2475/4083

MONASH UNIVERSITY

THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ON 1 December 2000

[redacted]

Sec. Ph.D. and Scholarships Committee

Under the Copyright Act 1968, this thesis must be used only under the normal conditions of scholarly fair dealing for the purposes of research, criticism or review. In particular no results or conclusions should be extracted from it, nor should it be copied or closely paraphrased in whole or in part without the written consent of the author. Proper written acknowledgement should be made for any assistance obtained from this thesis.

Between Art and Philosophy: Adorno and Foucault as Heirs and Critics of Enlightenment

by Sebastian Gurciullo BA (Hons)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
School of Literary, Visual and Cultural Studies
(Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies)

9 June 2000

Between Art and Philosophy: Adorno and Foucault as Heirs and Critics of Enlightenment

CONTENTS

Abstract

My thesis deals with recent problematizations of the category of the human subject which converge in the post-Nietzschean European philosophical tradition of critique. More particularly, this thesis explores and assesses forms of philosophical thinking which have explicitly sought to harness aesthetics as a form of ethical comportment aimed at the critique and surmounting of narrow conceptions of rationality. I have focussed on the thought of two extreme and highly influential practitioners of this line of investigation in the European tradition, Theodor W. Adorno and Michel Foucault. Both of these philosophers have given aesthetics a central role in the ethical task of rescuing philosophy from such narrow forms of rationality and the impoverished identities they tend to produce.

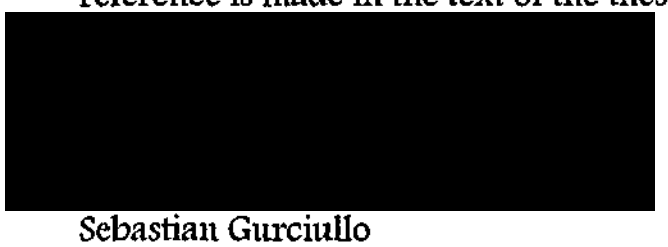
One of the substantial differences between these two philosophers may be found in their divergent assessments of the aspirations of Enlightenment thought. Adorno's employment of aesthetics is committed to expressing the tragic sense that the promise of the Enlightenment remains unfulfilled and perverted by the prevalence of instrumentalized forms of rationality. Adorno's aesthetics evoke both the damage done by instrumental reason's penetration into all spheres of life and an oblique vision of an alternative life-world that steadfastly refuses its own realization under instrumental conditions. Even though Foucault often presented images of an oppressive and perverse rationality, his philosophy expressed a more complicated, even troubled, relationship with the Enlightenment and its promise.

The aesthetic dimension is pursued by both philosophers in order to give expression to aspects of the self and our experience of the world which have been elsewhere stifled in the modern philosophical landscape. My introduction briefly suggests the early German Romantic movement in philosophy as a common point of origin for the kind of project undertaken by both Adorno and Foucault. Both thinkers give new twists to the tension between Enlightenment and Romanticism, a tension characteristic of much of modern social theory and philosophical reflection.

Many accounts of Adorno's and Foucault's work discount the centrality of aesthetics to their ethical orientations. By contrast, this thesis devotes three chapters each to both Adorno and Foucault in a thorough exploration of the aesthetic turn in their respective projects. Two final chapters examine Charles Taylor's and Gianni Vattimo's critical perspectives. These closing chapters also question the critical rationalism of Jürgen Habermas, Adorno's chief successor in Frankfurt School critical theory and one of Foucault's principal interlocutors.

Signed Statement

I, Sebastian Gurciullo, declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirms that to the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



Sebastian Gurciullo

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank all my family and friends for their ongoing support and understanding during the years of my candidature, and for tolerating my (all too frequent) grumpy and erratic moods. In particular, I would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the preparation and printing of this thesis: Siobhan Bowler, Anna Brown, Brett Cunningham, Gavan Cushnahan, Damian Dooley, D. J. Huppatz, Nadja Mack and Nicola Nixon. Special thanks to Brett Lockwood for his proofreading of the final draft, but also for his comradeship during some of the more anxious and lonely moments of my candidature. I thank all those friends who patiently listened to my ideas and engaged me in stimulating and challenging discussions which both enriched my thinking and often provoked me to change my mind.

This thesis is indebted to the community of scholarship in which it had its long gestation. My general thanks to the faculty of the Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, especially to the Administrative Officer for Graduate Studies, Ms Gail Ward, and Associate Professor Andrew Milner. I consider myself fortunate in having had such a dedicated and sympathetic supervisor, Dr Michael Janover. His unflagging commitment and steady support were pivotal to the completion of this thesis. Professor Kevin Hart and Dr Harry Redner provided guidance and interim supervision during the early stages of my candidature and the transition from Masters to PhD enrolment. Professor Gianni Vattimo of the University of Turin agreed to be interviewed by me on various themes in his thought, and Stuart Elden at Brunel University (Uxbridge) supplied me with a private translation (produced by himself and Isabelle Prépoignot) of a passage in Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. I thank Cecily Williams for her sound advice and assistance in the final preparations for submitting this thesis.

Much of the work undertaken for this thesis was funded by an Australian Postgraduate Award, for which I am grateful. I thank Dr Judith Brett and Dr Angus MacIntyre for their contribution to a very fruitful honours year which stood me in good stead for the receipt of this grant. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment of all teaching, research, and support staff at Monash Univeristy for maintaining their sense of the university's mission.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Rosa Gurciullo.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION: Constellations of Critique

The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.

Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach.*

What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism.* This history can be related even now; for necessity itself is at work here. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are cocked now. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power.*

A philosophy that tried to imitate art, that would turn itself into a work of art, would be expunging itself . . . Common to art and philosophy is not the form, not the forming process, but a mode of conduct that forbids pseudomorphosis. Both keep faith with their own substance through their opposites: art by making itself resistant to its meanings; philosophy, by refusing to clutch at any immediate thing. What the philosophical concept will not abandon is the yearning that animates the nonconceptual side of art, and whose fulfilment shuns the immediate side of art as mere appearance. The concept—the organon of thinking, and yet the wall between thinking and the thought—negates that yearning. Philosophy can neither circumvent such negations nor submit to it. It must strive, by way of the concept, to transcend the concept.

Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics.*

Enlightenment affirms, at a most basic level, that the light of human reason is capable of illuminating the meaning of the world in which we exist and of orienting us in how to act properly as humans in our worldly existence. This is the basic faith in reason which is expressed in the Enlightenment project and which has been at the heart of the momentous historical transformations of our modernity, in both its achievements and disasters. One may say that since the first optimistic days of the Enlightenment, this faith in human reason has fallen on hard times, in some ways echoing the fate of the Divine reason it was meant to supplant. The process of emancipation through secularization produces not a harmoniously free and fully rational humanity but a humanity confronting nihilism and at odds with itself. In a fundamental sense, the values of Enlightenment rationality fail to provide meaning for everyday life. In its more pernicious forms, Enlightenment rationality may even turn out to be life's enemy insofar as it undermines the capacity to openly acknowledge this fundamental problem by substituting false or dubious solutions for it.

Enlightenment disenchants, it is disappointing. The ambiguity of the faith in reason, which permits itself neither a contentment with its production of knowledge nor a regression to the temptations of illusion it has thereby sought to overcome, cannot provide a meaning for human finitude. In seeking a redeeming truth for human finitude, enlightening reason moves itself toward a logical suicide, and yet it cannot endure without believing in such a truth. It must suspend itself somehow somewhere between a death it cannot master and a dying it cannot endure. Perhaps this is where philosophy should begin again, at the limits of disenchantment: the inability to overcome nihilism *and to not respond to the demand* that it be overcome. It is perhaps in this way that we can avoid the fate of a complacent meaninglessness that accepts as brute fact the shape of the world as it has become. This could mean to leave room, if only by the slimmest of margins, for some alternative by maintaining redemption as an impossibility that unworks all the possibilities of its mastery, and leads us to the uncanny joys and disappointments of the everyday.[1]

In contrast to such a relatively modest proposal, both Theodor W. Adorno and Michel Foucault still seemed to practice a form of radical critique which aspired to greater transformative possibilities for our actuality. This was the case even if their practice of critique registered a reduction of the hope for comprehensive *political* transformation by turning toward aesthetic expressions of a critical ethos on a more limited scale. As both heirs and critics of the Enlightenment, these two thinkers highlight the limitations of radical critique informed by reason in effectively translating itself into prescriptions for political action and the shared ethical life of a wider community. In this regard, both thinkers inhabited a specifically *modern* predicament which the early German Romantic philosophers had sought to master in the final years of the eighteenth century. In the wake of the *Aufklärung*, these Romantic philosophers initially sought to fulfil the promise of enlightened reason, resolve its contradictions, and expand its reach by turning toward art and aesthetics. The dilemma faced by the *Aufklärung*, in their view, was that its employment of reason, which submitted everything to radical critique, led to a pervasive doubt and nihilism that undermined its commitment to educating humanity with regard to moral, political, and aesthetic principles. For the Romantics, art would be given the role of furnishing reason with the means of creating new principles and transmitting them to humanity at large, a function once reserved for the traditional authority emanating from religion.[2]

In their endeavours to overcome the disenchantments of Enlightenment by engineering its affective transmission through the creative imagination and art, the early Romantics exposed an essential ambiguity in programs seeking to utilize an aesthetic education of humanity in the service of cultivating and sustaining the autonomy of reason. What is at stake is not only the fulfilment of the promise of Enlightenment reason through aesthetic means, but the danger that the employment of such means could amount to its betrayal. An awareness of this dilemma is arguably indispensable for preventing the perversion of the critical impulse in such a transmission of rational principles being instrumentalized toward forms of compulsion rather than autonomy. If radical critique based purely on reason leads ultimately to scepticism and nihilism as the German Romantics feared, then the potential instrumentalization of reason in the guise of comforting myths supposedly counterbalancing (or completing) the critical impulse is surely an even greater danger.

Despite the fading from memory of the Enlightenment's higher ambitions as a redemptive possibility based on the fulfilment of human reason, its basic faith in the sufficiency of rational principles as the basis for organizing public institutions is perhaps more pervasive now than ever. The question remains as to whether the spreading dominion of specialized rationalities in our own day is a cause for celebration, a sign of the success of the critical capacities of reason in transforming the world for the better, or the entrenchment of affirmative myths which conceal the more disquieting features of modern life. Moreover, the determination of the very criteria for adjudicating such a question and drawing such distinctions are deeply contested and themselves partake of the very problem they are meant to adjudicate. The contemporary discourse of globalization is but one of the forms in which a commitment to rationality persists in this ambiguous condition. The problems of modernity broached by the Romantics in their efforts to fulfil the promise of the Enlightenment in many ways remain current, and are experienced as a wavering, an ambiguity, as to whether ours is a time of hope or despair.[3]

This uncanny and uneasy suspension in our everyday expressions between hope and despair is hinted at in the ambiguity of the fragmentary writings produced by the Jena Romantics, particularly the fragments published in the Schlegel brothers' short-

lived journal *Athenäum*.[4] These fragmentary writings may be read as a response to the crisis of the modern world, the problem of nihilism in a postreligious and posttraditional epoch which is still our own and in which there is no longer a (credible notion of a) unifying whole that can guarantee meaning and justice for human beings. More specifically, they may be read as an aesthetic response to the disintegration of Immanuel Kant's critical system, standing-in for the unresolvable antinomies of Enlightenment rationality, which itself failed to heal the diremptions of a modernity taking leave of divine holiness.[5] The preparation for Jena Romanticism's response to Kant may be found in the declaration of the so-called "Oldest System Programme of German Idealism", a politico–philosophical fragment–manifesto of uncertain authorship dating from 1796.[6] This document declares that "the highest act of reason, which embraces all Ideas, is an aesthetic act, and that *truth and goodness* are brothers *only in beauty*—The philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power . . . as the poet."[7]

Kant's First and Second Critiques had divided the human being between an epistemological subject logically capable of testing causality but without an image of itself *being* capable of doing so and a free ethical agent which acts *as if* it is claimed by a universal moral law, for which there is no evidence. The Third Critique would be the place where the reconciliation in *praxis* of the torn hemispheres of human being could begin to be contemplated. The achievement of this practical resolution would come from the aesthetic realm, in which the subject would receive an objectively concretized image of its self-legislating freedom reflected in the artwork. Philosophy would seek to achieve this synthesis capable of meaningfully sustaining a postreligious epoch in freedom by finding completion in and through the artwork, and, more specifically, in poetry as a kind of secularized religion in the service of reason or Ideas, an aesthetic absolute.[8] The "System Programme", at once the predecessor of early German Romanticism and Idealism, manifests a demand for the attempted fulfilment of the Kantian project, rather than a repudiation of it, in a "*sensuous religion*" that will be a "new mythology" of reason capable of forging a human community reconciled in freedom.[9]

The authors of the "System Programme", as Gianni Vattimo observes, called on poetry to prepare the way for "the realization of that realm of liberty which the Parisian revolutionaries had sought in vain to establish".[10] This utopian linkage of political revolutionary *praxis* and an aesthetic absolute, in which the artwork as the

sensuous image of freedom provides the model for the work of politics, is naive in the extreme and cannot help but lead to disappointment and failure (if not disaster) when attempted in reality in terms of success. Furthermore, what is captured in the attempted Romantic synthesis of the aesthetic and *praxis* is that which arguably comes to the fore as ideological in all revolutionary action and which cannot but lead to some form of miscarriage, the more so when thinking is blind to the impracticability, even impossibility, of any attempt to realize such a synthesis.[11] The Jena Romanticism of the *Athenäum* fragments distinguishes itself by giving the essentially naive configuration of Romanticism a new twist, what Maurice Blanchot has referred to as "the keenest knowledge of the narrow margin in which it can affirm itself" in a "situation in which failure and success are in strict reciprocity, fortune and misfortune indiscernible".[12]

The aesthetic absolute of the Jena Romantics, at least in Friedrich Schlegel's conception of it, would be the great novel of humanity as the completion of philosophy in and through poetry, a book which none of the Jena Romantics actually realized because as the absolute of Romantic poetry it is perpetually in a state of becoming. Its essence, in other words, is that it is a writing striving for perfection without the possibility of being perfected, a potential literature that knows no limits while being limited in each of its concrete moments, a movement of infinite variation in an expanded conception of writing that includes all forms of language and precludes a theoretical exhaustion of its possibilities.[13] What the Jena Romantics do realize is a new practice of writing in the discontinuous form of the fragment. What is significant about the *Athenäum* journal is that ensembles of such fragments are arranged in a dissonant space, in principle allowing for the exploration of a limitless number of topics which don't necessarily move toward overall coherence or agreement. They also evoke a utopian vision, the restless movement of singular thoughts contesting and differing in an anonymous collectivity of writing based on friendship. The particularity of the singular is preserved but placed in a tension with a socialized context that can only promise to redeem the fragments' isolated finitude, their fragmentariness, in an infinite work as yet unfinished, which is the promise of future fragments yet to be written, an uncertain future.

Suspended between completion and incompletion, the part and the whole, individual and community, singularity and collectivity, the demand for system and

its lack, the work and its absence, this discontinuous form of writing succeeds by taking failure into itself in an unresolved form, in a lack of final synthesis groping its way toward synthesis. This is what Blanchot calls "the non-romantic essence of romanticism", its essential ambiguity, which explains why "it manifests itself, rich in projects" but "dies out, poor in works", because "it is essentially what begins and what cannot but finish badly: an end that is called suicide, madness, loss, forgetting".[14] In Jena Romanticism, the very lack of finished works becomes the consciousness of "the work of the absence of (the) work", of the unworking of the work, which leads to the introduction of "an entirely new mode of accomplishment, and even a veritable conversion of writing: the work's power to be and no longer to represent; to be everything, but without content or with a content that is almost indifferent, and thus at the same time affirming the absolute and the fragmentary; affirming totality, but in a form that, being all forms—that is, at the limit, being none at all—does not realize the whole, but signifies it by suspending it, even breaking it".[15]

The failure of philosophical critique to translate into effective political *praxis* has been one of the pivotal intellectual experiences of twentieth-century radical thought. This has been the case with the experience of the Frankfurt School, an intellectual community whose central members progressively moved away from orthodox Marxism to include Marxist thought itself in their critique of instrumental rationality. This experience achieves its paradigmatic expression in the nascent negative dialectics of Theodor W. Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The Frankfurt School had been founded, as the Institute for Social Research, on the premise of synthesizing a broad interdisciplinary approach to social phenomena. Initially, the Frankfurt School theorists expected to link up speculative theory with empirical research, academic activity with its practical implications, and a critical distance from those aspects of orthodox Marxism which no longer seemed tenable with a basic faith in the ambitious Marxist project of unifying critical theory and revolutionary practice. The experience of exile in America and the reception of news filtering through of the Nazi death camps changed these expectations in a drastic manner. From the early 1940s, these syntheses began to look unworkable if not naive in the face of a devastating social reality. By the end of the 1940s, Adorno and Horkheimer had embarked on a critique of Western civilization so comprehensively radical that it was difficult to imagine what more there was left to say except by way of working out the finer

details. With their increasingly radical theoretical elaborations went a deepening distrust of the radical political activisms of the day and a reluctance to make any connection between their critical theory and the realization of a radical *praxis*. Meaningful change increasingly seemed to become a remote possibility. "Disillusioned with the Soviet Union," Jay comments, "no longer even marginally sanguine about the working classes of the West, appalled by the integrative power of mass culture, the Frankfurt School travelled the last leg of its long march away from orthodox Marxism".[16]

There is an echo of the Jena experience in the failure of the Frankfurt School's initial program for an interdisciplinary approach to social phenomena and the syntheses it sought to attain. In a sense, the experience of the Jena Romantics has been echoed by all movements that have self-consciously set themselves up as a vanguard or laboratory for political action. At the root of this is the belief in an aesthetic absolute, that somehow the political is mediated through aesthetic and literary production, that artworks or theoretical interventions are not only politically and culturally effective but necessary for the redemption of everyday life. As Simon Critchley has observed, ever since the French Revolution, up until 1968 and arguably beyond, movements have been founded on the essentially naive belief that a "small group of highly educated men and women, working together collectively and anonymously in a 'para-academic' context, could theorise and hegemonise new cultural forms and effect a new vision of social relations".[17]

In the wake of the Frankfurt School disenchantment with orthodox Marxism, Adorno moved toward a solidarity with the kind of failure experienced by the Jena Romantics, in terms of a social critique which maintains the impossibility of redemption for the sake of the possible. It is in this way that Adorno sustains his relentless critique of a narrow conception of Enlightenment rationality for the sake of a more substantive sense of rationality, the realization of which must be perpetually deferred if the critique is to hold good. It is this promise which is experienced as the possibility of critique but may also be thought of as the impossibility of redemption.[18] For Adorno, the ultimate site of this resistance to the possibility of redemption is to be located in the dissonant aesthetics of modernist art, particularly absolute music, which is the basis for a form of subjectivity which unflinchingly performs dysfunctionality in order to keep at bay the greater damage

of a successfully illusory state of reconciliation and to obliquely evoke a negative image of what an undamaged subjectivity might be like.[19]

Adorno's dissonant *praxis* of philosophy returns us to the problem of modernity, the overcoming of nihilism, *the inability to overcome it and to not respond to the demand that it be overcome*, of a death that cannot be mastered and a dying that cannot be endured. It is an ambiguity at the heart of the faith of Enlightenment, whose realization is a disenchantment that ultimately dissolves the faith that gave rise to it and threatens to leave us in a complacent and inert state of meaninglessness. It is this kind of false synthesis that manifests itself in the neoliberal cast of the emergent global order whose (complacently nihilistic) image of freedom is increasingly that of a shareholder in a multinational company.[20] The only true hope is that in the full light of day, meaninglessness can never be achieved, that it too fails as a work and can only be unworked, and that our *praxis* should be, can only be, the refusal and suspension of its achievement as a final meaning in an endgame synthesis. In resisting the dubious fate of realized pseudo-enlightenment, all we have is a weak and ambiguous hope that exposes us infinitely to what is other, through which we are obliged beyond calculability to respond to otherness, whether it be in the shape of other people, of animals, or to the earth and its environs. In respect to the other person, it is in friendship and companionship to someone who like ourselves was born to die this death which cannot be mastered and must endure the unendurable, that we perhaps also encounter the question of that which is beyond the strictly human order of values in contemporary life. Could we then say that the relation to the other person, who like ourselves is but a fragment in the poem of humanity, reminds us of that which is other than the human and a responsibility beyond the economy of human ends, a possibility which is difficult to articulate due to the force of modern habits in referring value back to the human?[21]

The advent of a new era called "postmodernity" which proclaims to have somehow overcome the problems of modernity has been a major feature of the theoretical landscape for some time now. In particular, theories of postmodernity tend to emphasize that the subject-centred rationality of modernity is fatally flawed, that it must therefore be refused and replaced with something else. In actuality, it is more

likely that the new terrain of postmodernity has more in common with the modernity it seeks to leave behind than many of its adherents would care to admit. This is not to deny that the emergence of a widespread enthusiasm for postmodernity does not register an important shift in our relationship with our modernity, but not of the kind which can decisively take leave of it through some virile act of will.

What is often overlooked in the enthusiasm for postmodernity is the extent to which the new solutions offered in the name of a postmodernity are intimately related to the problematic of subjectivity in modernity and in particular to the field of philosophical aesthetics as a place in which attempts have been made to articulate what has been repressed by a narrow conception of rationality. In terms of the problem of nihilism, the claim to have found "new" solutions does not resolve the problem of a lack of meaning for human finitude but perhaps exacerbates the problem even more. As Andrew Bowie has suggested, "There has been a remarkable amnesis in those recent theories which have announced themselves in terms of a new age. The issues they are concerned with are not 'post-modern', they are modern and involve the problems that emerge in modern philosophy."[22] In Bowie's view, much of what has come out of recent French theory was made historically and theoretically possible by the German philosophical tradition, in particular the salvation of the theological concern with meaning (or the meaning of an absence of meaning) by a world-disclosing, nonrepresentational language in the aesthetics of German Romanticism.[23]

Richard Kearney has identified four constitutive refusals as hallmarks of postmodernist theories. The first, and the one which commands my interest here, is the refusal to posit an "imagining subject as transcendental origin of meaning (the thesis of modern idealists from Kant and Schelling to Husserl and Satre)".[24] Like many of the other philosophers who are associated with postmodernism, Michel Foucault undertook a relentless, sometimes contradictory, and often controversial critique of the subject. Even though Foucault has often been identified as an advocate of postmodernism for precisely this very critique of the subject, I am more interested in the ways in which his work may be related to classic modernist thematics, particularly the theme of aesthetic self-creation.[25] In this regard, it is worth noting that Foucault himself found his identification with postmodernism baffling, even to the point of suggesting he had little understanding of what its

thematics might mean.[26] Consequently, Foucault's intellectual context may just as easily be seen in relation to a continuity with the philosophical tradition of aesthetic modernism that is still present in Nietzsche, as to the various proposals for postmodernism posited since Nietzsche.

The question of whether Foucault's thought can be located properly within a philosophical movement identified or celebrated as the achievement of a new postmodern epoch is therefore problematic. Furthermore, the appropriation of Foucault's work in favour of such a placement may tend to encourage what Ferry and Renaut in their *French Philosophy of the Sixties* have identified as the simplification of Foucault's work into an "antirepressive Vulgate".[27] In this regard, the philosophical configuration of antihumanism that emerged in France in the 1960s was the intellectual breeding-ground for a postmodernism which stood for a naive refusal of repressive institutions and practices in general, and in particular the repressive quality of metaphysical subjectivity as humanism.[28] I do not contest that this "Vulgate" existed, and perhaps continues to exist, in regard to interpretations of Foucault's work and the widespread appeal his writings have enjoyed in recent decades. What I would like to suggest is that there is perhaps a "vulgarity" in claiming that "From the beginning to the end of his work, Foucault remained consistent with his Vulgate."[29] This kind of interpretation of Foucault's thought seeks to resolve the unresolved tensions in his complex, multidimensional critique of the subject by way of a simplistic unidimensionality that seems to make its dismissal a foregone conclusion. In the process, Foucault's thinking is identified too prematurely with a straightforward and total refusal of the subject, even though in his early passionate denunciations he often seems to encourage just such an interpretation.[30]

While Ferry's and Renaut's book is a partisan intervention in the contemporary French theoretical scene and its perspective therefore polemical, it does raise some interesting issues with regard to the reception of the work of Foucault and the context in which it emerged. The reference point for Ferry's and Renaut's reconstruction of philosophical antihumanism is its relation to the events of May 1968 in Paris. For those who have read the work of the philosophers associating themselves most strongly with this movement, those Ferry and Renaut gather under the banner of French antihumanism, the reference to May 1968 will no doubt be a familiar one. Indeed, the opening remarks of Maurice Blanchot's appreciation of

Foucault, *Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him*, is perhaps one of the more memorable examples of this kind of reference. It serves as an allegory invoking all the registers of enthusiasm regarding the significance of these events, which range from the political and social to the mystical and mythological. What this allegory also alludes to is Foucault's relationship to the events of May 1968. Most notably it refers to Foucault's absence, not only literally but also metaphorically, as a political actor:

> A few personal words. Let me say first of all that I had no personal relations with Michel Foucault. I never met him, except one time, in the courtyard of the Sorbonne, during the events of May '68, perhaps in June or July (but I was later told he wasn't there), when I addressed a few words to him, he himself unaware of who was speaking to him . . . (Whatever the detractors of May might say, it was a splendid moment, when anyone could speak to anyone else, anonymously, impersonally, welcomed with no other justification than that of being another person.) It's true that during those extraordinary events I often asked: but why isn't Foucault here? thus granting him his power of attraction and underscoring the empty place he should have been occupying. But I received replies that didn't satisfy me: "he's somewhat reserved," or "he's abroad." But, in fact, there were many foreigners, and even the far off Japanese were there. Perhaps we may simply have missed each other.[31]

According to Ferry and Renaut, the hyperbole of this antihumanism long ago had its heyday in the various spheres of academe and the wider contemporary culture, having reached its peak in the "philosophy of the sixties".[32] To this philosophical current belongs Michel Foucault's "the end of man" announcement.[33] This antihumanist philosophy is often regarded as producing the definitive figures of what has become contemporary postmodernism (even though many of the participants in this philosophical grouping rejected that identification). Ferry and Renaut argue that the philosophical antihumanism that associated itself with what began as a student revolt, engaged in a hyperbolic repudiation of the metaphysical construction of subjectivity, which was taken to be the same thing as the idea of a humanist subject. In their view, what happened in the lecture theatres, in the streets, and in the philosophical movement of French antihumanism, was an exaggerated affirmation of the individual against the repressive claims of universal norms which unleashed a process whereby any sense of a stable and autonomous identity disintegrated. The traditional notion of the subject is eliminated at the same moment as the individual is affirmed in its full diversity, which suggests that what was thereby legitimated philosophically was "the heterogeneity that emptied the fluid Ego of substance". In their view, French antihumanism amounted to a critique of the

traditional aims of self-mastery and truth, as metaphysical or ideological illusions, that led straight into "the '*cool* and *laid-back* consciousness' of the eighties".[34]

If Ferry and Renaut are right, the problem was not so much that the antihumanist critique was not radical enough in order to fully effect the eradication of the category of the subject, nor that French antihumanists were premature in celebrating its demise and that final victory would be left to a future generation. The problem was that insofar as the attempt to radically overcome the metaphysics of the humanist subject failed to get beyond some form of subjectivity, the philosophical prejudices of this antihumanist philosophy prevented it from properly examining this failure in terms of the resistance of subjectivity to its own demise. What is required is not that we abandon the critique of the metaphysics of subjectivity, a task that has its roots in a modern philosophical tradition stretching as far back as Kant, but that we see through the false equation of humanism with metaphysics. This simplistic equation leads to the ruinous path of philosophical antihumanism and prevents an adequate reappraisal of how forms of subjectivity have survived as a viable presence in contemporary philosophy even in the wake of a concerted critique of metaphysics. For Ferry and Renaut declare "this perspective to be indispensable for anyone who wants to defend today, nonnaively and nonmetaphysically, *some* humanism, within which *some* reference to the idea of subjectivity seems to be the obvious condition of possibility". [35]

Ferry and Renaut steadfastly refuse the possibility that Foucault attempted to move beyond the virile overcoming of the humanist subject they claim defines a whole generation of French philosophers. In their view, it is only through the move to an ethic of transparent communication, of the kind advanced by Jürgen Habermas, that a humanist subject can be sustained without illusion as the foundation for a viable philosophy.[36] Foucault never accepted such a reconciliatory vocation for philosophy, and even in his late work he refused to accept a form of subjectivity established and legitimated through a consensus-based ethic. I don't think this refusal should be taken as a negation of the invitation to engage in a free and open discussion, but as a rejection of the attempt to transcendentalize such discourse into a formal universal norm. Even as a place-holder for a deferred reconciliation, a consensus ethics risks making too much of itself, and fixes a name to something which is perhaps better left unnameable.

In terms of radicalizing the thought of German precursors, Marx figures as a significant influence in the shaping of Foucault's project, but it is the influence of Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger which seems to be more decisive in reconstructing what might be said to be his final position.[37] In an interview conducted in 1978, Duccio Trombadori attempted to address this very problematic matter of Foucault's "position". Trombadori notes the "eccentricity" of Foucault's position, suggesting to Foucault that "in a certain sense it explains the difficulties encountered by critics, commentators, and interpreters in the attempt to locate or to attribute to you a precise place within contemporary philosophical thought". Foucault's answer, which he will seemingly modify yet again toward the end of his life, is that he doesn't consider himself to be a philosopher, at least, not in the traditional institutional sense of the word, and insofar as it designates a contemporary professional description. Retracing the lineage of French Nietzscheanism, which influenced his relationship to philosophical writing, Foucault states that "the most important authors who have—I won't say formed me—but who have enabled me to move away from my original university education, are: Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Pierre Klossowski", philosophers outside a traditional institutional setting who, rather than constructing systems, were more concerned with "having direct, personal experiences".[38]

In another interview later in the same book, Foucault returns to his encounter with Bataille and Blanchot, who both gave him a new approach to Nietzsche. "What did they represent for me?", he asks himself:

> First of all, an invitation to call into question the category of the "subject," its primacy and its originating function. And then, the conviction that an operation of that kind would not have made any sense if it had been confined to speculation: to call the subject into question had to mean to live it in an experience that might be its real destruction or dissociation, its explosion or upheaval into something radically "other."[39]

What was of interest in Nietzsche and Bataille for Foucault was therefore their attempts to locate ruptures in the continuity of the human subject as a lived experience. Seeking to distance himself from the predominant philosophical currents in postwar France, Hegelianism, phenomenology and existentialism, Foucault explains that these "professionalized" philosophies were unable to give satisfying answers to the questions which seemed most important to him in his formative intellectual years: "can it be said that the subject is the only form of

existence possible? Can't there be experiences in which the subject, in its constitutive relations, in its self-identity, isn't given any more? And thus wouldn't experiences be given in which the subject could dissociate itself, break its relationship with itself, lose its identity? Wasn't this perhaps the experience of Nietzsche, with the metaphor of the Eternal Return?"[40]

This present thesis takes shape in the wake of the structuralist and poststructuralist critiques of humanism and subjectivity. It asks questions of how we might now conceive of Enlightenment reason and its place in our present. What should we make of the aesthetic—Romantic and post-Romantic—refutations of rationalist humanism and founding subjectivity? Can we accept the force of such critiques while yet accepting also, or seeking to posit, the existence of a moment of subjectivity beyond (temporally after and philosophically prior to) these various refuting critiques of subjectivity? These questions were posed most subtly and acutely by Theodor W. Adorno and Michel Foucault. Through their manifold reflections, conceptions of subjectivity emerge in which the subject is neither a rational foundation nor an ethical finality but a tensile force-field of questioning and critique.

With regard to the organization of the two main sections of this thesis, the one on Adorno, the other on Foucault, I have sought to go against the grain. I find in Adorno's work a number of features which, despite Adorno's trenchantly unsystematic and methodically unmethodical philosophizing, may be detached from the actual course his dialectic takes, and generalized. In the case of Foucault, who unlike Adorno, was determined to concretize a critical form of thought that was no longer dialectical, I attempt to string together a narrative that while perhaps not being classically dialectical, is nonetheless haunted by dialectical problems.

What this thesis seeks to present is perhaps less a positive thesis than a partial point of view, though more than just a series of perspectives; in other words, something along the lines of what Adorno understood as a constellation. Borrowing from Foucault's later vocabulary, I could also say that what I have attempted is an exploration of the central problematization toward which both Foucault's and Adorno's work is directed. My concern is directed toward the problem of

subjectivity as it is encountered in their work, and what interests me most about their divergent responses to the problematization of subjectivity is the way they turn to aesthetics to sustain a mode of ethical comportment in which something of the imperilled subject survives or is cultivated anew, albeit inconclusively and tentatively. In the background to the constellation in which Adorno and Foucault are to be found is the criticism Habermas has consistently levelled at both Adorno and Foucault regarding the political desirability and philosophical legitimacy of such an aesthetically inclined ethical sensibility. Other elements in this constellation which I have chosen to focus on are thrown into light by the hermeneutical projects of Charles Taylor and Gianni Vattimo, both of whom recognize the aesthetic inclination toward ethics taken by Adorno and Foucault and seek to draw its limits from a path outside the neo-Kantianism pursued by Habermas. I realize that my treatment of Habermas is somewhat problematic, since his criticisms of Adorno and Foucault are a constant presence in much of what I have to say, but I do not give his work the kind of sustained treatment that I have applied to Taylor and Vattimo. Part of the reason for this omission were the exigencies of time and space. Another reason is that the contestation of ideas between Adorno, Foucault, and Habermas has already generated a substantial secondary literature, whereas the same cannot yet be said for either Vattimo or Taylor.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge that this is not a thesis in pure philosophical logic. To begin with, my training did not begin as a philosopher or critical theorist, but in the political science of post–World War II international relations. In the process I encountered my first *philosophia*, the political existentialism of Hannah Arendt, and my second, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis: an odd couple. I explicitly came to Foucault and Adorno out of a developing interest in literary modernism and the presentation of the crisis of subjectivity therein. In combination with the increasingly widespread suspicion of the unsustainability of pure philosophical logic, my own intellectual formation has led me to question the idea that thought should be taken purely on its own terms as a pure logic of ideas. I say this even though I have struggled to come to terms with the philosophical and critical theory I have examined at a purely conceptual level. But I don't think this is enough; something more is required which perhaps cannot be exactly specified in advance or justified as definite methodology. Not only must I ask about what kind of life the producers of thought lead, but also the way the thought is put together, its texture, its organization, its relations to other bodies of thought, the institutional and

political context in which it emerged, and attempt to imagine the world that it simultaneously projects and inhabits. What I think has drawn me to thinkers like Adorno and Foucault is that they are themselves exemplary of this kind of tendency, even while they remain cogent, actual theoreticians. If my thesis has suffered in terms of conceptual rigour because of this, I hope that it has gained in other dimensions for comprehending the reality of their thought.

PART ONE

ADORNO: PERSISTENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY?

Introduction

To perform the negative is what is still required of us, the positive is already ours.

Franz Kafka, *The Collected Aphorisms.*

The ending lasts longer than the previous history of metaphysics.

Matin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy.*

Clov: Then how can it end?

Hamm: You want it to end?

Samuel Beckett, *Endgame.*

One of the distinctive features of Theodor W. Adorno's philosophy is the role played by his style, the way he performs philosophical thinking as a practice averse to setting down a timeless philosophical system. Even if Adorno was drawn toward the construction of a system, such a movement remained problematic because he continually struggled with and problematized the notion of totality, neither wishing to foreclose its possibility nor falsely affirm its accomplishment. Adorno never wrote a summary of his project, and it is unlikely that one will find in his vast output a particular piece which sums up the whole. Within his work, the relationships between the parts themselves and their respective relations to the whole are complex and dynamic, and it is not out of place to speak of certain resemblances to a musical mode of composition. One would have to read Adorno's work in its entirety to gain the full picture. Even then, considering the vast series of conceptual variations which his work moves through, the reader would still have to establish a particular relationship to the material. This would be a difficult task, but no less difficult is the more limited task, when for reasons of limited time and space, an attempt is made to establish a relationship only to a small cross-section of Adorno's *oeuvre.*[1] Attempting such a sample requires that one remain carefully within the limits of the material at hand, while having to imagine the whole which is missing from it. It also requires some consideration of how a certain distance now separates us from Adorno's own historical context and the ways in which Adorno's work may come to have relevance for us now in a somewhat different context. If every part of Adorno's philosophy implies a missing whole, and furthermore, if each part is in effect a staging of this irreconcilable conflict between part and whole, what is required perhaps is the use of trial combinations that somehow, and perhaps only momentarily, unlock some kind of insight for our present situation.

CHAPTER I

Essaying Mimesis

> The statement that things are always the same is false in its immediateness, and true only when introduced into the dynamics of totality. He who relinquishes awareness of the growth of horror not merely succumbs to cold-hearted contemplation, but fails to perceive, together with the specific difference between the newest and that preceding it, the true identity of the whole, of terror without end.
>
> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia.*

Fredric Jameson has suggested the current historical moment, perceived as the hiatus that has come to be called "postmodernity", may prove to be particularly susceptible to the analysis carried out in the very "modernist" philosophy of Theodor Adorno. Jameson claims Adorno's work is peculiarly relevant in our current period of "late capitalism", of globalization and new world orders, for in this context it seems that "Adorno's prophecies of the 'total system' finally come true, in wholly unexpected forms". Ironically, Adorno's Marxist analyses of modernity may experience their greatest potency more than two decades after his own death, according to Jameson, at the very moment when theoretical Marxism appears to be little more than a spent force and many of its practical sociopolitical applications nothing short of historical disasters. Adorno's late modernism/Marxism returns as a highly instructive staging point for an analysis of postmodernity "in which late capitalism has all but succeeded in eliminating the final loopholes of nature and the Unconscious, of subversion and the aesthetic, of individual and collective praxis alike, and, with a final fillip, in eliminating any memory trace of what thereby no longer existed in the henceforth postmodern landscape".[1] Adorno's late Marxism, Jameson contends, may contribute significantly to an understanding of the cultural predominance of the postmodern by drawing analytical attention to the "economic system or mode of production" in which philosophical thought is constructed. The originality of Adorno's philosophical work "lies in his unique emphasis on the presence of late capitalism as a totality within the very forms of our concepts or of the works of art themselves".[2] One may wish to qualify this claim while still accepting its basic premise by acknowledging that late capitalism was often for Adorno the most palpable symptom of a far deeper malaise.[3]

Jameson proposes the relevance of Adorno's Marxism for the phenomenon of late capitalism, especially in its current manifestations in the cultural dominance of the postmodern. In Jameson's view, the scope and persistence of Adorno's staging of the

relationship between universal and particular is unprecedented in the Marxist theoretical tradition. Jameson observes that in the wake of poststructuralism, where there are no longer "concepts", and postmodernism, where "works of art" are likewise deemed anachronistic, "Adorno's offering may seem like a useless gift". Nevertheless, Jameson claims that such anachronisms may at the very least "serve to instruct the enemies of the concept of 'totality' in the meaning and function of this kind of thinking and interpretation . . . Adorno's life work stands or falls with the concept of 'totality'".[4] While Jameson ultimately prefers to read the significance of totality in Adorno's work in terms of economic (capitalist) phenomena, a broader significance often suggests itself in terms of the diagnosis of the human spirit, a concern that has also become suspect in recent times.

Edward Said has observed how the formal elements of Adorno's style or performance of philosophy is intimately related to his interpretation of the critical task of intellectual life, of how Adorno himself lived this vocation. Central to Adorno's sense of his intellectual vocation was the commitment to being "a permanent exile", always at a distance from the falseness of contemporary society, ever on guard against the pervasive logic of instrumental reason and its false image of totality. At the heart of this mode of intellectual life as permanent exile

> is a writing style that is mannered and worked over in the extreme. It is fragmentary first of all, jerky, discontinuous; there is no plot or predetermined order to follow. It represents the intellectual's consciousness as unable to be at rest anywhere, constantly on guard against the blandishments of success, which, for the perversely inclined Adorno, means trying consciously *not* to be understood easily and immediately.[5]

The condition of permanent exile in the form of an abstract thought resolutely aloof from the late capitalist world of the false totality is a defining feature of what we might term the modernism of Adorno's "perversely inclined" style of constructing philosophical texts. Indeed, Fredric Jameson has proposed that this aspect of Adorno's mode of philosophizing, his apparently outdated and anachronistic modernism and Marxism, may hold some important lessons for contemporary intellectuals confronting the seemingly unchallengeable positivities of social and economic life that Jameson sees as defining the postmodern situation. Jameson is eager to find a contemporary relevance for Adorno's work beyond Said's suggestion that it constitutes a testimony, that it may still have some more substantial effect on

the world. This forms the basis of Jameson's peculiar, highly politicized, and controversial appropriation of Adorno's work. In Jameson's view,

> Adorno was a doubtful ally when there were still powerful and oppositional political currents from which his temperamental and cantankerous quietism could distract the uncommitted reader. Now that for the moment those currents are themselves quiescent, his bile is a joyous counter-poison and a corrosive solvent to apply to the surface of "what is". Even his archaic economics now seems apt and timely; very much in the spirit of his own construction of time, the utterly outmoded doctrine of monopoly capital may be just the image we need, in the absence of our own images, since it incited him to track the system into its most minute recesses and crannies, without paranoia, and with an effectiveness that can still set an example to those demoralized by the decentralization of the current one, which offers rows of identical products (or their modular transformations) instead of the grim and windowless headquarters we thought we were looking for.[6]

It is precisely the concept of totality which much of the contemporary theory that has become identified either as poststructuralist or postmodern has either repudiated or abandoned along with the category of the subject. These theoretical developments have usually been staged as a path toward achieving some kind of experience or defence of unfettered particularity. Jameson is therefore in effect also arguing against any kind of easy assimilation of Adorno to this movement. In Jameson's view, this movement has often enough collapsed philosophical activity into a form of free-ranging textuality based on a celebration of chance and difference, thereby largely marginalizing the significance of some kind of philosophically consistent truth. As Peter Dews has observed in *Logics of Disintegration*, the poststructuralist quest for difference takes place "through an immersion in fragments and perspectives, not perceiving that this splintering is itself the effect of an overbearing totality, rather than a means of escape from it". In effect, poststructuralism may be interpreted "as the point at which the 'logic of disintegration' penetrates into the thought which attempts to comprehend it, resulting in a dispersal into a plurality of inconsistent logics".[7] Furthermore, Dews observes that it is "this defensive mimetic adaptation" which is responsible not only for "the internal incoherences of different post-structuralist positions" but also accounts for "their complementary onesidedness".[8]

In this context, mimesis pertains to the problem of representation, a problem that has been a feature of modernism and one central to Adorno's practice of philosophical modernism in particular. Like the poststructuralists, Adorno has a heightened awareness of the importance of presentational form, of how a

performative dimension is integral to the expression of any thought content. Philosophical argument is a form of writing and a species of performance; even as oratory it relies on rhetoric and as thinking on the mediation of some kind of formal conventions of argumentation. As Jameson observes, philosophical argumentation is consciously mediated in the case of Adorno "as linguistic experiment, as *Darstellung* and the invention of form".[9] The deployment of a mimetic comportment within philosophical activity attempts to deal with the problem of how the continuing contradiction between the particular and the general, the subject and the totality, should be registered and dealt with when the overwhelming force of instrumental rationality within philosophy perpetually reinforces the domination of the general and the totality over the particular and the subject. Adorno's approach to this is not to embrace a straightforward performance of the fragmentary, the occasional, the aleatory, or the particular in the hope that this will somehow prove to outwit the pervasive force of totality and instrumental rationality at work in the construction of philosophical concepts. Whenever Adorno does invoke the fragmentary form as a stand-in for the particular, such as in the essay-form, it remains embedded within a tension. On the one hand any deployment of a fragmentary form must recognize that it continues to function within a dominating system, and on the other it must persist with the deferred hope for some future reconciliation in which the whole is no longer characterized by domination. The totality cannot be simply wished away by an enthusiasm for the fragmentary or discontinuous; it must be constantly registered and negotiated. What needs to be performed is the contradiction between the wish to be free of systems of domination and its impossibility under present circumstances.

In a world still reeling from the disasters of totalitarianism, Adorno and his Frankfurt School colleague, Max Horkheimer, set about writing a book the aim of which was "nothing less than the discovery of why mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism".[10] This book was *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a collection of essays tracing the Enlightenment as an historical process of rationalization inclined to produce totalities of domination despite its original emancipative intentions. Although Nazi Germany was doubtless the supreme embodiment of this perversion of Enlightenment reason in all spheres of life, Adorno and Horkheimer had in mind a phenomenon that characterized late

capitalism as a whole in a somewhat more attenuated form. Adorno and Horkheimer sought a renewed critical relationship to Enlightenment thinking, a renewal of the task of rational critique still in the Enlightenment tradition but somehow avoiding the reproduction of an instrumental rationality inclined toward (self-)destruction. This is the dilemma the book confronts within Enlightenment thought, how to keep faith with its emancipative potential while not ignoring its propensity to self-destruct. Horkheimer and Adorno declare that they are "wholly convinced . . . that social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought." What must be acknowledged alongside this conviction, they believe, is that "this very way of thinking, no less than the actual historic forms—the social institutions—with which it is interwoven, already contains the seed of the reversal universally apparent today. If enlightenment does not accommodate reflection on this recidivist element, then it seals its own fate".[11]

What is required for this renewal in critical thinking is posed as a problem of communicative form, a taking leave with certain conventions of thought that have brought about a conformism in thinking subservient to a mythology of pure conceptual identity and clarity of communication. These conventions defining "linguistic and conceptual clarity" imposed on communicative form had colonized both philosophical and artistic production. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, since this orthodoxy of clarity

> declares any negative treatment of the facts or of the dominant forms of thought to be obscurantist formalism or—preferably—alien, and therefore taboo, it condemns the spirit to increasing darkness. It is characteristic of the sickness that even the best-intentioned reformer who uses an impoverished and debased language to recommend renewal, by his adoption of the insidious mode of categorization and the bad philosophy it conceals, strengthens the very power of the established order he is trying to break. False clarity is only another name for myth; and myth has always been obscure and enlightening at one and the same time: always using the devices of familiarity and straightforward dismissal to avoid the labor of conceptualization.[12]

The labor of conceptualization which the authors refer to here would avoid the temptation of a false clarity that is mythological through the performance of "determinate negation" in philosophical thinking. The point of reference here is a Hegelian dialectical mode of thinking that resists any premature prospect of a reconciliation of concept to actuality, of difference to identity, of subject to object. This restless dialectical movement is demonstrated in the first chapter "The Concept of Enlightenment", through the irreconcilability of the book's two central theses,

that "myth is already enlightenment" and that "enlightenment reverts to mythology".[13] As Adorno puts it elsewhere, this performance of dialectical thought "advances by way of extremes, driving thoughts with the utmost consequentiality to the point where they turn back on themselves, instead of qualifying them".[14] Consequently, the authors of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* refuse any sort of synthetic resolution, negating every such possibility in an "attempt to focus understanding more clearly upon the nexus of rationality and social actuality, and upon what is inseparable therefrom—that of nature and the mastery of nature".[15] It is principally by negating the possibility of synthesis, of a concept fusing into an identical relation with its object, that rational thought rebounds critically on itself and reveals its identifying logic to be not only repressive but unfulfilled. Adorno and Horkheimer aspired to mimetically present the logic of an unreconciled society and to offer a glimpse into a form of rationality that does not harden into an ideological distortion of itself. This "intransigence of theory in the face of the insensibility with which society allows thought to ossify", contests every conceptual schema of domination through which Enlightenment thinking misrepresents itself as progressive emancipation.[16] The more thought believes in this misrepresentation of itself, the more fully it becomes a self-destructive myth justifying the reduction of difference to identity, and nature to a series of manipulable entities. Perpetually resisting such reductions, the performance of determinate negation works critically upon the reified mythology of Enlightenment thinking through an open-ended exposure of occluded mediations. The emancipatory task is that an alternative to the instrumental reason which generalizes, calculates, administers, measures may be alluded too. This cannot be done in a purely discursive mode because to do so would risk simply reproducing the universalizing concepts of instrumental reason which exchange awareness of mediations for the distortions of immediacies.

As has already been noted, such a performance of critical thought invokes the mimetic faculty.[17] Though a recurring theme in Adorno's writings, mimesis remains an enigmatic concept employed in a number of varying contexts.[18] In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as Martin Jay has observed, Horkheimer and Adorno generally mourn "the loss or withering of a primal and inherently benign human capacity to imitate nature as the dialectic of enlightenment followed its fateful course".[19] Later, in his *Aesthetic Theory*, in the context of the irreconcilable dialectic of mimetic expression and rational construction in works of art, Adorno observes that "Art is a refuge for mimetic comportment", in which mimesis survives as "the nonconceptual

affinity of the subjectively produced with its unposited other".[20] Jameson proposes that insofar as the form of Adorno's own texts are attempts to circumvent the logic of domination at the heart of instrumental rationality, it might be worthwhile considering how mimesis is performed in the "micro-politics" of Adorno's own "dialectical sentences".[21] Taking his cue from a passage in *Negative Dialectics*,[22] Jameson takes Adorno to be suggesting that "within the very technical concepts of science and philosophy themselves" there exists "a mimetic impulse that embarrasses them and which they seek to deny (in the strong Freudian sense), if not to repress altogether". Accordingly, Adorno's performance of conceptual construction would constitute something like a "psychoanalytic acting out or talking cure, *abreaction*, of precisely that repressed mimetic impulse, allowing us once again to grasp some older relationship of the mimicking subject to its other or nature". No more than Freudian therapy suggests we could or should revert to being children again, a heightened awareness of this relationship does not entail that it be something we could somehow "reinstate or reinvent as such in 'modern times'". What is therapeutic is its anamnesis, its "discovery by way of memory".[23]

According to Jameson's proposal, Adorno's dialectical sentences enact a performance of constructing concepts which has something in common with art, where the mimetic faculty has found its most secure refuge from a world increasingly dominated by instrumental rationality. As Adorno indicates in the introduction to *Negative Dialectics*, in order to "represent the mimesis it supplanted, the concept has no other way than to adopt something mimetic in its own conduct, without abandoning itself".[24] It is in this sense that determinate negation takes up the lessons of aesthetic experience by performing in each particular instance of thought's approach to a specific object a relationship with that object which both highlights the domination imposed by the concept and attempts to recall some other (repressed) nondominative form in which the object may be mediated. As Terry Eagleton explains this problematic, "the crude linguistic instruments with which we lift a thing toward us, preserving as much as possible of its unique quality, simply succeed in pushing it further away". The only way that thought can "do justice to the qualitative moments of the thing" is if it can "thicken its own texture, grow gnarled and close-grained; but in doing so it becomes a kind of object in its own right, sheering off from the phenomenon it hoped to encircle".[25] This alternate form of rationality, which is strongly related to an aesthetic enterprise in the realm of constructing concepts, is not simply a form of *via negativa*, for it is neither a

systematic negation without reflexivity nor a sheer abandonment to the arbitrary negation of everything. Adorno and Horkheimer state this as their aim in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that what should be abandoned is the epistemological pretensions of thought being capable of comprehending "the given as such". What this entails is that thought should "not merely . . . determine the abstract spatio–temporal relations of the facts which allow them just to be grasped, but on the contrary to conceive them as the superficies, as mediated conceptual moments which come to fulfilment only in the development of their societal, historical, and human significance". The cognitive task is thereby redefined, no longer consisting of "mere apprehension, classification, and calculation," but rather "in the determinate negation of each im-mediacy".[26]

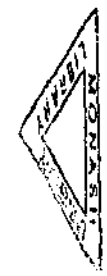
The performance of determinate negation of each immediacy exposes the moments in which rationality calls itself into question as nonidentical with itself and thereby manifests the complex web of mediations that constantly verge on the brink of exploding it into a mass of contradictions. "Adorno has a kind of running solution to this dilemma," Eagleton writes, "and this is style". The contradictions are negotiated through "the crabbed, rebarbative practice of writing itself, a discourse pitched into a constant state of crisis, twisting and looping back on itself, struggling in the structure of every sentence to avoid at once a 'bad' immediacy of the object and the false self-identity of the concept".[27] Jameson calls this performative or stylistic aspect of Adorno's philosophical sentences, in which the form of the sentences themselves become a mode of philosophizing, "*narrative*":

> It is therefore the mimetic component of the individual philosophical sentence—its tendency to narrativize the conceptual—that finally springs the isolated abstract concept out of its bad identity and allows it, as it were, to be thought from the inside and from the outside all at once: an ideational content transformed mimetically into a quasi-narrative representation . . . The mimetic or the narrative may be thought to be a kind of homeopathic strategy in which, by revealing the primal movement of domination hidden away within abstract thought, the venom of abstraction is neutralized, allowing some potential or utopian truth-content to come into its own.[28]

Before moving on to examine the larger-scale performative architecture (the constellation or the model) in Adorno's texts, it is worth noting some reservations expressed by Martin Jay regarding Jameson's usage of the term "narrative" to describe the performative aspect of Adorno's syntactic conceptuality. Jay suggests that the term connotes a linearity that does not do justice to the "chiasmic logic

Jameson himself recognizes as Adorno's main trope". As a possible alternative term, Jay suggests the paratactic form Adorno himself celebrated, especially in Hölderlin's late poetry, as a syntactical form which in "resisting the imperative to arrange ideas hierarchically . . . both undercuts the mediating logic of conceptual subordination and bears witness to the crisis of meaningful experience . . . in the modern world".[29]

In an early essay, "The Actuality of Philosophy", Adorno already deploys the category of totality in a critical capacity.[30] Philosophy, Adorno argues here, must relinquish the prospect "that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real".[31] By invoking totality in this way, Adorno negatively holds open the possibility of some future reconciliation of social reality, a prospect which requires a reorientation of philosophical rationality such that "only in traces and ruins is it prepared to hope that it will ever come across correct and just reality".[32] This reorientation is necessary if philosophy is to survive the problem of its own impending liquidation. It is the Benjaminian notion of "constellation", with its redemptive powers, which Adorno adopts here as one of the enduring metaphors for his approach to a renewal of philosophy in its time of unseasonal survival.[33]



Adorno's proposal for a "materialist" philosophy of interpretation specifies that "if philosophy must learn to renounce the question of totality then it implies that it must learn to do without the symbolic function, in which for a long time, at least in idealism, the particular appeared to represent the general".[34] An alternative to idealism, according to Adorno, was not to be found in the various analytical empiricist or logical positivist attempts to dissolve philosophy from within into the constituent branches of scientific knowledge it once hoped to provide unity for. The importance of Vienna School logical positivism, Adorno observes, is that it "sharpens the contours of the contents of philosophy not subject to logic and the separate sciences".[35]

Philosophy must thereby attend to the interpretative arrangement of the smallest and "unintentional" elements of reality and abdicate its traditional longings to solve "the great problems", the very magnitude of which "once hoped to guarantee the totality". This guarantee no longer holds because "between the wide meshes of big questions, interpretation slips away". Philosophical interpretation can only present

its truth through micrological juxtaposition in which the traditional task of solving great problems once demanded of philosophy is modified such that "it deposits within a concrete finding the total question which that finding previously seemed to represent symbolically".[36] The new task of philosophical interpretation, according to Adorno, is to "construct keys before which reality springs open", the construction of which shall be "specially made to order".[37] This all attests to the lateness of Adorno's philosophy, its unseasonable survival after the last of the great system-building philosophical enterprises, effectively presiding over their disintegration. As a consequence of its own belatedness, Adorno's philosophy is left only with the task of manipulating "conceptual material" through a process "of grouping and trial arrangement, of constellation and construction". Such combinations do not occur in some pre-given form but must be constructed by "human beings and are legitimated in the last analysis alone by the fact that reality crystallizes around them in striking conclusiveness". This process Adorno calls here, "exact fantasy":

> fantasy which abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it, and reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted, which fantasy itself must originally generate . . . the demand to answer the questions of a pre-given reality each time, through a fantasy which rearranges the elements of the question without going beyond the circumference of the elements, the exactitude of which has its control in the disappearance of the question.[38]

Adorno's introduction of this Benjaminian reformulation of the concept of totality through a constellatory approach presenting glimpses of an untotalized reality was partly an implicit critique of Horkheimer's more positive program for the *Institut für Sozialforschung*. In his inaugural address to the *Institut* as its director in January 1931, Horkheimer expressed the hope that an interdisciplinary approach encompassing critical philosophy and empirical research could still furnish a program aiming to attain holistic knowledge of the social totality. In so doing, Adorno's initial distancing from Horkheimer's more Lukácsian inspired vision of an expressive totality set a trend for a more narrowly philosophical and less optimistic approach for the *Institut*.[39] Nonetheless, there remained a tension within Adorno (and arguably within the *Institut's* interdisciplinary aspirations) between the Benjaminian micrological analysis of unmediated particulars and Horkheimer's impulse to mediate the particulars of a constellation in some form of totalizing theory.[40] According to Max Pensky, the 1931 lecture expresses a tension between two concurrent and possibly contradictory ambitions which would be played out in the course of his philosophical project. "The ambition to make good on Benjamin's

project of a philosophy that can still think the marginalized particular without violence—a true materialist philosophy—and the ambition to redeem the utopian, reconciliatory dimension of idealist texts subsist uneasily alongside one another."[41] In terms of Adorno's development of the "constellatory" approach, other than in his musical analyses, Adorno proved to be "more comfortable as an observer before the stage of the concept than he was wading into the thicket of the historical material".[42]

Committed to searching for an immanent logic within philosophy that would deliver a truth content capable of acting as a critique of society and its development, Adorno was convinced that philosophy itself could yield a revolutionary practice. If, as is the case for Adorno, social contradictions can be said to inhere, in mediated form, in the philosophical material itself, then the index of his modernity as a philosopher, the extent to which he is authentically up to date or relevant, may be read from his capacity to present the increasingly antagonistic logical contradictions of a disintegrative age within the very form of his philosophy. This is how Susan Buck-Morss explains the subversive or critical element of Adorno's approach, an approach through which "Adorno took up the struggles bequeathed by the preceding generation of philosophers, placed himself within their ranks, and from this fifth-column position pressed the antinomies of their theories to the point where the dialectical negation of idealism might be achieved". Rather than setting himself apart from the tradition he sought to critique, Adorno sought to immerse himself within its own inherent tendencies, to push the historically and socially mediated contradictions to the point whereby a transformation of "bourgeois idealism" into "revolutionary materialism" might be made possible. This approach is what Adorno meant by "immanent critique", as the basis for his performance of a "logic of disintegration", a performance which sought to unveil the infirmities residing beneath the increasingly reified appearances of a total system.[43]

The development of this dialectical mode of thinking as a performance of a "logic of disintegration" within a constellatory approach to truth, first elaborated in the 1931 lecture, evolved eventually into the *Negative Dialektik* of 1966.[44] The dialectical model which Adorno developed to deal with the complex conceptual mediation of phenomena under investigation adopts a "constellatory" approach, a dynamic mode of presentation that directed attention to the experience of how it may be possible for thought to relate to its object without dominating it. Rather than reinforcing

superficial conventions for how a thought might be communicated clearly and directly, Adorno directs attention to that which the concept cannot identify in its object without misrepresentation. This is a concern for the nonidentical that the concept cannot appropriate from the object but can only imitate, that is, through some form of mimetic activity, as in the indirect means of a concept's contextual interplay with other concepts. According to Adorno,

> By themselves, constellations represent from without what the concept has cut away within: the "more" which the concept is equally desirous and incapable of being. By gathering around the object of cognition, the concepts potentially determine the object's interior. They attain, in thinking, what was necessarily excised from thinking . . . Cognition of the object in its constellation is cognition of the process stored in the object. As a constellation, theoretical thought circles the concept it would like to unseal, hoping that it may fly open like the lock of a well-guarded safe-deposit box: in response, not to a single key or a single number, but to a combination of numbers.[45]

In Jameson's view, constellatory thinking is another instance of the performance of the mimetic comportment in Adorno's philosophy. In *Negative Dialectics*, Jameson observes, it becomes part of a ruse by which the "totalizing dilemmas of a systematizing philosophy (it being understood that, owing to its object, genuine philosophy is always somehow driven by that impulse) were to be disarmed by the acting out (or the mimesis) of a kind of pseudo-totality (the shamanistic overtones of the formulation are authorized by the Frazerian tribal speculations included in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*)". The strategy of attempting a mimesis of a totality in a constellatory pseudo-totality arouses and encourages "the illusion of the total system" by presenting "the systematic links and cross-references established between a range of concepts", while abruptly exorcizing "the baleful spell of system itself . . . by the realization that the order of presentation is non-binding, that it might have been arranged in an utterly different fashion, so that, as in a divinatory cast, all the elements are present but the form of their juxtapositions, the shape of their falling out, is merely occasional". It was this kind of presentational form, or *Darstellung*, "which seeks specifically to undermine its own provisional architectonic" which can be found in Benjamin's "constellation", and its later transformation in Adorno's "model".[46]

It was with the employment of the term "model" that Adorno's modification of Benjamin's constellatory approach to philosophy absorbed the compositional techniques of the later Arnold Schoenberg.[47] This modification of the constellation

via Schoenberg allows us to see the modernity of Adorno's compositional method in constructing philosophical texts and performing pseudo-totalities as constellations of concepts put through all possible variations. According to Jameson, earlier, or more classical philosophical approaches ostensibly separated "an 'initial thematic material'—the philosophical idea or problem—and its ulterior development—philosophical argumentation and judgement". In this mode, philosophy already possesses the concept prior to its being played out in thought within the text, where it is submitted to processes of criticism, modification, thus either solving or refuting the problem with which it began. Such a philosophical text, Jameson contends,

> presumably has a narrative time not unlike that of sonata form, where something climactic and decisive finally happens—after which a coda shuts down the process by drawing the conclusions . . . of course, Adorno characteristically raises the valences of this account, since he also wants to argue that something like Schönberg's solution is already secretly at work in Beethoven as well: just as one might also want to argue that certain crucial texts of classical philosophy are already "negative dialectics" without being aware of it . . .[48]

The modernist philosophical performance of Adorno however works differently from such classical texts: "the concept or problem will not be independent of the *Darstellung* but already at one with it; there will be no conceptual events, no 'arguments' of the traditional kind that lead to truth climaxes; the text will become one infinite variation in which everything is recapitulated at every moment; closure, finally, will be achieved only when all the possible variations have been exhausted".[49] Of course, a text consisting of such infinite variation can never be given as a completed achievement, which brings us to Adorno's practice of essayism.

Essayism may be seen as part of a literary and philosophical counter-discourse in which a critique of systematic approaches to the representation of reality or the acquisition of knowledge has been enacted through an affirmation of fragmentary or partial forms which disavow total representation or knowledge. The essay-form, the essayistic form of attention as a kind of epistemological approach, may be found in both literary and philosophical contexts, but is only contingently related to the sheer genre of the essay itself. Essays may not be essayistic, and an essayistic approach does not necessitate the frame of an essay. Essayism arguably finds its most current manifestations in much of the formal and substantive aspects of philosophical texts that have often been called poststructuralist or postmodernist.[50]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, essayism emerged as an important aspect of the intellectual and aesthetic movement known as modernism. Essayism in this context became for many Central European (predominantly German and Austrian) thinkers and writers, the site for an anticipated renewal of thinking in the face of an intellectual, and wider social, crisis.

Robert Musil's literary and critical work furnishes an excellent example of such an approach to essayism. Confronting a culture in which the simultaneous collapse of "the authority of tradition and of the persuasiveness of liberal ideology" was taking place, Musil and others of his generation attempted "to retrieve the ethical individual from the morass of bourgeois culture". This was to be done through the hybrid form of essayism, situated "between metaphysics and the novel", in which "the tasks of philosophy, literature, and cultural criticism" had apparently "converged".[51] Musil, like his protagonist Ulrich in the sprawling and unfinished *The Man Without Qualities*, affirmed a utopian essayism which attempted to register the symptoms of this crisis and address its underlying conflicts through an accommodation to an increasingly fragmented and complex social existence as something potentially liberating. Rather than bemoaning the loss of systematic approaches to knowledge and morality, Musil found in essayism an experimental approach to both epistemological and ethical problems which attempted to dissolve the nostalgia for previous ideological systems through a multiplicity of precise renderings. While not aiming to produce any stable or fixed solutions, Musil's essayism sought a spiritual affirmation by following the infinite variations of existential possibility, an affirmation which in his view was most appropriate to technologically complex modern societies bereft of unifying systems.[52]

In "The Essay as Form", Adorno seemingly champions a similar conception of essayism, the fragmentary or discontinuous character of the essay in its relentless negation of systematic and totalizing philosophical constructions.[53] Nicholsen has claimed that this particular essay "comes closer than anything else we have to a statement from Adorno about his own writing".[54] The essay-form is rehearsed here as the paradigmatic form for Adorno's philosophical writing style, as the form best suited to the critical performance of constellatory thinking. For Adorno, "the essay has something like an aesthetic autonomy that is easily accused of being simply derived from art, although it is distinguished from art by its medium, concepts, and by its claim to a truth devoid of aesthetic semblance".[55] As has already been

observed at the level of the dialectical sentence and the constellation, the autonomy of form is essential to every attempt to present claims to truth, and therefore something akin to aesthetic presentation cannot be eliminated as accidental or incidental in the vain hope of attaining a pragmatically transparent or straightforward relation to the object. It is this autonomy of expressive form which allows the essay to indirectly express "the consciousness of nonidentity", by "refraining from any reduction to a principle, in its accentuation of the partial against the total, in its fragmentary character".[56] It is in the way the essay-form orchestrates the relations between part and whole, the particular and the general, that it takes up the lessons of modernist aesthetics.

What Adorno finds in aesthetic experience is an impulse toward a synthesis or reconciliation of socially and historically mediated antinomies which always fails and cannot be fulfilled under present circumstances. This irreconcilability is played out in the rhetorical transitions Adorno emphasizes as proper to the essay-form, through which "the essay approaches the logic of music, that stringent and yet aconceptual art of transition, in order to appropriate for verbal language something it forfeited under the domination of discursive logic—although that logic cannot be set aside but only outwitted within its own forms by dint of incisive subjective expression".[57] According to Adorno, when compared to philosophical forms "in which performed content is communicated indifferently, the essay is more dynamic than traditional thought by virtue of the tension between the presentation and the matter presented". This dynamic tension itself coexists in tension with a virtual stasis, having brought the thick interweaving texture of thought into a construction of juxtaposed elements ostensibly at a "standstill".[58] As Eagleton observes, aesthetic experience demonstrates for Adorno "a utopian yearning for identity which must deny itself under pain of fetishism and idolatry. The work of art suspends identity without cancelling it, broaches and breaches it simultaneously, refusing at once to underwrite antagonism or supply false consolation."[59] It is this very impossibility which an enfeebled modern art takes into itself that furnishes it with such a powerfully negative critical force. What this entails, according to Eagleton, is not so much that art will replace thought as an emancipatory force, but that theory will become more aesthetic "in its approach to the particular; art does not exactly oust systematic thought, but furnishes it with a model of sensuous receptivity to the specific".[60]

For the essay-form not to become itself fetishized, its performance of constellatory thinking as sensuous receptivity to the particular in its nonidentity with the concept, cannot be seen as a straightforward affirmation of the fragmentary essay against the total system.[61] The essay is therefore not to be taken positively as the fragmentary form which thought finally assumes once the pernicious presence of totality has been eradicated from its midst. For it is not a celebration of sheer particularity finally in full reconciliation to itself and free of the utopian yearning that motivates thought in its restless negativity as critique. What the essay does stand for is a reflection of thought's socially and historically mediated discontinuities. The essay thereby stands vigilant against the continuing presence of a false totality in thought's midst, which would have it seamlessly cover up discontinuities so as to allow it to rest easy in the belief that its utopian agitation is no longer necessary, its critical aim having already ostensibly been achieved. In this regard, thought takes the tension in intellectual experience as its model without attempting to simply replicate it:

> In such experience, concepts do not form a continuum of operations. Thought does not progress in a single direction; instead, the moments are interwoven as in a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of the texture. The thinker does not actually think but rather makes himself into an arena for intellectual experience, without unravelling it. While even traditional thought is fed by impulses from such experience, it eliminates the memory of the process by virtue of its form. The essay, however, takes this experience as its model without, as reflected form, simply imitating it. The experience is mediated through the essay's own conceptual organization; the essay proceeds, so to speak, methodically unmethodically.[62]

"Discontinuity", Adorno declares, "is essential to the essay; its subject matter is always a conflict brought to a standstill."[63] It is discontinuity rather than deliberate fragmentariness that Jameson argues is evident in Adorno's texts. Even Adorno's shortest writings display a completeness and closure that defies the description of "fragments". Discontinuity, on the other hand, "is a basic fact of life in both Adorno and Benjamin, sometimes foregrounded by the blanks and gaps between paragraphs, sometimes exacerbated by their very absence and by the wilful elimination (particularly in Adorno) of virtually any paragraph breaks at all, in the towering wall of water of a text that carries us forward across bewildering shifts and changes in its topics and raw material".[64] The performance of constellatory thinking that takes place in the essay attempts to unify the otherwise discontinuous organization of concepts. The overarching concept, which would take on the claim of representing the totality, gives "the illusion of achieving" that which the essay "knows to be impossible and yet tries to accomplish".[65]

As Jameson has commented, it may well be asked where our sense of the totality comes from if indeed we are forever passing "through the individual sentences, or even through their larger locally staged argument and architectonic". With the onset of postmodernity it not only "seems possible to read particulars one by one without any transcendent universal or totality from which they derive their meaning", but also notions of totality become politically suspect as "stereotypes that include no new information content". In such a situation, a provisionally adequate though hardly satisfying response may be provided by converting the problem into a solution. In other words, the lack of reconciliation between universal and particular, the ongoing strife and contradiction between these two poles, "constitutes Adorno's diagnosis of the modern world, and cannot in that sense be solved in its own right". Construed in this manner, "interpretation as such—the reading of the particular in the light of the absent universal—is dialectically transformed and 'sublated': producing a new mode of interpretation in which the particular is read, not in the light of the universal, but rather in the light of the very contradiction between universal and particular in the first place".[66] This is what Adorno means when in "The Essay as Form" he states that "singularity's claim to truth is taken literally, up to the point where its untruth becomes evident. The daring, anticipatory, and not fully redeemed aspect of every essayistic detail attracts other such details as its negation; the untruth in which the essay knowingly entangles itself is the element in which its truth resides."[67]

Jameson contends that the kind of program apparently staged in "The Essay as Form" does not tally with the overall impetus of Adorno's thinking. The attempt to repudiate system or totality and the concomitant allegiance to a fragmentary and aleatory philosophizing, "to a freedom in the instant that eschewed the traditional Germanic longing for the *Hauptwerk* and the architectonic truth", cannot be taken at face value. The unconvincing rhetoric of this program, Jameson suggests, may be interpreted as Adorno's attempt to argue "inconclusively against his own powerful *esprit de système*, rather than (like Nietzsche) expressing some blithe and irresponsible temperamental freedom from the temptation altogether".[68] While Jameson is certainly correct in emphasizing the inconclusiveness of Adorno's essayism in terms of its incapacity to escape the temptation of system, the longing for the *Hauptwerk*, he does not seem to acknowledge the possibility that Adorno himself essays essayism in just this context. If the temptation to system is so powerful, then

perhaps the best way to demonstrate this is not in the form of a straightforward antisystem, either in the totalized form of yet another system or in the reified commandment to fragmentary and aleatory forms of resistance. Essayism is itself tried, performed, on this very fissure so as to demonstrate the inconclusiveness of all possible forms under present conditions, and the extent to which even the most utopian of current forms fall short in the present moment and fail to satisfy. There is no existing place in which a critical and utopian thinking can reside and find peace.

The connotations of the word "essay" suggest actions such as "to attempt, to try, to put to trial or to test", and in the variant "*assay*", to measure or weigh up.[69] What is ultimately being weighed up or tested in the essay is perhaps the essay itself, "whereby the essaying of philosophical systems goes hand in hand with a further essaying of the very vehicle—the essay—in which this essaying is performed".[70] If Adorno's essayism is inconclusive it is perhaps because it cannot help but fail to satisfy as an alternative to system. The essay-form is ultimately disappointing in terms of its own utopian intentions, displaying its incapacity to come good on its promise, the impossible one of escaping system altogether.[71] On the other hand, the essay-form is an appropriate site in which to play out the problematic of part and whole, in that the form expresses a longing for redemption on the side of the particular. It is because of the utopian expectations attached to the essay-form itself that it is perhaps the most appropriate site to play out the inevitable disappointment which pervades Adorno's philosophy as a whole and thereby offers a glimpse of what an authentic reconciliation might be like.[72]

What distinguishes Adorno's essayism from that of someone like Musil's, therefore, is that when seen in the context of his philosophy as a whole, Adorno is very sober and understated about the immediate prospects for an affirmative and successful essayism, thereby limiting the anticipation of an immediate redemptive quality in the fragmentary form itself. Musil was much more hopeful about the form and expected something much more revolutionary from the essay in terms of its ability to give a preparation for "right living" in the example of "possibilitarians".[73] In the first volume of the novel *The Man without Qualities*, Robert Musil presents his chief protagonist and autobiographical stand-in, Ulrich, as an advocate of essayism. For Ulrich the essayistic form was more than simply a literary approach to philosophical writing. Its epistemological dimension also entailed an ethical approach to life, for it was in the way in which the essay, "in the sequence of its paragraphs, takes a thing

from many sides without comprehending it wholly—for a thing wholly comprehended instantly loses its bulk and melts down into a concept—that he believed he could best survey and handle the world and his life".[74] The essayistic form supplies a model for ethical life for Ulrich precisely in the way in which it transforms the "floating life within" into a "decisive thought". A practitioner of the essay-form, and also a commentator on it like Adorno, Musil gives this remarkable account of the essayist's experience:

> The translation of the word "essay" as "attempt", which is the generally accepted one, only approximately gives the most important allusion to the literary model. For an essay is not the provisional or incidental expression of a conviction that might on a more favourable occasion be elevated to the status of a truth or that might just as easily be recognized as error (of that kind are only the articles and treatises, referred to as "chips from their workshop", with which learned persons favour us); an essay is the unique and unalterable form that a man's inner life assumes in a decisive thought. Nothing is more alien to it than that irresponsibility and semi-finishedness of mental images known as subjectivity; but neither are "true" and "false", "wise" and "unwise", terms that can be applied to such thoughts, which are nevertheless subject to laws that are no less strict than they appear to be delicate and ineffable. There have been quite a number of such essayists and masters of the floating life within, but there would be no point in naming them. Their domain lies between religion and knowledge, between example and doctrine, between *amor intellectualis* and poetry, they are saints with and without religion, and sometimes too they are simply men who have gone out on an adventure and lost their way.[75]

For Adorno, on the other hand, the mixture of indeterminacy and decisiveness pertaining to the essay-form made it particularly suitable for expressing the no-man's land his philosophy of exile came to inhabit. Adorno's (failed, inconclusive, anachronistic) philosophical essayism offers us the melancholy experience of survivorhood, the permanent exile keeping faith with a homeless humanity and its suffering. This gives us one line of approach for understanding the task that Adorno raises in the well-known lines from the preface to *Negative Dialectics*: "To use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity—this is what the author felt to be his task ever since he came to trust his own mental impulses; now he did not wish to put it off any longer."[76] The correlate of the object which cannot be made to fit into a concept without remainder, is the knowing subject who remains exiled from that object, and who can only intervene by arranging the conceptual material in such a way that this exile is made painfully evident. This is a condition which does not permit the writer to find lodgings even in his own writing:

> For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live. In it he inevitably produces, as his family once did, refuse and lumber. But now he lacks a store-room, and it is hard in any case to part from left-overs. So he pushes them along in front of him, in danger finally of filling his pages with them. The demand that one harden oneself against self-pity implies the technical necessity to counter any slackening of intellectual tension with the utmost alertness, and to eliminate anything that has begun to encrust the work or to drift along idly, which may at an earlier stage have served, as gossip, to generate the warm atmosphere conducive to growth, but is now left behind, flat and stale. In the end, the writer is not even allowed to live in his writing.[77]

The demand for a precise rendering of the human condition requires, not only the removal of unnecessary ornaments and trinkets that may otherwise lend it a more humane feel, but also that the writer find no home for himself within his own work. Only in its painful absence, limiting its input to the arrangement of material at hand, does the human subject keep faith with the guilt of its own survival. As Fredric Jameson has observed, this condition shaped "the temporality of the constitutively incomplete" in Adorno's life and thinking:

> The specific form, then, in which [Adorno] lived the news about Auschwitz could be called "unexpected survivorhood": what seems to have horrified him was not that he himself was in danger after the fact, or that he also might have been swept into the camps and gassed, however Jewish he did or did not feel himself to be. Rather, it was the idea that by the same kind of accident (and even without knowing it at the time) he himself proved unexpectedly to have outlived those who were herded into the gas chamber. This, then, is an experience of "death" and "mortality" which is transmitted not by some vivid imagination of the death anxiety, but rather through life itself, and the guilt of living on, the gift of life as sheer accident, the emptiness of a peacetime existence which is somehow felt to have taken the place that should have been occupied by someone else, now dead . . . the gratuitous survival of existence, its aimlessness and pointlessness, after genocide . . .[78]

Philosophy too, Jameson adds, must bear the guilt of its own survival when "temporal experience" prohibits "any mirage of full presence, of ultimate satisfaction, reconciliation, or historical consonance".[79] In this way, the lateness of Adorno's philosophy, its belatedness in regard to a long tradition, its survival beyond the moment of catastrophe in which it is palpably rendered impossible and gratuitous, provides a further context of Adorno's own preoccupation with lateness in aesthetics. Adorno's "concept of lateness", Said has contended, "comes for Adorno to seem *the* fundamental aspect of aesthetics, and of his own work as critical theorist and philosopher . . . Lateness is being at the end, fully conscious, full of memory, and also (even preternaturally) aware of the present . . . as scandalous, even

catastrophic commentator on the present."[80] Adorno's theorizing of lateness emerges primarily through his engagements with Beethoven's musical compositions, and in particular the late works in which Beethoven produced a *late style*, in the sense of a memorial and critical attitude rather than simply a style coming late in time.

For Adorno, advanced art was one of the two principle cognitive forms left available for resisting and registering the false totality and holding open the possibility for some indefinitely postponed reconciliation. Negative dialectics as the path for critical thought followed by Adorno was the other locus of this resistance and hope, but it was ultimately a "philosophically reflective aesthetic experience" which constituted for Adorno "the more metaphysically substantive" option.[81] For Adorno, Beethoven's late work, to which we shall now turn, stands as a pivotal moment not only in the musical tradition to which it belongs, but in the development of European bourgeois art as representative of the values of the Enlightenment.

CHAPTER II

Sonata Fragments

> The essay . . . judges what exists not against something eternal but by an enthusiastic fragment from Nietzsche's late period . . . "If we affirm one single moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence . . . " Except that the essay distrusts even this kind of justification and affirmation. It has no name but a negative one for the happiness that was sacred to Nietzsche. Even the highest manifestations of the spirit, which express this happiness, are always also guilty of obstructing happiness as long as they remain mere spirit. Hence the essay's innermost formal law is heresy. Through violations of the orthodoxy of thought, something in the object becomes visible which it is orthodoxy's secret and objective aim to keep invisible.
>
> Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature.*

Adorno and Horkheimer express the fatal contradiction of the dialectic of Enlightenment as follows: "In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant."[1] The history of the human species is thus constructed as a fate consisting essentially of universal domination. Without wishing to refute that this "fatalism" finds its confirmation in Auschwitz, David Roberts has pinpointed the fatal flaw of this version of the dialectic as its being too "totalizing", effectively depriving it "of all historical specification". It is in Adorno's deciphering of the dialectic within the tradition of bourgeois music, primarily in *Philosophy of Modern Music*, that it finds its most appropriate and accurate expression. In Roberts's view,

> We must regard the history of bourgeois music as the most satisfactory, indeed, as *the* model of the dialectic of enlightenment, for the very simple reason that it constructs a totality and is neither a totalizing construction (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) nor a totalizing deconstruction (*Negative Dialectics*). Moreover, it is only in relation to the historically specified—music as *the* bourgeois art—that we can specify Adorno's historical position. It is that of the articulation of the self-knowledge of progress, whose historical dialectic has brought about the crisis of German music and of German philosophy.[2]

Roberts goes on to argue that Adorno's work is incapable of dealing with the contemporary situation, that Adorno's "'satanic parody' of progress" was just as incapable as Georg Lukács's theorizations on aesthetics when it came to crossing the frontier of World War I.[3] The transition from Beethoven's middle period compositions to his late works is crucial to an understanding of this impasse in Adorno's analyses of modernity, culture and society. Adorno's untimely critique of modernity hinges on his reconstruction of the philosophical truth content of the aesthetics of Beethoven's late style.

We turn now from the disastrous times through which Adorno lived to a more positive era of modernity. This was a time when the promise of the Enlightenment was still fresh and the hopes it sought to realize had not yet been transformed into a "satanic parody" of progress, as the delusional ideological accretions of an oppressive rationality run amok.[4] This historical moment was the highpoint of the bourgeois revolution in Europe, a revolution that carried forth into society at large the cultural values of the Enlightenment itself. The privileged sphere for Adorno's analysis of this movement is art, in particular the bourgeois music that came to be known as Viennese Classicism. As Rose Subotnik has observed in her excellent study of Adorno's relationship to this aesthetic movement, one must understand that Adorno's writings on music seek to "analyse music not merely as an organization of sounds but as an embodiment of truths perceived by human consciousness; and the purpose of his musical writings is to criticize not merely the technical workings of music but, above all, the human condition of the societies that give music life".[5] What Adorno is concerned with, furthermore, is a vision presented in music of the conditions of human existence and the possibilities it presents as to the perfection of *human* life. In this regard, the highest achievement of human history, Subotnik explains, took place for Adorno in the bourgeois era:

> This was the crystallization of reason and self-consciousness into the concept of the free individual, a self-conscious human being with freedom to determine his or her own destiny, above all as Kant defined freedom, through the exercise of moral choice. From Adorno's Kantian–Hegelian viewpoint, this highest of all possible conceptions of the human could become a reality only through the coinciding of individual and social interests in a condition of human wholeness or integrity; and the latter, in turn, came close to realization at one unique moment in history, represented in music by Beethoven's second-period style.[6]

For Adorno, Beethoven the artist is as much "the musical prototype of the revolutionary bourgeoisie" as his compositions are "the prototype of a music that has escaped from its social tutelage and is esthetically fully autonomous, a servant no longer".[7] It was in the development of the sonata-form in Beethoven's second-period style that a benchmark was achieved in autonomous art. With this development, bourgeois art became a truly autonomous sphere of activity no longer in the service of either church or court. As an art-form, it therefore made possible the musical embodiment of the bourgeois ideal of autonomous subjectivity, an expressive variant of the Enlightenment ideal for the highest form of human existence. As Robert Witkin explains in *Adorno on Music*, for Adorno artworks play

a critical role in relation to their society to the extent that they are autonomous. "The greater the autonomy of an artwork from social and institutional imperatives, the more precisely will its formal constitution depict the structure and conflicts of the society in which the artist works."[8] It is when artworks are concerned most with the internal problems of their particular art-form that they best reflect the conditions not only of their own making but of the wider society in which they were produced. "The kinship", Adorno explains, "with that bourgeois libertarianism which rings all through Beethoven's music is a kinship of the dynamically unfolding totality. It is in fitting together under their own law, as becoming, negating, confirming themselves and the whole without looking outward, that his movements come to resemble the world whose forces move them; they do not do it by imitating that world."[9]

The sonata-form, therefore, as an aesthetic form concerned primarily with its own dynamic unfolding as a totality, does not seek to represent society as if by photographic images but through an unconscious affinity with the ideal image of an organically harmonized bourgeois society. "It is as a dynamic totality, not as a series of pictures," Adorno explains, "that great music comes to be an internal world theatre."[10] It is within the sphere of its own autonomous operations that the sonata works unconsciously as a formal analogue that reproduces existing society and its unrealized aspirations within itself. Social reality is embedded within the very materiality of the sonata-form, and thereby structures the range of formal possibilities within which it can operate.[11] As Witkin points out, "Aesthetic form, the artwork's perceptual frame, is, as a product of consciousness, shaped by the social objectivity that mediates all consciousness; thus the more the artwork relies on its own autonomous form rather than trying to depict, immediately, social reality, the more distinctly will this reality and its antagonisms appear in cipher in the work's perceptual arrangements and the tensions they engender."[12]

The idea of a dynamically unfolding totality is a manifestation of what Witkin identifies as the semiotic revolution that took place in European society alongside the social transformation unleashed by the rise of the bourgeoisie as a class.[13] Between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, this semiotic revolution produced the innovations, that later hardened into the conventions, constituting the tonalism of Viennese Classicism. This was the musical culture in which Beethoven composed, and what this culture sought was "the construction of

music that inscribes the 'historical' as *suspense*". The principle of suspense, Witkin explains, is closely associated with a vision of "*organic*" development that is itself related to the bourgeois ideology gaining ascendancy at this historical juncture as a principle of social and economic organization.[14] The inherent principle guiding the construction of bourgeois societies requires that there be some kind of harmony established between the claims of individual liberty and the claims of social cooperation which set limits on such liberty. From the Renaissance onwards, artistic production in European societies developed a series of aesthetic innovations which sought to disclose the hidden depths of experience, its inner meaning "—its psycho-logic, its socio-logic—in and through the systematic [dialectical] articulation of 'external' or 'surface' appearances". The individuated elements of a work of art were articulated in such a way as to evoke a harmonic whole which appears to arise from their spontaneous organic interactions, an "identity relation . . . which puts suspense or *historicity* into the work, making the development of the parts, in their mutual relations, unfold towards the completion of the whole".[15]

The sonata-form is composed of elements which on their own are formally empty, a collectivity of nothingness. It is only once these particles are brought into relation with each other that they attain any real significance as individual components, becoming individuated through their spontaneous and organic interaction with each other in a collective arrangement over time.[16] What Adorno observes in Beethoven's compositions is the way each particular both embodies an impulse toward the whole, in which its individuation would find fulfilment, and at the same time, taken in isolation, displays a tendency toward indeterminateness within a purely formal set of (tonal) relationships. The "tour de force" Beethoven demonstrates in each of his masterpieces consists in the transformation of an indeterminate agglomeration determining itself as a meaningful plenitude. As an aesthetic semblance, this determinate evocation of a meaningful and plentiful whole resembles the grand gesture of Hegelian reconciliation without claiming to represent a final or absolute truth.[17] Faced with the irreconcilable claims of the particular and the universal, the part and the whole, Beethoven, according to Adorno, made it seem as if particulars fulfilled themselves through a dynamic interaction with each other in a utopian totality. The musical culture of Viennese Classicism thereby crystallized for Beethoven the bourgeois composer what was considered to be a very real possibility in the wider culture, a harmonized society of bourgeois individualism. These were the aspirations Beethoven developed in the

sonata-form, the possibility of reconciling the projects of individual and society through a logic that appears to be the outcome of the free and spontaneous interactions of socialized individuals.

Unlike the predialectical music of his predecessors, which tended to be organized by a rationality imposed transcendentally from above, Beethoven's music sought to demonstrate the possibility of an immanent mode of rational organization that emerged from below, from the free and spontaneous interaction of the musical particles as the dialectical suspension of the whole. This task could only be achieved as long as a bourgeois composer like Beethoven, a "god-creator of texts", as Witkin observes, had the power to arrange the totality of his compositions such that they appear to be the spontaneous and organic outgrowth of the elements. Each of the elements are therefore arranged "in their local relations—their juxtapositions, couplings, variations, 'blendings' and 'collidings' with one another within the text—as though this totality was somehow contained in or presupposed by these elements from the outset".[18] According to Adorno, what Beethoven required to accomplish this task was a methodology wherein the conventions of composition were concealed as far as possible, and where concealment proved impossible, made to appear to serve "the expressive impulse" of freely and spontaneously associating individual particles. It was the Beethoven of the second-period compositions in sonata-form who perfected this compositional methodology, who "through the creation of latent middle voices, through his use of rhythm, tension, and other means, always drew the traditional accompanying figures into his subjective dynamics and transformed them according to his intention—if he did not indeed develop them himself, for example in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, out of the thematic material, and thus free them from convention on the strength of their own uniqueness".[19]

With the sonata-form, understood as a congealed material form of actual social conditions, Beethoven seemed to have acquired the means for synthesizing in musical compositions such opposites as subject and object, individual and society, freedom and form, identity and change, as if by a self-evident law.[20] This anthropomorphic reading of sonata-form compositions, Subotnik explains, allows Adorno to analyse its developmental process as one in which, "a musical element subjects itself to logical dynamic change while simultaneously retaining its original identity, thus overcoming the contradiction between identity and nonidentity".[21]

What takes place in the developmental process of the sonata is a dialectic in which the subject demonstrates its self-generating freedom by undergoing objective transformations in time and yet returning to itself with its identity retained. The self-generating logic of individual freedom overtakes the externally imposed order of an objective world in a synthesis that is supposed to prefigure a reconciled totality.[22] For Adorno, it is this utopian tendency of art which furnishes it with a critical task vis-a-vis society, such that "by making manifest its own harmonious totality, Beethoven's second-period style calls attention by contrast to the ongoing lack of wholeness or integrity in the human condition".[23] Beethoven's development of the sonata-form in his second-period compositions, magnified in the grandeur of his most well-known symphonies, constituted for Adorno the crowning achievement of bourgeois ideology in its positive phase, a utopian image of the attempt to reconcile the claims of individual freedom and societal constraint.[24]

Unfortunately, reality came crashing in and ever since the myth of enlightened progress has been collapsing in on itself in a progressive ruination. For a society built fundamentally on competing and incompatible interests, conflicts are inevitable, and all social relations will in some way bear the stamp of these conflicts. In the midst of such a social reality it is impossible to achieve an absolute and lasting reconciliation between the spiritual needs of individuals for free expression and the oppressive force of societal constraints seeking to impose a necessary order.[25] To the extent that it falls prey to its own utopian urge and confuses the possibility of reconciliation with the graven image of its actual achievement, bourgeois art becomes illusory and promulgates ideological untruths, which in turn may be coopted to further the coercive force of ascendant social relations. The bourgeois composer's god-like power collapses in the revelation that its achievements rely upon concealment of the overwhelming force of social convention. Nevertheless, even as bourgeois ideology such art may still retain a critical capacity insofar as it calls society to attention regarding the gaps that persist between anticipated reconciliations and their impossibility under actual conditions, registering the extent to which bourgeois society has failed to match up to its own ideals.[26] Even if the utopian reconciliation that the sonata-form hoped to achieve proved to be an impossibility, it still remains for Adorno a benchmark in artistic achievement and therefore a significant "key to an understanding of Adorno's music analyses: certain principles that he holds to be central to sonata-form as an ideal provide him with a

model of *sociality* which might be said to constitute a universalistic set of claims as distinct from being merely ideological".[27]

The utopian vision is retained in Beethoven's compositions, and in a sense its critical capacity is intensified, as his compositional style came to register the impossibility of reconciliation under existing conditions and for the foreseeable future. Despite its negativity, this transformation marked for Adorno the only genuine path of progress and it was a sign for him of Beethoven's greatness that he had the courage to take it. It is characteristic of great artists, in Adorno's view, to undertake such late reflections which somehow radically call into question the preceding trajectory of their life's work. Adorno elaborates this idea in a passage in *Aesthetic Theory* within the context of the aesthetic of harmony in art. In its striving for aesthetic wholeness, in the illusoriness of its apparent achievement of harmony, art loses its critical capacity unless it can call attention to itself as semblance and thereby cast off the appearance of aesthetic wholeness. To the extent that an artwork labours to conceal that there is always some form of residual nonidentity that resists harmony, this artwork diminishes its claim to truth. Thus, for Adorno,

> What is achieved is never aesthetic harmony but rather polish and balance; internal to everything in art that can justly be called harmonious there survives something desperate and mutually contradictory . . . From the perspective of the philosophy of history, it is hardly an improper generalization of what is all too divergent if one derives the antiharmonic gestures of Michelangelo, of the late Rembrandt, and of Beethoven's last works not from the subjective suffering of their development as artists but from the dynamic of the concept of harmony itself and ultimately from its insufficiency. Dissonance is the truth about harmony.[28]

Beethoven's late works reveal that the truth of harmony is dissonance, and consequently contain a more truthful understanding of the human condition, the troubling thought that any attempted realization of individual freedom may be problematic, if not altogether illusory.[29] It becomes increasingly obvious that the dream of deriving the whole organically from the free interactions of its constituent particulars is in reality a distortion that conceals the operation of an external force imposed from above. The products of a late style are unpleasant, disturbing and difficult to assimilate as they contain a negativity which challenges the normal, institutional functionality of societies in fostering more comforting self-deceptions. In Beethoven's second-period compositions, the bourgeois composer as a creator-god of texts had to employ a range of deceptions to conceal wherever possible the

actual force required in accomplishing this task. The artist inherits his artistic material as a practitioner engaged in a social praxis, which like all social praxes has an unconscious affinity with social conditions more generally. With each attempt to force its inherently antagonistic components toward a reconciliation, with each renewed effort and increment of force toward the reconciling of antagonisms within the inherited aesthetic material, the greater the degree of resistance encountered in the material itself. Eventually, the amount of constructive force and violence required to formulate a reconciliation becomes starkly apparent. It is only once this objective is given up that "the artist realizes the true condition of the subject, its homelessness in the world".[30]

Consequently, as Subotnik observes, the "subject cannot completely establish as an objective reality its power to derive the objective principle of formal organization from itself". Only an apparent and momentary reconciliation can ever take place through the arbitrary intervention of the higher power, society, acting through its intermediary, the bourgeois composer as creator-god of texts. For Adorno, Beethoven fared no better than Kant in guaranteeing "either individual freedom or the reconcilability of individual and society as necessary objective realities".[31] Adorno, however, does believe that Beethoven's second-period compositions went beyond the Kantian antinomies of particular (individual) and general (society) in a momentary, unsustainable, Hegelian synthesis of the two. Ultimately, however, the formal models postulated for achieving this synthesis by both Beethoven and Hegel corresponded to the bourgeois social order which was itself incapable of decisively overcoming the dualism in reality. Barely construed, the synthesis already exhibits its impending dissolution into its constituent contradictory elements.[32]

Beethoven's late style incorporates the tragic lesson of this failure by undertaking a "double negation". It is no longer possible to rest with the apparent reconciliations of individual and collective that characterized the second-period compositions and that allowed a critique of society within an affirmative mode of presentation:

> Now to be authentic music must become explicitly negative. Henceforth the artefacts of "affirmative culture" directly affirmed repressive social arrangements; only "negative culture" could defend human freedom. To retain their status as authentic art, the works of Beethoven's late style had to replace synthesis as their formal content with the impossibility of synthesis; their aesthetic content had to become the impossibility of aesthetic wholeness and harmony. By exposing some irreconcilable dichotomy within itself, Beethoven's late music could call attention to the concurrent external disintegration of human integrity, to the enslaving,

dehumanizing compartmentalization (for example, into individual and social identities) forced upon humans by society.[33]

Following Beethoven's late work, the features of late style would no longer be the preserve of some great artists entering into a late critical reflection on their own previous works. It would increasingly constitute the horizon of possibility for those more advanced modes of composition undertaken by the heirs of this particular tradition of authentic music and art more generally.[34] Beethoven's late work therefore marks the entry of bourgeois art into a state of lateness and prefigures the onset of late modernity, in both culture and society. It also correlates to the transition of bourgeois ideology itself from a truly progressive movement to a moment of crisis in which it threatens to devolve into a purely reactionary and distortive form.

What makes this kind of late reflection in Beethoven's late work a remarkable turning point in European cultural history for Adorno is that it marks the moment at which the bourgeois ideal of progress begins to disillusion itself and thereby cede ground to its own belatedness. Progress for Adorno, post-Beethoven, is only authentic insofar as it can recognize itself as an ever-deepening sense of lateness rather than any false surpassing of this condition. After Beethoven, progress can only give expression to a sense of missed opportunity, or of there being something crucial that has gone amiss or been withheld.[35] It is for this reason that Adorno claimed that "No later work, even were it the work of the greatest talent, could match the truth content of Beethoven's last quartets without reoccupying their position point by point with regard to material, spirit, and procedures."[36] What Beethoven's late works signify is that no measure of renewed effort or striving for perfection will bring back the once palpable possibility of utopian reconciliation. All that this would achieve would be to reinforce the illusions of a society that would prefer to conceal the systematic inequalities that constitute its professed interests in harmonic functionality. "The classicistic ideal of drossless perfection is no less illusory than the longing for a pure uncoerced immediacy", according to Adorno. In his view, the preferences of classicism for the necessity of harmonized totalities are fundamentally suspect and deceptive. "The achieved incontestability of any and all classicism has something underhanded about it. Beethoven's late works mark the revolt of one of the most powerful classicistic artists against the deception implicit in the principle of his own work."[37] In a more realist mode, the late Beethoven was now able to openly acknowledge all of this and thereby reveal the illusions of

classicism for what they were, having "become mistrustful of the unity of subjectivity and objectivity, the roundness of symphonic successes, the totality emerging from the movement of all the parts; in short, of everything that gave authenticity up to now to the works of his middle period".[38]

If one had to pinpoint the moment in which the transition to this negative culture took place for Adorno, it would have to be in Beethoven's Sonata no. 32 in C minor, op. 111, completed in 1820.[39] This judgement appears not in one of Adorno's own works but in a highly instructive passage in Chapter VIII of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, where Wendell Kretschmar gives a lecture on op. 111 and why Beethoven only composed two movements for this remarkable piano sonata.[40] Within a novel which is itself burdened by lateness, Kretschmar's answer is that it would have been impossible for Beethoven to compose a third movement for this sonata because in the extraordinary second movement the possibilities for any further development of the sonata-form are exhausted:

> A third movement? A new approach? A return after this parting—impossible! It had happened that the sonata had come, in the second, enormous movement, to an end, an end without any return. And when he said "the sonata," he meant not only this one in C minor, but the sonata in general, as a species, as traditional art-form; it itself was here at an end, brought to its end, it had fulfilled it destiny, reached its goal, beyond which there was no going, it cancelled and resolved itself, it took leave—the gesture of farewell of the D G G motif, consoled by the C sharp, was a leave-taking in this sense too, great as the whole piece itself, the farewell of the sonata form.[41]

In the background of Kretschmar's diagnosis of op. 111 is Adorno's own analysis of Beethoven's late style in an early aphoristic essay, "Late Style in Beethoven", first published in 1937. As Adorno explains in this essay, the inaccessibility of Beethoven's late works is not merely the result of an unleashed subjectivity, liberated from all conventions of form in order to better express itself "transforming harmony into the dissonance of its suffering, and disdaining sensual charms with the sovereign self-assurance of the spirit liberated". Unlike Beethoven's second-period works, the late works shun direct expression of the subjective kind, whereby the conventions of form are made to appear to be determined through the dynamic unfolding of free interactions from the particulars to the whole. Instead the late works are mysteriously distant and expressionless, they no longer possess anywhere near the same degree of appearance of harmony, subjectivity, autonomy and spontaneity.[42]

"The formal law" according to which these late works are composed, Adorno continues, is therefore to be seen in the relationship of these conventions to subjectivity, which is, furthermore, "revealed precisely in the thought of death". Death can only appear in works of art, unlike in "created [that is, human] beings", indirectly, in allegorical mode. The death of art (that is, an enlightened bourgeois art), the impossibility of synthesis in other words, cannot impose itself directly in the late works as though it were the expressive content of their subjectivity. What this subjectivity is capable of however, Adorno claims, is to present an allegory such that "as mortal, and in the name of death, [it] disappears from the work of art into truth".[43] Death here stands for the finiteness of human subjectivity, for the relative weakness of the human condition before elemental forces which will always have the upper hand and come crashing down on the subject's vain hope of mastery. This is the impossibility of synthesis in art, which is the impossibility of art itself, and for Adorno as for Hegel, the death of art:

> The power of subjectivity in the late works of art is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves. It breaks their bonds, not in order to express itself, but in order, expressionless, to cast off the appearance of art. Of the works themselves it leaves only fragments behind, and communicates itself, like a cipher, only through the blank spaces from which it has disengaged itself. Touched by death, the hand of the master sets free the masses of material that he used to form . . .[44]

The conventions in Beethoven's late work thus appear as nothing other than themselves, liberated from any apparent creative mastery by the subject. They give momentary, fragmentary expression to the absence of subjectivity. Beethoven no longer allows himself to attempt to gather up the deserted and alienated landscape into a holistic image. Instead, Beethoven "lights it with rays from the fire that is ignited by subjectivity, which breaks out and throws itself against the walls of the work, true to the idea of its dynamism. His late work still remains process, but not as development; rather as a catching fire between the extremes, which no longer allow for any secure middle ground or harmony of spontaneity."[45] Fractured and disjointed, the late works fall silent at intervals where the subject departs the work, a silence which is directed outward as expressionless expression. Hence in Beethoven's late style, the catastrophic happens: the objective and the subjective appear together, side by side in an irreconcilable constellation. On the one hand the objective is the fractured landscape, the fragmented totality, the contradictions of society, on the other, the departing subjectivity, which though forced to flee due to

its relative weakness, remains the only source of light which can still give this desolate landscape life.[46]

The transition to Beethoven's late works is crucial to an understanding of Adorno's analyses of modernity, culture and society.[47] If we are to believe Adorno, fantastic as his thesis may seem, this transition to a negative culture registered a crisis whose shockwaves reverberated all the way through to the tumultuous times in which he lived and continue to rumble even beneath the surface of the much vaunted global political and economic order in our own time. Beethoven's late works are but the most eloquent and advanced registrations of this crisis, and are not to be confused with its full ramifications and ongoing historical developments. For Adorno this event in our modernity was primarily of a sociohistorical nature and its consequences were far from exhausted in the situation of his own lifetime, let alone that of Beethoven's. This unfolding event is known by many names, and its impact has been felt far and wide. It is not only the crisis of modernity, but also the internal collapse of Enlightenment's progress and the perversion of reason into an instrumental rationality, all of which come to take on the proportions of a spiritual disaster for Adorno. As much as we would prefer to forget or diminish its claim on us so as to carry on with the pragmatic tasks of our everyday business, this disaster keeps on calling us to attention, for it is far from over.

Friedrich Nietzsche was in a sense Adorno's precursor in registering the radicality of this crisis. Like Adorno, Nietzsche often turned to music not only to detect the signature of cultural malaise, but also for images of reconciliation promising to release us from its grip. Adorno differentiated himself from Nietzsche by never permitting himself the fallacy that images of reconciliation to be found in music were anything more than illusions.[48] In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche presents his dream for a music of reconciliation. Presenting himself as a man of the south, not by birth certainly, but by a disposition which affirms and loves the south "as a great school of convalescence, for all the diseases of sense and spirit, as a tremendous abundance of sun and transfiguration by sun, spreading itself over an autonomous existence which believes in itself".[49] This imaginary south of life-affirming abundance, of yea-saying, is presented as an antidote to the burdensome German music of the north which threatens to spoil one's health. Dreaming a future music, a southerner of the spirit must,

> also dream of the redemption of music from the north and have in his ears the prelude to a deeper, mightier, perhaps wickeder and more

> mysterious music, a supra-German music which does not fade, turn yellow, turn pale at the sight of the blue voluptuous sea and the luminous sky of the Mediterranean, as all German music does; a supra-European music which holds its own even before the brown sunsets of the desert, whose soul is kindred to the palm-tree and knows how to roam and be at home among great beautiful solitary beasts of prey . . . I could imagine a music whose rarest magic would consist in this, that it no longer knew anything of good and evil, except that perhaps some sailor's homesickness, some golden shadow and delicate weakness would now and then flit across it: an art that would see fleeing towards it from a great distance the colours of a declining, now almost incomprehensible *moral* world, and would be hospitable and deep enough to receive such late fugitives.[50]

Morton Schoolman has speculated that the "prelude" in the southerner's ears may have been Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.[51] Wagner's chromaticism in this work, radically dismantling the conventions of tonalism Beethoven had laid bare, may have been taken by Nietzsche to be the promise of a new music of reconciliation. While he believes Nietzsche's dream may have been inspired by Wagner's work, Schoolman contends that "Wagner's extreme chromaticism cannot sustain unequivocally the image of reconciliation Nietzsche envisioned".[52] The significance of Nietzsche's dream is to be found elsewhere, in suggesting that Wagner's chromaticism had in fact broken decisively with the aesthetic conventions which had hitherto governed German bourgeois music, a prelude to a music liberated "from rules that impose limits on musical expression [and] an aesthetic form that made it possible to compose without conventions". In this regard, Nietzsche's dream does prefigure a music of the future, in particular the compositions of Arnold Schönberg, whose achievements Adorno would recognize in his *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Adorno's philosophy of this new music would provide "an answer to the question Nietzsche had begged", as to whether music can fathom being, make difference transparent, and reconcile reality.[53]

Beethoven's late work is, for Adorno, the advance warning of the disaster which will befall modernity, and only wilful deception will attempt to forestall its recognition by conjuring images of reconciliation which cannot survive the social conditions they must inhabit. In the wake of Beethoven's late work, cultural production will increasingly divide sharply into one of two extremes. On the one hand there will be those inauthentic works which seek to avoid knowledge of the disaster; they will display a tendency to regress to earlier stages of cultural production, to more unproblematic modes of composition, reverting to dreams of reconciliation and

purity untroubled by the impossibility which they seek to deny. These works will further contribute to and prolong the disaster, or what amounts to the same thing, will seek to avoid expanding the realm of consciousness in regard to it. In Adorno's view, these are the very products which shall be most eagerly and easily consumed and therefore the most popular. In modern societies, works such as these are mere products destined for consumption and will happily find their place within the business of the culture industry. At its most base, industrialized music will generate products which imitate the gesture of authentic art in casting aside the appearance of art. They present products that rebelliously mock the lie of cultural sophistication in order to make themselves all the more appealing to an audience that craves to have its immediate listening pleasure justified by a more noble motive. From this position Adorno issues his often misunderstood but nonetheless contentious polemic against jazz and other contemporary forms of popular music. As far as Adorno is concerned,

> Recommending jazz and rock-and-roll instead of Beethoven does not demolish the affirmative lie of culture but rather furnishes barbarism and the profit interest of the culture industry with a subterfuge. The allegedly vital and uncorrupted nature of such products is synthetically processed by precisely those powers that are supposedly the target of the Great Refusal: These products are the truly corrupt.[54]

On the other hand, there are those works that still strive to retain some measure of that dwindling resource, authenticity. These are works which seek to take the disaster into themselves; they cannot be consumed easily, and reject easy access to their meaning. Paradoxically, they aim to expand awareness of the pervasiveness of the disaster and in some small measure redeem the world by constructing useless, disturbing and meaningless works. Increasingly, these works cast aside the appearance of art and move toward disintegrative constructions. Within their own autonomous realm, these constructions repudiate the impulse toward meaningful and useful communication with the wider society, for the expressive subjectivity has disappeared behind the facade of a technologically constructed edifice, which is its only interface with the outside world. Opting instead for a noncommunication, they focus attention on their structure and form, which embodies a kind of knowledge of the surrounding world. As a form approaching cognition, authentic art now indirectly mimics in a hyperbolic mode the worst aspects of modern technologically administered societies: fragmentation, absurdity, conformism, meaninglessness. As far as possible, illusion is negated, ornament and superfluous detail obliterated, consolation of any kind banned. Eventually, the idea of a work itself comes to be

questioned. The physicality of music, sound, begins to yield more and more to silence. The process which begins in Beethoven's late works culminates, for Adorno, in the compositions of Arnold Schönberg.

With Schönberg, the compositional task is in an advanced state of disillusionment. Responding to this simultaneous process of decay and rationalization, the unveiling of the compositional unconscious forbids the creation of works which project the appearance of reconciliatory wholeness. "Under the coercion of its own objective consequences music has critically invalidated the idea of the polished work and disrupted the collective continuity of its effect", Adorno declares.[55] As a form of critical knowledge, problematic works such as Schönberg's stand opposed to the untroubled public performance and consumption of music which continues within the normal cultural business of late capitalism. Outside this domain of consumption that constitutes the culture industry, authentic artworks may still be composed as long as they withhold themselves from the demand for finely polished and consoling works. What emerge now are antiworks that seek to defy the imperatives of the culture industry, whereby management of cultural production aims to suit the predetermined and regressive demands of a manipulated marketplace of consumers, what might also be thought of as the production of degraded subjectivities. Consequently, in Adorno's view,

> All those outside the sphere of management are path-finders, trailblazers, and—above all—tragic figures. Those who come after them are to have a better lot; if they conform, they are granted entry. But these outsiders are in no sense the pioneers of future works. They challenge the concept of production and the works produced. The apologist of actual radical music—who would support his arguments by pointing to the prolific output of the Schönberg school—already denies precisely what he wishes to support. Today the only works which really count are those which are no longer works at all.[56]

Writing against a background of European apocalypse, Adorno charged artworks with the task of having to come to terms with the dissolution of that dream which seemed to promise "permanent artistic possessions", for they must acknowledge that "the historical tendency present in musical means . . . questions what many progressives expect of it: structures perfected within themselves which might be exhibited for all time in museums of opera and concert".[57] With the unveiling of the underlying structure of music, its unconscious, which Schönberg sought to expose in his compositions, it becomes hypothetically possible to envisage musical compositions which will never be interpreted or performed. "The silent, imaginative

reading of music could render actual playing as superfluous as, for instance, speaking is made by the reading of written material; such a practice could at the same time save music from the abuse inflicted upon the compositional content by virtually every performance today."[58] With this extreme tendency of "artistic maturity and intellectualization", it is not only the sensuousness (what Schönberg called music's "animal warmth") which is negated, but art itself.[59] With increasing intellectualization, art moves towards its own dissolution, and as has already been indicated above, "converges abysmally with anti-artistic, barbaric tendencies".[60] Schönberg, at least, did not follow through completely with the systematization of his technique toward this end of total abstraction.[61] Consequently, his music testifies to the truth that the "utopia of art transcends individual works", and his later works are not so much "works" as "paradigms of a possible music". Thus:

> The idea of music itself grows all the more transparent as the works insist less and less on their appearance. They begin to acquire the character of the fragment, the shadow of which followed Schönberg's art throughout his life. His last pieces give a fragmentary impression, not merely in their brevity but in their shrivelled diction.[62]

The most valuable knowledge that the new music came to express for Adorno was knowledge of humanity's suffering confronted with a dead-end, a humanity that has become so impotent as to not permit itself the luxury of illusion and play. For Adorno, the most authentic of Schönberg's compositions stood as unreconciled case studies of conflicting drives that offer no consolation and of a human condition permeated with anxiety. This occurred in the music of Schönberg's Expressionistic phase.[63] The registering of "traumatic shock" becomes "the technical structural law of music", a music which thereby negates the possibility of "continuity and development". Expression in Schönberg's musical language drives itself toward two polar extremes: "towards gestures of shock resembling bodily convulsions on the one hand, and on the other towards a crystalline standstill of a human being whom anxiety causes to freeze in her tracks".[64]

The anxiety of this formal language is a discourse of the lonely human being, which Schönberg developed to the extreme as a reflection on contemporary social existence.[65] Through his experiments on the musical tradition that extends back to Viennese Classicism and his attempt to unveil its underlying structures, Schönberg not only produced strange unprecedented soundscapes, but opened up "a new expressive dimension beyond the depiction of human emotions". Adorno observes how this led one conductor to compare "the resolution field at the end of the great

development section [of the *First Kammersymphonie*] with the joy of a glacier landscape". In this development, Schönberg opts for an absence of expression through a cooling of the music's "animal warmth", thereby constructing the idea of an uncanny language beyond the range of that which is familiar to human beings. It is only in this way that music can give expression to what it must say.[66]

Adorno views Schönberg's compositions as case studies in a posthuman epoch. They belong to a moment in history in which the great aspirations of bourgeois humanism had been exhausted as a possible source of salvation for human civilization. It is therefore a moment in which history is no longer, properly speaking, *human* history. The fate of bourgeois humanism stands for something far wider than the mere fortunes of a class in Adorno's interpretation. It signals also the end of history as humanly intelligible, and the end of humanity as a meaningful category. For Adorno, the practice of *humanitas* can only be intelligible in relation to some form of "moral species" called humanity. In terms of concrete historical realities, the aspirations of the moral species humanity can only be embodied for Adorno in the bourgeois individual and the class that he or she belongs to. Schönberg's musical compositions mark the end point in the logical development of human history and gesture toward the emergence of some form of individual and social existence which is posthistorical, of a posthumanity therefore which has "entered into a meaningless ahistorical stasis".[67] The human subject persists in its exile as the ever-deepening lateness of human history grinds to a halt and where the only remaining dynamism is a vicious circle of ever-intensifying repetition.

It was in the work of Samuel Beckett that Adorno found the most compelling expression of this very situation. "The gesture of walking in place at the end of *Godot*," Adorno claims, "is the fundamental motif of the whole of his work" in its precise rendering of "the need for progress" being "inextricable from its impossibility". In Beckett's work, the moment of fulfilment "reverses into perpetual repetition that converges with desolation".[68] What would emerge from this constellation remained beyond the reach of Adorno's bleak vision. With this, the long retreat of the human subject into exile seems complete, ending in a humanity at a deepening stalemate, a condition which already registers the emergence of a posthumanity in which it would be premature if not dubious to find a hopeful development or cause for celebration. The only hope that remains is in the resistance of exiled subjectivity to being absorbed into the false totality of this vicious circle.[69]

In chapter XXV of Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, Adorno makes an appearance as the devil, as one of a number of masks worn by this demon of pastiche.[70] Adorno as the devil, as Lyotard observes, quotes "whole phrases" from the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.[71] Mann's casting of Adorno as the devil is a somewhat equivocal deployment and part of his own ironical play on lateness.[72] On the one hand, the devil presents the tragedy of progress' convergence with nihilism in the vicious circle. On the other hand, the devil's narrative is already a parody of this tragedy and itself partakes of the vicious circle of endless quotation.[73] Lyotard chides Adorno for not taking up the affirmation of the vicious circle free of any theological yearning by a melancholy subject for a lost totality, which would be "the parodic work of nothing".[74] Adorno's dogged refusal to abandon the tragic dialectic therefore renders him both anachronistic, a representative of a modernist mode of theorizing no longer valid or relevant, and a victim of his own inability to prevent the contamination of his tragic mask by its own self-parody.[75]

And so Adorno is apparently set to rest permanently, if it were not for the fact that the very cultural dominance of postmodernism's carnival of parody confirms the erstwhile outdated, extreme, and hyperbolic hypotheses set forth by Adorno.[76] The parody of a reification of parody (as celebration of the fragmentary, aleatory, contingent, or whatever) sets the stage for a growing dissatisfaction with the pervasive and ineffectual logic of postmodernism and a return of the repressed tragic sense embodied by Adorno's theorizing on aesthetics. What is lost in postmodernism is the negative force of Adorno's sense of dysfunction. Even though postmodernism and poststructuralism have themselves radicalized the very elements of dysfunctionality which figure in Adorno's analyses of modernity, they have been shorn of their melancholy dissonance and made to appear as insuperable positivities which should be celebrated in all their unredeemable glory. In contrast, the strangely affirmative quality of Adorno's melancholy dissonance remains a testament of integrity to the persistence of human suffering and the longing for redemption. While Adorno's successors in the Frankfurt School have sought to fill the chasm between the micrological complexity and the macrological reductionism of Adorno's analyses, they too have lost his tragic sense of dysfunction. Instead, as in the case of Jürgen Habermas, cautious attempts to advance universal imperatives of interpersonal justice through an impoverishing procedural rationality elide the experiential problem posed so forcefully by Adorno. The expansion of

communicative functionality between rational agents fails to leave any room for the utopian longing for a more substantial redemption whose realization Adorno indefinitely postponed but never abandoned.

CHAPTER III

Utopian Negation

> In face of the totalitarian unison with which the eradication of difference is proclaimed as a purpose in itself, even part of the social force of liberation may have temporarily withdrawn to the individual sphere. If critical theory lingers there, it is not only with a bad conscience.
>
> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia.*

"The supposition of identity is indeed the ideological element of pure thought," Adorno observes, "all the way down to formal logic; but hidden in it is also the truth moment of ideology, the pledge that there should be no contradiction, no antagonism."[1] In other words, the reconciliation promised in even the most ideologically distorted identity anticipates for Adorno an identity that may be otherwise, a form of identity whose longing to be fully like the thing indicated no longer distorts its particularity but enables it to be fully realized. Something like this reconciliation was fleetingly conjured by Beethoven's second-period works, only to be proven premature in terms of a possible realization in (social) reality. For Adorno, it was Beethoven's late works which came to have a more lasting relevance as a realistic registration of the actuality of modernity. The possibility of reconciliation negated in present circumstances belongs to a distant utopian future, but one which nevertheless animates the present with a sense of hope. As Adorno states in *Negative Dialectics*, such a "reconciled condition would not be the philosophical imperialism of annexing the alien. Instead, its happiness would lie in the fact that the alien, in the proximity it is granted, remains what is distant and different, beyond the heterogeneous and beyond that which is one's own".[2] It is with this possibility in mind that Adorno concludes his *Minima Moralia*:

> The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light.[3]

For the moment at least, the only way toward "the standpoint of redemption" is through "reconstruction, mere technique", as nobody, least of all Adorno, is able to claim occupation of a fully redeemed standpoint. The task of the philosopher then is to reconstruct, to fashion perspectives that alter our perception of things, not as an end in itself but as a first approximation to what will one day be revealed fully in the

messianic light, the distorted and indigent state of the world. The critical task of the philosopher is "consummate negation", for in the fashioning of perspectives, what the philosopher hopes to construct is an oblique angle upon that which escapes mere reconstruction, of that which cannot be measured or represented. But for thought to be more than mere reconstruction, Adorno adds, is "also the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, even though by a hair's breadth, from the scope of existence, whereas we all know that any possible knowledge must not only be first wrested from what is, if it shall hold good, but is also marked, for this very reason, by the same distortion and indigence which it seeks to escape".[4] Thought is thereby forced to contemplate its own possibility of redemption in terms of its impossibility. Eagleton remarks that for Adorno, just as "thought must travel beyond itself so must the aesthetic transcend itself, emptying itself of its authoritarian urges and offensively affirmative instincts until it leaves behind nothing but a ghostly negative imprint of itself, which is probably the nearest we shall get to truth".[5]

Adorno realizes that his highly abstract and aestheticized theoretical approach leaves him open to the charge of capitulation and the suspicion that perhaps his frail utopian impulse had shrivelled to little more than an empty husk.[6] Having constructed critical perspectives that negate contemporary social arrangements, Adorno is nonetheless apparently incapable of offering any course of practical action toward realizing some kind of concrete utopian expectation. This became a focal point shortly before Adorno's death with his failure to live up to the activist expectations of student protesters in the late 1960s. In response, Adorno wrote "Resignation" in which he explicated the nature of the charges brought against him and how they failed to convince him that he should change his position. For refusing to extract a functional praxis from his theoretical explorations, "a person who in the present hour doubts the possibility of radical change in society and who for that reason neither takes part in or recommends spectacular, violent action, is guilty of resignation. He does not consider the vision of change which he once held capable of realization; indeed, he actually had no true desire to see it realized in the first place. In leaving conditions as they are, he offers his tacit approval of them."[7] A rebuff to any form of hasty revolutionary enthusiasm, Adorno's response to this charge relies on the claim that a praxis-orientation presented as a necessity is the refuge of desperation. Those who, out of a reckless urge to liberate themselves, abjure the kind of patient thinking that would present a reality more complex and

resistant to action remedies than the one invoked to make immediate action feasible and possible, are the ones guilty of resignation. It is the fear of having to accept that reality is much more complex and that current arrangements are not only resistant to immediate change, but that the very possibility of change has become fundamentally problematic if not meaningless. This fear is turned into denunciation of those who would attempt to demonstrate that spontaneity does not belong to a prematurely interrupted thought but to a thinking that resists the demand for immediate action:

> When the doors are barricaded, it is doubly important that thought not be interrupted. It is rather the task of thought to analyse the reasons behind this situation and to draw the consequences from these reasons. It is the responsibility of thought not to accept the situation as finite. If there is any chance of changing the situation, it is only through undiminished insight. The leap into praxis will not cure thought from resignation as long as it is paid for with the secret knowledge that this course is simply not the right one.[8]

For Adorno, it is the hasty action orientation that attempts to preserve for itself a refuge of "immediacy in the midst of a thoroughly mediated and obdurate society".[9] Confidence in such "limited action" on a small scale "is reminiscent of the spontaneity which atrophies beneath the encrusted totality and without which this totality cannot be transformed into something different. The administered world has a tendency to strangle all spontaneity or at least to channel it into pseudo-activity."[10] In its precipitate amalgamation into a solidarity of action orientation, the individual capitulates to a spurious source of collective identity and is thus "spared the cognition of his impotence; within the circle of their own company, the few become many. It is this act—not unconfused thinking—which is resignation."[11] Holding steadfast to the performance of determinate negation to the last, Adorno asserts that it is the "uncompromising critical thinker, who neither superscribes his conscience nor permits himself to be terrorized into action", who in reality refuses resignation. Less likely to be self-satisfied, more fully in touch with the limits of possibility, the utopian impulse in thought remains intact "the less it objectifies itself as utopia". As a "force of resistance", thinking is fundamentally fragile and without guarantees:

> This emphatic concept of thinking is by no means secure; no security is granted it by existing conditions nor by the ends yet to be attained nor by any type of organized force. Whatever was once thought, however, can be suppressed; it can be forgotten and can even vanish. But it cannot be denied that something of it survives. For thinking has the momentum of the general. What has been cogently thought must be thought in some other place and by other people. This confidence accompanies even the

> loneliest and most impotent thought. Whoever thinks is without anger in all criticism: thinking sublimates anger.[12]

In this way, Adorno consoles himself, thought that is capable of expressing unhappiness achieves its own form of happiness, and those who refuse to abandon such thought also resist resignation in the hope that some day others may come to share the same thought.[13] With this, Adorno's very late recapitulation and defence of his project, there remains an unwillingness to make concessions or to repudiate the complexity and abstraction that made his performance of thinking seem ludicrously out of touch and ineffectual in the real world. Eagleton, himself critical of what he sees as the stifling grandiosity marring Adorno's style, admits that it is pointless to reprimand the aestheticism of Adorno's performance of thinking as being practically useless, for Adorno "knows it already, better even than us, and is more concerned to rub the ridiculousness of his doctrines in our face than to defend them. In Zen-like fashion, it is only when we have grasped their absurdity that illumination might break upon us." According to Eagleton, later (that is, poststructuralist) theorists have come to "practise this provocative style even more effectively than Adorno himself", but largely at the cost of "his profound sense of political responsibility. Adorno recognized the necessity of that style; but he never failed to meditate on its intolerable privilege too, which is what marks him off from a post-Auschwitz generation".[14]

In a recent interview, Habermas recalls Adorno's character as a thinker, the sheer genius and integrity of his thinking, which made him both unremittingly serious and childlike:

> Adorno was a genius; I say that without reservation . . . Adorno had a presence of mind, a spontaneity of thought, a power of formulation that I never have seen before or since. One was unable to grasp the emerging process of Adorno's thoughts; they emerged, as it were, finished. That was his virtuosity. He also did not have the freedom to go below his level; he could not let up on the effort of his thought even for a moment. When you were with Adorno you were in the movement of his thought. Adorno was not trivial; it was denied him, in a clearly painful way, ever to be trivial. But at the same time, he lacked the pretensions and the affectations of the stilted and "auratic" avant-garde that one saw in [Stefan] George's disciples. If there was a *pathos*, it was that of negativity; and this did not stand in contradiction to his egalitarian convictions. By all notable standards, Adorno remained anti-elitist. Incidentally, he was a genius also in that he preserved certain child-like traits, both the character of a prodigy and the dependence of one "not-yet-grownup." He was characteristically helpless before institutions or legal procedures.[15]

Habermas's incidental observation that Adorno's *virtuoso* capacity for finely honed theorizing existed side-by-side with an incapacity to deal with the real world is doubly revealing. This portrayal of Adorno is consistent with Habermas's view that Adorno's unremitting performance of determinate negation was an ethically integral stance that nonetheless led nowhere, was incapable of coping with the pragmatics of everyday communication, and had little of practical worth to contribute to resolving our current predicaments. Adorno's critical theory therefore stands as the last great example of bourgeois idealism in philosophy; as a portrait of that ideology's own demise in a world that had become alien to it. As an ageing *oeuvre*, Adorno's work now approaches the world, wherever it manages to break out of its status as something apparently irrelevant, as an oddity. It is this odd outdated performance of thinking and its extreme uninhabitableness, which at times makes it come across as a clownish curiosity and at others as a disturbing provocation. As Eagleton has observed, Adorno "would rather stifle than suffocate, and in whole reaches of his work the air feels too rarefied to sustain much biological growth".[16] Consistent in its own rarefied, highly abstracted, quasi-autonomous realm, Adorno's *oeuvre* continues to grow increasingly distant and alien to the world of everyday life and communication. Paradoxically, it is its very example of negativity, its hostility to sustaining "much biological growth", which constitutes the bewildering utopianism of Adorno's performance of thinking.

Habermas has claimed that, despite its consistency as an ethical stance, its utopian negativity in response to a fallen contradictory world, Adorno was aware of the performative contradiction implicit in the approach of determinate negativity in doggedly denouncing an Enlightenment reason that has become "totalitarian" by using its "tools" to do so. Indeed, Habermas adds, "Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* reads like a continuing explanation of why we have to circle about within this *performative contradiction* and indeed even remain there".[17] In this regard, Habermas suggests that there are lines of comparison that can be drawn between Adorno's negative dialectics and the work of some later theorists, such as Foucault's critique of power. As Habermas observes,

> Foucault's microanalysis of power calls our attention to an invisible dialectic between egalitarian tendencies of the age and those new unfreedoms that settled into the pores of simultaneously emancipated and systematically distorted communicative practices. Not for nothing was he, Foucault, fascinated by his late encounter with the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as he told me himself. But Adorno's aesthetic thinking, a

> thinking that tirelessly orbits the constellation of the nonidentical, has something more to say to us. It is a thinking that stands as the indelible register of the experience of the emigrant, faced with the sheer accident of his own escape from the death camps.[18]

Despite the importance of this lived experience and a deeply melancholic view of our current times, Adorno in Habermas's view never gave way completely to an abandonment of reason's place in philosophy. Habermas, who experienced these events as a teenager, recalls the "shock" of the revelations that came after the fall of the Nazi regime. In the face of these revelations, Habermas realized that "despite everything, we would live on in the anxiety of regression, that we would have to carry on in that anxiety". From this moment on, he claims to have "cast about, sometimes here, sometimes there, for traces of a reason that unites without effacing separation, that binds without unmaning difference, that points out the common and the shared among strangers, without depriving the other of otherness".[19] It is the willingness to maintain a central role for rational communication in philosophy, no matter how depraved the fate of reason appeared to be in the light of surrounding circumstances, that allows Habermas to still see in Adorno a minimal basis for commonality that he feels is lacking with regard to Foucault. Adorno still wanted to "say *something* about the indispensable conditions of claims to validity of those beliefs we hold to be justified, claims that transcend all restrictions of time and place". To shirk the responsibility of accounting for the validity claims one makes in one's discourse is to abandon reason, and consequently, to abolish philosophy.[20]

The result, for Habermas, is to engage in an overly-aestheticized form of philosophical discourse, not only in terms of a preoccupation with style, but more importantly the employment of a subversive but ultimately debilitating mode of argumentation, a "*counter*-discourse" of modernity. This counter-discourse may be found as much in the avant-garde art of aesthetic modernism as in that romantic lineage of philosophy that descends via Nietzsche to Adorno, and more recently to someone like Foucault. "The playful-subversive element of a critique of reason which is conscious of its own paradoxical self-referentiality, and the exploitation of experiential possibilities which were first revealed by the aesthetic avant-garde—these two things characterize a Nietzschean style of thought and presentation, which founds the spiritual kinship of Adorno with Derrida on the one hand, and with Foucault on the other."[21]

Though Adorno felt the necessity of engaging in this aesthetic approach to philosophy, he never attempted to abandon reason as such, "precisely in the fact that he no longer wishes to break out of the paradoxes of this critique of reason, which has now become as if subjectless—he wishes to endure in the performative contradiction of a negative dialectics, which directs the unavoidable medium of identifying and objectifying thought against itself. Through the exercise of endurance he believes himself to be remaining most nearly faithful to a lost, non-instrumental reason."[22] Foucault, on the other hand, often seems to practice a critique of modernity that would put him outside the Enlightenment tradition of rationality, and yet, according to Habermas, he cannot specify what this critique consists of if not a totalized form of Enlightenment rationality. This central criticism that Habermas levels at Foucault, that his analyses exhibit unwitting performative contradictions, is only slightly modulated following Foucault's death, on account of the "productive" and "instructive" complexity of Foucault's thought.[23]

For all that Habermas admires Adorno's *virtuoso* achievements and the ethical consistency with which he pursued his "determinate negation", this is not the path of reason that Habermas takes. As Habermas's observations cited above indicate, regardless of how unsustainable he considers Adorno's project to be, his own critical project expresses a greater sense of solidarity with Adorno's commitment to Enlightenment than with Foucault's critical methods. But as I shall seek to demonstrate in the discussion that follows, both Habermas and Foucault exhibit a strange convergence when viewed from Adorno's trenchantly negative utopianism. From an Adornian perspective, both Foucault and Habermas relinquish the more substantial, if impossible, vocation of critique in an effort to be more up-to-date.

Habermas wishes to avoid enduring the dramatic impasse that Adorno relentlessly laboured over and therefore directs his own efforts toward providing a new impetus to the aspirations of the Enlightenment, albeit in a modulated form. It is also clear that despite the redeeming features of Adorno's critique of instrumental reason, it nonetheless remains part of a dangerous counter-discourse of philosophical modernity for Habermas, as he makes clear in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.*[24] Habermas is concerned with more moderate claims for critique regarding communicative competences, a possibility that was nonetheless made partially possible by Adorno. As Martin Jay explains, to the extent that Adorno at times seemed to argue "against the goal of a perfectly noncontradictory world, in

which logical and ontological categories would be seamlessly united, he opened the door for a more modest notion of contradiction, which would be meaningful for only certain aspects of social reality".[25]

But it was not only Adorno who made this idea possible for Habermas, for it had been raised a number of times in various forms and contexts at least since the young Hegel, but repeatedly neglected as a possible mode of providing justification for our modernity. In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas attempts to define the task of philosophy in modernity in terms of the provision of a ground and mode of self-legitimation *for* modernity on its own terms, to produce a sense of normativity wholly modern and separate from external tradition in whatever form. While modernity's aim of self-grounding produced a new and powerful sense of liberation, it also unleashed an equally potent anxiety. With its new-found subjective freedom, a form of consciousness no longer beholden to traditional external constraints, modernity also experienced a profound lack of self-assurance, since it had to produce a meaningful cultural totality from out of itself rather than merely relying on a pre-existing one. According to Habermas it was Hegel who first felt this anxiety and who attempted to heal the fundamental diremptions which were its cause through a philosophical synthesis based on a subject-centred reason capable of comprehending the whole. In Habermas's recollection of the story of philosophical modernity since Hegel, philosophers have either attempted variations on Hegel's solution, or since Nietzsche, inverted it in the form of a mythical aesthetic reconciliation.[26]

Nietzsche, in Habermas's view, treats as a fallacy the Hegelian idea of subjective freedom as containing a progressively realized rationality which comprehends the whole, and thereby abandons the dialectic of Enlightenment altogether. Not only did Nietzsche reduce reason to a purely instrumental form and repudiate its critical capacity, at the same time he sought solace in a subjectivity of mythical–aesthetic reconciliation. Unlike Nietzsche's later French heirs, Adorno and Horkheimer felt uneasy about the total abandonment of Enlightenment rationality and its consignment to purely instrumental forms. Nevertheless, they too failed to see the only viable path out of the impasse of subject-centred reason in the idea which had presented itself to the young Hegel and others after him but had never been pursued with conviction and persistence until Habermas, the path of intersubjective communicative rationality.[27]

This intersubjective version of rationality opens the way for Habermas's critical category of performative contradiction, whose minimalist utopia is the "ideal speech situation". With this, the realm of philosophy shifts from a subject-centred reason embedded in consciousness, to an intersubjective communicative reason embedded in language. And it is philosophy, Habermas insists, which must retain for itself a critical task as "guardian of rationality".[28] In this regard, it is philosophy's role to both limit and safeguard reason as a form of intersubjective communicative practice by holding open a purely regulative notion of redemption implicit in everyday language pragmatics. In the light of this pragmatic horizon,

> The utopian content of the communication community shrinks to the formal aspect of an undamaged intersubjectivity. Even the expression "ideal speech situation" leads to error insofar as it suggests a concrete form of life. What can be normatively brought into relief are necessary but general conditions for a communicative praxis of everyday life and for a process of discursive will-formation which would put participants *themselves* in a position to actualize concrete possibilities for a better and less endangered life, in accord with their *own* needs and insights, and on their *own* initiative.[29]

As John Rajchman has observed, Habermas's conception of a communications utopia emerged out of psychoanalytic therapy but then became more closely linked to "a rational proceduralism that would underlie liberal democracy". And it is those procedures and nothing else which he comes to think embody "the utopian aspirations of human speech [and] concludes that utopian thought must renounce any attempt to envisage an ideal way of life, and shrink to the acceptance of a formal proceduralism . . . All our hope, all our political imagination, must reside solely in our capacity to formulate in advance the rational procedures of our discussion, and to use them to justify our democratic institutions."[30] Habermas's concern for a pragmatics of intersubjective communication seeks to anchor his emancipative goals to the realm of everyday speech. Adorno's abstract virtuosity refused to descend to this level of pragmatic concerns precisely because it entails the excision of a more substantive concern for redemption.[31] Habermas demonstrates a democratic impulse and a sense of political responsibility which, regardless of its worth, as Rajchman's comments cited above indicate, tends to be philosophically deflating. While Habermas attempts to theorize a task for philosophy on behalf of a realm as yet undamaged by the world of administration, a realm of noncoercive rational discourse that might take place between equals, it is a task which philosophy ultimately undertakes in the interests of the continued functionality of

that administered world legitimately anguished by a very real lack of self-justification. Under the compulsion to produce a more holistically affirmative, positive, relevant, practical, responsible and above all, functional vision of critical philosophy, Habermas tends to narrow the notion of critique toward a kind of self-imposed sterility that negates much of the varied aspirations philosophy has traditionally held and limits what it may aspire to in the future.

It is through this functional path that Habermas has attempted to repudiate the ethically consistent but forlorn impasse to which Adorno's dysfunctional pathos of negativity brings philosophy, and even more vigorously, what might be seen as an alternative path out of this impasse pursued by poststructuralist theorists. The formal aspects of these theorists' writings, their performance of thinking as a style, seems to resemble Adorno's own approach to philosophy. Their true inspiration, however, is to be found in an untroubled appropriation of Nietzsche which yields a more positive dysfunctionality.[32] As Habermas has pointed out, the crucial difference between Adorno and poststructuralist theorists is that

> Adorno does not merely bale out of the *counter*-discourse which has inhabited modernity ever since the beginning; rather, in his desperate adherence to the procedure of determinate negation, he remains true to the idea that there is no cure for the wounds of Enlightenment other than the radicalized Enlightenment itself. Unlike Nietzsche and his disciples [Derrida and Foucault], Adorno has no illusions about the genuinely modern origins of aesthetic experience, in whose name modernity falls victim to a levelling, undialectical critique.[33]

R. Lane Kauffmann has argued that the writings of Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault may be seen as contributions to the European tradition of essayism to which Adorno's writings, as part of an earlier generation of German philosophical essayists, have also contributed. As with their German predecessors, poststructuralist thinkers have also resisted the temptation of constructing philosophical systems, whether of a phenomenological, structuralist, Marxist, or psychoanalytic variety, by adopting aesthetic techniques of composition which foreground discontinuities and fragmentation.[34] Despite these similarities, there are important differences, as Habermas has consistently argued, between these two forms of essayism as a counter-discourse of modernity. In general terms, it may be said that the aesthetics of fragmentation or discontinuity served the German philosophical essayists in their continued critical engagement with the tradition of humanist idealism. This aesthetic was integral to an essayistic approach which sought both to preserve some sense of subjective freedom of the imagination while

limiting the cognitive role of subjectivity to tracing the terminal paradoxes or aporiai of the object. The French theorists, who sought to further radicalize this critique of idealism, seemingly aimed at a total elimination of the humanist baggage and thereby pronounced "the Subject anachronistic and the Author dead".[35] A more trenchantly discontinuous discursivity emerges premised on autonomous processes of language which largely avoid making reference to a mediating subject consciously arranging material.[36] This preoccupation with autonomous discursivity inclined the French theorists to resist any allegiance to a particular genre as the heroic embodiment of a critical ethos, and along with this, a hostility to the kind of role the essay may have sometimes served in Adorno's work as an ultimately unsatisfactory refuge for a self in exile. Kauffmann, however, observes that the differences outlined above are complicated by both Foucault and Barthes, who, as "systematic critics of bourgeois individualism in their early works, make the self in distinct ways a central concern of their late works, and each pays final homage to the essay as well".[37]

As in Adorno's work, the inclination in poststructuralist theory towards an aesthetic of dissonance or fragmentation contains an ethical component. Martin Jay has written a number of articles which have attempted to bring some clarity and balance to the Anglo–American discussion of this complex and sometimes disorienting terrain. Jay has argued strongly that far from being nihilistically unconcerned with ethical and moral issues, key poststructuralist thinkers have displayed an intense engagement with ethical issues and raised fundamental questions regarding normativity.[38] Where the poststructuralists depart from the tense stand-off of Adorno's dialectical impasse is in their *untroubled* affirmation of an ethical impulse that does not "cohere into a systematic moral discourse". This seems to be one of the few shared assumptions of poststructuralist thinkers, that "a positive theory of ethics is both untenable and dangerous". This otherwise heterogeneous body of thought generally suspects and resists any attempt to rigorously define and piece together some kind of codified system of ethics in the form of norms, rules, laws, or values.[39] Underlying this resistance to an integrated and codified ethical system is a resistance to utopian visions of holistic and harmonized constructions of society and the individual self. Such holistic visions of community or self are seen to be the source of a regressive nostalgia, or worse, of inevitable coercion and repression. Ethics therefore come to take the shape of a negation, a suspicion of and resistance to any "utopian image of an entirely self-

generating society, the product of self-conscious, reflective, autonomous humanism". With the resistance to a holistic and entirely self-determining society at one with itself, organically integrated in the wish for harmonious interaction between its parts, there is also a "rejection of a society of egalitarian mutuality and reciprocity" which is seen to coercively level "qualitative differences through the quantitative reduction of the exchange principle".[40]

Jay has explained that in the aesthetics underlying this approach to ethical life, "rather than praising the work of art as an organic, beautiful whole, an autotelic structure providing a sensuous manifestation of an Idea, a boundaried object following its own immanent laws, the poststructuralists embrace instead the modernist (or in certain cases, postmodernist) work 'in crisis'".[41] To extract an ethics out of this model of the aesthetic leads, in terms of a form of individual life, to "an unstable, dispersed, protean (or more benignly put, nonrigid, risk-taking, self-questioning) 'self' that refuses to congeal into a totalized character". In terms of community, this model of the aesthetic suggests "a type of society that is much harder to depict in positive terms than that predicated on the ideal of an organic work of art". As with Lyotard's preference for the transgressive sublime rather than the beautiful, the poststructuralists display a general attraction to "the unpresentable, not only as an aesthetic phenomenon, but as a social one as well".[42] This version of the aesthetic constantly undermines the boundaries between the aesthetic and other realms, and puts its practitioners at odds with Habermas's differentiation of value spheres, in which aesthetic experience would play a subordinate, functional role in support of intersubjective communication. The fiction of an ideal speech community as the operative engine of Habermas's intersubjective rationality is itself a political aesthetic, in which the imperial claims of the separate value spheres (including the aesthetic itself) would be kept in check, and their truth-claims adjudicated, by their referral to the pretheoretical wisdom of the life-world.[43]

Reconstructing the lineage of an alternative notion of community to be found in poststructuralist texts, Jay refers to the early Bataille's version of an "ecstatic community of expenditure, in which the exchange principle is overcome and individuals sacrifice their boundaried egos in an orgy of self-immolation".[44] Jean-Luc Nancy has approached Bataille's understanding of community and experience from a Heideggerian slant which also borrows Blanchot's notion of *désoeuvrement*.

A typically French neologism that is notoriously difficult to translate, *désoeuvrement* can be approximated by the large number of connotations translators have proposed in English, such as inoperativeness, unworking, worklessness, unproduced, at loose ends, uneventfulness, inertia, idleness.[45] With the notion of a *communauté désoeuvrée*, also the title of one of Nancy's books translated as *The Inoperative Community*, Nancy proposes that the kind of community and experience Bataille affirmed was not produced through work or active production. Rather, community for Nancy takes place as the commonality of singular beings exposed in their finitude, in the experience of mortality "which we necessarily all share yet cannot communicate".[46]

Such a community, Jay observes, is not the experience of conscious construction, or some form of "collective self-fashioning", and consequently "unlike a *poesis*, a self-conscious work of art in the traditional sense of the term". Instead of proposing yet another form of "community of pure immanence and unimpeded intimacy, in which the members are part of a plenitudinous and meaningful totality, the inoperative or unworked community is composed of finite human beings whose relations to each other are forged precisely through their mutual finitude". It is a form of community which is conscious of the "inevitable separation" of human being, "of the impossibility of absolute unity", an awareness of which is given in "the awesome fact of death, the inevitability of human finitude".[47] More recently and in response to Nancy's *Inoperative Community*, Maurice Blanchot has given the name "unavowable community" to the kind of community envisaged by Bataille, on account of its "unrepresentability and permanent virtuality".[48] What seems to be shared by each of these various formulations, whether invoked in a literary/aesthetic or extrapolated into a sociopolitical register, is the untroubled or joyous affirmation of a sense of dysfunctionality at the heart of our various notions of functionality (work, action, use, operation, production, and so on), a principle or force that erodes and undermines boundaries simultaneously with all attempts to construct or fashion them.[49]

Foucault's late ethics advocate the project of a Nietzschean aesthetic self-fashioning as an ethical task in which the self emerges as a work of art rather than as the expression of a pre-existing authentic core to one's existence.[50] One may live and think in ways which call into question the forms of life and thought pursued by others but without troubling oneself too much about trying to justify or explain this

difference in perspectives. One need not either try to convince others of their errors nor advocate some particular way of living or thinking as suitable for all. One should not even be too concerned with what kind of privilege the pursuit of aesthetic self-fashioning assumes. The untroubled or even joyous dissonance that self-fashioning entails vis-a-vis others is also to be found *within* such individual aesthetic self-fashioning, as it does not hope to construct or wish to affirm a seamless whole. Although Foucault himself never explicitly makes the connection, some form of experience of community of the sort outlined above was the political complement of his late ethics and aesthetics of existence.

This aspect of Foucault is perhaps one of the least understood in the Anglo-American reception of his *oeuvre*. A number of commentators have begun to make sense of it. The connection has been implicitly drawn by Jay in "Morals of Genealogy" when he observes that Foucault's late ethics as aesthetics of existence, may in effect "resemble the elite and narcissistic world of the nineteenth-century dandy, who deliberately rejected the telos of a natural self in favour of a life of contrived artifice, and did so with minimal regard for its impact on others". Jay suggests that Foucault's ethics depart from this model insofar as "the splendid isolation of the dandy is overcome and self-fashioning turns into a kind of unfashioning of even the contrived self. The violent dismembering of that self is considered ethical because it undoes the worse violence that constituted it in the first place."[51] Elsewhere, Jay has also drawn some more explicit connections between the notions of experience and community in Bataille and Foucault.[52]

More enthusiastically, John Rajchman has traced these themes from Foucault's early literary essays across the discontinuities of his *oeuvre* to his late works. In earlier works, Rajchman notes, Foucault spoke of an "*absence d'oeuvre*", an idea which suggests that "through one's work one tries to say something as yet unsayable, or to see something as yet invisible, and so one opens out a space of a sort of rhythmic 'disappearance' of oneself in and through one's work. The 'being of language' (as distinct from its regulated use in 'discourse') would offer the occasion and the condition of this modern 'attitude' to oneself in one's work."[53] It would therefore be possible to see Foucault as bringing "the exercise of writing as *désoeuvrement* into the fields of history, politics, and epistemology".[54]

Adorno declared his lack of enthusiasm for the contemporary political activisms shortly before his death in 1968. To the end, Adorno remained committed to the aesthetics of lateness and the frail utopianism of a humanity in stalemate. In contrast, Foucault embraced the possibilities for renewing political action in the wake of the "failed" student revolts of May 1968. Some of Foucault's statements from this period and beyond suggest that he withdrew from the aesthetic thematics of his earlier works because they constituted some form of "political blockage", a problem he attempted to obviate through a more politically active approach in the years that followed.[55] Nevertheless, it could be argued that the earlier aesthetic themes mutated to furnish important, though somewhat subterranean, impulses for the *ethos* which informed Foucault's subsequent histories and political strategies. Foucault's work from the late 1960s to the late 1970s, when viewed through his analyses of a "microphysics of power" do lend themselves to such a reading.[56]

During this period of his work, Foucault indicated that he did not believe the ensemble of dominative power-relations unleashed by Enlightenment reason any longer (if they ever did) form a totality. The utopian hope for reconciliation is therefore as much an illusion as the belief that there is a global capitalist order that is principally responsible for current social and political forms of oppression. Foucault flatly negated the possibility of analysing social structures as comprising some form of totality, however contradictory and indigent. In his concomitant refusal of some as yet unrealized or excluded form of subjectivity that could act as a stable basis for resisting domination, Foucault sublated the thematics of his earlier aesthetic themes into a theory of power. In this perspective developed by Foucault during the 1970s, power is seen as all-pervasive, dispersed and tending toward formations of domination. But because power does not form a consistent whole, because it is itself a conflict of relations, its economy is seen as basically anarchic, congealing at certain points of least resistance but always prone to fluctuations and displacements, especially when challenged. Under such conditions, the best that can be done comes in the form of small-scale resistance actions that take up the anarchic flux of power and channel it for a brief moment in some "critical" or disruptive direction, before this deployment itself begins to congeal and merge into the multiple formations of domination. Stated positively, Foucault adopts a nomadic notion of identity as perpetual flux (that is, no-identity) whose utopia is no-utopia, in contradistinction to the nonidentity of exiled subjectivity in Adorno, whose utopia is for the moment indefinitely blocked.[57]

The continuity traced above increases in plausibility with the more explicit and final modulation of these themes in Foucault's later writings on ethics, aesthetics of existence, and an Enlightenment or modernist *ethos*.[58] Through Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot and Klossowski, Foucault learnt to look for an outside of philosophy, to question the limits of philosophy. It is precisely this which Foucault's constantly renewed efforts attempted in the form of "*essais*", "to open philosophy outside itself", a practice which in his later works he came to call a philosophical *ethos*, a way of being a philosopher as an attitude to oneself.[59] Through his essays Foucault attempted to stray afield of himself, to move away from what he had been toward some other possibility, an attitude to oneself he claimed was close to both the modernist attitude of Baudelaire and certain themes in classical Greek thought; an aesthetic exercise in self-fashioning or a self as the (un)work(ing) of art.[60] This view of the aesthetic, which has strong resemblances to what Foucault once referred to as an *absence d'oeuvre*, operates in Foucault's critical *ethos*.[61]

In his late writings, Foucault audaciously attempts to bring these themes and approaches to philosophical writing essentially drawn from Bataille, Blanchot and Klossowski into relation with what he saw as the question of Enlightenment. For Foucault Enlightenment was more a constantly renewed critical attitude of modernity than a core set of rational procedures to be progressively explicated and set out in advance of critically assessing the validity of claims. With "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault traces the ethos of this questioning along the critical tradition stemming from Kant, in which the question is posed, "What are we in our actuality?" or "What are we today?". Hence the following critical tradition of questioning is traced: Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Max Weber, Husserl, Heidegger, the *Frankfurterschule*.[62] Within this tradition, different cultures have produced different forms of critical rationality. It is not so much the empty abstraction Reason which is under consideration, but the specific constructions of critical rationality which the tradition has produced in response to renewed specifications of a basic questioning of actuality never given in advance.

"Thus 'the question' is such as to always survive those formulations of it precise enough to yield solid historical results," Rajchman observes, "and conversely, the tradition maintains itself only by constantly reformulating the question that constitutes it." What Foucault sought to attempt was a "critical historical

questioning prior to judgement by reference to agreed norms", through which one could then adjudicate on the validity or otherwise of proposed answers. What Foucault purports to speak is this questioning, which is anonymous and which always comes before judgement, which is in fact the source of critique. It is a question which constantly poses itself before the presumption of a "we". Any "we" which may cohere from the questioning need not necessarily be universal, organic, nor anything but a temporary formation soon to be erased or called into question.[63]

Interestingly, Rajchman stages a confrontation between Foucault and Habermas, as proponents of two different versions of liberation. According to his reconstruction of their encounter, Foucault's reproach would be that "if only Habermas would allow in history, and in particular in the present, moments of critical questioning prior to the norms rational agents may agree upon . . . we might be able to let each of these different practices of enlightenment proliferate, temporarily hooking up with one another, and so dissolving the nationalist boundaries of the traditions of their provenance".[64] Freedom for Habermas is to be located in a life-world guided by communicative rationality under the guardianship of philosophy securing an intersubjective community of will-formation. As a formal procedure largely ruling out any substantive possibility of utopia, this image of radically democratic society asks us also to ignore the possibility that what *we* may now call modernity may pass away and be replaced by something else. Foucault holds out for a more substantive possibility of change in which there isn't any pregiven possibility of an agreed structure in which to adjudicate between validity claims. The anonymous question is prior for Foucault, and it will solicit different formulations in different contexts. It is by "problematizing moments in the specific traditions in which we find ourselves" that we are kept open to unforeseeable changes in our horizon of possibilities, to those events which allow us to become other than what we are here and now and allow us to ask again (and again, and again . . . here, there and everywhere) "Who are 'we' today?".[65] But might not this ceaseless (re-)dressing of the "we" simply amount to a kind of liberal pluralism shorn of its residual myth of progress?

Though apparently opposites, both Foucault and Habermas effectively inhabit a shared horizon of modernity as a dynamic stasis when viewed from Adorno's uncompromising perspective. Foucault stresses the possibilities of unforseen change as integral to our freedom in a perpetual present that rhythmically undoes our individual and collective identities. For Habermas, nothing essentially new is to be

expected from our realization of freedom other than the perpetual (if incompletable) refinement of our procedures of adjudication striving to encompass a greater and greater diversity of difference on an equal footing into a "we" that will hold in check the partial interests of administration and expertise. Rajchman sets out to distinguish Foucault from Habermas, but he inadvertently demonstrates just how close their respective, supposedly *critical*, understandings of modernity actually are; the one on the side of a dysfunctional futility on behalf of isolated singularities in perpetual flux, the other on the side of a functional sterility ostensibly in the interests of the pretheoretical wisdom of the life-world. Foucault and Habermas are arranged on different sides of the impossibility Adorno laboured over repeatedly. For Adorno, the consciousness of the dysfunctionality at the heart of our Enlightenment was the privileged burden of the modernist aesthetic, toward which his own performance of thinking as determinate negation continuously gestured. Though Foucault and Habermas take apparently opposed paths away from the kind of critical impasse mapped out so thoroughly by Adorno, they both slide critique toward an ineffectuality which would be conducive to a total system.

Both forms of critique are amenable to the total system because they lose from view the substantial moment of redemption, the messianic light which makes the difference between knowledge that illuminates the world and the merely repetitive techniques of reconstruction. For perspectives to be fashioned that make the world appear strange, which displace the world as it is, and throw its indigence and distortion into relief, they must evoke both the fullness of the messianic light and register the impossibility of its arrival. If such a possibility is no longer deemed affordable, or relegated to the ranks of anachronism, then from Adorno's perspective the Enlightenment project of critique is abolished and modern philosophy loses all sense of vocation. All that remains is mere adaptation, accommodation to the indigence of the world, a resigned acceptance of mere technique, and an increasingly entrenched loss of memory.

In part two of this thesis I will expand on the themes developed thus far in regard to the aesthetically inclined ethical comportment that one finds in Adorno's work into a consideration of the way aesthetics figure in the work of Foucault. In this chapter, I looked at both Habermas and Foucault from Adorno's perspective on the modern predicament of philosophical critique. In part two, I shall attempt to reconstruct Foucault's aesthetic path to ethics in greater detail and to explore his divergent

relation to the Enlightenment tradition as an attempt to get beyond the kind of impasse Adorno presents us with. I shall also seek to demonstrate an alternative moment of redemption in Foucault's work, which ultimately has less to do with claims to a critical approach to modernity than a personal sense of salvation. This form of redemption is derived from Nietzsche's art of living, itself subversive of the critical claims philosophy has staked out with regard to Enlightenment and modernity. Its figure is the vicious circle, which Nietzsche often enough affirmed as Eternal Return, an opening beyond the horizons of the political and social crises of modernity to the realm of the imperilled human spirit. While Foucault is not a spiritual thinker, his work does raise spiritual problems, relating to what "we" may still hope for in the wake of modern disenchantment, and illuminates something of the predicament of modernity with regard to these problems. Accordingly, I will attempt to follow Foucault beyond Adorno's trenchant refusal of adaptation to the demise of the more substantial hopes of Enlightenment.

MONTANA LIBRARY

PART TWO

FOUCAULT: REDEMPTION BEYOND ENLIGHTENMENT?

Introduction

> So far, all that gives colour to existence still lacks a history. Where would you find a history of love, of avarice, of envy, or conscience, of pious respect for tradition, or of cruelty? Even a comparative history of law or at least of punishment is so far lacking completely.
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.

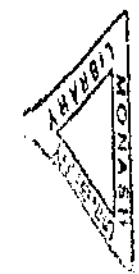
What on earth is one to make of the body of writing organized under the proper name of Michel Foucault? Furthermore, considering the phenomenal mass of secondary literature which has accumulated on the margins of this body of work, whose scope is now arguably beyond any possible mastery and which itself seeks to pull the primary sources in so many contradictory directions, whose line of approach should one privilege, on what basis, and toward what end?[1] Is it at all possible to divorce Foucault's work from the profusion of secondary literature that encompasses it now? Or should one collapse this distinction and simply avail oneself of whatever resources one can find within this labyrinthine repository of ideas that can be made functional for one's own individual purposes? Is one to avoid asking who or what lies behind this collection of texts under the risk of assigning an arbitrary unity and continuity to them which they do not possess, or posing a secret depth of concealed collusions that do not exist?

Various commentators have pointed out the difficulty of grasping the unity of Foucault's *oeuvre*. As with Adorno's critical approach, this was partly the outcome of a trenchant refusal to write philosophy systematically. But it was also an expression of a practice of philosophy which frequently attempted to exceed a purely academic setting. Foucault's commitment to applying the rigours and freedoms of philosophy to lived experience and the incalculable contingencies, accidents, and particularities of lived experience to philosophy, perpetually forestalls the possibility of an abstract philosophical system. As James W. Bernauer puts it, throughout Foucault's body of work, "amid the scattered researches on one hand and the refining of method on the other, was a fundamental interrogation of his experience of thinking itself, a continuing concern with the route it should follow if research was to be more than academic exercise and method more potent than arrangement of material".[2] Foucault sought to extend philosophical practice into various experiences one might have in the world and was particularly interested in intense experiences and their potential for self-transformation, the capacity to make one think otherwise and be different. Such is the significance of

the limit-experience for Foucault, from madness and sexuality to revolution and creativity.[3]

In the knowledge of approaching death, Foucault turned his attention to another practice of intense experience; the ascetic practices produced by the philosophical schools of antiquity. His turn to ascetic practices, particularly those regarding sexual conduct in ancient Greece and Rome, coincide with a concern for the ascetic practice of the intellectual, his own way of living life as a philosopher. Foucault also turned to another form of ascetic practice, an Enlightenment ethos of critique with its roots in Kant. There is a retrospective movement in this late work, whereby Foucault reinterprets concerns from earlier moments in his work in a way which adds a whole new dimension to the (dis-)unity of his *oeuvre*. As the following quote from Maurice Blanchot suggests, Foucault's researches remained transitional and essentially ambiguous:

> What seems to me to be the difficult—and privileged—position of Foucault might be the following: do we know who he is, since he doesn't call himself (he is on a perpetual slalom course between traditional philosophy and the abandonment of any pretension to seriousness) either a sociologist or a historian or a structuralist or a thinker or a metaphysician?[4]

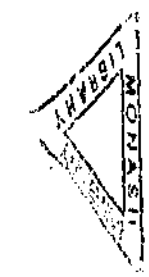


Tracing Foucault's path is a complicated matter, a difficult pleasure. The preconception that there actually is anything to trace may actually risk distortion, and in the final analysis may even turn out to harbour a futile idea. But unlike Adorno's approach to the composition of his texts, this doubt as to whether a subject could be invoked as the unifying principle for a body of work was not a cause for concern. Foucault's central critical concern, a sustained critique of forms of subjectivity, moves through a series of texts, relentlessly decentring and recentring, and constituting a multiplication of elaborations and approaches. If there is a unifying principle here it is something like the performance of a relentless transformation or mobility, an eagerness to adapt to new situations or circumstances. Numerous attempts have been made to subdivide this process in order to reconstruct the reasoning sustaining its various movements. Mark Poster has attempted to delineate three positions.[5]. Bernauer on the other hand has found four "distinct experiences of thinking as well as operations for the conduct of inquiry", which therefore respectively "define the basic stages in his intellectual journey and the fundamental operations of archaeological-genealogical inquiry".[6] Denis Hollier, furnishing yet another developmental schema, has mused in terms

resembling those of Blanchot above on the identity (or resistance to identity) displayed in Foucault's life-work:

> Who is speaking in these texts? How many Michel Foucaults would it be necessary to construct in order that they should figure in at least one of his complete works? What would be their exact place in the complete works of all the Michel Foucaults? I do not know if he officially disowned them, but he set around them signs of the greatest distance. On the basis of this distance, Foucault's own question can be turned back on him: What is an author? What nowadays is perhaps most striking about his work is in fact the insurmountable distance he adopts from himself, as if his grammar were that of dissent. Hence the impression one gets that the distance anyone might want to adopt from him would remain small in comparison with the distance Foucault has already established from himself. More distant from himself than we will ever be, he forestalls us, circumvents us, condemning us to an interior distance, holding himself back in a distance without interiority.[7]

From yet another angle, Paul Veyne offers a simple though suggestive contextualization of the course of Foucault's theorizing in terms of a Nietzschean movement from passive to accomplished nihilism.[8] By this he also means to evoke a personal development: "Michel Foucault's evolution from the bitter rage of his years of dark youth at the *École normale* (following a childhood which was perhaps too full of guilt and too humble) through the courageous serenity, to the happy laughter and equanimity of his mature years."[9]



With these themes of personal transformation and shifting perspectives in thinking, lived experience and various aesthetic (cathartic, cynical, ascetic) practices of philosophy as ethics (a way of life), the work of Michel Foucault displays the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche and with him gestures that may be characterized as a form of very late Romanticism. John Sturrock has observed that Foucault was a "self-effacing Nietzschean", a novel if strangely contradictory phenomenon, "whose 'audacities' remained mainly a private matter during his lifetime, and whose oeuvre, for all the remarkable influence that it has had, is necessarily discreet, founded as it is on a peculiarly self-denying interpretation of what an Author is".[10] And yet, despite this anonymity, Foucault holds out on the possibility of critique, but unable to master or name its source except by way of fleeting figurations.

In James Miller's controversial reconstruction of Foucault's life, Foucault's "great Nietzschean quest" began during a vacation in August 1953, reading the *Untimely Meditations* while relaxing on the Italian Riviera.[11] In an interview conducted in 1982 Foucault would admit that Nietzsche's influence had shaped not only his

thinking but his whole life in a profound manner. "Nietzsche was a revelation to me", Foucault observes, "I felt that there was someone quite different from what I had been taught. I read him with a great passion and broke with my life, left my job in the asylum, left France: I had the feeling I had been trapped. Through Nietzsche, I had become a stranger to all that. I'm still not quite integrated within French social and intellectual life."[12] In having followed the path which the Nietzschean quest advises, "to become what one is", Foucault is not so much offering a new model of subjectivity as such, but an example of how one may criticize one's self-constitution as a subject in a lifelong practice, an activity embracing rather than fearing constant change in perspective and a cultivated marginality. An experience of subjectivity lived toward difference was the way Foucault became what he was.

The central theme of Foucault's Nietzschean quest is his own self, an intellectual experiential–experimental self lived as perpetual critique. To begin with, his attitude toward the self, or the subject, as a sovereign entity which can serve as a foundation, is marked by a work of effacement. Effacement involves the dispersal of the unified self; the linguistic and experiential deconstruction of the self-present subject of the "I think". During the 1960s in Paris, a new generation of philosophers sought to refute the latest adherents of this ideal, the preceding generation of philosophers, epitomized by Jean-Paul Satre. The logic of identity and the concept of the dialectic came under attack, and as Vincent Descombes notes, were drawn together in a mutual critique:

> what is the dialectic, if not precisely a superior concept of identity ("speculative identity", or "identity of identity and non-identity"), which leads to recognition of the *absolute, not as substance but as subject* (Hegel)? The double attack on phenomenological consciousness and the logic of identity is therefore conducted under the banner of a single crusade against the *subject in general.*[13]

The logic of identity, derided as "the supreme philosophical illusion", was seen to be incapable of representing "the *other* to itself without reducing it to the *same*, and thereby subordinating difference to identity. The logic of identity is countered with a 'thinking based upon difference'".[14]

The next three chapters explore the ways in which "thinking differently" is modulated in Foucault's life and work, as literary experience, political critique and aesthetico–ethical self-formation. Together these explorations suggest that Foucault aims not to efface subjectivity but to score out those moments in which subjectivity

takes itself and its world too much for granted. In his relentless questioning of subjectivity and its modes, Foucault draws near to Adorno's critique of identity as the ontological template of a seamless subject and a world from which all hope for living and thinking otherwise has been banished. But as I shall demonstrate, Foucault's critical approach was far more adaptive to disenchantment and less encumbered by the traditional goals of the Enlightenment which Adorno sought to memorialize. The mobility of thinking differently pursued by Foucault often evoked the image of a philosopher conducting guerrilla warfare without any hope for an end to combat, and sometimes seemed to risk a forgetfulness as to what the battle was (or had been) about.

MONASH LIBRARY

CHAPTER IV

Poetic Madness and Literary Experience

> That which will not take long to die, that which is already dying in us (and whose very death bears our current language) is *homo dialecticus*—the being of departure, of return, and of time, the animal that loses its truth only in order to find it again, illuminated; the self-estranged who once again recovers the unity of the self-same. This figure has been the master subject and the object slave of all the discourses concerning the human, in particular human alienation, which have persisted for quite some time. And fortunately it is dying beneath the babble of these discourses.
>
> Michel Foucault, *Madness, the Absence of Work.*

In *The Order of Things,* Michel Foucault proposes an account of the emergence of our modernity on the basis of a renewed disjunction between words and things:

> The threshold between Classicism and modernity (though the terms themselves have no importance—let us say between our prehistory and what is still contemporary) has been definitely crossed when words cease to intersect with representations and to provide a spontaneous grid for the knowledge of things. At the beginning of the nineteenth century they rediscovered their ancient enigmatic clarity . . .[1]

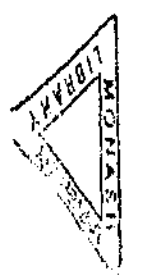
With the (re-)appearance of this disjunction, at once an innovation that initiates our modernity and a return to something ancient, language is liberated from the task of representing and it becomes possible to think of language arising for no other reason than that of manifesting itself. A language, that is, referring to nothing beyond its own enigmatic appearance, the clarity of meaning nothing outside itself. In this regard, Foucault links Nietzsche the philologist and Mallarmé the poet, who at the end of the nineteenth century began to think through the radical implications of this feature of the modern dispensation of language for the question of subjectivity. "To the Nietzschean question: 'Who is speaking?' Mallarmé replies—and constantly reverts to that reply—by saying that what is speaking is, in its solitude, in its fragile vibration, in its nothingness, the word itself—not the meaning of the word but its enigmatic and precarious being."[2]

What coincides with this disjunction pertaining to language which Foucault is interested in, and to which it is intimately related, is the emergence of a musical absolute, as occurs, for example, in the compositions of Beethoven. Foucault does not discuss this musical phenomenon directly, as does Adorno, for whom it is an integral part of his exploration of the history of subjectivity. Music is significant here because it is the form of art which, especially through its refinement of a pure abstract autonomy in a posttheological epoch, is most capable of distancing itself

from the order of representation. Andrew Bowie has suggested the affinity between Foucault's understanding of the literary "word", in its "enigmatic and precarious being", and the abstract musical potentiality of the "note".[3] Bowie has also argued that:

> The analogies between the growth in importance for philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century of the non-representational form of music, and ideas about the subversion of self-consciousness based on rejecting the model of language as the representation of the ideas of a subject, seen in structuralism and post-structuralism, are not fortuitous. Towards the end of the eighteenth century "absolute music", music without a text, becomes increasingly important in musical praxis, in philosophical reflection upon the significance of art, and as a means of understanding subjectivity . . . Music makes evident the fact that understanding subjectivity can never be fully achieved through theoretical articulation.[4]

The musical absolute to which Bowie refers, is characterised by a musical form which is purely instrumental, unaccompanied by verbal component, and therefore nonreferential or uninclined to represent some specific content of meaning. Instead, it precariously evokes that which is never given to referential language to express conceptually and aspires to attain an infinite realm of manifold particularities. Philosophical reflection on a musical absolute corresponds to post-Kantian reflections on subjectivity, and the aporiai philosophy entangles itself in when attempting to represent the subject as an object in language. One of the principal sources through which Foucault accesses this aesthetic tradition is Mallarmé, who is the heir of a Romantic transformation of the aesthetic absolute into the possibility of a pure poetic form.[5]



According to Bowie's account, the aesthetic emerged as an independent area of philosophical interest during the course of the eighteenth century, in response to the perception that rationalistic philosophies had failed "to do justice to the immediacy of the individual's sensuous relationship to the world". In this original context, the *modern* aesthetic concern for an "endless multiplicity of the particular and individual is an occasion for celebration, which points to an infinity of meaning, not, as it will often do subsequently, to a meaningless randomness".[6] In *The Order of Things* Foucault explores this aesthetic phenomenon of infinite multiplicity as it arises in the transformation of language into a folded space, in which "what makes it possible to define a language is not the way in which it represents representations, but a certain internal architecture".[7] Toward the end of the eighteenth century the proliferation of scientific languages occurs in relation to the fragmentary self-

referentiality of a language which encompasses and enfolds them, a language that "began to fold in upon itself, to acquire its own particular density, to deploy a history, an objectivity, and laws of its own".[8]

As a "compensation" for this "demotion of language to the mere status of an object", there emerged in the proliferation of scientific languages made possible by this new dispensation of language a concern for the medium of language through which they carried out their work.[9] There also emerged a study of language itself as a sociohistorical phenomenon, philology, and finally, as the "twin" of philology and as that which contests it, there emerged the possibility of "literature" and the "literary" as a specific form of written language, language "in an independent form, difficult of access, folded back upon the enigma of its own origin and existing wholly in reference to the pure act of writing".[10] Foucault argues that it was Nietzsche's achievement to have opened up a "philosophical–philological space" in which "language wells up in an enigmatic multiplicity that must be mastered". Furthermore, it was toward this opening that Mallarmé set himself a task which is still our own, according to Foucault: "in its stammerings, it embraces all our current concerns to confine the fragmented being of language once more within a perhaps impossible unity . . . of enclosing all possible discourse within that slim, material black line traced by ink upon paper".[11]

In Foucault's account, the language of literature itself, as an infinite repetition within each word that appears, an infinite seriality of words, is Foucault's figuration of what Bowie would call "meaningless randomness". In "Language to Infinity", an essay predating the publication of *The Order of Things*, Foucault draws on Borges' "Library of Babel" to evoke a language whose space is no longer governable by a dialogical communicative paradigm of rhetorical contestation. Instead, the space of language is now composed of the archival spatiality of "the Library . . . the ranging to infinity of fragmentary languages, substituting for the double chain of Rhetoric the simple, continuous, and monotonous line of language left to its own devices, a language fated to be infinite because it can no longer support itself upon the speech of infinity", even though "within itself, it finds the possibility of its own division, of its own repetition, the power to create a vertical system of mirrors, self-images, analogies".[12] Foucault also observes in this essay, anticipating his comments in *The Order of Things*, that

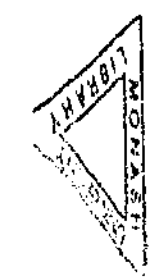
> a change was produced in the relationship of language to its indefinite repetition at the end of the eighteenth century—nearly coinciding with

> the moment in which works of language became what they are now for us, that is, literature. This is the time (or very nearly so) when Hölderlin became aware, to the point of blindness, that he could only speak in the space marked by the disappearance of the gods and that language could only depend on its own power to keep death at a distance. Thus, an opening was traced on the horizon toward which our speech has ceaselessly advanced.[13]

For Foucault, this possibility, of a language to infinity, an anonymous stuttering of indefinite repetition manifesting in the seriality of words, signals the impending dissolution of that over-determined fiction, the creature of Enlightenment rationality, whose ascension accompanied the disjunction between words and things and whose task it was to resolve the problem of representation and fragmentation in language through an anthropological unity: Man or the humanist subject.[14]

Ruminating on Hölderlin's "first pathological episode" at Jena in "The Father's 'No'", Foucault allows his imagination play on the poet's depression: "in keeping with the post-Kantian crisis, the disputes of atheism, Schlegel's and Novalis's speculations, the clamor of the Revolution which was understood as the promise of another world, Jena was certainly the arena where the fundamental concerns of Western culture abruptly emerged". Jena here stands for the advent of modern History, a time between the presence and absence of the gods which "defined the central and empty space where European culture discovered, as linked to a single investigation, the finitude of man and the return of time".[15] This event, Foucault continues, as the first dawning of the death of God, impacted not only on the emotions, to the extent that nothingness first entered consciousness as something real to be feared and (a)voided, it also had a profound impact on our language in the shape of an impenetrable silence that became its enigmatic source, the point of blindness. "Language thus assumes a sovereign position; it comes to us from elsewhere, from a place of which no one can speak, but it can be transformed into a work only if, in ascending to its proper discourse, it directs its speech towards this absence." Literary writing has therefore become, for Foucault, "an attempt to exhaust language", for which reason, "eschatology has become of late a structure of literary experience, and literary experience, by right of birth, is now of paramount importance".[16]

Foucault's early work in the 1960s, including the extended theoretical works *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, may be read within the context of a literary avant-garde. The aim of this literary movement as Foucault articulates it was to push toward a post-Enlightenment culture by directing itself toward the place of absence from which language comes.[17] Foucault's work from this period is premised on an impending ontological rupture, a premonition that the ontological arrangements which brought into being an entity called "Man" were about to crumble, perhaps were already crumbling. In this Nietzschean–Heideggerian antihumanist register, Foucault in *The Order of Things* speaks of an awakening from an "anthropological sleep".[18] This sleep was initiated by the fourth question in Kant's *Logic*. In addition to his three critical questions (What can I know? What must I do? What am I permitted to hope?), Kant's fourth question which asked, "*Was ist der Mensch?*", sought the orchestration of these three critical questions toward a determination of what is meant by this thing called human being *qua* Man (*der Mensch*).[19] The analysis of language in Nietzsche and Mallarmé inflected through a Heideggerian ontological problematic prompts Foucault to pose the question of the being of language in terms of a reawakening from the slumber of anthropology: "Is it a sign of the approaching birth, or, even less than that, of the very first glow, low in the sky, of a day scarcely even heralded as yet, but in which we can already divine that thought—the thought that has been speaking for thousands of years without knowing what speaking is or even that it is speaking—is about to re-apprehend itself in its entirety, and to illumine itself once more in the lightning flash of being?"[20]



As John Rajchman has argued, it was to assist in this reawakening that Foucault wrote a series of "de-realizing" histories and essays, beginning with studies on how psychiatric knowledge created an object called "madness" in *Madness and Civilization*. Only later would he begin to undertake more specific subversive genealogies designed to undermine the reality of our contemporary conceptions of Man, and those particular forms of subjectivity that made their way from the prevailing philosophical tradition, through the human sciences into the technocratic administration of populations and individuals. Foucault's aim, from the beginning, was to show that "our own selves may be the great realist illusions of our time—the whole, private, individual, mental, inner entities we often take for granted as being what we are".[21]

Foucault's early literary, often surreal, essays tended to analyse the reality of our modern selves primarily through the ontological dimension of art, and in particular, modernist writing, as a self-reflexive production of language in which the Heideggerian thematics of the being of language played a crucial, if often subterranean, role.[22] The chief philosophical targets of Foucault's work in this period are the initiator of the anthropological sleep, Kantian humanism and its successor, the totalizing anthropological logic of Hegelian dialectics.[23] As has already been indicated, however, Foucault also designated Kant as the philosophical initiator of the kind of critical discourse of limits and transgression which he explores in the strangely contiguous development of transgressive literature emanating from Sade in "A Preface to Transgression". For while Kant made an "opening" in the Western philosophical tradition "when he articulated, in a manner that is still enigmatic, metaphysical discourse and reflection on the limits of our reason", he "ended by closing this opening when he ultimately relegated all critical investigations to anthropological questions".[24] The task of radicalizing critical discourse subsequently fell on Nietzsche and his later French heirs, who through the development of a "nondiscursive language" have sought to reawaken us from the "confused sleep of dialectics and of anthropology" through "the Nietzschean figures of tragedy, of Dionysus, of the death of God, of the philosopher's hammer, of the Superman approaching with the steps of a dove, of the Return".[25]

Bataille's "erotic" literature poses for Foucault the question of what kind of nondialectical discourse will emerge from the recognition of "an essential experience for our culture since Kant and Sade—the experience of finitude and being, of the limit and transgression".[26] Foucault claims that for the moment at least, this cannot be a matter of supplying a linguistic model for expressing transgression in the manner in which dialectics did for contradiction. "Our efforts are undoubtedly better spent in trying to speak of this experience and in making it speak from the depths where its language fails, from precisely the place where words escape it, where the subject who speaks has just vanished, where the spectacle topples over before an upturned eye—from where Bataille's death has recently placed his language."[27] Such would be a discourse of shattered and splintered subjectivity, "the possibility of the mad philosopher . . . the experience of the philosopher who finds, not outside his language (the result of an external accident or imaginary exercise) but at the inner core of its possibilities, the

transgression of his philosophical being; and thus, the nondialectical language of the limit that only arises in transgressing the one who speaks".[28]

As is evident in numerous other enthusiastic remarks which echo this appreciation of Bataille, Foucault championed the form of avant-garde modernist writing under the name of literature.[29] As a self-reflexive and self-explicating style of writing, it displayed that peculiarly modernist concern for drawing attention to its own methods of constitution, a writing which in a sense relentlessly sought to think itself at the limits of possibility. Within the broader parameters of this literary–philosophical movement, which included theorists of otherwise divergent approaches (such as Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan), language and avant-garde writing became the central focus of a form of self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity in language and literature was taken as part of a larger allegory where art searched for its own sources and presented the search in the work of art produced by this searching. In its movement toward its own creative sources, and in the impossibility of this task, the artistic endeavour confronted itself with a radical risk, the danger, the threat of its own disintegration. Foucault's writings from this early stage of his theoretical development positively revel in the riskiness and subversiveness of this enterprise for a critique of subjectivity. Rajchman interprets Foucault's attraction to this literary modernism as a search for "a romantic alternative to a culture obsessed with the principle of systematic reason and the idea of a traditional humanism". In the figure of a messianic lightning-flash Foucault "found a madness that was not a mental disease and a writing that had fled the representational paradigm of language; the two were interconnected in a transgressive 'counter-discourse.'"[30]

Foucault's early writings on madness, and on other themes of transgression, sought to unearth an overarching experience of Unreason as the basis of this "counter-discourse", seemingly the only kind of experience which offered a glimpse of what might constitute an alternative form of subjectivity. What we find in *Madness and Civilization* and Foucault's other early, somewhat surreal critiques of rationality is an "experience of the book as an antiworld", a side of Foucault's writings which is now often overlooked or passed over as if it were merely an error resulting from a misguided, if excusable, youthful exuberance.[31] As Michael Janover has suggested, through these literary experiments, Foucault sought to recuperate "not so much a critique of constitutive subjectivity as a counterconstitution: a *de*constitutive

subjectivity composed of Dionysian fragments of excess, transfiguration, disorder, unreason and death".[32] Presenting a deconstitutive subjectivity always verging on the brink of disintegration in an ontological dramaturgy exploring themes from the work of writers such as Sade, Blanchot, Bataille, Deleuze, Janover argues Foucault's counter-discourse sought to denounce not subjectivity itself but that overdetermined fiction of the subject as a stable, rational, unified and centred field of continuous experience that could enjoy universal appeal. This denunciation was often expressed in hyperbolic announcements such as "the end of Man" in *The Order of Things*, by which Foucault sought to evoke not "a lacuna that must be filled" but "the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think".[33] What Foucault hoped could be thus recuperated for thought was that realm "below the level of representation" through which the stable rational subject was constituted.[34]

Illuminating Maurice Blanchot's version of this counter-discourse, Foucault observes that through it one constantly engaged the task of negating "one's own discourse", an experience that shatters it into fragments which cut against all attempts at resolved and systematic understanding. The experience of a relentless and disorienting search for an unrepresentable source of art is seen to be a source of sorts itself, the very essence of art. Distancing itself from the eye of transparent representation, this thinking of art, or more specifically, of writing, brings us to the madness in artistic creation, an experience which is also to be taken as the (de-)constitutive "other" of our rational experience as modern selves. It often seems to point toward a desolate and disconcerting source of experience which modern reason neglects to confront because it disturbs and unnerves received and established ways of understanding. This experience of language is present within the absurd force of cruelty in the work of Artaud, but also in the obsessional language games of Roussel, in which there occurs an evocation of the madness in language no longer subservient to the law of representation. It is also present in Blanchot's "thought from the outside", a writer who as Foucault observes, has withdrawn to such an extent "into the manifestation of his work" that he is "not hidden by his texts, but absent from their existence and absent by virtue of the marvellous force of their existence".[35] Such a consciously transgressive writing allows us to understand madness as constitutive of experience at the limit, "in that region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes", which is the "formless, mute, unsignifying region where language can find its freedom".[36]

MONASH LIBRARY

If freedom is present in such an experience of language, it takes the form of a transgression of the limits of the representable, the freedom of that which cannot be transmitted or represented in ordinary discourse, of that which is barely utterable. Here we encounter the modernist sublime, that which can only be hinted at, gestured toward, which ultimately escapes all attempts at representation and threatens any approach with disintegration. The experience of the sublime is one to which people in their everyday experience remain blind because of the danger it harbours, which is only glimpsed in the threat that madness evokes. This experience points to an abyss at the very centre of existence which can never be accounted for or filled in, but which offers a tragic experience of freedom. As Rajchman comments, sublime experience "articulates the Dionysian wisdom that the world of the inauthentic petit bourgeois neurotic rests on a fundamental Nothingness which he must deny; it defamiliarizes his world, reverses its values, and points toward a new age".[37]

There is a mythology of sorts in this apocalyptic experience of the sublime in modernist art, a self-effacing heroism of avant-garde consciousness. While whole populations are confined by the conventional values of their everyday life, seeing nothing but the play of light before them, beyond their limited gaze artist–heroes descend to a shadow region in order, as Rajchman suggests, "to articulate 'the abyss' which lies behind our world and the limits of what we may experience in it".[38] These artist–heroes risk the fate of Orpheus, descending into an underworld only to lose forever the sublime object they sought to retrieve, out of an inability to resist the temptation of seeing it face-to-face as it exists in that underworld. Not only is Eurydice lost, the artist-hero ultimately loses himself in violent dismemberment.[39] Tragic experience is a hallmark of the artist–hero who chances the transgressive sublime.

Among the theoretical influences which support this vision of a transgressive sublime are Heidegger, and Freud (via Lacan), and Nietzsche, but in Foucault's exploration of a poetic madness the exemplary practitioners paraded before us are all artists, principally men of letters who go mad. It is these latter who heroically destabilise and call attention to that "archaeological" double, "Man and the unthought", the configuration through which the entity Man describes himself while thought discovers "both in itself and outside itself, at its borders yet also in its

very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught." An "unthought" not as something "lodged in man like a shrivelled-up nature or a stratified history" but as a relation of Man, the unthinkable "Other" of this humanist invention. Man's most intimate and uncanny companion from the outset of his journey has been a figure who harbours the potential eclipse of Man.[40] This is what Foucault intends by taking seriously a concern with language cut adrift of an anthropological anchoring, a language which probes its own limits, its own conditions of possibility; "a literature [illegible]ated to language gives prominence, in all their empirical vivacity, to the fundamental forms of finitude".[41]

Within the modern configuration of what constitutes the knowable, it is left to the great artistic figures to reach beyond the constraints of their times, beyond the prison of a narrow rationality, to venture out into uncanny nether regions. It is they who have probed the implications of "a language spoken by no one", to experience how a speaking subject may be nothing other "than a grammatical fold".[42] In doing so, an individual may court self-effacement, risk insanity and the unravelling of their work in ruination. In their confrontation of the abyss, the realm of Unreason, of madness, of death, of meaninglessness, of all those figures of radical negativity that mark human finitude and which everyday life cannot endure and must avoid, the artist–heroes cannot hope to remain unscathed, and such is their tragic glory. A stark comparison with Adorno's experience of tragedy suggests itself here. Adorno only ever checked in to the "Grand Hotel Abyss" with a heavy heart, as a reluctant guest forced to contemplate the experience of actual political exile and forever haunted by the prospect of living-on after Auschwitz.[43] Foucault's relationship to tragic experience as poetic madness expressed itself as a more enthusiastic wish to live-on in the proximity of a liberating convulsive potential.

In the concluding chapter of *Madness and Civilization* Foucault focuses on a series of artists, mainly writers and painters, who in the process of producing their works explored and became susceptible to madness. These artists, Foucault contends, are exemplary for a critique of modernity in their relentless transgression of the language-structures, the rules of discourse, and so too the values of the surrounding bourgeois society. What they force themselves and their society to face are the limits of reason in a language which points to the absence from which language emerges, its nothingness. At the height of his hyperbolic excess, Foucault's cathartic

announcements exemplified that apocalyptic tone that was fashionable amongst Nietzsche's French heirs. Seeking to evoke the immanence of a nihilistic and apocalyptic night, a darkness converging on the world now that the day of the Enlightenment was approaching its twilight, Foucault sought, perhaps too vehemently and often with a strained virility, a strange redemption on the desolate terrain of self-effacement.

In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault glimpsed this zone of effacement in the paintings of Goya, where "forms are born out of nothing: they have no background, in the double sense that they are silhouetted against only the most monotonous darkness, and that nothing can assign them their origin, their limit, and their nature".[44] It is this madness which philosophy, Foucault the celebrator of transgressive effacement would claim, has kept at bay through a suppression of the subversive element of language. This poetic madness, when pursued to its limit, has the power to shake one's grip on the philosophical hammer. In some ways, what has been kept at bay resembles the images of what Foucault names the pre-Classical age, depicted in Goya's paintings, which found in madness a brute force that could not be constrained, erupting ever afresh within every form of constraint, transmitting to those privileged, tragic, and failed artist–heroes like Nietzsche "those barely audible voices of classical unreason, in which it was always a question of nothingness and night, but amplifying them now to shrieks and frenzy". With new and more effective forms of constraint these forces are now felt with greater intensity, procuring for them "a hold on Western culture which makes possible all contestations, as well as *total* contestation", thereby "restoring their primitive savagery".[45]

Foucault notes in *Madness and Civilization* that the year 1656, during which a decree was issued founding the *Hôpital Général* in Paris, was a landmark in a process whereby significant numbers of the population, not only in Paris and France but throughout Europe, came to be arrested and constrained within the walls of various kinds of repressive institutions.[46] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of a new clinical practice imbued with the virtuous task of liberating the inmates of these institutions from their forlorn condition, Foucault demonstrates how these institutions of often brutal constraint were reformed in the name of humanitarian treatment and cure.[47] This change marked the beginning of a process whose aim it was to totally sanitise the madman and to dispose him to the

manipulation and subtle incarceration of certain curative practices. Finally, madness itself might only survive in its untameable purity in the proximity to a faltering literary experience:

> Since the end of the eighteenth century, the life of unreason no longer manifests itself except in the lightning-flashes of works such as those of Hölderlin, of Nerval, of Nietzsche, or of Artaud—forever irreducible to those alienations that can be cured, resisting by their own strength that gigantic moral imprisonment which we are in the habit of calling, doubtless by antiphrasis, the liberation of the insane . . .[48]

In the essay which heralds Foucault's transition to a more concrete and austere genealogical critique, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", the invocation of "sacrifice" echoes once more, perhaps for the last time in Foucault's writings, the experiments of literary–poetic effacement of his earlier essays. Foucault begins his essay on Nietzsche's genealogical approach to historical writing by declaring that: "Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary." He concludes by proffering parody, dissociation, and sacrifice as its three cardinal values.[49] Through these "uses" of an historical sensibility opposed to a more traditional conception of historical writing, Foucault hopes to counter "the three Platonic modalities of history". Parody opposes Reality and "the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition"; dissociation opposes Identity and "history given as continuity or representative of a tradition"; and sacrifice opposes Truth and "history as knowledge [*connaissance*] [translator's note]". The measure of these values is their respective subversive potential for use in bringing about "a transformation of history into a totally different form of time", for producing what Foucault calls "a countermemory", an historical form of writing that "severs [history's] connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model".[50]

Foucault is following Nietzsche's advice in the second of his untimely meditations, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" against the "historical culture" of latecomers. Characterised by the backward glance that sees the contemporary moment as the culmination of a historical process and therefore increasingly bereft of further possibilities, Nietzsche contrasts this overburdened historical sense of belatedness with the possibility of emulating the cheerful vitality of the unhistorical Greeks. Hegelian dialectics is targeted by Nietzsche as the worst manifestation of this unhealthy approach to history. "The belief that one is a latecomer of the ages is, in

any case, paralysing and depressing: but it must appear dreadful and devastating when such a belief one day by a bold inversion raises this latecomer to godhood as the true meaning and goal of all previous events, when his miserable condition is equated with a completion of world-history." The Hegelian self is the individual as cultural formation whose backward glance comprehends itself as the self-revelation of a historical process made sovereign, "so that for Hegel the climax and terminus of the world-process coincided with his own existence in Berlin". In the wake of Hegel all further possibilities take on the appearance of being merely "a musical coda to the world-historical rondo or, even more properly, as superfluous".[51] But even the "late-born" may still find salvation, Nietzsche advises, as long as they can create a way of living which allows them forget their lateness, that guarantees there will be those who follow and who will see them rather as "first-born".[52]

Likewise, in Foucault's approach to history, the production of a countermemory is a work of effacement.[53] The sovereign unified self is eclipsed, leaving only the ambiguous shadows of contingencies, discontinuities and accidents in which there thrives a manifold otherness. It is in order to broach this realm that the unified self that seeks knowledge and certainty through representations is to be sacrificed through experiences of experimentation. The identity which is effaced is this "weak identity, which we attempt to support and to unify under a mask", which has already become parodic. When the mask is erased we find an identity ravaged by its own otherness, a plural nonidentity, in which "countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and dominate one another".[54] The virtue of the "good historian, the genealogist", Foucault declares, will be in knowing "what to make of this masquerade". Foucault, who one may reasonably imagine aspired to be such a historian, proposes an historical form of writing that, while being more uninhibited relative to its traditional counterpart, will also be more effective by not taking itself too seriously and revelling in the carnival of masks. Such history

> will push the masquerade to its limit and prepare the great carnival of time where masks are constantly reappearing. No longer the identification of our faint individuality with the solid identities of the past, but our "unrealization" through the excessive choice of identities—Frederick of Hohenstuafen, Caesar, Jesus, Dionysus, and possibly Zarathustra. Taking up these masks, revitalizing the buffoonery of history, we adopt an identity whose unreality surpasses that of God, who started the charade.[55]

With the face of a unified identity wiped out in an explosion of laughter, Nietzsche's carnival of disguises fundamentally challenges the seriousness of the subject of

knowledge as a disinterested spectator who diligently records facts. The masks worn by "the will to knowledge [*savoir*]" are many: "instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice". What Foucault calls the rancour of the will to knowledge destroys and subverts, reveals injustice where we expected to find righteousness, disrupts us at those moments where we hoped to find our greatest solace. This rancorous will to knowledge demands that we take transgression as a counter-discourse; it produces a countermemory that frees us to a bacchanalia of identities. Foucault finally likened the demands of this will to knowledge to those of a religion: "Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves, calls us to the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge [*connaissance*] [translator's note]".[56]

Allan Stoekl has commented on what to him is a sinister resonance in this formulation. Foucault takes as a necessity a subject willing to experiment on itself in a religion of sacrifice where the experimental subject "is nothing other than his own sacrificial victim". Tracing a tradition of sacred violence descending from Durkheim and Mauss, both of whom "presented a sacred violence that led from the act of the priest (as representative) to the well-being and reinvigoration of the community", Stoekl sees in Foucault "a knowledge–power that short-circuits, that tears the priestly (sacrificial) subject first from any possibility of a unified community and its history (instituted under the sign of a pure Truth), and then from himself, from the very inevitability of his own coherency and integrity".[57]

The sacrifice in question anticipates Foucault's development of more explicitly political analyses regarding subject-formations. Foucault transposes into the practice of historical writing that which he finds in the sacrifice of the author in literature. In the midst of Foucault's genealogical survey of the "author function" in "What is an Author?", originally published two years prior to the Nietzsche essay cited above, he observes how the activity of writing

> has become linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life: it is now a voluntary effacement which does not need to be represented in books, since it is brought about in the writer's very existence. The work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author's murderer, as in the cases of Flaubert, Proust, and Kafka.[58]

Foucault concludes his analysis of the author function by suggesting that the aim of such a re-examination of "the privileges of the subject" in the functioning of

authorship is not that of reinstating "the theme of an originating subject but to grasp the subject's points of insertion, modes of functioning, and system of dependencies".[59] Such analyses will give rise to questions such as:

> How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules? In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analysing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.[60]

Yet, prior to his enacting of genealogical countermemory in works such as *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault calls for an experimentation that will sacrifice the author and the subject of knowledge to a discourse developing "in the anonymity of a murmur".[61] This figure of anonymity, echoing Blanchot, anticipates Foucault's preoccupation with power in the 1970s. It is during this intense confrontation with power (to be explored in the next chapter) that it seemed as if an individual named Foucault no longer mattered in terms of authorship and it was more a case of books determined by the very distributions and formations of knowledge–power provoking an investigation. But behind all the strategic questions of such an investigation "we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an indifference: What difference does it make who is speaking?"[62]

The stratagem of indifference is raised in an interview conducted with Raymond Bellour in 1967, attempting to deal with the problematic reception of *The Order of Things* and Foucault's other historical works, already anticipating some of the methodological comments he would make in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* a few years later and in the essays cited above.[63] Foucault suggests that there is something arbitrary and fictitious in the kind of archival structuring his works impose on historical materials. As Bellour comments, "history is thus directly tied into the infinity of its archives—hence into the meaninglessness that characterises all infinity—and, at the same time, captured in models whose formal character reveals with its very logic the meaninglessness of all internal and circular closure".[64] In writing history, Foucault's political gesture is to keep his distance from the familiarization of this meaninglessness into a form of historical writing which attempts to minimise any irony about its status as truth and truth's implicit unfolding in history. Against this possibility, a work like *The Order of Things* and the contingencies and discontinuities in its specific selections of historical material does not have as its aim the reconstitution of some "immanent secret", but instead

> treats the text as a set of elements (words, metaphors, literary forms, groups of narratives) among which one can bring out absolutely new relations, insofar as they have not been controlled by the writer's design and are made possible only by the work itself as such. The formal relations that one discovers in this way are not present in anyone's mind; they don't constitute the latent content of the statements, their indiscreet secret. They are a construction, but an accurate construction provided that the relations described can actually be assigned to the material treated. We've learned to place people's words in relationships that are still unformulated, said by us for the first time, and yet objectively accurate.[65]

From this set of methodological assumptions, a historical work such as *The Order of Things* may be seen as "a pure and simple fiction: it is a novel, but it is not I who invented it, it is the relationship of our age and its epistemological configuration with that whole mass of statements. So the subject is, in fact, present in the whole book, but it is the anonymous 'one' who speaks today in everything that is said".[66]

Gilles Deleuze, whose valorization of nomadic thought overlapped significantly with Foucault's own concerns during the 1970s, suggests that Foucault's restatement of his historical approach as it culminates in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* focuses on the mobile diagonal line of "statements".[67] As Deleuze explains: "Statements are not words, phrases or propositions, but rather formations thrown up by the corpus in question only when the subjects of the phrase, the objects of the proposition and the signifieds of words *change in nature*: they then occupy the place of the 'One speaks' and become dispersed throughout the opacity of language."[68] This approach, which Deleuze claims inhabits all of Foucault's work, is the rigorous enactment of a paradox whereby "the language coagulates around a corpus only in order to facilitate the distribution or dispersion of statements and to stand as the rule for a 'family' [of statements] that is naturally dispersed". Furthermore, Deleuze suggests that in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault "offers us less a discourse on his method than the poem of his previous works, and reaches the point where philosophy is necessarily poetry, the severe poetry of what is said, which subsumes both non-sense and the greatest profundities". Foucault's works are therefore on the one hand indistinguishable from fictions because "statements resemble dreams and are transformed as in a kaleidoscope, depending on the corpus in question and the diagonal line being followed". On the other hand, Foucault "can also claim that he has written only what is real, and used what is real, for everything is real in the statement, and all reality in it is openly on display".[69] It is this "rarefied universe" of the "archaeologist–archivist", the space traversed by the formation of "a transversal

LIBRARY MONASH

or mobile diagonal line" that Deleuze suggests has an affinity with serial compositions.[70]

Foucault's intimations of an immanent apocalypse that will bring about a post-Enlightenment culture through contact with a poetic madness or some other kind of transgressive experience enacting the end of Man recedes in the course of the 1970s. Foucault moves from the rhetoric of staging the encounter with the modernist sublime of avant-garde writing, in which the rational subject of humanism confronts the madness or transgression it excludes, toward an encounter with the very formations of power and knowledge which produce madness and other sites of possible transgression as objects for control and manipulation. And yet, as Michael Janover has noted, despite no longer making direct references to "the saving power" of the transgressive sublime in his work after 1972, it remained pertinent as a model for thinking outside the limits of conventional philosophical categories, and the "experiments in crossing over from philosophy to experience, from familiar order to strange disorder, remained central as models in Foucault's own thinking".[71]

In terms of offering a critique of the current configurations of power, in so far as Foucault's critical strategies relied on an excessive or hyperbolic evocation of an impending apocalyptic event, his writings often seemed to lack concrete critical potential. Furthermore, Foucault's invocation of a poetic madness often seemed to suffer from an overly romantic and nostalgic belief that what psychiatric practice had confined in the object it sought to manage under the name of mental illness had obliterated some quasi-essential good within madness itself that could somehow be restored.[72] Jacques Derrida makes a similar point in his detailed and complex critique of *Madness and Civilization*, originally delivered as a lecture in 1963.[73] Derrida takes issue with Foucault's apparent claim, expressed most directly in the preface to this book, in which he states that his aim was not to write the history of a psychiatric language, "that monologue of reason *about* madness" that renders madness silent, but "the archaeology of that silence".[74] According to Derrida, this amounts to the claim to have written something like "a history of madness *itself*, that is madness speaking on the basis of its own experience and under its own authority", prior to its confinement by rationality in knowledge and therefore no

longer inscribed within the language of reason but allowed to speak for itself.[75] In this regard, Derrida observes, "Foucault wanted madness to be the *subject* of his book in every sense of the word: its theme and its first-person narrator, its author, madness speaking about itself".[76] The realism of this project, to allow the reality of madness its own voice as if it were the book's subject, makes the book a kind of medium or conduit for the communication of madness in such a way as to entangle its project in logical contradiction and a problem of representation. The attempt to break the confinement of madness within reason takes place only as a revolution within reason, Derrida argues:

> It is a question, therefore, of escaping the trap or objectivist naïveté that would consist in writing a history of untamed madness, of madness as it carries itself and breathes before being caught and paralysed in the nets of classical reason, from within the very language of classical reason itself, utilizing the concepts that were the historical instruments of the capture of madness—the restrained and restraining language of reason. Foucault's determination to avoid this trap is constant. It is the most audacious and seductive aspect of his venture, producing its admirable tension. But it is also, with all seriousness, the *maddest* aspect of his project.[77]

Derrida's critique hinges on a passage in the original French edition of *Madness and Civilization.*[78] The passage suggests the language of poetic madness had been dispelled by Descartes in his *Meditations on First Philosophy.* This occurs through Descartes' recourse to a reason that could master the threat of madness in the deployment of a hyperbolic doubt that knows, despite its own extravagance, that it is not the confused and illegitimate extravagance of madness.[79] The philosopher, by virtue of his or her reason, is able to doubt and is therefore certain of being unlike the lunatic who remains incapable of doubting or testing his or her own certainties. Descartes' decision thereby inaugurates the philosopher's (but not only the philosopher's) rigid demarcation of madness as that which is outside reason. This event of mastery was part of a complex social process whereby the exclusion of madness was institutionalised in order to confine, control, domesticate and silence it and eventually make it an object for a psychiatric knowledge that claimed the capacity to cure this dysfunction and liberate the sufferer. Foucault seems to suggest that it may be possible to master the undoing of this mastery in order to once more allow madness a sovereignty capable of subverting the certainties of rational discourse, to demonstrate the proximity of the absolute certainty of not being mad to madness and the possibility of a radical interruption of philosophical inquiry.

I shall not attempt to rehearse Derrida's complex critical performance here in regard to Foucault or the contestation of the significance of the passage from Descartes' *Meditations*. What is important for my purposes is that Derrida argues that rather than disrupting the distinction of reason/unreason, placing it firmly in question in an undecidable way, Foucault's own hyperbolic gesture, "a powerful gesture of protection and internment" and also a "Cartesian gesture for the twentieth century", ends up reinforcing the implacable logic of the metaphysical decision he struggles to undo (to outdo).[80] "The attempt to write the history of the decision, division, difference runs the risk of construing the division as an event or a structure subsequent to the unity of an original presence, thereby confirming metaphysics in its fundamental operation", writes Derrida.[81]

During the long interval between Derrida's "Cogito and the History of Madness" and Foucault's direct response to it in 1972, "My Body, This Paper, This Fire", Foucault's project had been refined and modified, his thinking of difference made even more surreal than it was in the evocation of a poetic madness in *Madness and Civilization*.[82] Foucault also began to give greater emphasis to historical discontinuities. As he states in the introduction to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, his *Madness and Civilization* "accorded far too great a place, and a very enigmatic one too, to what I called an 'experiment', thus showing to what extent one was still close to admitting an anonymous and general subject of history".[83] Later on in this book, while apparently making another self-criticism regarding *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault states with regard to the discontinuities in the study of an object such as madness: "We are not trying to reconstitute what madness itself might be, in the form in which it first presented itself to some primitive, fundamental, deaf, scarcely articulate experience, and in the form in which it was later organised (translated, deformed, travestied, perhaps even repressed) by discourses, and the oblique, often twisted play of their operations." But in making this qualification, which seeks to defuse any potential misunderstanding with regard to an attempt to naively possess that object called madness prior to its controlled dispersion in discourse, Foucault quickly adds that he in no way wishes to give up on the writing of philosophically informed historical works which remain attentive to prediscursive experiences, the sorts of experience that he continued to think harboured transformative potentials: "Such a history of the referent is no doubt possible; and I have no wish at the outset to exclude any effort to uncover and free these 'prediscursive' experiences from the tyranny of the text".[84]

MONASH LIBRARY

Leaving aside the details of the complex philosophical differences and interests dividing the respective readings of the Cartesian text which are at issue in "My Body, This Paper, This Fire", the measure of Foucault's distance from Derrida's approach pertains to this "tyranny of the text" that Foucault still hopes to avoid and circumvent. In the following passage, Foucault suggests there is something ethically or politically debilitating in Derrida's strategies of textualizing the reading of texts:

> I will not say that it is a metaphysics, metaphysics itself or its closure which is hiding in this "textualization" of discursive practices. I'll go much farther than that: I shall say that what can be seen here so visibly is a historically well determined little pedagogy. A pedagogy that teaches the pupil there is nothing outside the text, but that in it, in its gaps, its blanks and its silences, there reigns the reserve of the origin; that it is therefore unnecessary to search elsewhere, but that here, not in words, certainly, but in the words under erasure, in their *grid*, the "sense of being" is said. A pedagogy that gives conversely to the master's voice the limitless sovereignty that allows it to restate the text indefinitely.[85]

What emerges in this passage and in the paper as a whole is a political concern for the specific political enactments that occur in texts and the possibility of political action that Foucault believes to be glossed over and stifled in Derrida's critical performance of indeterminacy in writing.[86] Foucault attacks Derrida's philosophical project as a performance in which nothing exists outside the movement of deferring and differing in textuality. What Foucault fails to answer in his reply to Derrida however, what he tries to circumvent by accusing Derrida of something worse than metaphysics, is whether his own project is metaphysically encumbered and thereby debilitated from achieving its own goals. In particular, Foucault does not directly address whether the attempt to rescue the prediscursive experience of madness from the confinement he designates Descartes as inaugurating in philosophical discourse is not itself punctuated with metaphysical assumptions.

There is an Hegelian lesson in the question of an escape from metaphysics for Derrida, as he points out in the "Cogito" paper: "The revolution against reason, in the historical form of classical reason (but the latter is only a determined example of Reason in general. And because of this oneness of Reason the expression 'history of reason' is difficult to conceptualise, as is also, consequently, a 'history of madness'), the revolution against reason can be made only within it, in accordance with a Hegelian law to which I myself was very sensitive in Foucault's book, despite the absence of any precise reference to Hegel".[87] Foucault's comments in his inaugural

lecture at the *Collège de France* on December 2, 1970, suggest that at this time at least, although within the context of a much broader research program, he was not completely unaware or unconcerned with the problem Derrida raised almost a decade before. Having set out a program of research which sought to exceed the limits of Hegelian dialects, Foucault makes the following remarks:

> But truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.[88]

This reference to Hegel takes place within the context of an *hommage* to Jean Hyppolite, whom he praises for having "tirelessly explored, for us, and ahead of us, the path along which we may escape Hegel, keep our distance, and along which we shall find ourselves brought back to him, only from a different angle, and then, finally, be forced to leave him behind, once more".[89] Perhaps part of the price that Foucault would have to pay for wanting to distance himself from Hegel would be a continuing embarrassment at the Hegelianism that survived in his early work on madness.[90]

How distant is this anticipation of a vicious circle in Foucault's political strategies of reversal from Derrida's relation to Hegel? While Derrida insists on an incalculable ethical preparation for the political, Foucault, though perhaps aware of the concern Derrida raises, feels compelled to act. There is a passionate urgency in Foucault that is alien to Derrida's world, to make a specific difference regardless of the implacable logic whose limits it constantly runs up against and risks repeating.[91] Unlike Adorno, whose negative dialectics were a critique of Hegel through an intensification of the dialectic that was not purely anti-Hegelian, Foucault's thinking seeks to push dialectics toward a rupture which is explicitly contra Hegel. Foucault wants to overcome Hegel, to take leave of him and thereby liberate difference from its confinement within the implacably identitarian logic of dialectical labour.[92] As late as 1972, in one of the appendices to the new French edition of *Histoire de la folie*, Foucault suggests that the relation of our modernity to madness has the power to trouble reason, such that "the sharp image of reason will wither in flames".[93] In place of this sharp image of reason there emerges an "esoteric language", a self-referential economy of signification visible in both the excessive words of the insane

and the eruptions of transgressive literature. In both instances we may find languages which "enunciate in their utterances the linguistic code in which they enunciate those utterances", and thereby open onto an infinite reserve of signification exposed to "an absence of work".[94]

Foucault's thinking develops as a enigmatic style rather than a systematically developed method committed to cumulative self-clarification. The experience of reading his work evokes something of the unsettling self-referentiality he attributes to both modern literature and madness. What remains problematic is whether his style of historical–philosophical inquiry succeeds in terms of what it hopes to achieve and what motivates it. Despite Foucault's professed antipathy to dialectics and the kinds of continuous narratives it entails, there is a continuity in Foucault's own style. Does Foucault's style succeed in breaking totally with the steady advance of dialectics and the ontological presupposition of a unified punctual self? Or is it more the case that, in spite of his more hyperbolic claims, Foucault achieves the more modest task of interrupting and upsetting dialectical continuities, unmasking the points at which the unity of its subject threatens to break down? To totally break with continuity of experience would lead to an apocalyptic end without recourse; it would be final. But because Foucault continues writing his unsettling histories, there is perhaps in his own style of thought, not only in each work but spanning across each work, something like a negative imprint of the dialectical continuity he seeks to escape. The suspicion arises that Foucault's style of thought does not so much break with the dialectical continuity of experience but repeats its central gesture of *overcoming* at a higher level of abstraction, by encompassing the points at which it threatens to break down (madness, death, transgression). It is unlikely that someone like Foucault, trained by the Hegel scholar Hyppolite, was unaware about these (somewhat abstract and traditional philosophical) problems. Nonetheless, they rarely seem to enter into his "official" discourse in the terms suggested here. From the 1970s onward, the few brief references to Hegel continue to stress Foucault's wish to be done with dialectics, to have somehow moved beyond the play of contradictions and toward an analysis of power that does not obey its logic.[95] It's as if Foucault left these problems unresolved because he found them unresolvable, and thereby attempted a political strategy to confute that spectre of Hegelianism, an overcoming subjectivity that still haunts his thinking by directing historical analyses towards transgression rather than the resolution of contradictions.

In the following chapter I will consider Foucault's writings on power from the 1970s. In this period, Foucault distances himself from the literary and aesthetic issues which preoccupied him in earlier years, and yet, in the very transition to his new concerns there is a marked shift in style, one which he consciously used to great effect. I will explore the kind of continuity that is encountered in a style such as Foucault's, particularly with regard to his employment of this style to reconfigure the political goals of a critical appraisal of power-relations. The transition that occurs in his thought as is indicated by the performativity (and therefore aesthetics) of his style, demonstrates the extent to which he is both a critic and an heir of Enlightenment in spite of his early attempts to escape its ambit altogether.

MONASH LIBRARY

CHAPTER V

A Vision of Critical Resistance

> I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them sometimes—all the better. All the better. Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I'd like criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms.
>
> Michel Foucault, "The Masked Philosopher".

In the wake of Foucault's death, Gilles Deleuze published what would be an influential book-length study of his late friend's work. To complement the complex presentation of ideas in his *Foucault*, whose pages often hover between erudition and phantasmagoria, Deleuze also gave a number of interviews in which he reiterated the main points in that publication and explained his motivations for writing it. Deleuze's enthusiastic comments on Foucault are among the most original and idiosyncratic responses to his thought. While they may lack the kind of analytical rigour and critical testing other commentators demand be applied to Foucault's thought, Deleuze's "portrait" of Foucault has the advantage of an evocation that seeks not so much to interpret Foucault as to understand him through conjuring a "double".[1] Deleuze's effort seeks to correct what he believes has been an all too eager and malicious tendency to latch onto some aspect of Foucault's work in order to criticize and dismiss it in isolation. The implication of Deleuze's antipathy to this sort of approach to Foucault's work is that it neglects the necessarily imaginative rendering required to fully visualize his enigmatic and elusive lifework.[2] In the case of Deleuze's rendition, Foucault, the thinker and his thought, are evoked within a horizon of friendship lost and the shared aspirations that once animated their philosophical affinity. In his avowedly vitalist account of Foucault's life and thought, Deleuze stresses that what interests him is the "whole", meaning by this the logic of transitions through which Foucault's work (as both thought and life) moves and which he feels have not been properly understood.[3] It is only with an eye to the whole of Foucault's work, Deleuze explains, that

> you see that some element that seems less convincing than others is an absolutely essential step in his exploration, his alchemy, and that he wouldn't have reached the new revelation you find so astonishing if he hadn't followed the path on which you hadn't initially seen the need for this or that detour . . . You have to take the work as a whole, to try and follow rather than judge it, see where it branches out in different directions, where it gets bogged down, moves forward, makes a

MONASH LIBRARY

> breakthrough; you have to accept it, welcome it, as a whole. Otherwise you just won't understand it at all.[4]

In arguing that the "crises and abrupt shifts" that punctuate the logic of Foucault's thought "were the mark of its creativity, the mark of its ultimate consistency", Deleuze is attempting to render the *movement* or *dynamic* of Foucault's thought in postdialectical terms, as a series of seismic crises rather than a stable evolution.[5] The movement from an attention to the formal analysis of knowledge–archives to the "play of forces" of power–diagrams is not one toward a higher synthesis but the opening up or invention of another dimension in Foucault's thinking, an attention to "the nonformal element running between or beneath different forms of knowledge".[6] Deleuze illustrates this developmental logic by making a reference to Leibniz:

> You think you've got to port, but then find yourself thrown back out onto the open sea . . . That's particularly true in Foucault's case. His thought's constantly developing new dimensions that are never contained in what came before. So what is it that drives him to launch off in some direction, to trace out some—always unexpected—path? Any great thinker goes through crises: they set the rhythm of his thought.[7]

According to Deleuze, "once one steps outside of what's been thought before, once one ventures outside what's familiar and reassuring, once one has to invent new concepts or unknown lands, then methods and moral systems break down and thinking becomes, as Foucault puts it, a 'perilous act,' a violence whose first victim is oneself".[8] The year 1968, Deleuze claims, marked an important crisis in Foucault's work. If, as Deleuze contends, *Madness and Civilization* was the product of an earlier crisis, which led to a "conception of knowledge" that culminated in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, then this culmination also marked the moment of an "impasse" and the onset of a new crisis. In the wake of 1968 came the political activism that drew Foucault to the formation of the Prison Information Group and the analyses of the microphysics of power developed fully in *Discipline and Punish*.[9]

It would seem that in the aftermath of this crisis, specific references to an impending apocalypse, a feature of Foucault's writings during the 1960s, became more scarce and in the course of the 1970s disappeared altogether. Nevertheless, the monolithic image of power's microscopic and inescapable infiltration–dispersion throughout the social and individual body, especially in its most sustained presentation in *Discipline and Punish*, arguably retained something of the apocalyptic gesture alongside a great deal of outrage and passion against the illusions justice surrounds

itself with. Late in his life, Foucault would specifically repudiate the apocalyptic tendency and stress that one should be wary of the habit of seeing in the conditions of the present some sort of final crisis. The belief that we are facing an apocalyptic present was a habit of thought Foucault believed to be inherited from Hegel, a habit he believed could be overcome without in fact repeating it. As Foucault explains it, this habit entails

> the analysis of the present as being precisely, in history, a present of rupture, or of high point, or of completion or of a returning dawn, etc. The solemnity with which everyone who engages in philosophical discourse reflects on his own time strikes me as a flaw. I can say so all the more firmly since it is something I have done myself; and since, in someone like Nietzsche, we find this incessantly—or, at least, insistently enough.[10]

At this late stage in his thinking, Foucault came to see the prudence for an analysis of the present that retained a certain "modesty", even if one believed as Foucault did that the present moment was deserving of particular attention and its actuality remained the focus of critical engagements.[11] This modesty was undoubtedly lacking in Foucault's earlier writings, in which he was caught up in a kind of apocalyptic fervour very much in the modernist avant-garde style. Left-leaning and self-consciously radical, Foucault elaborated a rhetoric of risk which in reality was primarily risking irrelevancy, bringing to mind the posture of a Zarathustra attempting to convert the last men.[12] Blind to the political complexities emerging in the world, and to the ways it could itself be susceptible to re-enforcing elitist dogmas, literary avant-garde writing was the locus of a form of critique as popular in American academic departments of literary theory today as they were amongst the radical Parisian intelligentsia in 1968. The transgressive creed regarding literary worth could itself be a form of constraint, a disciplinary accretion of expert texts reinforcing the fiction of a literary avant-garde consciousness set apart from the debased consciousness of the modern masses.[13]

An apocalypse of sorts did occur in the 1960s, but it was not the one imagined by those who were heralding it. Having made the transition to thinking in terms of specific political struggles in the nexus between relations of power and their truth effects, Foucault in 1977 denounced "the writer" and the "whole relentless theorisation of writing which we saw in the 1960s", a phenomenon moreover, which was the "swansong" not only of the writer, but the universal intellectual who writes in order to represent all. In this process of the decline of avant-garde writing

MONASH LIBRARY

as a political model, its own apocalypse rather than a global one, the writer, argues Foucault, "was fighting for the preservation of his political privilege; but the fact that it was precisely a matter of theory, that he needed scientific credentials, founded in linguistics, semiology, psychoanalysis, that this theory took its references from the direction of Saussure, or Chomsky, etc., and that it gave rise to such mediocre literary products, all this proves that the activity of the writer was no longer the focus of things".[14]

In 1975, Foucault spoke about the functions of literature in contemporary society, drawing the connection between the avant-garde practice of literature and its institutional validation within universities since the nineteenth century. Literature operates on the basis of "an interplay of selection, sacralization, and institutional validation, of which the university is both the operator and the receiver".[15] Foucault's concerns here are to extend the reflection on the "intransitivity of literature" conducted by writers like Barthes or Blanchot. Beyond the attempt to debunk the "expressive character of literature" so as to analyse literature as a thing primarily concerned with its own being, Foucault poses a further stage of "unravelling the totality of sacralizations of which literature has been the object". To not go this extra step, Foucault cautions, risks reinforcing the sacralization of literature once again. This tendency, which played itself out during the 1960s, witnessed the appropriation of themes from writers such as Barthes and Blanchot in order to conduct an "exaltation, both ultra-lyrical and ultra-rationalizing, of literature as a structure of language capable of being analysed in itself and on its own terms".[16] The political dimension was ignored or reduced to the intrasitivity of a writing that was itself essentially a subversive activity which made the writer a defacto revolutionary, a situation Foucault thought amounted to a "political blocage [sic]".[17]

In 1971, and with memories of the 1968 revolts still vivid, Foucault conducted a discussion under the auspices of *Actuel* with a group of *lycée* students on their experience of repressive discipline.[18] Foucault suggested to the students that humanist principles of social organization, and more specifically in the pedagogic context of an educative institution, those who teach and set themselves up as the representatives of humanism, act to circumvent "*the desire for power*". What Foucault recommended, leaving aside the possibility of "political struggle" in the form of "class warfare", is "the destruction of the subject as a pseudosovereign (that

LIBRARY MONASH

is, through an attack on 'culture': the suppression of taboos and the limitations and divisions imposed upon the sexes; the setting up of communes; the loosening of inhibitions with regard to drugs; the breaking of all the prohibitions that form and guide the development of a normal behaviour)"; in short, "to all those experiences which have been rejected by our civilization or which it accepts only within literature".[19] The discussion concluded with Foucault's assertion that the imagining of utopia and its theoretical elaborations (the products of writers acting as universal intellectuals) may turn out to be another way in which the current system of repressions sought to perpetuate itself. What he opposes to this was "actual experiences", and instead makes the heterotopic suggestion that "the rough outlines of a future society is supplied by the recent experiences with drugs, sex, communes, other forms of consciousness, and other forms of individuality. If scientific socialism emerged from the *Utopias* of the nineteenth century, it is possible that a real socialization will emerge, in the twentieth century, from *experiences*."[20]

It is in this way that Foucault seems to distance himself from the radical literary modernism primarily concerned with language and its being. Foucault's comments during the 1970s do seem to suggest that he disavows the transgressive aestheticism of literary theory by claiming that it experienced its last gasp rather than being the herald of a new, post-Enlightenment culture. John Rajchman has made a persuasive argument for such a break in Foucault's thinking and for reading his comments on literary theory during the 1970s as "autobiographical" and constituting "an unspoken self-rebuke". Such remarks seemed to be an admission of a certain distancing from his identification with and celebration of an avant-garde modernism. Rather than being the herald of a dawning new culture, this avant-garde modernism had experienced its swansong, and proved incapable of awakening from a dreamy slumber which prevented it from properly comprehending the political arrangements of the existing culture.[21]

If Foucault's early writings on madness and transgressive experience in literature had harboured an overly romantic conception of political action, it would be difficult to conclude that this romanticism was finally shaken off by his push beyond the theoretical domain of avant-garde writing into practices and experiences of power. There is a great deal of Romantic naiveté in his early experiments with post-Marxist models for effective political action. The subsequent disenchantment of his thinking on power, which increasingly reflected the cynicism of its vision of power

relations, did not see the progressive amelioration of this naiveté. Rather, it deepened, as the ironic gesture of a critique knowing all to well how little it can ultimately challenge the order of things through an increasingly radical nominalism courted its own self-elimination. Nor was it the case that Foucault's thinking extricated itself totally, if this indeed was his aim, from the workings of the aesthetic and the redemptive horizon which it carries in its modern institution. In the wake of the revolutionary enthusiasms of the early 1970s, the redemptive horizon toward which Foucault's critique of subjectivity was directed ceased to be enacted in explicitly apocalyptic terms. Furthermore, the very possibility of redemption (either as apocalyptic experience or revolutionary convulsion) became increasingly problematic and marginal to the objectives articulated in Foucault's analytic of power. Nevertheless, the overall structure of this redemptive horizon remained more or less in place even if it did not figure in the stated objectives of his critique. The apocalyptic tone of a transgressive writing seeking effacement is displaced by a cynical vision of power in which transgression is retained as an experience of the limits of an impersonal power conducted through the equally impersonal possibilities of resistance. Foucault also expands writing into the nondiscursive, the writing which is not written in the common alphabet as marks on paper but in the diagrammatics of a power whose forces arrange the forms of bodies, spaces, architectures, practices, visions, maps, charts, and so on, through various technological apparatuses. In opposition to the dispersed ubiquity of power, nodes of resistance could be still located, among which Foucault counted the continuing subversiveness of limit-experiences. Consequently, any talk of a rupture in Foucault's thinking would have to be the kind of rupture that could not escape the repetition of the Hegelian logic of overcoming.[22]

During the early 1970s Foucault was interested in exploring new forms of political action through which he sought to retain the possibility of extraphilosophical and nondiscursive experiences that he had previously explored in transgressive literature. While the hyperbolically heroic and apocalyptic terms of earlier writings were scaled down, Foucault's political orientation exhibited a concentrated passion and urgency. As Foucault's writing became more disciplined and austere in the presentation of the nexus between power and knowledge in concrete practices, the image of a heroic artist–intellectual teetering on the verge of madness, or some other

MONASH LIBRARY

version of the abyss, was gradually abandoned. As Blanchot has noted in his generally admiring commentary on Foucault's work, "Foucault reproached himself for having been seduced by the idea that there is a depth to madness, that it constitutes a fundamental experience situated outside history and to which poets (artists) can serve as witnesses, victims, or heroes".[23]

Following this re-alignment, knowledge and expertise become central concerns for Foucault in a clash of power-relations rather than the contestation of pure linguistic meanings, and dissecting the dynamics of power in concrete practices became a more pressing issue than language experiments and evocations of apocalypse. As Foucault declared in one of his 1970s interviews: "The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning."[24] Blanchot also notes the transformation beginning with *Discipline and Punish*, where we see "the emergence of the political in the work and life of Foucault", marking the "transition from the study of isolated discursive practices to the study of the social practices that constitute their underpinning".[25] But this transformation was already in progress prior to the publication of *Discipline and Punish*, and the preparation for that study can be seen most vividly in Foucault's involvement in setting up the Prison Information Group (*Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons*, henceforth GIP).

Foucault's work in the GIP, as much an experiment in alternative political strategies as a passionate experience of resistance to what was perceived to be the intolerable exercise of power in the prison system, began in February 1971 in the intellectual and political aftermath of May 1968. Although May 1968 was often the reference point for Foucault's political thinking at this time, he would later claim it was initially his experience in Tunisia in March 1968 that radically altered his outlook and politicized his thinking. Upon his return to France, Foucault recalls, the endless bickering and splintering over Marxist theory disappointed him. It was the example of personal physical commitment and specific strategic action he encountered in Tunisia that informed his engagement with the GIP.[26] The GIP activities set the scene for much of Foucault's work in the 1970s, an attempt to think and act politically without a unified political theory.[27] Several months after his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in December 1970, Foucault and his partner Daniel Defert organized a collective action group composed of a diverse array of left political and intellectual actors including Maoist militants from the recently outlawed *Gauche*

Prolétarienne.[28] The GIP sought to accumulate information through questionnaires directed toward those with firsthand experience of prisons and to disperse this alternative knowledge on the prison system by publishing a series of pamphlets documenting the group's findings. The group also directed protest actions outside particularly notorious prisons and orchestrated a media campaign designed to both pressure the government and make its concerns all the more visible. In all its activities the group remained remarkably fluid, spontaneous and improvisational. Throughout its short duration (1971–1973), Foucault committed a great deal of energy and time to the group's activities and administration.[29]

In his discussion with Foucault during the GIP's second and final year of activities, Deleuze praises Foucault for being "the first—in your books and in the practical sphere—to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others".[30] In this discussion, the theory/practice distinction is collapsed into a general spectrum of action. Rather than practice being the straightforward application of a theory (or vice versa), according to Deleuze we instead encounter "theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks".[31] In the case of the GIP, the objective of action was to create the conditions which would allow the prisoners to speak for themselves:

> A theorising intellectual, for us, is no longer a subject, a representing or representative consciousness. Those who act and struggle are no longer represented, either by a group or a union that appropriates the right to stand as their conscience. Who speaks and acts? It is always a multiplicity, even within the person who speaks and acts. All of us are "groupuscules."[32]

The traditional intellectual who attempts to represent others is an anachronism at best, at worst the agent of a system of power which asserts the right to speak on behalf of others and to know what is best for them. Theory as a practice is, as Deleuze suggests, "like a box of tools", to be used or made to function in regional contexts to disrupt the totalizing effects of knowledge, always ready to redeploy itself, remaining mobile and multiple.[33] In the case of the prison system, the task was to create the opportunity, not only for the inmates to confiscate power, if only for a moment by speaking about their experience of penality, but also for those who have worked within the system of power to speak up as specific intellectuals about what they were required to do on its behalf.[34]

In strategic terms, the penal system presents the most naked manifestation of power, only thinly disguised by the pale justifications of good prevailing over evil, and order over anarchy. Because of this naked excess, the power play of penality is in a relatively visible state and therefore is an appropriate site to attack a form of power which is to be found in other locations throughout society. The penal system reveals "the cynicism with which power is exercised as power, in the most archaic, puerile, infantile manner", and simultaneously "justified as moral force". In prisons, power does not hide but "reveals itself as tyranny pursued into the tiniest details; it is cynical and at the same time pure and entirely 'justified,' because its practice can be totally formulated within the framework of morality".[35]

The antireformist orientation of the GIP is perhaps best summed up in Foucault's statement during his contemporaneous discussion with *lycée* students. Foucault states that the group's interventions ultimately aim "not to extend the visiting rights of prisoners to thirty minutes or to procure flush toilets for the cells, but to question the social and moral distinction between the innocent and the guilty. And if this goal was to be more than a philosophical statement or a humanist desire, it had to be pursued at the level of gestures, practical actions, and in relation to specific situations".[36] Dreaming of a multiple and mobile revolutionary politics, Foucault adds that what is required is that we "attack an institution at the point where it culminates and reveals itself in a simple and basic ideology, in the notions of good and evil, innocence and guilt", and that we "attack the relationships of power through the notions and institutions that function as their instruments, armature, and armor".[37] It is only by directing the struggle against power that "all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment, all who find it intolerable, can begin to struggle on their own terrain and on the basis of their proper activity (or passivity). In engaging in a struggle that concerns their own interests, whose objectives they clearly understand and whose methods only they can determine, they enter into a revolutionary process".[38]

Even if this wish for revolutionary action was to ultimately remain dreamlike, its *gesture* nonetheless retained for Foucault something real and important that had to be maintained and exercised. Without ruling out revolutionary change, Foucault's aim remained not so much the imagining of an alternative system but the steadfast refusal of the current one no matter how intractable it seemed. The aim was to make visible and to resist the ways in which power's interplay with knowledge constituted

individuals as various kinds of subjects, to refuse the necessity of their being so constituted no matter how indispensable such measures appear to be. While the GIP did perhaps make some of the minute details of the workings of penal power visible, showing the extensive network in which this particular node of power operated, and to some extent blurred the moral and cognitive distinctions used to justify the power to punish, it was arguably no match for a highly adaptive system that continued to succeed through recourse to a discourse of reform.

Furthermore, within the struggle surrounding the penal system, Foucault identified internal problems which led it toward a dead end. Looking back at its demise from the vantage of the late 1970s, Foucault states that this demise occurred because of its incapacity to forge and build links with other struggles of resistance and also because it permitted itself "to be penetrated by a whole naive, archaic ideology which makes the criminal into an innocent victim and the pure rebel—society's scapegoat—and the young wolf of future revolutions".[39] Foucault would have to confront similar problems in his own writings about power–knowledge, both in the context of prisons and that of sexuality. What may be said initially is that in the aftermath of his involvement with the GIP and its eventual dissolution, Foucault's theory of power would become more cynical in its vision and the possibilities for resistance less revolutionary in scope, and increasingly ironic in its regard for the possibility of liberation.

Foucault's involvement in the GIP is directly linked to the emergence of what remains one of his most well-known and influential books, *Discipline and Punish*.[40] The genealogical countermemory enacted in this remarkable book is now a familiar story, depicting the emergence of a prison system that, rather than being a progressive humanization of justice, reveals the disconcerting linkage of the power and technical expertise of punishment. Disconcerting because what this prison system produces is not a more humane method of correcting infringements of the law so much as an integral structure with extensive links to other social institutions whose apparatuses are directed toward the surveillance, discipline and normalization of individuals. One of the central theses of the book is that contemporary prisons are production sites for the formation of delinquency, an identity which is simultaneously defined in depth against a background inscription

of normality by a series of disciplinary knowledges. What Foucault also does in this book is to elaborate the theory of power that was already in the making during his involvement with the GIP, a theory whose strategic significance is directed toward the present as a way of understanding the nexus between power and knowledge and to providing tools to combat it.[41]

Foucault does not theorize power as a property or possession but as a strategic "micro-physics of power" in which power is always exercised as if it were a perpetual combat, a war of forces. In power's application on bodies, "its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings", such that one should "decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess". Ultimately, one should envision this model of power as "a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory".[42] This theory of power allows for the possibility that power relations are never final or stable, that they constantly fluctuate and may be reversed, deflected, or deformed. For even those who nominally do not have power are invested with it, conduct and transmit power even as it forms them, and grapple against power even as it seeks to tighten its grip on them. Knowledge is not to be seen as something outside of these power relations but as part of its means and effects; power is an integral factor in the production of knowledge and cannot be suspended in order to procure a power-free zone to guarantee knowledge its serenity. For Foucault, "power and knowledge directly imply one another", and consequently, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations".[43]

"In short", Foucault states, "it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge."[44] Foucault's theory of power itself, and the genealogy of the prison system it produces, would therefore have to be a form of knowledge that resists the particular power relations it identifies as being so intolerable. It is an attempt to visualize power from within the very relations being visualized in such a way as to alter these relations, the exercise of power in order to intervene in its operations as one of the possibilities of its operations, and the production of other possibilities for further interventions. There

is therefore a performative dimension to Foucault's book, to both its theory of power and to the countermemory that it evokes, that does not itself figure in its pages but which is constantly enacted in their production. There is thus a lacuna in Foucault's work as to what sustains and distinguishes his vision of political resistance above the play of forces which otherwise prevail. This absence does not detract from the *tour de force* of *Discipline and Punish*, which remains, after all, a masterful performance of erudition and analysis that impresses upon the reader a compellingly austere image of the emergence of modern incarceration and its broader social implications. What this lacuna does suggest, however, is that there is something missing from the theory of power–knowledge Foucault relies upon which he either is unable or unwilling to articulate, let alone theorize, within its pages.[45]

This point is best illustrated by focussing on Foucault's discussion of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, both in *Discipline and Punish* and in a number of interviews and other texts which followed its publication.[46] Foucault's treatment of the panopticon is a succinct political allegory that encapsulates the essence of his countermemory in visualizing the power relations that produced our disciplinary society. In Foucault's account, the possibility of panopticism emerged at a specific moment

> that saw the transition from historico–ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to the scientifico–disciplinary mechanisms, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible . . . when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented.[47]

Panopticism, an architecture, but more importantly a diagrammatic arrangement of space and organization of visibility, is integral to the effective and economical production, maintenance and policing of disciplines. It follows from a moment when architecture became a central concern for a political technology seeking to maintain civil order, "the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies".[48] The prototype for this reflection may be seen in the arrangements set in place in the plague-stricken town that sought to produce "the utopia of the perfectly governed city". The plague provided "the trial in the course of which one may define ideally the exercise of disciplinary power".[49]

MONASH LIBRARY

The greatest virtue of the panopticon devised by Bentham is its remarkably simple and efficient design principle, and the devastating power of surveillance it is capable of inducing at such little cost. Foucault's initial description is worth quoting at length:

> at the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions—to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide—it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.[50]

Each individual is partitioned from all others, in effect itemized and catalogued. The power that keeps each in check is calculated to exert minimal force for maximum effect, such that it can become virtually automatic as to its functioning, relying on the individual her/himself to conduct a self-monitoring such that she/he "becomes the principle of [her or] his own subjection".[51] Knowing that at any moment she/he may be the object of surveillance, the individual behaves as if she/he were permanently under surveillance. Furthermore, enhancing its impersonality, anyone may operate this machine. It matters little who exercises the power of observation nor what motive brings this person to play this function, the power remains anonymous and impersonal: "the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of a philosopher who wishes to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing".[52] Apart from observing, the machine can also function as an experimental device, trialing new techniques, testing their effectiveness, and so forth. It can even be used to supervise and analyse its own operations. This veritable "laboratory of power" is therefore capable of indefinitely refining its efficiency and its capacity to penetrate into the smallest details, for "knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces of which power is exercised".[53]

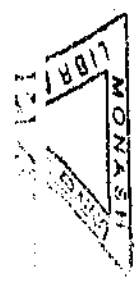
MONASH LIBRARY

Importantly, for Foucault, this device "must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men". Though Bentham presents it in the form of a particular self-enclosed institution, its true ingenuity is not that of a "dream building". Rather, "it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use".[54] The applications for its adaptation and usage are therefore limitless, its true destiny was not to be confined to a material building or edifice but to be dispersed in innumerable apparatuses in a generalized way, to render the social body more useful, efficient, and predictable. What is accomplished is the realization of the great potential already stored in the existing disciplines, which having already been elaborated in specific self-enclosed places such as schools or barracks could now be made "to function in a diffused, multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body".[55] The result of "this movement that stretches from the enclosed disciplines, a sort of social 'quarantine', to an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of 'panopticism'", is the formation of a "disciplinary society". This result is achieved not so much because disciplinary power eliminates all other forms of power, but because its forces have penetrated them and link them, "extending them and above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements".[56] As Foucault explains elsewhere, *Discipline and Punish* sought to illustrate how from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to our present day there has been "a veritable technological take-off in the productivity of power", ushering in a new economic distribution of power whose procedures "allowed the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted and 'individualised' through the entire social body".[57]

Regarding the control of the panopticon's central tower, Foucault was to conclude that Bentham was unable to resolve the problem of who should be entrusted to exercise its power, even though anybody could theoretically do so.[58] But perhaps a similar problem confronted Foucault himself. Having constructed a formidable image of a disciplinary society whose workings are based on the revolutionary

LIBRARY MONASH

technologies of surveillance epitomized by Bentham's panopticon, one wonders exactly what kind of gaze it is that animates Foucault's vision and what kind of knowledge it is that informs what he has to say. Deleuze has observed that the panopticon as a diagram is "a map, a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field". It is, moreover, "a machine that is almost blind and mute, even though it makes others see and speak".[59] Is one to suppose therefore that Foucault's book is not so much a personal effort but the product of one of those panoptic apparatuses whose proliferation he describes so vividly, but one which has been hijacked and turned back on its own historical conditions of possibility, to reveal a subversive countermemory not only of its own emergence but of all the other disciplinary mechanisms coexisting with it? More crudely, has Foucault (or merely some mechanism intersecting in the person called Foucault) attempted to take-over the central tower of the panopticon, to take over its gaze and privilege in order to monitor all the intolerable practices it has been responsible for so as to file a meticulous report? Even more crudely still, supposing Foucault actually did capture the central tower of this device which permits anyone the ambiguous privilege of observation, would it be the one place where Foucault could live out his long-held dream of anonymity? If so, what is the point of the exercise, what difference does it make? If visibility is a trap, in what way would Foucault's vision be liberating, let alone coherent?



Crudity aside, these questions do point to something troubling in Foucault's theory of power–knowledge even if they do not significantly contest the insights of his specific empirical analyses.[60] The seemingly inescapable brutality implied by Foucault's theory of power–knowledge provokes questions of this sort. Perturbed by these kinds of questions and doubts, Foucault begins to tackle the issues they point toward in a number of lectures and interviews from 1976 onwards. In a lecture delivered in 1976 at the Collège de France, Foucault in a retrospective mode looks back over the concerns of his courses over the past half decade and beyond, back to the 1960s. Addressing his audience, Foucault opens the lecture by stating that it had been his "desire to be finished with, and to somehow terminate a series of researches that have been our concern for some four or five years now, in effect, from the date of my arrival here, and which, I am well aware, have met with increasing difficulties, both for you and for myself". While noting that his researches over this period were related, Foucault admits that they have remained largely fragmentary, and that none of these fragments have proved conclusive or even have led anywhere

in particular. Diffuse and repetitive, recovering familiar territory, rearticulating the same themes and concepts, Foucault confronts a seemingly dispiriting situation:

> None of it does more than mark time. Repetitive and disconnected, it advances nowhere. Since indeed it never ceases to say the same thing, it perhaps says nothing. It is tangled up into an indecipherable, disorganised muddle. In a nutshell, it is inconclusive.[61]

Having faced this worst-case scenario, the rest of Foucault's lecture attempts to draw an affirmation. Perhaps it is for the best that his researches remained inconclusive, that they were not predetermined either with regard to place of origin or destination. At least by being provisional Foucault's researches enable others who have followed the trails he has pursued to take them in unforeseen directions, and permit Foucault himself to improvise as the need arises. Though fragmentary, these researches may still provide himself and others with unexpected opportunities to make something out of them. Foucault takes heart from the fact that in the past two decades it has been localized critical offensives which have had the most impact on social institutions and practices, exposing them in such a way as to make even the most secure among them seem much more vulnerable or fragile. Not only have global or systematic forms of critique (Foucault here cites Marxism and psychoanalysis as prime examples) fared less favourably, they have largely been a hindrance to criticism and struggle. In effect, it is these localized forms of criticism which indicate "an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established régimes of thought". What we have witnessed here, Foucault adds, is "an *insurrection of subjugated knowledges*".[62]

Aligning his own scattered genealogical productions with this insurrection of subjugated knowledges, Foucault claims that what they aim to achieve is "a painstaking rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts", to produce a knowledge capable of being used tactically in present struggles. At once "the combined product of an erudite knowledge and a popular knowledge", these genealogies only became possible once "the tyranny of globalising discourses with their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical *avant-garde* was eliminated".[63] This is all very well and good, but Foucault raises the possibility of a changed strategic situation, of a possible modification in the contest, a different relation of forces. The two-pronged question returns, what is the ultimate outcome of these piecemeal struggles, do they indeed have or need one? It

is a question which poses the circularity of the play of forces in power relations as he has thus far analysed them. And it is a question that Foucault himself poses:

> Is it not perhaps the case that these fragments of genealogies are no sooner brought to light, that the particular elements of the knowledge that one seeks to disinter are no sooner accredited and put into circulation, than they run the risk of re-codification, re-colonisation? In fact, those unitary discourses, which first disqualified and then ignored them when they made their appearance, are, it seems, quite ready now to annex them, to take them back within the fold of their own discourse and to invest them with everything this implies in terms of their effects of knowledge and power. And if we want to protect these only lately liberated fragments are we not in danger of ourselves constructing, with our own hands, that unitary discourse to which we are invited, perhaps to lure us into a trap, by those who say to us: "All this is fine, but where are you heading? What kind of unity are you after?"[64]

To avoid this trap and to clarify how his critique is at all possible Foucault attempts to develop his understanding of resistance to power. In an interview published the same year as the lecture cited above was presented, Foucault speaks of resistance as something always present in the social body, "in classes, groups and individuals themselves which in some sense escapes relations of power, something which is by no means a more or less docile or reactive primal matter, but rather a centrifugal movement, an inverse energy, a discharge". There is, Foucault would have it, "a certain plebeian quality or aspect . . . in bodies, in souls, in individuals, in the proletariat, in the bourgeoisie, but everywhere in a diversity of forms and extensions, of energies and irreducibilities".[65] Where relations of power arise, there too arise resistances, and "like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated into global strategies".[66] And yet, no matter how much Foucault attempts to clarify resistance, there remains a vicious circularity to his understanding of power which fails to account adequately for the specific performativity of his critique of power. Something more than relations of power is necessary in order to make sense of the enactment of resistance as critique in the person of the specific intellectual. The danger of a pure circularity appears to reduce resistance, as Allan Stoekl has observed, to a local struggle against oneself.[67]

What is unsettling in the circularity of power as theorized by Foucault is the cynical and ultimately absurd vision that it attempts to sustain and from which he attempts to draw an affirmation.[68] Foucault produces a form of critique so rationalized, so thoroughly purged of hope and the yearning for something better, that its only affirmative moment seems to be a liberation from critical opposition. Viewed in this

way, it is not so much that Foucault's theory of power is incoherent, one could say that in itself it is all too coherent. What makes no sense is why Foucault would hold to such a theory and what he hoped to achieve with it. It is as if only at the far reaches of disenchantment, in a reality that would effectively be unlivable, that Foucault expects to encounter an extraordinary affirmation. Instead, Foucault encounters the persistence of a performative subjectivity that can make the difference between a totally cynical vision and the possibility for an alternative. It is here, one might speculate, that the *saving* power of Nietzsche's teaching that one should "give style" to one's character began to come to the fore in Foucault's work on power. It would provide him with a version of discipline that does not normalize, and a form of legislation that, rather than masking power through right, might actually provide genuine moments of autonomy. In Nietzsche's teaching, this is an aesthetic task of self-creation and self-legislation

> practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed—both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable. In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste![69]

In the wake of the publication of *Discipline and Punish*, and the first volume of his history of sexuality, Foucault began to make significant modifications to his theory of power; one might even call it a phased strategic withdrawal. The five further volumes which were projected to continue the sexuality series never emerged as planned, and the two volumes that eventually were published abandoned the strategic analysis of power elaborated in the first volume. In 1984, Foucault would explain that it was due to "laziness" that he projected a series that presumed in advance what he would think in years to come and which condemned him to the boredom of its steady execution.[70] If Marx had called on philosophers to change the world rather than merely interpreting it, Foucault presented philosophy's task as preserving the possibility of changing one's mind.[71]

This transition happened even as Foucault continued to clarify his understanding of power and resistance, and perhaps it must ultimately be seen as the eventual outcome of this process of clarification. Foucault would stress that his analyses of modern power were not only inconclusive, but that he was only at the beginning of his researches into its minute operations and dynamics, only in the initial phases of explaining in its full complexity what had thus far remained largely neglected and unaccounted for. In committing himself to further clarification, Foucault would also stress that power was not the ultimate reference point or abstract principle for explaining every social and political phenomena.[72] These related modifications to Foucault's analyses of power point toward the emergence of the dominant themes of his late work.

Firstly, in response to what he perceived to be an undue fixation with his analysis of panopticism, Foucault began to stress that the technologies of power operative in modern societies cannot be reduced to those pertaining to visibility alone.[73] In addition, with reference to the panoptic metaphor, when asked whether there is any point in prisoners taking control of the central tower, Foucault answers in the affirmative, albeit as long as this is not "the final purpose of the operation".[74] In other words something more needs to happen other than a localized reversal of forces, though Foucault does not stipulate exactly what this more could be. Secondly, Foucault begins to seriously reconsider his vocabulary of struggles and strategies, rich in metaphors drawn from combat and conflict, and his view of politics as a form of attenuated warfare.[75] The first indications of this shift are given in the 1975–1976 lecture series at the Collège de France where Foucault begins to explore how and when it became possible to conceive of power relations in terms of warfare.[76] In the first lecture of this series (already cited above where Foucault attempts to put a positive spin on the inconclusiveness of his researches on power–knowledge), Foucault suggests that the notion of power relations as war requires "closer scrutiny", and must be either "considerably modified if not ultimately abandoned".[77] Thirdly, as the concern for bio-power gives way to the art of governmentality, some of the features of the ethical themes articulated in Foucault's late work begin to emerge.[78] In the broader sense of "government" Foucault would find the kind of relationship which is "proper to power". He would thereby finally get beyond the juridical and warlike modes of action (consensus/contract and struggle/violence), which rather than characterizing the necessary mode of action

MONASH LIBRARY

exercised in the power relation, are some of its optional instruments.[79] In this broad context, Foucault will also begin to speak about practices of freedom, to analyse the political stakes in exercising critique and reflect on the (im-)possibility of revolution.[80]

Deleuze's suggestion is that this shift was brought on by a crisis, as much personal as theoretical. Its onset is perhaps signalled by Foucault's articulation of the theory of power relations in volume one of *The History of Sexuality*, the play of forces in which he has seemingly trapped himself and his thinking.[81] According to Deleuze, Foucault poses this objection to himself in a marginal text dating from 1977, "The Life of Infamous Men", where once again he seems to repeat the familiar problem of a power–knowledge that stamps the lives of otherwise unexceptional and obscure individuals with the brand of infamy. In self-rebuke, according to Deleuze, Foucault poses the problem in the following passage:

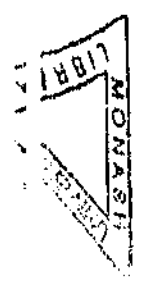
> that's just like you, always with the same incapacity to cross the line, to pass over to the other side, to listen to and make heard the language from elsewhere or from below; it is always the same choice, for the side of power, for what power says or of what it causes to be said.[82]

What emerges here, according to Deleuze, is the line of questioning that will ultimately result in a concern for a life-force that seeks to resist the brutal interventions of power and the normalizations imposed by knowledge. In the clash with power which brands individuals with infamy we can detect the intensity of life in its struggle with power, a concentration of energy in which an attempt is made "to utilise its forces or to escape its traps".[83] It was not enough for Foucault to invoke "foci of resistance" to power without giving an indication as to where these could be located. The reason why it takes him so long to do so, Deleuze suggests, is because Foucault had yet to invent this new dimension.[84]

Deleuze's concluding chapter to his *Foucault* sets out to demonstrate the emergence of a vitalism in Foucault's late work that nonetheless was implicated in all that came before. It is the idea of "folded force", invented by the Greeks as an aesthetics of existence, that would form the basis for Foucault's ethics, according to Deleuze, as "a dimension of subjectivity derived from knowledge and power without being dependent on them".[85] In resisting the constraints of knowledge and power, the "struggle for subjectivity presents itself . . . as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis".[86] The process of "subjectification" is a perpetual aesthetic exercise

of folding force in various ways, of "inventing new ways of existing, through optional rules, that can both resist power and elude knowledge, even if knowledge tries to penetrate them and power to appropriate them".[87] It is only in this aestheticizing mode, Deleuze argues, that life can find a way to exist amid the unendurable relations of force exerted by the circulation of power.[88]

Deleuze's reading addresses the issue of what to make of Foucault's analyses of power within the context of its problematic formulation and the transition to his latter concerns. It is a problem which other scholars enthusiastic about the direction of Foucault's work in the 1970s have had to face, namely the problem of whether they could accommodate the concerns of Foucault's late work, in particular the shift in emphasis from strictly sociopolitical and strategic problems to more personal ethical ones. For others, perhaps, the later work on ethics provides a way of alleviating some of the more problematic aspects of Foucault's theory of power. The later scenario seems to express Paul Patton's aspirations in attempting to rescue Foucault's theory of power. Patton has argued that to do this requires introducing some distinctions into Foucault's usage of the term "power".[89] Patton relies on what he sees to be Foucault's systematic presentation of his approach to power in "The Subject and Power", an essay which along with others from Foucault's late work introduces a notion of freedom which Patton argues was implicit but undeveloped in his earlier genealogies.[90] In accordance with Foucault's late restatement of his approach to power, Patton distinguishes between "power to", "power over", and "domination".[91]



"Power to" refers to an active human material "composed of forces and endowed with certain capacities", a power understood "in its primary sense of capacity to do or become certain things", and which "can be exercised in infinite different ways". This, Patton proposes, is the very minimal "subject of thought and action" to be found in Foucault's genealogies, wherever he evokes the possibility of resistance, and which later forms the basis of what he calls freedom.[92] "Power over" is the inescapable condition of every social relation, wherever a relationship exists between two persons there is a relation of power. The exercise of "power over" need not be detrimental, as it can induce positive effects on the person it is applied on. Furthermore, it is always conducted on the basis of possible resistances, the freedom of power to refuse being governed in a certain way. Where "power over" attempts to effectively disarm this capacity of "power to" resist, there begins "domination"

and the disciplinary inducement of automatic reflexes. Even here, there is room to find acceptable forms of domination, and short of absolute bondage there is always the possibility that intolerable domination will transform resistance into struggle and the potential transformation of power relations.[93] Beyond this descriptive account of power, what Foucault is not prepared to do, Patton notes, is to provide "universal criteria which would allow us to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable forms of actions upon the action of others". Instead, while leaving open the possibility that such distinctions can be made, Foucault "exposes the limitations of the demand for such [universal] criteria". In his late work, Patton contends, Foucault will develop a conception of human being which, while eschewing such universal criteria, "explains both resistance to domination and the possibility of transforming the existing economics of power".[94] Foucault's cautious call for reactivating certain Greek ethical practices in our modernity

> might be read as a proposal for a different economy of power with respect to our sexual being . . . a proposal for a non-universalizable ethics whose importance in the present context lies in the possibility that it might provide a "practice of freedom" which enhances the feeling of power in a way which other liberated lifestyles do not. Foucault's problem is not that of formulating the moral norms that accord with our present moral constitution, but rather the Nietzschean problem of suggesting ways in which we might become other than what we are.[95]

Foucault's thinking remained to the end stringently opposed to offering normative prescriptions with regard to the possibilities for social and individual change. Without the foundational support of normative prescriptions, Foucault's problematic task remained that of how to think, imagine and represent the possibility of social change and individual transformation. Despite Foucault's ongoing modifications to his theory of power in his late work, it is unclear whether it has more than diagnostic value and a very problematic strategic usage. Whatever else one may wish to call it, (performativity, ascetic practice, aesthetics of existence) the primary mode through which Foucault's late thought posits resistance to power is aesthetic. Its articulation makes sense of what Foucault was doing all along, pursuing an aesthetic mode of thinking as a response to a sclerotic rationality which in many of its forms and guises led to the production of impoverished subjectivities. It is in the ultimately very personal ethical domain of self-creation that Foucault evokes an affirmation that achieves a relative autonomy from the play of forces that constitutes the sociopolitical dimension. The question is, to what extent does this kind of affirmation retain significance for what is normally called social or political action? It is toward this final phase of Foucault's thinking that I will now turn.

CHAPTER VI

Aesthetic Existence as Self-Care

> . . . someone who is a writer is not simply doing his work in his books, in what he publishes . . . his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books. The private life of an individual, his sexual preference, and his work are interrelated not because his work translates his sexual life, but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text. The work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work.
>
> Michel Foucault, "An Interview with Michel Foucault".

> As to those for whom to work hard, to begin and begin again, to attempt and be mistaken, to go back and rework everything from top to bottom, and still find reason to hesitate from one step to the next—as to those, in short, for whom to work in the midst of uncertainty and apprehension is tantamount to failure, all I can say is that clearly we are not from the same planet.
>
> Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure.*

Apparently baffled by Foucault's late turn to "certain traditional questions", Maurice Blanchot speculates the change "was precipitated by circumstances that I do not pretend to elucidate because they seem to me to be of a private nature, and there would be no use in knowing them".[1] James Miller, in his biography of Foucault, on the other hand, does attempt to elucidate such private matters, thereby affirming such matters are worth investigating as legitimate avenues for researching and illuminating intellectual life. For his imaginative attempt to connect Foucault's private and public intellectual activity Miller has attracted pointed criticism from some quarters.[2] Miller contends that what led to this change in Foucault's outlook was a series of intense sexual experiences in San Francisco capped off by an epiphanic LSD trip in Death Valley, California during the spring of 1975. "Though it would take him years to collect his thoughts about what had happened, and to express his statements openly [these experiences] had imbued him not only with a new understanding of his sexuality, but also with a new feeling of power—and a new, and utterly unexpected, sense of freedom."[3] It would not be worthwhile attempting to validate these kinds of creative leaps in Miller's biography. Perhaps as some of his critics have observed, the kinds of links Miller makes between Foucault's ideas and his life rely on a rather speculative psychological portrait of his own making, reflecting more of Miller than Foucault.[4] Nevertheless, there was a significant reconfiguration of Foucault's projects in his later period, and as had already had happened at least once before in his intellectual path, a new dimension emerged in Foucault's work.[5]

In the final years of his life Foucault turned his historical attention to antiquity and in the process produced a remarkable shift, not only in what he lectured and wrote about or what he was drawn to discuss, but also in the way he pursued these activities. Blanchot notes the change by observing how the last books Foucault composed "on subjects so intimate to him are ostensibly books of a studious historian rather than works of personal inquiry". Their style, Blanchot continues, is different to the earlier texts, "calm, at peace, without the passion that gives so many of his other texts their fire".[6] In his last interview, Foucault is asked about the change in style that occurs with his last books, in which the presentation of ideas occurs through a "clear, pure, and smooth writing". Foucault acknowledges a change in his usage of vocabulary and of general philosophical approach in his late works as compared to his books up to and including *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault states that he abandoned this style rather abruptly in the period 1975–1976.[7] Foucault observes that while some people seemed to take these earlier texts as radically nonphilosophical, they were "at the same time, a more radical way of thinking the philosophical experience". Foucault also suggests that in these earlier texts "a lot of things which were implicit could not be rendered explicit due to the manner in which I posed the problems". In retrospect, Foucault claims that these works attempted to elaborate "three major types of problems", the interrelated problems of truth, power, and individual conduct. "What bothered me about the previous books", Foucault explains, "is that I considered the first two experiences without taking the third one into account." It was only by "bringing to light this third experience" that Foucault was able to provide "a kind of guiding thread which, in order to justify itself, did not need to resort to somewhat rhetorical methods of avoiding one of the three fundamental domains of experience".[8]

In his second and third volumes of the history of sexuality series and in numerous other writings and interviews leading up to the publication of these books, Foucault's thoughts on antiquity repeatedly focus on this domain of individual conduct, the notion of an intensification of one's relationship to oneself as a transformative embarkation. What emerges in this new ethical dimension of Foucault's thinking is an exploration of philosophy as a way of life where one pays close attention to one's actions and thoughts in a transformative process whereby one constitutes oneself as a self. As Deleuze had observed, the emergence of this new dimension in Foucault's thinking was the result of a crisis, a crisis partly brought on by Foucault's analyses of power, which by the mid to late 1970s had exhausted

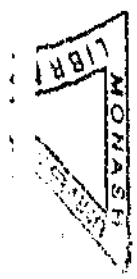
themselves in a theoretical dead-end which threatened to entrap his thinking in the play of forces.[9] As Foucault himself admitted as he began to explore the ethical practices of antiquity and early Christianity, he had given too much attention to techniques of domination at the expense of techniques of self-transformation.[10] In this way, Foucault began to theorize the dimension which was never discussed in *Discipline and Punish*, but which was crucial for understanding how and why he could be writing such a book.[11]

It is only toward the late-1970s that Foucault began to give rough indications of how he saw this problem, such as the 1977 interview on the history of sexuality, which concludes by referring to his work up to and including his first volume of the history of sexuality series as "fictions".[12] The following year, in his interviews with Marxist journalist Duccio Trombadori, Foucault would expand on this fictional aspect of his texts and researches by talking about the self-transforming approach in writing an "experience-book".[13] It is this kind of book, Foucault explains, which he has always aimed at writing, the kind of book which is accompanied by an intense experience capable of transforming not only his thoughts but his own self. Referring to *Discipline and Punish* as an example, Foucault explains how the critical efficacy of an experience-book of this sort is to be judged in terms of its capacity to transform its readers' relationship to the present by permitting them in some measure to share in his own experience. Furthermore, *Discipline and Punish* was written within a wider context of a transformation of our relation to the present. "This book is merely inscribed in something that was already in progress; we could say that the transformation of contemporary man is in relation to his sense of self."[14]

Foucault states during a lecture given in the United States in 1980, the "genealogy of the modern self" had been his "obsession for years because it is one of the possible ways of getting rid of a traditional philosophy of the subject".[15] As far as it is genealogical, this exploration is not to be confused with the discovery of a priori forms of reflexivity which constitute subjectivity at all times and places, but is a way of thinking about such forms of reflexivity as contingent historical possibilities making specific types of subjectivity possible at a given place and time. As a result of the final detour taken in his long-running genealogical project, Foucault sought to salvage from antiquity the care of the self; not so as to find a replacement subject but to explore ethics as ascetic practices directed toward aesthetic ends. Antiquity therefore provided the classical inspiration for Foucault's articulation of the ethical

dimension of his own exercise of subjectivity in perpetual transformation through experience and experimentation.

At the outset we can make a number of general observations about Foucault's late work on the cultivation of the self. This phase in Foucault's work is no longer centred upon a political exercise, which the intimate relation between his analyses of power and his activism during the 1970s seemed to suggest. The work of the self on the self is an art of living which is primarily ethical in orientation and has its precursors in the worldly spiritual exercises of Greek antiquity. As Foucault himself remarked in a late interview, "what interests me is much more morals than politics or, in any case, politics as an ethics".[16] A continuity may be found here from the earlier transgressive approach to the self, and the resistance to power of Foucault's middle period, in the idea of the self being somehow constituted against an array of techniques and limitations *imposed* on it from the outside. What is usually taken to be the self therefore arises as a mixture of blind, anonymous forces, the specific accidents that constitute a life, but also the disciplinary techniques of modern society. In this raw state, the self's relationship to itself is unformed, even though a conviction of self-sovereignty may be the governing self-relation which anchors an unexamined relationship to oneself. To acknowledge the contingency of this sovereign self, that things could have been otherwise, and to begin to think how things could have been otherwise, is to think the relationship of the self to itself. The self is not there to begin with as a timeless universal or sovereign structure but something that may be fashioned in the course of a life. One can begin to have a relationship of self to self through a critical engagement of those blind forces and disciplinary orderings which shape one's identity externally. Contained within this task there is a form of rebellion, a refusal to accept things as they are, a critical relationship to the self which valorizes the capacity to transform the self through an openness to the many styles for expressing freedom.



Although these themes and concerns were in some way operative in Foucault's earliest interest in transgressive experience, in his later work he begins to theorize how certain disciplinary techniques themselves contain transformative potential. Such self-transformation may not be a task suited to everyone, it may only be a limited strategy for a small number of individuals who develop special interests in activating this particular approach to their self. The task is not to uncover a deep truth necessarily accessible to all, nor is it limited to being the singular achievement

of one person, Michel Foucault. More positively, it is an undertaking which, in its high form, seems to have been historically the particular obsession of certain types of individuals, most notably certain philosophers.[17] This kind of philosophical experience, which may also occur in what are strictly speaking nonphilosophical contexts, is opposed to the kind of philosophical activity which is organized purely or even primarily as an academic and theoretical pursuit. In this regard Foucault is in agreement with Hadot's assessment of the practice of ancient philosophy in contrast to its current academic pursuit. "Ancient philosophy proposed to mankind an art of living. By contrast, modern philosophy appears above all else as the construction of a technical jargon reserved for specialists."[18] This art of living was not only the preserve of philosophical teachers, but of those who attended to those teachings and made them their own, applying them in their particular circumstances. A philosophy composed of concrete exercises for life and in life is premised on a harmonized bilateral relationship between theory and lived-experience in which neither has absolute privilege over the other.

But is it still possible to speak of a philosophical way of life, or is the pursuit of a philosophical way of life as Foucault envisages it in his late work anachronistic or regressive? Moreover, is there something politically or morally suspect about a thinker promoting a philosophical way of life as aesthetic self-fashioning, as opposed to seeking, for instance, the advance of universal principles of interpersonal justice? Is the cultivation of a philosophical way of life as an individual exercise the consequence of an irresponsible attitude in the face of more pressing problems of public reason and collective life? The context for these doubts is a historical present that bears the legacy of the Enlightenment, and regardless of how critical we may be about the consequences of Enlightenment, the constitution of ourselves still carries many of the concerns which first emerged in their current configuration in the work of Enlightenment thinkers and critics. Even though we can no longer believe in the Enlightenment in the same way as someone like Immanuel Kant, for many of us it is impossible to simply forget the ethical concerns the Enlightenment gave such a central and definitive role for our modernity. Foucault would acknowledge that even if one continues to question the value of certain forms of rationality in our present, a total abandonment of the concerns of thinkers such as Kant or even Weber would risk courting irrationalism.[19] Through his own positive engagement with the tradition of the Enlightenment, Foucault developed a qualified respect for

MONASH LIBRARY

its concerns which seemed to be lacking in his earlier valorization of transgressive experience and his portrayal of our present world as a carceral archipelago.[20]

Criticisms levelled at Foucault's view of self-transformation tend to focus on its commitment to a contemporary form of dandyism, an aestheticization of existence to the detriment of any wider considerations beyond the self. In this sense it may be considered narcissistic or even solipsistic, encouraging one to pay too much attention to oneself and not enough to other horizons of possible meaning, sources that lie beyond the relation of self to self (for example, the relationship of self to community, to significant others, the world, and so forth). Such an interpretation ignores the way in which community, others, the world, do figure in Foucault's work even though in the late work there emerges an apparently overriding concern for the relation of self to self. In doing this, Foucault is remaining faithful to the Enlightenment, in which reflexive experience has been a central feature of the humanist configurations which include these wider contexts.[21] The novelty in Foucault's approach, however, is the way and the degree to which his genealogy of the modern subject poses the question of the self-relation as the central, prepolitical, ethical concern.

In his course summary for 1980–1981 at the Collège de France, Foucault gave this overview of the path his work had taken and of his new concerns:

> no longer . . . through the divisions between the mad and nonmad, the sick and nonsick, delinquents and nondelinquents, nor through the constitution of fields of scientific objectivity giving a place to the living, speaking, labouring subject; but, rather, through the putting in place, and the transformations in our culture, of "relations with oneself," with their technical armature and their knowledge effects. And in this way one could take up the question of governmentality from a different angle: the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others (such as one finds in pedagogy, behaviour counselling, spiritual direction, the prescription of models for living, and so on).[22]

The new concerns are with how the self experiences a relationship to itself, how such a practice is activated, how it has been produced in different configurations over time. What is also indicated is an interest in how these practices may also be considered in relation to the various forms of authority-relationship that arise between people in the sense of "governmentality", governing oneself in the

governing of or being governed over by, others. In exploring these new concerns Foucault draws from ancient ascetic and aesthetic thought, from the numerous practices, spiritual exercises, which had been developed in different forms in different epochs to focus the attention of the self on the self.

Part of the import of Foucault's genealogy of the self-relation is to suggest ways in which the care of the self practised in antiquity may assist us in creating an aesthetics of existence for our present. As with Foucault's previous histories, a transformation of our view of the past is meant to transfigure our present. In the context of his late work, the aim is to transfigure a present which still bears the legacy of Christian and humanist forms of subjectivity or modes of subjectivation. Central to his transfiguration of our view of the past is the emphasis Foucault gives to an ascetic or austere attitude already developed in antiquity prior to its transformation by Christianity. In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault introduces the framework that will guide his investigation of ethics in antiquity in their relevance for our modernity. Foucault draws a distinction between the morality of codes and the practice of ethics. Any action which is to be considered "moral", Foucault argues, is not simply reducible "to an act or series of acts conforming to a rule, a law, or a value".[23] What is also relevant in moral action is its "relationship with the reality in which it is carried out", and its "relationship with the self". Moral action therefore takes place among already present historical contingencies and constraints which shape a particular cultural reality. Within such contexts an individual is called upon to partake in "self-formation as an 'ethical subject,' a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal". An individual is thereby called upon "to act upon himself, to monitor, to test, improve, and transform himself".[24]

These activities of *askêsis* are not to be understood as belonging solely to the ancients but to all experiences of moral action:

> There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified morality; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectivation" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them. Moral action is indissociable from these forms of self-activity and they do not differ any less from one morality to another than do the systems of values, rules, and interdictions.[25]

What Foucault is therefore proposing is a view of morality comprising two fundamental elements, "codes of behaviour and forms of subjectivation", neither of which can ever "be entirely dissociated, though they may develop in relative independence from one another". For this reason it may sometimes be the case that a particular morality may give greater emphasis to "the code, on its systematicity, its richness, its capacity to adjust to every possible case and to embrace every area of behaviour", in which case "the subjectivation occurs basically in a quasi-juridical form, where the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws, to which he must submit at the risk of committing offences that may make him liable to punishment".[26] At the other extreme, one may come across a morality "in which the strong and dynamic element is to be sought in the forms of subjectivation and the practices of the self". In such moralities one may find the bare minimum of rules and codes for acceptable behaviour, or that strict observance is of relatively minor importance compared with what the individual is called upon to undertake with regard to his own relationship with himself, in his actions, thoughts, and feelings, as he attempts to constitute himself as an ethical subject. In this kind of moral experience, an individual is called upon to pay attention to "the forms of relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes of himself an object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being".[27] Christianity has itself been composed of both elements, working concurrently, between which there have existed "at different times, juxtapositions, rivalries and conflicts, and compromises".[28]

Questions of morality in Greek and Greco–Roman antiquity were directed more toward practices of the self and practices of *askêsis* than toward codifications of conduct and strict definitions of permitted and forbidden actions. In late modernity we find ourselves at the end of a long and sporadic process beginning in the thirteenth century in which late Christianity and then its secular successors have brought about a very strong leaning toward moral experience as strict adherence to rules and subjectivation in a quasi-juridical mode.[29] This configuration of morality is at the root of those exercises of power which seek to produce normalized individuals on a wide scale. In contrast, Foucault explains that in the Stoic ethics, the care of the self was an ethical task taken up by a relatively small minority as a matter of personal choice. The motivation for taking this personal choice was

therefore not the aim of normalizing a population but "the will to live a beautiful life, and to leave to others memories of a beautiful existence".[30]

While Foucault finds this idea very attractive, he does not mean that we should or somehow could authentically imitate Greek or Roman antiquity. Even if it were possible, it would be pointless to attempt to resurrect the ethical practices of antiquity in their entirety or in some large-scale appropriation. Foucault's usage of the ancients is strategic and limited, and refuses to valorize their experience of morality as somehow better, wiser or superior to present practices.[31] Instead, as Paul Veyne illustrates, Foucault believed "the idea of a work of the self on the self, to be capable of reacquiring a contemporary meaning, in the manner of one of those pagan temple columns that one occasionally sees reutilised in more recent structures".[32] The strategic import of this interpretation as a contemporary implementation follows from a concern which Foucault raised as early as *The Order of Things*. Foucault had already pointed out there that modernity has been unable to construct a positive universalist moral system that did not turn out to be a deception and an unworkable disappointment.[33] The drift away from a universal morality comes in the wake of the failed dreams of humanist philosophies, which even as they tried to escape Christian models of morality ended up replicating them. The successors to Christian pastoral authorities attempted to create their own secular, universally legitimate, code. In a world where any universalist claim is immediately suspect and prone to attack from those who feel left out or marginalized, in a world too where there can already be seen a proliferation of ways of life, often irreconcilable with each other, it becomes more a question of how people create and implement their own moral practice for themselves and in relationships with others.[34]

Modernity is therefore partly the experience of the impossibility of successfully realizing or making credible a new universalist code (a code of codes). On ethical issues, Foucault would counsel us, modernity is also the time in which individuals who have understood this impossibility may instead draw support from the self-relation undertaken in the mode of an ascetic cultivation aimed at fashioning their lives as a work of art.[35] In this relationship to oneself there is generated an ethics as the conduct of how one conducts oneself in relation to oneself and others. This raises the possibility of a "self, taking itself as a work to be accomplished" which would then "sustain an ethics that is no longer supported by either tradition or reason; as

an artist of itself, the self would enjoy that autonomy that modernity can no longer do without".[36] In the realm of knowledge of the good life, modernity's experience of being-human thereby moves toward the uncodifiable. Foucault notes the resemblance of our situation to the one to which the Greek ethics responded. Ethical conduct was relatively unconcerned with the religious problem of an afterlife, nor was it connected with institutional concerns in the sense that no legal system monitored moral problems. What was of concern in the asceticism of ethical conduct was an aesthetic goal, the beautiful life. Similar problems confront we moderns,

> since most of us no longer believe that ethics is founded in religion, nor do we want a legal system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on.[37]

The reconsideration of certain practices to be found in late antiquity therefore serves two purposes concurrently. Not only does it serve for elaborating an autonomy that modernity needs, Foucault is also seeking to offer resistance to the forms of subjection found in the present which stifle the expression of liberty. Rather than re-endorsing the metaphysical subject as a "sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere", Foucault believes that forms of subjectivity are "constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment".[38] The discussion of ancient practices of self-constitution is therefore partly a matter of seeking distance from the forms of subjection operating in the present by appealing to different approaches to subjectivity, different ways of posing it as a problematic. This limited revival of antiquity is not only something to be recollected because it offers a different but forgotten point of view, but also because it affords a significant and substantial critical point of view in itself, which places pressure on forms of subjectivation operating in the present. As such it offers to us moderns a critical path out of a present where we find "for a whole series of reasons, the idea of a morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared", an absence which calls for "the search for an aesthetics of existence".[39]

In his interpretation of ancient practices of the self Foucault stresses how these practices "found a ready support in the whole bundle of customary relations of kinship, friendship, and obligation".[40] In Foucault's view this kind of engagement in ascetic practices may require a change in one's wider commitments, because one is to some extent disengaging from them, but again he emphasizes that this should not be taken to mean "that one must cease all other forms of occupation and devote oneself entirely and exclusively to oneself; but in the activities that one ought to engage in, one had best keep in mind that the chief objective one should set for oneself is to be sought within oneself, in the relation of oneself to oneself".[41] The ethical work takes place in the relationship one has with oneself. This does not mean that all that is important in ethical work is the self, but that it is in the relation to oneself that one conducts this work, it is in this relation that ethical work is articulated in the first instance, as the reflexive relation of the self to its own other.

Though fundamentally a solitary work, Foucault stresses that this ethical work is far from being a declaration that life is reducible simply to selfish considerations or a withdrawal from social and political engagements. Despite this, criticisms have been raised by commentators regarding Foucault's approach to ancient ascetic practices of caring for the self as being too narrow in its purview. One line of approach, emerging from commentators otherwise quite sympathetic to Foucault's late work on antiquity, has criticized Foucault's account of the care of the self, arguing that it lacks some of the essential features of a *spiritual* exercise.

Arnold I. Davidson, following Pierre Hadot, has argued that Foucault *did* approach philosophy as a spiritual exercise—"an exercise of oneself in which one submitted oneself to modifications and tests, underwent changes, in order to learn to think differently".[42] Nevertheless, Davidson, like Hadot, contends that the full extent of this provocation is betrayed by Foucault's refusal to direct the philosophical ethos toward the goal of achieving a universalist or cosmic consciousness. Foucault's ethics, in their view, seem to focus too much attention on the selfish pleasure of transforming one's life aesthetically. To his credit, Hadot acknowledges that the differences between his account of the care of the self and Foucault's goes beyond differences in interpretation and ultimately has to do with divergent philosophical approaches.[43] Furthermore, Hadot also acknowledges that despite insisting on certain defects in Foucault's historical approach, what is also at stake for both of them is "a tacit attempt to offer contemporary mankind a model of life". Hadot

thereby signals his awareness of Foucault's broader aims in interpreting antiquity for the purpose of transforming his readers' relationship to the present through his proposal for a nonuniversalist aesthetics of existence.[44] Hadot understands that it is precisely this nonuniversalist tendency in modern thought that separates his historical interests from Foucault's in interpreting antiquity. Hadot indicates that it is this tendency in modern thought which needs to be somehow transformed and that the features neglected by Foucault's version of the care of the self may serve us in this regard. Hadot's concern is that Foucault's apparent embrace of selfish aesthetic pleasure in the process of self-transformation, as opposed to the virtuous joy the Stoics claimed accompanied the realization of a divine or cosmic reason, commits Foucault to promoting "a new form of Dandyism, late twentieth-century style".[45] Hadot's interpretation of the Stoics, in contrast, seeks to go beyond this "movement of interiorisation" focussing on the self in order to promote for our present the adjacent movement they discovered "whereby one rises to a higher psychic level . . . becoming aware of oneself as a part of nature, and a portion of universal reason". In this way, Hadot explains, "one no longer lives in the usual, conventional human world, but in the world of nature", whereby one comes to practice "'physics' as a spiritual exercise".[46]

Following Hadot, Davidson claims one of the philosophical aims of the care of the self is a transformation through which one attains "the perspective of the cosmic Whole", an aim which gives the care of the self "its distinctive philosophical tint in late antiquity through those practices that raise the self to a universal level, that place the self within a cosmic dimension that at the same time transforms the self, even to the point, as Hadot writes, of surpassing the self".[47] In the specific configurations (or, as his calls them, *styles*) of philosophy as a way of life that Davidson prefers, the intensification of the relationship of self to self brings one into eventual contact with that part of oneself which is not simply a personal possession, but some part of a cosmic spirit at once in each self but also always something beyond that self.[48] Davidson asks whether the inner *daimon* or *psuché*, which signifies that part of one's self which is beyond the self, is compatible with Foucault's vision of the cultivation of the self:

> The philosophical ideal that allows us to put together the care of the self and the *psuché* as *daimón* is the figure of the sage or wise man. The figure of the sage is notably absent from Foucault's writings on ancient philosophy, and it is precisely this absence that sometimes permits him to pass too smoothly from ancient to modern experiences of the self. By anchoring the ideal of the sage at the basis of ancient ethics, we can

better see the abyss that separates *psuché* from any possible estheticization of the self.[49]

In Davidson's view, if "Foucault's interpretation of the culture of the self in late antiquity is sometimes too narrow and therefore misleading" this can be attributed to "*a defect of interpretation, not of conceptualisation*"..[50] This distinction itself obfuscates what is after all the significant divergence between Davidson's and Foucault's approach to interpreting antiquity, rather than a mere interpretative defect in Foucault's approach. Foucault made no claim to offer a thorough reinterpretation of antiquity. Foucault was not and never claimed to be an historian of antiquity.[51] Davidson himself acknowledges that as with Foucault's other historical projects, it was a case of certain elements of antiquity that struck Foucault as important in relation to modernity, or more precisely for transforming our relationship to the present.[52] Furthermore, it actually *is* a matter of conceptualization that is at stake in Foucault's resistance to conceptualize and implement some form of absolute. It is this refusal to conceptualize an absolute which underlies Davidson's claim that Foucault moves too easily from ancient to modern forms of practices of the self. Davidson fails to grasp the significance of Foucault's refusal to conceptualize an absolute or deliver knowledge regarding its possible attainment. Foucault would have resisted the figure of the wise man or sage, the figure capable of attaining such a goal, as a mask no longer appropriate for the philosopher in our late modernity.[53]

That Foucault does not affirm transcendence in the terms asserted by Hadot and Davidson should neither be taken as exhausting Foucault's provocation nor the issue of transcendence in his late thought. The possibility of transcendence is not given once and for all but needs to be (re-)created each time. It is for these very reasons that the claim made by both Hadot and Davidson, that access to a cosmic consciousness is the necessary goal of the way of life known as philosophy, avoids the specific challenge of Foucault's late thought. This would require that we not only divest ourselves of the constraints of the dominant forms of the modern subject, but also think against any form of tyranny which would re-institute the past, especially when it is a past represented as a golden age of origins, as is often the case in presentations of antiquity. The gap between Davidson and Hadot on the one hand and Foucault on the other appears unbridgeable. It is the gap which not only separates modernity from antiquity as far as a belief in divine reason is concerned, but also one which internally splinters the present on the issue of a universal

rationality or morality. Foucault's appeal to the ancient practice of the care of the self may accommodate the life of the sage as one among many, as it would accommodate the Nietzschean quest for self-transformation in the style of the *Übermensch*. But to make of one of these styles of life a necessity, that the aim is to become the sage, for instance, or for that matter the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, would be at odds with the current of Foucault's thought and would miss the point of his provocation. In this regard, it would matter very little how accurate and full an interpretation one claims to have of those same ancient practices which Foucault is drawing from. The past in the shape of antiquity should not be seen as an auspicious origin to which we should now return but as a distant alterity that can nonetheless illuminate aspects of the present and which in the form of fragments can still serve us, as in the case of an aesthetics of existence.

Foucault's thought moves not towards a necessary epiphany of cosmic consciousness but towards promoting specific transformations of the self in the present world. In the light of the present, Foucault's refusal to prescribe the goal of finding a path to divinity through ascetic self-practices as the crowning achievement of such practices takes full measure of a present where so many lifestyles have become possible. Not only those lifestyles that already exist, and they are many, not only those that seek to live specifically "philosophical" styles in the way of the sage or the *Übermensch* (how realistic an option are either of these for the majority of people living today?), but those that are yet to be invented, which present circumstances contain only as possibilities either foreclosed or open. That styles of life or systems of belief become increasingly a matter of personal and particular needs and choices and therefore a matter of contingent configurations, of tastes and prejudices, is what requires attention and care. This fact, rather than being covered over again by the claim that there is only one true path to ascetic self-cultivation, one which is faithful to an ancient striving for that divine part of oneself, could form the basis of a critique of the present. In such a critique, all prescriptions which valorize styles of life or systems of belief that tend to some discovery of a divine part of oneself connected to a cosmic whole (whatever that may indeed be), as the highest form of achievement, would be suspect.[54]

In what may be his definitive statement on contemporary politics and morality, "What is Enlightenment?", Foucault draws from Kant and Baudelaire to formulate what he calls a "modernist ethos".[55] This was Foucault's attempt to renegotiate the significance of the Enlightenment tradition for the present, and perhaps more importantly, for himself.[56] The significance of Kant's marginal text for Foucault is that it poses a new kind of problem for philosophy whereby it comes to question and reflect upon its own present, a present distinguished by a cultural phenomenon that named itself *Aufklärung*.[57] From Kant Foucault draws out the idea of a critical way of thinking which can provide an escape route from intellectual "immaturity", which is taken to mean "a certain state of our will that makes us accept someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the use of reason is called for".[58] For Foucault this task is raised to the level of a duty or obligation, to encourage individuals to recognize, defy, and escape the limitations preventing them from thinking for themselves. The individual must live the attitude "that he will be able to escape from [his immature status] only by a change that he himself will bring about in himself".[59]

Consequently, a measure of enlightenment is taken to be the extent to which people can change themselves and others in their community through a reasoning process which defies all limitations or formalizations and which exists in public as free speech for its own sake.[60] What is required for humanity to achieve this task of applying "its own reason . . . without subjecting itself to any authority", is "critique".[61] The critical attitude Foucault sees Kant initiating with regard to the question of Enlightenment is a kind of ongoing resistance, an art of not being governed in certain ways which takes freedom as always already practical, in its "unwillingness to comply, the refusal to acquiesce, to fit ourselves in the practices through which we understand and rule ourselves and each other".[62] Strangely, Kant's practice of critique is transformed into a critical attitude of "noncompliance in concrete situations of power" which cannot be abstracted into a plan for instituting a new form of life. This critical attitude must remain specific and unpredictable, not universal and grounded. In short, this critical approach "is designed to sharpen revolt but not to institute a new society".[63]

Moving from Kant to Baudelaire in his elaboration of a modernist ethos, Foucault refers to the relationship of modernity to itself, but also of the individual to him or her self. In both of these dimensions,

> The deliberate attitude of modernity is tied to an indispensable asceticism. To be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments; it is to take oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration: what Baudelaire, in the vocabulary of his day, calls *dandysme*.[64]

This activity of "ironic heroisation" unfolds in the domain of art, or more specifically the life of the dandy as an aesthetics of existence, an asceticism by which "the dandy . . . makes of his body, his behaviour, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art".[65] The critical dandyism which Foucault affirms, however, is wedded to the Enlightenment attitude of "a permanent critique of our historical era", the perpetual public questioning of our actuality as moderns. As with its attitude to the codes of Christian morality, this ethos sceptically resists all "faithfulness to doctrinal elements".[66] As a practical critique it remains ever alert to what "is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints", and thereby seeks to bring attention to the ways in which our present may be transformed.[67]

Foucault would observe that it was because his work was guided by these kinds of ethical concerns, which he now defines as a modernist ethos, that it attracted attacks from all points in the political spectrum. As a consequence, Foucault would cheerfully observe how his work had been placed in a myriad of different political contexts, predominantly on the left, but also on the right as a kind of conservatism. For Foucault, this was not a sign of the failure of his work but a confirmation that he had succeeded in posing unprecedented questions to politics. Rather than advancing an alternative view of politics, Foucault's aim had been "to question politics, and to bring to light in the political field, as in the field of historical and philosophical interrogation, some problems that had not been recognised there before". These sorts of questions "are not determined by a pre-established political outlook and do not tend toward the realisation of some definite political project".[68] It is for this reason that Foucault would not be drawn into advocating a consensual model of political action as a "regulatory principle". At best, the absence of consensuality could be a critical principle in the analyses of power relations.[69] Rather than seeking to advance the "correct" political solution through a process of consensual formation, the kind of analyses Foucault engaged in sought "problematisations", "the development of a domain of acts, practices, and thoughts that seem to me to pose problems for politics".[70] Foucault's approach eschews the possibility of the right solution governed by a pragmatics of collective will-formation. Rather than appealing to an existing community of consensus as the framework within which a

particular problem is posed, it is necessary to pose the kind of questions that may result in the formation of an unexpected and temporary community. "Because it seems to me that the 'we' must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result—and the necessarily temporary result—of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it."[71]

This is why for Foucault, what is important about the Enlightenment is primarily a self-referential questioning as to its actuality rather than the expression of a new consensus in philosophical thought. It is this historically contingent attitude which still has relevance to our philosophical situation today, not an adherence to a consensus of philosophical doctrines or truths. In order keep ourselves open to unexpected community, Foucault advises that we

> leave to their pious meditations those who want to keep the heritage of the *Aufklärung* alive and intact. This piety, of course, is the most touching of all treasons. Preserving the remains of the *Aufklärung* is not the issue, but rather it is the very question of this event and its meaning (the question of the historicity of the reflection on the universal) that must be maintained present and kept in mind as that which must be contemplated.[72]

According to Foucault, a similar issue arises as to the question of revolution. Again, what is important is not which aspects of the revolution we should retain for future models but the question of "what must be done with this will to revolution, with this *enthusiasm* for the Revolution which is something other than the revolutionary enterprise itself".[73] What is important therefore, is the historically contingent enactment of a reflection on universal principle. As Melissa A. Orlie has observed, the universal principles that were the concern of the Enlightenment only appeared and were experienced "in particular ethical enactments".[74] It is this questioning of our actuality that Foucault distinguishes from a philosophical questioning seeking "the conditions under which true knowledge is possible", which "since the 19th century has been defined and developed as the analytic of truth". In contrast, Foucault delineates another line of questioning passing through Hegel, the Frankfurt School, Nietzsche and Weber, which is directed toward questioning our actuality as moderns, inquiring into "the present field of possible experiences". It is this philosophical approach that Foucault has sought to develop, which he calls "an ontology of ourselves, an ontology of the present".[75]

Foucault does not thereby issue a definition of being-human, but suggests a path for resisting existing definitions of being-human in an ongoing movement of being-otherwise. This is why Foucault has urged we should experiment on ourselves, and more specifically in terms of experimentation of how we constitute ourselves as ethical agents. The experimental or innovative mode of subjectivation is part of what Foucault defines as a critical ontology of ourselves. This critical endeavour should not be approached as "a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them".[76] It was by taking this critical path that Foucault helped to make relevant for philosophical and scholarly discussion issues such as prison conditions, psychiatric treatment and homosexual lifestyles, not as an opportunity for further expert analysis of these problems but as a challenge to the validity and motives of such expertise. To look for a way out of constraining practices it was "no longer necessary to wait for the revolution to begin to realise ourselves: the self is the new strategic possibility".[77]

Foucault's call for ethical experimentation on ourselves is not a call for a total abandonment of existing moral codes as much as it is not a call to abandon the Enlightenment whose legacy much of our contemporaneity still bears. While the ethical experimentation Foucault proposes takes place amidst a system of normativity that is no longer operable or consistent in its claim to universality, there is nothing in Foucault's late writings which would suggest that all existing moral practices and codes would suddenly be annulled if one started experimenting in this fashion. The emphasis would be to be aware of opportunities to innovate, question, transgress, and transfigure where it seems appropriate, and to test the validity, reality, and interests of codified guarantees which purport to save us from the possibility of certain types of transformation. There is little that is particularly startling in this proposal, as it would seem that a great many people are already engaged in such experimentation because they cannot find satisfaction in any of the available universalist moralities currently available and the mode of subjectivation which such codes invoke. Those who value questioning or stretching the bounds of accepted moral conventions in our secular societies have had to introduce their own innovative touches and little experiments into their lifestyle, in their relationships,

even if elsewhere they will proclaim some sort of commitment to universal human rights.

In contrast to any such grand proclamations, Foucault maintained that "the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical".[78] Foucault is convinced that to attempt to do otherwise would not only be impossible, but potentially disastrous. Foucault steadfastly refuses to offer an alternative which would be global and radical, for "we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, of another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led only to the return of the most dangerous traditions".[79] To such global and radical changes, Foucault's reassessing the intent of his own earlier strategic analyses of power relations, contrasts "very specific transformations that have proved to be possible in the last twenty years in a certain number of areas that concern our ways of being and thinking, relations to authority, relations between the sexes, the way in which we perceive insanity or illness; I prefer even these partial transformations that have been made in the correlation of historical analysis and the practical attitude, to the programs for a new man that the worst political systems have repeated throughout the twentieth century".[80]

Such cautionary statements regarding a modernist ethos have not prevented would-be defenders of the Enlightenment project from viewing Foucault's proposal for an aesthetics of existence based on care of the self as harbouring a totalitarian threat. This is the case with Richard Wolin's thoroughly unnuanced polemical attack, which draws some of its central arguments from a Habermasian separation of distinct value spheres. Wolin has denounced Foucault's aestheticism as something which "favours either an attitude of narcissistic self-absorption or one of outwardly directed, aggressive self-aggrandisement", neither of which display any trace "of human solidarity, mutuality, or fellow-feeling". Foucault's "aesthetic decisionism", as Wolin prefers to characterize the culmination of his philosophical project in his late works, conjures an ethical universe as "a Hobbesian state of nature . . . with a flair for style".[81] Wolin consequently warns against an aesthetic attitude which reserves for itself the right to invade and challenge the logic of realms outside its proper sphere of validity. According to Wolin, this potentially dangerous and irresponsible tendency in modern thought should be resisted, particularly if it

attempts to explicitly elaborate itself as the basis for a political or moral praxis. As Wolin explains,

> once an aesthetic outlook becomes the sole determinant of life, its insensitivity to other values ultimately translates into an insensitivity to other persons qua ends in themselves. They are viewed as the pliable objects of aesthetic fashioning, raw materials to be integrated into a grandiose aesthetic spectacle that is not of their own making. Under such circumstances, whose undemocratic spirit remains unmistakable, the only persons possessed of self-determination are the superhuman masters qua theatrical *réalisateurs*. The rest are degraded to the level of fungible extras who are of little intrinsic value when viewed on their own terms.[82]

Wolin's criticisms attempt to unveil the darker side of the contestation of all other values spheres implicit in an aesthetics of existence. Presenting a worst-case scenario of how an aesthetics of existence may unfold, Wolin assumes that such an aesthetics of existence is inherently totalitarian and can only find satisfaction by unleashing the worst possible human impulses.[83] James W. Bernauer's response to Wolin's and related critical approaches has sought to comprehend what provoked such vitriolic and self-righteous polemics against Foucault's late work that ultimately resort to charges of "narcissism" and "immaturity" to drive home their points.[84] Bernauer finds in this reaction to Foucault's late work on ethics not only an affront to

> a philosophical position but a love, a self-love which survives in a culture which has lost its way intellectually, politically and morally. The charges of narcissism against a thinker who proclaims the need for a freedom from our current relations to the self are a subterfuge meant to conceal narcissistic attachment to an experience of the person, which Foucault's entire work attempted to subvert. If his earlier declaration of the "death of man" was tolerable, it is because it was directed at forces which could still be considered as somehow extrinsic to the self [ie. the human sciences]; the ecstatic renunciation of the modern relation of the self, which is announced in Foucault's last writings, was unacceptable, because all too many in his audience have only that relation as an imagined last barrier to nihilism.[85]

Bernauer's eccentric reading of Foucault's late work, as with Davidson's approach discussed earlier, tends to over-literalize Foucault's employment of spiritual exercises in order to elucidate its provocation. Bernauer's attempt to characterize Foucault's late works as the manifestation of "ecstatic thinking" focuses on Foucault's refusal to conceptualize humanity or some form of human subject in terms of an absolute capable of replacing the dead Christian God. This observation in itself is relatively uncontroversial and does actually make some sense of Foucault's consistent subversion of all forms of knowledge seeking to impose constraining

identities on individuals with the force of necessity, and his own reluctance to promote universal prescriptions for how people should live and define themselves. What is problematic in Bernauer's proposal of ecstatic thinking is in making too much of its resemblance to negative theology and taking an overly literal approach to Foucault's relation to spiritual questions that would have him be the practitioner of a "worldly mysticism".[86]

This intent on Bernauer's behalf leads him to make some rather imprudent extrapolations from Foucault's texts. For instance, Bernauer believes that Foucault's project was informed by "a fundamental personal conflict in his earlier intellectual interests", which he once described in an early interview as having to do with a "religious problem".[87] Likewise, Bernauer's understanding of the transgressive forms of resistance Foucault seemed be advocating in his reflections on the Iranian revolution leads Bernauer to detect a specifically "Foucaultian spirituality", a detection that reads more into the cited text than is warranted.[88] Perhaps the most interesting of Bernauer's extrapolations is his understanding of Foucault's relationship to Christian practices of self-renunciation. Bernauer interprets Foucault's statement in the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, of wishing "to get free of oneself", as being equivalent to the paradoxical Christian practice of self-care through self-sacrifice, which was the subject of some of Foucault's late lectures.[89] There is indeed an enigmatic self-effacing dimension to Foucault's philosophical ethos, but it can hardly be equated in anything but a facile way with the ecstasy, of what were after all, *penitential* practices in Christianity, as Bernauer seems to suggest.[90]

Ultimately, Bernauer is just as eager as the other commentators discussed thus far to qualify Foucault's commitment to an aesthetics of existence and to turn it away from the kind of uncaring elitism such a project culminated in with Nietzsche's *Übermensch* ethics.[91] Bernauer's concluding statements in this article return to plausibility by suggesting that what Foucault was engaged in was an "ethics of thought" that could not be codified or generalized, but which "constitutes a practice which educates his readers into an ethical responsibility for intellectual inquiry".[92] If this approach struck others as promoting "anarchism", Bernauer suggests "it is only because the modern bureaucratization of intellectual life has made it so difficult to practice the freedom and experience the pleasure of thinking".[93] While Bernauer is willing to concede that aesthetics has a role in Foucault's practice of this

ethics of thought, he insists that its true worth is to be found beyond aestheticism. Bernauer's article seems to suggest that this step beyond aestheticism would consist of an assimilation of Foucault's project to some kind of spiritual pursuit, or at the very least, to suggest it as a secular or worldly practice akin to the pursuit of spiritual questions.[94] But isn't this what aestheticism is for our modernity: the realm in which aspects of our spiritual traditions have been preserved as a refuge from the narrow concerns of rationality? Furthermore, is it not possible for an aesthetics of existence to lead to the kind of ethical goal Bernauer finds in Foucault as much as it is possible for Nietzsche to turn it into a quest for an *Übermensch* ethics?

In conversation with Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow regarding the direction of his final projects, Foucault's initial answer is the exclamation: "Well, I am going to take care of myself!"[95] This comment, Blanchot muses, "is not easy to elucidate, even if one considers a bit hastily that, like Nietzsche, he was inclined to seek in the Greeks less a civic morality than an individual ethic permitting him to make of his life—what remained of it for him to live—a work of art".[96] And yet, it is exactly this line of approach which Alexander Nehamas has recently taken in his attempt to place Foucault within a philosophical tradition of the art of living. In the ever-growing maze of recent scholarship on Foucault, Nehamas' reading has been the most forthright and unapologetic in expressing admiration for and explaining the value of aestheticism in Foucault's late work. Nehamas has already argued convincingly for the legitimacy and worth of philosophy as an art of living which does not necessarily have to produce universalist conclusions and as an aesthetic–literary practice through his exploration of Nietzsche's life-work.[97] In his most recent book, *The Art of Living*, Nehamas extends his project by examining the central place of Socrates and his irony in forging this tradition of philosophy as an art of living.[98] Nehamas reads Foucault's late work as locating his work as a whole in this tradition of philosophy.[99]

Nehamas's central theme is that Plato's early works on Socrates (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*) present such an enigmatic, abstract, and formally empty figure of his master that it would seem that Plato himself had great difficulty in penetrating Socrates' irony. "In one of the greatest literary feats of which I am aware", Nehamas observes, "Plato implicitly admits (since he never appears in his dialogues, he could

have done so in no other way) that he does not understand the character he has constructed." These early images of Plato's Socrates present a paradoxical figure, "convinced that the knowledge of 'virtue' is necessary for the good life, Socrates admits that he lacks it, and yet he leads as good a life as Plato has ever known".[100] According to Nehamas, the resolution of this paradox is something that Socrates' irony denied to Plato. Socrates appears "ready-made" as an unprecedented figure, an ironic silence "envelopes his life and character", such that in these early works of Plato, "we see a person who created himself without ever showing anyone how he did it".[101] In subsequent works, Plato felt compelled to fill in the details, to explain how this unprecedented figure came to be who he was, how one may live the kind of good life for which Socrates was the inspiration, and provide a series of coherent theoretical principles to support its claims to universal validity. In so doing, Nehamas explains, Plato inaugurated the practice of philosophy, which, while seeking to theoretically articulate a mode of living that was best for all, also transformed the art of living into a primarily theoretical project with universal aspirations.[102]

The enigma of Plato's early Socrates also founded another tradition of philosophy which has tended to be less universal in its claims, which has approached the art of living and how to lead the good life not so much as a theoretical problem but as an aesthetic one. Like Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Foucault, who figure in Nehamas' study of the art of living, these are philosophers who articulate a way of living that is primarily their own. Others who are willing and able to follow their example are counselled, however, to do so not by direct imitation but by fashioning their own way of living, by giving style and unity to their own selves, by creating themselves as memorable examples. The transience of such existences is transcended through a literary mode, the production of a written record which bears witness to their self-creation over a life-span devoted to philosophy as an art of living. Socrates, the founder of this tradition, is the only one for whom this does not apply. It was Plato who bore witness to Socrates, Socrates may have practiced the art of living with his interlocutors but he did not attempt to record it for posterity. Furthermore, Socrates arrives on the scene, so to speak, fully formed but profoundly enigmatic in Plato's early works, the details of his life and character shielded by his irony. The philosophers of the art of living have been consistently drawn to Plato's early rendition of Socrates for inspiration; they themselves bear witness to this unprecedented figure, who, despite spending

> much of his life obsessively engaged in conversation, his legacy—to his interlocutors, to his own author, to his author's readers—was a profound silence. And though his facial features were pronounced enough to provoke so many different interpretations, his face ultimately proved to be blank, a face from which his soul could not, in the end, be read. Though he seems to spring off the page, vivid and alive, Plato's early Socrates is not a concrete figure but a half-empty page that later philosophers have tried to complete with their own words.[103]

As Nehamas observes, it was only in his late work that Foucault articulated his relationship to this philosophical tradition and made his own attempt to decipher the enigma of Socrates's words. In the process, Foucault linked his study of ancient ascetic practices of caring for oneself with *parrhêsia*, the courageous practice of telling others an unpleasant truth about themselves to incite them to take care of themselves. According to Nehamas, Foucault stresses this linkage in his interpretation of the early Socrates in order to argue for the public value of what would otherwise appear to be a private philosophical mission. Nehamas contends that Foucault, "who gradually came to see his writing as part of philosophy understood as the art of living, also believed that philosophers of his sort, self-fashioners who create new possibilities for life, are directly useful to the public". In reading this kind of public utility into Socrates, Foucault is also presenting his own version of the care of the self "to be to develop a voice that others like him might be able to appropriate in their own terms, use it for their own purposes, and through it care for themselves in the way their own selves and particular circumstances required".[104]

In Nehamas's view, Foucault thereby managed to overcome the apparent paralysis which his earlier analyses of power seemed to encounter in the inability to specify what kind of resources resistance to power might be able to take without simply perpetuating its economy of vicious circularity. As I have been attempting to show in the preceding chapters, this dimension to Foucault's project was the largely unarticulated and usually implicit basis for his critical project. In his late works, Foucault's politics come to explicate this primarily ethical task, which gives to his own project of self-fashioning *both* a public and a self-effacing dimension. But this is different to the self-effacement induced by Socratic irony. As Nehamas contends, Socrates's mission is much more private than Foucault's version will allow, its usefulness to the city and its adversarial content much more ambiguous:

> [Socrates's] main concern was to chart a path he could follow. That path led through, literally through, other people: he often discarded them once they were no longer useful to him.[105]

Foucault's rendition of Socrates is ultimately informed by his own project of self-fashioning. As an *art* of living, such a project always presumes that some measure of novelty and experimentation will be required to facilitate its continuing development. Consequently, such an art cannot be sustained through interdictions seeking to lay down in advance a series of principles directed toward a straightforward adherence to a particular model. Furthermore, as Nehamas points out, it is not toward the particular features of such projects that our attention should be turned but toward "their more abstract, higher-level features".[106] What is required is an appreciation of the singular feat through which they manage to integrate and harmonize all their features into a coherent whole, the achievement of which also produces an image of an integrated self. Nehamas acknowledges that this level of appreciation is of little use when it comes to extracting anything more than "some very abstract principles . . . which are as empty as they are banal and useless", and confirms once again that "the art of living, like any art, does not obey rules that are both general and informative".[107]

In my view, the vagaries of such harmonization prompt Nehamas to give too much credence to the eradication of dissonance in such projects of self-fashioning, not only within each instantiation of self-fashioning, but also with regard to their claims to somehow harmonize with public utility. There is a dissonance in Foucault's life-work which does not seem to fit exactly with the model proposed by Nehamas, and for that matter with Foucault's own statements regarding an aesthetics of existence and the nature of its public utility. Foucault's life-work, cut short as it was by unexpected illness, is full of loose-ends, unresolved and incomplete engagements, haunted by abandoned blind alleys. Likewise, there is a dissonance which Nietzsche's project constantly struggles against and does not fully resolve.[108] Both Nietzsche's and Foucault's wish to integrate all dissonance into a life-affirming and beautiful whole is not a complete success, and nor are their efforts to fashion an example for others free of ambiguity. This suggests that the features of this dissonance contain some truth which the ideal of a perfected harmony seeks to occlude. Perhaps this persistence of dissonance is an indication that the art of living does not augur well as a model for public action, at least in terms of a functional and sustainable politics. It is a model of exceptions rather than rules, and thereby presents a dilemma for a modernity that demands more self-reassuring models. In this regard, the dissonance in question may express a problem regarding a

troublesome aspect in contemporary conditions for existence and in the raw materials for this art of living, a problem which checks both its aspiration to moulding a seamless and beautiful whole, and its desirability as a model for public action in a world already too riven by human frailty.

As a way of fathoming this problem, I would like to consider the extent to which the project of self-fashioning that figures in both Nietzsche's and Foucault's approach to philosophy takes its cue from Greek sources.[109] Both thinkers defined their respective projects of self-fashioning in opposition to the deformations inflicted on the West by two millennia of Christianity, Christianization, and its subsequent transformations in secularized modern societies. Is it possible that they deny too strongly some of the central moral inspirations of the Judaeo–Christian heritage in attempting to overcome its adverse elements? Surely such a long-lasting and wide-ranging spiritual tradition offers resources as significant as the Greek moment in our formation as a civilization? One of the insights which may be drawn from the Judaeo–Christian tradition, leaving aside its dogmatic transformations, is the idea that the asymmetrical relation to the other is ethically anterior to the relation to the self. Barry Smart has raised this possibility in the context of an analysis of Foucault's late work on the care of the self and his project of self-stylization, an analysis which seeks to question the extent to which this can genuinely form an ethical appreciation of and responsibility for others.[110] The ascetic self-mastery which animates the care of the self in Foucault's recollection of its ancient practice, whereby its practitioner qualifies himself in caring for others, prompts Smart to ask: "It is all very well talking about creating ourselves as a work of art, but is such a preoccupation with the self necessarily synonymous with caring or showing responsibility for others?"[111]

Beyond advocating an intellectual ethics, an ethics of thought's relation to truth, and an ethical relation with pleasures, that others could (perhaps should) adopt for themselves, how does Foucault's ethics concretely relate the self's responsibility for others in a way that preserves it from an encroaching indifference? Drawing on the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, Smart contends: "It is only possible for care for self to encompass care for others if there is from the beginning, if there is *already*, a responsibility for the other, an unmeasured and unmeasurable non-reciprocal responsibility which is 'anterior to all the logical deliberation summoned by reasoned decision'."[112] Rather than uncritically affirming the ontological

precedence of the Greek care of the self, in which the self-relation comes before the relation to the other, Smart follows Levinas in suggesting that the condition of possibility for the intelligibility of being is only made possible by the ethical relation to the other.[113] This asymmetrical relation does not dissolve dissonance, it takes it to the heart of ethics, the relation one has with others, and the relation one establishes with oneself. Smart suggests that it is only in this way, moving beyond Foucault's ethics, that a real challenge can be made to the "cult of the self", and forces us to question whether in contrast to antiquity "our modern preoccupation with oneself and an associated increasing rationality of human conduct has virtually neutralised the moral impulse, such that taking care of the self now seems to preclude any possibility of taking care of the other?"[114]

It is a paradoxical fact that Foucault's own scepticism toward the world-transforming potencies of his thought has attracted readers to his inquiries and led to the widespread intellectual and political influence of his analyses.[115] Foucault believed himself to have neither a "social" nor a "cultural" orientation in his approach to life but rather an abiding concern with more intense experiences. Acknowledging that his work had resonated more with those with a literary or artistic sensibility than with academic philosophers and sociologists, Foucault observes that he himself was never "a really good academic", being more interested in intellectual work as an aesthetic pursuit of self-transformation than acquiring knowledge to transform the world. Although from a theoretical perspective knowledge had transformed the world, Foucault's personal experience gave him the feeling that knowledge's usefulness for changing the world was very limited and ultimately, in its constellation with political power, more inclined to destructive ends. But at a personal level, Foucault admits the redemptive power of self-knowledge as personal transformation:

> You see, that's why I really work like a dog and I worked like a dog all my life. I am not interested in the academic status of what I am doing because my problem is my own transformation. That's the reason also why, when people say "Well, you thought this a few years ago and now you say something else," my answer is, [*Laughter*] "Well, do you think that I have worked like that all those years to say the same thing and not to be changed?" This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?[116]

Foucault's lifework exhibits the unremitting efforts of a thinker who constantly questioned and requestioned his own assumptions, accepting both the challenges and risks of thinking differently, which always involve the possibility of being mistaken. In the process, he sometimes had to start from the very beginning, to rework his thinking in a different way, and yet again question its claims, hesitate as to the certainty of what he was saying. Such a practice of philosophy is an unappealing one for many philosophers who hold different aspirations for the practice of philosophy, aspirations which have sometimes led to dismissing Foucault as an illegitimate or dangerous philosopher. This has particularly been the case for those philosophers who retain a strong conviction in certain core principles of Enlightenment thought. The view expressed by some contemporary adherents of the Enlightenment project, that for philosophy to be valid and socially useful it must adhere to certain predetermined principles of rational coherence and universal assent, expresses a genuine moral concern but it also risks depriving philosophy of its variety, richness and vitality. To denounce a philosophical practice on the basis of its preference for aesthetic forms of coherence or for a refusal to aim at universal assent not only diminishes philosophy, it risks contradicting its own moral inspirations in seeking to guarantee for all a diversity and freedom of expression.

PART THREE

TAYLOR AND VATTIMO: HERMENEUTICS OF MODERN LIFE

MONASH

CHAPTER VII

The Moral Sources of the Modern Identity

> The Romantics made the poet or artist into the paradigm human being. Modernists have only accentuated this. The bringer of epiphanies cannot be denied a central place in human life. But the denial of epiphanies of being has made the very process of bringing them problematic and mysterious. There is a new reflexive turn, and poetry or literature tends to focus on the poet, the writer, or on what it is to transfigure through writing. It is amazing how much art in the twentieth century has itself for its subject, or is on one level at least thinly disguised allegory about the artist and his work.
>
> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self.*

The critical project of Charles Taylor began as an attempt to challenge a set of widespread assumptions in our modern culture regarding the status of knowledge and what it means to be a "self".[1] According to Taylor's restatement of this project in "Overcoming Epistemology", the root of these assumptions is to be found in the modern epistemological tradition stemming from Descartes. This tradition produced a doctrine regarding the subject of knowledge that sought to procure a form of cognition "seen as correct representation of an independent reality". The composite picture of human agency embodied in this epistemological subject, Taylor explains, is connected "with certain central moral and spiritual ideas of the modern age".[2] Beginning with Descartes, the certainty of epistemological claims pertaining to an external reality was to be achieved through a new form of self-reflexive clarity premised on the methodological procedures that a subject of knowledge had to undertake to order its thoughts correctly.[3] The disengaged agency this epistemological subject gave rise to, seeking to delimit itself from whatever object it sought to represent correctly, is informed by the modern ideals of self-responsibility, freedom, and autonomy.[4] Taylor retrieves a composite portrait of this form of subjectivity in the following terms:

> The first is the picture of the subject as ideally disengaged, that is, as free and rational to the extent that he has fully distinguished himself from the natural and social worlds, so that his identity is no longer to be defined in terms of what lies outside him in these worlds. The second, which flows from this, is a punctual view of the self, ideally ready as free and rational to treat these worlds—and even some of the features of his own character—instrumentally, as subject to change and reorganizing in order the better to secure the welfare of himself and others. The third is the social consequence of the first two: an atomistic construal of society as constituted by, or ultimately to be explained in terms of, individual purposes.[5]

Taylor builds on a number of challenges to this view of agency which have radically contested its claims to neutrality and sought to articulate the intimate connections of its cognitive claims with certain moral and spiritual aspirations central to our modernity.[6] What emerges from this line of critique is a form of subjectivity which is premised on the experience of human being as inextricably entwined in its involvements in the world. Rather than aiming to achieve a disengaged procedure for rationally testing representations sharply abstracted from what is being represented, an alternative reflection on agency begins from the embodied experience of a being in the world intending to know something about that world. Something new is thereby brought to light: the way we represent an object is thoroughly embedded in the way we otherwise deal with it. Although this background of dealings is usually left unarticulated in the epistemological tradition Taylor is critiquing, even when it becomes the focus of articulation it still cannot be fully rendered explicit. This background of dealings is not something distinct from the subject. Rather, it constitutes the subject's deep embeddedness both in the world of objects and in communication with others through language about that world. According to Taylor, the picture which emerges here suggests that "through a clarification of the conditions of intentionality, we come to a better understanding of what we are as knowing agents—and hence also as language beings—and thereby gain insight into some of the crucial anthropological questions that underpin our moral and spiritual beliefs".[7]

Thus, for Taylor, overcoming epistemology does not simply amount to a radical break with the tradition of epistemology but a cognitive or epistemic gain that in this sense carries "further the demand for self-clarity about our nature as knowing agents, by adopting a better and more critically defensible notion of what this entails".[8] The improvement is in the self-understanding of the limits and conditions of the knowing subject and the critical implications of this improved self-understanding for aiding in the removal of distortions impairing our relationships with the world and others in community. The gain in reason therefore can be characterized in terms of a fuller clarity of the self-reflexive subject which was lacking in previous endeavours of philosophical investigation into epistemological certainty. Morally, we gain by dispelling some of the pernicious effects produced by the infiltration of the notion of disengaged agency into contemporary theories and practices of science, ethics, society, and politics. In the process, the moral sources

which informed this form of agency, rather than being discarded, are retrieved from oblivion through an improved articulation of their intent and limits.

As Taylor observes, however, the construal of this overcoming of the epistemological tradition as gains has been contested by Nietzsche's French heirs, who see themselves as far more radical critics of that tradition. Taylor, who is otherwise dismissive of their reading of Nietzsche and of the kinds of projects they have pursued in his name, maintains a qualified respect for the work of Michel Foucault. Taylor suggests the moral or spiritual stance defended by Foucault emerged clearly in his final works. Foucault's rejection of the punctual self, "which could take an instrumental stance toward its life and character", emerges from *Discipline and Punish* in "the practices and 'truths' of the disciplinary society he painted in such repellent colors". As Taylor goes on to observe, Foucault also rejected as an alternative the "deep or authentic self" to be found in the critical tradition stemming from Hegel and developed in various ways by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.[9] Such a self would have been too much of a prison for Foucault, Taylor suggests, and so it was that his later works explicitly articulated the Nietzschean quest of self-making, the work of the self as an art-form or aesthetics of existence. The irony of this approach to the self, which supposedly overcomes traditional approaches to subjectivity, is the unfettered primacy it gives to subjectivity above other considerations. Rather than seeing the critique of epistemology as a rational gain accessing some deeper or more authentic truth about the human agency involved in knowing, epistemic claims are seen to rest on impositions of order that can only be outdone by aesthetic will-power.

Taylor identifies a third alternative to the overcoming of epistemology in the work of Jürgen Habermas. Contrary to the neo-Nietzschean approach, Habermas has remained a strong adherent to the tradition of critical reason, which has its roots in the Enlightenment. Habermas has also found reason to doubt the kind of tradition Taylor draws from, in particular distrusting the Heideggerian notion of disclosure, and for this reason has developed a formal approach to rationality, "a procedural ethic . . . purged of the monological errors of earlier variants". As Taylor points out, while both he and Habermas draw on some of the same critics of epistemology, Habermas is concerned that this line of critique may undermine "a truly universal and critical ethic" if left to its own devices.[10] Taylor has explored the difficulties

with the kind of procedural ethic espoused by Habermas, suggesting that it too has its limits.

Rather than constructively engaging the problem of adjudicating between these various construals of the overcoming of epistemology, Taylor's perception is that the neo-Nietzscheans, Foucault included, have abandoned such contestation as pointless on the basis of a victory already settled. In his assessment, this has meant that the dispute will most likely have to be settled in the terms of those who have defended some kind of tradition of critical reason. It is this issue which I would now like to explore in greater detail, namely some of the features of Taylor's own efforts toward an adjudication of this issue within his larger hermeneutical project of retrieving the fullness of the modern identity. Only in the concluding section of this chapter will I complicate matters by setting Taylor's own project within the zone of ontological contestation, which it purports to render more fully and clearly.

Taylor's most sustained engagement with Foucault's thought is to be found in an essay published in 1984, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth", and in an ensuing debate with a number of Foucault's defenders.[11] Taylor's argument was reminiscent of a growing rank of critics who found some of Foucault's historical analyses attractive in their exposition of subtle forms of domination in our modern societies, but found the overall normative stance in which they were embedded problematic. The majority of Taylor's essay is targeted at exposing the argumentative incoherence and normative confusion in Foucault's analyses of power, particularly Foucault's inability to justify his analyses as substantial gains in terms of truth and freedom and his tendency to foreclose the possibility of such gains altogether.[12] Rather than being resolved by Foucault's tentative proposals for an aesthetics of existence toward the end of his life, in Taylor's view, these normative confusions persisted.

Taylor recognizes that what he is ultimately dealing with in Foucault is a neo-Nietzschean form of relativism which aims to subvert the kind of analytical vocabulary committed to notions of freedom and truth that he himself espouses as maximizing the hope and intelligibility of our situation as agents. Taylor observes that Foucault's assertion of the regime-relativity of truth only leaves room for limited forms of resistance to power, which in effect change nothing, or so little as

to count for nothing. Despite a professed attention to micrological detail, Foucault's analyses take on a monolithic proportion in the inescapability of competing regimes of power/knowledge they depict.[13] Furthermore, these analyses seem to be posed in neutral terms, lacking a concrete sense of their own situation in what they purport to describe and how they could be even possible given the conditions of the description. What Foucault neglects, according to Taylor, is "the possibility of a change of life form that can be understood as a move toward a greater acceptance of truth—and hence also in certain conditions a move toward greater freedom".[14] The question Taylor poses in concluding is whether Foucault's late turn toward an aesthetics of existence adequately provides for such a possibility of change and of his own ethical situation as an agent.

According to Taylor's own understanding, the possibility for this kind of change is premised on some degree of commensurability between one form of life and another, rather than viewing each as occupying completely different existential contexts. He explains how our biographical experience provides us with examples as to how change of this kind is indeed possible. Our self-reflexive understandings of ourselves, of our identity, provide intuitive instances of this kind of continuity and development, whereby we move from certain conditions of error in ways which may potentially be experienced as forms of liberation. Similar sorts of experiences are available on the macro-scale of politics and history. It is by drawing on such a background of cultural experiences that Taylor believes he is capable of articulating a more balanced and upbeat account of historical processes than Foucault would ever have permitted himself. The following paragraph captures the essence of Taylor's agonism.

> We have become certain things in Western civilization. Our humanitarianism, our notions of freedom—both personal independence and collective self-rule—have helped to define a political identity we share; and one that is rooted deeply in our more basic, seemingly infrapolitical understandings: of what it is to be an individual, of the person as a being with inner depths—all the features that seem to us to be rock-bottom, almost biological properties of human beings, as long as we refrain from looking outside and experiencing the shock of encountering other cultures. Of course these elements of identity are contested; they are not articulated neatly and definitely once and for all, but the subject of perpetual revisionist strife. And worse, they are not all easily compatible—the freedom of independence is hard to combine with that of self-rule, as we constantly experience—and so we fight among ourselves in the name of incompatible weightings. But they all count for us. None of them can be repudiated simply in the political struggle. We struggle over interpretation and weightings, but we cannot shrug them off. They *define* humanity, politics for us.[15]

As Taylor observes at the conclusion of his article, Foucault's tentative proposal for an aesthetics of existence taking its cue from antiquity, is ultimately aimed at contesting "the whole idea that we have a deep self or nature that we have to decipher".[16] While going some way towards articulating his own image of the good life, Foucault's ethics continue his earlier refusal to justify his own perspective as a gain in freedom and truth. As Taylor declares in a later effort, "the fine-grained discernment of what has been gained, and what lost, and what doors to otherness we have closed, and how much they can be opened again without destroying ourselves" is the urgent task we must engage and debate. The only way this can be done fairly, in his view, is through "the hermeneutic theory of truth as self-interpretation".[17]

Such a hermeneutic approach is central to Taylor's most ambitious project to date, his *Sources of the Self*. I will not attempt to recount the whole story Taylor presents in this book, which covers the Western religious, philosophical and aesthetic traditions in the formation of what he calls our "modern identity" through its constitutive moral sources. Instead, I shall focus on the way Taylor situates Foucault in relation to the modernist movement in art, and specifically the more enduring strands of modernism which have cultivated an experience of moral sources beyond the self. Taylor traces the emergence, in some modernist art, of a new mode of "epiphany" distinct from the Romantic mode which preceded it. Epiphanies, for Taylor, are those heightened experiences encountered in art which point toward, or allow some kind of direct contact with, moral sources beyond the self. In the twentieth century, the approach to such epiphanic experiences has become both more inward, more celebratory of subjectivity, but at the same time less subjectivist in its decentring attention from the subject onto other sites of interest. "There seems to be a slide to subjectivism and an anti-subjectivist thrust at the same time", Taylor observes.[18]

As with their precursors in the Romantic movement, modernists found themselves in opposition to the fallen world of instrumental reason, the everyday modern reality of a world increasingly defined by industry, mechanism and utility. But whereas for the Romantics epiphanic art was directed toward liberating us from this debased form of existence through giving expression to "the spiritual reality behind nature and uncorrupted human feeling", modernists no longer felt they could provide such

direct epiphanic experiences of the good. By the twentieth century, the industrial and technological transformation of the world had also thoroughly transformed our image of nature and our relationship to it. In addition, the scientific worldview which had wrought this transformation was extending its reach beyond the realm of mechanics toward the realm of the life sciences. These changes culminated in the reimagining of nature itself along the lines of Schopenhauer's conception, in which it figures "as a great reservoir of amoral power". [19]

For the modernist artists who absorbed these changes, the Romantic approach to epiphany seemed to be overly sentimental and untenable in its celebration of a unified self harmonized with nature. Consequently, the deepening of inwardness that the modernists produced didn't necessarily focus on "a *self* to be articulated, where this is understood as an alignment of nature and reason, or instinct and creative power". Rather, inwardness was seen as a potential path "beyond the self as usually understood, to a fragmentation of experience which calls our ordinary notions of identity into question".[20] In seeking a more accurate relation to their lived-experience in this anti-Romantic epiphanic mode, some modernists produced "a profound breach in the received sense of identity and time, and a series of reorderings of a strange and unfamiliar kind".[21] Modernist writers like Marcel Proust and Thomas Mann gave to the twentieth century understandings of modern identity new images of what it is like to be a human being. In the process, they defined a counter-epiphanic mode in art which, while contesting Romantic expressivist models, itself produced a new, more difficult approach to epiphany. Taking Ezra Pound's example as representative for one of the most enduring strands in early modernism, the literary object is no longer seen to express some kind of deeper reality, as in the Romantic models. Instead of making a deeper reality appear "*in* the object or image or words presented", modernist epiphanies take the more indirect route of making this reality appear *between* a configuration of elements, such that "the words or images set up between them a force field which can capture a more intense energy".[22] It is this kind of preference for what Taylor calls "framing epiphanies" which characterized the modernist aesthetic sensibility in philosophers like Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, who presented oblique or indirect images of redemption from instrumental rationality through constellations of concepts.[23]

According to Taylor, a recent combination of the "counter-epiphanic and decentring strands of modernism" have been partly responsible for the intellectual vogue of French thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault. Foucault's histories stand in alliance with the anti-Romanticism of modernism insofar as they attempt to refute unitary conceptions of the self as a being with depths that can be discovered and brought to light. Foucault emphasizes both the arbitrariness of this particular construction of the self and its connections with certain disciplinary practices seeking to control individuals. What Taylor finds objectionable in Foucault's historical method is an impoverished view of the self informed by a narrow reading of Nietzsche that has recently been popular in France. This reading of Nietzsche focuses on his "sense of the arbitrariness of interpretation, on interpretation as an imposition of power, but completely neglects the other facets of this baffling thinker, the Dionysian vision of the "eternal return" which makes possible the all-englobing affirmation of 'yea-saying'".[24] As with Derrida, Taylor claims, Foucault "has taken up the negative thrust of modernism—its anti-Romanticism, its suspicion of the supposed unity and transparency of the disengaged self, of the alleged inner sources of the expressive self—while negating its opening to epiphany".[25] According to Taylor, both Foucault and Derrida negate the possibility of affirming any sense of the good, and thereby give the impression of being normatively neutral while inadvertently celebrating a vision of the self affirming its unrestrained freedom and power.

Taylor notes that Foucault altered his neutral stance in his late work in his affirmation of aesthetic self-making, the fashioning of the self as a work of art. Nevertheless, according to Taylor, Foucault's affirmation remains highly problematic "because of the difficulty of detaching a notion of the aesthetic from the other strands in modern thought that Foucault still wanted to repudiate". Furthermore, Taylor emphasizes that what emerges in Foucault's late affirmation of self-making is what was hitherto implicit throughout his work, "the kind of unrestrained, utterly self-related freedom that this ideal entails".[26]

In his *Ethics of Authenticity*, Taylor fills in some of the conceptual background to this peculiarly narrow valuing of freedom that he finds in Foucault by exploring the ways in which the ideal of authenticity has been perverted by the narrowing of meaningful horizons that has accompanied the rise of individualism in modern societies. Taylor seeks not so much to dismiss the importance of authenticity as an

ideal, but merely to bring its practice back into line with a fuller appreciation of what it entails and of the meaningful context of other ideals which both sustains and limits it.[27] Of particular relevance to Taylor's critique of Foucault are the internal dynamics of the ideal of authenticity under the influence of an encroaching nihilism that has penetrated high culture since the mid nineteenth century.[28] While someone like Foucault attempts to radically undermine the notion of authenticity and the unitary notion of the self, Foucault's own deviant version of the ideal of authenticity can be seen as valorizing a self with an unbounded, but ultimately self-destructive, sense of expressive freedom.

The historical development of the version of authenticity that leads to Foucault begins with the valorization of the artist as the paradigmatic human being. What is important in the conception of the artist as a model for human agency is his or her capacity to undertake self-discovery as *poiêsis*, a self-making which values creativity as the appearance of something hitherto unprecedented. From the beginning, this form of creativity as self-fashioning was contrasted against morality and the conformist tendencies of the modern world. Although some exponents of the idea of self-fashioning speculated that it would be compatible with morality, this soon was shown to be a non-necessary connection. What was more likely was that self-fashioning would have to contest at least some of the rules which morality sought to impose on it externally. Eventually, as with Nietzsche's aesthetic self-making, morality was contested more fully. What Nietzsche contests is the sacrifice self-making would have to endure if it were to acknowledge the higher significance of Christian notions of benevolence or of some of its secular derivatives. In Nietzsche's wake followed countless other prophets of nihilism even more extreme in their affirmations, "apostles of evil" as Taylor calls them.[29] With Foucault, the spiritual heir of this tradition of nihilism, the deviancy in the ethic of authenticity is fully developed and whatever redeeming features may have still clung to the earlier deviations are totally erased. Taylor provides a map of authenticity so that we can grasp just how deviant Foucault's inarticulate version of it actually is:

> Briefly, we can say that authenticity (A) involves (i) creation and construction as well as discovery, (ii) originality, and frequently (iii) opposition to the rules of society and even potentially to what we recognize as morality. But it is also true, as we saw, that it (B) requires (i) openness to horizons of significance (for otherwise the creation loses the background that can save it from insignificance) and (ii) a self-definition in dialogue. That these demands may be in tension has to be allowed. But what must be wrong is a simple privileging of one over the other, of (A), say, at the expense of (B), or vice versa.[30]

MONASH

Foucault's aesthetics of existence are thus shown to privilege the constitutive and creative features of language as a means of expression without acknowledging horizons of meaning, supporting creativity's capacity for amoral defiance against rules and norms without acknowledging the necessity of dialogue in making creativity possible through binding humans together as fellow creatures. In Taylor's final calculation, he declares the incoherence of this distorted construal of authenticity because it privileges some of its aspects without acknowledging "some of its essential features". The result of this "understanding of value as created gives a sense of freedom and power".[31] What finally emerges is the degree to which authenticity is a form of freedom as self-determination, which if left to itself respects no boundaries and self-destructs, perpetuating the erosion of meaning in the contemporary world.

In contrast to the more enduring early modernism (Proust, Pound, Joyce, Eliot, Mann), which managed to avoid this kind of shallow incoherence, Taylor assimilates both Foucault and Derrida to the strand of modernism developed in movements like Surrealism and Futurism. These last movements, through only superficially divergent formulations, affirmed the untrammelled creative power of the imagination.[32] The slide toward such subjectivist self-celebration has been a danger for all forms of modernism, Taylor observes, and continues to be "a standing temptation in a culture which exalts freedom and puts such a value on the creative imagination". Even though Taylor is willing to recognize some of the historical insights produced by Foucault's historical work, he claims that his affirmation of self-making is too shallow to have any enduring value. In this regard, both Foucault and Derrida "offer charters of subjectivism and the celebration of our own creative power at the cost of occluding what is spiritually arresting in this whole movement of contemporary culture".[33] It is this spiritual dimension that Taylor's *Sources of the Self* seeks to recover, despite the undeniable fact that we live in an era in which "metaphysics or theology comes indexed to a personal vision, or refracted through a particular sensibility".[34] Taylor likes to talk about this in terms of a map, he is mapping "a bit of the publicly available background, what we all lean on and count with while we communicate".[35]

Taylor's mapping observes that while there is generally agreement regarding the more significant of our moral standards (most importantly notions of freedom,

benevolence, and the affirmation of ordinary life), there remain very profound divisions as to what the sources of our morality actually are. The map also highlights conflicts between contemporary notions of disengaged instrumentalism that emerged from the radical Enlightenment and criticisms of this form of rationality that first emerged in Romantic expressivist notions and later in the modernist search for aesthetic forms of fulfilment. Apart from the conflicts regarding moral sources, and those between disengaged instrumentalism and alternatives seeking a richer form of fulfilment than it can offer, there is also a conflict between some of these alternatives and the whole question of articulating moral sources.[36] Despite the conflicts that Taylor maps out, what he wants to emphasize in the portrait of the modern identity he has attempted to recover through its historical development is both the centrality of "constitutive goods in moral life" and "the diversity of goods for which a valid claim can be made". Taylor draws from this the conclusion that while notions of the good may be in conflict, they do not therefore necessarily negate each other. This is perhaps the point at which Taylor's argument is most Hegelian in its attempt to synthesize a complex diversity of moral goods without impoverishing the claims that each contests with regard to the others, but rather by making the stakes clearer.[37] Taylor expresses the conviction that:

> Close and patient articulation of the goods which underpin different spiritual families in our time tends . . . to make their claims more palpable. The trouble with most of the views that I consider inadequate, and that I want to define mine in contrast to here, is that their sympathies are too narrow. They find their way through the dilemmas of modernity by invalidating some of the crucial goods in contest.[38]

Taylor contends that interpretations of our modernity which succumb to this narrowing in the range of moral goods not only invalidates them, but also forces those who propound them into a situation in which they would have to contradict themselves if they seriously wished to affirm them fully and in a responsible manner. The reason for this is that the diversity of the modern identity which Taylor affirms is so all-embracing that none of its features can be overlooked without experiencing some form of impoverishment, partiality or blindness with regard to what one inevitably affirms or seeks to repudiate. Taylor acknowledges that proving such to be the case would have to proceed in an ad hoc manner, as he has done with regard to the narrow vision of Foucault's philosophical affirmation of self-making. If Taylor finds Foucault's philosophical project too narrow and inarticulate with regard to the moral sources which in his view sustain it, he is just as critical of the

kind of procedural rationality which Habermas relies on in order to criticize Foucault's project and which Habermas promotes as the only viable alternative.[39]

In the case of Jürgen Habermas, Taylor acknowledges there is a gain in his version of procedural ethics by virtue of its novel dialogical dimension. For Habermas, a norm is justifiable only to the extent that it is capable of gaining the uncoerced assent of all through the intersubjective transformation of agents with equal rights engaged in an actual discussion where the better argument prevails.[40] Habermas makes this strategy for achieving moral objectivity more acceptable by drawing a distinction between culturally specific visions of the good life and legitimate universal concerns for ensuring interpersonal justice through rational understanding.[41] Taylor observes that Habermas's justification for the priority of his discourse ethics rests on a theory of ontogenetic and cultural maturation without stating exactly what particular vision of the good life motivates and recommends this process. What is left out of the picture, in Taylor's view, is the deep background understanding which surrounds the moral intuitions at the heart of procedural ethics, the sense of the strong goods which inform their claim to priority and importance. According to Taylor's understanding of morality, there is no culturally neutral basis for justifying moral principles because they are always deeply enmeshed in specific construals of the ethical human agent. Taylor does not believe that such an approach to ethical life necessarily leads to relativism. Taylor's challenge to Habermas, as Peter Dews has argued, seeks to demonstrate that "it *is* possible to give arguments for why one ethical conception is superior to another—not in a decontextualized way, by appealing to general principles, but in the same way that, through transformative encounters and experiences, we may come to appreciate that we formerly had an inadequate grasp of what we really felt and aspired to, and thus of who we truly were and what the best way to live our lives might be".[42]

What Taylor highlights in procedural ethics is the extent to which they are motivated by certain "hypergoods" (particularly freedom, altruism, and universalism) that are central to the aspirations of modern culture but which have been occluded by a desire for a procedural neutrality abstracted "from all specific cultural forms of life".[43] The very goods that motivate theorists such as Habermas

MONASH

also drive them to deny their existence. Consequently, according to Taylor, supporters of procedural ethics

> are caught in a strange pragmatic contradiction, whereby the very goods which move them push them to deny or denature all such goods. They are constitutionally incapable of coming clean about the deeper sources of their own thinking. Their thought is inescapably cramped.[44]

In Taylor's view, procedural rationality is insufficient and must either be supplemented or expanded to include substantive criteria, an expansion which would ultimately involve a modicum of metaphysical speculation of the kind Habermas so rigorously avoids.[45] Part of such an undertaking would be to give an undistorted account of the deep background of one's moral understanding, of why one should be moral and of what it means to be moral. Apart from facilitating mutual understanding, language has the capacity to disclose our moral situation, indeed, it might only be able to facilitate mutual understanding to the extent that it gives such an undistorted disclosure. The expressive dimension of language is crucial to rationality in making plain its culturally specific understandings of the good. "We express our moral ends and our understanding of ourselves as humans by at the same time understanding and justifying our ends: we articulate the implicit understanding which comprises the background of our social norms, customs and institutions, and which is closely bound up with our understanding of moral ends."[46]

These last comments by Taylor are from an essay included in a collection responding to Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action*. What is striking about Habermas's reply to Taylor included in the same volume is how carefully he avoids the force of Taylor's challenge.[47] As with much of Habermas's writings, the response is couched in a highly abstract and specialist language such that only those familiar with his particular vocabulary will be able to fully appreciate the finer points of what he is saying and what he is trying to achieve. This is especially evident when read in contrast to Taylor's essay, which despite also dealing with abstract ideas attempts to remain as close as possible to the vernacular. Considering the scope of the problem Habermas is addressing, the path he has chosen to address it, and the formidable scholarly erudition he marshals for this purpose, this level of abstraction is not particularly surprising, nor does it in itself provide grounds for criticism.

MONASH

The difficulty Habermas confronts is that his theoretical elaborations of a procedural rationality underpinning the intersubjective process for adjudicating universal normative claims are often unintelligible except for a relatively small specialist audience. Habermas wants to express something crucial about how we all experience the conditions and possibility for rational adjudication on questions of interpersonal justice. The manner in which he does this leads him to mind-boggling abstractions which aspire to the rigours of scientific hypothesis for the sake of overriding culturally specific contents of the good life in individual life-worlds. Habermas dismisses as philosophically illegitimate a reasoning that could disclose why it is crucial to be moral. Peter Dews has remarked that Habermas's unwillingness to grant this world-disclosing capacity a place in philosophical reasoning is disturbing, "because it seems to deprive Habermas of any philosophical means to foster *concretely* the moral mode of being with whose *formal* possibility he is so intensely concerned".[48] It might be argued that the abstraction of Habermas's procedural rationality is emblematic of his refusal to grant philosophical reasoning a capacity for world-disclosure. It is for this reason that Habermas's concluding statement in his reply to Taylor seems so ironic. Repeating his criticism from *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* regarding the approach to language favoured by thinkers such as Heidegger and Derrida, Habermas reproves Taylor for allowing the "problem-solving capacity of language to disappear behind its capacity for world disclosure".[49]

In the essay, "Inwardness and the Culture of Modernity", Taylor aims to highlight some of the prejudice which hides behind the guise of cultural neutrality. His account of the specificity of inwardness in modern Western understandings of the notion of the self seeks to highlight the inadequacy of certain approaches to our modernity which fail to take account of these specificities. Taylor suggests making a distinction between theories of modernity which are "cultural" and "acultural". Taylor contends that Habermas tends to approach modernity from an "acultural" perspective because he describes the transformations that have been experienced in the modern West as a "culture-neutral operation". Taylor explains that what is meant by this is "an operation which is not defined in terms of the specific cultures which it carries us from and to, but is rather seen as of a type which any traditional culture could undergo". In contrast to this line of reflection on the process of transformation associated with modernity, Taylor's own preference for a "cultural" theory of modernity emphasizes the novelty of the modern West, "seen as a culture

(or group of cultures) among others, with its own specific understandings, e.g., of person, nature, the good, to be contrasted to all others, including its own predecessor civilization (with which it obviously also has a lot in common)".[50] The kind of acultural theory which Taylor attributes to Habermas tends to conceive of our modernity

> as a set of transformations that any and every culture can go through and that all will probably be forced to undergo. The changes are not defined by their end point in a specific constellation of understandings of, say, person, society, good; they are rather described as a type of transformation, to which any culture could in principle serve as "input."[51]

Taylor observes that the overwhelming tendency in our culture has been to interpret the process of transformation associated with modernity in acultural terms, regardless of whether its overall development is evaluated in positive or negative terms. In either case an evaluation is central to the interpretation of the transformation undergone. "Modernity arises because we 'come to see' something, or for the negative cases, because we lose something from view." Cultural theories, on the other hand, do not usually interpret the transformation from one constellation to another in evaluative terms, even if they leave open the possibility of an "ulterior judgement of value between cultures". The crucial point, for Taylor, is that cultural theories don't interpret the process of transformation itself in such partial evaluative terms despite the pressure to assume such a standpoint. This pressure has been evident in the experience of Westerners who in the long transition to modernity from Christendom have felt compelled to interpret this transformative process in evaluative terms.[52] This process of transformation, which introduces the possibility of seeing one's own culture as one among many, is interpreted in terms which suggest its inevitability as either an improvement or decline that all other cultures are themselves destined to experience in time. The latent fear motivating this partisanship is that if we don't interpret the process of modernization in partial evaluative terms, we somehow risk jeopardizing judgement for the sake of a fuller understanding of other cultures which stand outside the specific constellation that led to *our* modernization.

Taylor acknowledges that it is not possible to make an exclusive choice for either the cultural or the acultural theory of modernity. What is suggested, rather, is the complementarity of each, the one balancing the limitations of the other, and since our modernity has been generally interpreted from an acultural perspective it

follows that the cultural perspective is in greater need of development. Two central problems have arisen from the distorted interpretation of our modernity that acultural theories have produced. On the one hand, such interpretations have promoted an understanding of certain changes in our modernity as being the products of unproblematic or unavoidable developments brought about by a universally applicable Enlightenment experience dissociated from its specific cultural constellation. On the other hand, certain features of the modern constellation are ignored and their connections to the wider processes of transformation unexamined. As a result, certain features of the modern constellation are not given their historical specificity and they end up appearing as eternal or constant. In particular, Taylor is interested in the "fate of those, largely implicit, understandings of human agency that I want to group under the term 'modern identity,' such as, e.g., the various forms of modern inwardness."[53]

If social research is to cultivate an understanding of "the full gamut of alternative modernities that are in the making in different parts of the world", it will have to avoid locking us "into an ethnocentric prison", condemning us to the blissful ignorance of projecting "our own forms onto everyone else".[54] Taylor attempts to illustrate his concerns through an examination of the notion of inwardness and its importance to the modern identity in terms of the cultivation of self-control and self-exploration.[55] The modern notion of inwardness is not only alien to the notion of self which Plato and Aristotle worked with but also numerous other cultures that developed parallel to our own. Inwardness, for Taylor, is intimately connected to the kind of radical reflexivity which emerged in the modern West, whose index is registered in descriptions of human agency in terms of the reflexive pronoun "self". Self-control and self-exploration are part of the cultivation of this reflexive relationship to ourselves which opens up our inner depths. At least since Descartes, the self is seen in terms of gaining an instrumental mastery over part of the self, the passions. What was required for this to take place was the development of a procedural notion of rationality that guaranteed certain knowledge about the world by taming and directing the inner dynamics of passion. Although this task of self-control is conducted in the first-person perspective, it seeks to disengage itself from that perspective by attaining a procedural certainty in a third-person objectification of oneself. Long before Descartes, Augustine gave this inward turn another dimension beyond self-control, namely a self-exploration which sought to give our lives deeper personal meaning and justification. It was this latter task that

Montaigne cultivated in his writings, a task which was further developed by Romantic notions of self-expression.

What Taylor stresses in his "cultural" account of the development of inwardness in our notions of self is "a skein of particular conceptions of the human good and the corresponding notions of human agency". These notions of inwardness and self, he argues, "are connected with views of human excellence and fulfilment which privilege activities inseparable from radical reflexivity, specifically those of disengaged self-objectification and self-control on one hand and the range of forms of self-exploration on the other, which have ramified through the Romantic period and beyond and have become deeply intricated with our notions of personal fulfilment, of artistic originality, and of the creative imagination".[56] In terms of Taylor's attempt to counter-balance the distorted picture of our modernity promoted by acultural theories, modern inwardness is shown to be a more complex and conflicted experience than they generally allow. Nevertheless, Taylor observes, what his perspective seeks to demonstrate is the interconnections between the two poles of inwardness he has been exploring, "their common roots and kinship as forms of modern inwardness".[57]

In Taylor's view, Habermas's dogged recourse to a procedural solution to the question of morality demonstrates an unwillingness to express exactly what it is in his deep cultural understanding which makes the question of morality crucial in the first place. What motivates Habermas's preference for an acultural explication of the moral question is itself motivated by a sense of the good specific to his own cultural constellation. Taylor contends that if only Habermas could fully explicate this background understanding, the moral sources which sustain it, he would realize the partiality and narrowness forced upon his intuitions of the good life by a detached proceduralism governed by an overriding desire not to be partial. It is only through such realizations, according to Taylor, that a sense of the complexity and contestability of the various goods which motivate us can be acknowledged, and the diversity of ethical life-worlds appreciated and affirmed more fully.

Taylor's own proposal to cultivating a moral self emphasizes the recognition of a zone of contestation over fundamental goods. Most contentious of all in this regard

might be Taylor's professed intuition that in some deep sense our moral sources need to be backed up by the kind of affirmation of life that humans can only make in relation to a God. Taylor's thinking on the validity of this intuition is well-illuminated by his debate with Quentin Skinner.

Not only does Skinner endorse the view of Enlightenment thinkers that most faiths have produced dangerous and irrational dogmas, but also their optimism in regard to the death of God presenting "us with an opportunity, perhaps even a duty, to affirm the value of our humanity more fully than ever before".[58] For Skinner, the rational force of Enlightenment thought is decisive in this debate, for theistic perspectives have been unable in his view to mount a rational reaffirmation of their argument capable of convincing the modern individual of secular persuasion to abandon his or her stance. Taylor's brief reply to Skinner begins with an observation of the chasm which separates their respective background assumptions regarding this issue. Taylor goes on to acknowledge Skinner's point that some forms of religious belief have shown themselves to be highly dangerous to human life. Nevertheless, Taylor reminds us that in our own century it has been mainly those movements which have attempted to fully displace religious belief with some kind of fully purified human affirmation which have produced the most dangerous outcomes. According to Taylor,

> we have reason to fear any belief which holds out hope of major transformation in human life, including several atheistic views, some of which have caused quite a bit of havoc in our century. I also think that this is not necessarily the only consideration. Perhaps if we determined only to put our faith in something which gave absolutely no cause for fear, we might end up also without hope for human beings.[59]

While Skinner sees the death of God as the possibility for a new affirmation of human life in a fuller sense, Taylor poses the question of exactly what kind of affirmation this would be. Taylor's intuition, again because he has no evidence or proof, is "that there is a scale of affirmation of humanity by God which cannot be matched by humans rejecting God". Taylor suggests that by foreclosing on considerations of this sort through an untroubled endorsement of secular experience and Enlightenment values we blind ourselves to a complex moral problem. The question he poses is:

> how much *can* you affirm? Just talking of "opportunity" or "duty" is beside the point. As though you could just turn it on. And as though once you had, the resulting commitment would be no cause for fear. This is perhaps the ultimate "liberal complacency".[60]

In the concluding passages of his *Sources of the Self*, Taylor does acknowledge that whilst religions have given us the highest ideals, they have also led to some of the worst episodes in human history in the name of those ideals. In the face of this dilemma, some may wish to caution against the risk of affirming such lofty ideals, to prudently avoid the destructive potential they also harbour. But Taylor's optimism breaks through here to hazard the hope, without any pretence to being able to demonstrate its validity, that such is not the inevitable fate of our highest spiritual ideals. Taylor asserts that the dilemma posed by the potential "mutilation" of our humanity, the destructive potential that comes with the highest ideals *or* through their avoidance for the sake of prudence and safety, "is in a sense our greatest spiritual challenge, not an iron fate". In this regard, Taylor's ultimate spiritual position reflects the Christian teaching of the New Testament rather than the less humanly commensurable severity of the Old Testament, let alone the tragic sensibility of the Greeks. The best elements in the ideals Taylor retrieves from the Enlightenment and Romanticism are seen to point toward this Christian affirmation, which projects onto the cosmos a generous benevolence towards humans, an ontological invocation of a universe fundamentally predisposed to human coherence and ends. It is this hopeful message that Taylor sees "implicit in Judaeo-Christian theism (however terrible the record of its adherents in history), and in its central promise of a divine affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain unaided".[61]

Even if we would never wish to follow Taylor this far, I think that his attempt to step beyond the narrow confines of the disenchanted view of the world is a provocative move. Taylor's intuition that in our modern culture we tend "to stifle the spirit" is at the basis of his attempt to liberate those aspects of our modern identity which prevailing outlooks have cast into darkness under the assertion that we shall thereby spare ourselves a great deal of trouble and the terror of irrationality. Despite the concluding remarks quoted above, the main thrust of Taylor's *Sources of the Self* is not an argument asserting that religious content and a relation to God should be central to our conception of the good life, but that it could be such given the fullest possible articulation of our modern identity.[62] Even the cautious defender of reason Habermas has tentatively acknowledged in some of his recent writings the continuing power and inspiration of religious and aesthetic contact with what he calls the "extraordinary". The concluding paragraph in Habermas's essay "Themes

in Postmetaphysical Thinking", is worth quoting in full to give a sense of the new tensions emerging within his hermeneutic project of postmetaphysical thinking:

> In the wake of metaphysics, philosophy surrenders its extraordinary status. Explosive experiences of the extraordinary have migrated into an art that has become autonomous. Of course, even after this deflation, ordinary life, now fully profane, by no means becomes immune to the shattering intrusion of extraordinary events. Viewed from without, religion, which has largely been deprived of its worldview functions, is still indispensable in ordinary life for normalizing intercourse with the extraordinary. For this reason, even postmetaphysical thinking continues to coexist with religious practice—and not merely in the sense of the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous. This ongoing coexistence throws light on a curious dependence of a philosophy that has forfeited its contact with the extraordinary. Philosophy, even in its postmetaphysical form, will be able neither to replace nor to repress religion as long as religious language is the bearer of a semantic content that is inspiring and even indispensable, for this content eludes (for the time being?) the explanatory force of philosophical language and continues to resist translation into reasoning discourses.[63]

While Habermas can acknowledge that there is a continuing need to tap more meaningful sources of transcendence than that offered internally by procedural validity claims, he remains strictly opposed to any autonomous philosophical contact with the extraordinary. Philosophy must draw the line at this point, even though its gesture in this regard is to some extent made meaningful by the continuing possibility of contact with the extraordinary in the religious and aesthetic spheres. As Peter Dews has observed, this raises some interesting questions:

> How can [Habermas] on the one hand command philosophy to stand sentinel at the gates of a disenchanted world, preventing the infiltration of regressive illusions, yet on the other expect it to absorb and rework the energies of art and—more especially—of religion, which derive from encounters with the transcendence of the "sheerly alien, abyssal, uncanny"? And if philosophy, art and religion do find themselves radically at cross-purposes, as Habermas suggests, where should we look first in our need for existential orientation?[64]

Dews concludes that, given this more conciliatory approach to religious contents, which philosophy is to critically appropriate where possible, what might be holding Habermas back from affirming an autonomous philosophical contact with the extraordinary and sources of meaning is nothing but "political caution".[65] It is the very mutilation of our humanity which Taylor has observed may be risked not only through a miscarriage of the highest human ideals, but also by the over-cautious withdrawal from all such risks. The irony is that Habermas's acknowledgement of these sources of resistance to disenchantment and instrumental rationality end up promoting their absorption into a thoroughly disenchanted procedural rationality

whose vaunted security is undermined by its aridity. The question must be asked whether what Habermas thereby endorses is anything more than a precarious holding pattern that may itself just as easily exacerbate the risks it supposedly seeks to keep at bay.

In Taylor's view, Habermas's predecessor in the Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno, fared better on this issue, leaving open the possibility of the unconditioned as something constantly troubling philosophical thought, but which philosophy could only approach obliquely. Despite his tragic sense of the impasse the Enlightenment project found itself in, Adorno never permitted himself the more positive articulation of the unconditioned which Taylor feels comfortable espousing. Taylor's understanding of Adorno's project is judicious in its assimilating him to the modernist movement in art, an aesthetic movement which sought epiphanic experience in the space *between* fragments. Adorno's employment of constellations is therefore a way of approximating the lost power to "name" things in their full particularity and avoid the distortive universality which is inescapable when they are objectively mediated through conceptual orderings. Juxtaposing concepts of "mutual affinity" in a more fragmentary and equivocal way, "creates a space in which the particular can emerge". What is achieved thereby is not a full reconciliation, but an oblique premonition of what reconciliation might be like by making an aspect of it fleetingly appear. Adorno thereby articulates a profound sense of loss as a way of keeping something essential in us alive. His sense of reconciliation, as Taylor claims, is expressivist:

> it would mean the full flowering of particularity, its integral recognition. This is something which can only take place through articulation in concepts, in universals. The reconciliation eludes us, because universal concepts always suppress from sight something of the reality of the particular. The perfect, non-distorting, non-reductive appellation would be the "name", a term drawn by Adorno from the Cabbalist tradition. We have lost the power truly to name things.[66]

In Taylor's view, Adorno at least holds onto "a notion of integral expressive fulfilment, in which the demands of sensual particularity would be finally harmonized with those of conceptual reason, and in which domination and suppression of the former by the latter would be overcome". If this form of redemption cannot be fully realized in human history, it does at least act as a substantial "critical standard", especially "where it comes close to an undistorted recognition of conflict between goods". Even so, it is still too narrow for the kind of

understanding of the modern identity which Taylor seeks to cultivate, being far too anthropocentric in its treatment of nonhuman goods. It displays the preferences of the radical Enlightenment to ultimately relegate notions of the good that don't have a basis "in human powers or fulfilments" to the category of illusions better left to more archaic forms of life. Theistic perspectives, but also notions of the good explored in some modernist art and which are located outside the category of the human are dealt with in a reductive manner, ultimately related to the human subject's quest to realize itself expressively.[67]

While Foucault initially sought to awaken from the anthropological slumber that had set in since the Enlightenment, his own spiritual stance also refused to revitalize the old metaphysical names for our moral sources, to rehash them one more time in the hope that whatever went wrong before will be made right this time round. For Taylor, Foucault ultimately emerges in his late work as a philosopher of freedom, albeit a strictly negative freedom which involved "the building of an identity, relatively uncolonized by the current regimes of power".[68] Unlike Taylor's approach to the modern identity, which seeks to retrieve the complexity and overall coherence of its different strands in dialogue and complementarity, "Foucault never paints the interpenetration of identities as a potential gain". For this reason, Foucault is for Taylor, "the most profoundly antidialogical thinker". Foucault ignored this possibility so as to define "the only really healthy mode of identity formation, the definition of self in the aesthetic dimension" as "a completely solo operation, the achievement of lone virtuosi, who could learn from each other, but did not need to associate with each other".[69]

Taylor's portrayal of Foucault captures some of the broad outlines and essential features of his project, but it does so in a reductive manner. For instance, calling Foucault an "antidialogical thinker" seems to confuse a refusal to formalize communicative practices as a basis for identity formation (as Taylor and Habermas have attempted to do in divergent ways) with a total denial that communication with others may provide positive sources for our being who we are. A more accurate statement would therefore be that Foucault did not see any gain in being able to formulate a theory of communication which sought to specify what good communication is or should be, not that good communication is impossible.[70] I think

MONASH

Taylor simplifies here a problem that is far more contestable than he would care to admit.

Foucault's experience of self-creation, while narrow and inarticulate in Taylor's view, may be a genuinely ethical way to live in the absence of God. It provides one way to resist instrumental rationality and achieve a relation with the extraordinary in an existential context perceived as no longer permitting a return to former certainties. This may be unappealing to those who still hold onto the prospect of articulating a wider and stronger significance beyond the self that we could all acknowledge, albeit through personally indexed visions which share with Foucault's aestheticism a realization that ethics is a matter of cultivation. Such is the impetus behind Taylor's project and his dissatisfaction with Foucault's self-fashioning. What is lacking in Taylor's project is a sense of irony in its retrieval of moral sources and a lack of generosity toward what he perceives as the spiritual orientation of Foucault's aestheticism. A more generous approach would concede that what Foucault's stance may lose in regard to cultivating a wider significance beyond the self, it makes up for in its agnostic refusal to translate personal contingencies into pastoral teachings and to show a willingness to make do with a far more modest approach.[71]

William E. Connolly has argued that Taylor's retrieval of moral sources and Foucault's post-Nietzschean self-fashioning, share a divergent approach to the cultivation of an ethical sensibility. "These two orientations produce each other as competitors; they manufacture a competition in which neither is in a good position to write its adversary off as inconceivable, incoherent or unthinkable because the elements of strength and weakness in each are too close for comfort to those in the other."[72] In a sense, both Taylor and Foucault are engaged in a cultivation of ethical life, but whereas Taylor goes for the maximum, Foucault opts for the minimum. If we conjecture that the complexity of the modern identity Taylor wants to give expression to is far more complex than Taylor's retrieval of it can actually sustain, then how would his best account of it be better than a more modest approach that leaves more room for different contestations. But of course, this politicization of the zone of ontological contestation is precisely the kind of disengaged perspectivism Taylor cannot accept and sees as continuous with a general disengagement from moral sources in our disenchanted times.[73]

Although couched in the language of liberal pluralism, Taylor's articulation often denies a concrete sense of his own contingency. It is true that in the abstract he admits to the contestability of much of what he is saying, but Taylor proceeds by bracketing this conditionality in order to sustain a thoroughly engaged argument that moves toward the unconditioned. Especially in Taylor's portrait of the self in his *Sources of the Self*, but also in his *Ethics of Authenticity*, Taylor brings together such breadth and wealth of material in his limpid, reasonable prose that one is often at a loss to find anything to argue against. Confronted with the background grandeur of his vision, contestation is seemingly reduced to quibbling over trifling details of interpretation, or worse, to normative confusions. Taylor covers all the bases, or would like to, but beneath the biblical simplicity of his exposition one wonders whether there is a mass of messy unaccommodating detail that must be kept hidden lest it jeopardize the portrait's overall coherence.[74] Like a Freudian superego, Taylor calls the philosophical ego back to reality and lets it know in no uncertain terms that it is not even master in its own house. But the normative piety of his erudite portrait of the modern identity leaves an ambiguous impression on the reader.

Like Taylor, I can see the continuing need for the kind of deep, ultimately spiritual, affirmation he attempts to bring into or extrapolate from his account of the modern identity, which for Taylor must be a higher-order unity holding together the vast complexity and difference of moral sources it maps out. What I doubt is not the questions Taylor poses to disengaged and secular ontopolitical formations that dominate cultural life in the contemporary West, but the way he seeks to resolve those questions. Taylor's riposte to Skinner's cautious avoidance of religious affirmations acknowledges their risks. While these risks have been confirmed throughout the ages by the dubious actions they have sometimes been used to sanctify (pogroms, crusades, all manner of persecutions), Taylor transforms the risks into renewed spiritual challenges, seeking a blessing whereby our collective espousal of the highest ideals will not fall victim to that wheel of fate that makes inevitable their conversion into perverse acts of mutilation.

This is all very well and good, and one can admire Taylor for speaking frankly about his own faith and broaching this topic in a scholarly arena. But even as Taylor acknowledges these risks, his affirmation negates a whole series of other risks associated more with spirituality than with orthodox religion, the sorts of risk that don't make much sense in his moral universe. What is at issue is the *volatility* of the

kind of affirmation he seeks to reclaim as a possibility for the modern identity, of whether it is possible to eradicate this volatility without in any way diminishing the resulting affirmation. I speak here of the kind of risk one takes in being dissatisfied with the range of spiritual life available or thus far considered possible or worthy, of experimenting and experiencing life, of straying afield of oneself, of being lost, of not knowing who one is or why one exists, of tasting despair to the point of madness or some other extreme condition. I speak here of what might be termed minority spiritual experiences, often dismissed as heresies, perversions, or simply manifestations of evil[75], which do not fit into and which trouble the grander spiritual visions often institutionalized in religions or serving the comfortable mappings of edifying philosophers. It may be that the only way Taylor's vision would permit such experiences as valuable would be if they were brought back into the fold, when what they really do is question in a radical way the more assured affirmation Taylor seeks and the answers he provides.

Taylor's attempt to articulate the fullest possible portrait of our modern identity, what Taylor would call the best account of our moral sources, seeks a blessing which has so far been denied repeatedly to all prior metaphysical speculations on morality. The strong understanding of moral sources which constitutes Taylor's quest attempts to redress the conflict of narrow interpretations of the self and its world in a way which may no longer be possible or desirable. Yet, regardless of its desirability, the project which Taylor has embarked upon and attempted to sway other thinkers toward is an ambitious one even if it would most likely fail, considering the widespread cynicism it would have to combat.[76] Rather than a project of retrieval which strengthens our sense of moral sources beyond the self and claims this as an epistemic gain, a more reasonable direction may be taken by acknowledging the weakening in our relationship to being, the unfolding of a more diffuse significance, a less dramatic but more extensively human experience of value. Such an experience of meaning would be seen not as something which must be finally overcome as a vast cultural error, but as a coming-to-terms with the past.[77]

CHAPTER VIII

The Subject of Postmodernity

> Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times. Nevertheless, he is entitled to console himself with the thought that this development will not end precisely with the year 1930 A.D. Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man's likeness to God still more. But in the interests of our investigations, we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character.
>
> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents.*

At the conclusion of "The Question Concerning Technology", Martin Heidegger reiterates that "the essence of technology is nothing technological".[1] For Heidegger, technology is not just a matter of machines but a way of ordering the world. Technology, in effect, interprets the earth, channels and transforms it into a world fit for human needs and wants. The extreme danger of a total enframing of existence which technology brings about also discloses the first glimmer of a possible redemption. The essence of technology is related to aesthetics and the appearance of truth, but also figures as a moment in the history of salvation. In the interview Heidegger granted to *Der Spiegel* in 1966 on condition that it be published only after his death[2], he states that this redemption will not be fulfilled by humans alone. "Only a god can save us", Heidegger declares.[3] All that humans can do is prepare for this possibility through a thinking which is no longer philosophy as it has traditionally been practised: "to the superior global power of the unthought essence of technology there corresponds the tentativeness and inconspicuousness of thought, which attempts to meditate this still unthought essence."[4]

A student of Heidegger's pupil Hans-George Gadamer, the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, has been an important contributor to debates not so much on technology itself as on the disposition of modern thought that has interpreted the advent of modern technology as an ominous threat. His work engages themes of the wider European tradition of philosophy, particularly recent German hermeneutics, and draws extensively on the theses of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. In *The End of Modernity*, Vattimo proposed that Nietzsche and Heidegger initiate a postmodern philosophy insofar as they seek to distance themselves from the philosophical tradition of modernity without proposing an alternative to it. This refusal places both philosophers on the margins of modernity, at its limit, though not properly outside or beyond it. Both Nietzsche and Heidegger radically question

the heritage of modern European thought, "but at the same time refuse to propose a means for a critical 'overcoming' of it" because "any call for an 'overcoming' would involve remaining captive to the logic of development inscribed in the tradition of European thought".[5] It is Vattimo's contention in this work that "the scattered and often incoherent theories of post-modernity only acquire rigour and philosophical credibility when seen in relation to the Nietzschean problematic of the eternal return and the Heideggerian problematic of the overcoming of metaphysics".[6]

It was in the late 1970s that Vattimo emerged as a leading thinker of postmodernity in Italy through his Heideggerian-inspired thematic of *pensiero debole*, a term usually translated as "weak thought", where the weakness in question has connotations of depotentiation and depletion.[7] The refusal of "strong overcoming", according to Vattimo, opens philosophy up to what he calls "weak thought", the thought that is postmodern and hermeneutic. The metaphor of "weakening" has been employed by Vattimo to elaborate an original philosophy of interpretation, a postmodern hermeneutics for which there are no facts, only interpretations, a view which is itself an interpretation and therefore not an assertion of brute facticity. A significant claim of the postmodern approach to truth is that it disputes the form of rationality which has thus far dominated modernity, in which truth is experienced as the correspondence of a proposition to a fundamental reality or foundation. From the perspective of postmodernity, modern rationality reveals itself as a series of renewed attempts to achieve or refine this ultimately ineluctable correspondence. Vattimo's postmodern hermeneutics does *not* claim to have thereby finally discovered the way things *are*. A postmodern mode of rationality, insofar as it is hermeneutic and therefore interpretative, is incapable of asserting itself as the final belated revelation of the true structure of Being. Were it to attempt such a resolution or to forget the metaphysical tendency toward overcoming, Vattimo contends that it would risk devolving into yet another form of metaphysics, in this case a pure and incoherent relativism. The hermeneutic insight that there are no facts, only interpretations, is itself an interpretation that requires some kind of justification and explanation to prevent itself becoming confused with the most arbitrary assertion of a fact. Without undertaking this kind of clarification, Vattimo fears, hermeneutics as a form of philosophical interpretation will either be (or appear to be) little more than an irrational and brute assertion of perspectivism as the final word.[8]

As we saw in the previous chapter, the hermeneutics of Charles Taylor and his critique of rival interpretations of our modernity (Adorno, Habermas, and Foucault), opened onto an ontopolitical zone of deep contestation. What Taylor ultimately contests in each of these thinkers is the narrowness and confusion of partial viewpoints truncating the complexity of the modern identity. The strong evaluations of constitutive goods which figure in Taylor's hermeneutic project would cultivate a restoration of the deep ontological commitments which could orient our collective ethical life. As we saw, Taylor's assumptions regarding the desirability of this harmonizing project are implicitly contested by the ontological commitments of the positions he wishes to criticize. Nevertheless, the disengaged and perspectival relativism which would result from simply accepting this ontological contestation as the final word would perhaps confirm the absence of shared ethical orientation Taylor wishes to avoid. It is on this point that the hermeneutic project of Vattimo offers an alternative approach to the zone of ontopolitical contestation which avoids the narrowness Taylor criticizes, but also the risks of a return to strongly reassuring constitutive structures for existence.

For Vattimo, the projects of thinkers like Adorno, Foucault, and Habermas entail unconsciously metaphysical positions because they still rely on strong ontological structures.[9] Unlike Taylor, Vattimo does not think the problem with these metaphysical positions inheres in their being ultimately too narrowly partial to acknowledge the ontological plenitude which makes them possible. On the contrary, Vattimo's aim is to locate the points at which these thinkers relapse into unacknowledged metaphysical interpretations of the world to avoid the nihilistic experience of our modernity. Ethical orientation in the zone of ontopolitical contestation cannot be achieved by an engaged agent seeking the recovery of the ontological background as Taylor desires, but by showing that this ontological background is given as the proliferation of interpretations which cannot claim to be in any way a final description of reality.[10]

This task of clarification is what Vattimo has in mind in his recent book, *Beyond Interpretation: The meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy.* In the preface Vattimo states that his motivation for undertaking this clarification of the meaning of hermeneutics for contemporary philosophy was "a certain unease" regarding the increasingly diffuse significance of hermeneutics as a method of interpretation employed extensively in contemporary philosophy. The polemical intent of Vattimo's

argument seeks to distinguish a certain practice of hermeneutics as properly philosophical from appropriations which dilute its radicality and philosophical consequences. Vattimo's polemical intent is stated most explicitly in the second appendix to this book, where the "unease" which Vattimo acknowledges in the preface is placed in the context of the charge of "irrationalism". Presently, this line of criticism has produced a more moderate charge: "it maintains that hermeneutics involves a more or less explicit rejection of argumentation, which is replaced by a kind of creative–poetic, or even purely narrative, way of philosophizing."[11] Vattimo believes that this claim actually identifies a real "risk" in hermeneutics, particularly in those forms which have recently captured the most attention.[12] Vattimo is therefore wary of hermeneutics generally becoming identified with this perceived rejection of argumentation, which in his opinion would be a betrayal of its own intentions. Vattimo contends that:

> Hermeneutics can and must rebut this accusation by working to develop from its own original presuppositions a notion of rationality all of its own that, without returning to the foundational procedures of traditional metaphysics, does not completely annul the specific characteristics of philosophical discourse, as distinct from, say, poetry and literature. This "rationality of hermeneutics", or hermeneutic rationality, aims specifically to rebut the latest, weak, form taken by the accusation of irrationalism which focuses on the absence of argument in hermeneutic theory; but it can also open the way to a renewal, at least in certain respects, of the more classical historicist and scientific notions of rationality.[13]

This work of reconstructing a hermeneutic rationality "is inseparable from a reconsideration of the relation between hermeneutics and modernity".[14] In rethinking philosophy's relation to modernity, Vattimo explains, "it is becoming increasingly difficult to say what significance hermeneutics has for the problems of which philosophy has traditionally spoken: problems such as those of science, ethics, religion and art".[15] Vattimo's aim is thereby to counter overly-narrow and literal misreadings of his thesis of "weak thought" and its relations to contemporary nihilism.[16] Weak thought, as the enduring metaphor of Vattimo's philosophical project, is the elaboration of a hermeneutic approach to philosophy that attempts to trace the dissolution, a weak overcoming, of the tradition of metaphysics and the modernity which is its legacy.[17]

MONASH

In the mid 1980s, Vattimo observed that hermeneutics had become the "common idiom of both philosophy and culture", the contemporary *koiné*. What Vattimo means by this is that "from the viewpoint of factual description, the way in which in the past the great majority of literary and philosophical discussions had to rise to the challenge of Marxism and structuralism, often without necessarily accepting any of their tenets, today this central role belongs to hermeneutics".[18] This popularization of hermeneutics into a *koiné*, as has already been observed, has come at the cost of diluting its initially radical philosophical significance, and consequently, the risk of its becoming "something innocuous, worthless even".[19] Vattimo hastens to explain that his argument does not so much seek to establish an essentially "authentic" meaning for hermeneutics as to indicate a direction in which "it could be more fruitful than it is at present".[20] This more fruitful direction would be a "radicalization" of hermeneutics by treating "the classical theses of hermeneutics . . . within a framework of the history of nihilism as the history of modernity and thereby of secularization".[21]

Thus, according to Vattimo, that which "reduces hermeneutics to a generic philosophy of culture is the wholly metaphysical claim (often implicit and unrecognized) to be a finally true description of the (permanent) 'interpretative structure' of human existence".[22] For Vattimo, hermeneutics is not only a theory of historically conditioned horizons for the possibility of truth, it is *itself* a radically historical truth. An initial approach to this paradoxical terrain is given by Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God. Proclaiming this death, Nietzsche does not thereby deliver an objective fact: God does not or cannot exist. There are only interpretations, no facts, and this announcement too is an interpretation, otherwise it would take the place hitherto occupied by the now dead God. The announcement "God is dead" is a piece of interpretative speculation and an event suggesting why he is no longer deemed necessary. Initially God is a necessity, a guarantee for humans of a certain measure of security in the world through the establishment of order and morality. Vattimo interprets Nietzsche's announcement as an observation that, today, the

> work of reassurance is, if only relatively speaking, complete and we live in a formal and ordered social world, in which science and technology are available to rid our stay in the world of the terror that belonged to primitive man. God seems too extreme, barbaric and excessive a hypothesis. And, moreover, the God that has served as this principle of stability and reassurance is also the one that has always forbidden the lie; so it is to obey him that the faithful have forsworn even that lie which he is himself: it is the faithful that have killed God . . .[23]

However much this announcement may have taken on the appearance of incontrovertible truth, to think that the death of God has finally given us a statement of fact and access to a more stable truth would be an error of repetition. What is announced in the interpretation of the death of God is the mortality of all Truth and therefore the advent of nihilism, that "uncanniest of all guests" which Nietzsche observed had turned up at Europe's door.[24] Even a hermeneutics that permits itself to become a theory of perspectivism registered as objective fact could only present its view as a matter of "taste", or worse, of passively registering "a state of mind that remained as wholly inexplicable to oneself as to others (precisely because intractable to argument)".[25]

Vattimo proposes an argument for establishing a nonmetaphysical ground for hermeneutics, but it is an argument that can only present itself as "the most persuasive philosophical interpretation of a situation or 'epoch', and thereby, necessarily, of a provenance", the end result "of a process that, in its view, 'logically' prepares a certain outcome". With this we come to understand what Vattimo means by the "nihilistic vocation" of hermeneutics, that it can only supply a coherent historical account of how it has come about at a particular moment, as part of a historical destiny in which it is implicated and in which it reads the signs of its own perishability or mortality. What hermeneutics does is tell a story that recollects the events which brought it about as the common idiom of contemporary Western culture, and more specifically, philosophical practice. A hermeneutics aware of its nihilistic vocation will in this way avoid that "generality of a philosophy of culture that continually oscillates between relativism and transcendentalist metaphysics (depending on whether one identifies the horizon of interpretation with the lifeworld understood as a particular culture or as a universal normative reference point)".[26] To practise hermeneutics responsibly in this manner yields a coherent view that is always in transition, a "weak thought" that is in "waiting for others to propose a more plausible alternative".[27]

In *The Transparent Society*, Vattimo proposed that the postmodern world of mass communications, rather than leading to a greater transparency, leads to a more complex and chaotic world which should be taken as the only possible horizon for realizing any emancipatory hopes.[28] In such a world of conflicting perspectives, "one can say that if there is any reason for listening to the discourse of

hermeneutics, it can only lie in the fact that hermeneutics is presented as belonging to the age in which we live, as its theory, and so only in a certain sense 'adequate'".[29] Hermeneutics therefore belongs to "the world of public opinion, of mass media, of Weberian 'polytheism', of the technical and potentially total organization of existence".[30] For Heidegger, modernity is the world of accomplished nihilism, the *Ge-Stell*, the world of techno–scientific rationalization.[31] What prevails in Vattimo's reading of Heidegger is the way the monolithic tendency of representationalism in technological enframing undermines itself. Rather than leading to only one world picture, technological enframing ultimately may be understood in Weberian (polytheistic) terms as a conflict of proliferating pictures of the world.[32] The coordination of entities reduced to abstract representations in modern techno–science (understood to encompass not only the natural but the human sciences as well) entails a loss of reality that leads ironically not to the oppressive reassurance of the world picture but to a proliferation of conflicting images. "It is this conflict that sets in train a massive enlargement of the systems of calculation and prediction, to the point where this movement to the extremes of calculability leads to a general incalculability: the age of the world picture gives way to the dissolution of this image in a Babel of conflicting images".[33]

Vattimo suggests this understanding of the consequences of technological enframing was a latent possibility in Heidegger's own thinking that was never fully developed.[34] The reason Heidegger did not pursue his anticipation of a nonmetaphysical thinking emerging from the world of accomplished nihilism and technological domination in this direction was due to his inability to foresee the way in which the *Ge-Stell* would be radically transformed by "the transition from mechanical technology to information technology".[35] As Vattimo explains:

> It is not in the world of machines and engines that humanity and being can shed the mantles of subject and object, but in the world of generalized communication. Here the entity dissolves in the images distributed by the information media, in the abstraction of scientific objects (whose correspondence with real "things" open to experience can no longer be seen) or technical products (that do not even make contact with the real world via their use value, since the demands they satisfy are increasingly artificial). Whereas the subject, on its part, is less and less a centre of self-consciousness and decision-making, reduced as it is to being the author of statistically predicted choices, playing a multiplicity of social roles that are irreducible to a unity. In the *Ge-Stell* of information, the world of images of the world, the true world, as Nietzsche said, becomes a fable; or, to use the Heideggerian term, *Sage*. Hermeneutics is the philosophy of this world in which being is given in the form of weakening or dissolution.[36]

The meaning of the history of Being as it culminates in the world of generalized communication is that it *is no longer*, that it has manifested itself historically as a prolonged drift of dissipation. In this regard, Vattimo's interpretation of Heidegger's attempt to overcome Being given as presence in metaphysics is taken to be strictly "a recollection of the oblivion of Being", thus running contrary to Heidegger's own dominant inclinations, in which the overcoming of metaphysics became "an effort, in spite of everything, somehow to prepare a 'return of Being', perhaps in the form of an apophasic, negative, mystical ontology".[37] Rather, the history of Being is a narration of a "long goodbye", of an "interminable weakening of Being", a recollection *only* of the "oblivion of Being", of its continual "suspension and withdrawal".[38] The hermeneutic task with regard to the world of techno–science is not that of criticizing it in the name of humanistic values which it threatens to obliterate. In the world of mass communications, the hermeneutic task is to aid the natural and human sciences together toward a recognition of their own "nihilistic meaning and to take it up as a guiding thread for judgements, choices and the orientation of individual and collective life".[39] For Vattimo, it is this recollection of a belonging to the history of nihilism which is lacking in thinkers such as Adorno and Foucault that leads them ultimately into problematic revivals of the metaphysics of aestheticism as a response to the demise of the humanist subject.

Central concerns of the crisis of humanism registered by philosophical thought during the early twentieth century, as Vattimo observes, were the expanding technologization of the world and the rationalization of social life. Against these dehumanizing tendencies, philosophical thought sought to distinguish specifically human values from those embodied in the scientific objectification of the world and life. In addition, theoretical and practical preparations were being fashioned to pave the way for the recuperation of the centrality of the human subject displaced by these developments. The dehumanizing threat is seen as somehow external to humanistic values even if the threat seems to emanate from an ensemble of mechanisms in which the human subject and its values are inextricably implicated. The moment of reappropriation would occur when this ensemble is somehow brought to heel in the name of essentially unsullied but unrealized humanistic values, which provide the only *viable* course of action. In this reading of the crisis of

humanism, confidence is maintained in the ultimate integrity of humanistic values. Accordingly, there is a discounting of the possibility that although the dehumanizing mechanisms have been set in motion by a humanistic reason, there might be something wrong with the very structure of the latter and its configuration of human subjectivity.[40] Such responses to the crisis of humanism, according to Vattimo, failed to "substantially call the traditional kind of humanism into question", for they could not register "this crisis as affecting the contents of the humanistic ideal, but only the possibility of its historical survival in the new conditions of existence of the modern world".[41] This kind of approach to the crisis of humanism, experienced as the flight from the terror of Nazi extermination camps into a world of manipulated subjectivities and damaged life, was evident in Theodor W. Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, published in 1947.

What Adorno and Horkheimer present in their research is what Vattimo calls the "counter-finality of reason". The process of rationalization unleashed by the Enlightenment is shown to reach an impasse in which, "even when realizing itself 'correctly' and according to plan, reason turns against the very ends of emancipation and 'humanization' by which it is motivated". The possibility of responding to this impasse "by taking another step down the path of a fuller and more authentic rationalization" is ruled out because "it is precisely this mechanism that has shown itself to be corrupt". In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the implication seemed to be that a correction of reason was still possible by critically distinguishing the instrumental rationality which had led to the world of total administration (and in its more extreme versions, death camps) from some other, as yet undeveloped, kind of reason. In other words, reason had been led astray "because it had chosen scientific, objectifying, metrical reason as its model". Recuperating ideas already developed by Weber, Adorno linked the predominance of this form of rationality with the imposition of a capitalistic order upon social life. An overthrow of this capitalist order could therefore still hope to facilitate the emergence of "a less unilaterally calculative and instrumental practice of reason as well, opening the way forward to a different form of rationalization that could retrieve some sense of liberation".[42]

As Vattimo observes, this possibility in Adorno's subsequent work became increasingly tenuous as he developed a more trenchantly negative utopianism as a

critical ideal. It no longer seemed realistic to hope for an "emancipation of reason from its modern historical 'figure', with its mix of social discipline, repression, calculative objectivization and the technological application of science". A weaker and ever more fragile hope was all that remained, "that the utopian *telos* can be affirmed only in negative terms".[43] This was the case in the concluding chapter of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, "Meditations on Metaphysics". Modernization as the metaphysics of an instrumental rationalization of the world is again the target. In the aftermath of Auschwitz, Vattimo observes, it seems that Adorno is willing "to consider the extreme explosion of violence an unveiling and decisive step along the way of a possible 'going beyond' of the metaphysics that inspires violence and is disclosed in it". Translating the weak hope presented in Adorno's reflections into his Heideggerian vocabulary, Vattimo suggests that "it is perhaps only after Auschwitz that Being can give itself in its authentic minimal and micrological essence (though without, obviously, attributing any necessary providentiality to Auschwitz)". [44]

For Adorno, Auschwitz is not only the outcome of a rationalization of the world, but also provides an image prefiguring the world of total administration and the normality that would characterize it through its affirming and rendering universal the insignificance of transitory individual lives.[45] Auschwitz as an atrocity of rationalization in the name of a Thousand-Year Reich became a monumental tomb swallowing not only the affirmation of truth as permanence, but also the contrary possibility of elevating the transitory as the essence of a new metaphysics. While this forces an acknowledgment of transitory lives in their material immediacy, this acknowledgment must never be allowed to congeal their alterity into the basis for establishing a reconciled lifeworld. Reconciliation for Adorno, as Vattimo observes, must remain a distant, almost inaccessible, promise, "because its realization would imply precisely the suppression of that dimension of alterity, nostalgia, aspiration, and openness that constitutes the right and truth of the transitory". And yet, in Vattimo's view, the negative dialectics which Adorno develops in order to ward off this possibility is highly problematic and ever more fragile. According to Vattimo: "In spite of all the sincere emphasis given appearance and micrology, Adorno's 'bonheur' is still always thought according to the most classical metaphysical mechanisms of grounding." The attempt to go beyond metaphysics and the violence it threatens to unleash in the name of the universal exorcizes the reconciliatory moment of final grounding of any imminence. Because it is both desired and feared, the moment when reconciliation redeems the world must be placed at a great

distance, in a quasi-inaccessible utopian future, for to bring it closer would only be courting disaster. Dialectics can only offer a form of reconciliation which excludes the possibility of transcending our indigent world. It does this for the sake of "the transitory and sensuous against the 'normalizing' claims of metaphysics".[46] Vattimo hastens to add that even for Adorno transcendence cannot only be considered as an "expression of alienation", it must also be "the source of the right of the sensuous in its necessary referral to something else".[47] In Adorno's concern to indefinitely suspend the moment of reconciliation, in which dialectics would become "positing", there seems to be the realization that the impositions of metaphysics are not due to the workings of transcendence, "the referral to another order of reality that devalues and lowers that which is immediately given, but rather the mechanism of grounding, the process that claims to reach that promised 'other' and to establish itself in its disclosed presence, in its *energia*".[48]

Vattimo concludes that the aporetic nature of Adorno's negative dialectics "express a more serious and more radical problematic encountered by every attempt to go beyond metaphysics without abandoning the conception of Being as disclosed presence that determined the development of metaphysics and that still inheres in the thought of Hegel and Marx to which Adorno remains tied".[49] Adorno could have averted this problem had he embraced the dissolutive fragility of negative dialectics and defended it "in the name of micrology and the 'presque rien' as thought that evades metaphysics in its very form by refusing, strictly speaking, the logic of grounding". To have taken this direction, Vattimo argues, Adorno would have had "to articulate better the implications of his micrology which remain implicit, while the dominant model remains that of dialectical reconciliation—even if transferred to a utopian future—that is to say, the idea of true Being as presence". Adorno shares the same horizon as that opened by Nietzsche and Heidegger in viewing the essence of metaphysics as violent imposition, but he remains committed to a dialectics and a concomitant construal of Being that ultimately renders his thought pre-Nietzschean and pre-Heideggerian.[50]

For Vattimo, the continuing significance of Adorno, and contemporary dialecticians Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch,

> consists less in their having rethought dialectics in such a way as to incorporate the critical exigencies of micrology, than in their having reassessed such exigencies even to the detriment of dialectics, even to the detriment of the coherence and unity of their own thinking. They are not dialectical thinkers. They are thinkers of the dissolution of dialectics.[51]

Adorno and his fellow dialecticians presided over a dissolution of dialectics that could no longer be contained by the dialectical form itself, a process which revealed the extent to which "the dialectical approach to the problem of alienation and reappropriation is still deeply complicitous with the alienation it intends to combat". The critique of metaphysical notions of "totality" and "reappropriation" at the heart of dialectics as occurs in Heidegger's thinking through of the ontological difference inherits and radicalizes "the dissolutive tendencies of dialectics".[52] In Vattimo's more radical proposal of "weak thought", an ontology of weakening is foreshadowed which not only takes up Heidegger's differential thought but the heritage of dialectics. The weak form of overcoming Heidegger termed *Verwindung* is taken up by Vattimo against Heidegger's own prevailing preference for a preparation of the return of Being. It is in this way that Vattimo's weak thought takes up the heritage of both dialectics and ontological difference:

> The dialectical heritage through which difference declines (*verwindet sich*) into weak thought is condensed in the notion of *Verwindung*—with good reason, for *Verwindung* . . . is the term Heidegger adopts in place of *Uberwindung*, the overcoming or sublimation proper to dialectics . . . In the Heideggerian concept and "practice" of *Verwindung* we find a concentration of the dialectical (and thus metaphysical) heritage that still lives on in the thinking of difference. Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics seems to involve a dialectical overcoming, yet it is different precisely insofar as it is a *Verwindung*.[53]

As we saw earlier, Vattimo contends that it was Heidegger's inability to develop this tendency in his own thinking which prevented him from anticipating how the monolithic *Ge-Stell*, the technological enframing of existence, undermines and transforms itself in societies of mass communications. It thereby offers a potential source of emancipation, rather than a despairing preparatory call for a recuperation of Being. Likewise, Adorno's commitment to a dialectical reconciliation withdrawn into an inaccessible future appearing only obliquely in avant-garde aesthetics, failed to see any hope in the world of mass culture experienced as a society of generalized communication.[54]

According to Vattimo, a "stability and permanence in the work [of art], a depth and authenticity in the aesthetic experience of creation and appreciation are things we can no longer expect from late-modern aesthetic experience, dominated as it is by the power (and impotence) of the media".[55] This condition need not be taken to be symptomatic of "alienation linked to the dehumanizing aspects of standardization".

Mass media, by encouraging "the inconstancy and superficiality of experience", actually act as a foil "to the generalization of domination, insofar as it allows a kind of 'weakening' of the very notion of reality, and thus a weakening of its persuasive force". Vattimo takes this to be the lesson of the situationists, where the spectacle does not merely appear as a puppet of power but also indicates a "softer and more fluid" reality, "in which experience can again acquire the characteristics of oscillation, disorientation and play".[56] In the late-modern world of generalized communications, "these are the only ways that art can (not *still*, but perhaps *finally*) take the form of creativity and freedom".[57] Vattimo claims that it is in this spirit that we can recall the Schopenhauerian tendency of the "presque rien" in the final meditations on metaphysics in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. It would indicate the transitoriness and indigence of contemporary existence, "the last possible name of metaphysical being—essential, with an evanescent air of the 'quintessential', a kind of slightness".[58]

Vattimo's weak thought has sought to question the ethical orientations of more recent thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas in order to reveal residues of strongly metaphysical commitments. With regard to Foucault, many of the problems Vattimo identifies correspond to versions of the overcoming of metaphysical humanism proposed recently by French appropriations of hermeneutics. As Giovanna Borradori explains this contentious claim, these French efforts to overcome metaphysics often subscribe "to a form of knowledge strictly limited to 'local' strategies, erasing *a priori* the possibility of any criticism of technology, limiting philosophy to a role of pure description". In Borradori's assessment this would miss the point of Heidegger's attempt in *Being and Time* to move beyond "the conception of Being as 'foundation'" as requiring that attention be paid to the historical configurations of subjectivity. "The nature of subjectivity would thus include not only a textual-hermeneutical dimension but a historical dimension as well."[59]

Foucault's practice of philosophy would seem to answer this call, opening up a historical dimension as well as a mode of interpretation, which from the 1970s, following on from his announcement of the death of Man, was directed toward a genealogical critique of individualizing disciplinary practices and the technologies

of the self.[60] Nevertheless, these analyses of power and domination remained prone to being parodies or simulacra of thought, or at the very least, "fictions", as Foucault sometimes referred to the positing of truth in his histories.[61] If the play of forces was the ultimate reality in the production of truth, Foucault was theoretically incapable of justifying his own histories other than as a kind of parody of this play. Foucault's histories thereby sought to dispense with the humanist metaphysics of historical writing, most decisively with the dialectical privileging of stable and continuous development of truth over time. According to Vattimo, a consistent understanding of the crisis in the metaphysical tradition can only come from a point which is both outside and within the tradition, through the weak overcoming of metaphysics experienced as *Verwindung*. It is for this reason that Vattimo detected in Michel Foucault's work up to and including his microphysics of power in the mid 1970s, as in the intellectual current known collectively as French poststructuralism, too strong a mode of overcoming relative to the metaphysical tradition.

In the introduction to *Il pensiero debole*, Vattimo and Rovatti distinguish their "weak thought" from the various versions of French poststructuralism. From the rhizomatic thought of Deleuze to the microphysics of power in Foucault there is still "too much nostalgia for metaphysics" and an incapacity to deliver in full "the experience of the *oblivion* of Being, or of the 'death of God', that which above all Heidegger and Nietzsche announced to our culture".[62] As an alternative response to the crisis of reason based on a metaphysical humanism, weak thought avoids the inherent tendency in French poststructuralism to create entities with "the same burden of the metaphysical *ontos on*". Such a tendency ends up repeating and affirming the confusion of beings for Being, which rather than escaping the metaphysics of presence may inadvertently reassert it.[63]

The claim to have moved beyond the rational *logos* of the Enlightenment, to have made a total break with the tradition of the Enlightenment (and with it the metaphysical tradition as a whole), involves an unavoidable paradox, to be somehow beyond the Enlightenment tradition of critique and yet to be critical of the Enlightenment. Vattimo's usage of *Verwindung* addresses itself to this paradox in postmodernism, which has also figured as the principal focus of Jürgen Habermas's criticisms of this intellectual current.[64] To claim to have overcome metaphysics or the tradition of the Enlightenment purely and simply would only be an unconscious relapse into what was ostensibly being escaped. Vattimo attempts to thereby meet

the challenge posed by Habermas's criticism of attempts to critically overcome the Enlightenment tradition which deny themselves the very tools for sustaining such a critique rationally.[65] In his polemic against what he sees as a line of French antimodernism linking Georges Bataille with Jacques Derrida via Michel Foucault, Habermas observes a repetition of "the fundamental experience of aesthetic modernity, namely the revelation of a decentred subjectivity liberated from all the constraints of cognition and purposive action, from all the imperatives of labour and use value, and with this they break out of the modern world altogether". Paradoxically, this escape from the modern world and "an implacable opposition to modernism", is enacted "precisely through a modernist attitude" which had already reached its zenith in the exaltation of the present witnessed in dadaism, surrealism, and the writings of Walter Benjamin.[66] These French thinkers, whom Habermas labels the "young conservatives" of our times, "locate the spontaneous forces of imagination and self-experience, of affective life in general, in what is most distant and archaic, and in Manichaean fashion oppose instrumental reason with a principle accessible solely by evocation, whether this is the will to power or sovereignty, Being itself or the Dionysian power of the poetic".[67]

Foucault himself did not properly address these issues until the posthumously published essay "What is Enlightenment?", in which he renegotiates for himself a relationship to Enlightenment rationality. In this essay Foucault refuses what he terms Enlightenment "blackmail", that one either take a position outside the tradition of Enlightenment rationalism (and suffer the inevitable consequences) or stay within it (and accept it totally).[68] To this ultimatum Foucault opposes an interpretation of the Enlightenment, not "as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating", but "as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them".[69] While this statement may have gone some way to addressing a problematic relationship to the tradition of the Enlightenment, for a philosopher like Vattimo, Foucault's reliance on the idea of ethos as a philosophical life reveals other unresolved problems of a metaphysical nature.

Foucault's early works on madness can also be viewed in this light. Against the modern administration of mental illness Foucault seeks to oppose the poetic sovereignty of madness as an experience of the eclipse of rational subjectivity that

survives in the experience of modern art. "Through Sade and Goya, the Western world received the possibility of transcending its reason in violence, and of recovering tragic experience beyond the promises of dialectic".[70] As Vattimo has pointed out, however, the overcoming of humanism in this manner, through violent convulsion, is too strong and carries with it the risk of some sort of relapse into metaphysics. Even if one were to leave aside the explicit references to violence in this overcoming as it appears in Foucault's early work, what remains is the peremptory decision to be rid of subjectivity. As Vattimo observes:

> The leaving behind of humanism and metaphysics is not an overcoming, but rather a *Verwindung*; subjectivity is not something that can be simply shed like an old, worn-out garment.[71]

Vattimo offers in this account a way of understanding why the problem of the subject becomes in Foucault's mature writings again the focus of his genealogical analyses, ultimately tied to a higher-order concern of interpretation as a mode of self-stylized transformation.

For Vattimo, Foucault's late work exhibits an appropriation of hermeneutics as a mode of interpretation concerned primarily, as in Richard Rorty's work, with "redescriptions" and an ethical emphasis on difference.[72] Vattimo recalls Gilles Deleuze appreciative work on Foucault, in which it is argued that in his late work, Foucault does not so much rediscover the subject as turn it over to perennial transformation. Deleuze informs us that Foucault, having already made the subject a derivative of the statement (recalling the Nietzschean insight of the doer being super-imposed on the deed), "by defining it now as a derivative of the outside, conditioned by the fold . . . draws it out fully and gives it an irreducible dimension".[73] For Foucault the subject is an interpretation, whose identity is always a becoming from outside and a movement of difference beyond the limit. Vattimo's counter-assessment suggests that Foucault's proposing such an ethic of redescription "in all probability offers a fresh reading of the Nietzschean idea of the conflict of interpretations". Foucault and other readers of Nietzsche like Rorty, adopt the Nietzschean principle "that if in the age of nihilism there is still a duty that we can recognize as coherent, it is not that of respecting the table of existing values, but that of inventing new tables of values, new lifestyles, new systems of metaphors for speaking of the world and of our own experience".[74] What emerges from this ethical orientation of interpretation is not so much a question of knowledge but an operation or experiment in the mode of subjectivity. Rather than being directed

towards understanding, this mode of interpretation gives special emphasis to the subject as experimentation or innovation.

What is revealed in the experience of truth as redescriptive interpretation is the nonneutrality of the interpreter, figured either as a radical historical contingency, a particular personality, a life-story, or a personal style. For Foucault and Rorty, these features are central to the interpretative venture and cannot be rendered marginal, assigned a "provisional or accidental" status in the quest for a more transparent assessment of truth-claims. For Vattimo, however, the ethic of redescription produces a relapse into the romantic metaphysics of artistic genius, revalorizing the revolutionary and poetic moment which actually favours radical discontinuity rather than continuity:

> What is valued seems here to be identified with the new, the unheard of, the "stroke of genius"—precisely the genius of the Romantic tradition; and the more it is aware of its complete unfoundedness and unfoundability, the more highly it is valued (this is why Heidegger and Nietzsche, united by dint of their offering pure redescriptions of themselves and of the world, are "worth" less than Proust, who, as a Nietzschean expression has it, knows that he is "only a poet, just a clown").[75]

The ethic of redescription distorts the original intent of hermeneutics, according to Vattimo, "especially the conviction that interpretation is the articulation of something understood, and thus a response to a call whose source, in Heideggerian terms, lies in the historico–destinal throwness in which Dasein is located".[76] The affirmation of the artist's faith in his or her own transformative capacities as a "wholly arbitrary assumption of total responsibility" repeats the metaphysics of creative genius. This metaphysical revival is no longer legitimated in terms of a spiritual or mysterious communion with nature, but seeks an implicit justification in "a vitalistic celebration of creativity which remains the only way to explain why it is important that 'the conversation continue'".[77]

On the other hand, the development of hermeneutics as an ethics of communicative transparency, as occurs in the work of Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas, reveals its own unacknowledged metaphysical revivals. What Vattimo criticizes in the work of these thinkers is their reliance on a quasi-transcendental imperative of transparent communication. From a faithfully hermeneutic point of view, any

recourse to "the ideal of an absolute transparency of communication" is for Vattimo a betrayal of the interpretative experience of truth by risking the reassertion of stable metaphysical structures.[78] In Vattimo's view, the normative significance of the defence of separate value spheres and the lifeworld as a whole from unwarranted incursions in Habermas's work "seems to depend wholly on the fact that the discursive and dialogical character of the lifeworld—as the supporting horizon of a culture—is in fact specific to Western culture, and perhaps even to the 'transparent' community of modern scientists alone".[79] For Habermas, the intersubjective formation of each individual "I", demonstrated in the positive knowledge of human sciences, forms the basis for a theory of communication in which participants always already aspire to be universally understood. But according to Vattimo:

> If one wishes to execute the turn modernity demands of thought, one must renounce the metaphysical ideal of knowledge as the description of objectively given structures. Habermas's intersubjective I is wholly the I of modern metaphysics–science. It is the object of the human sciences and the equally ahistorical subject of the laboratory.[80]

Consequently, the ideal of transparency, in which communication is stripped of distortive elements, "seems to be perilously close . . . to the conception of truth as objectivity determined by a 'neutral' subject modelled on the form of 'metaphysical' subjectivity incarnated most recently in the ideal of the modern scientist".[81] In terms of practical consequences, it could be argued against Habermas that his theory of communicative action itself risks the kind of colonization of the lifeworld that it purportedly defends the lifeworld against. Seen in this way, even as a purely regulative ideal the model of communicative transparency may turn out to be a clandestine "colonization of the lifeworld by a specific form of action, the scientific–descriptive".[82]

Habermas's defence of the lifeworld, according to Vattimo, fails to radically disclose its own historicity and for that reason all too easily transposes "the historical becoming of a particular lifeworld" into a transcendental structure for all possible life-worlds.[83] For Vattimo, the ethical orientation of hermeneutics can only be sustained by affirming its "historicality as *belonging*", in which the experience of truth occurs "as the articulation—or interpretation—of a tradition (a language, a culture), to which existence belongs, and which it reformulates in new messages sent to other interlocutors". It is only at this juncture, Vattimo claims, that "[e]thical life and historicality coincide".[84] Rather than justifying a more adequate epistemological grasp of the reality of human existence, hermeneutics should see

itself as an event of the process of secularization, "the philosophical thought of secularized Europe".[85] If hermeneutics is to be more than a metaphysical description purporting to have arrived at the fundamental structure of Being, an emphasis on reasonableness and tolerance in dialogue will only make sense, so Vattimo claims, within a history of Being experienced as weakening.

The nihilistic vocation of Vattimo's hermeneutics, as he himself has suggested, makes it more capable of understanding and meeting the challenge posed recently by various forms of fundamentalism and associated phenomena. Uppermost in Vattimo's mind, especially in the context of his recent discussion of his own return to Christianity, is the bizarre fundamentalism of Pope John Paul II.[86] But as he has otherwise indicated, it would also include all manner of religious, ethnic and communitarian revivals that forcefully assert themselves in the context of the "supermarket culture" of late consumerist society.[87] Although he offers few specific examples, Vattimo is undoubtedly referring to the advent of phenomena ranging from doomsday cults to isolationist/survivalist communities to ethnic cleansing. What would unify all of these disparate phenomena would be the assertion of authoritative interpretations of the world, whether it be the conviction of immanent apocalypse, a paranoid projection into global conspiracies, or the propaganda of ancient hatreds. The late-modern world, characterized by the dissolution of reality into conflicting interpretations, is also the place in which fundamentalisms return "as neurotic defences of identity and belonging in reaction to the indefinite widening of horizons entailed by the culmination of the epoch of the world picture".[88] It is in this context that Vattimo has suggested that the recent disarray of the "Left" may be ameliorated by reconstructing its emancipatory ambitions along the lines of a nihilistic ethics. Such a possibility, he suggests, "may give it the capacity to look at the phantasmagoria of the post-modern world in a manner not simply defensive and reactive".[89]

For Vattimo this inability to adjust to new emancipatory possibilities was the central problem of the apocalyptic polemic of Adorno, who overemphasized the extent to which the media and culture industries formed part of a closed hegemonic system of propaganda and degradation. Adorno's nostalgia for a classical *Bildung* would not permit him to see in mass communications new emancipatory possibilities, where

even "minorities and subcultures of every kind tend to acquire increased visibility, even if only to gratify the market's need for novelty and 'differences.'"[90] What Vattimo finds worthwhile in the work of thinkers like Foucault, Deleuze and Lyotard, was their unwillingness to recur to *Bildung* ideals of the past. "If salvation is possible, it cannot be found in values and lifestyles that belong to previous stages in the history of metaphysics but in today's new, unprecedented life chances."[91] Consequently, in Vattimo's view, the search for a more viable *Bildung* ideal will have to be oriented towards "grasping the changed predicament of the self in the world of mass culture".[92] If such a society of mass communications is not to be perceived as the quasi-totalitarian reality Adorno feared, we must interpret its conflicting viewpoints not as a final metaphysical statement of reality but as the chance of emancipation, "by our being even more radically Babelic than it is".[93] Rather than reacting to this Weberian polytheistic predicament by seeking the reassurance of a monotheistic alternative which would guide conflicts toward resolution within a reconstructed horizon of universal values, a more radical polytheism is what shall count as the chance for emancipation. According to Vattimo, we should guard against "the return, either explicit or implicit, of monotheism, be it due to nostalgia or to a kind of socialized individual neurosis".[94]

While Charles Taylor's ontological retrieval of the complexity of the modern identity seeks to overcome the disengaged and fractured identities arising from modern secularization, for Vattimo it is no longer possible or desirable to attempt to contain narrow, confused, and conflicting identities through strong evaluations claiming a fuller, more reassuring, but also potentially more punitive return of Being. Vattimo's understanding of nihilism's vocation in the modern world takes it to be an avenue offering the *chance*, rather than the promise, of emancipation. The meaning of the world revealed as the conflict of interpretations is also "to recognize ourselves as heirs to a tradition of the weakening of the strong structures of Being in every field of experience—heirs, and therefore relations, daughters, brothers and friends of those to whose calls we must now cor-respond".[95] Vattimo's recent turn toward religious issues has seen the emergence of an ethic of charity in his work as the corollary of his understanding of the reduction of violence implicit in a weak ontology given as secularization. Consequently, for Vattimo:

> Thinking that no longer understands itself as the recognition and acceptance of an objective authoritarian foundation will develop a new sense of responsibility as ready and able, literally, to respond to others whom, insofar as it is not founded on the eternal structure of Being, it knows to be its "provenance".[96]

It is within this framework that Vattimo has sought to recuperate the significance of the history of salvation in the Judaeo–Christian tradition for weak thought as a *kenosis*, a process through which transcendence empties itself. Vattimo's discussion of religion in *Beyond Interpretation* begins with the contention that as "the nihilistic implications of its own premises are developed, hermeneutics encounters charity and rediscovers its own links with the Western religious tradition".[97] The development of Christianity in the West approached in terms of a *kenosis*, yet another avatar of weakening, relates the process whereby God the Father becomes incarnate in the Son, and eventually makes way for the Holy Spirit. The import of the history of salvation, as Vattimo sees it, is that it results in a more charitable relation to interpreting truth and the pluralization of domains in which it may be experienced.

Vattimo's controversial suggestion is that a link can be found between hermeneutics as a nihilistic form of interpretation and the Christian ethic of charity. Retracing this link, Vattimo proposes that hermeneutics does not properly belong to the mainstream rationalism of the Enlightenment project, being instead a "minor trend that survives into modern culture".[98] Generally speaking though, Vattimo observes that in its development in twentieth-century philosophy as *koiné*, hermeneutics limits itself to being a form of thinking "well disposed towards religion, in that its critique of the idea of truth as verifiable conformity between proposition and thing undermines the rationalist, empiricist, positivist and even idealist and Marxist negations of the possibility of religious experience".[99] In other words contemporary hermeneutic approaches tend to dissolve (in various ways) rationalistic negations of religious, mythic, and poetic experiences of truth only to end up endorsing a *de facto* metaphysics of the plurality of avenues for accessing truth ultimately articulated from the perspective of the philosophical *logos*. Something more is called for from hermeneutics, in Vattimo's view, if it is not to relapse into a metaphysics of this sort.

Vattimo asks whether hermeneutics, in its opposition to scientific objectivism and to rationalistic arguments for atheism, has anything positive to say in favour of religious experience itself and whether it may be possible to elaborate more than a relativistic affirmation of the autonomy and validity of different spheres for experiencing truth, as they occur in religion, myth or poetry? Rather than viewing

its own historical trajectory simply as liberation from service to religious dogma, where it remained principally a technique bound to interpreting the biblical text, Vattimo suggests that hermeneutics should recover something more substantial from its Judaeo-Christian provenance. Vattimo's suggestion is that if such a positive relation can be found it is through the ambiguous processes of secularization which lead from religion to hermeneutic thinking: "modern hermeneutic philosophy is born in Europe not only because here there is a religion of the book that focuses attention on the phenomenon of interpretation, but also because this religion has at its base the idea of the incarnation of God, which it conceives as *kenosis*, as abasement and, in our translation, as weakening."[100] The weakening which takes place from the reign of the Father (in the Old Testament) to that of the Son (in the New Testament), is taken a step further with the reign of the Spirit, allowing a freer, more charitable (hence weaker) relation to scripture and revelation, and an approach also willing to contend with the aesthetic dimensions of experiencing truth.[101]

Vattimo's argument therefore, is that hermeneutics insofar as it belongs to a nihilistic modernity, is "conceived above all as the secularization of the religious tradition of the West".[102] Modern hermeneutics, to the extent that it sees its origins in the Enlightenment tendency toward demythologization, "leads in contemporary thinking to the dissolution of the very myth of objectivity (this is the meaning of the radical demythification worked by Nietzsche) and to the 'rehabilitation' of myth and religion". It is this paradox, which ultimately requires that we reinterpret the links between hermeneutics and Christianity, for in Vattimo's view,

> nihilism is too much "like" *kenosis* for one to see this likeness as simply a coincidence, an association of ideas. We are led to the hypothesis that hermeneutics itself, as a philosophy with certain ontological commitments, is the fruit of secularization as the renewal, pursuit, "application" and interpretation of the substance of the Christian revelation, and pre-eminently the dogma of the incarnation of God. [103]

According to this paradoxical interpretation of secularization as itself modelled upon a theology of *kenosis*, philosophical hermeneutics is part of the pluralization of interpretations unleashed by the history of salvation, rather than a straightforward overcoming of religion experienced as secularization.[104] This entails that the features of these two metaphysical interpretations of the relation between philosophy and religion (an ontological plurality and a dialectical overcoming) will not simply disappear, but will be retained in a distorted and depleted form.

Hermeneutics, insofar as it inherits modernity, will see its relationship to the religious tradition in a way that resembles the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. Unlike the dialectics of overcoming, the process of secularization of which hermeneutics partakes will no longer be regulated by the aim of attaining an "ultimate self-transparency and full reappropriation", but will have to resign itself to an ontological plurality. Vattimo observes that for the moment we cannot go any further than this: "the liberation of the plurality of myths, and thus the re-legitimation of religion in the wake of hermeneutics, are wholly dependent on a process of secularization set in train by the story of the *kenosis* of God in the incarnation."[105]

The ethical consequences of Vattimo's nihilistic ontological commitments coincide with the ethics of diminution in Schopenhauer rather than the triumphalist ethics usually attributed to Nietzsche. Strangely, Vattimo also interprets some fragmentary notes of Nietzsche's late work as tending toward a similar position, where the *Übermensch* appears to be the "'more moderate' man, the artist even, who loves experimentation even beyond the interests of his own self-preservation".[106] Vattimo's comments in this regard are based on what is perhaps a contentious and selective interpretation of notes posthumously published in *The Will to Power*.[107] Although doubtful as to whether this ethical position can be translated into a political program, Vattimo suggests that "it is no small matter to introduce the notion of 'compassion' to the culture of the left, and in general to replace the critique of ideology with an explicit commitment to ethics as the capacity to transcend the logic of the struggle for life".[108]

In this final, puzzling, turn to religion as the necessary underpinning of a hermeneutics of modernity and its disenchantments, Vattimo approaches Taylor. However, unlike Taylor, for whom the fullest possible reappropriation of the modern identity implies a movement toward a renewed ontological vigour potentially culminating in a religious affirmation, Vattimo emphasizes the dilution and weakening of ontological structures as the meaning of the Western history of salvation itself. Interpretation leads not to restoration of strong structures of Being, but is itself a part of Being's infinite depletion, a resignation to its drift. For Vattimo, the impossibility of dispensing with ontological commitments inclines us ethically toward an ontology destined to dissolve. If there is some form of benevolence which ultimately prevents the conflict of interpretations from devolving into a chaos of

irreconcilable differences, it comes in the form of a charity understood as the depletion of transcendence and a consequent openness to all manners of immanence. The corollary of this seems to be a demise, or at the very least a substantial moderating distortion, of the *political* aspirations that once motivated thinkers in the Enlightenment tradition. Emancipation comes now to be understood less as acts of political liberation than as resignation in making the best of a less than ideal situation.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION: Enlightened Adaptation or the Retreat of the Political?

> Just as the end of myth can itself only be recounted as myth, perhaps the story of the end of metaphysics will itself always open on to a metaphysical dimension. A style of philosophy which acknowledges this—in opposition to both the contextualisation and formal universalism which today command wide allegiance—would view a commitment to metaphysical inquiry as an important aspect of the cognitive and imaginative transcendence of the given, and not one-sidedly as its ontological endorsement.
>
> Peter Dews, The Limits of Disenchantment.

I would like to descend now from the metaphysical heights culminating in my last chapter's discussion of the inescapable ontological dimension Vattimo construes as destined to weaken. In concluding, I will orient my remarks around a more populist account of our current times as an *example* of intellectual adaptation. In 1999 Anthony Giddens gave a series of lectures on the theme of globalization. Entitled *Runaway World*. The series was commissioned by the BBC for its annual Reith Lectures.[1] Intending to fit the theme of the material discussed, a novelty was introduced into the very form of the lecture series. The lecture series itself, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and the World Service, was staged as a global event: opening and closing lectures given in London, the other three recorded respectively in Hong Kong, Delhi, and Washington DC. Internet access also provided Giddens's worldwide audience with the opportunity to comment upon and critique his views. Speaking as a public intellectual, in a style readily accessible to an educated nonacademic audience, Giddens enthusiastically embraced the possibilities of global communications. A prominent academic whose work had already moved beyond specialist academic audiences to influence political and policy elites, the lecture series gave Giddens a remarkable opportunity to air his views about globalization in a globalized forum.

It seems to me that Giddens's lectures, not only in their content, but in their very form, could serve as a kind of prototype for the way intellectual work concerned with the actuality of humanity at the beginning of a new millennium may come to be performed. The kind of accommodation of expert scholarship for a wider audience that Giddens's lectures undertake is not altogether novel and has long been part of established genres of intellectual work. Prominent and respected academics who have otherwise written principally for a scholarly community have often been invited to report or adapt their findings in terms suitable for a wider audience. This is perhaps more likely in the case of a practitioner of sociology and social theory like Giddens, whose work is already predisposed toward such potential adaptation.[2]

What does seem truly novel in Giddens's experiment is the close coincidence of his intellectual theme of a globalized humanity with the actual production and dissemination of his lectures facilitated by an opportune employment of available communication interfaces (including intercontinental travel). The theme of adaptation to globalization mediated by global technology toward a (potentially, if not actual) global target audience, as occurs in these lectures, raises important concerns about the political significance of intellectual work in our time. In the light of the potential influence a thinker adopting Giddens's methods and stance may exert, these lectures provoke a questioning regarding the overwhelming pressure to adapt our thinking to the supposed realities of a globalizing world. It also raises concerns regarding the viability of critical thought in the face of these purported realities. Is Giddens merely expressing a moderate and reassuring view of unnerving phenomena, or is there something troubling about the political implications of his own intervention? If globalization is a fate that demands our adaptation, does Giddens's experiment as a globalized thinker furnish the model we must likewise embrace? I will return to Giddens later in this conclusion, but would like now to discuss a set of concerns related to the questions just posed.

My thesis has attempted to master and contribute to a complex and abstract philosophical terrain regarding subjectivity, aesthetics, and ethics. I have focused on what I consider to be two exemplars of a form of philosophical practice that has relinquished expectations inherited from the tradition of Enlightenment thought for translating critique into immediate and decisive transformations of the public sphere. Both Adorno and Foucault have nonetheless contested aspects of public reason by focusing their attentions on what may be considered a more minimal (perhaps dwindling) political goal: to harness aesthetics as a form of ethical comportment aimed at the critique and contestation of narrow conceptions of rationality and identity. Furthermore, in both cases, aesthetics has been given a central role in the ethical task of rescuing philosophy itself from such narrow forms of rationality and the impoverished identities they tend to produce. This is the case even if what is practised as critical thought no longer strictly corresponds to the idea of pure philosophy, being for Adorno critical theory, negative dialectics, micrology, and so on, and for Foucault archaeology, genealogy, aesthetics of existence, and so on. Likewise, the principal thinkers whose critiques of Adorno and Foucault I have examined in detail (Taylor, Vattimo, and more intermittently Habermas), are contending practitioners of a hermeneutic survival of philosophical thought. They

too seek to preserve some kind of critical ethos, though they differ from Adorno and Foucault, and from one another, as to what role should be assigned to aesthetics.

Given this theme, I would like to articulate an ethical, but also a political, question which has haunted me in the process of writing this thesis. My intention is not to indulge a purely personal predicament, but to broach a dilemma that I suspect generally confronts others who think in the troubled and precarious institutional setting of contemporary university research. What can I hope to achieve through my research beyond contributing to academic scholarship? In the context of belonging to a community of scholars, the question may be inflected this way: What is the purpose of "our" scholarship beyond its own reproduction? And more urgently, it may be registered as follows: What is the *political* vocation of university research under conditions where at an administrative level the university is being effectively depoliticized as an institution redesigned for the production and circulation of knowledge in a globalized market?[3] I do not doubt that there are possible answers to these questions, both old and new. Answers to these questions should be attempted and articulated.[4] What I do doubt is the current public efficacy of such answers, from classical humanist ones about universities critically preserving, developing, and disseminating aspects of a national culture to more contemporary posthumanist justifications of the university as a site where all justificatory models for knowledge are critically suspended.[5]

The perception that university research is removed from the real world, or simply incomprehensible to nonacademics both in terms of content and import, is of course not new. What is new is the way this perception is now being used to justify the thorough transformation of the university along corporate lines at a moment when the various self-justifications it presents no longer seem effective in contesting or resisting this transformation. With regard to the institutional vocation of the university, does this mundane re-engineering project now in full swing constitute a decisive victory in favour of that part of our Enlightenment legacy which reduces all things to a calculus of efficiency and productivity? Should such questions lead to an exploration of broader political implications, or, is the urgent tone of such questions merely making a fuss about nothing, whereas what scholars should be doing is keeping their minds on their work with the hope of excelling and producing good research and training outcomes?

For Adorno the transformations outlined above would merely be one more confirmation of the pervasiveness of instrumental rationality in our modernity. Because Adorno clung to classical Enlightenment aspirations which even he realized had migrated into the realm of impossibility, looking toward his work for political directions on such an issue leads to a principled ineffectuality. Few people would still be able or willing to understand, let alone appreciate, the ethical inspirations and ironies of such a political orientation at an intellectual level. Even Adorno must have realized, in a childlike way perhaps, that quite frankly such an orientation didn't stand a chance against the institutional logics it sought to question. Foucault's work seems to offer a more effective approach, at least one that is more up-to-date and less debilitating. But again, attempting to extract viable or desirable political directives from Foucault's work is problematic, as critics such as Habermas have consistently argued. In the context of such criticisms Simon During has observed that "Foucault's work seems particularly inadequate when one wishes to act or think on behalf of institutions or goals which are themselves sanctioned by classically enlightened or humanist ideals." During adds that this problem of preserving cultural critique "is not just one among many issues", but rather one that is confronted "as soon as we attend to the power and effectiveness that theory and, indeed, the humanities, actually have in society".[6]

Comparing the respective merits of Habermas, Taylor, and Foucault with regard to this question, During notes that it may seem that it is the former two who furnish more viable reasonings for a defence of critique as a function of the university. As During explains, this is because Foucault's work entails that "educational institutions train individuals in specific practices, rather than forming an abstract subject with a generalised capacity for critical thought". During fails to acknowledge that such a recommendation, as to the desirability of specifically trained intellectuals over anachronistic practitioners of a more general form of critique, itself constitutes a generalized statement embroiled in contradiction. More interested in outcomes, he contends that such a move "radically demystifies notions like 'reflection' and 'academic freedom.'" For During there is no turning back to these mystifications, yet he still expects that in the wake of their demise it may be possible to affirm that "the academic humanities are worth defending just because they still shelter critique".[7] During presents a defence of critique as experimental, nonpractical, and nonrepresentative when he says that

> humanities in the university can claim that their tasks are not performed under the sign of representation: they can insist that they represent

> neither a section of the market like the media, nor a sector of the established national will like politicians. It is because they do not belong to an institution legitimised through representation, but are pedagogical, future-directed, and, furthermore, dedicated to training students in skills which are not immediately vocational, that they can focus on theoretical, methodological, practical problems and difficulties, that they can help prevent cultural objects, memories, points of view falling out of sight, that they can draw connections that have no functional or commercial interest to the market or the state, and can work to maintain voices of those whom history, the market or the will of the people silence.[8]

As much as I sympathize with such a defence, it is precisely the lack of bottom line functionality or commercial reality that is now deemed an unaffordable luxury and a failure of academic adaptation to demands supposedly emanating from the market and popular will. More concretely, granted that universities should not be representational institutions, how is the university itself to be represented? How, if not through representation, by attracting the media spotlight or influencing politicians, is the work of persuasion in defence of such a privileged area of dysfunction (at taxpayers' expense in the case of publicly funded universities) likely to succeed?

Bill Readings has proposed a similar posthumanist adaptation that seeks to turn the destabilized and permanently transitional environment of globalized universities into an advantage. Readings proposes the cultivation of "short-term collaborative projects of both teaching and research . . . which would be disbanded after a certain period, whatever their success".[9] What this should seek to promote is "a shifting disciplinary structure that holds open the question of whether and how thoughts fit together". With the current breakdown of the ordering of knowledge and institutional structure, such a mobile tactical response would thereby contest "the discourse of excellence" which instructs students and teachers alike to leave overall questions of integration and mission to administration. The aim would be to constantly contest this usurpation of general purpose by the safe hands of an administration manipulating "grids that chart the achievement of goals and tabulate efficiency".[10] It would also resist the temptation to a resigned complacency, where scholars could "even go on believing in culture if they like, as long as their beliefs lead to excellent performance and thus help the aim of total quality".[11]

The guiding ethic, which would help the community of scholars negotiate this environment free of nostalgia and pious residues, Readings derives from the work of

Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot. What should be cultivated is a "dissensual community" based on an "incalculable obligation or unknowable (and hence unpayable) debt, of non-finite responsibility toward the Other".[12] Cautious as to the mystical overtones of this formula, Readings asserts that what he is proposing is actually common-sensical and pragmatic: "that we do not know in advance the nature of our obligations to others, obligations that have no origin except in the sheer fact of the existence of Otherness—people, animals, things other to ourselves—that comports an incalculable obligation."[13] Maintaining such a worthy ethical impulse in an institutional setting may be more difficult than even Readings allows. It strikes me that it too might be too abstract to combat the seemingly implacable logic of operationalized excellence and quality it is ranged against; and it would be extremely difficult to sustain in actual institutional practices pressured to deliver practical outcomes. Furthermore, as Readings himself suggests, there is no privilege left for the community of scholars pursuing such an ethic. It could be pursued simultaneously elsewhere, in any of a number of sites, such that there seems to be no reason other than the proliferation of such sites favouring its specific instantiation in universities.

What becomes increasingly questionable under current circumstances is the legitimacy of research and training that has no immediate practical application. What is thrown into relief is what I would argue is an ineliminable abstract and esoteric kernel in thought that purports to be critical, and which it fights against in order to justify its own practical survival. In whatever form the critical impulse seeks to sustain its survival, one of its central features is, what I would call, a concentrated will to abstraction.[14] This feature is a constant embarrassment because it frustrates the aspirations of critical thinking to assert its relevance and translate itself into shared realities. But shared reality as it is—what already exists, or the given—is precisely what criticism sets out to separate itself from, otherwise it would be just what everybody else is doing and therefore unexceptional. This tension manifests itself no matter how "material", specific, concrete, micrological or transparent recent methodologies deployed for the survival of critical thinking have claimed to be.

My own thesis, though conducted under the interdisciplinary banner of a Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, is in many ways a fairly standard and traditional commentary on the work of two thinkers, who, moreover, deplored and

sought to evade commentaries of this very sort reducing their thought to mere abstractions. Geared as it is toward a highly specialized academic audience, if successful and published, my thesis may be read by a very small number of scholars doing similar research. One of the outcomes of undertaking the kind of research thesis which I have chosen to write is the heightening of this rarefied relevancy. I have sought to understand and contribute to issues in contemporary philosophical and critical theory whose implications beyond the merely academic are taken seriously by the scholarly community in which they are raised. And yet, many times in the process of my research, I found myself passionately disentangling the thought of some philosophical essay or critical work promising to yield valuable insights and was struck by the sheer, almost other-worldly, abstraction and esoteric nature of what I was reading. This recognition was often enough reinforced whenever I attempted to explain to people in my daily life exactly what it was that I was doing and what I saw to be its import.

This predicament echoes what has perhaps been a perennial experience of philosophers: to somehow be passionately concerned about this world, but to delve into and cultivate a thought about this world which remains at a distance from the given institutions and structures, and received ways of living. Even Jürgen Habermas, a staunch contemporary defender of the life-world, that world beyond the expert culture of academia in which even the most abstractly inclined philosophers and theorists live out their daily lives, has been unable to completely resolve this contradiction. Michel Foucault, who never presented himself explicitly as a defender of the life-world, may nonetheless be interpreted as defending something similar. His normative silence on the matter suggests that for him, something intractable to definition was at stake. This kind of interpretation is justified particularly on the basis of his political engagements during the 1970s, but also the concomitant analyses of power–knowledge and promotion of the figure of the specific intellectual often evoked a sense of solidarity against those subject to incursions from expert cultures. It was in this vein that his work, more than any of the other thinkers I have examined in this thesis, developed a relatively wide following, cutting across established academic disciplines and beyond to other institutional and cultural elites, even into the margins of popular culture as a kind of pop icon. And yet, considering his late turn toward aesthetics of existence and the legacy of his thought more generally when studied critically and in detail, his contribution to solidaristic political action seems highly ambiguous, even if it has

often been construed decisively as either radical liberationism or neoconservative quietism (depending largely on the interests of the interpreter). Even if his aesthetics of existence are thought to provide an empowering model for otherwise marginalized individuals and groups, they nonetheless imply a strangely fleeting, ephemeral, and almost purely coincidental solidaristic politics.

Theodor W. Adorno presents the most eccentric case, an exile in his own native Germany, to which he returned in the years of postwar reconstruction, a Marxist in a no-man's land. His work is, overall, the most resistant to easy reading, the least concerned with being immediately understood, even if the impulse guiding it is ultimately commemorative, a difficult memory. Adorno's tragic mask can only be taken seriously as memory, recalling why it is that he refused the kind of adaptations most of us now take for granted, not as a call to return to a maladapted condition but to remember why he chose to remain in a condition of maladaptation.

In stark contrast, the example of Giddens's Reith Lectures with which I began this conclusion displays a concentrated effort toward adaptation. Giddens not only encourages his audience to make the most of their globalized condition but also takes the opportunity to make his own intellectual contribution to this adaptation. Gianni Vattimo's perspective on (post)modernity, and the intellectual task examined in the last chapter of this thesis, would seemingly endorse Giddens's experiment. Despite their shared impulse toward adaptation, the latter thinker implicitly still dreams of a self-transparency made possible by globalized communication clarifying the residual opacity of thinking. Nevertheless, for the time being and for the foreseeable future, it strikes me that Giddens's experiment furnishes a powerful prototype for intellectual work seeking an immediate impact in responding to and shaping global trends.[15]

In his introductory comments, Giddens broaches a familiar philosophical story: that the Enlightenment philosophers' intentions to render the world more rational and thereby control and harmonize its development has unleashed unpredictable transformations. Globalized humanity paradoxically inhabits "a runaway world".[16] Against those who remain sceptical about the novelty of globalization and who tend to be pessimistic about the transformations it is rendering, Giddens argues that it has ushered in a period of unprecedented change in the history of the world. Contrary to what many "old left" critics may think, globalization is not simply a replay of

earlier free market economics, albeit on a grander scale, and its significance cannot be reduced to the purely economic even if proponents of economic globalization have been dominant in defining what it means. According to Giddens, the various trends which might be understood as globalization are "political, technological and cultural, as well as economic. It has been influenced above all by developments in systems of communications, dating back only to the late 1960s."[17]

While Giddens concedes that many things happening under the banner of globalization are troubling and ambiguous, his pragmatic contention is that it is only by facing up to the risks and challenges of its reality that it can be guided for the good. In the final lecture in the series Giddens talks about democracy, elaborating on the possibility that globalized telecommunications systems can lead to "a democratising of democracy itself".[18] As Giddens observes, since the mid 1970s there has been a remarkable growth in the number of democratic governments in the world, more than doubling the number that were in existence previously. Strangely, this spread of democratic culture has been accompanied by a growing cynicism about democracy in countries with established democratic institutions and traditions. In these mainly "Western" countries, existing democratic processes have been undergoing a progressive disillusionment and relative loss of legitimacy. For Giddens, who is pragmatically democratic, this is no cause for alarm. What it indicates, in his opinion, is not a diminishment in interest in political affairs but the rise of transnational and other forms of democratic activity facilitated by the mass media and communications. It is at this very juncture that Giddens stages his rather prosaic intervention in the globalization debate and his defence of cosmopolitan values based on a pragmatic belief in the universality of tolerance and dialogue. The challenge of the fundamentalist and neoconservative right, Giddens argues, forces us to affirm these values:

> All of us need moral commitments that stand above the petty concerns and squabbles of everyday life. We should be prepared to mount an active defence of those values wherever they are poorly developed, or threatened. Cosmopolitan morality itself needs to be driven by passion. None of us would have anything to live for if we didn't have something worth dying for.[19]

Despite this worrisome affirmation of the potential violence of the sacred, much of what Giddens promotes is a form of moderation in politics and society, which is perhaps the guiding principle of the kind of reinvention of the British Labour Party under Tony Blair. One of the problems that sets in, once this kind of moderation is

made the ruling political exigency, is the delegitimation of anything that sounds or appears to be immoderate or radical. This may be a genuine attempt to build a new cross-spectrum consensus, but it could also be read as a demise of parliamentary politics sustained on an oppositional model of democracy. This is the case if the outcome is a situation in which the primary contenders for government become progressively indistinguishable from each other in substance, and any residual appearance of difference is a factor of manufactured spins designed to prop up the illusion of oppositional politics as consumerist choice. What exactly does Giddens's intellectual experiment consist of: is it a new form of political action or political technology? Is this experiment a prototype for new forms of politically engaged intellectual activity, or a sign of the further shrinking of political horizons?[20]

In November 1980, the Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political was established in France under the guidance of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. The Centre was to be "a place of free investigation . . . intended to occupy a marginal or 'withdrawn' position in relation to the places traditionally assigned in the dialogue (agreement or conflict) between philosophy and politics".[21] In November 1984, Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe were announcing the Centre's closure. As they observe in their announcement of "the closure of the political":

> The end of Marxism, modestly and curiously baptised the "end of ideologies", is insidiously transformed into the end of every consideration and every operation which has in view the identity of the collectivity, its destination, the nature and exercise of its sovereignty. An intellectual attitude (for this does not amount to a thinking) which privileges the ethical or the aesthetic, even the religious (and sometimes the social) over the political, has been allowed, little by little, to gain ground.[22]

What Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe announce as the inconclusiveness of their experiment to "retreat the political" is not taken as an invitation to resign this word once and for all. What it does suggest is that, in the wake of the Enlightenment, the world has been thrown into an uncanny light. What began as an optimistic project to illuminate the world through rationality has produced its own forms of obscurity, a process that threatens to extinguish every last source of inspiration and auratic meaning, leaving us in an ambiguous political condition. It becomes increasingly difficult to provide Enlightened answers for what becomes of the political: what is left/right of/for the political? Is this very form of questioning already too anachronistic, too overbearing in its aspirations?

This thesis has argued that Adorno and Foucault are critics of Enlightenment who yet remained heirs to its hopes and hazards; critics who approach sociopolitical forms through interrogation, indirection and irony rather than with clear resolution or convinced (and convincing) solutions. Their example and their work might suggest that the question of the political is in need of retracing (*retrait*) *without* calling for our retreat from the questions and the questioning of politics.

NOTES

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: Constellations of Critique

1 This is Simon Critchley's suggestion in the introduction to *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 1–28, a philosophical position aptly summed up by his book's title which he reaches principally through the work of Theodor W. Adorno, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Blanchot, and through Samuel Beckett's literature.

2 See Frederick C. Beiser, "Early Romanticism and the *Aufklärung*", in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, pp 317–29. Beiser's main contention in this article is that initially, in the early phase of "*Frühromantik*" (1797–1802), German Romantic philosophers were not simply the enemies of the *Aufklärung*, but both its heirs and critics in trying to rescue its critical impulse from the fate of scepticism and nihilism.

3 Regarding the contention that philosophical modernity has a "romantic *unconscious*", see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe & Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Phillip Barnard & Cheryle Lester, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988, pp. 15–17.

4 The life of the Jena Romantics' journal *Athenäum*, published by Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, as Maurice Blanchot notes in section entitled "The Athenäum" in his *The Infinite Conversation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993, p. 354, lasted for six issues between 1798–1800, "long enough for romanticism to reveal itself there, and even determine its future as an autorevelatory force". The fragments published in the *Athenäum* may now be found in Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, pp. 17–93.

5 That Jena Romanticism may be read within the emergence of an aesthetic or literary absolute as the response to the breakdown of the Kantian critical project has been suggested by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy in *Literary Absolute*, pp. 5–11, 48–9. As Simon Critchley has observed in *Very Little*, the philosophically more justified path has been to trace the emergence of Jena Romanticism, as Hegel and Walter Benjamin do, "to Fichte's early conception of reflection in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Reflection is the activity of the intelligence, or *free* action, defined as the *form* of thinking itself without regard to specific contents. A notion whose potential limitlessness was seen by Schlegel—in distinction from Fichte—as positive" (pp. 87–8).

6 See Gianni Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation: The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy*, trans. David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 62, 119 n. 5, for references to the candidates for the authorship of the "System Programme", Friedrich Hölderlin, Georg W. F. Hegel, and Friedrich Schelling. Vattimo observes that the author's most likely composed this piece during "the period of their friendship at the seminary in Tübingen, when the three friends had already lost faith in the French Revolution", and that current scholarly opinion suggests the piece is "the work of Schelling, formulated, with the help of his two friends, in 1795; the edition that has come down to us is from Hegel's hand and dates from 1796".

7 An English translation of the "System Programme" may be found as an appendix (pp. 265–7) to Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, see p. 266 for this citation.

8 "Aesthetic Absolutism" is a term that comes from Bernard Lypp, *Ästhetischer Absolutismus und politische Vernunft*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main, 1972, and is cited by both Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, pp. 47–8 and Critchley, *Very Little*, pp. 90, 91.

9 The text of the "System Programme" also suggests that not only "the masses" are in need of such a "*sensuous religion*", the philosopher too must possess aesthetic power, as has been noted, and like the people, "needs monotheism of reason of the heart, polytheism of imagination . . . and of art". Here we have a utopian image of a reciprocal reconciliation between philosopher–poets *cum* revolutionaries and the people, where the "Ideas" must be made aesthetic or mythological for them to be of interest to the populace and that mythology must be made reasonable for the philosopher to accept it without shame, mythology made philosophical and the people reasonable, philosophy made mythological and philosophers sensuous, "System Programme", p. 266–7. For accounts of how the authors of the "System Programme" were following in the footsteps of Kant's project, see Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 62–3; Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, pp. 45–52; and Critchley, *Very Little*, pp. 85–90.

10 This sought after renewal of political *praxis*, Vattimo adds, is "somewhat akin to that conceived by Schiller in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795)", *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 62.

Vattimo also observes how this the link between art or poetry as a secularized religion (of the senses) and *praxis* advanced in the "System Programme" was subsequently lost by the philosophy of art in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to its becoming "dominated by the idea that 'progress' in both theoretical aesthetics and the arts themselves be identified with the specialization of the aesthetic experience, its constitution *juxta propria principia* in opposition to every unwarranted conjunction with other activities and other spheres of interest or value". According to Vattimo, even the aesthetics that adhered to these principles could not remove the constitutive relation of art to religion, "at least in the sense that it is primarily, indeed exclusively, with religion that art has had to avoid being confused in order to affirm its own specificity and exercise its own function in the history of Western culture" (pp. 63–4). It is with the lack of awareness of this constitutive link, Vattimo proposes, that many subsequent aesthetic theories missed the essential ambiguity and fecundity in the process of secularization, as a failed emancipation from religion, a link that is all the more operative the less one is aware of it or wishes to forcibly expunge its residues (p. 65).

11 As Simon Critchley comments in *Very Little*, the literary absolute, of literature's declaration of the take-over of power, is a mimicry of the Romanticism of the revolutionary by the powerless writer, for it takes place "at the moment when, in the wake of the French revolution, the poet declares himself legislator for humanity, a moment when literature becomes identified with terror in a way that is repeated on the political right in the 1930s and on the left in 1968, he or she is utterly marginal to society, like 'Citoyen' Sade calling through a urine funnel to the crowds assembled outside the Bastille" (p. 92).

12 Blanchot, "The Athenäum", p. 356.

13 As Schlegel declares in one of his *Athenäum* fragments, "in a certain sense all poetry is or should be romantic". Schlegel's declaration of the essence of Romantic poetry occurs in fragment 116 of the *Athenäum Fragments*, in *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 31–2. Elsewhere, Schlegel explains why the great book of humanity would never be realized, as it would have to be "an eternally developing book, the gospel of humanity and culture will be revealed" (pp. 102–3).

14 Blanchot "The Athenäum", pp. 357, 352–3. See also Critchley's discussion of the fragment and the non-Romantic essence of Romanticism, which draws not only on Blanchot's work but also its appropriation by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy in *Literary Absolute*, in *Very Little*, pp. 105–17. In particular, see his comments regarding the connection of the practice of writing fragments in Jena Romanticism and Adorno's essayism as a form of negative dialectics, and his suggestion that the quasi-dialectics of "wit" and "irony" developed by Schlegel in relation to the fragments constitute "a *negative* dialectic that disrupts the possibility of Hegelianism *avant la lettre* [and] that his critique of Hegel is—anachronistically—*pre-Hegelian*, and might therefore lead us to see the Hegelian dialectics as a *wit-less* and *un-ironical* response to romantic ambiguity" (pp. 106, 115). Of course, writing after Auschwitz, Adorno inflects the failure of discontinuous form through the theme of damaged life, which makes its accomplishment seem all the more pale and weak. See in particular Adorno's *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, Verso, London, 1996, which most resembles the discontinuous form of the *Athenäum Fragments*, but which lacks the evanescent *play* of the latter.

15 Blanchot, "The Athenäum", p. 353. Later in this essay, Blanchot discusses what kind of subjectivity this writing which is conscious of its own unworking will give rise to, a passage which suggests a possible approach to the interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's lifelong project of self-fashioning (p. 357).

16 Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923–1950*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1973, pp. 253, 256. Jay's "biography" of the Frankfurt School offers an excellent meditation on the early Frankfurt School's disenchantment with orthodox Marxism.

17 See Critchley, *Very Little*, p. 98. In the twentieth century we have seen a sheer proliferation of such groups, which have likewise begun with ambitious and naive expectations and met with varying degrees of failure. In addition to the Situationist International Critchley mentions, numerous other examples come to mind: in art, Surrealism and Bataille's attempts to form an alternative literary community based on sacrifice, in the social realm, the Frankfurt School and the Psycho–Analytic movement. One could add a number of other avant-garde groups that would fit in less with the Jena model but nonetheless contain an echo of its inspiration. Even the theoretical architects of Nazism and the Bolshevism may exhibit a variation on this constellation. Furthermore, one could venture that in its most generalized form, the aesthetic absolute is operative in any theoretical configuration that sets itself the task of converting a political dream (traditionally an image of utopia, but no longer necessarily so) into a concrete socio–political

reality through action (*praxis*) in the world which is prepared and sustained by a political technology of propaganda for the "education" of the masses.

18 On the impossibility of redemption for the sake of the possible see the concluding entry, entitled "Finale" to Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, p. 247. On Adorno's possible filiation with the kind of fragmentary writing practised by the Jena Romantics, at least in terms of his practice of essayism, see his comments in "The Essay as Form", in *Notes To Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, p. 16, where he notes that the "romantic conception of the fragment as a construction that is not complete but rather progresses onward into the infinite through self-reflection champions this anti-idealist motive in the midst of Idealism . . . Discontinuity is essential to the essay; its subject matter is always a conflict brought to a standstill." For a critical comparison attending to the *philosophical* logic of Adorno's conception of "non-identity" and similar critiques of subjectivity staged by the German Romantics, see Andrew Bowie, "'Non-Identity': The German Romantics, Schelling and Adorno", in *Intersections: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory*, eds Tilottama Rajan & David L. Clark, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1995, pp. 243–60. Bowie refutes the logic of Adorno's philosophical reasoning with regard to "non-identity" in favour of Schelling's construal of the problem but suggests Adorno's aesthetic writings contain insights which approach this position and offset the problems in his philosophical position (pp. 258–9).

19 See PART ONE of this thesis.

20 In this regard see Simon Critchley's remarks on the globalization of liberalism in the context of Richard Rorty's defence of liberalism, in which the predominantly economic cast of globalized liberalization seems to be fundamentally at odds with a political liberalism represented as being sufficient for the aim of minimizing suffering, "Deconstruction and Pragmatism: Is Derrida a Private Ironist or a Public Liberal?", in *Ethics–Politics–Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, Verso, London, 1999, pp. 87–8. This essay may also be found in Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, Routledge, London, 1996, which includes contributions from Richard Rorty, one of which responds directly to Critchley's essay.

21 There have recently been a number of attempts calling for a critical re-examination of our religious heritage, to revalue those values which can still speak to us in our indigent condition (compassion, charity, generosity, tenderness, fidelity, forgiveness) and to remember all those fragments of redemption which now lie in ruins. Critchley seems to suggest a secular revaluing of some of our religious heritage in a passage closing his discussion of Jena Romanticism, *Very Little*, pp. 137–8. Vattimo goes further in *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 72–4.

22 Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, p. 253. Bowie attempts to reconstruct the importance of the tradition of philosophical aesthetics to current debates on postmodernity beyond the usual discussion of Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, to include thinkers such as Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and the early Romantics.

23 Andrew Bowie, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 3, 13–23.

24 See Richard Kearney, *The Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, Harper Collins, London, 1991, p. 172.

25 Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, pp. 13, 130–31, has also remarked on the connection between liberation and aesthetics of existence in Foucault's later work, noting that, "If the subject can be constituted by 'liberation' there must be some way in which one can conceive of what a free subject is", and the family resemblance of this idea in Foucault, beyond the obvious connection to Nietzsche, to Friedrich Schelling's idea of liberation through *Bildung*.

26 In fact, Foucault was also, apparently, unsure as to what the problematic of "modernity" might mean in a contemporary context, beyond reference to the kind of modernity thematized by Baudelaire. On this matter see Foucault's remarks in an interview with Gérard Raulet originally published in *Telos* in 1983 as "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault", reprinted as "Structuralism and Post-structuralism", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 2, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, New Press, New York, 1998, pp. 447–9.

27 Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*, trans. Mary Schnackenberg Cattani, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1990, p. 96. For further reference to what Ferry and Renaut meant by this and how Foucault himself may have at first encouraged and then become embarrassed by this "Vulgate", see pp. 71–97.

28 In the vicinity of Ferry and Renaut's discussion of the Foucauldian antirepressive Vulgate is Michael Walzer's characterization of Foucault's radically elusive political position as "infantile leftism", although this is not his main concern in the chapter on Foucault entitled "The Lonely

Politics of Michel Foucault", in *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, Basic Books, New York, 1988, p. 192.

29 This statement occurs in the concluding passages of Ferry's and Renaut's chapter on Foucault in *French Philosophy*, p. 120.

30 In the context of a vulgar antirepressive strain in postmodernism, see Terry Eagleton remarks in the introduction to his *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, on the trite fashionability that can surround the postmodernist dismissal of every remnant of the liberal humanist ideology, including the belief in the human subject. What Eagleton criticizes may be the way in which the refusals that have become associated with the general description suggested by Kearney produce a series of sometimes ludicrous conclusions. Within his own Marxist position he views these tendencies as rash and unnecessary. Certain elements within the liberal humanist tradition, he maintains, are worth saving and ditching the tradition altogether, overnight, may even be impossible. He identifies an "ideology of the aesthetic", arising in the eighteenth century as a prototype for a form of bourgeois subjectivity which became central to modernity. He would like to criticize this ideology whilst at the same time salvaging the more subversive elements for their emancipatory potential. In this way he declares himself to be for a constructive recollection, a salvaging of worthwhile fragments, of the liberal humanist project. Its not as if the subject of the liberal humanist tradition has been peremptorily dismissed, as if its overcoming could be achieved by yet another effort of renewed mastery. In melodramatic exaggeration, Eagleton abuses those "correctly programmed" thinkers who, "reach for their decentred subjectivities at the very mention of the dread phrase 'liberal humanist'" and thereby "repressively disavow the very history which constitutes them, which is by no means uniformly negative or oppressive" (p. 8). See also his comments on the trajectory of Foucault's theoretical development which tends to confirm the kind of judgement imposed by Ferry and Renaut, that Foucault is essentially a dangerous, useless and naive thinker when it comes to politics, and which fails to see any worthwhile import in his later work (pp. 384–95).

31 Maurice Blanchot, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, pp. 63–4. According to Foucault's own view on the significance of May 1968 in Paris and account of his activities at this time in his discussions with Duccio Trombadori in *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein & James Cascaito, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991, he was in Tunisia for most of 1968, where in distinction to the political infighting and fragmentation that took place in Paris, people engaged in political action where in actual danger of losing their lives. Foucault explains that he returned to France not in June or July as may seem to be suggested if we take Blanchot's comments literally, but in November–December (p. 138). It is also interesting to note an echo in this interview of Blanchot's question as to Foucault's whereabouts, although it is attributed by Foucault to Marcuse, who "said reproachfully one day, where was Foucault at the time of the May barricades?" (p. 132)

32 Ferry and Renaut, *French Philosophy*, pp. 4–12, also propose a four-fold characterization of this movement somewhat different to Kearney's.

33 See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1974, pp. 384–5.

34 Ferry and Renaut, *French Philosophy*, p. 66. According to Ferry and Renaut, the philosophical variations of 1968 antihumanism deposed the traditional concept of subjectivity as autonomous will, and "like their contemporary movement, participated in a no doubt unprecedented promotion of the values of individualism, which at least some of the intellectually dominant figures of the sixties believed they were combating. If there is a 'ruse of reason' that can be brought in here, it would have to be located at this level: Agents of an individualism they often denounced, the major representatives of '68 philosophy made history without knowing the history they were making" (p. 67). Cornelius Castoriadis, "Movements of the Sixties", in *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997, has resisted this interpretation of the failure of May 1968 and insisted that what was most promising in May 1968 was the promise still evident in collective action in modernity, that it may yet manage to overcome its inability to sustain a transformation into a permanent institutional form.

35 For Ferry and Renaut, *French Philosophy*, p. 31, the necessary correction to this bankrupt path is the investigation of "figures of subjectivity" which are not metaphysical or bourgeois. With the intention "to analyse the various forms of subjectivity in modern philosophy", the aim is to expose as precisely as possible "the error or illusion shared by all the philosophical currents to which the

ideal type of the sixties can be applied, the error of assimilating these forms of subjectivity and of believing it could massively denounce *all* subjectivity or *all* humanisms".

36 See the concluding pages to Ferry's and Renaut's discussion of Foucault in *French Philosophy*, pp. 119–20, in which the later modifications in Foucault's work on ethics are seen to be simply repetitions of earlier positions which denounced "the tyranny of the normative or the universal in relation to the individual. From the beginning to the end of his work, Foucault remained consistent with his Vulgate. Until his very last works, he regarded the '68 notion of individuality as the opposite of subjectivity defined as consciousness of principles that seem universal and at the pole of intersubjectivity."

37 In his final interview, conducted by Gilles Barbadette and André Scala, Foucault explains the decisive impact of Nietzsche and Heidegger, taken together, in the formation of his own thinking. Foucault's remarks indicate that while he became ultimately much better acquainted with Nietzsche than with Heidegger, he refers to his "fundamental Nietzscheanism", it was Heidegger who was "the essential philosopher", who made it possible for him to read Nietzsche with renewed interest. See Michel Foucault, "The Return of Morality", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 250–51. Ferry and Renaut, *French Philosophy*, pp. 68–9, use this reference to buttress their claims that Heidegger laid the intellectual groundwork that made possible all of the various manifestations of French Antihumanism. "Within an overall Heideggerian context," they observe, "it may well be possible to define philosophical practice by reference to Nietzsche (Foucault) or to Freud (Lacan), but Heidegger remains the 'essential philosopher,' the one who makes a new reading of Nietzsche or of Freud possible, a fertile reading that is the basis of these various protagonists' originality".

38 See Foucault, *Remarks on Marx*, pp. 29–30. These interviews with Trombadori also indicate Foucault's distance relative to both mainstream Marxist traditions, and to its development in forms such as the Frankfurt School, even though with the later he does suggest a greater sense of affinity. See in particular Trombadori's interpretation in his introduction to these interviews, pp. 15–24. Regarding Foucault's sense of affinity with the Frankfurt School see also Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-structuralism", pp. 440–41.

39 See *Remarks on Marx*, p. 46. See also Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-structuralism", for remarks on his reading of Nietzsche via Blanchot and Bataille, tracing the decisive impact of Nietzsche in determining the "experience for the abolition of the founding act of the subject", which served as a respite for a generation of philosophers seeking a way out of the dominance of phenomenology in France (pp. 438–9).

40 See *Remarks on Marx*, p. 49. Later on in this interview, Foucault discusses the importance of other formative preoccupations for his writings, in particular the critique of the human sciences and the philosophy of science. Under the influence of Nietzsche, Foucault came to reflect on the history of the sciences in such a way as to bring them into close proximity to his interest in limit-experiences. In this regard, Foucault suggests that "rather than asking science to what extent its history has approached the truth (or had impeded access to it), wouldn't it rather be necessary to recognise that the truth consists of a certain relationship that discourse or knowledge has with itself? And doesn't this relationship contain within itself its own history?" (p. 62). For further elaborations on this theme and comments on how this approach to the history of science informed his *The Order of Things*, see also pp. 68–71, 99–100.

PART ONE ADORNO: PERSISTENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY?

Introduction

1 On the need to set up a dialectical relationship with Adorno's work see Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, Routledge, London, 1998, p. 7.

CHAPTER I Essaying Mimesis

1 Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*, Verso, London, 1996, p. 5.

2 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 9.

3 For a recent assertion of this interpretation of the significance of capitalism in Adorno's work, see Raymond Geuss, *Morality, Culture, and History: Essays on German Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 97. This kind of interpretation is also borne out in Martin Jay's classic study of the early years of Critical Theory, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923–1950*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1973.

4 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 9. Jameson's *Late Marxism* provoked a significant controversy among the ranks of Adorno scholars when first published, the central issue being what should constitute an appropriate appropriation of Adorno's work. This is as much a historical issue as it is a theoretical one. The simultaneous proliferation of divergent appropriations of or hermeneutical approaches to Adorno's work and its actual aging through the insertion of historical specificities separating our present from those in which he composed his *oeuvre*, make the question of how we should relate to his work highly problematic. For various reviews of and responses to Jameson's interpretation ranging from the vituperously hostile to the appreciatively sympathetic, see: Robert Hullot-Kentor, "Suggested Reading: Jameson on Adorno", *Telos*, no. 89, Fall 1991, pp. 167–77; Eva Geulen, "A Matter of Tradition", *Telos*, no. 89, Fall 1991, pp. 155–166; Peter Osborne, "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno", *New German Critique*, no. 56, Spring–Summer 1992, pp. 171–92; Sean Homer, *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York, 1998; Peter Uwe Hohendahl's introduction to his *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1995; Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997; and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, "Adorno in Postmodern Perspective", *Thesis Eleven*, no. 34, 1993, pp. 178–85.

5 Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Vintage, London, 1994, p. 42. Said does not here acknowledge the provenance of the term "permanent exile". Martin Jay, in his *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, pp. xii–xiii, recounts his original usage of this term as a way of characterizing Adorno's exile in an article published in 1969 ("The Permanent Exile of Theodor W. Adorno," *Midstream*, vol. 15, no. 10 (December 1969)) (see p. 263 n. 6). Jay considered "permanent exiles" as a possible title for his history of the early Frankfurt School, *The Dialectical Imagination*, but was eventually dissuaded by strong opposition from Max Horkheimer and Felix Weil, both of whom had returned to Europe and found a greater measure of peace in the contemporary world than some of their former colleagues. Jay's persistence with this term, which eventually became the title of his later book on the wider German intellectual migration to America, was due to his conviction that despite the repatriation of a number of Frankfurt School members to Germany, Critical Theory remained in a kind of exile.

6 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 249. In his introduction to this book, Jameson explains the historical background and political itinerary leading up to his highly politicized appropriation of Adorno, culminating in the 1990s as a decade in which "Adorno's prophecies of the 'total system' finally came true" (see pp. 4–5).

7 Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*, Verso, London, 1987, pp. 231–2.

8 Dews, *Logics of Disintegration*, p. 232. Dews's book offers one of the best comparative accounts of recent French "poststructuralist" philosophy and both the early and later Frankfurt School Critical Theory. See especially pp. 224–34. A shorter account by Max Pensky focusing on Adorno's relevance in the context of contemporary poststructuralism/postmodernism debates and Habermas's critiques thereof, is also useful, see "Editor's Introduction: Adorno's Actuality", in *The Actuality of Adorno: Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, esp. pp. 1–13.

9 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 11. Nicholsen in *Exact Imagination*, has also suggested that the most promising approach for a fuller understanding of Adorno's philosophy is through a consideration of how central its presentational form is to its content: "Adorno himself always insisted that the presentational form [*Darstellungsform*] of his work—which, following Benjamin's lead, he refers to as configurational or constellational form—was inseparable from its philosophical substance. At the same time, he insisted that it was analogous to aesthetic form. Much attention has been devoted to the 'negative dialectical' structure of Adorno's thought, but the link between that structure and the aesthetic dimension of his work—in which I include both his work on aesthetics and works of art and the formal dimension of his own texts—has not received the same degree of attention" (p. 3).

[10] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, Allen Lane, London, 1973, p. xi.
[11] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, p. xiii.
[12] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, p. xiv.
[13] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, p. xvi.
[14] Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, Verso, London, 1996, p. 86.
[15] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, pp. xv–xvi.
[16] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, p. 41.
[17] The impact of Walter Benjamin's work on mimesis is significant to this aspect of Adorno's thinking. See Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute*, Harvester Press, Hassocks, UK, 1977, pp. 87–90, and the two versions of a short article dealing with mimesis by Walter Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1986, pp. 333–6, and "Doctrine of the Similar," *New German Critique*, no. 17, Spring 1979, pp 65–9.
[18] On this matter see Jameson, *Late Marxism*, esp pp. 64, 104–5. Geuss contends that Adorno's pursuit of the project to redress the balance between identity-thinking and an awareness of the nonidentical goes astray precisely insofar as he opts for the "more radical and less promising" aspiration to mimetically "represent the non-identical", see *Morality, Culture, and History*, p. 64.
[19] See Martin Jay, "Mimesis and Mimetology: Adorno and Lacoue-Labarthe", in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, eds Tom Huhn & Lambert Zuidervaart, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, p. 30. See also Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, pp. 180–1.
[20] Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 2nd edn, ed. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, The Athlone Press, London, 1997, pp. 53–4. For an account of the complex dialectic of mimesis and construction in art see Peter Osborne "Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism: The Problem of a 'Postmodern' Art", in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Routledge, London, 1989, esp. pp. 29–32.
[21] Jameson notes that the dialectical sentence is "what strikes one as radically original in Adorno", regarding which the precursor is not, in his opinion, Walter Benjamin but Austrian rhetorician Karl Kraus, see *Late Marxism*, p. 63.
[22] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Seabury Press, New York, 1973, p. 270, or see Jameson's own more nuanced translation in *Late Marxism*, p. 65.
[23] Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 65.
[24] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 14.
[25] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 341.
[26] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, pp. 26–7.
[27] Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 341.
[28] Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 68.
[29] Martin Jay, "Mimesis and Mimetology", p. 36. See also Adorno, "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry," in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 130–31. Jay also notes that "another possibility would be to follow [Adorno's] discussion of hieroglyphic writing and *écriture* in mass culture and modernist art", and directs us to Miriam Hansen, "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer," originally published in 1992 in *New German Critique*, but now also to be found in *The Actuality of Adorno*, ed. Max Pensky, pp. 83–111. Eagleton in *Ideology* suggests another possibility, mimesis as "*allegory*", as "that figurative mode which relates through difference, preserving the relative autonomy of a set of signifying units while suggesting an affinity with some other range of signifiers. And while this model is not broached by Adorno as explicitly political, it surely carries significant political implications", it could serve as a way to think through "the relations between class-struggle and sexual politics" other than "along the lines of some Lukácsian 'expressive totality', but . . . in a set of correspondences which, like the constellation, take the full measure of otherness and disparity" (p. 356).
[30] Theodor W. Adorno, "The Actuality of Philosophy", *Telos*, no. 31, Spring 1977, pp. 120–33. This essay was originally delivered on May 7, 1931 as Adorno's inaugural lecture to the faculty of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt, a position he held until 1933. As Martin Jay has noted in *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, this essay displays a scepticism toward the capacity of philosophy to deliver totalizing thought and indicates the impact that Walter Benjamin's antiholistic constellatory thinking (in particular, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* originally

published in 1928) had on his younger friend. Jay contends this essay, and perhaps another written around the same time, "The Idea of Natural History" (this latter was also originally delivered as a lecture, on this occasion to the Frankfurt Kant Society in 1932 and likewise only published after Adorno's death), were the "the most explicitly Benjaminian of his works" and were directed against "the type of holism promoted by Lukács and the first generation of Western Marxists" (pp 259, 261). Another important influence on Adorno's antagonism toward totalizing philosophical systems was Siegfried Kracauer, who became Adorno's friend and mentor in 1918, when Adorno was only 15 and Kracauer 29. For an account of the intellectual exchange between the two friends and the philosophical differences at the center of their eventual estrangement see chapter 13 in Jay, *Permanent Exiles*, pp. 217–36. In particular, see Jay's summary of the critical questions raised by Kracauer shortly before his death regarding problems in Adorno's philosophical positions, pp. 235–6.

31 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 120. As Adorno observes here, it is this fallacy that united the two otherwise opposing philosophical tendencies he addresses in this essay: a decaying idealist tradition of philosophy (for which Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology was the belated heir with the question of Being) still working away at the grand resolutions long ago rendered untenable and impossible, and scientistic (principally Vienna School logical positivism and various analytical–empiricist) attempts to dissolve philosophy from within into the constituent branches of knowledge which it once sought to unify. Both philosophical tendencies manifested, for Adorno, a totalizing rationality intent on dominating reality through concepts and a lack of awareness for how their own concepts are socially and historically mediated, thereby blindly replicating social and historical contradictions (pp. 120–24).

32 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 120.

33 See Pensky, "Adorno's Actuality", p. 4.

34 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 127.

35 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 125.

36 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 127. In this essay, Adorno stresses that the problems that a philosophical interpretation deals with comes primarily from the sciences, in particular sociology, "and, as the interpretive grouping process demands, crystallize out the small, unintentional elements which are nonetheless still bound to philosophic material" (p. 130).

37 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 130.

38 Adorno, "Actuality", p. 131.

39 See Jay, *Permanent Exiles*, pp. 106–13. Jay explains how Max Horkheimer's hope to combine a critical philosophical approach with an empirical research program designed to produce a comprehensive view of the social totality that avoided disciplinary compartmentalizations was inspired by Georg Lukács normative notion of an expressive totality. This Lukácsian notion of totality was based on an epistemological claim which held that the social totality could only be known by the proletariat as "the universal class that totalized social reality through the objectification of its collective subjectivity". In the event that the proletariat had not yet achieved this consciousness, it was the role of the Marxist theorist to express its "objective possibility". This principle was based "on a Hegelian transformation of Vico's *verum-factum* principle", which "assumed that knowing and making were reciprocal and symmetrical processes: totalistic cognition was the privilege only of those who created the social totality or of their intellectual spokesman in the vanguard party. All others were condemned to partial and therefore ideological knowledge. Only the identity of collective metasubject and the objective social world could overcome the antinomies of bourgeois thought." Horkheimer, Jay continues, may have subscribed to this position during the 1920s, but by the time of the 1931 address, he and other Western Marxists were already in the process of questioning its validity. Consequently, the hope expressed in the address "that totalistic knowledge of society could still be gained through the interdisciplinary methods" was at odds with the "unacknowledged rupture in the *verum-factum* principle" (pp. 109–10). Adorno's repudiation of this principle may be observed in "Actuality", p. 128.

40 See Jay, *Permanent Exiles*, pp. 115–19

41 Pensky, "Adorno's Actuality", pp. 4–5.

42 Pensky, "Adorno's Actuality", p. 10. For another account of Adorno's deployment and modification of Benjaminian themes see Rolf Tiedemann, "Concept, Image, Name: On Adorno's Utopia of Knowledge", in *The Semblance of Subjectivity*, esp. pp. 132–41.

43 Buck-Morss, *Origins*, p. 66.

44 See Buck-Morss, *Origins*, pp. 63–9.

45 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 162–3.

46 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, also notes that this "apparently more awkward" term was introduced by Adorno in *Negative Dialectics*, the second half of which offers "three formal demonstrations" of what he meant by the term (p. 50).

47 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, informs us that the term "model" came to designate for the later Schönberg, "the raw material of a specific composition or its thematic point of departure: which is to say, for twelve-tone music, the specific row itself, the particular order and configuration of the twelve notes of the scale which, chosen and arranged in advance, *becomes* the composition, in so far as this last is 'nothing more' than an elaborate series of variations and permutations—both vertical and horizontal—of that starting point. What in classical music was separated—the initial 'themes' and their later 'development'—is here reunited". (p. 61) Buck-Morss has also compared Adorno's construction of philosophical texts to Schönberg's techniques, *Origins*, see pp. 131, 188–90. Buck-Morss asks pointedly whether Adorno's philosophy, like Schönberg's twelve-tone row, might not fall victim to turning the principle of antisystem itself into a system (p. 189).

48 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, pp. 61–2.

49 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 62.

50 See: Claire De Obaldia, *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995; Geoffrey Hartman, "Literary Commentary as Literature", in his *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980, pp. 189–213; Graham Good, chapter 1 in his *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the essay*, Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 1–25; and R. Lane Kauffmann, "The Skewed Path: Essaying as Unmethodical Method" in Alexander J. Butrym (ed.), *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1989, pp. 221–40. For reflections specific to Adorno's essayism see Robert Hullot-Kentor's "Title Essay", *New German Critique*, no. 32, Spring–Summer 1984, pp. 141–50. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, both prominent figures in the current intellectual currents which may in some senses be seen as inheriting aspects of philosophical essayism, have themselves written a kind of tribute to the German Romantics and their fragmentary writings, *The Literary Absolute. The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Phillip Barnard & Cheryle Lester, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988. In Georg Lukács's own enactment of the essay-form, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay: A Letter to Leo Popper", in *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock, Merlin Press, London, 1974, pp. 1–18, the essay's ancestry is traced back as far as Plato, "the greatest essayist who ever lived or wrote" and who discovered in the life of Socrates "the typical life for the essay form" (p. 13).

51 See David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture 1880–1942*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980, esp. pp. 16–17, 20. As Luft observes, the convergence manifested itself in the tendency through which "philosophers moved away from abstract system toward the concrete and the fragmented form, [and] the novelists moved toward essayism, reflection, and the collapse of narrative coherence" (p. 20).

52 See Luft, pp. 16–22, 100–121, and Thomas Harrison, *Essayism: Conrad, Musil and Pirandello*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992, pp. 1–18, 56–86, 148–88.

53 Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form", trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, pp. 3–23 (an alternative translation by Bob Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will is to be found in *New German Critique*, no. 32, 1984, pp. 151–71). Adorno's essay-forms part of his polemic with Lukács, namely the younger Lukács, with whom Adorno had a greater sympathy. Adorno takes issue with Lukács's own "manifesto" of the essay-form (cited above), particularly Lukács's characterization of the essay as an "art form" and as a "downpayment on future syntheses". Adorno's essay cites or makes direct references to Lukács' earlier essay on pp. 3, 5, 9–10, 18, in the *Notes to Literature* version.
See also Adorno's concluding comments in "Actuality", pp. 132–3, where he affirms the form of a philosophical essayism as appropriate to the project he outlines in the foregoing pages.

54 Nicholsen, *Exact Imagination*, p. 105. Of course, as has already been stated, it is this very point which Jameson relentlessly repudiates in *Late Marxism*.

55 Adorno, "Essay", p. 5.

56 Adorno, "Essay", p. 9.

57 Adorno, "Essay", pp. 21–2.

58 Adorno, "Essay", p. 22.

59 Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 347.

60 Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 361. Eagleton then attempts to challenge this possibility by asking how philosophy can learn from the aesthetic if the content of this lesson cannot be translated back into discursive thought. Eagleton's argument is that philosophy is more or less identical with discursive thought, and that part of it which inheres in its presentational form is something

extrinsic unless it can be converted into discursive propositions. Eagleton therefore seems to find it dubious to rely on the communicative medium in which concepts are presented unless it can be explicated. Adorno's gesture of indicating what cannot be spelt out discursively without somehow being lost is thus ruled foreign to the undertaking of philosophy or theory (p. 361).

61 There is an affinity of the performance in failure of essayism in Adorno to the "anti-art" of Samuel Beckett's plays, an affinity which Adorno himself has theorized, see his comments on the emergence of "anti-art" in relation to Beckett, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 28–31.

62 Adorno, "Essay", p. 13.

63 Adorno, "Essay", p. 16.

64 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 51.

65 Adorno, "Essay", p. 16.

66 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, pp. 31–2.

67 Adorno, "Essay", p. 19.

68 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, p. 247. This inconclusive aspect of Adorno's essayism has been registered negatively in terms of its ultimate reliance on negative dialectics as a de facto method. As Kauffmann has observed, through Adorno's persistent reenactments of "the obligatory heresy against perceived orthodoxy, his own writings come to resemble less an open-ended process of judging than a predetermined verdict. As he relentlessly inveighs against systems, his method finally becomes one itself" (p. 231). Seen in this way, Adorno's essayism "takes on the methodological role of 'exact fantasy' in the service of negative dialectics. So it may be said that, in Adorno, the essay is subtly reinstrumentalized in its very critique of instrumentalization" (p. 232).

69 Harrison, *Essayism*, p. 3.

70 De Obaldia, *Essayistic Spirit*, p. 100.

71 Kauffmann observes that insofar as Adorno (and later Derrida) attempts a philosophical antisystem, he is confounded by the inescapable truth that ultimately his work is driven toward a philosophical system in the very midst of attempting to perform a dismantling of such systems. "Unfortunately," Kauffmann adds, "under the present conditions of knowledge and its dissemination, in which even the subtlest critical model is destined for commodification, the work of each theorist has tended to become mechanized, reified by its adherents, as though the price of its popularity were parodic exaggeration of the programmatic tendencies latent in each mode of essaying" (p. 235). Kauffmann therefore registers a similar dilemma to that pinpointed by Jameson, but suggests a solution more in keeping with the positive spin of poststructuralist affirmations of "a kind of comradeship with chance—a conditional alliance" (p. 238), than with Adorno's more sobre avoidance of such unmediated affirmations of the aleatory: In conclusion, Kauffmann reaffirms a more tense standoff: "In the current critical landscape, there are powerful temptations both in systems and in antisystems. Both are preemptive, colonizing modes of thought: wherever one finds oneself, the terrain has been mapped, the roads and lanes well laid out in advance. The contemporary situation calls for a less programmed, more venturesome mode of response, a kind of thought at once fragmentary and holistic, not governed by exclusive principles, whether systematic or unsystematic in nature" (p. 237).

72 Pensky has suggested that "*disappointment*" would be the word that captures "the distinctive Adornian comportment at the crossroads of subject and object, since it refers both to the time of the object (the appointment with the nonidentitical is always missed, just as philosophy is still arriving too late), as well as the subjective disposition (to feel disappointed) whose vaguely childish wisdom contains something of the mature power that Adorno was able to bring to bear in his better critical work. This work is powered, throughout, by a disappointment so massive that it remains itself virtually undetectable according to all the familiar theoretical devices, by all the instruments that conceptual thought has hitherto contrived and, like some astronomical singularity, like some impossibly great mass, makes itself felt only by its invisible distortion of each and every formulation that circles ceaselessly around it, unable either to escape its gravity or illuminate it" (pp. 11–12).

73 See Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, vol. 1, Picador, London, 1979, pp. 303, 12 respectively.

74 Musil, *Man Without*, p. 297.

75 Musil, *Man Without*, p. 301.

76 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. xx.

77 Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p. 87.

78 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, pp. 112–13. For a constrasting critical assessment of this aspect of Adorno's philosophizing, the melancholia of his science, see Geuss, *Morality, Culture, and*

History, p. 105, where it is suggested that an "evaluation of Adorno's philosophizing that tried to be true to the spirit of the approach he himself used in studying other philosophical positions would have to come to terms with Adorno's own extreme narcissism and the self-serving nature of his melancholy".

79 Jameson, *Late Marxism*, pp. 112–13.

80 Edward Said, "Adorno as Lateness Itself", in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p. 273.

81 See Osborne, "Metaphysics of Modernism", p. 29. See also Axel Honneth's assessment in "Communication and Reconciliation: Habermas' Critique of Adorno", *Telos*, no. 39, Spring 1979, pp. 45–61.

CHAPTER II Sonata Fragments

1 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, Allen Lane, London, 1973, p. 3.

2 David Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1991, pp. 63–4. Adorno's own view of the relation between *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell & Wesley V. Bloomster, Sheed and Ward, London, 1974, is stated in his preface to the latter work, the whole of which he suggests may be read as an "extended appendix" of the former work (pp. xvii–xviii).

3 Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment*, pp. 63–5.

4 See Adorno, *Modern Music*, pp. 27–8.

5 Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, p. 17.

6 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 17. For Adorno's own understanding of the Kantian and Hegelian aspects of Beethoven's compositions, see his *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Seabury Press, New York, 1976, pp. 209–10.

7 Adorno, *Sociology of Music*, p. 209.

8 Robert Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, Routledge, London, 1998, p. 62.

9 Adorno, *Sociology of Music*, p. 209.

10 Adorno, *Sociology of Music*, p. 211.

11 See Adorno, *Modern Music*, pp. 32–7.

12 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 62.

13 The sonata-form emerged from this semiotic revolution along with its analogues in the other bourgeois arts (the novel, chiaroscuro in painting, in drama etc.), see Witkin, pp. 33–49. Witkin admits that Adorno avoided constructing such a systematic semiotic theory and that "he would no doubt see this as precisely the type of conceptual trap he was dedicated to avoiding" (p. 8). For an alternative account of the rise and development of the sonata-form (including Beethoven's compositions) which stresses the extent to which it, as an embodiment of Enlightenment values, originally belonged to the illusions and denials of a dying culture of feudal nobility, see Maynard Solomon, "Beethoven, Sonata, and Utopia", *Telos*, no. 9, Winter 1971, esp. pp. 32–7. Solomon contends the Enlightenment, in all its cultural forms, was initially a dream-like ideology belonging to segments of the declining aristocracy, only making its way into the bourgeois culture in its more revolutionary manifestations during the course of the nineteenth century. For a response to these claims, see Robert C. Solomon, "Beethoven and the Sonata Form", and a counter-response from Maynard Solomon, "Beethoven and the Enlightenment", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, pp. 141–6, 146–54.

14 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 33.

15 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 36.

16 See Witkin, *Adorno*, pp. 46–9.

17 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 2nd edn, ed. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, The Athlone Press, London, 1997, p. 185. This aspect of Beethoven's compositions is also noted by Solomon, who observes that the reconciliations of Beethoven's compositions in sonata-form were never presented as complete or final, but as "a series of Utopian reconfirmations . . . all conditional, one-sided, temporary. Each work in Beethoven's total output is part of a larger entity, and each affirmation, each happy ending, looks forward to a new struggle, to further agonies of introspection, to Winter, death and towards a new victorious

conclusion . . . The works are a perpetual cycle of struggle, death and rebirth. Each work looks both backward and forward—Janus-like—for within the work, the happy ending acknowledges the pain which preceded it", see Maynard Solomon, "Beethoven, Sonata, Utopia", pp. 43–4.

18 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 30.

19 Theodor W. Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven", *Raritan*, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 104.

20 As Fredric Jameson explains in *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971, the Beethoven sonata "represented a complex solution to the problem of musical identity and musical change. The characteristics of the form—the dispatching of the theme to the most distant and unexpected keys (in order that it may return, this time with a kind of finality, to its point of origin), the thoroughgoing metamorphoses it is made to undergo in variation after variation (in order to demonstrate the more surely its identity with itself)—are at one with the very establishment of the tonal system itself, for they amount to a concrete reenactment before the listener of tonality as a self-evident law, reconfirmed through the form" (pp. 16–17).

21 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 20.

22 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, pp. 20–21.

23 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 22.

24 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 30.

25 The realization of this transition is registered in Thomas Mann's novel, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a friend*, Vintage, New York, 1971, when the affirmation of humanity in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the "Ode to Joy", is "taken back" by the tragic hero of the novel, composer Adrian Leverkühn, who composes an "Ode to Sorrow", "as its counterpart in a most melancholy sense of the word" (p. 490). Leverkühn proclaims that what is to be taken back is "the good and noble . . . what we call the human, although it is good, and noble. What human beings have fought for and stormed citadels, what the ecstatics exultantly announced—that is not to be. It will be taken back. I will take it back" (p. 478).

26 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 45.

27 Witkin, *Adorno*, p. 46, see also Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment*, pp. 65–9.

28 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 109–10.

29 Beethoven's late works consist of the last five piano sonatas, the Ninth Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis*, the last six string quartets, and a number of bagatelles for the piano, see Edward Said, "Adorno as Lateness Itself", in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p. 268.

30 Witkin, *Adorno*, pp. 53–4.

31 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 23.

32 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 24.

33 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 25.

34 Shierry Weber Nicholsen makes a similar observation in the introduction to her *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, p. 7. On the connections between the aesthetic theories of Adorno and Georg Lukács regarding their mutual characterization of the developing lateness of bourgeois culture as one of decadence, see Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment*, pp. 65–9.

35 See Said's comments in "Lateness Itself", p. 273, on the status of lateness in Adorno's thinking, an enduring of "ending in the form of *lateness* but *for itself*, its own sake, not as a preparation for or obliteration of something else".

36 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 208–9.

37 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 297–8.

38 Theodor W. Adorno, "Alienated Masterpiece: The *Missa Solemnis*", *Telos*, no. 28, 1976, p. 122. Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 22, observes that because the late or third period style contains a consciousness of how "the synthesis prefigured in Beethoven's second-period style turned out to be an impossibility", it is in Adorno's judgement "the most realistic of Beethoven's styles".

39 The *Missa Solemnis* (composed 1818–1819), itself a late work, had already registered the demise of the synthetic affirmations of the second-period style, but its formal characteristics and possibilities were located within the genre of the mass and thus significantly removed from those of the more humanistic sonata-form through which the second-period compositions had sought to achieve totalistic syntheses. See Adorno, "Alienated", and Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, p. 255.

40 See Mann, *Faustus*, esp. pp. 49–56. Thomas Mann acknowledges his debt to Adorno's direct

assistance and his appropriation of Adorno's ideas in *The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of* Doctor Faustus, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1961. We find here a confessional account not only of how Adorno acted as Mann's musical adviser in the writing of the Faustus novel, but also of how the novelist appropriated many of the philosopher's ideas, particularly from the as yet unpublished manuscript of *Philosophy of Modern Music*, for his own work (p. 43). Mann feels impelled to justify his appropriation of Adorno's ideas, which find their way into Kretschmar's stammerings, in terms of a return to his own original thematics in an earlier novel, *Death In Venice* (pp. 45–6). In addition, Mann reports that following an evening of readings, during which he recited pages from the novel under construction and Adorno from his commentaries on Beethoven, Adorno played op. 111 in full, "in a highly instructive fashion". Mann explains that the performance made such an impression on him that he rose early the next morning to commence a "thoroughgoing revision and extension of the lecture on the sonata, which became a significant enrichment and embellishment of the chapter and indeed of the whole book. Into the poetic little illustrative phrases I wrote for the arietta theme I slipped Adorno's patronymic, *Wiesengrund* (*Meadowland*), by way of showing my gratitude" (pp. 47–8). Several months later during another gathering at the Mann household, Mann read this section out to Adorno and Horkheimer along with the first three chapters of the book. Mann records that the sonata section made a very positive impression on Adorno, who apparently was "touched by the little tribute to him" (p. 48). Yet this tribute must not have been enough to assuage Mann's unease, resolving in December 1945 "to hand over to Adorno everything that had so far been written and typed up, in order to give him a complete insight into the unfolding of the novel's ideas, to acquaint him with my intentions, and to cajole him into helping me with the impending musical problems". Toward the end of the month, Mann wrote Adorno "a ten-page letter in which I apologized as best I could for my 'scrupulously unscrupulous' borrowings from his philosophy of music. I had done this, I wrote, in the confidence that what I had borrowed, what I had learned, might attain an independent function within the work, a symbolic life of its own, and in so doing remain untouched at its original site" (pp. 150–51).

The controversy over authorship of *Doctor Faustus* was not limited to the relationship between Adorno and Mann in the construction of the novel, but also involved composer Arnold Schönberg. Schönberg's compositional technique of twelve tone row construction features ambivalently in Adorno's critical comments on Schönberg (which annoyed Schönberg) and in Mann's *Doctor Faustus* as an invention credited to the novel's fictional anti-hero, Adrian Leverkühn (which drove Schönberg to threaten legal action). One of the upshots of this latter dispute can be observed in Mann's inclusion of an "Author's Note" after the end of the novel explaining the true author of these ideas as being Schönberg. A quirky but highly informative account of the controversies and complexities of this constellation of Mann–Adorno–Schönberg, played out on the margins of Mann's *Doctor Faustus* while all three where in exile in California, can be found in Gary John Percesepe, *Future(s) of Philosophy: The Marginal Thinking of Jacques Derrida*, Peter Lang, New York, 1989, pp. 103–49.

41 Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. 55–6. Before reaching this conclusion, Kretschmar explains how op. 111 and indeed all of Beethoven's late works must have appeared strange and inaccessible to Beethoven's audience, even to his friends and admirers. To them op. 111 could hardly have appeared to be "a well-rounded and intellectually digested work". With what gathering dismay, Kretschmar ponders, must they have observed as Beethoven's art moved beyond the well-rounded masterpieces of his maturity, and the heights to which he had brought the sonata-form in symphony, piano sonata, and classical string quartet: "In the works of the last period they stood with heavy hearts before a process of dissolution or alienation, of a mounting into an air no longer familiar or safe to meddle with; even before a *plus ultra*, wherein they had been able to see nothing else than a degeneration of tendencies previously present, an excess of introspection and speculation, an extravagance of minutiæ and scientific musicality—applied sometimes to such simple material as the arietta theme of the monstrous movement of variations which forms the second part of this sonata. The theme of this movement goes through a hundred vicissitudes, a hundred worlds of rhythmic contrasts, at length outgrows itself, and is finally lost in giddy heights that one might call other-worldly or abstract. And in just that very way Beethoven's art had overgrown itself, risen out of the habitable regions of tradition, even before the startled gaze of human eyes, into spheres of the entirely and utterly nothing-but personal—an ego painfully isolated in the absolute, isolated too from sense by the loss of his hearing; lonely prince of a realm of spirits, from whom now only a chilling breath issued to terrify his most willing contemporaries, standing as they did aghast at these communications of which only at moments, only by exception, they could understand anything at all" (p. 52).

As Daniel C. Melnick, *Fullness of Dissonance: Modern Fiction and the Aesthetics of Music*, Associated University Presses, London, 1994, observes it is entirely appropriate to the abstract irony of Mann's novel that this diagnosis of the end of the sonata-form, a death which is itself prolonged in the work of Leverkühn (standing in for Schönberg) taking place within a novel itself staging a prolonged and belated "farewell not only of the novel form as it had existed but of the possibility for traditional European art" (p. 96).

42 Adorno, "Late Style", p. 103. What comes to the fore in the late works, according to Adorno, is the importance of the conventions themselves, for they can no longer be made to appear to be the organic outgrowth of free expression as happened in the second-period compositions. In other words, an abundance of conventional material, "decorative trill sequences, cadences, and *fiorituras*", are no longer made to appear to serve an expressive impulse and instead are scattered about Beethoven's late works in a fairly unresolved state, appearing often "in a form that is bald, undisguised, untransformed" (p. 104).

43 Adorno, "Late Style", p. 105.

44 Adorno, "Late Style", p. 105.

45 Adorno, "Late Style", p. 106.

46 Adorno, "Late Style", p. 107.

47 It would be wrong, as Subotnik points out in *Developing Variations*, to think that Adorno saw this transition as sudden. "Rather, he holds the dialectical belief that any historical concept contains within itself the foundations of its own negation. He asserts that Beethoven was already questioning the principle of synthesis from within the second-period style, and thereby raising the possibility that this principle was illusory at the very moment when it appeared most real." What Adorno draws attention to are "negative moments" or "resistances" which can be found within the second period style (p. 22).

48 Morton Schoolman, "Toward a Politics of Darkness: Individuality and Its Politics in Adorno's Aesthetics", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 76.

49 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1974, pp. 168–9.

50 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 169.

51 Schoolman, "Politics of Darkness", pp. 77–8. Schoolman observes Nietzsche was "intimately familiar" with this opera "a full quarter of a century before the publication of *Beyond Good and Evil*", for in 1862, along with "two adolescent companions with whom he founded the society 'Germania,' Nietzsche studied and worked out on the piano the score of Wagner's music drama from an arrangement that had become available that year" (p. 77).

52 Schoolman, "Politics of Darkness", p. 78.

53 Schoolman, "Politics of Darkness", p. 79.

54 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 319–20.

55 Adorno, *Modern Music*, p. 29.

56 Adorno, *Modern Music*, p. 30.

57 Adorno, *Modern Music*, p. 32.

58 Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel & Shierry Weber, Neville Spearman, London, 1967, p. 169. Edward Said has recently contested this aspect of Adorno's music criticism in his *Musical Elaborations*, The Welleck Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991. Said observes that the music which Adorno once championed for its distance from contemporary social life, which for him gave it the capacity to stage a devastating critique of society, not only proved to be itself amenable to an inclusion within the mainstream performing repertoire but occluded Adorno's attention to other emergent composers and trends in music (which Said notes Adorno was at least willing to admit in a late essay "Modern Music is Growing Old"). Said's point is to highlight the extent to which musical performance is now the central focus of music production and how "some of the alienating distance of the ascetic compositional techniques described so powerfully by Adorno nevertheless survives in the rituals of virtuoso performance that, despite the relative scarcity of virtuosity, nevertheless continue into the present". Consequently, "analysis must be extended into a present to which the application of Adorno's prescriptive admonishments appears (dare one say it?) sentimental" (pp. 14–15). Said himself demonstrates this post-Adornian analytical approach in the remarkable and divergent performance careers of Arturo Toscanini and Glenn Gould (pp. 18–34).

59 Adorno, *Prisms*, pp. 169–70.

60 Adorno, *Prisms*, p. 170.

61 For Adorno's discussion and critique of the systematization of Schönberg's music in twelve tone

serialism see *Modern Music*, pp. 61–77. Adorno discusses Schönberg's refusal to remain tied to twelve tone technique in *Modern Music*, pp. 120–24 and in "Vers Une Musique Informelle", in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Verso, London, 1992, pp. 277–9.

62 Adorno, *Prisms*, p. 171.

63 In his attempt to delineate the possibilities for an informal music, Adorno refers favourably to Schönberg's musical productions in "free atonality", roughly from 1910 to the commencement of the twelve tone compositions in 1925, see "Musique Informelle", pp. 273–5. For a critical assessment of Adorno's programmatic tendencies in this essay, see chapter 6 in Raymond Geuss, *Morality, Culture, and History: Essays on German Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 140–66.

64 Adorno, *Modern Music*, p. 42. The reference here is to the heroine of Schönberg's *Erwartung*, whose nocturnal search for her lover leads through terrors to the discovery of his murdered corpse.

65 Adorno, *Modern Music*, p. 43. The hyperbolic view of the world projected by expressionist music is captured by Witkin's commentary on the wider cultural imagery that formed its background, which perhaps found its most paradigmatic popular expression in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. In the first two decades of the century, the rise of totalitarian societies is presaged by the urbanization of vast populations in socio–economic orders constructed as vast machineries of production and administration of life processes, in which the mass-individual is publicly little more than an insignificant cog or automaton and privately a spiritually impoverished and desociated atom (pp. 17–24).

66 Adorno, *Prisms*, p. 158.

67 Subotnik, *Developing Variations*, p. 18.

68 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 30. Adorno adds on the following page that Beckett's realism is to be understood in the context in which "new art is as abstract as social relations have in truth become. In like manner, the concepts of the realistic and the symbolic are put out of service. Because the spell of external reality over its subjects and their reactions has become absolute, the artwork can only oppose this spell by assimilating itself to it. At ground zero, however, where Beckett's plays unfold like forces in infinitesimal physics, a second world of images springs forth, both sad and rich, the concentrate of historical experiences that otherwise, in their immediacy, fail to articulate the essential: the evisceration of subject and reality. This shabby, damaged world of images is the negative imprint of the administered world. To this extent Beckett is realistic" (p. 31). For further pertinent comments on Beckett see also *Aesthetic Theory* pp. 249–50 and the essay "Trying to Understand *Endgame*", in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, pp. 241–75. For an account of the continuing critical relevance of both Adorno and Beckett that is more attentive to the latter's dark humour as a source of weak affirmation, see Simon Critchley, *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, Routledge, London, 1997, esp. pp. 148–80.

69 As Martin Jay has observed in *Adorno*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1984, the vicious circle of repetition was always seen as suspect by Adorno. Unlike a later generation of philosophers, full-blown deconstructionists and poststructuralists, Adorno still held out for "something genuinely new" and as a result "was immunized against the deconstructionist tendency to affirm the current society as already characterized by the indeterminate, carnivalesque, but repetitive play of irreducible differences" (pp. 108–9). In other words Adorno never took Nietzsche so far as to affirm "the belief that recurrence was eternal . . . as necessary and good" (p. 109).

70 Adorno's appearance takes place as the second mask in Mann, *Faustus*, pp. 237–43.

71 Jean-François Lyotard, "Adorno as the Devil", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, p. 128.

72 This may explain why Mann reports in *Story of a Novel* that his conscience was "greatly relieved" after showing Adorno this section and seeing "that the author of the *Philosophy of Modern Music* was so gracious about the way I had provided my devil, who is 'against "works,"' with some of his critical *aperçus*" (p. 154).

73 See Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment*, pp. 146–51, for an instructive analysis of this double-play in Mann's *Doctor Faustus* and of Lyotard's exploitation of it. For Roberts, Lyotard's critique of Adorno offers a way "beyond but not outside" the dead-end of Adorno's theorizing (pp. 149–50), an outside which Roberts attempts to pinpoint in part 3 of his book (pp. 155–229).

74 Lyotard, "Devil", p. 133.

75 Max Pensky (ed.), "Editor's Introduction: Adorno's Actuality", in *The Actuality of Adorno: Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, p. 8.

76 See Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*, Verso, London, 1996, pp. 4–5, 249.

CHAPTER III Utopian Negation

1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton, Seabury Press, New York, 1973, p. 149.
2 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 191.
3 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. by E. F. N. Jephcott, Verso, London, 1996, p. 247.
4 Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p. 247. In this context of philosophical reconstruction, see Martin Jay's assessment of the sometimes inconsistent, even conflictual, approach of the early Frankfurt School's interdisciplinary approach to the social totality, chapter 8 in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, esp. pp. 114–19. Jay's essay attempts to demonstrate that there was a mimetic relation between the tensions within the school's interdisciplinary approach (which also manifested themselves within Adorno's own work) and the totally administered society of late capitalism which was the object of its studies. The tensions within the *Institut's* program can therefore be seen "to represent, if in perverted and distorted form, the nonidentical liberation of the possible future" (p. 119). It must be remembered that a total system, as Adorno explicates this notion, is not a totally consistent whole but a disorganized appearance of totality racked with ruptures and diremptions, which is what makes it infirm and still open to critique rather than monolithically efficient and impregnable. See Robert Hullot-Kentor's remarks on this in his review of Jameson's *Late Marxism*, "Suggested Reading: Jameson on Adorno", *Telos*, no. 89, Fall 1991, esp. p. 171, n. 4.
5 Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 362.
6 On this matter see Martin Jay's reconstruction of the Adorno's relationship with Sigfried Kracauer, and the criticisms Kracauer levelled at Adorno shortly before the former's death, in *Permanent Exiles*, pp. 226–36.
7 Theodor W. Adorno, "Resignation", *Telos*, no. 35, Spring 1978, p. 165. As Wes Blomster states in an introductory article accompanying this late piece, "Introduction to Adorno Essays", "Adorno speaks here with that nobility of the spirit which linked his generation to the grand humanism of the age of enlightenment back to which the roots of his thought and his intellectual position can be traced" (p. 127). An interesting context for this short essay can be found in the correspondence between Herbert Marcuse and Adorno during the lead-up to Marcuse's intended visit to Frankfurt in June 1969 to deliver a lecture at the Institute. The tensions of the student demonstrations spilled over into an already strained friendship when Adorno called in the police to remove radical student activists who had occupied the Institute to coordinate their strike activities. Word of Adorno's actions prompted Marcuse, who had a greater sympathy for the student activists despite the extreme and irrational ideas which some of its member professed on political action, to cancel his visit. The correspondence and an informative account of the events surrounding it by Esther Leslie (who also translated the correspondence), "Introduction to Adorno/Marcuse Correspondence on the German Student Movement", can be found in *New Left Review*, I, no. 233, January–February 1999, pp. 118–36.
8 Adorno, "Resignation", pp. 166–7.
9 Adorno, "Resignation", p. 167.
10 Adorno, "Resignation", p. 167.
11 Adorno, "Resignation", p. 167.
12 Adorno, "Resignation", p. 168.
13 Adorno, "Resignation", p. 168.
14 Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 363.
15 Jürgen Habermas, "A Generation Apart from Adorno (An Interview)", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 122–3.
16 Eagleton, *Ideology*, pp. 361–2.
17 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. by Frederick Lawrence, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 119.
18 Jürgen Habermas, "What Theories Can Accomplish—and What They Can't", interview with Michael Haller in *The Past as Future*, ed. & trans. Max Pensky, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1994, p. 119.

[19] Habermas, "What Theories Can Accomplish", pp. 119–20. John Rajchman in his *Philosophical Events: Essays of the '80s*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, undertakes a deconstructive/psychoanalytic analysis of the peculiarly German anxiety regarding the securing of foundations and self-assurance in modernity as it arises in Habermas's *Philosophical Discourse*. Rajchman focuses especially on Habermas's attempt to secure a universal pragmatics of language as a kind of reactive meditation on why German philosophy following Kant displayed a hostility to modernity and democracy and developed into forms of irrationality, in relation to which the French move to postmodernity seems to be merely derivative, a form of belated mimicry. (pp. 24–30) Martin Jay has attempted to defend Habermas against similar charges which see him as projecting his own contingently formed concerns onto a universal canvas in his review article of *Philosophical Discourse*, in *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1, esp. pp. 94–6, 111–12.

[20] See Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter", in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt & Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 9.

[21] Jürgen Habermas, "A Philosophico–Political Profile", in *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews*, ed. Peter Dews, Verso, London, 1986, p. 157.

[22] Habermas, "A Philosophico–Political Profile", p. 155. Habermas continues, "This forgotten reason, belonging to prehistory, finds an echo only in the powers of a wordless mimesis. The mimetic can be circled around by negative dialectics, but it cannot—as Heidegger suggests—be revealed. The mimetic does not allow one to sense what it is performing the role of stand-in for, but it permits no knowledge of a structure which could be characterized as rational. To this extent, Adorno cannot appeal to any structure heterogeneous to instrumental reason, against which the force of totalized purposive rationality must collide."

[23] This more positive appraisal emerged perhaps through the developing scholarly exchange between the two thinkers on the question of Enlightenment which was unfortunately cut short by Foucault's death. See Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*", in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, ed. & trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 173–9. Habermas here compliments Foucault's philosophical capacity for generating "productive contradictions", and suggests that only complex thinking "produces instructive contradictions". In Habermas's view, "Kant became entangled in an instructive contradiction of this kind when he explained revolutionary enthusiasm as a historical sign that allowed an intelligible disposition in the human race to appear within the phenomenal world". Foucault likewise generates an instructive contradiction "when he opposes his critique of power, disabled by the relevance of the contemporary moment, to the analytic of the true in such a way that the former is deprived of the normative standards it would have to derive from the latter". Habermas furthermore speculates that it was possibly "the force of this contradiction that drew Foucault, in this last of his texts [ie. "What is Enlightenment?"], back into a sphere of influence he had tried to blast open, that of the philosophical discourse of modernity"(pp. 178–9).
Writing in the midst of the encounter between Foucault and Habermas which had just begun and looking forward to its further developments, Martin Jay, in his *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, suggests that Foucault, out of all the poststructuralists critics of Marxist holism, was the most interesting for extending this critique beyond purely linguistic analyses. Jay's assessment no doubt is in part due to his own exchange with Foucault at a workshop at the University of California in October, 1981 (p. 529 n. 65). Foucault's move toward analyses of society and politics, Jay observed, "presented the most direct challenge to the Western Marxist tradition, out of which in fact he himself originally came. He is in a sense the poststructuralist equivalent of Habermas in that both take language very seriously, but refuse to confine their considerations to it alone. It may be an exaggeration, but only a small one, to say that the cutting edge of the current debate over holism is the confrontation now looming between these two figures. One way to characterize it is to say that Foucault has combined many of the arguments we have traced in the Western Marxist critics of Lukácsian holism, most notably Althusser, Adorno and Merleau-Ponty, and turned them in a radically anti-Marxist direction, while Habermas, taking the same arguments to heart, has tried to reconstruct Marxist holism on essentially new grounds" (p. 518).

[24] See in particular chapter V, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno", in Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse*, esp. pp. 126–30.

[25] Martin Jay, "The Debate over Performative Contradiction: Habermas versus the Poststructuralists", in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds

Axel Honneth et. al., MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, pp. 262–3. Jay refers us to two passages in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (pp. 142–3, 153) which, as Jay observes, warn "against the hypostatization of noncontradictoriness as the complete overcoming of all tensions and differences in a grand synthesis" and for a form of reconciliation which would include "a moment of preserved contradiction, which is not merely an evil to be overcome" (p. 263). An example of Habermas's attempts to recast Adorno's utopian thought (see the quote from *Negative Dialectics* at note 2 above) in a form more suitable to his own ends can be found in "Theodor Adorno: The Primal History of Subjectivity—Self-Affirmation Gone Wild", in *Philosophical–Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, pp. 106–7. For a scathing commentary on this appropriation see Rolf Tiedemann, "Concept, Image, Name: On Adorno's Utopia of Knowledge", in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, eds Tom Huhn & Lambert Zuidervaart, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 127–8.

26 A good overview of Habermas's *Philosophical Discourse* in the context of recent poststructuralist theory on aesthetics, may be found in Jay's review of the book cited above (see note 19).

27 Rajchman in *Philosophical Events* has commented with some irony on "Habermas' circle", the curiously self-centred story which Habermas weaves in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. In particular Rajchman observes: "The 'philosophical discourse of modernity' thus turns out to be a strange sort of discourse. Everyone who takes it up (i.e., everyone) ends in error, self-contradiction, and 'exhaustion'; and yet everyone *might* have found the correct Habermasian solution. The upshot of Habermas' tale of modern philosophy is a sense of a vast intellectual failure we might have spared ourselves had we looked for the timeless presuppositions and aspirations of rational consensus, and derived from them a 'grounding' of the wordy version of social democracy Rorty thinks is identical to what Americans call 'liberalism.'" (p. 29) This observation takes place in a wider argument which attempts to deconstruct Habermas' philosophical discourse of modernity in the context of a mutual encounter beginning in the late 1970s between Habermas' communicative ethics, Richard Rorty's liberal-pragmatism and more importantly for my current concerns, Foucault's relationship to philosophical modernity (see esp. pp. 7–54).

28 See Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In", pp. 17–20.

29 Jürgen Habermas, "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 17.

30 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 47. For an overview of Habermas' work which avoids the schematicism of Rajchman's account and explores fully the categorical complexities of his theoretical development in the wider context of the vicissitudes of the Hegelian–Marxist notion of Totality, see chapter 15 in Jay's *Marxism and Totality*. As Jay presents Habermas's development, the ideal speech situation as the regulative idea of intersubjective communication is but one of the axes of Habermas' attempt to reconstruct a viable Marxist understanding of totality through synthesizing a number of non-Marxist sources, see esp. pp. 483–509.

31 On the concern for redemption being substantially removed from Habermas' attempt to recast Adorno's thought within his theory of communicative action see Peter Uwe Hohendahl's conclusion to his *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1995, pp. 251–3.

32 On the different appreciations of the crisis of Enlightenment values (including notions of totality) that takes place in Nietzsche by Adorno and poststructuralists, see Jay's comments in *Marxism and Totality*, pp. 551–2.

33 Habermas, "Philosophico–Political Profile", pp. 157–8.

34 R. L. Kauffmann, "The Skewed Path: Essaying as Unmethodical Method", in *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*, ed. Alexander J. Butrym, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1989, p. 232. Kauffmann's reconstruction of this tradition traces its emergence out of German romantic writings and includes among its later practitioners the likes of Georg Simmel, Robert Musil, Rudolph Kassner, Georg Lukács (in his earlier, pre-Marxist writings), Walter Benjamin and Adorno, see pp. 227–31.

35 Kauffmann, "Skewed Path"., p. 233.

36 Kauffmann's summation in "Skewed Path", though simplifying the comparison captures the main cast of the divergences: "If the Frankfurt School theorists regard consciousness as the locus of ideology and the scene of critical thought, the poststructuralists are preoccupied instead with language and discourse, looking less to epistemology than to avant-garde art and aesthetics for their discursive models. A utopian ideal in either case, the essay is for the German theorists a *cognitive* or *epistemic* utopia; for the French thinkers it would be, to use Roland Barthes's phrase, a 'utopia of language'" (p. 233).

37 Kauffmann, "Skewed Path", p. 233.

38 This is Martin Jay's point in his essay "The Morals of Genealogy: Or Is There a Poststructuralist Ethics?", in *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique*, Routledge, New York, 1993, p. 39. Unfortunately, Jay's otherwise sensitive discussions of poststructuralist aesthetics and ethics are limited by the inevitability with which they move toward submitting their claims to the kind of mundane questioning on behalf of the life-world derived from Habermas's model of intersubjective communicative rationality.

39 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", pp. 39–40.

40 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", p. 44.

41 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", p. 45.

42 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", p. 45.

43 On this issue see Eagleton's discussion of Habermas's work from the perspective of its political aestheticism in attempting to re-invigorate the public sphere, *Ideology*, pp. 401–9. The debate over the aesthetic in the context of its respective treatment in Habermas's *Philosophical Discourse* and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's and Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. by Phillip Barnard & Cheryle Lester, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988, is not only over versions of the aesthetic but also as to how it should or should not function in the scheme of things. See: Jay's review of *Philosophical Discourse*, pp. 105–12; Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, pp. 40–45; and the David Carroll's introduction to his *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida*, Routledge, New York, 1989.

44 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", p. 45. In another essay Jay studies the ethical implications of self, community, and aesthetics in Bataille and Foucault, "The Limits of Limit-Experience: Bataille and Foucault", in *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1998. Jay notes how these earlier themes in Bataille's work of late 1930s which were associated with radical public activities, were transformed after his retreat into solitude during the years of the Second World War. What emerged was a new focus in his work which he called "inner experience", which modulated some of the extremity of the themes that are the feature of his earlier writings. "Many of the themes of his earlier work—sacrifice, the sacred, violence, the *informe* (formlessness), debasement, and *dépense* (waste or expenditure)—now resurfaced in an apparently new key" (p. 70). See Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988.

45 See the translator's introduction in Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1986, p. 148 n. 4; and translator's preface by in Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, 1988, pp. xxii–xxv, xxviii–xxix nn. 12–13. See also Jay "Morals of Genealogy", pp. 45–6 and "Limit-Experience", p. 75.

46 Georges Van Den Abbeele, "Introduction", in *Community at Loose Ends*, ed. Miami Theory Collective, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, pp. xiv–xv. See esp. the preface and chapter 1 of Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. & trans. Peter Connor et. al., University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, and also by Nancy, "Of Being-In-Common", in *Community at Loose Ends*, pp. 1–12.

47 Jay, "Limit Experience", pp. 75–6.

48 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", pp. 45–6. See in particular part I, "The Negative Community", of Blanchot's, *Unavowable Community*, pp. 1–26.

49 One may well ask whether, when approached in these terms, these poststructuralist thematics are actually some kind of restatement of the Nietzschean opposition between a boundary transgressing Dionysian impulse and a boundary clarifying Apollonian principle but minus Nietzsche's sense of tragedy.

50 Because part two of my thesis elaborates these themes in Foucault's thinking, particularly through the all-important inflections they receive in his late writings, what follows is necessarily brief and schematic so as to provide something of a preamble to subsequent chapters. In keeping with my attempt to reconstruct Adorno's critical position, the arrangement of material with regard to these themes in Foucault's thinking is oriented here toward drawing out the points at which they are susceptible to criticism from an Adornian construal of modernity's predicament.

51 Jay, "Morals of Genealogy", pp. 45, 46.

52 See Jay, "Limit-Experience". The type of experience Foucault claimed to undergo in writing his books was an intensification of experience to reach the limits of experience as the "impossibility of living" regarding which see also Foucault's interviews with Italian Marxist journalist Duccio Trombadori in *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. by R. James Goldstein & James Cascaito, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991, see discussion 1 esp. pp. 30–32.

53 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 95. For Foucault's usage of this term see the conclusion to his

Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. Richard Howard, Tavistock Publications, London, 1967, in which it is inaccurately translated as "*the absence of the work of art*", p. 287. The connotations of this phrase are probably closer to Blanchot's *désoeuvrement* (see note 45 above).

54 This is how Rajchman reconstructs Deleuze's view of Foucault, *Philosophical Events*, pp. 95, 102 nn. 53, 54). According to Rajchman, "Deleuze says the 'being of language,' which would be the condition and occasion of literature is also the condition and occasion of Foucault's archaeology of discourse. And he says the opening of visibility, or 'the being of light,' which would be the chance of the visual arts, is also the condition of Foucault's art of seeing" (p. 95).

55 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 102 n. 55, cites an interview ("Foucault, passe-frontières de la philosophie," *Le Monde*, September 6, 1986) as evidence of Foucault's concern regarding the political derailment implicit in the kind of self-referential literary analyses which became popular in the academy, which led to a "sacralization" of literature very much counter to his own concern with the exploration of literature in Bataille and Blanchot as a way out of Hegelianism and a different way of doing philosophy (p. 96).

One of the more extreme political actions Foucault engaged in has been documented in James Miller's controversial biography, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, pp. 178–9. During student protests in 1969 at the newly opened Vincennes campus, Foucault not only joined a number of other professors in the student occupation of the administration buildings and amphitheatre, but also, according to witnesses, resisted the eventual police crackdown, ending up on the roof of the administration building, "gleefully lobbing stones—although he was careful not to dirty his beautiful black velour suit". Miller also documents Foucault's "Maoist" phase in which he advocated extreme political action modelled on guerilla tactics. This was also the time of the *Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons* (GIP), which is perhaps one of the most enduring example of the kind of ephemeral and mobile political experimentalism Foucault's writings seem to entail (see esp. pp. 183–200).

Other interesting insights into the kind of political aspirations Foucault held in this period may be found in "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'", in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) & Sherry Simon, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1980, pp. 218–31. This piece is a transcription of a discussion held at a high school under the auspices of *Actuel* (in which it was first published in November 1971). In response the question of what would replace the current "system", Foucault suggests that it would not be supplied by a utopian vision, but rather "that the rough outline of a future society is supplied by the recent experiences with drugs, sex, communes, other forms of consciousness, and other forms of individuality. If scientific socialism emerged from the *Utopias* of the nineteenth century, it is possible that a real socialization will emerge, in the twentieth century, from *experiences*" (p. 231).

56 The model of power that Foucault develops after 1968 is arguably already implicit in his earlier writings on transgression, see for example his essays on Bataille and Nietzsche, "A Preface to Transgression" and "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol 2, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, New Press, New York, 1998, pp. 69–87, 369–91.

57 For a discussion of this crucial distinction between Adorno and Foucault, in the context of the political implications of the transition to postmodern negations of identity generally and its somewhat ambivalent appropriation by Edward Said in particular, see Fred Dallmayr, "The Politics of Nonidentity: Adorno, Postmodernism—And Edward Said", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 38–9.

58 There is sufficient evidence for this throughout Foucault's writings as I will attempt to show in the following sections of this thesis which deal more specifically with his work. Rajchman in *Philosophical Events*, has already drawn attention to this continuity, that "one can argue that his early ideas about the oeuvres of modernity did not altogether disappear from his thinking. If *absence d'oeuvre* ceases to be an object of his histories, it comes to supply something of the *ethos* of his work as historian. Rather than being the obscure hero of his histories, Nietzsche would be someone he would put to a new *use*, and he would continue Baudelaire's "attitude to modernity" in his own work in another way. It is thus that Foucault would extend the place Baudelaire called "art" to a particular ethic of thinking, seeing, and living" (p. 96). Foucault's usage of the term ethos emerges in "What is Enlightenment?", in *The Politics of Truth*, eds Sylvère Lotringer & Lysa Hochroth, Semiotext(e), New York, 1997, pp. 101–34.

59 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 59. Foucault sees Bataille, Blanchot and Klossowski as interpreters of Nietzsche who themselves applied Nietzsche in new ways, and in combination with

a tradition of French philosophical letters associated with figures such as Sade, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Artaud, Nerval. A very useful document for understanding Foucault's relationship to these thinkers can be found in his interviews with Trombadori, *Remarks on Marx*, esp. discussions 1 and 2, pp. 25–82. Foucault describes his own work as employing an essayistic approach in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1986, p. 9.

60 On Baudelaire and self-fashioning in terms of a modernist ethos see Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 39–50.

61 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, suggests "Foucault's art of seeing might be said to be the art of seeing outside ourselves, or seeing the 'absence' in our work. Not to look within to a true or authentic self; not to master one's time by holding it in one's thought; not to find a place for oneself within society or state, but to look out from oneself, to open one's time to what has not yet been seen, to transform or displace one's instituted, assigned identity at a time and place" (p. 97).

62 Foucault traces this lineage in "The Political Technology of Individuals", in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, p. 145. In this, his final period of productivity, Foucault traced a number of other similar critical lineages stemming from Kant to which he seemingly felt some kind of connection, such as the one with which he begins "What is Enlightenment?": Hegel, Nietzsche, Weber, Horkheimer, Habermas, pp. 101–2.

63 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 17.

64 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, p. 19.

65 Rajchman, *Philosophical Events*, pp. 19–20. On this question of actuality see Blanchot's response to the question "Who comes after the subject?", a short piece simply entitled "Who?", which he ends by suggesting we continue asking the childlike question "Who is me today?", in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, eds Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor & Jean-Luc Nancy, Routledge, New York, 1991, pp. 58–60.

PART TWO FOUCAULT: REDEMPTION BEYOND ENLIGHTENMENT?

Introduction

1 In order to demonstrate the kind of proliferation of secondary material, I cite a single book of recent publication, whose 792 pages contains an extraordinary number of slants and approaches, interpretations and applications of Foucault's works: Clare O'Farrell (ed.), *Foucault: The Legacy*, Queensland University of Technology Publications, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1997.

2 James w. Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking", in *The Final Foucault*, eds James Bernauer & David Rasmussen, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1988, p. 45.

3 See for example, James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, pp. 176–82, for a reconstruction of Foucault's involvement in the student riots at Vincennes.

4 Maurice Blanchot, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, p. 93.

5 Mark Poster, "Foucault and the Problem of Self-Constitution", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, eds John Caputo & Mark Yount, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1993, p. 64. Regarding the three positions identified, Poster offers this summary: "Position 1 of the 1960s (which Foucault was later to call 'archaeology') was a critique of the self as rationalist by a strategy of *reversal*: madness vs. Reason. Position 2 of the 1970s (which Foucault was to call 'genealogy') was a critique of the self as centred consciousness by a strategy of *displacement*: the locus of intelligibility shifted from subject to structure. Position 3 of the 1980s (which Foucault was to call 'ethics') was a hermeneutics of the self using a strategy of *historicism*: the emphasis fell on the activity of self-constitution in discursive practices" (p. 65).

6 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", p. 46. According to Bernauer the first mode of thinking, best seen at work in *The Order of Things*, "was a cathartic thinking, the effort to comprehend and purge the epistemic conditions determining the major principles of current knowledge in the sciences of man". The aim of this thinking ended up being "personal" in the sense of revealing the anthropologism of Man so as to explode it as a foundation and give back to us a view of the discontinuities of knowledge regimes. Following on from this, (1969–1971) there was a period of

"dissonant thinking", liberated from anthropologism, and aiming at liberating forms of "dissonance", the forgotten contingencies which are at the roots of thought, through the nondialectical excavatory work of "archaeology". The third period (1972–1979) sees the emergence of a "dissident thinking" which was "engaged in an archaeology–genealogy of politics . . . a continuing challenge to the forms of power's practice in our society, and to the types of understanding which hide the grounds for these forms. His dissident thinking was no less cathartic or dissonant, but its uncovering of foundations was now welded to explicitly political tasks." Finally there is "ecstatic thinking" in Foucault's last works. This takes a twofold movement: the announcement of a shift to constitution of "ethical subjectivity and individual conduct" to be undertaken through another shift, this one in time, back to "the classical and early Christian eras"; following on from this, was the more significant "effort to pass beyond the modern mode of being a subject" (p. 47).

7 Denis Hollier, "The Word of God: 'I am dead'", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, p. 130.

8 Paul Veyne, "Foucault and Going Beyond (or the Fulfilment of) Nihilism", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, p. 340. Veyne acknowledges that his ideas regarding nihilism and the movement beyond it come from Gianni Vattimo which shall be explored in the final chapter of this thesis.

9 Veyne, "Going Beyond", p. 340.

10 John Sturrock, "Michel Foucault", chapter in *The Word from Paris: Essays on Modern French Thinkers and Writers*, Verso, London, 1998, p. 62.

11 Miller, *The Passion*, p. 66.

12 Michel Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self: An interview with Michel Foucault", conducted by Rux Martin in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, pp. 9–15.

13 Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox & J. M. Harding, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, p. 76.

14 Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, p. 75.

CHAPTER IV Poetic Madness and Literary Experience

1 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1974, p. 304. Foucault's approach to historical periodizations may be found in an interview he conducted with Raymond Bellour, "On the Ways of Writing History", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 2, *Aesthetics, Methodology and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, New Press, New York, 1998, esp. pp. 280–86.

2 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 305.

3 Andrew Bowie, "Music, Language and Modernity", in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Routledge, London, 1989, p. 67. Two of Foucault's prominent philosophical "friends" have also remarked on the relationship of his thinking to music, and more specifically, to serialism. In Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, ed. & trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, the first chapter on Foucault's early "archival" period, which focuses on its culmination in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, suggests the proximity of Foucault's mobile approach "skimming along in a kind of diagonal line that allows him to read what could not be apprehended before, namely statements", to an "atonal logic" (p. 2). (Although the entire chapter is in a sense an attempt to enact the performative character of what Foucault means to perform by this notion of "statements", a short reprise of what Deleuze understands by it may be found on p. 18.) The chapter concludes with a reference to Pierre Boulez on Anton von Webern, which Deleuze suggests may just as easily have been applied to Foucault (p. 22). Maurice Blanchot, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/ Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, discusses the connections between the interest in discontinuities in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Discourse*, and serial music (pp. 73–7). On Foucault's connections with the French proponents of serialism, principally Jean Barraqué and Boulez, and further connections to "formalism" see James Miller's discussion, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, pp. 79–81. See also Foucault's own comments regarding the impact serial music had on his theoretical development in the 1967 interview with P. Caruso, "Who are you, Professor Foucault?", in *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, p. 97.

4 Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, pp. 2–3.

5 For a tracing of the links between the disjunction of words and things in Foucault's *Order of Things* (whose original French title *Le Mots et les choses*, translates literally as "words and things"), and a musical absolute see Bowie, "Music, Language and Modernity", pp. 67–71. Bowie's discussion of "absolute music" and the "topos of Unsayability" draws on Carl Dahlhaus's, *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*, Munich and Kassel, 1978.

6 Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, pp. 4–5. Bowie's comments cited here occur in the context of his discussion of two early philosophers of the aesthetic, Alexander Baumgarten and Johann Georg Hamann, whose ideas regarding the aesthetic were still premised on theological assumptions about the harmony of a cosmos guaranteed by God.

7 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 237.

8 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 296.

9 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 296.

10 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 297, 300. For an exhaustive and detailed account of the connections between literature, literary theory, and Foucault's work see Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing*, Routledge, London, 1992.

11 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 305.

12 Michel Foucault, "Language to Infinity", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 99–100.

13 Michel Foucault, "Language to Infinity", p. 94. As Bowie observes, the transformation in the understanding of language to which Foucault refers, the loss of the support of the speech of infinity, is "linked to the decline of theological views of the world, in which language, to put it crudely, was regarded as God's naming of the furniture of the universe", see the introduction to *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 21.

14 See especially the concluding pages of *The Order of Things*.

15 Michel Foucault, "The Father's 'No'", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, p. 18.

16 Foucault, "The Father's 'No'", p. 19.

17 An example of Foucault's association with literary avant-gardism during the 1960s was his proximity to the *Tel Quel* group of critics and novelists, see the introduction and chronological history to Patrick ffrench & Roland-François Lack (eds), *The Tel Quel Reader*, Routledge, London, 1998. This collection also includes a critical essay by Foucault on a number of *Tel Quel* writers, "Distance, Aspect, Origin", originally published in *Critique* in November 1963.

18 Foucault's usage of the term "anthropology" is not so much a reference to "the study of cultures exterior to our own" but "the strictly philosophical structure responsible for the fact that the problems of philosophy are now all lodged within the domain that can be called that of human finitude", regarding which see Foucault's discussion on the links between psychology and philosophy in his 1965 interview with Alain Badiou, "Philosophy and Psychology", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, p. 250. See also his comments on the "possibility–or the peril–of an anthropology" initiated by Kantian finitude (pp. 256–7), and within the context of how he would teach the subject of psychology, on the mutual "anthropological slumber in which philosophy and the human sciences were enchanted, as it were, and put to sleep by one another–and that we need to awake from this anthropological slumber, just as in the past people awoke from the dogmatic slumber" (pp. 258–9).

19 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 341.

20 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 306. This question is formulated in a passage which goes on to pose a number of alternative questions leading to an equivocal conclusion, and yet, the Heideggerian formulation of the question I have cited seems central to an understanding of the famous concluding statement to this book: "If those [current] arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility—without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises—were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (p. 387).

21 John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 52.

22 It has generally been acknowledged that the most influential Heideggerian document in regard to the development of French antihumanism is his "Letter on Humanism" which may be found in *Basic Writings: from* Being and Time *(1927) to* The Task of Thinking *(1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell, Harper, San Francisco, 1993, pp. 213–65. On the subterranean role played by Heidegger in

some of Foucault's early literary essays, see Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, pp. 175–7, 181, 186–8, 337–8 n. 5.

23 A particular reading of Hegel is operative in the French philosophical and literary context, largely determined by the highly influential lectures delivered by Alexandre Kojève, regarding which see Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox & J. M. Harding, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, esp. pp. 27–48. For a discussion of Foucault's relationship to this French tradition Hegel criticism see also the final chapter in Judith Butler's, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, and also Foucault, "The Discourse on Language",. appendix in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972.

24 Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, p. 76. As may be seen here, Foucault's appraisal of Kant is not wholly hostile. It is only to the extent that Kant initiates the anthropological sleep that he is to be repudiated in Foucault's view, not in so far as he initiates a critical concern with limits, a concern which will emerge in Foucault's later comments on Kant in writings such as "What is Enlightenment?".

25 Foucault, "Transgression", p. 76. Nietzsche's heirs are here cited as Bataille, Blanchot and Klossowski.

26 Foucault, "Transgression", p. 77.

27 Foucault, "Transgression", p. 77.

28 Foucault, "Transgression", p. 80.

29 English translations of these literary essays may be found in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) & Sherry Simon, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1980, or in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, from which I have been citing.

30 Rajchman, *Foucault*, p. 6.

31 There is sufficient evidence in some of Foucault's later statements regarding his early writings that he himself felt there were such errors or excesses which he no longer wished to affirm. The "antiworld" citation is from a discussion of the relationship of Foucault's writing of knowledge to Surrealism, and in particular André Breton, to be found in his 1966 interview with C. Bonnefoy, "A Swimmer between Two Words", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 171–4. Foucault remarks here on the way Breton transformed writing into knowledge as "a means of pushing man beyond his limits, of forcing him to face the insuperable, of placing him near to what is farthest away from him. Hence the interest he brought to bear on the unconscious, on madness, on dreams". Such a writing, Foucault adds, would be "so radical and so sovereign that it manages to face up to the world, to counterbalance it, to offset it, even to utterly destroy it and scintillate outside it. Actually, this experience begins to appear rather early in *Ecce homo* and in Stéphane Mallarmé. This experience of the book as an antiworld is reencountered in Breton and it has contributed substantially to changing the status of writing" (pp. 172–3).

32 Michael Janover, "The Subject of Foucault", in *Foucault: The Legacy*, Clare O'Farrell, Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1997, p. 218.

33 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 342. Gilles Deleuze offers a detailed and idiosyncratic rendition of the theme of the death of Man in the appendix to his *Foucault*, pp. 124–32, but see also his briefer comments in the main body of the text, pp. 87–9.

34 See Foucault's comments on Sade in *The Order of Things*, p. 211, where he states that "Sade attains the end of Classical discourse and thought. He holds sway precisely upon their frontier. After him, violence, life and death, desire, and sexuality will extend, below the level of representation, an immense expanse of shade which we are now attempting to recover, as far as we can, in our discourse, in our freedom, in our thought. But our thought is so brief, our freedom so enslaved, our discourse so repetitive, that we must face the fact that that expanse of shade below is really a bottomless sea. The prosperities of *Juliette* are still more solitary—and endless."

35 Michel Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, p. 19.

36 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 383.

37 Rajchman, *Foucault*, p. 18.

38 Rajchman, *Foucault*, p. 18.

39 Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vol. 1, Penguin Books, London, 1995, pp. 111–13. Jeffrey Mehlman, "Maurice Blanchot", in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 72, pp. 77–82, commenting on Blanchot's work explores how this myth presides over Blanchot's *oeuvre*: "not the poet who conquers death, but he who through art loses both the world (Eurydice) and himself

(through dismemberment) in an expenditure without end. To have evoked that myth—and the self-effacing austerity with which Blanchot, to all (public) appearances, has disappeared into his work—is to hint at the specific difficulties facing his would-be literary biographer" (p. 77).

40 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 326.

41 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 383.

42 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 54.

43 This disparaging expression comes from Georg Lukács 1962 preface to *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock, Merlin Press, London, 1971, p. 22. While the book was originally written in 1914–1915 and first published in 1920, the preface in which this expression occurs refers to the intelligentsia of the Federal Republic who, including Adorno, had taken up residence in "a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort on the edge of an abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss between excellent meals or artistic entertainments, can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered". While it was meant to be a condemnation of the comfortable pessimism of Adorno and his compatriots, the expression does capture something of the necessarily contradictory nature of Adorno's position, one which he was perhaps all too painfully aware of and never attempted to deny or superficially resolve.

44 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1967, p. 280.

45 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 281.

46 See chapter 2, "The Great Confinement", in *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 38–64.

47 See chapters 8, "The New Division", and 9, "The Birth of the Asylum", in *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 221–40, 241–78.

48 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 278.

49 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 369, 385.

50 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", p. 385.

51 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life", in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 104.

52 Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages of History", pp. 104–5.

53 In this regard, see Foucault's introduction to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where his new emphasis to historical discontinuities to some extent anticipates his adumbration of countermemory here in relation to a "sacrifice" of the traditional subject of knowledge, see esp. pp. 9–14. Incidentally, my reference to Nietzsche's untimely meditation on history should not be taken as suggesting this was the principal Nietzschean text inspiring Foucault's historical method. As Foucault frequently suggests himself in interviews conducted in the 1970s, his approach owes a great deal to the Nietzsche of *The Genealogy of Morals*.

54 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", p. 386.

55 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", pp. 385–6.

56 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", p. 388.

57 Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual*, p.193.

58 Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, p. 206.

59 Foucault, "What is an Author?", pp. 220–21.

60 Foucault, "What is an Author?", p. 221.

61 Foucault, "What is an Author?", p. 222. Foucault retained an abiding interest in the possibility of anonymity. It is perhaps one of the central themes in Foucault's work which has received the least attention, and what little attention it has been given has reduced it to the status of a fashion statement to be either praised or condemned. But it is only one of the casualties of the fixation with Foucault's analyses of power in the mad scramble for a post-Marxist politics. I offer here a brief excursion: First, Foucault's response to Alain Badiou's final question in their 1965 interview, "Philosophy and Psychology", as to how Foucault would "teach on the subject of psychology", to which Foucault responds: "The first precaution I would take, if I were a philosophy professor and I had to teach psychology, would be to buy myself the most realistic mask I can imagine and the one farthest from my normal face, so that my students would not recognise me. I would try, like Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*, to adopt another voice so that none of my speech patterns would appear. That is the first precaution I would take. Next I would try, as far as possible, to introduce the students to the techniques that are currently being used by psychologists, laboratory methods, social psychology methods. I would try to explain to them what psychoanalysis consists in. And then, the following hour, I would remove my mask, I would take up my own voice again, and we would do philosophy, even if this meant reencountering psychology, at that moment, as a kind of absolutely unavoidable and inevitable impasse that Western thought entered into in the

nineteenth century" (pp. 258–9). An extended treatment of anonymity in regard to Foucault's writing of historical works may be found in his 1967 interview with Raymond Bellour, "On the Ways of Writing History", pp. 286–91. In his 1980 interview with Christian Delacampagne, first published in *Le Monde*, and reprinted in translation as "The Masked Philosopher", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Press, New York, 1997, pp. 321–8. Foucault "opted for the mask of anonymity—the philosopher declined to reveal his name—in order to demystify the power society ascribes to the 'name' of the intellectual" and "to liberate the consumer of culture from a critical discourse that is overdetermined by the characters that dominate our perceptions" (see note at bottom of p. 321). Foucault also suggests some kind of distortion in the perception of his words on account of his fame when he suggests that part of the motivation for the mask of anonymity came "[o]ut of nostalgia for a time when, being quite unknown, what I said had some chance of being heard. With the potential reader, the surface of contact was unrippled. The effects of the book might land in unexpected places and form shapes that I had never thought of. A name makes reading too easy" (p. 312). Finally, see Foucault's pseudonymously authored entry for a new edition of the *Dictionnaire des philosophes*, commissioned by Denis Huisman, signed in the name of Maurice Florence, "Foucault", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 459–63.

62 Foucault, "What is an Author?", p. 222, the final line of this citation contains a reference to Beckett, with which Foucault also introduces the theme of the author function in this essay (p. 205). Foucault makes some interesting comments in "Michel Foucault and Zen: a stay in a Zen temple", in *Religion and Culture*, regarding the status of an author's intention in a text, namely his belief that "from the moment when he writes he is no longer the owner of what he says, except in a legal sense", and also suggests the kind of utility to which the writing of his oeuvre is directed (p. 111).

63 In an interview conducted shortly after the publication of his book on Foucault, "A Portrait of Foucault", in *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, Deleuze states that theoretical underpinnings of the analysis of language and knowledge in *Madness and Civilization* were "fully elaborated in the *Archaeology* of 1969—that is, in his theory of utterance" (p. 104).

64 Foucault, "Writing History", p. 284.

65 Foucault, "Writing History", pp. 286–7.

66 Foucault, "Writing History", p. 286.

67 In "A Portrait of Foucault", Deleuze suggests that Foucault's 1963 publication *Raymond Roussel* already contained "the poetic and comic version of the theory of utterance set out in the *Archaeology* [*of Knowledge*] of 1969". Furthermore, Deleuze indicates that it is possible to see Foucault's study of Roussel's development of a "crazy etymology" in his works as implicitly staging an implicit precursor to Heidegger, who too developed "a whole etymological procedure bordering on madness" (p. 107). For further discussions on the significance of Roussel to Foucault see also Deleuze, *Foucault*, pp. 110–11, and Pierre Macherey, *The Object of Literature*, trans. David Macey, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, esp. pp. 214–15. See also the interview with Charles Raus, included as the postscript to the English translation of *Raymond Roussel*, for Foucault's own discussion of his interest in "found language" in Roussel within the context of his focus on language in the 1960s, "An Interview with Michel Foucault", in *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Raus, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, 1986, esp. pp. 176–7. Although the terms "statement" and "utterance" have been used by different translators to render the same word in the original French, "*énoncé*", which has no exact English equivalent, Simon During, *Foucault and Literature*, pp. 95–6, explains the distinction between the two terms as they occur in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

68 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 18. Earlier in this chapter, Deleuze suggests that this concern for statements "echoes Blanchot in denouncing all linguistic personology and seeing the different positions for the speaking subject as located within a deep anonymous murmur. It is within this murmur without beginning or end that Foucault would like to be situated, in the place assigned to him by statements" (p. 7).

69 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 18.

70 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 22, but see also further comments on p. 52. Blanchot observes in "Foucault as I Imagine Him", commenting on the discrepancy between the "striking formulations" of Foucault's "official discourse", and the actual complexity of "his own principles", how "it is accepted as a certainty that Foucault, adhering in this to a certain conception of literary production, got rid of, purely and simply, the notion of the subject: no more oeuvre, no more author, no more creative unity. But things are not that simple. The subject does not disappear;

rather its excessively determined unity is put in question. What arouses interest and inquiry is its disappearance (that is, the new manner of being which disappearance is), or rather its dispersal, which does not annihilate it but offers us, out of it, no more than a plurality of positions and a discontinuity of functions (and here we reencounter the *system of discontinuities*, which, rightly or wrongly, seemed at one time to be a characteristic of serial music)" (p. 77). In his 1967 interview with P. Caruso, "Who are you, Professor Foucault?", Foucault reveals how, apart from reading Nietzsche, "I owe the first great cultural jolt to French serial and dodecaphonic musicians—like Boulez and Barraqué—to whom I was linked through friendship. For me they represented the first 'breach' in that dialectical world I had been living in" (p. 97).

71 Janover, "The Subject of Foucault", p. 222. See also Foucault's comments in "Structuralism and Post-structuralism", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, and the first two interviews in *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein & James Cascaito, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991.

72 Rajchman, *Foucault*, p. 117.

73 Jacques Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness", in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, pp. 31–63.

74 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. x–xi.

75 Derrida, "Cogito", p. 33.

76 Derrida, "Cogito", pp. 33–4.

77 Derrida, "Cogito", p. 34. In this connection see also Foucault's self-criticisms in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 47.

78 This is one of the many passages omitted from the heavily edited English translation (*Madness and Civilization*), itself based on the French abridged version (*Histoire de la folie*, 10/18 Union Générale de l'Edition, Paris, 1964) of the original publication *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Plon, Paris, 1961. Both French editions went out of print and a new French edition (*Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1972) returned to the unabridged format. This edition included a new preface and two appendices. This version was then reprinted by Gallimard in a cheaper edition without the appendices in 1976, which consequently comes closest to reproducing the original Plon edition. I have relied on a private translation of this passage from the 1976 edition by Isabelle Prépoignot and Stuart Elden. I am also indebted to Elden's reconstruction of the publication history of *Histoire de la folie* in "Re-placing *Madness and Civilization*: The Spaces of *Histoire de la folie*", Discussion Paper Series No. 97/8, Department of Government, Brunel University, Uxbridge. The passage in question occurs in the opening pages of the second chapter, "The Great Confinement", which may be found on pp. 56–9 in the 1976 edition. Foucault's subsequent restatement of his argument on his reading of the Cartesian gesture of excluding the extravagant possibility of madness may be found in one of the appendices to the 1972 Gallimard edition, a translation of which, "My body, This Paper, This Fire", may now be found in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 393–417.

79 Foucault's argument refers to the first of the meditations, see René Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy*, in *Meditations of First Philosophy*, in *Essential Works of Descartes*, ed. Daniel J. Bornstein, Bantam, New York, 1966, pp. 59–63.

80 Derrida, "Cogito", p. 55.

81 Derrida, "Cogito", p. 40.

82 For a brief discussion of this transformation in the context of the debate with Derrida see Niall Lucy, *Debating Derrida*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 62–3.

83 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 16. The French word *expérimenter* connotes both experience and experiment.

84 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 47. Foucault's position with regard to historical study in the introduction to this work in some ways anticipates the theme of a countermemory developed in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", see esp. pp. 9–14. Deleuze in his *Foucault* has suggested that if the romanticism of *Madness and Civilization* was left behind to make way for "a new positivism", it was a "rarefied form of positivism, which in itself is poetic [and] perhaps helps to rekindle a general experience in the dissemination of discursive formations or statements, an experience which is still that of madness; while it also reintroduces into the various locations at the heart of these formations a mobile site which is still that of a doctor, clinician, diagnostician or symptomatologist of civilizations (independently of any *Weltanschauung*)" (p. 13).

85 Michel Foucault, "My Body, This Paper, This Fire", in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 416. Arnold I. Davidson (ed.), "Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, reports an interesting observation relating to Foucault's initial reaction to

the lecture at which Derrida first presented his "Cogito" paper: "The person sitting next to Foucault during Derrida's lecture of March 1963 . . . told me that Foucault was so excited during that lecture that he could literally not sit still, continually bouncing up and down in his seat. I think that Foucault recognised, even then, the stakes that would be at issue in their exchange. In an initial version of his response to Derrida, published in Japanese in 1972 and only now available in French in *Dits et écrits*, we can see very clearly that Foucault found in this debate about Descartes nothing less than the question and status of the profound 'interiority of philosophy' and of the singular events that are external to it" (p. 14). According to Christopher Norris, *Truth and the Ethics of Criticism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, however, the charge Foucault makes against Derrida as an apolitical textualist is a familiar one which has been "the standard reproach among commentators lacking any first-hand acquaintance with Derrida's work" (p. 44). A judicious discussion of the issue of an extraphilosophical (historicist) determinations of philosophical texts in the dispute between Foucault and Derrida may be found in Robert D'Amico, "Text and Context: Derrida and Foucault on Descartes", in *The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with the New French Thought*, ed. John Fekete, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984, pp. 164–82. In conclusion, D'Amico suggests that the enigmatic character of the Derrida/Foucault dispute with regard to the Cartesian text is a result of a concern "with the literary effects and symptoms of the text" rather than with "traditional issues of sound philosophical argument. Between Derrida and Foucault there is no traditional philosophical dispute, which is why the debate is elusive. What is left is the absence of older certainties" (pp. 180–81). A reading of the differences between Derrida and Foucault on Descartes within the broader context of their respective writings may be found in Roy Boyne, *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason*, Unwin Hymin, London, 1990.

86 This criticism of Derrida may be seen as continuous with Foucault's self-rebuke regarding his own practice of theorizing literature during the 1960s, which shall be examined in the next chapter.

87 Derrida, "Cogito", p. 36.

88 Foucault, "Discourse on Language", p. 235.

89 Foucault "Discourse on Language", p. 235. On the importance of Hyppolite's seminar on Hegel for Foucault see the final chapter of Butler, *Subjects of Desire*.

90 See Michel Foucault, "The Functions of Literature", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988, p. 312, an interview conducted in 1975.

91 For some brief comments from Derrida regarding his relation to Hegel and his studied withdrawal from the political, see his comments in an interview, "The Almost Nothing of the Unpresentable", in *Points . . . Interviews: 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf et. al., Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, on Hegel and attempting to escape him (pp. 81–2) and on political engagement/withdrawal (pp. 86–8).

92 For a comparison of Foucault's and Adorno's relation to Hegel see Fred Dallmayr, "The Politics of Nonidentity: Adorno, Postmodernism—And Edward Said", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 40–42.

93 Michel Foucault, "Madness, the Absence of Work", *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, p. 97. This short essay originally appeared in *La table ronde* 196, March 1964, and was later included as one of two appendices to 1972 edition of *Histoire de la folie*. The piece may be read as an indirect response to Derrida's criticisms and restates the connection between literary experience in modernity and madness he explored in his history of madness.

94 Foucault, "Absence of Work", p. 102.

95 See for instance "Body/Power" and "Truth and Power", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham et. al., Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, pp. 56, 114–15.

CHAPTER V A Vision of Critical Resistance

1 In "A Portrait of Foucault", in *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, Deleuze states that his book-length study of Foucault's thought, *Foucault*, ed. & trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, has attempted "a portrait of [Foucault's] philosophy. The lines or touches are of course mine, but they

succeed only if he himself comes to haunt the picture" (p. 103). See also the translator's note 1 (p. 198) to this interview for an explanation of the connotations of "the double" and also Deleuze's comments in "Breaking Things Open, Breaking Words Open", also in *Negotiations*, pp. 84, 88.

2 The corollary of this problem may be found in those impatient and hasty appropriations of Foucault's work that pay little regard for and risk violating the context in which they were originally generated. In a way, Foucault inadvertently encouraged such obliviously piecemeal and instrumental appropriations by suggesting that his work could be considered as a "toolkit" of ideas. Deleuze, himself a proponent of the "toolkit" idea, seems to suggest in "Breaking Things Open" that a less instrumental approach to a thinker's work would be one that reflected on what takes place in responding to someone's thinking as "not just a question of intellectual understanding or agreement, but of intensity, resonance, musical harmony. Good lectures, after all, are more like a concert than a sermon, like a soloist 'accompanied' by everyone else. And Foucault gave wonderful lectures" (p. 86).

3 Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 84. Deleuze explains why he considers his attributing a vitalism to Foucault's thought is justified on p. 91. See also the conclusion to the chapter entitled "Strategies or the Non-stratified: the Thought of the Outside (Power)" in Deleuze, *Foucault*, which not only suggests that Foucault's thought culminates in a vitalism, of life as the capacity to resist force, but also that this primary "life" force is itself something that comes from outside the reactive play of forces which takes life as its object (pp. 92–3). For a direct refutation of Deleuze's proposal see John S. Ransom, "Forget Vitalism: Foucault and *Lebensphilosophie*", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 33–47. Ransom's ultimately reductive argument (examined in greater detail later in this chapter), culminates in a reading of Foucault's introduction to Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn Fawsett, New York, Zone Books, 1989, pp 7–24, a text which he charges Deleuze has curiously overlooked considering it contains explicit critical references to vitalism.

4 Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 85. Deleuze's statement here is reminiscent of Nietzsche's injunction that one should "'give' style to one's character", see *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Random House, New York, 1974, section 290, p. 232.

5 Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 83. According to Deleuze the "logic of someone's thought is the whole set of crises through which it passes; it's more like a volcanic chain than a stable system close to equilibrium" (p. 84). See also "A portrait of Foucault", p. 104.

6 See: Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 92; "A Portrait of Foucault", p. 105; "Life As a Work of Art", in *Negotiations*, p. 97.

7 Deleuze, "Life As a Work of Art", p. 94.

8 Deleuze, "A Portrait of Foucault", p. 103.

9 Deleuze, "A Portrait of Foucault", pp. 104–6.

10 This comment occurs in an interview conducted by Gérard Raulet in the context of a series of questions regarding the modernity/postmodernity debate, see Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 2, *Aesthetics, Methodology and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, New Press, New York, 1998, p. 449.

11 Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism", p. 449.

12 See the prologue to Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1969, pp. 46–7.

13 See John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939*, Faber and Faber, London, 1992, which primarily assesses figures associated with English literary modernism (T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, and Virginia Woolf) but also a wider tradition in European writing encompassing Nietzsche and Ortega y Gasset. Carey claims that the English literary intelligentsia through the idiom of modernism, constructed a response to mass culture, which sought to "exclude these newly educated (or 'semi-educated') readers, and so to preserve the intellectual's seclusion from the 'mass'" (p. vii). Carey links this attitude to the view of Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and the other Frankfurt School theorists (excepting Walter Benjamin), "that mass culture and the mass media, as developed under capitalism, had degraded civilization in the twentieth century" (p. 43). Interestingly, Carey also extends this critique to the postwar French context of the new novel, where Roland Barthes' "dehumanisation of literature, shows other affinities with the old-style intellectuals" (p. 216). A similar case may be made for Foucault, no doubt, although his usage of the term "masses" during the 1970s has a positive rather than derogatory emphasis, see for example "Truth and Power" and "Intellectuals and Power" cited below.

14 These statements occur in the (written) response to the final question in an interview conducted

by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham et. al., Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 127.

15 Michel Foucault, "The Functions of Literature", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988, p. 309.

16 Foucault, "Functions of Literature", p. 309.

17 Foucault, "Functions of Literature", pp. 309–10.

18 The discussion was subsequently published in *Actuel*, in November 1971. As James Miller explains in his biography of Foucault, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, p. 198, *Actuel* was "the most freewheeling magazine of the French alternative press after 1968, a monthly larded with the cartoons of R. Crumb and full of news about every facet of the international counter-culture, from Maoism to LSD".

19 Michel Foucault, "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'", in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) & Sherry Simon, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1980, pp. 221–2.

20 Foucault, "Revolutionary Action", p. 231. See Allan Stoekl's contemptuous critical comments on this passage in *Politics, Writing, Mutilation: The Cases of Bataille, Blanchot, Roussel, Leiris, and Ponge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985, pp. 121–2, 142–3 nn. 34–5. Foucault's sense of heterotopias may be gathered from "Different Spaces", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, pp. 175–85.

21 John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 12. For an account which explicitly contests Rajchman's claim that Foucault's work in the 1970s constituted a radical break from his earlier work, see Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, pp. 191–2.

22 This problem shall be revisited in the final chapter with regard to Gianni Vattimo's criticisms of Foucault.

23 Maurice Blanchot, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, p. 67.

24 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power", in *Power/Knowledge*, p. 114. See also comments regarding avant-garde theories in "Two Lectures", in the same collection.

25 Blanchot, "Foucault", p. 83.

26 For a retrospective comparison of the different contexts of political struggle in Paris and Tunisia in 1968 see Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991, pp. 134–41.

27 Colin Gordon has observed about the writings and interviews collected under his editorship in *Knowledge/Power*, demonstrate not only the collaborative approach of Foucault's work in the 1970s, but also the extent to which it was "consciously provisional, often fragmentary and digressive, abounding in hypotheses and sparing in conclusions". Nevertheless, Gordon adds, his work still manifested its "own kind of rigour through an abiding concern, constant throughout Foucault's work, to question and understand the fluctuating possibilities, the necessary or contingent historical limits of intellectual discourse itself" (p. ix).

28 While Foucault's involvement with the GIP often meant that he was working closely with Maoists from the outlawed *Gauche Prolétarienne*, it would be wrong to conclude from the basis of this strategic alliance that Foucault had substantially absorbed something of their other political and revolutionary strategies. See, for instance, Foucault's debate with Maoists, "On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists", in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 1–36, where Foucault resists the notion that a popular court could somehow embody popular justice without subverting it and reintroducing the morality of the judicial system it sought to oppose. What is striking from the perspective of the late 1990s is the revolutionary enthusiasm (a reflection of the post-1968 French political climate) shared by both Foucault and his Maoist interlocutors and their palpable expectation that a process of forging a revolutionary alliance was a distinct possibility, at least in France. What is most startling in this discussion is Foucault's radical but politically naive contention that popular justice should be dispensed summarily by those involved in a dispute without recourse to any machinery of justice, such as the popular court envisaged by the Maoists. One wonders to what extent Foucault takes on the revolutionary language of his interlocutors in order to argue with them, but see also Foucault's discussion with Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, where revolutionary processes also figure in regard to their discussion of the broader GIP aspirations and where a number of differences with Maoist

strategies are raised, though apart from the opening point are made only obliquely. Compare these comments to Foucault's later, more sober, statements on revolution in the 1977 interview "Truth and Power", pp. 122–3, and in "What is Revolution?", in *The Politics of Truth*, eds Sylvère Lotringer & Lysa Hochroth, Semiotext(e), New York, 1997, pp. 83–100.

29 See David Macey's chapter on Foucault's involvement in the GIP in his biography, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, Hutchinson, London, 1993, pp. 257–89. Many of the documents relating to the group's activities and Foucault's involvement in particular have yet to surface in English translation and Macey's study therefore provides one of the best overall accounts of this material drawn from the original French sources.

30 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 209.

31 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 207.

32 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 206.

33 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 208.

34 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 214. See also Foucault's explanation of what he means by "specific intellectuals" in "Truth and Power", pp. 127–33.

35 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 210.

36 Foucault, "Revolutionary Action", p. 227. Foucault's deep suspicion of the motivations and outcomes of modern institutional reform was already a central feature of his thinking as early as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard, Tavistock Publications, London, 1967, see particularly chapter 9, "The Birth of the Asylum", pp. 241–78. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Penguin Books, London, 1979, Foucault extends this suspicion to an analysis of the prison system, demonstrating how from the outset this system was seen as a failure in terms of its correctional aims, requiring perpetual reform and refinement of its correctional operations and techniques and a proliferating discourse of reform as central to its modus operandi, see esp. pp. 234–5. For an overview of this deep suspicion of change in Foucault's writings prior to his late work on ethics ultimately attributed to Foucault's radical political commitments and the impact of Heidegger's comprehensive disdain of modernity, see Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998, pp. 169–74.

37 Foucault, "Revolutionary Action", p. 228.

38 Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power", p. 216.

39 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power", p. 130.

40 On this connection see Foucault's comments in *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 30–31, 268–71, and Paul Patton, "Of Power and Prisons: Working Paper on *Discipline and Punish*", in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, eds Meaghan Morris & Paul Patton, trans. Paul Foss & Meaghan Morris, Feral Publications, Sydney, 1979, pp. 109–112. Another outcome of Foucault's involvement in the prison struggles was the less well-known collaboration *I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister and My Brother . . . : A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, trans. Frank Jellinek, Pantheon Books, New York, 1975. The scholarly work for this collection, primary documents including Rivière's memoir, and secondary "notes" by the contributors, among them pieces by Foucault, emerged from the seminar Foucault conducted at the Collège de France during the years 1971–1973. Itself a fragment of that countermemory elaborated in greater detail in *Discipline and Punish*, this idiosyncratic book is also an attempt to allow one of the enigmatic combatants in an earlier instantiation of the nexus between power and knowledge in the penal system a belated opportunity to be heard and refuse the reductive expertise that sought to assign an identity to him. The case of Rivière is important also because it occurs at a moment of intense debate regarding the validity of criminological psychiatry and the introduction of the concept of monomania into the mechanisms of justice. The challenge the book throws out to contemporary psychiatrists, psychologists and criminologists, Foucault claims, is whether their discourse of delinquency is any more capable now than it was at the time of its inception in accounting for Rivière's enigmatic crime. See: Michel Foucault, "I, Pierre Rivière", in *Foucault Live: Interviews 1966–1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston, Semiotext(e), New York, 1989, pp. 131–2; "Prison Talk", in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 48–9; foreword to *I, Pierre Rivière*; course summary for the 1971–1972 seminar, "Penal Theories and Institutions", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Press, New York, 1997, pp. 20–21; "The Dangerous Individual", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, pp. 125–51.

41 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 24. Although Patton, in "Of Power and Prisons", p. 129, stressed that Foucault's analyses of power should not be viewed or judged in terms of a resolved and coherent general theory, it is possible to trace a continuity of concerns and strategic possibilities which do move in this direction even if they remain ultimately fragmentary.

42 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 26. A very interesting exchange on Foucault's usage of strategic, geographic, and spatial metaphors in his analyses of power–knowledge may be found in his interview with Marxist geographers for the journal *Hérodote*, "Questions on Geography", in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 63–77. Foucault's preference for spatial metaphors, which was already evident in *Histoire de la folie*, is an attempt to rectify the neglect of space in philosophy since Hegel, see for example his comments in "The Eye of Power", in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 149–50. For a discussion of the treatment of space in *Histoire de la folie* indicating how it prefigures later spatial concerns in books such as *Discipline and Punish*, see Stuart Elden, "Re-placing *Madness and Civilisation*: The Spaces of *Histoire de la folie*", Discussion Paper Series No. 97/8, Department of Government, Brunel University, Uxbridge.

43 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 27.

44 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 28.

45 One would either have to go chronologically backward to "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, pp. 369–91, or forward to Foucault's late work for clues in this regard. For the former option, see my discussion in the previous chapter; the later option is the primary concern of the remainder of this chapter. See also Patton's reading of "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in "Of Power and Prisons", pp. esp. 135–41, which while illuminating some aspects of Foucault's genealogical approach in *Discipline and Punish* does not explicitly address upon the performative dimension which interests me here.

46 As the course summary for Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France for 1972–1973 indicate, Foucault's exploration of panopticism was already under way during the final year of the GIP's activities, see "The Punitive Society", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 32–6. Foucault's comments in an interview conducted after a visit to Attica in the United States in April 1972 also point to his emerging interest in panopticism, "Michel Foucault on Attica: An Interview", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, esp. pp. 154–8.

47 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 193.

48 Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, and Power", in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 239. Foucault's usage of police signifies something far broader than its common usage suggests today, seeking to recapture the significance it had when it emerged in the eighteenth century as "a program of government rationality" (p. 241). It is interesting that this interview conducted in 1982 makes only one brief reference to panopticism, reflecting a shift in Foucault's interests that shall be taken up shortly.

49 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 198.

50 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 200.

51 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 203.

52 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 202.

53 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 204.

54 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 205.

55 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 208–9.

56 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 216.

57 Foucault, "Truth and Power", p. 119.

58 See Foucault's comments in "The Eye of Power", p. 157.

59 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 34.

60 Edward Said, a critic who has himself written historical analyses inspired by *Discipline and Punish*, has discussed the problem of Foucault's theory of power in its tendency to over-generalize conclusions from otherwise sound specific analyses, see *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, pp. 244–5. From another perspective, see Martin Jay's acute exploration of the "anti-ocular counter-enlightenment" culminating in recent French thought, "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in the Twentieth-century French Thought", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 175–204, and also his book-length study, including a revised version of this essay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994. Regarding Foucault, Jay demonstrates how Foucault's work developed an antivisual discourse already present in French thought which he himself never acknowledged or problematized. Foucault's study of the panopticon figures as the high-point of this unexamined tendency in his own work, which as Jay seems to argue, blinded him to other possibilities of sight and to his own limited horizon within this antivisual discourse.

61 Foucault, "Two Lectures", p. 78.

62 Foucault, "Two Lectures", p. 81.

63 Foucault, "Two Lectures", p. 83.

64 Foucault, "Two Lectures", p. 86.

65 Michel Foucault, "Power and Strategies", in *Power/Knowledge*, p. 138. This account of resistance largely repeats the formulation Foucault gives in greater detail in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, London, 1990, esp. pp. 95–6.

66 Foucault, "Power and Strategies", p. 142.

67 This observation occurs in Stoekl's hostile analysis of the short-circuiting logic in Foucault's statements about universal and specific intellectuals in *Agonies of the Intellectual*, pp. 194–7. A more balanced critical approach which also highlights the vicious circularity of Foucault's theory of power may be found in Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, esp. pp. 244–7.

68 See Foucault's comments on criticism, reform and transformation in the 1981 interview "Practicing Criticism", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, pp. 154–6, where the impression of a short-circuiting logic in his radical critique of power is no longer present.

69 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 290, p. 232. On the issue of Foucault's introduction of self-creation and self-legislation into his work, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, "The Significance of Michel Foucault's Reading of Nietzsche: Power, the Subject, and Political Theory", in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter R. Sedgewick, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, pp. 26–7.

70 Michel Foucault, "The Concern for Truth", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, pp. 255–6.

71 See the concluding comments in R. James Goldstein's translator's introduction to *Remarks on Marx*, pp. 13–14.

72 See Foucault's discussion with Trombadori in *Remarks on Marx*, pp. 148–50.

73 Foucault, "The Eye of Power", pp. 148 and 155, see also "Clarifications on the Question of Power", in *Foucault Live*, pp. 183–4.

74 Foucault, "The Eye of Power", p. 164.

75 It is interesting to note how Foucault's view of the power relations as warfare, even after he begins to question its vocabulary, is often connected to his commitment to produce an analysis of power that can distinguish itself from Hegelian–Marxist models, see for example "Body/Power" and "Truth and Power", in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 56, 114–15. This vocabulary of power relations as warfare remained unquestioned up until the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, see p. 93.

76 Michel Foucault, "Society Must be Defended", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 59–65. In the two years following this lecture series Foucault's interviews often reconfirm this questioning of the problematic model of warfare for politics without being able to suggest an alternative, see: Foucault, "Truth and Power", p. 123; "The Eye of Power", p. 164; "The End of the Monarchy of Sex", in *Foucault Live*, pp. 53–4,

77 Foucault, "Two Lectures", p. 92. Foucault here also singles out the notion of "repression" as equally problematic, although his analysis of power relations as productive had already been contesting the trope of repression. Curiously, the suggestion here seems to be that there is too strong a connection between power relations as war and the notion of repression.

78 See the course summary for 1977–1978, "The Birth of Biopolitics", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, esp. p. 77.

79 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 219.

80 For a general overview of the emergence of these new concerns leading up to Foucault's exploration of Greek ascetic practices, see the course summaries for 1976–1979, "Security, Territory, and Population", "On the Government of the Living", and "Subjectivity and Truth", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 67–92. For a discussion of governmentality in relation to critique, see "What is Critique?", in *The Politics of Truth*, pp. 23–61. Foucault's modified analysis of space to accommodate practices of freedom is evident in "Space, Knowledge, Power", in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 239–56. Foucault raises the question of the desirability of revolution as the possibility of politics in "Monarchy of Sex", pp. 151–2, 155, and in greater detail in "What is Revolution?", in *The Politics of Truth*, pp. 83–100. In elaborating these new concerns Foucault often makes reference to the Enlightenment tradition of critique as the ever renewed questioning of our actuality, in particular to Kant's answer to the question "*Was ist Aufklärung?*" which appeared in the *Berlinischer Monatschrifte* in 1784, an English translation of which is included in *The Politics of Truth*, pp. 7–20 (Foucault's answer to this question, which was published in 1984, may also be found in this collection).

81 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 94. See also Deleuze's statements regarding this problem in "Breaking Things Open", p. 92, "Life as a Work of Art", p. 98, "A Portrait of Michel Foucault", pp. 109–10.

82 Michel Foucault, "The Life of Infamous Men", in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, p. 80. See Deleuze's comments in "A Portrait of Foucault", pp. 108–10, where he suggests that this piece

is the expression of a crisis in Foucault's life and thought. Deleuze is obviously very attached to this piece by Foucault and does not hesitate to call it a masterpiece and suggests that the idea of the "infamous man" is on a par with Nietzsche's "last man". He also notes how the "infamous man", in its designation of ordinary life is the complete opposite of Batailles's conception of infamy as excess. See: Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", pp. 89–90; "A Portrait of Foucault", p. 108; *Foucault*, p. 145 n. 3.

83 Foucault, "Infamous Men", p. 80.

84 Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 92.

85 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 101. See also "Breaking Things Open", p. 91, and Foucault's own comments on the transition to taking up this third dimension that was ever-present but never articulated in his work, "The Return of Morality", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, p. 243.

86 Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 106.

87 Deleuze, "Breaking Things Open", p. 92.

88 Deleuze, "A Portrait of Foucault", p. 113.

89 See Paul Patton's first article on this problem, "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom", *Political Studies*, vol. XXXVII, no. 2, pp. 260–76.

90 See Foucault, "The Subject and Power", p. 221. It is interesting that in his new characterisation of the power relationship in terms of governmentality, Foucault refers not to panopticism and the disciplinary society but to the secularisation of a pastoral power in the formation of modern Western states which was subsequently distributed throughout the social body, see pp. 213–16.

91 Paul Patton, "Foucault's Subject of Power", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage, London, 1998, p. 67.

92 Patton, "Foucault's Subject", pp. 65–6.

93 See Patton, "Foucault's Subject", pp. 67–9, and Foucault, "The Subject and Power", pp. 216–26.

94 Patton, "Foucault's Subject", p. 70.

95 Patton, "Foucault's Subject", pp. 75–6.

CHAPTER VI Aesthetic Existence as Self-Care

1 Maurice Blanchot, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, p. 95. A little further on, however, Blanchot does indeed make a tentative speculation on Foucault's transition to the study of antiquity, explaining that he "can't help thinking that with the vehement criticism aroused by *The History of Sexuality*, a kind of mind-hunt (or even manhunt) which followed its publication, and perhaps a personal experience I can only guess at, by which I believe Foucault was struck without then fully knowing what it meant (a strong body that stops being so, a serious illness that he barely anticipated, ultimately the approach of death that opened him up not to anguish but to a new and surprising serenity), his relation to time and writing was profoundly modified" (pp. 107–8).

2 See David M. Halperin's critical essay in *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, primarily on Miller's invocation of certain unstated (almost unconscious) background assumptions in his biographical study of Foucault's intellectual life but also addressing wider problems of the biographical form.

3 James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, p. 284.

4 See the contributions to a symposium on Miller's biography published *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 30–99, including essays by David Halperin, Alasdair McIntyre, Richard Rorty, and James Miller's own responses to their criticisms. Further criticisms may be found in: Jeremy R. Carrette (ed.), "Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh", in *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, esp. pp. 13–32; Martin Jay, "The Limits of Limit-Experience: Bataille and Foucault", in *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1998, esp. pp. 67–70. Alexander Nehamas has been one of the few scholars to defend Miller's approach if not the specific connections he draws, in "Subject and Abject: The Examined Life of Michel Foucault", *New Republic*, 15 February 1994, esp. p. 35, and *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998, esp. pp. 178–9.

5 See the previous chapter for my own reconstruction of the largely theoretical reasons that set the scene for this change.

6 Blanchot, "Foucault", p. 108.

7 This perhaps suggests that the first volume of the history of sexuality series, also written in the period leading up to this date, has more in common with the former books than with the latter ones.

8 Michel Foucault, "The Return of Morality", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 242–3.

9 Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. by Séan Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p. 94. See also Deleuze's statements regarding this problem in "Breaking Things Open", "Life as a Work of Art", "A Portrait of Michel Foucault", all to be found in *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp. 92, 98, 109–110.

10 Michel Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth", in *The Politics of Truth*, eds Sylvère Lotringer & Lysa Hochroth, Semiotext(e), New York, 1997, pp. 180–81. This paper was delivered as a lecture at Dartmouth College on 17 November 1980, and in a slightly different version for the Howison Lectures at Berkeley California on 20 October 1980. See also Foucault's course summaries for his lectures at the Collège de France in the years 1980–1982 for the emerging articulations of these new research concerns, "Subjectivity and Truth" and "The Hermeneutic of the Subject", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Press, New York, 1997, pp. 87–106.

11 See Melissa A. Orlie, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997, which explores Foucault's thinking of power in *Discipline and Power* within the comparative context of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Orlie observes rightly that although Foucault wanted to write about power without recourse to its negative characterization as domination, his book ends up doing so (see esp. p. 49).

12 Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham et. al., Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 193. Foucault states here that he is perfectly aware "that I have never written anything but fictions" but immediately stresses that this should not be taken to mean "that truth is therefore absent", as it is possible "for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth, and for bringing it about that a true discourse engenders or 'manufactures' something that does not as yet exist, that is, 'fictions' it. One 'fictions' history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one 'fictions' a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth". Some interesting comments regarding exaggeration in Foucault's "fiction" see James Johnson, "Communication, Criticism, and the Postmodern Consensus: An Unfashionable Interpretation of Michel Foucault", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 4, esp. p. 574. For an attempt to recollect a more general significance of the fictive in Foucault's work see Raymond Bellour, "Towards Fiction", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992, pp. 148–56.

13 Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein & James Cascaito, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991, pp. 29–30. Revisiting his roots, Foucault also states in this interview that his pursuit of the experience-book was a way of leaving behind his training in traditional philosophy. The authors who enabled him to approach philosophy in this nonphilosophical way were Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, and Pierre Klossowski.

14 Foucault, *Remarks on Marx*, p. 42. In a later interview conducted under the mask of anonymity, "The Masked Philosopher", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, Foucault would enthusiastically recall the transformations that recent history had witnessed, in displacing and transforming "frameworks of thinking", in the alteration of "received values", in the willingness "to become other than what one is". When seen in this way, "the last thirty years or so have been a period of intense philosophical activity. The interaction between analysis, research, 'learned' or 'theoretical' criticism, and changes in behavior, in people's real conduct, their way of being, their relation to themselves and to others has been constant and considerable" (p. 327).

15 Michel Foucault, "Christianity and Confession", in *The Politics of Truth*, p. 199.

16 Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview", in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 375.

17 See Nehamas, *Art of Living*, which traces the philosophical concern for self-transformation back to Socrates' enigmatic project, an example of self-transformation which has provoked others to undertake their own project of self-transformation. Nevertheless, it has also appeared in other problematizations of the self's relationship to itself spread over diverse periods and places, in relation to a wide variety of specific circumstances, and often in contexts other than the

philosopher's project of self-transformation. Regarding this theme see vols 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1986, and *The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, London, 1990.

18 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, eds Arnold I. Davidson & Michael Chase (trans.), Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p. 272. On the impact of Pierre Hadot's thinking on ancient philosophy as a way of life on Foucault's late researches, see Arnold I. Davidson, "Introductory Remarks to Pierre Hadot", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 200–202. Hadot's article in this collection, "Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy", pp. 203–24, gives a good sense of his interpretation of the ancients, but see also *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, in particular the beginning of chapter 7 which briefly discusses his understanding of how Foucault has appropriated his work (p. 206), and the whole of chapter 11 which contrasts philosophy as a way of life with the pursuit of philosophy as an academic exercise (pp. 264–76).

19 Foucault's qualified acknowledgment of this point posed to him by Jürgen Habermas is discussed in "Space, Knowledge, and Power", in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 248–9.

20 See Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Politics of Truth*, pp. 101–34.

21 Beginning with Descartes's self-reflexive "I think, therefore I am", examples of other self-reflexive configurations are to be found in Hegel's absolute subject, Kant's autonomous moral agent, Freud's dynamic model of the psyche. Variations on these configurations have even made their way into the dominant political ideologies of our time. The liberal conception of a rational and autonomous agent, an individual, who exists in a society of other equal agents each of which freely and rationally choose his/her own actions, alone or in concert with others, toward the fulfilment of specific goals. Or in the socialist configuration, where collective agents, classes, embody specific interests and move individuals collectively toward certain collective ends. On a higher level of abstraction there is the humanist configuration which places the human agent, either in collective or individual form, at the center of determinations concerning human actions and meaning. See Foucault's comments in "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 278–80.

22 Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, p. 88.

23 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 28.

24 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 28.

25 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 28.

26 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, pp. 29–30.

27 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 30.

28 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 30.

29 Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 30. Foucault does not explicitly draw this contrast here but it seems to me implicit in his discussion, particularly in his qualification regarding viewing all Christian moralities as instances of the strong codification of morality, where he nonetheless argues that "it may not be wrong to think that the organisation of the penitential system at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and its development up to the eve of the Reformation, brought about a very strong 'codification'—of the moral experience. It was against this codification that many spiritual movements reacted before the Reformation".

30 Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics", p. 254.

31 In a very late interview Foucault declared that he found the ancients neither admirable nor exemplary in their particular styles of existence, and the only judgement he is willing to make about ancient practices as a whole is to highlight how the ancients "immediately stumbled upon what I consider to be the contradiction of the morality of antiquity between the relentless search for a certain style of existence on the one hand and the effort to make it available to all on the other". With ironic laughter, Foucault observes that to him the whole of antiquity seems to have been a "profound error", see Foucault, "The Return of Morality", p. 244.

32 Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and His Ethics", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, p. 231.

33 See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1974, p.328.

34 See Melissa A. Orlie's attempt to explicate the complex ethico–political terrain which she believes both Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt provide the crucial insights for addressing, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*.

35 Rather than being an argument against this point of view, I think the twentieth century's experiment with a globalization of human rights has highlighted just how impossible it is to set up universalist rights devoid of ethical interpretation on the one hand and instrumentalization on the other.

36 Veyne, "Final Foucault", p. 231.

[37] Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics", pp. 255–6.
[38] Michel Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, pp. 50–51.
[39] Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence", p. 49.
[40] Foucault, *Care of the Self*, pp. 52–3.
[41] Foucault, *Care of the Self*, pp. 64–5.
[42] Arnold I. Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought", in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p. 123.
[43] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 206. Hadot notes here his expectation, foiled by Foucault's untimely death, that such "differences could have provided the substance for a dialogue between us".
[44] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 208. By way of clarification, I think it needs to be noted that Foucault's proposal for an aesthetics of existence is nonuniversalist in two interrelated senses. Firstly, in the sense that it does not recommend itself universally to all people on the basis of some kind of necessity. Secondly, it does not direct those who may choose to take up there own aesthetics of existence toward the specific achievement of some kind of universal perspective.
[45] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 211.
[46] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 211. The reference to "physics" as a spiritual exercise refers to the broader features of Hadot's interpretative project. Spiritual exercises form a part of each of the three domains of philosophical teaching: ethics, physics, logic. Each domain is not only theoretical, but is applied through practices or exercises which constitute one's lived experience. See Arnold I. Davidson's introduction to Hadot's book, "Introduction: Pierre Hadot and the Spiritual Phenomenon of Ancient Philosophy", p. 24.
[47] Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics", p. 121. Endnote 23 to this article furnishes an interesting aside. Here Davidson seems to acknowledge that Hadot's charge of dandyism perhaps does not take into account the kind of coupling of ascetics and aesthetics Foucault elaborates in "What is Enlightenment?", but declines entering into any detailed discussion of the matter. As Michael Janover has noted regarding Foucault's reference to Baudelaire's *dandysme* in this essay, in The Subject of Foucault", in *Foucault: The Legacy*, Clare O'Farrell, Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1997, that for the "poet himself, the dandy is only partially the stoic workman upon his own self, dandies are also characterised by a degree of self-absorption that seems foreign to Foucault's modernist ethos" (p. 223). In this endnote, Davidson also follows Hadot in acknowledging the importance of the relationship with the present in Foucault's historical approach and that what is at stake is not just differences of interpretation (regarding which, Davidson confirms, Hadot's is the historically more accurate or precise version), but fundamental philosophical choices and preferences. While both Davidson and Hadot are content with acknowledging this point, they do not seem to reflect any further on its implications, which is one of the very problems Foucault's ethics seems to be addressing. That is, how to live in the absence of a universal morality, or at the very minimum, how to think morally when no possible consensus is available (and furthermore, no consensus is available as to how we could even begin to build such a consensus) to approach moral and ethical problems from a universalist perspective. Davidson's and Hadot's statements seek to promote the possibility of a universalist perspective while their performative enunciation confirms even more the urgency of Foucault's nonuniversalist approach. The problem could of course be resolved if they simply declared Foucault's philosophical preferences to be wrong, something they seem unwilling to do.
[48] Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics", p. 127.
[49] Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics", p. 128.
[50] Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics", p. 122.
[51] Foucault deals with this point in "The Return of Morality", pp. 251–2.
[52] See Davidson's comments, "Ethics as Ascetics", p. 126.
[53] In this regard, it strikes me that Foucault echoes Socrates in the *Apology*, professing a limited human wisdom which consisted largely of a process of negation, a wisdom of just how ignorant humans are of their ignorance.
[54] This problem will be approached from another angle in the next chapter which deals with the "Augustinian" retrieval of the modern identity undertaken by Charles Taylor. While there are some resemblances between the perspective taken up by Taylor and the proposals advanced by Hadot and Davidson for looking beyond the self for moral sources, Taylor's picture of the modern identity is far more pluralistic in its approach and explicitly distances itself not only from Foucault's spiritual position but also of the kind of spiritual position defended by one of Foucault's principle critics, Jürgen Habermas.

55 This essay presents a variation on themes already raised in a number of lectures all more or less taking their cue from Kant's "*Was ist Aufklärung?*". These lectures, "What is Critique?", "What is Revolution?", in addition to Foucault's "What is Enlightenment?", may now be found together in the collection, *The Politics of Truth*.

56 Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 119–21. Foucault also refers here to what calls Enlightenment "blackmail" and presents a possibility for negotiating this impasse. The blackmail is in the form of an either/or. Either you take your place within the Enlightenment tradition of rationalism and accept everything that it has traditionally stood for, or you criticize it, take your place outside it and thereby repudiate it totally. Arguments have been raised for affirming or condemning both of these alternatives. Foucault's suggestion is to accept some degree of historical determinism, whereby we cannot but help being products of Enlightenment rationality, but with the aim of orienting "toward the 'contemporary limits of the necessary,' that is, toward what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects".

57 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 103–5, and "What is Revolution?", pp. 84–9.

58 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 105.

59 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 106.

60 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 107–8.

61 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 111. As Foucault acknowledges in the earlier lecture, "What is Critique?", p. 34, this critical attitude is distinct from the kind of critique Kant will develop in regard to knowledge.

62 John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 92.

63 Rajchman, *Foucault*, p. 93.

64 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 117–18.

65 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 118.

66 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 119.

67 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 124–5. In "The Subject and Power", afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 213, Foucault draws significant parallels in terms of the ongoing struggles to create new forms of subjectivity in the present and the various struggles which occurred in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries that culminated in the Reformation. The Reformation thus serves as a recent example of the struggle over the form of subjectivation, and "should be analysed as a great crisis of the Western experience of subjectivity and a revolt against the kind of religious and more power which gave form, during the Middle Ages, to this subjectivity". What needs to be emphasized is the revolutionary transformation which occurred at this time in response to the "need to take a direct part in spiritual life, in the work of salvation, in the truth which lies in the Book—all that was a struggle for a new subjectivity".

68 Foucault, "Politics and Ethics", pp. 375–6. On the political positions assigned to Foucault see also "Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations: An Interview with Michel Foucault", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 113–14. The positions Foucault cites here to have been used to identify him politically make for an amusing melange: "anarchist, leftist, ostentatious or disguised Marxist, nihilist, explicit or secret anti-Marxist, technocrat in the service of Gaullism, new liberal . . .".

69 Foucault, "Politics and Ethics", p. 379.

70 Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations", p. 114.

71 Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations", pp. 114–15. The specific point of reference here is Richard Rorty's criticism regarding Foucault's researches failing to situate themselves within a community of interests "whose consensus, whose values, whose traditions constitute the framework for a thought and define the conditions in which it can be validated" (p. 114).

72 Foucault, "What is Revolution?", p. 98.

73 Foucault, "What is Revolution?", p. 99.

74 Orlie, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, p. 186.

75 Foucault, "What is Revolution?", pp. 99–100. According to Foucault, it was Kant who founded both of these modern philosophical approaches, the analytic of truth being the outcome of his canonic critical works, the questioning of actuality the outcome of his more marginal writings on the question of Enlightenment and revolution which are the principle focus of Foucault's lecture. On this issue see also the earlier lecture, "What is Critique?", pp. 32–61.

76 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 132.

77 Veyne, "Final Foucault", p. 231.

78 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 126.

79 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 126.

80 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", pp. 126–7.

81 Richard Wolin, "Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism", *Telos*, no. 67, Spring 1986, p. 85. For a thoughtful examination of the criticisms levelled by Wolin and other commentators at Foucault's aestheticism, see Jane Bennett, "'How Is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?': Foucault, Schiller, and the Aestheticisation of Ethics", *Political Theory*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 653–72.

82 Richard Wolin, "Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism", p. 85.

83 As Wolin's discussion of Nietzsche and Heidegger in this article indicates, a fairly close line is drawn between the proponents of an aestheticized philosophy or philosophical projects of self-creation and the Nazi experiment, "Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism", pp. 73–6. Wolin's attempts to associate Foucault's project with the political debacle of Heidegger's support for the myth of National Socialism is imprudent in view of the number of times Foucault himself sought to counter fascism. See for example his preface to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Viking Press, New York, 1977, pp. xi–xiv, which he celebrates as "the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time", an ethics which he characterizes as "an *Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life*" (p. xiii). Some of the themes explored briefly in this preface in terms of contemporary life and the resistance to fascistic tendencies in thought also emerge in greater detail in Foucault's historical analysis of Nazi bio-politics, in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, London, 1990, esp. pp. 149–50.

84 See James Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking", in *The Final Foucault*, eds James Bernauer & David Rasmussen, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1988, p. 47. In addition to the comments made by Wolin which I have cited above, Bernauer refers explicitly to the comments made in the same issue of *Telos* by Maria Daraki, whose inquisition into Foucault's project discovers something analogous to demonic possession: "It is not a question of 'errors' of scholarship. Foucault is a hard-working and well-informed writer. It is, rather, a question of this tragic blindness the Greeks call *Ate* which takes hold of a man like a *daimon*. Foucault's *daimon* is a fantasm of dominating narcissism which demands the sacrifice of all facts. Is for this *daimon* that Foucault patiently gathers facts which give his analysis an aura of seriousness, but which incline towards the absurd wherever the analysis is judged", see Maria Daraki, "Michel Foucault's Journey to Greece", *Telos*, no. 67, Spring 1986, p. 105. Another example of this kind of polemical attack may be found in Michael Walzer's chapter on Foucault in *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, Basic Books, New York, 1988. Walzer, who is ultimately intent on extracting and judging the political theory he insists is lurking in Foucault's work, dismisses Foucault's constantly shifting and self-consciously radical political positions as "infantile leftism", in the sense that Foucault's political positions were "less an endorsement than an outrunning of the most radical argument in any political struggle" (p. 192). Although he did not necessarily agree with Foucault's views, Jürgen Habermas saw some sort of "maturity" in Foucault's later work. See Jurgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*", in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, ed. & trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 173–9. On the links between maturity and the attitude of the Enlightenment see also Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, "What Is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What Is Enlightenment?'", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 109–22. The theme of maturity is also discussed by Mark Poster, "Foucault and the Problem of Self-Constitution", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, eds John Caputo & Mark Yount, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1993, esp. pp. 70–74. Finally, it is worth noting that Foucault rarely seemed to engage in polemics (apart from his famous dispute with Jacques Derrida, regarding which see chapter 4 of this thesis), preferring the discussion of ideas to public attacks on personality. This very issue is the first topic of discussion in Foucault's 1984 interview with Paul Rabinow, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations", pp. 111–13.

85 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", p. 48.

86 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", esp. pp. 67–70. In a similar vein, John Caputo, "On Not Knowing Who We Are: Madness, Hermeneutics, and the Night of Truth in Foucault", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, has argued Foucault transformed his "tragic hermeneutics", as Caputo calls the movement of Foucault's early thought to uncover a poetic madness, into a "hermeneutics of refusal" (pp. 233–4). According to Caputo, Foucault maintains "an entirely negative idea of the individual", and "opposes all 'cataphatic' discourse about the individual, discourse that tries to say what the individual is or should be, and he does so in the name of a kind of 'apophatic'

discourse, of preserving a purely apophatic freedom" (p. 251). For Caputo, Foucault's understanding of freedom "is a kind of irrepressibility, a refusal to contract into an identity a continually twisting loose from the historical forms of life by which it is always already shaped. Freedom is not a nature or essence but a lack of nature or essence, a capacity for novelty and innovation". Rather than Bernauer's "transcendence" for describing the experience of Foucault's freedom, Caputo suggests that this term which "is in keeping with Bernauer's guiding motif of Foucault's 'negative theology' (God transcends whatever we say about God)" is perhaps "rather a 'high' theology for Foucault" and instead proposes that what is captured by Foucault's "more modest freedom" comes "from below" as "a refusal, a resistance, a certain stepping back, not so much a *trans*cendence, let us say, as a *re*scendence" (p. 255). For a contesting point of view which sees in Foucault's work a negative anthropology rather than a resemblance to negative theology, and consequently a more troubled relationship to the humanism he sought to distance himself from, see Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, esp. pp. 189–90.

87 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", pp. 66–7. Bernauer here relies on a rather liberal interpretation of some comments once made in a 1967 interview with P. Caruso, "Who Are You, Professor Foucault?", in *Religion and Culture*, p. 98.

88 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", p. 70. For the comments on the Iranian revolution see Michel Foucault, "Is it Useless to Revolt?", in *Religion and Culture*, pp. 131–4.

89 Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", p. 69.

90 Bernauer does rely here to some extent on some of Foucault's early work which often made reference to both Bataille and Blanchot, see "Ecstatic Thinking", pp. 67–70. Foucault's interest in transgressive experience in Bataille, for instance, does make reference to violent irruptions and affects which erase the boundaries of the self and which may have similarities to religious ecstasies but not to their goal of penance, renunciation, or piety. In any case, the emphasis on ascetics in Foucault's late work seems to be more concerned with a different, more modulated and sustained, intensification of experience, even if does not explicitly rule out the kind of experience he was interested in with his earlier writings. See Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression", and my discussion of this phase of Foucault's thinking with regard to the possibility of poetic madness in chapter 4.

91 See Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", pp. 70–71. For a convincing depiction of Nietzsche's Übermensch ethics is these terms see Peter Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995.

92 See Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", pp. 73.

93 See Bernauer, "Ecstatic Thinking", pp. 75.

94 In a later essay, Bernauer drops the references to "Foucaultian spirituality" and "mysticism" to focus on Foucault's late work as developing an ethics for thinking beyond the modern political constellation as the struggle of life versus death, "Beyond Life and Death: On Foucault's Post-Auschwitz Ethic", in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, esp. pp. 268–75. More recently, however, Bernauer has largely repeated the religious and spiritual themes delivered in "Ecstatic Thinking" in his appreciation of Foucault for a foreword, "Cry of Spirit", to a collection of interviews and writings by Foucault engaging with spirituality and religion, *Religion and Culture*, pp. xi–xvii. While Bernauer and Carrette are eager to employ Foucault's late work on Christianity for contemporary studies of religion and spirituality and to revise our understanding of the relationship of his life-work for and to these domains, it seems that some care needs to be taken when imputing directly religious and concerns to his work. Without wishing to promote a policing of scholarship, some kind of demarcation needs to be maintained between what can actually be detected in Foucault's work and what his work may inspire others to do or how they may wish to apply his work further. It is not only with regard to spiritual and religious issues that there has been a danger of claiming Foucault was engaged in a project which a closer examination of his texts would indicate was not the case. In my opinion, Carrette's introductory essay to this volume, "Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh", pp. 1–47, is more careful in this regard than Bernauer's more speculative and enthusiastic piece.

95 Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics", p. 255.

96 Blanchot, "Foucault", p. 108. Blanchot's concluding comments to his appraisal of Foucault are as difficult to elucidate as he claims Foucault's comment to Rabinow and Dreyfus to be, and perhaps suggests something of Blanchot's own philosophical concerns in the context of his complex relation to himself and to his dead "friend". See Jacques Derrida's nuanced reading of this enigmatic passage, in *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins, Verso, London, 1997, pp. 299–302.

[97] This is the approach Nehamas took to Nietzsche in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985.

[98] See Nehamas, *Art of Living*, for a discussion of how Plato's Socrates initiates not only philosophy as the art of living, "combining, in its various versions, life with discourse, doing with writing", but also philosophy as a purely intellectual or theoretical discipline which has come to dominate the practice of philosophy in our own time (pp. 184–5).

[99] Nehemas's reading relies primarily on Foucault's late lectures at the Collège de France on Socrates and the practice of *parrhêsia* he inaugurated in philosophy. These lectures are currently unavailable in English translation, but an earlier series of lectures touching on Socratic *parrhêsia* delivered in English at the University of California at Berkeley in the Fall Term of 1983 are readily available for consultation in an unofficial transcript on the internet at <http://perso.club-internet.fr/kmille/discours.htm>. The lectures are also available in photocopy and audiotapes, BdS n° D213, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University, 1985. These lectures, given as part of a seminar entitled "Discourse and Truth", raise the main connections that Nehamas focuses on, Socrates's care of the self and his courageous status as a truth-teller.

[100] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 12. As Nehamas explains here, the kind of irony encountered in Socrates' words does not consist in their being the contrary of what they apparently mean, but only something different from that meaning, which renders them all the more ambiguous.

[101] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, pp. 10–11.

[102] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 184.

[103] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 185.

[104] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, pp. 168–9.

[105] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 183.

[106] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 185.

[107] Nehamas, *Art of Living*, p. 186.

[108] Perhaps the most telling expression of this problematic of dissonance for an aestheticized existence is the impossible task of affirming eternal recurrence which I discuss at length in a recent article, "Eternal Return as *Désœuvrement*: Self and Writing", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, no. 14, Autumn 1997, pp. 46–63.

[109] Nehamas's contention is that Nietzsche had to distance himself from Socrates in order to appear not as an imitator but as an original. While Nietzsche tends to exhibit a nostalgia for the pre-Socratics, Foucault suggests a parallel between our modernity and late antiquity to suggest the possible relevance of a care of the self for us and an asceticism that Nietzsche did not see in antiquity.

[110] Barry Smart, "Foucault, Levinas and the Subject of Responsibility", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 78–92.

[111] Smart, "Subject of Responsibility", p. 85. Scholarly opinion is divided on this issue of whether Foucault's version of self-creation is compatible with even a minimal notion of solidarity with others. See for example chapter 4 in David R. Hiley, *Philosophy in Question: Essays on a Pyrrhonian Theme*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, especially the concluding section pp. 110–14. In contrast, see Melissa A. Orlie's approach to Foucault in conjunction with insights drawn from Hannah Arendt's regarding collective political action, in *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, esp. pp. 170–98.

[112] Smart, "Subject of Responsibility", p. 87. Smart's citation here is from Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, Dusquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1987, p. 111.

[113] See Foucault's statements in the late interview, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 281–301. The following formulations are especially pertinent: "Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection" (p. 284); "A city in which everybody took proper care of himself would be a city that functioned well and found in this the ethical principle of this permanence. But I don't think we can say that the Greek who cares for himself must first care for others. To my mind, this view only came later. *Care for others should not be put before care of oneself. The care of the self is ethically prior in that the relationship with oneself is ontologically prior*" (p. 287, emphasis added).

[114] Smart, "Subject of Responsibility", pp. 89–90.

[115] As examples of the claims made regarding the influence of Foucault's ideas, see Michael André Bernstein, "Street-Foucault", in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, vol. VII, ed. Barry Smart, Routledge, London, 1995, who has spoken enthusiastically about what he calls "Street-Foucaultianism". This term attempts to address seriously what some would simply dismiss as the vogue or "trendiness" of Foucault's ideas for a wider audience. It therefore refers to the sphere of

influence beyond the academy, beyond "any organisational bases, institutional sanctions, or view to professional self-improvement". It is this wider appeal which Bernstein believes to be "as clear an index of [Foucault's] capacity to continue troubling our certain ties as do the regular appeals to his authority amidst the learned articles of the past decade" (pp. 276–7). Another view of the oppositional value of Foucault's work is elaborated by David M. Halperin in his essay "The Queer Politics of Michel Foucault" which appears in his *Saint Foucault*. Halperin suggests that even though Foucault's work helped to bring about new bodies of theory, such as the gay and lesbian perspectives of "queer theory", with a new cultural politics, a "queer culture", his teaching would be lost if it simply gave rise to an institutionalized or commodified practice and neglected to nurture the oppositional value of his thought. Halperin believes that "Foucault's response to that possibility was to refuse to identify any actually existing social group as a political vanguard and, instead, to search constantly for new practices, techniques, and modes of analysis that might, in the current historical situation, enlarge the possibilities for ongoing personal and political transformation. Queer politics may, by now, have outlived its political usefulness, but if its efficacy and its productive political life can indeed still be renewed and extended, the first step in this procedure will be to try and preserve the function of queer identity as an empty placeholder for an identity that is still in progress and has as yet to be fully realised, to conceptualise queer identity as an identity in a state of becoming rather than as the referent for an actually existing form of life" (pp. 112–13).

116 Michel Foucault, "The Minimalist Self", in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988, p. 14.

PART THREE TAYLOR AND VATTIMO: HERMENEUTICS OF MODERN LIFE

CHAPTER VII The Moral Sources of the Modern Identity

1 See Charles Taylor's comments regarding the longevity of this interest of his in the preface to *Philosophical Arguments*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995, p. vii. Brief overviews of Taylor's itinerary may be found in Jeremy Rayner, "Therapy for an Imaginary Invalid: Charles Taylor and the Malaise of Modernity", *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 3, esp. pp. 147–9, and John Horton, "Charles Taylor: Selfhood, Community and Democracy", in *Liberal Democracy and its Critics: Perspectives in Contemporary Political Thought*, eds April Carter and Geoffrey Stokes, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, esp. pp. 155–9.

2 Charles Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology", in *Philosophical Arguments*, p. 3.

3 Taylor stresses that the reversal Descartes introduced with regard to the ancients and their approach to rationality and epistemic certitude comes through the introduction of inwardness, see "Epistemology", pp. 3–5, and with regard to the mediation of neo-Stoicism and St Augustine in this reversal see "Inwardness and the Culture of Modernity", in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds Axel Honneth et. al., MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, pp. 95–9, 103–5.

4 For Taylor, Descartes's initiation of this self-reflexive turn in regard to the epistemological subject was developed further by both Locke and Hume.

5 Taylor, "Epistemology", p. 7.

6 In this article Taylor relies principally on the work of Hegel, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and the later Wittgenstein.

7 Taylor, "Epistemology", p. 14.

8 Taylor, "Epistemology", p. 14. This is the reason Taylor insists on distinguishing his approach to overcoming epistemology from Richard Rorty's. Rorty is content to adopt a Quinian critique of epistemological "foundationalism" rather than the more broader representational issue Taylor is interested in addressing which wants to secure a deeper and more adequate notion of human agency (see pp. 2–3).

9 Taylor, "Epistemology", p. 16.

10 Taylor, "Epistemology", p. 17.

11 See: Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth", *Political Theory*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 152–83; "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth", *Political Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 377–85; "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom: A Reply", *Political Studies*, no. XXXVII, pp. 277–81.

12 See Taylor, "Freedom and Truth", esp. pp. 172–5. In "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth", a response

to William E. Connolly's defence of Foucault, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", also in *Political Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 365–76, Taylor offers the following succinct characterization of how he sees Foucault's arguments as proceeding: "Foucault's mode of expression moves us perplexed but unresisting from (a) the analysis of certain historic regimes of truth as repressive, to (b) the suspicion that all hitherto existing regimes have been in some regard repressive, to (c) the Nietzschean gloss on this, that 'discourse is a violence we do to things,' and that in this regard all regimes are equally or incommensurably imposed" (p. 380). The citation here is from Foucault's "The Discourse on Language", an appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, but as Taylor states at the outset of his earlier essay, the analyses he particularly has in mind are Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, which apply and articulate the theory of power in regard to concrete historical documents.

13 My own argument in chapter 6, that Foucault's depiction of the overall situation of agents as beings embedded in an all too coherent and iron-clad network of competing regimes of power/knowledge in works such as *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, has something in common with Taylor's argument here. It is not the analyses themselves which are incoherent, therefore. What doesn't make sense is why anyone would or could formulate or construct them. This is perhaps another way of putting Taylor's critical insights regarding ontologically embodied agents but for much of the essay he seems to attribute the incoherence to the analyses themselves, rather than contesting the political implications of Foucault's destabilization of an intelligible ontological context for action by explicitly demonstrating why his own ontological projections are more sustainable and desirable. Taylor only really reaches this level of deep contestation in the final section of the article, but in my view he does so in a way in which the matter is already prejudged, and the stakes of the impasse are not explicated.

14 Taylor, "Freedom and Truth", p. 177. Paul Patton, "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom", *Political Studies*, no. XXXVII, 1989, pp. 260–76, makes a concerted effort to clarify Foucault's approach to power by drawing on Foucault's late essay, "The Subject and Power", afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, pp. 208–26. Patton suggests that Foucault's late work makes explicit certain presuppositions in his earlier historical analyses, a proper understanding of which not only contest Taylor's charge of incoherence, but suggest that what Foucault was doing all along was seeking "to expand the space of possibilities for personal identity" (p. 266). Taylor's response, "Power and Freedom", though welcoming Patton's clarification, reiterates his conviction that Foucault's approach to power was incoherent, regardless of the more refined vocabulary Patton proposes. Not even Patton's suggestion that Foucault implicitly held a minimalist view of the subject as an embodiment of certain unshaped capacities, a "power to" as a basic ontological condition of freedom, can save Foucault from having failed to elaborate or endorse a collective approach to power which strives to minimize domination and can thus aim to achieve an overall transformation of power relations for the better. Taylor has in mind something like Hannah Arendt's notion of political action in common. This kind of concern motivates Melissa A. Orlie's recent attempt to supplement Foucault's ethics with Arendt's more collective approach to power, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997.

15 Taylor, "Freedom and Truth", p. 178.

16 Taylor, "Freedom and Truth", p. 180.

17 Taylor, "Foucault and Truth", p. 383.

18 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1989, p. 456.

19 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 457.

20 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 463. Arguably, Taylor's account of the distinction between Romantic and modernist epiphany does not register the extent to which a more complex relation to fragmentary experience anticipating some forms of modernism was already present in early German Romanticism of a movement like the *Athenaeum*, regarding which, see the Introduction to this thesis.

21 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 465.

22 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 475.

23 See Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 477–9.

24 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 488. This claim reflects more on Taylor's classical preference for images of unity and wholeness as expressions of affirmation, rather than the actuality of whether Nietzsche's French heirs have seriously taken up Nietzsche's notion of eternal return. What to

Taylor seems to be an undefended neutrality may itself be a variant of the affirmation of eternal return. Clearly there is an argument to be made for the appropriation of the "yea-saying" of eternal return within the various celebrations of difference and fragmentation in thinkers associated with French Nietzscheanism, regarding which, see Sebastian Gurciullo, "Eternal Return as *désœuvrement*: Self and Writing", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, no. 14, Autumn 1997, pp. 46–63.

25 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 488.

26 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 489.

27 See Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, esp. pp. 60–69.

28 For another account of the rise of nihilism in high culture from a culturally conservative viewpoint in some ways reminiscent of Taylor's, see John Carroll, *Ego and Soul: The Modern West in Search of Meaning*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 1998, esp. chs 6, 7.

29 Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 66. Among these apostles of evil, Taylor counts Marinetti and his Futurist disciples, Artaud, and Bataille, the latter two being significant in the part they played in the formation of Foucault's spiritual nihilism.

30 Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 66.

31 Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 67.

32 For Taylor's account of this strand of modernism and for his analysis of the similarities between their superficial differences see *Sources of the Self*, pp. 469–72. Taylor delineates a third "austere" modernism on pp. 483–7.

33 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 490.

34 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 491.

35 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 492. Later on, Taylor discusses how his own mapping of the publicly available background is itself accessed through a personal index of resonances. While Taylor admits his own work does not achieve the kind of epiphanic experience of moral sources it maps out, he emphasizes that his usage of language does share with epiphanic art the resort to personally resonant images to indicate the moral sources beyond the self that are at stake. In this regard, Taylor seems to suggest that philosophy and criticism can usually only play a subsidiary role to the more substantial contact with moral sources encountered in epiphanic art and, beyond this, spiritual traditions (see p. 312).

36 See Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 495–9.

37 Taylor has published two works on Hegel: *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, and *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979. Particularly in the larger former work, Taylor often expresses admiration for Hegel's failed attempt to synthesize the best of the Enlightenment and Romantic traditions, in particular Kant's rational self-legislating freedom with notions of an expressive unity with nature. Their is something in Hegel's gesture which Taylor finds pertinent for a modernity in which criteria of efficiency and utility dominate public life so as to make possible more fulfilling activities in private life. What is called for is a restoration of a more integrated identity, not only seeking to undo the sharp distinction between private fulfilment and public efficiency, but to recall the claims of both Enlightenment reason and Romantic expressive fulfilment to the goods which orient them (see esp. pp. 539–70).

38 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 502–3.

39 I shall abstain from discussing Habermas's criticisms of Foucault as the debate seems to have been already amply mapped out. The primary line of argument Habermas has used against Foucault is that of performative contradiction staged from a theory of intersubjective communication, regarding which see esp. chs 9–11 of his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990. For a generally favourable assessment of the charge see Martin Jay's essay "The Debate over Performative Contradiction: Habermas versus the Poststructuralists", in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds Axel Honneth et. al., MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, pp. 261–79. For a judicious defence of Foucault against Habermas's charge which concludes by examining the aporia between the fundamental assumptions of their respective philosophical projects, see James Schmidt, "Habermas and Foucault", in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*, eds Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves & Seyla Benhabib, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 147–71. For further readings on the Foucault–Habermas debate see the recently published collection of essays in Samantha Ashenden & David Owen (eds), *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1999.

40 As Peter Dews has observed, this strategy for grounding moral norms which transcend divergent cultural contexts, emerging during the 1970s when Habermas reflections began to centre on the

normative structure implicit in relations of communication, is set out in the early 1980s in "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification", in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt & Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990. See Dews's discussion of this in his *The Limits of Disenchantment: Essays on Contemporary European Philosophy*, Verso, London, 1995, pp. 204–5.

41 See Dews discussion of some of the problems of this distinction in *Limits of Disenchantment*, pp. 205–6. For recent formulations of this distinction see Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, particularly the essay entitled "Metaphysics after Kant", pp. 14–15. The distinction harks back to an earlier essay "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter", in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, see esp pp. 14–20.

42 Dews, *Limits of Disenchantment*, pp. 207–8.

43 Charles Taylor, "Language and Society", in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas's* The Theory of Communicative Action, eds Axel Honneth & Hans Joas, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 30.

44 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 88. For a detailed study of the dispute between Taylor and Habermas which addresses the issue of whether the latter's discourse ethics harbour an unarticulated good in prioritizing questions of justice over visions of the good life, see William Regh, *Insight and Solidarity: A Study in the Discourse Ethics of Jürgen Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994, esp. chs 5, 6. Although attempting to mediate between the contending claims and admitting that ultimately the issue revolves around "the relative success of two entire research programs", Regh's Habermasian sympathies lead him toward arguing for the plausibility of the priority of justice, as a unique good whose priority cannot be avoided (pp. 147–59).

45 On this issue, see Dews's discussion of Habermas on nature, *Limits of Disenchantment*, pp. pp. 165–6.

46 Taylor, "Language and Society", p. 34. Alexander Nehamas has formulated a similar criticism against Habermas, albeit as a defence for a more relativistic perspectivism without stressing any necessary preoccupation for a situated retrieve of moral sources in Taylor's manner. See Alexander Nehamas, "The Ends of Thought", *The New Republic*, 30 May 1988, pp. 34–6.

47 A large portion of Habermas's reply is devoted to correcting a number details in Taylor's reconstruction of his theory of communicative action, a reasonable choice considering that this is the principal subject of discussion. Habermas also chides Taylor's own expressivist theory of language, derived from Wilhelm von Humboldt, for being too much under the sway of Romanticism and for not developing further the intersubjective tendencies in Humboldt's theory, see Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply", in *Communicative Action*, pp. 215–22. For an illuminating commentary on Habermas's argument in this reply see Regh, *Insight and Solidarity*, pp. 150–53.

48 Peter Dews, *The Limits of Disenchantment*, p. 162. See also Habermas's criticisms on the role played by aesthetics in Taylor's project in *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 74–5.

49 Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply", p. 222. See also Alexander Nehamas's remarks regarding the pitfalls of abstraction in Habermas's philosophical vocabulary for his philosophical project in his review of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, "The Ends of Thought", esp. pp. 34–6. A more sympathetic approach to this problem has been elaborated by Peter Dews, *The Limits of Disenchantment*, esp. p. 162. In particular, Dews observes here that while Habermas is willing to see the value of world-disclosing language in facilitating an understanding of why we should be moral, he does not allow that this function of language can serve as philosophical argument, the later having to remain satisfied with only being able to reflect on "the possibility and structure of the moral point of view".

50 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 88.

51 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 89.

52 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 91.

53 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 93.

54 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 93.

55 For a more expanded discussion of these issues, Taylor directs us to part II of his *Sources of the Self*.

56 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 107.

57 Taylor, "Inwardness", p. 108.

58 Quentin Skinner, "Modernity and Disenchantment: Some Historical Reflections", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p. 47.

59 Taylor, "Charles Taylor Replies", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism*, p. 225.

60 Taylor, "Charles Taylor Replies", p. 226. In an article belonging to a previous round of exchanges with Skinner, "Comments and Replies", *Inquiry*, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 242, Taylor made this point regarding the foreclosing of debate by the culturally dominant secular perspective even more vehemently: "I think that it probably shows up a striking blind-spot of the contemporary academy, that unbelievers can propound such crudities about the sources of belief, of a level which any educated believer would be excoriated for applying, say, to members of another confession. The paradox is that the last members of the educated community in the West who have to learn some lesson of ecumenical humility are (some) unbelievers. When these come to talk about religion, they have all the breadth of comprehension and sympathy of a Jerry Falwell, and significantly less even than Cardinal Ratzinger. The really astonishing thing is that they seem proud of it."

61 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 531.

62 See Michael L. Morgan, "Religion, History and Moral Discourse", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism*, pp. 51–4.

63 Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, p. 51.

64 Dews, *Limits of Disenchantment*, pp. 11–12.

65 Dews, *Limits of Disenchantment*, p. 210.

66 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 478.

67 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 506. In Taylor's view, Habermas's criticism that Adorno was caught in an outdated paradigm of consciousness focussing on subject/object relations presents only a partial and ambiguous gain. By indicating that the human agent's rational formation is bound to communicative practices, Habermas contends that there is no necessary link between the instrumentalization of nature and the instrumentalization of other humans. Adorno can only conceive the development of Enlightenment reason as an advance in domination of the object by the subject and therefore misses the intersubjective rationality which is constantly invoked in communication between agents. According to Taylor, Habermas thereby elides the experiential problem Adorno was concerned with in favour of an affirmation of the continued functionality of the public realm, as if this somehow resolved the experiential erosion of meaningful sources in the light of which we can value something like the public realm in the first place. Habermas therefore, despite being more upbeat about the prospects of modernity in his more recent acknowledgement of sources of meaning, in some ways is less concretely engaged with the problem Adorno registered regarding the "loss of meaning, fragmentation, the loss of substance in our human environment and our affiliations" (pp. 509–10).

68 Charles Taylor, "Living with Difference", in *Debating Democracy's Discontents: Essays on American Politics, Laws and Public Philosophy*, eds Anita L. Allen & Milton C. Regan Jr, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 224. In this regard Taylor refers us to the group discussion with Foucault in Berkeley, only part of which made the transition to print as "Politics and Ethics: An Interview", in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, Penguin Books, London, 1991, esp. pp. 377–80.

69 Taylor, "Living with Difference", pp. 224–5.

70 On this matter see Foucault's tentative comments in a late interview regarding "reciprocal elucidation" in the context of a discussion of polemics waged against his work, Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations: An Interview with Michel Foucault", in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Press, New York, 1997, pp. 111–12.

71 In this regard see Paul Bové's bristling analysis of Taylor's essay, "Freedom and Truth", drawing out the unquestioned institutional prerogatives Taylor relies upon as a traditional intellectual practicing in the analytical philosophical tradition, in "The Foucault Phenomenon: The Problematics of Style", foreword to Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, pp. ix–xix.

72 William E. Connolly, "Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 112–13. Connolly observes in the next paragraph: "Taylor almost recognizes this moment of affinity within difference with respect to Nietzsche, but he fails to do so with respect to Foucault and Derrida . . . Taylor anchors his highest morality in an ambiguous relation between two dimensions; an identity deepening itself through progressive attunement to a higher purpose in being. A post-Nietzschean might draw corollary sustenance from a contingent identity affirming the rich abundance of 'life' exceeding every particular organization of it" (p. 113). Connolly qualifies the applicability of this Nietzschean concept of "life" for Foucault's thought a few pages later (pp. 115–19).

[73] One feature of the debate between Taylor and Foucault's defender Connolly is the way their respective positions find themselves in a kind of agonal stalemate, each accusing the other of prematurely foreclosing certain options while congratulating themselves for keeping them viable. It is precisely this kind of strife and conflict with regard to moral questions that Habermas's discourse ethics is designed to overcome by formalizing the only viable alternative. If only the participants in this debate could put aside their conflicting ontological commitments and follow Habermas's lead, perhaps some basic ground rules for a discussion could be elaborated which would allow some headway to be made as to crucial questions of interpersonal justice that all could agree on. The problem is, as we have already seen, that this solution already entails ontological commitments that are disputed by other claimants, and so on, and so forth.

[74] Taylor often avoids this kind of annoying detail by bracketing discussions off and acknowledging it would take a whole further work to explicate or justify some of the more "terse and dogmatic" (Taylor's self-description) statements he makes. See for instance the transitional passage in his *Sources of the Self*, where he moves from the portrait of the modern identity he has been painting toward a higher level clarification of what such a portrait "inclines one to say" in terms of more speculative beliefs (p. 499). Likewise, my own contention about the shirking of detail in Taylor's work would require, presuming I would actually be obsessive enough to pursue such a questionable endeavour, its own book-length study. In this regard see William E. Connolly's characterization of Taylor's project as hermeneutics in a pastoral mode, especially his analysis of visual tropes and metaphors, "The Irony of Interpretation", in *The Politics of Irony: Essays in Self-Betrayal*, eds Daniel W. Conway & John E. Seery, St Martin's Press, New York, 1992, pp. 128–9. For further criticisms levelled at Taylor's discourse from defenders of Foucault, see William E. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", pp. 365–76; Réal Robert Fillion, "Foucault *contra* Taylor: Whose Sources? Which Self?", *Dialogue*, vol. XXXIV, 1995, pp. 663–74; Michael J. Shapiro, "Charles Taylor's Moral Subject: Philosophical Papers, Volumes 1 and 2", *Political Theory*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 311–24; Paul Bové, "The Foucault Phenomenon", pp. ix–xix.

[75] Taylor's treatment of Bataille springs to mind here. To call Bataille and a great deal of the modern avant-garde "apostles of evil", as Taylor does in his *Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 66, again captures something essential in Bataille's atheistic contestation of Catholicism (particularly his own experience of it growing up in early twentieth-century France), but fails to register the extent to which the evil that Bataille exorcizes is seen as internal to Catholicism itself, rather than the property of a Satan onto which it can safely be projected and kept at bay.

[76] In this regard see Habermas's comments regarding the inappropriateness of a postmetaphysical thinking belatedly attempting to recover an occluded moral sensibility of the good through a reinvigorated and passionate engagement in a time of moral cynicism, *Justification and Application*, p. 75. See also Regh's comments on the plausibility of Taylor's project in the light of its ambitions, *Insight and Solidarity*, pp. 122-3. Both Habermas and Regh seem to acknowledge that while the problem which Taylor struggles to articulate can no longer be resolved by the classical moral approach he clings to, nor can it be fully resolved by a discourse ethics, even if they ultimately see it as the only viable alternative.

[77] These are the terms in which Gianni Vattimo views contemporary ethical life in an interview "Bottle, Net, Truth, Revolution, Terrorism, Philosophy", *Denver Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 27, whose views regarding the "weakening of Being" will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII The Subject of Postmodernity

[1] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, Harper and Row, New York, 1977, p. 35.

[2] The interview, conducted in September 1966 for *Der Spiegel* by Rudolph Augstein and Georg Folff, delved into Heidegger's political acts and motivations during the period of his brief rectorship of the University of Freiburg (1933–1934). The discussion moves beyond his actions during this period, the perception that his views on and relations with the Nazi party constituted inexcusable errors of judgement, to encompass the passivity of his subsequent political stance with regard to the question of technology. The interview was published in *Der Spiegel* on 31 May 1976. It has been reprinted in English translation under the title "'Only a God Can Save Us': *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger", in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, pp. 91–116.

[3] Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us'", p. 107.

[4] Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us'", p. 110.

5 See Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, trans. Jon R. Snyder, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 1–3. Vattimo contends here that Nietzsche and Heidegger provide the crucial insight that modernity is "dominated by the idea that the history of thought is a progressive 'enlightenment' which develops through an ever more complete appropriation and reappropriation of its own 'foundations'. These are often also understood to be 'origins', so that the theoretical and practical revolutions of Western history are presented and legitimated for the most part as 'recoveries', rebirths, or returns" (p. 2).

6 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, p. 1.

7 See Jon R. Snyder, translator's introduction, *The End of Modernity*, p. ix. In 1983, Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti edited a collection of essays to which they both contributed (another notable inclusion being an essay by Umberto Eco), under the title *Il pensiero debole*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1995, for which they wrote an introduction that became a kind of manifesto for weak thought, see pp. 7–11.

8 Alexander Nehamas, "Nietzsche, Modernity, Aestheticism", in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds Bernd Magnus & Kathleen M. Higgins, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 223–51, contests this point, arguing that perspectivism does not have to be validated by an overarching interpretation which attempts to make sense of the tendency toward partial perspectives on truth in a history of Being.

9 This claim shall be developed further in later sections of this chapter.

10 Insofar as Taylor is Heideggerian in his hermeneutic project, he differs from Vattimo by reading Heidegger's attempt to disclose the background conditions of agency in such a way that avoids pursuing the consequences of Heidegger's project of disclosure being itself an interpretation. Consequently, Taylor seems to operate on the basis that what Heidegger makes possible is something like the final discovery of the interpretative nature of Being ontologized as the basis for an engaged agent's strong evaluations. See Charles Taylor's essay on Heidegger, "Engaged Agency and Background in Heidegger", in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 317–36.

11 Gianni Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation: The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy*, trans. David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 97. As Vattimo notes, the former, stronger charges against hermeneutics were "launched both by the supporters of historicist rationalism (such as the followers of Lukács) and by neo-positivist scientism" (p. 97).

12 See Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 98–103. Although Vattimo has in mind here the work of Richard Rorty and Jacques Derrida, as I will elaborate below, he has applied a similar criticism to the ethics articulated in Foucault's late work.

13 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 98.

14 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 98.

15 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. ix.

16 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. ix. In a private conversation (unpublished telephone interview, 1 July, 1998, Melbourne–Turin), Vattimo elaborated on the misunderstandings that the proposal of weak thought has engendered. To begin with, an initial reaction in the 1980s when the proposal was first made, interpreted it as a categorical claim that there was no truth, no values, etc., that everything was possible, in other words. In more philosophical terms, this interpretation led to a metaphysics of perspectivism, the incommensurable plurality and relativity of realities often taken to be emblematic of postmodernity. Another form of misunderstanding was promoted by religious thinkers. For example, Dario Antiseri in his *The Weak Thought and its Strength*, trans Gwyneth Weston, Avebury, Aldershot, UK, 1996, for whom the weakness of reason is a preface to a leap into faith.

17 In their introduction to *Il pensiero debole*, Vattimo and Rovatti declare that "rationality must, indeed, weaken itself from within, cede territory, not be fearful of retreating toward the zone of shadow, not remain paralysed by the loss of the luminous, unified and stable Cartesian reference" (p. 10, my translation). This declaration is therefore only a repudiation of "strong reason" (p.11), not a repudiation of reason altogether. Nor is the affirmation of weak thought to be confused with a thesis of cultural decadence or pessimism, regarding which see for example Vattimo's comments in his introduction to *The End of Modernity*, pp. 1, 5.

18 Gianni Vattimo, "Hermeneutics as Koine", *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 5, nos 2–3, p. 399. As Vattimo explains, up until the publication of Hans-George Gadamer's *Truth and Method* in 1960, "hermeneutics was no more than a technical term indicating, for culture at large, a very specialized discipline that dealt with the interpretation of literary, juridical and theological texts" (p. 399). As he already observes in this article, explicitly hermeneutic thinkers such as Gadamer

and Ricoeur are lumped together with thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault, Apel and Habermas (p. 400). As Vattimo indicates in *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 1, Luigi Pareyson and Martin Heidegger also belong to the ranks of actual hermeneuticists, while Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor, and Emmanuel Levinas also belong to the vulgate.

19 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 1.

20 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 2.

21 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 60.

22 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 6.

23 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 7.

24 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (ed.) & R. J. Hollingdale, Vintage, New York, 1968, book 1, # 1, p. 7.

25 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 8.

26 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 28.

27 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 11.

28 Gianni Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, trans. David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 4.

29 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, pp. 114–5.

30 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 115.

31 Perhaps the best way to understand the consequence of Heidegger's highly abstract notion of *Ge-Stell* is through the kindred notion of standing-reserve as it is presented in "The Question Concerning Technology", esp. pp. 17–35. In particular, the image of the jetliner ready for takeoff on the runaway is especially suggestive. "Revealed, it stands on the taxi strip only as standing-reserve, inasmuch as it is ordered to ensure the possibility of transportation. For this it must be in its whole structure and in every one of its constituent parts, on call for duty, i.e., ready for takeoff" (p. 17). Although it is impossible to fully visualize the extent of the challenging enframing of the *Ge-Stell* up close, as it were, those who have travelled by jet have surely caught a glimpse of it. As the passenger jet rises, its standing-reserve may be visualized against the background grid of city networks and districts, the surrounding mosaic arrangement of agricultural fields that feed into them, the more randomly arranged wilderness reserves, in short, the vast infrastructural setting (natural, industrial, and human resources) which not only makes it possible for a jet to do what it is meant to do but to give you, its passenger, a momentary glimpse as a moment of what is glimpsed as planet earth's transformation into the *Ge-Stell*. "We now name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve: '*Ge-Stell* [Enframing]" (p.19). I imagine the passenger catching a ride into earth orbit, with all the aptitudinal fine-tuning and expert training this still requires, has an even more enhanced experience of the Heideggerian *Ge-Stell*, which propels humans (quite literally) away from the earth, a radical transformation in perspective for hitherto earth-bound creatures.

32 Max Weber's understanding of the proliferation of gods resulting from secularization may be found in "Science as a Vocation", in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1948, esp. pp. 147–56.

33 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 25–6.

34 In the preceding citation Vattimo is drawing from the concluding passages and appendices of Heidegger's 1938 essay, "The Age of the World Picture", included in *The Question Concerning Technology*, pp. 115–54. Vattimo likewise indicates the shift from *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger speaks of "the" world, to "The Origin of the Work of Art", in which he refers to "a" world, see *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 23–4.

35 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 116.

36 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 117. Regarding this transformation of technological enframing in mass communications societies into the ensemble known as "*télématique*", see also Gianni Vattimo, "Postmodernity, Technology, Ontology", in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger & M. Richard Zinman, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, pp. 222–5.

37 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 13. Vattimo's claim regarding his appropriation of Heidegger is that it remains "faithful, even beyond the letter of [Heidegger's] texts, to the ontological difference, that is, to avoiding the identification of Being with a being". To speak of Being either in terms of its "'return' to speak to us beyond the oblivion into which it had fallen, or if one believes that it continues always to elude us just because it transcends the capacity of out intellect and our language, as in the case of apophasic theology—in all these cases it seems that one continues to identify Being with a being" (p. 13). Regarding these divergent paths for interpreting Heidegger's understanding of the weakening of Being see also Vattimo's essay "Toward an Ontology of Decline", in *Recoding Metaphysics: The New Italian Philosophy*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1988, pp. 63–76.

38 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 13.
39 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 26.
40 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, p. 35.
41 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, p. 36.
42 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 82.
43 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 82.
44 Gianni Vattimo, "Metaphysics, Violence, Secularization", in *Recoding Metaphysics*, p. 48.
45 For a haunting depiction of such a posthistorical world of normalized nihilism, see the short story by Jorge Luis Borges, "Utopia of a Tired Man", in *The Book of Sand*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, pp. 64–70.
46 Vattimo, "Metaphysics", p. 51.
47 Vattimo, "Metaphysics", p. 51.
48 Vattimo, "Metaphysics", pp. 51–2. As Vattimo has observed recently in *Beyond Interpretation*, Adorno's negative dialectics locates the oppressiveness of metaphysics in its reliance on universal concepts. But universals, have not always led to oppression and the violation of individual rights, "indeed, the metaphysicians themselves are in a good position to say that the very rights of the individual have often been defended precisely in the name of metaphysical grounds—for example in the doctrine of natural right" (pp. 30–31).
49 Vattimo, "Metaphysics", p. 52.
50 Vattimo, "Metaphysics", p. 52.
51 Gianni Vattimo, "Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 154–5.
52 Vattimo, "Dialectics", p. 157.
53 Vattimo, "Dialectics", p. 158. See also Vattimo's essay "*Verwindung*: Nihilism and the Postmodern in Philosophy," *Substance*, vol. 16, no. 53, p. 7. In this work, Vattimo explains: "*Verwindung* ('overcoming') is a word that Heidegger uses rather rarely; it appears in one passage in *Holzwege*, in an essay in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, and, above all, in the first essay of *Identität und Differenz*. With it Heidegger seeks to designate something similar to yet distinct from *Überwindung* ('going beyond') in that *Verwindung* contains no notion of dialectical sublimation (*Aufhebung*) nor of a 'leaving behind' which characterizes the connection we have with a past that no longer has anything to say to us." Vattimo also explains that *Verwindung* has connotations of "convalescence", such that it suggests "an overcoming which is in reality a recognition of belonging, a healing of an illness, and an assumption of responsibility", see *End of Modernity*, p. 40.
54 Vattimo, "Postmodernity, Technology, Ontology", p. 223. See also Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, pp. 5–6, 46–7.
55 Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, p. 57.
56 Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, p. 59.
57 Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, p. 60.
58 Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, pp. 100–101. In an interview from the early 1980s, "Bottle, Net, Truth, Revolution, Terrorism, Philosophy", *Denver Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 4, Vattimo went so far as to suggest that Adorno's "polemic of culture against mass society", was due perhaps to "the survival of, broadly speaking, Platonic prejudices" that amounted to a quasi-neurotic failure of adaptation to an experience of the weakening of Being. "One doesn't succeed in adapting to a less intense and more diffused experience of value and so one brands such an experience inauthenticity, kitsch, manipulated degradation." Vattimo goes on to acknowledge that "the need for an 'intense' experience of values is also a real need and hence should be taken seriously", but professes that what this could actually mean "perhaps eludes me" (p. 27).
59 Giovanna Borradori, "'Weak Thought' and Postmodernism: The Italian Departure from Deconstruction", *Social Text*, vol. 18, 1987–1988, pp. 43–4.
60 Gilles Deleuze, commenting in an interview on the misunderstanding of Foucault's announcement of the "death of man", explains that it is not only revelation of the fiction invented by the human sciences called "Man", but as the possibility and attentiveness to alternative compositions of being human. Considering one possibility, Deleuze poses the question of "what happens when human forces combine with those of silicon, and what new forms begin to appear?" in "Life as a Work of Art", in *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp. 99–100.
61 See for instance Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham et. al., Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 193.

62 Vattimo and Rovatti, "Premessa", in *Il pensiero debole*, p. 9 (my translation). The passage cited reads as follows in the original Italian: "(dai rizomi di Deleuze alla microfisica di Foucault), abbiano ancora troppa nostalgia per la metafisica, e non portino davvero fino in fondo l'esperienza dell'*oblio* dell'essere, o della 'morte di Dio', che sopprattutto Heidegger e Nietzsche hanno annunciato alla nostra cultura."

63 Vattimo and Rovatti, "Premessa", p. 9, see also Borradori's discussion of this passage in "'Weak Thought' and Postmodernism", p. 40.

64 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, p. 4. In this regard, see also Vattimo's criticisms of Jean-François Lyotard's description of modernity as the end of *metarécits* in "The End of (Hi)story", in *Zeitgeist in Babel: The Postmodernist Controversy*, ed. Ingeborg Hoesterey, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991, pp. 132–41.

65 For further discussion of this debate with reference to the views of Habermas and Lyotard's postmodernism, and Vattimo's suggested solution of a weak rationality content with its own paradoxes, see Michael Peters, *Poststructuralism, Politics and Education*, Bergin and Garvey, Westport, Conn., 1996, pp. 148–50.

66 Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project", in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*, eds Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves & Seyla Benhabib, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 53, 40–42.

67 Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project", p. 53.

68 Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Politics of Truth*, eds Sylvère Lotringer & Lysa Hochroth, Semiotext(e), New York, 1997, p. 43.

69 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", p. 50.

70 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1967, p. 285.

71 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, p. 46. As Heidegger observes in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Harper and Row, New York, 1973, p. 85: "Metaphysics cannot be abolished like an opinion. One can by no means leave it behind as a doctrine no longer believed and represented."

72 Gianni Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 34–5. Despite this similarity which Vattimo points out, Rorty's pragmatic liberalism confines projects of redescription to a purely private function and indicates the dangers of taking Foucault's project of redescription as the basis for action in the public realm. Rorty thinks that in pragmatic terms, liberalism is the best way of dealing responsibly with the demands and hopes of public life. See Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, esp. chapter 3. See also the debate between Rorty and Simon Critchley on this matter in Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, Routledge, London, 1996.

73 Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, ed. & trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p. 106.

74 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 35.

75 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 36.

76 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 36.

77 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 36–7.

78 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 33. See also Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, pp. 109–10.

79 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 20.

80 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 112.

81 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 33. Vattimo makes a similar observation in *The Transparent Society*, suggesting that both Habermas and Apel base their ideal of communicative transparency on a model of "the community of researchers and scientists" which Charles S. Peirce referred to as "logical socialism". The question Vattimo puts here regarding Habermas's ideal of transparency is whether "one can legitimately model the emancipated human subject, and ultimately society, on the ideal of the scientist in her laboratory, whose objectivity and disinterest are demanded by what is at bottom a technological interest". (p. 24).

82 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 33–4.

83 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 21–2.

84 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, pp. 112–13.

85 Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, p. 113.

86 See especially Gianni Vattimo, *Belief*, trans. Luca D'Isanto & David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999, a book written largely in a discursive style from the first-person perspective and fitting the (anachronistic?) genre of the confession. The "bizarre fundamentalism" of the current papacy is epitomized by the prohibition of using condoms during a time in which AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases threaten to cause great suffering and loss of life, particularly in African countries. This kind of fundamentalism, Vattimo contends, "seems to be motivated less by

fundamental principles (even if one takes up naturalistic and essentialistic metaphysics preferred by this Pope) than by the desire to avoid the impression that Christian morality and doctrine may be weakening", see *Belief*, pp. 56–7. Apart from his discussion of religion in chapters 4 and 5 of *Beyond Interpretation*, a more traditionally philosophical essay on religion may be found in "The Trace of the Trace", in *Religion*, eds Jacques Derrida & Gianni Vattimo, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 79–94.

87 See Vattimo, "Hermeneutics and Democracy", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 23, no 4, pp. 1–7.

88 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 39–40.

89 Vattimo, "Hermeneutics and Democracy", p. 6. Vattimo also suggests here that the Left might also do well to recover something of the utopian impulses behind proposals that emerged in the late 1960s, from the delirious mobility of desire in authors like Deleuze and Guattari to the relatively more moderate anticipation of "aesthetic–instinctual" revolution in the work of Marcuse.

90 Vattimo, "Postmodernity, Technology, Ontology", p. 224. In all fairness to Adorno, he was not living at a time when this kind of tendency in the media really started to become widespread. Nevertheless, one could argue that his nostalgia perhaps may have still led him to interpret such phenomena as a sham and diversion.

91 Gianni Vattimo, "Democracy, Reality, and the Media: Educating the *Übermensch*", in *Democracy and the Arts*, eds Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger & M. Richard Zinman, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1999, p. 152.

92 Vattimo, "Democracy, Reality, and the Media", p. 154.

93 Vattimo, "Democracy, Reality, and the Media", p. 155.

94 Vattimo, "Democracy, Reality, and the Media", p. 156.

95 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 40.

96 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 40.

97 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p.42.

98 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p.44.

99 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, pp. 44–5.

100 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 48. In attempting to elaborate the significance of this for hermeneutics, Vattimo refers us to the minor "Joachimist" trend in Christian thinking. Developing alongside the mainstream "dogmatic and disciplinarian" relation to scripture and revelation found in the canonical monopoly of Popes and cardinals, this minor trend took its inspiration from "Joachim of the Flowers who spoke of a third age in the histories of humanity and salvation, namely, the reign of the spirit (following after that of the Father in the Old Testament, and that of the Son), in which the 'spiritual' sense of the scriptures is increasingly in evidence, with charity taking the place of discipline" pp. 48–9.

101 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 49. Vattimo quotes St Augustine in this connection: "ama et fac quod vis", which can be translated as "love and do what you want" (p. 51).

102 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 52.

103 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 52.

104 Vattimo's new "religious" twist on secularization as weakening, as he himself admits in the preface to *Beyond Interpretation*, "leads in a direction that might be seen as scandalous, in that it 'twists' weakness and nihilism into a sense totally different to the usual: and above all, because it ends somehow in the arms of theology—albeit in ways that do not bring it into contact with any 'orthodoxy'" (p. x).

105 Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, p. 54.

106 The result of Adorno's negative dialectics, as has already been stated above, would also issue in a similar position in Vattimo's interpretation, "the *presque rien*, the culmination of the metaphysical *promesse de bonheur* in aesthetic experience", see *Transparent Society*, pp. 118, 95–103. I would also propose that some of Foucault's final, somewhat equivocal, statements, could be read in this direction too, see the concluding section to chapter 6 of this thesis.

107 In particular, Vattimo refers to the second-last subdivision of section 55 in Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*, which champions "those who do not require any extreme articles of faith; those who not only concede but love a fair amount of accidents and nonsense; those who can think of man with a considerable reduction of his value without becoming small and weak on that account . . ." (pp. 38–9). According to Vattimo, what is at stake in this idiosyncratic interpretation it is not so much a question of "being historically correct about what Nietzsche really had in mind, but rather of clarifying what he means for us, what he tells us about the problem of how to think disenchantment radically", see *Transparent Society*, pp. 99–100.

108 Vattimo, *Transparent Society*, p. 103.

CONCLUSION: Enlightened Adaptation or the Retreat of the Political?

1 Subsequently published as a small book, Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives*, Profile Books, London, 1999. As Giddens explains in his preface, the title "Runaway World?" was used by a previous Reith Lecturer a quarter of a century ago, Edmund Leach. While Leach felt inclined to pose the title as a question, Giddens poses it as statement indicating the reality of widespread sentiments regarding rapid change under current processes of globalization (pp. xi–xiii).

2 As the note on the inside cover of Giddens's published version of his lectures listing his most recent publications indicates, his *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (1998), has been influential on political leaders the world over, let alone in his native Britain where New Labour has trumpeted the virtues of its own version of the "Third Way" in politics.

3 This has been the actual institutional context of Monash University (Melbourne, Australia) in which my own thesis was produced, a local instantiation of the kind of institutional transformations taking place all over the world. An historical account of the transformation or "remaking" of Monash University in the wider context of its relatively short history as a "new" university beginning with its foundation by Act of Parliament in 1958 has just been published, see Simon Marginson, *Monash: Remaking the University*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000. The book, though touted as presenting an independent viewpoint, assumes the realist position that the remaking (read corporatization) of the University was a necessary adaptation to both Australian Federal government policy directives since the 1980s and an attempt to give new relevance to the University in a globalizing market.

4 For an example of such an attempt within an Australian context, see Tony Coady (ed.), *Why Universities Matter: A Conversation about Values, Means and Directions*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, NSW, 1999. The publication history of this book itself tells a story about the gagging of debate by academics resisting the direction of the transformation of their host institutions. The publication of the book was initially blocked by a last minute decision (ostensibly for reasons of the book's marketability) by the in-house publisher of the University of Melbourne under whose auspices it was originally produced. The move was generally taken by academics to be a sign of the growing intolerance of the corporate culture administrating the globalization of local universities toward comments that threatened *institutional* marketability and reputation. The irony is that the alleged censorship arguably caused greater damage to the institution than if the book had been quietly published as normal. Coady took his martyred book elsewhere for publication. I'm sure the administrators have learned an important lesson out of this: never get involved in the first place with such undesirable books or activities, or at the very least, leave them be until they run out of energy of their own accord.

5 For a recent exploration of these issues see Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1996, esp. chs 1 and 12. Readings own proposal, drawing from Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot, does arouse my sympathy at an intellectual level, even though I doubt it again in terms of public efficacy capable of convincing the daughters and sons of modernity with good reasons, as Jürgen Habermas would say. Readings observes that "the University becomes no longer a model of the ideal society but rather a place where the impossibility of such models can be thought—practically thought, rather than thought under ideal conditions. Here the University loses its privileged status as the model of society and does not regain it by becoming the model of the absence of models. Rather, the University becomes one site among others where *the question of being-together is raised*, raised with an urgency that proceeds from the absence of the institutional forms (such as the nation-state), which have historically served to mask that question for the past three centuries" (p. 20). From a more culturally conservative viewpoint which nevertheless raises important challenges to any contemporary justification of the university in the context of an overview of the historical failure of successive attempts to provide the university with such a vocation see John Carroll, *Ego and Soul: The Modern West in Search of Meaning*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 1998, ch. 7.

6 Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 143.

7 During, *Foucault and Literature*, p. 143.

8 During, *Foucault and Literature*, p. 144. During's proposal is geared toward his own field of cultural production, departments of literature "producing and disseminating genealogies of cultural work, especially, genealogies of writing" (p. 144). See also During's comments a little further down where he notes Foucault's concerns about the future of universities as critical institutions in the 1980s.

9 Readings, *University in Ruins*, p. 176.

10 Readings, *University in Ruins*, p. 191.
11 Readings, *University in Ruins*, p. 192.
12 Readings, *University in Ruins*, p. 188.
13 Readings, *University in Ruins*, pp. 188–9.
14 By abstraction I do not merely indicate the various permutations of complex simplicity striven for in the ideality of critical thought, but also its sense of being derived, separated-off, withdrawn, and diverted.
15 In a private conversation (unpublished telephone interview, 1 July, 1998, Melbourne–Turin), Gianni Vattimo explained his own attempt to adjust to the contemporary situation. A few weeks prior to our discussion he had moved from the department of philosophy to the department of social communications at the University of Turin where he teaches. The reason for this move, Vattimo explained, arose out of a desire to teach philosophy to people who had no intention of becoming philosophers and to work toward expanding the relevance of philosophy beyond its specialized field. In passing, it is worth noting that Michel Foucault secured a place for himself at the earliest possible opportunity at the Collège de France, where lectures are open to the general public. Of course it may be contested that despite not having the most immediate impact, more traditional academic work limited to the specialized arena in which it takes place may still have a deeper significance and rigour which shall contribute in the long run to the kinds of transformations which shape our world.
16 Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 2.
17 Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 10.
18 Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 75.
19 Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 50.
20 By raising such questions I do not mean to denigrate or disparage Giddens's efforts in these lectures. I listened to the radio broadcast version on ABC National with interest and particularly found his explorations of the concept of risk, and the rise of intimacy as a pivotal experience in modern relationships, both informative and perspicacious. My questioning is directed more at the political implications of his lectures as (critical?) interventions contributing to and shaping contemporary debates.
21 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, "Foreword to The Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political", in Simon Sparks (ed.), *Retreating the Political*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 105.
22 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, "'Chers Amis': A Letter on the Closure of the Political", in *Retreating the Political*, p. 146.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Works by Theodor W. Adorno

Adorno, Theodor W., "The Actuality of Philosophy", *Telos*, no. 31, Spring 1977, pp. 120–33.

——, *Aesthetic Theory*, 2nd edn, ed. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, The Athlone Press, London, 1997.

——, "Alienated Masterpiece: The *Missa Solemnis*", *Telos*, no. 28, Summer 1976, pp. 113–24.

——, "The Essay as Form", *New German Critique*, no. 32, 1984, pp. 151–71.

——, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Seabury Press, New York, 1976.

——, "Late Style in Beethoven", *Raritan*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 102–7.

——, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, Verso, London, 1996.

——, *Moments musicaux: Neu dedruckte Aufsätze 1928–1962*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Maim, 1964.

——, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Seabury Press, New York, 1973.

——, *Notes To Literature*, 2 vols, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991–92.

——, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell & Wesley V. Bloomster, Sheed and Ward, London, 1974.

——, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel & Shierry Weber, Neville Spearman, London, 1967.

——, *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Verso, London, 1992.

——, "Resignation", *Telos*, no. 35, Spring 1978, pp. 165–8.

Adorno, Theodor W. & Bloch, Ernst, "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing", in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1998, pp. 1–17.

Adorno, Theodor W. & Horkheimer, Max, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, Allen Lane, London, 1973.

Adorno, Theodor W. & Marcuse, Herbert, "Correspondence on the German Student Movement", *New Left Review*, I, No. 233, Jan.–Feb. 1999, pp. 123–36.

Works by Michel Foucault

Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972.

——, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Raus, Double Day and Company, Garden City, 1986.

——, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Penguin Books, London, 1979.

——, "Discourse and Truth", unofficial transcript of unpublished lectures delivered as part of a seminar conducted at the University of California, Berkeley, Fall Term 1983, made available on the internet at <http://perso.club-internet.fr/kmille/discourse.htm>.

——, "Distance, Aspect, Origin", in *The Tel Quel Reader*, eds Patrick ffrench & Roland-François Lack, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 97–108.

——, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Press, New York, 1997.

——, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 2, *Aesthetics, Methodology and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, New Press, New York, 1998.

——, "Experiences of Madness", *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–25

——, foreword and appendix to *I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister and My Brother . . . : A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, trans. Frank Jellinek, Pantheon Books, New York, 1975 , pp. vii–xiv, 199–212.

——, *Foucault Live: Interviews 1966–1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston, Semiotext(e), New York, 1989.

——, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, Penguin Books, London, 1991.

——, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976.

——, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, London, 1990.

——, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1986.

——, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, London, 1990.

——, "Introduction" to Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn Fawsett, Zone Books, New York, 1989, pp. 7–24.

——, "Introduction" to *Herculine Barbin: Being the Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall, Haverster Press, Brighton, UK, 1980, pp. vii–xvii.

——, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) & Sherry Simon, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1980.

——, "The Life of Infamous Men", in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, eds Meaghan Morris & Paul Patton, trans. Paul Foss & Meaghan Morris, Feral Publications, Sydney, 1979, pp. 76–91.

——, "Madness, the Absence of Work", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I Davidson, trans. Peter Stastny & Deniz Sengel, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 97–104.

——, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard, Tavistock Publications, London, 1967.

——, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, pp. 7–58.

——, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Harper and Row, New York, 1976.

——, "On Attica: An Interview", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, pp. 154–61.

——, "On Madness in *Rameau's Nephew*", in *Writing and Psychoanalysis: A Reader*, ed. John Lechte, Arnold, London, 1996, pp. 88–96.

——, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1974.

——, "The Political Technology of Individuals", in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, pp. 145–62.

——, *The Politics of Truth*, eds Sylvère Lotringer & Lysa Hochroth, Semiotext(e), New York, 1997.

——, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et. al., Routledge, London, 1988.

——, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham et. al., Pantheon Books, New York, 1980.

——, "Preface" to English translation of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Sheen & Helen R. Lane, Viking Press, New York, 1977, pp. xi–xiv.

——, *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999.

——, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein & James Cascaito, Semiotext(e), New York, 1991.

——, "The Subject and Power", afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, pp. 208–26.

——, "Technologies of the Self", in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, pp. 16–49.

——, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault", conducted by Rux Martin in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, pp. 9–15.

Works by Charles Taylor

Taylor, Charles, "Charles Taylor Replies", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 213–57.

——, "Comments and Replies", *Inquiry*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 237–54.

——, "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth", *Political Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 377–85.

——, "The Dialogical Self", in *Rethinking Knowledge: Reflections Across the Disciplines*, ed. Robert F. Goodman & Walter R. Fisher, State University of New York Press, New York, 1995, pp. 57–66.

——, "Engaged Agency and Background in Heidegger", in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 317– 36.

——, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991.

——, "Federations and Nations: Living Amongst Others", interview in Richard Kearney, *States of Mind: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers on the European Mind*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, pp. 23–32.

——, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth", *Political Theory*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 152–83.

——, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975.

——, *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979.

——, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man", *Review of Metaphysics*, 1971, pp. 3–51.

——, "Inwardness and the Culture of Modernity", in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds Axel Honneth et. al., MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, pp. 88–110.

——, "Justice after Virtue", in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, eds John Horton & Susan Mendus, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 16–43.

——, "Language and Society", in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas's* The Theory of Communicative Action, eds Axel Honneth & Hans Joas, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 23–35.

——, "Leading a Life", in *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason*, ed. Ruth Chang, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 170–83.

——, "Living with Difference", in *Debating Democracy's Discontents: Essays on American Politics, Laws and Public Philosophy*, eds Anita L. Allen & Milton C. Regan Jr, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 212–26.

——, *Philosophical Arguments*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995.

——, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

——, "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Truth: A Reply", *Political Studies*, no. XXXVII, 1989, pp. 277–81.

——, "What is Human Agency?", in *The Self: Psychological and Philosophical Issues*, ed. Theodore Mischel, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977, pp. 103–35.

Works by Gianni Vattimo

Vattimo, Gianni, *The Adventure of Difference*, trans. Cyprian Blamires & Thomas Harrison, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993.

——, *Belief*, trans. Luca D'Isanto & David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999.

——, *Beyond Interpretation: The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy*, trans. David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997.

——, "Bottle, Net, Truth, Revolution, Terrorism, Philosophy", *Denver Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 24–34.

——, "Democracy, Reality, and the Media: Educating the *Übermensch*", in *Democracy and the Arts*, eds Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger & M. Richard Zinman, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1999, pp. 146–58.

——, "Dialectics, Difference, and Weak Thought", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 151–63.

——, "The End of (Hi)story", in *Zeitgeist in Babel: The Postmodernist Controversy*, ed. Ingeborg Hoesterey, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991, pp. 132–41.

——, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, trans. Jon R. Snyder, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988.

——, "Hermeneutics and Democracy", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 1–7.

——, "Hermeneutics as Koine", *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2–3, pp. 399–408.

——, "Hermeneutics and Nihilism: An Apology for Aesthetic Consciousness", in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Brice Wachterhauser, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1986, pp. 446–59.

——, "Metaphysics, Violence, Secularization", in *Recoding Metaphysics: The New Italian Philosophy*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1988, pp. 45–62.

——, "Nihilism: Reactive and Active", in *Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism: Essays on Interpretation, Language and Politics*, eds Tom Derby et. al., Carleton University Press, Ottawa, 1989, pp. 15–21.

——, "Postmodernity, Technology, Ontology", in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger & M. Richard Zinman, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, pp. 214–28.

——, "The Secularization of Philosophy", in *The Writing of Difference*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1991, pp. 283–90.

——, telephone interview by author, 1 July 1998, Melbourne–Turin.

——, "Toward an Ontology of Decline", in *Recoding Metaphysics: The New Italian Philosophy*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1988, pp. 63–76.

——, "The Trace of the Trace", in *Religion*, eds Jacques Derrida & Gianni Vattimo, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 79–94.

——, *The Transparent Society*, trans. David Webb, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.

——, "*Verwindung*: Nihilism and the Postmodern in Philosophy", *Substance*, vol. 16, no. 53, pp. 7–17.

Vattimo, Gianni & Rovatti, Pier Aldo (eds), *Il pensiero debole*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1995.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Ansell-Pearson, Keith, "The Significance of Michel Foucault's Reading of Nietzsche: Power, the Subject, and Political Theory", in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter R. Sedgewick, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, pp. 13–30.

Antiseri, Dario, *The Weak Thought and its Strength*, trans. Gwyneth Weston, Avebury, Aldershot, UK, 1996.

Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958.

Arnason, Johann, "Rationalization and Modernity: Towards a culturalist reading of Max Weber", *La Trobe University Sociology Papers*, no. 9.

Ashenden, Samantha, & Owen, David (eds), *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1999.

Barbiero, Daniel, Review of Peter Carravetta, *Prefaces to the Diaphora: Rhetorics, Allegory, and the Interpretation of Postmodernity*, *Substance*, vol. 22, nos 2–3, pp. 345–7.

Bataille, Georges, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985.

——, *Inner Experience*, Trans. Leslie Anne Boldt, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988.

Beckett, Samuel, *Endgame*, Faber and Faber, London, 1958.

Beiner, Ronald, *Philosophy in a Time of Lost Spirit: Essays on Contemporary Theory*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1997.

Beiser, Frederick C., "Early Romanticism and the *Aufklärung*", in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, pp. 317–29.

Bellamy, Richard, "Post-Modernism and the End of History: Vattimo's *Le avventure della Differenza* and *La fine della modernità*", *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 727–33.

Bellour, Raymond, "Towards Fiction", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992, pp. 148–56.

Benjamin, Walter, "Doctrine of the Similar", *New German Critique*, no. 17, 1979, pp. 65–9.

——, "On the Mimetic Faculty", in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1986, pp. 333–6.

——, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, New York, 1969, pp. 217–51.

Bennett, Jane, "'How Is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?': Foucault, Schiller, and the Aestheticization of Ethics", *Political Theory*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 653–72.

Berkowitz, Peter, *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995.

Bernauer, James, "Beyond Life and Death: On Foucault's Post-Auschwitz Ethic", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992, pp. 260–79.

——, "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking", in *The Final Foucault*, eds James Bernauer & David Rasmussen, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1988, pp. 45–82.

——, "The Prisons of Man: An Introduction to Foucault's Negative Theology", *International Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. XXVII, no. 4, pp. 365–80.

Bernauer, James & Mahon, Michael, "The Ethics of Michel Foucault", in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 141–58.

Bernstein, Michael André, "Street-Foucault", in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, vol. VII, ed. Barry Smart, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 276–78.

Bernstein, Richard J., *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991.

Blanchot, Maurice, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993.

——, *The Madness of the Day*, trans. Lydia Davis, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, 1981.

——, "The Limits of Experience: Nihilism", in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 121–7.

——, "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman & Brian Massumi, Zone Books, New York, 1987, pp. 61–109.

——, *Thomas the Obscure*, trans. Robert Lamberton, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, 1988.

——, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, 1988.

——, "Who?", in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, eds Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor & Jean-Luc Nancy, Routledge, New York, 1991, pp. 58–60.

——, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1986.

Blomster, Wes, "Introduction to Adorno Essays", *Telos*, no. 35, Spring 1978, pp. 123–7.

Bloom, Harold, *The Breaking of the Vessels*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982.

Borges, Jorge Luis, *The Book of Sand*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1979.

——, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, Penguin Books, London, 1970.

Borradori, Giovanna, *The America Philosopher: Conversations with Quine, Davidson, Putnam, Nozich, Danto, Rorty, Cavell, MacIntyre, & Kuhn*, trans. Rosanna Crocitto, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994.

—— (ed.), "Recoding Metaphysics: Strategies of the Italian Contemporary Thought", in *Recoding Metaphysics: The New Italian Philosophy*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1988, pp. 1–26.

——, "'Weak Thought' and Postmodernism: The Italian Departure from Deconstruction", *Social Text*, vol. 18, 1987–1988, pp. 39–49.

Bové, Paul A., "The Foucault Phenomenon: the Problematics of Style", foreword to Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, ed. & trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, pp. vii–xl.

Bowie, Andrew, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990.

——, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*, Routledge, London, 1997.

——, "Music, Language and Modernity", in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Routledge, London, 1989, pp. 67–85.

——, "'Non-Identity': The German Romantics, Schelling and Adorno", in *Intersections: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory*, eds

Tilottama Rajan & David L. Clark, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1995, pp. 243–60.

Boyne, Roy, *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason*, Unwin Hymin, London, 1990.

Buck-Morss, Susan, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute*, Harvester Press, Hassocks, UK, 1977.

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York, 1990.

——, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999.

Callinicos, Alex, "Impossible Anti-Capitalism?", *New Left Review*, II, no. 2, Mar.–Apr. 2000, pp. 117–24.

——, "Social Theory Put to the Test of Politics: Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens", *New Left Review*, I, no. 236, Jul.–Aug. 1999, pp. 77–102.

Calvino, Italo, *The Literature Machine*, Picador, London, 1989.

——, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1992.

Canon, JoAnn, *Postmodern Italian Fiction: The Crisis of Reason in Calvino, Eco, Sciascia, Malerba*, Fairleigh Dickison University Press, Rutherford, N. J., 1989.

Caputo, John, "On Not Knowing Who We Are: Madness, Hermeneutics, and the Night of Truth in Foucault", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, eds John Caputo & Mark Yount, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1993, pp. 233–62.

Carey, John, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939*, Faber and Faber, London, 1992.

Carravetta, Peter, "On Gianni Vattimo's Postmodern Hermeneutics", *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 5, nos. 2–3, pp. 395–7.

——, *Prefaces to the Diaphora: Rhetorics, Allegory, and the Interpretation of Postmodernity*, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, Ind., 1991.

Carrette, Jeremy R., *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality*, Routledge, London, 2000.

—— (ed.), "Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh", in *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, pp. 1–47.

Carroll, David, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida*, Routledge, New York, 1989.

Carroll, John, *Ego and Soul: The Modern West in Search of Meaning*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 1998.

——, *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture*, Fontana Press, London, 1993.

Castoriadis, Cornelius, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997.

Cavell, Stanley, *Must We Mean What We Say?: A Book of Essays*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1969.

Coady, Tony (ed.), *Why Universities Matter: A Conversation about Values, Means and Directions*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, NSW, 1999.

Connolly, William E., "Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 108–28.

——, "The Irony of Interpretation", in *The Politics of Irony: Essays in Self-Betrayal*, eds Daniel W. Conway & John E. Seery, St Martin's Press, New York, 1992, pp. 119–50.

——, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", *Political Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 365–76.

Critchley, Simon, *Ethics–Politics–Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, Verso, London, 1999.

——, *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, Routledge, London, 1997.

D'Isanto, Luca. "Gianni Vattimo's Hermeneutics and the Trace of Divinity", *Modern Theology*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 361–81.

Dallmayr, Fred, "The Politics of Nonidentity: Adorno, Postmodernism—And Edward Said", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 33–56.

D'Amico, Robert, "Text and Context: Derrida and Foucault on Descartes", in *The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with the New French Thought*, ed. John Fekete, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984, pp. 164–82.

Daraki, Maria, "Michel Foucault's Journey to Greece", *Telos*, no. 67, Spring 1986, pp. 87–110.

Davidson, Arnold I., "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought", in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 115–40.

—— (ed.), "Introductory Remarks to Pierre Hadot", "Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 195–202, 1–17.

Dean, Mitchell, "For a Political Ontology of Ourselves", *Political Expressions*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 17–30.

Deleuze, Gilles, *Foucault*, ed. & trans. Seán Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988.

——, *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995.

——, "Nomad Thought", in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 142–49.

De Obaldia, Claire, *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995.

Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, pp. 31–63.

——, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1982, pp. 111–36.

——, "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 57–96.

——, *Points . . . Interviews: 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf et. al., Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995.

——, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins, Verso, London, 1997.

Descartes, René, *Meditations of First Philosophy*, in *Essential Works of Descartes*, ed. Daniel J. Bornstein, Bantam, New York, 1966.

Descombes, Vincent, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox & J. M. Harding, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980.

Dews, Peter, *The Limits of Disenchantment: Essays on Contemporary European Philosophy*, Verso, London, 1995.

——, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*, Verso, London, 1987.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. & Rabinow, Paul, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982.

——, "What Is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What Is Enlightenment?'", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 109–22.

During, Simon, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing*, Routledge, London, 1992.

Eagleton, Terry, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

Elden, Stuart, "Re-placing *Madness and Civilisation*: The Spaces of *Histoire de la folie*", Discussion Paper Series No. 97/8, Department of Government, Brunel University, Uxbridge.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke, "The Risks and Responsibilities of Affirming Ordinary Life", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 67–80.

Falzon, Chris, "Foucault's Human Being", *Thesis Eleven*, no. 34, 1993, pp. 1–16.

Ferry, Luc & Renaut, Alain, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*, trans. Mary Schnackenberg Cattani, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1990.

Fraser, Nancy, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions", *Praxis International*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 272–87.

ffrench, Patrick and Lack, Roland-François (eds), *The Tel Quel Reader*, Routledge, London, 1998.

Fillion, Réal Robert, "Foucault *contra* Taylor: Whose Sources? Which Self?", *Dialogue*, vol. XXXIV, 1995, pp. 663–74.

Frascati-Lochhead, Marta, *Kenosis and Feminist Theology: The Challenge of Gianni Vattimo*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998.

Freud, Sigmund, *Civilization and its Discontents*, ed. & rev. James Strachey, trans. Joan Riviere, Hogarth Press, London, 1973.

Gatt-Rutter, John, *Writers and Politics in Modern Italy*, Holmes and Meier, New York, 1978.

Geulen, Eva, "A Matter of Tradition", *Telos*, no. 89, Fall 1991, pp. 155–66.

Giddens, Anthony, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives*, Profile Books, London, 1999.

Good, Graham, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay*, Routledge, London, 1998.

Goodman, David, Review of Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*, Steven Seidman and David G. Wagner (eds), *Postmodernism and Social Theory*, Stephen Crook, Jan Pakulski and Michael Waters, *Postmodernisation: Change in Advanced Society*, Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity—Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, *Thesis Eleven*, no. 40, pp. 138–46.

Geuss, Raymond, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

——, *Morality, Culture, and History: Essays on German Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths*, 2 Vols, Penguin Books, London, 1995.

Gurciullo, Sebastian, "Eternal Return as Désœuvrement: Self and Writing", in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, no. 14, Autumn 1997, pp. 46–63.

Gutting, Gary, *Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Habermas, Jürgen, "A Generation Apart from Adorno (An Interview)", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 119–24.

——, "A Reply", in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas's* The Theory of Communicative Action, eds Axel Honneth & Hans Joas, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 214–64.

——, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993.

——, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project", in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*, eds Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves & Seyla Benhabib, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 38–55.

——, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt & Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.

——, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, ed. & trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989.

——, "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 1–18.

——, "A Philosophico–Political Profile", in *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews*, ed. Peter Dews, Verso, London, 1986, pp. 149–89.

——, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.

——, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992.

——, "Theodor Adorno: The Primal History of Subjectivity—Self-Affirmation Gone Wild", in *Philosophical–Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, pp. 99–109.

——, "What Theories Can Accomplish—and What They Can't", interview with Michael Haller in *The Past as Future*, ed. & trans. Max Pensky, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1994, pp. 99–120.

Hacking, Ian, "Self-Improvement", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 235–40.

Hadot, Pierre, "Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 203–24.

——, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, eds Arnold I. Davidson & Michael Chase (trans.), Blackwell, Oxford, 1995.

Halperin, David M., "Bringing Out Michel Foucault", *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 69–93.

——, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995.

Hansen, Miriam, "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer", in *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, ed. Max Pensky, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, pp. 83–111.

Harrison, Thomas, *Essayism: Conrad, Musil and Pirandello*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992.

Hartman, Geoffrey, *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980.

Heidegger, Martin, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Harper and Row, New York, 1973.

——, *Identity and Difference*, Harper and Row, New York, 1969.

——,*Basic Writings: from* Being and Time *(1927) to* The Task of Thinking *(1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell, Harper, San Francisco, 1993, pp. 213–65.

——, "'Only a God Can Save Us': *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger", in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, pp. 91–116.

——, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, Harper and Row, New York, 1977.

——, "Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?", in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 64–79.

Hiley, David R, *Philosophy in Question: Essays on a Pyrrhonian Theme*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998.

Hjort, Mette, "Literature: Romantic Expression or Strategic Interaction?", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in*

Question, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 121–35.

Hohendahl, Peter Uwe, "Introduction: Adorno Criticism Today", *New German Critique*, no. 56, Spring–Summer 1992, pp. 3–15.

——, *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1995.

Hollier, Denis, "The Word of God: 'I am dead'", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992, pp. 129–40.

Hollingdale, R. J., "The Hero as Outside", in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds Bernd Magnus & Kathleen M. Higgins, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 71–89.

Homer, Sean, *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York, 1998.

Honneth, Axel, "Communication and Reconciliation: Habermas' Critique of Adorno", *Telos*, no. 39, Spring 1979, pp. 45–61.

Horton, John, "Charles Taylor: Selfhood, Community and Democracy", in *Liberal Democracy and its Critics: Perspectives in Contemporary Political Thought*, eds April Carter and Geoffrey Stokes, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 155–74.

Hoy, David Couzens, "Foucault and Critical Theory", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 18–32.

Hullot-Kentor, Robert, "Suggested Reading: Jameson on Adorno", *Telos*, no. 89, Fall 1991, pp. 167–77.

——, "Title Essay", *New German Critique*, no. 32, Spring–Summer 1984, pp. 141–50.

Isaac, Jeffrey, "Marxism and Intellectuals", *New Left Review*, II, no. 2, Mar.–Apr. 2000, pp. 111–15.

Jameson, Fredric, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*, Verso, London, 1996.

——, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971.

Janover, Michael, "The Subject of Foucault", in *Foucault: The Legacy*, Clare O'Farrell, Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1997, pp. 215–26.

Jaspers, Karl, *On Max Weber*, ed. John Dreijmanis, Paragon House, New York, 1989.

Jay, Martin, *Adorno*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1984.

——, *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1998.

——, "The Debate over Performative Contradiction: Habermas versus the Poststructuralists", in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, eds Axel Honneth et. al., MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, pp. 261–80.

——, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923–1950*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1973.

——, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994.

——, *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique*, Routledge, New York, 1993.

——, "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in the Twentieth-century French Thought", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 175–204.

——, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984.

——, "Mimesis and Mimetology: Adorno and Lacoue-Labarthe", in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, eds Tom Huhn & Lambert Zuidervaart, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 29–53.

——, *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985.

——, Review of Jürgen Habermas's *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1, pp. 94–112.

Johnson, James, "Communication, Criticism, and the Postmodern Consensus: An Unfashionable Interpretation of Michel Foucault", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 559–83.

Kafka, Franz, *The Collected Aphorisms*, Syrens, London, 1994.

——, *The Complete Short Stories of Franz Kafka*, Minerva, London, 1992.

Kauffmann, R. Lane, "The Skewed Path: Essaying as Unmethodical Method", in *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*, ed. Alexander J. Butrym, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1989, pp. 221–40.

Kearney, Richard, *The Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, Harper Collins, London, 1991.

Klossowski, Pierre, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return", in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 107–20.

Kortian, Gorbis, *Metacritique: The Philosophical Argument of Jürgen Habermas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe & Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Phillip Barnard & Cheryle Lester, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1988.

——, *Retreating the Political*, ed. Simon Sparks, Routledge, London, 1997.

Leslie, Esther, "Introduction to Adorno/Marcuse Correspondence on the German Student Movement", *New Left Review*, I, no. 233, Jan.–Feb. 1999, pp. 118–23.

Lingis, Alfonso, "*The Will to Power*", in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 37–63.

Lucente, Gregory L., *Crosspaths in Literary Theory and Criticism: Italy and the United States*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997.

Lucy, Niall, *Debating Derrida*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995.

Luft, David S., *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture 1880–1942*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980.

Lukács, Georg, *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock, Merlin Press, London, 1974.

——, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock, Merlin Press, London, 1971.

Lyotard, Jean-François, "Adorno as the Devil", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, pp. 127–137.

——, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington & Brian Massumi, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984.

Macey, David, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, Hutchinson, London, 1993.

Macherry, Pierre, *The Object of Literature*, trans. David Macey, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

MacIntyre, Alasdair, "Miller's Foucault, Foucault's Foucault", *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 54–60.

Magnus, Bernd, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1978.

Magnus, B., Stewart, S. & J.-P. Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, Routledge, New York 1993.

Mann, Thomas, *Buddenbrooks*, Vintage Books, New York, 1961.

——, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a friend*, Vintage Books, New York, 1971.

——, *The Magic Mountain*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1971.

——, *The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of* Doctor Faustus, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1961.

Marginson, Simon, *Monash: Remaking the University*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000.

Mehlman, Jeffrey, "Maurice Blanchot", in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 72, pp. 77–82.

Melnick, Daniel C., *Fullness of Dissonance: Modern Fiction and the Aesthetics of Music*, Associated University Presses, London, 1994.

Miller, James, "Foucault's Politics in Biographical Perspective", *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 30–44.

——, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993.

——, "Policing Discourse: A Response", *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 94–9.

Mitzman, Arthur, *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1970.

Morgan, Michael L., "Religion, History and Moral Discourse", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 49–66.

Mouffe, Chantal (ed.), *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Musil, Robert, *The Man Without Qualities*, 3 Vols, Picador, London, 1982.

Nagel, Thomas, *The View From Nowhere*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.

Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. & trans. Peter Connor et. al., University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991.

——, "Of Being-In-Common", in *Community at Loose Ends*, ed. Miami Theory Collective, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, pp. 1–12.

Nehamas, Alexander, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998.

——, "The Ends of Thought", *The New Republic*, 30 May 1988, pp. 32–6.

——, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985.

——, "Nietzsche, Modernity, Aestheticism", in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds Bernd Magnus & Kathleen M. Higgins, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 223–51.

——, "Subject and Abject: The Examined Life of Michel Foucault", *The New Republic*, 15 February 1993, pp. 27–36.

Nicholsen, Shierry Weber, "Adorno in Postmodern Perspective", *Thesis Eleven*, no. 34, 1993, pp. 178–85.

——, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997.

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1974.

——, *Ecce Homo: How One becomes what One is*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, London, 1979.

——, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Random House, New York, 1974.

——, *The Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.

——, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1969.

——, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.

——, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (ed.) & R. J. Hollingdale, Vintage, New York, 1968.

Norris, Chistopher, *Truth and the Ethics of Criticism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994.

——, "Versions of Apocalypse: Kant, Derrida, Foucault", in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, pp. 227–49.

O'Farrell, Clare (ed.), *Foucault: The Legacy*, Queensland University of Technology Publications, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1997.

Orlie, Melissa A., *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997.

Osborne, Peter, "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno", *New German Critique*, no. 56, Spring–Summer 1992, pp. 171–92.

——, "Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism: The Problem of a 'Postmodern' Art", in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Routledge, London, 1989, pp. 23–48.

Paddison, Max, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

——, *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music*, Kahn and Averill, London, 1996.

Patton, Paul, "Foucault's Subject of Power", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 64–77.

——, "Of Power and Prisons: Working Paper on *Discipline and Punish*", in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, eds Meaghan Morris & Paul Patton, Feral Publications, Sydney, 1979, pp. 109–47.

——, "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom", *Political Studies*, no. XXXVII, 1989, pp. 260–76.

Pensky, Max (ed.), "Editor's Introduction: Adorno's Actuality", in *The Actuality of Adorno: Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, pp. 1–21.

Percesepe, Gary John, *Future(s) of Philosophy: The Marginal Thinking of Jacques Derrida*, Peter Lang, New York, 1989.

Perniola, Mario, "The Difference of the Italian Philosophical Culture", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 103–16.

Peters, Michael, *Poststructuralism, Politics and Education*, Bergin and Garvey, Westport, Conn., 1996.

Philp, Mark, "Foucault on Power: A Problem in Radical Translation?", *Political Theory*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 29–52.

Pippin, Robert. B., *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture*, Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, Mass., 1991.

Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Four Dialogues*, Dover Publications, New York, 1992.

Poster, Mark, "Foucault and the Problem of Self-Constitution", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, eds John Caputo & Mark Yount, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1993, pp. 63–80.

Rajchman, John, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985.

——, *Philosophical Events: Essays of the '80s*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991.

——, *Truth and Eros: Foucault, Lacan, and the Question of Ethics*, Routledge, New York, 1991.

Ransom, John S., "Forget Vitalism: Foucault and *Lebensphilosophie*", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 33–47.

Rayner, Jeremy, "Therapy for an Imaginary Invalid: Charles Taylor and the Malaise of Modernity", *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 145–55.

Readings, Bill, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1996.

Regh, William, *Insight and Solidarity: A Study in the Discourse Ethics of Jürgen Habermas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994.

Roberts, David, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1991.

Rorty, Richard, "After Philosophy, Democracy", interview in Giovanna Borradori, *The America Philosopher: Conversations with Quine, Davidson, Putnam, Nozich, Danto, Rorty, Cavell, MacIntyre, & Kuhn*, trans. Rosanna Crocitto, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994, pp. 103–17

——, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

——, "Paroxysms and Politics", *Salmagundi*, no. 97, Winter 1993, pp. 61–8.

Rose, Nikolas, "Authority and the Genealogy of Subjectivity", in *De-Traditionalisation: Authority and Self in an Age of Cultural Uncertainty*, eds P. Heelas, P. Morris & S. Lash, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, pp. 294–327.

Rosen, Michael, "Must We Return to Moral Realism?", *Inquiry*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 183–94.

Said, Edward W, "Adorno as Lateness Itself", in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, pp. 264–81.

——, *Musical Elaborations*, The Welleck Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991.

——, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Vintage, London, 1994.

——, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983.

Schelling, Friedrich(?), "Oldest System Programme of German Idealism", appendix in Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, pp. 265–7.

Schlegel, Friedrich, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991.

Schmidt, James, "Habermas and Foucault", in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*, eds Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves & Seyla Benhabib, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 147–71.

Schoolman, Morton, "Toward a Politics of Darkness: Individuality and Its Politics in Adorno's Aesthetics", *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 57–92.

Schrift, Alan D., *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism*, Routledge, New York, 1995.

——, "Nietzsche's French Legacy", in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, eds Bernd Magnus & Kathleen M. Higgins, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 323–55.

——, "Panopticism and Postmodern Pedagogy", in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, eds John Caputo & Mark Yount, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1993, pp. 127–36.

Schürmann, Reiner, "Deconstruction Is Not Enough: On Gianni Vattimo's Call for 'Weak Thinking'", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 165–76.

Shapiro, Michael J., "Charles Taylor's Moral Subject: *Philosophical Papers, Volumes 1 and 2*", *Political Theory*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 311–23.

Skinner, Quentin, "Modernity and Disenchantment: Some Historical Reflections", in *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 37–48.

——, "Who Are 'We'? Ambiguities of the Modern Self", *Inquiry*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 144–53.

Smart, Barry, "Foucault, Levinas and the Subject of Responsibility", in *The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Jeremy Moss, Sage Publications, London, 1998, pp. 78–92.

Smith, Nicholas H., "Reason after Meaning", in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 131–40.

Snow, Banjamin, "Introduction to Adorno's 'The Actuality of Philosophy'", *Telos*, no. 31, Spring 1977, pp. 113–19.

Solomon, Maynard, "Beethoven and the Enlightenment", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, pp. 146–54.

——, "Beethoven, Sonata, and Utopia", *Telos*, no. 9, Winter 1971, pp. 32–47.

Solomon, Robert C., "Beethoven and the Sonata Form", *Telos*, no. 19, Spring 1974, pp. 141–6.

Stambaugh, Joan, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1972.

Stoekl, Allan, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992.

——, *Politics, Writing, Mutilation: The Cases of Bataille, Blanchot, Roussel, Leiris, and Ponge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985.

Strong, Tracy B., *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975.

Sturrock, John, *The Word from Paris: Essays on Modern French Thinkers and Writers*, Verso, London, 1998.

Subotnik, Rose Rosengard, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991.

Tally, Robert T., Review of Gianni Vattimo, *The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 170–73.

Tiedemann, Rolf, "Concept, Image, Name: On Adorno's Utopia of Knowledge", in *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, eds Tom Huhn & Lambert Zuidervaart, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 123–45.

Van Den Abbeele, Georges, "Introduction", in *Community at Loose Ends*, ed. Miami Theory Collective, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, pp. ix–xxvi.

Veyne, Paul, "The Final Foucault and His Ethics", in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I Davidson, trans. Peter Stastny & Deniz Sengel, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 225–33.

——, "Foucault and Going Beyond (or the Fulfilment of) Nihilism", in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. François Ewald, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1992, pp. 340–43.

Walzer, Michael, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, Basic Books, New York, 1988.

Weber, Max, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1948.

White, Hayden, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1987.

——, "The Italian Difference and the Politics of Culture", *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 117–22.

Wise, Christopher, *The Marxian Hermeneutics of Fredric Jameson*, Peter Lang, New York, 1995.

Witkin, Robert W., *Adorno on Music*, Routledge, London, 1998.

Wolin, Richard, "Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism", *Telos*, no. 67, Spring 1986, pp. 71–86.

Zanini, Adelino, "Weak Thought between Being and Difference", in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, eds Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996, pp. 53–9.

Ziauddin, Sardar, "Surviving the Terminator: the Postmodern Mental Condition", *Futures*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 203–10.