FRENCH HEGEL
FROM SURREALISM TO POSTMODERNISM

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To Diane and Anna

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Introduction

French Hegel and the Unhappy Consciousness

There can be no doubt that twentieth-century French philosophy was deeply engaged with German thinkers: Husserl and Heidegger, Nietzsche and Marx, and Hegel. Of these, it is Hegel who most haunts French thought: nowhere is French philosophy more ambivalent and conflicted in its attitudes toward a philosopher, strenuously resisting and "correcting" Hegel at the very moment it finds him most seductive. The Surrealists want negation, but without limits; Sartre wants negation, but without totality; Derrida and Bataille want negativity, but not its recuperation in a positive result. Even those who are most explicitly anti-Hegelian, such as Deleuze and Foucault, admit their fascination with Hegel's thought, and sometimes inadvertently demonstrate Hegel's influence on them. It's as if French philosophy of the past century had to deny Hegel in order to affirm him, and affirm him in order to deny him.

Most accounts of Hegel's reception in France focus on the French understanding of the dialectic of master and slave in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*[1] and the importance of this reading of Hegel for a theory of history. The hero of this story—and of such proportions as to make even Carlyle blush—is Alexandre Kojève, whose lectures at the École Pratique des Hautes Études from 1933 to 1939[2] have attained mythic status.[3] The grandiose claim that Kojève effectively initiated an entire generation (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Bataille) into the Hegelian mysteries, however, cannot be maintained. As compelling a figure as Kojève no doubt was, Hegel's entry onto the French intellectual scene preceded his celebrated lectures by a decade. The Surrealists were drawn to Hegel's dialectical negations as a means of erasing the divisions between reality and the dream; the Marxists looked to Hegel's "idealist" dialectics to clarify dialectical materialism. Above all, Jean Wahl's 1929 book, *Le*

malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel,[4] has influenced all those French thinkers in this century concerned with irreparable divisions and unbridgeable differences. In varying degrees, this preoccupation extends from existentialism and surrealism all the way through to the various poststructuralist critiques of "totality" and "history." It is markedly present in the thought of Bataille, Sartre, and Derrida. Hegel's description of how a reality divided against itself continually passes from one opposed term to the other, without finding repose or reconciliation, constitutes a dominant theme in French philosophy from the 1920s up to the present.

The aim of this work is to trace the history of this preoccupation with "the unhappy consciousness" through its various manifestations in French thought in the twentieth century, and in so doing to reinterpret the Hegelian legacy in France. My concern is not so much with Hegel as with what the French made of the theme of the unhappy consciousness. Since Jean Wahl's interpretation of the unhappy consciousness is what allowed the rich and varied developments and applications that modern French thought has given it, I will briefly outline that interpretation here, in order to give some preliminary indications of its scope.

1. WAHL ON THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS

Hegel's *Phenomenology* and the Unhappy Consciousness: an Overview

Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a record of the successive appearances (phenomena) of the human spirit throughout its historical development, as expressed in its social and political institutions, mores and philosophies. The end point of this process, and the point of view from which the *Phenomenology* is written, is where Spirit becomes conscious of the necessity of its various phases of development, and understands itself both as a result (insofar as it is the philosophical comprehension of the entire development) and as inseparable from that development (*PS* 2). When Spirit discovers that the truth it had sought outside itself is in fact its entire historical development, comprehended systematically as a series of conceptually related stages that both negate and complement each other, it accomplishes a "return to itself" from the alienation it suffered when it sought its truth in an object outside itself. Spirit's odyssey towards truth is in truth a homecoming, a reconciliation with itself (*PS* 27–28).

All of this can seem rather perplexing unless we recall that for Hegel, Spirit (or Mind) is not identical with the mind of any existing individual (*PS* 16), but encompasses the totality of all human thoughts and actions, and reveals their true meaning as a totality of mutually explicating parts, or a system—one governed by a logic that the philosopher, using a dialectical reason that comprehends the parts in terms of the whole, can uncover and explicate conceptually. On both the

individual and collective level, the meaning of human development for Hegel is progress towards an ever more rational form of existence.[5] The final goal of history is free and rational individuals living in societies governed by laws that guarantee civil freedom and that are the social or collective expression of rationality and freedom. This goal is achieved at a price: "we contemplate history as this slaughter-bench upon which the happiness of nations, the wisdom of states, and the virtues of individuals are sacrificed" (*IPH* 24). But the final result is a State where the power of society is experienced not as an alien force, but as an expression of the individual's own reason and an affirmation of his own rights and duties: each individual is granted recognition from all others through the State's legal guarantee of individual rights. At this point, the estrangement between individuals and the universal, which is a division within Spirit itself, is definitively overcome: each individual finds himself in a collective enterprise which is the work of each and all. Hegel's philosophy is meant to be the expression of this historical culmination—Spirit achieving consciousness of its own fulfillment.

In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the unhappy consciousness is the phase of the development of the freedom of self-consciousness that follows the stages of master and slave, stoicism and skepticism.[6] These stages of self-consciousness represent consciousness' increasing awareness of itself as *negativity*: as the power to negate and transform what stands before it in labor (the slave); the negation of the external and sensible world, which is set over against the infinite power of thought (Stoicism); and finally the negation of existence, including the existence of the subject, in radical doubt (Skepticism). At the stage of the unhappy consciousness, consciousness experiences itself not simply as negativity, but as a nothing, itself negated in its finite and transitory existence; it is a vanishing particular. Over against this nothingness stands the truth of the universal, of infinite thought, which has been projected onto an object outside of consciousness, a transcendent and formless God. This experience is represented historically, says Hegel, by the figure of Abraham, who experiences finite existence as a wandering in a desert of non-being, and for whom God is the infinite Being in relation to which finite being is nothing.

Wahl's Interpretation of the Unhappy Consciousness

In Jean Wahl's book-length study *Le malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel*, the unhappy consciousness is much more than that historically determinate and momentary stage where consciousness alienates the universal and eternal in itself in a transcendent God. Wahl follows Hegel in interpreting this opposition between a wholly "other" infinite God, and the finite, mortal self as an *internal* conflict, within the self. In this conflict, the self opposes its universal and eternal aspects (as infinite thought) to its particular and perishable aspects. But

Wahl goes beyond the letter of the Hegelian text by pointing out that there are many other ways in which the self can divide and oppose itself, and so many other ways for consciousness to be unhappy. The chief merit of Wahl's interpretation, and the one that would influence French thought for decades, is that rather than being a determinate historical stage of spirit, as in Hegel, the unhappy consciousness for Wahl represents every sort of experience of a self divided against itself, and the motor of the dialectic (*LMC* 10). In its unhappy state, the opposed aspects of the self negate each other, without there being a positive "negation of the negation," or synthesis, that would unite the opposed elements of the self and mediate between them. Such unhappiness could be overcome only through the complete reconciliation of the self with itself achieved at the very end of the *Phenomenology*, in an "absolute knowing" that redeems every opposition and division—and the suffering produced by these—by showing them to be necessary to the realization of a self that surmounts and encompasses them.

Taking as a premise Hegel's statement that "the Absolute is a subject," Wahl sees the *Phenomenology*'s "odyssey of the spirit" mirrored in the individual self's dividing itself in order to fully realize its possibilities. For Wahl, it is man's essence that reveals to us the essence of Absolute Spirit, which transcends and negates itself in order to return to itself (*LMC* 140). Hegel's Spirit separates itself from itself through a process of division, differentiation, and articulation, so that the final synthesis achieved by Spirit will not simply repeat Spirit's original simple unity, the tautologous unity of Fichte's "I am I" or Parmenides' "Being is Being," but will consist in an "identity" much richer in content, where the unity revealed is that of a mind divided into faculties of sense, understanding and reason; of a society divided into classes or "estates;" and of science divided into a number of disciplines (*LMC* 138f).[7] In much the same way, says Wahl, the human individual progresses in knowledge by using judgment to draw distinctions between various kinds of things and then relating the different things and their differences to each other systematically, at the same time as he progresses personally by recognizing the conflicts between sensuous impulse and rational duty, between self-interest and the interest of others, between religious piety and duties to the state, and then resolving these conflicts, both by modifying and reshaping the self and by working in concert with others in order to modify and reshape cultural norms. As Wahl summarizes, "in what does life consist if not in separating itself from itself, transcending itself, in order to return into itself? Separation resides in the notion of man himself" (*LMC* 140), whose subjectivity Hegel defined by self-negation (*PS* 51).

Yet the self does not simply stand by and contemplate the negations that divide it; its internal divisions cause the suffering that motivates it to achieve a state of wholeness, in which those aspects of the self it had separated off from itself or opposed to each other are returned to the self and reconciled (*LMC* 7, 82f, 107f). Only when the particular is at home in the universal, the finite in the infi-

nite, the self in the other, and when difference is encompassed in a higher (absolute) identity, are the sufferings of a divided self at an end. For that reason, says Wahl, the unhappy consciousness is the protagonist of the entire *Phenomenology* (*LMC* 187f), and its suffering is the driving force behind every dialectical progression of Spirit, even in its most universal aspect as "the history of humanity" or "the history of God," where "pure negativity" is "the unhappy consciousness of God," "the absolute unrest, the inequality of absolute spirit which creates otherness" (*LMC* 143).

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF WAHL'S INTERPRETATION

In Hegel's figure of the unhappy consciousness, Wahl found a penetrating analysis of an internally divided and self-alienated subject, a subject that strives vainly for synthesis but instead oscillates between self and not-self, being and nothingness (*LMC* 169, 188). Wahl was not alone in this. Taking their cue from Wahl, other French thinkers used Hegel's descriptions of the unhappy consciousness to understand the divisions between the unconscious and consciousness, between real needs and their mystified ideological representations, between what is meant and what is said, between thought and being. Beginning in the 1920s, there was a flourishing of literature in which the unhappy consciousness is a central theme, and which relates Hegel to Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard. From Surrealism, to Marxism, to existentialism, the Hegelian unhappy consciousness assumes a key place in French thought.

This does not mean that French thought in this period became "Hegelian" in any orthodox sense. Although the theorists of the 1920s and 1930s found Hegel's theory of the unhappy consciousness a useful diagnostic tool, most refused the Hegelian solution of a speculative synthesis which could reconcile oppositions and differences in a higher unity. For some, such as the French Marxists, the moment of synthesis is possible, but is to be brought about by means of a social revolution that will change the world, rather than by a philosophical science that would demonstrate the rational necessity of what already exists. For them, the unhappy consciousness is not the "essence" of the human condition, but the alienation of productive activity under capitalism. Others, in a perhaps more radical way, refuse the moment of synthesis altogether, seeing the divisions that render consciousness unhappy as inescapable, and the synthesis that would mend these divisions as worse than the "unhappiness" it was meant to "cure."

Although I will be concerned with both tendencies in this volume, I will focus on those philosophers who are chiefly preoccupied with working out the implications of the impossibility of any final synthesis. If there is no synthesis, then there can be no dialectic, properly speaking, not even a materialist one, but only anti-thetics, the play of opposed terms that negate and pass into each other without ever coinciding in a meaningful whole. Dialectics requires the mediation

of a third term that comprises both thesis and anti-thesis,[8] and without this encompassing moment of synthesis, differences are left unresolved and unreconciled, embroiled in a conflict without end or meaning. Whether the end of history is conceived of in a Marxist or Hegelian way, if there is no final synthesis in an ideal society that would resolve all antagonisms, conflicts lose whatever justification they may have as necessary moments of a historical development towards a completely just state of affairs.

It is not difficult to see how the early forms of existentialism, particularly as a "philosophy of the absurd," follow from a refusal of synthesis that makes the unhappy consciousness a condition from which there is no escape.[9] The necessity and inescapability of internal division and of difference, the impossibility of synthesis and dialectics, are also hallmarks of everything in current French philosophy that goes by the name of "postmodern." The vindication of the unhappy consciousness as an unsurpassable moment thus links such philosophers as Derrida and Foucault with those of an earlier generation, such as Wahl and Sartre. Recent critiques of the Hegelo-Marxist theory of history, of the unitary and autonomous self, and of the linguistic sign as a univocal signifier, share not so much an "anti-foundationalism" as an anti-finalism, a denial of any ultimate *telos* that would allow one to overcome divisions and to understand them as interrelated moments of a fully realized "totality." In their celebration of difference and division, recent French philosophers are the heirs of a preoccupation with the unhappy consciousness that goes back to Jean Wahl.[10] Moreover, some theorists of difference are directly inspired by Wahl (Sartre, Derrida), and others are profoundly influenced by Wahl's Hegel interpretation, either directly or through the intermediary of Hyppolite (Deleuze, Foucault), such that when they reject Hegel, it is above all Wahl's unhappy consciousness, with its *déchirement* and suffering, that they reject.

3. AIMS OF THIS STUDY

These very preliminary reflections, oversimplified as they are, nevertheless allow us to see how making the unhappy consciousness central to the French understanding of Hegel makes possible a reinterpretation of the reception of Hegel in France. Instead of seeing French Hegelianism as centered on the problem of history and the state—an interpretation that focuses on the notions of totality and dialectic, and on such figures as Kojève, Jean Hyppolite, Henri Lefebvre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Eric Weil, and Lucien Goldmann—we can see the theme of the unhappy consciousness as bringing together such apparently diverse figures as Benjamin Fondane, Georges Bataille, Alexandre Koyré, André Breton, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, and even Michel Foucault. In what follows, I will not be concerned with the truth or accuracy of French interpretations of Hegel, but with the effects of the theme of the unhappy consciousness on French

philosophy, a theme that takes on a life of its own in the various uses the French make of it. Making the unhappy consciousness central to the story of the reception of Hegel in France will bring to the foreground figures who are usually neglected or relegated to secondary roles. By the same token, it should become apparent how much myth the standard accounts contain, particularly the commonplace that Hegel's influence in France began with Kojève and ended with structuralism and post-structuralism. Marx wrote that the past haunts the minds of the living like "an incubus."[11] Hegel's ghost haunts French philosophy still.

Although the material of this study is presented in more or less chronological order, this book is not meant to be a history of the reception of Hegel in France. The focus on the theme of the unhappy consciousness by itself narrows down the field of French philosophers influenced by Hegel, and I have no wish to simply repeat what other studies of Hegel's impact on French thought have already covered. In the second place, I have been more concerned to trace thematic links between different French philosophers than to demonstrate relations of influence, and have tried to strike a balance between chronology and thematic linkage. The first two chapters deal with the reception of Hegel's thought early in this century, and with the emergence in the 1920s and 30s of a dominant "anthropological" reading of Hegel that focused on Spirit at the expense of Hegel's logic and philosophy of nature. This anthropological turn was decisive for French Hegel interpretation, as it allowed Hegel's thought to be brought within the ambit of movements such as surrealism, Marxism, and existentialism, and Wahl's focus on the unhappy consciousness is as important in that regard as Kojève's more famous exegesis of the master-slave dialectic. The central chapters look at French philosophers and writers of the 1930s and 40s who responded directly to the problem of the unhappy consciousness: the pre-war existentialists Wahl and Fondane, the Surrealists, the Marxist Henri Lefebvre, Bataille, and Sartre. The final two chapters of the book deal with the persistence of Hegelian negativity in Derrida and the attempt to leave Hegel behind in the "new empiricism" of Foucault and Deleuze.

Chapter One

The Anthropological Turn

1. THE PROBLEM OF PAN-LOGICISM

At least part of the responsibility for the widespread misapprehension that a genuine knowledge of Hegel did not exist in France prior to the publication of Jean Hyppolite's *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de Hegel* in 1946[1] and Kojève's *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* in 1947 lies in the enthusiastic response these works received in postwar France.[2] Later, although more knowledgeable commentators recognized the importance of the pre-war works of Jean Wahl[3] and Henri Lefebvre,[4] they nevertheless gave the impression that Hegel became known in France through his adversaries: Marxism (Lefebvre) and Kierkegaardian existentialism (Wahl).[5] Otherwise, it was said, Hegel was unknown in France, not taught at the universities and entirely outside the mainstream of French intellectual life. In Sartre's famous words, "the horror of the dialectic was such that Hegel himself was unknown to us."[6]

True, a certain Hegel, the Hegel of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, did not become known in France prior to the Marxist and existentialist commentaries that began appearing in the 1920s. Not until after 1945 did this "dramatic" Hegelianism, which centered on the theme of historical becoming through conflict, come to be seen as compatible with existentialism and Marxism,[7] and even as encompassing and surpassing both these tendencies.[8] Since it was this interpretation that placed Hegelianism at the center of postwar French thought, it was perhaps only natural that post–1945 Hegel interpreters would see the story of Hegel in France in terms of their own existentialist and Marxist precursors.[9] In so doing, however, they passed over sixty years of French writing on Hegel. Until the 1920s, the French almost always understood Hegelianism to mean the "System" set forth in Hegel's

Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences, which had been translated into French, albeit abominably,[10] in the 1860s.[11] After 1945, it was easy to forget that the Hegel interpretations of the 1920s and 1930s were in many ways a reaction against this older interpretation of Hegel. Unless we bear this in mind, we cannot understand what is at issue in modern French Hegel interpretation.[12]

The transition from the *Encyclopedia* to the *Phenomenology*, which is essentially the transition from an epistemological to an historical reading of Hegel, responded to a problem which continues to vex French Hegel interpretation, namely: in what domain does the Hegelian dialectic properly apply? If the generation of French philosophers that came of age in the 1950s and 1960s found the "humanistic" or "anthropological" version of Hegel to be a mystification, we should not lose sight of the fact that the version in question was itself an attempt to correct the mystifications seen as inhering in the earlier, epistemologically oriented interpretation.

The mystification with which Hegelianism was charged, then as later, is "panlogicism," in essence, the forcing of all phenomena into the Procrustean bed of the System. This is the point at which the Hegelian system has been most attacked by French philosophers from the 1920s onward. Briefly, it is the problem of the extent to which Hegelian Reason, which seeks to incorporate its Other, implicitly distorts and even does violence to anything which resists or stands outside it.[13] This criticism had been levelled against Hegel by French critics from very early on, in many of the same terms used much later by Foucault and Derrida. The attempt to limit the application of the Hegelian dialectic to human history, later denounced as humanism, aimed precisely at overcoming these objections.[14]

2. THE "CONCRETE UNIVERSAL" IN FRENCH EPISTEMOLOGY BEFORE 1923

Because of French philosophy's preoccupation with science in the nineteenth century, Hegel's philosophy of history was at first regarded as secondary in importance to his logic, at least as the French understood it in its *Encyclopedia* version. The order of the day was to create a new epistemology or philosophy of science adequate to recent scientific developments, and it was thought that Hegel's dialectical method and concept of a "concrete universal" could be used to this end. So it was that the first French Hegel interpreters, although they formed no Hegelian school such as those in Italy or England (*EHPP* 225), saw in Hegel's dialectic a way of overcoming the epistemological aporiae of empiricism and rationalism. Empiricism, it was thought, could not account for the logic or structures of wholes simply by generalizing from the characteristics of their component parts; to do so would be to miss precisely those properties that belonged to the whole in virtue of its being a whole—a system of relations between parts. Cartesian or Kantian rationalism, on the other hand, although it was suited to comprehending relations, utilized a static and abstract notion of reason, one eminently suited to mathematical analysis or geometry, but incapable of accounting

for the constructive syntheses found in the discoveries of nineteenth-century science, such as biological evolution, electromagnetism or societal development, realities which were thought to be concrete and dynamic totalities.

Hegelianism promised a way out of this impasse by proposing a fluid and expanded reason that could grasp the concrete logic of becoming, and overcome the accepted distinctions between reason and sense, the contingent and the necessary, the particular and the universal. The aim was to grasp the *singular* universality of concrete and particular wholes, instead of sacrificing the concreteness of the particular to the abstract universality of the concept, or the intelligibility of the concept to the immediacy of intuition. Hegelian dialectic would allow one to grasp objects as totalities in the process of becoming, the development of which corresponds to "moments" of the Hegelian Idea, "the succession of incompletely real and incompletely intelligible theses and anti-theses, which reason unites in increasingly rich syntheses, in an ever more harmonious Whole."[15]

It is easy to see why the spirit of Hegelian project, seen in this way, would attract even those who rejected the letter of Hegelian metaphysics. The neo-Kantian, Émile Boutroux, is representative in this respect.[16] Boutroux admires Hegel's attempt to find a dynamic reason that penetrates to the heart of things, rather than grasping the husk of their rational form. Hegel's reason does not stand over against Being, but animates it (100) by resolving contradictions that exist in things (*in subjecto*) rather than in terms (*in adjecto*), and does this by allowing the opposed terms to "evolve" into a higher synthesis that encompasses both, rather than by cancelling out one or the other of them (95–96): "Hegelian logic wants the irrational, with the antinomies it engenders, to be the condition of the concept, of reason as a living and effective reality" (101). Instead of discarding the irrational as unintelligible, Hegel wishes to grasp it as a necessary moment of the intelligibility of the real development in things. In that way, even the apparently unintelligible—the accidental, the merely contingent, the bare particular—is brought within the scope of a principle of intelligibility that goes beyond mere conceptual analysis.

Even though Boutroux himself did not think that Hegel succeeded in "enlarging the conception of Reason," he considered this task essential if reason were to be made sufficiently "supple" and "lively" to deal with new developments in science. Some forty years later, Merleau-Ponty concurred: "Hegel . . . inaugurates the attempt to explore the irrational and to integrate it into an enlarged reason, which remains the task of our century. He is the inventor of that Reason which is vaster than the understanding, which is capable of respecting the variety and singularity of psychic processes, civilizations, methods of thought, and the contingency of history, but which does not renounce dominating them in order to lead them to their proper truth."[17]

Precisely this Hegel, the philosopher of reconciliation through reason and all-encompassing syntheses, would be vehemently rejected by the post-1960

French thinkers, for reasons already given by Boutroux. Hegel's reason "transcends, absorbs, transforms, in short eliminates intuition as such, just as it eliminates the accidental, the contingent, the given, the individual;" instead of a genuine synthesis of the universal and the singular, Hegel gives us a "concrete universal" which stands over *against* the individual, most notably in the form of the Hegelian State (105). In a truly concrete thought, the individual would not disappear, as happens in Hegel (111). But since Hegel's logic is one of synthesis, it cannot help but consider individuals only as opposed terms that will be united in synthesis, and "mutilates reality" by considering everything *other* as *contradictory*.[18] So although it would be unfair to accuse Hegel of an abstract pan-logicism, or of "rationalizing the real" in the way that any conceptualizing account of reality must,[19] Hegel is guilty of "a concrete pan-logicism" (105), one which leads straight to the terror of the absolute state.

This sort of charge against Hegel has become something of a commonplace over the past thirty years: a reason that seeks to be all-inclusive falsifies reality by suppressing or repressing its "other," much as the police state achieves a certain homogeneity by repressing dissidence. For the first wave of Hegel interpreters as well, there was a strong suspicion that Hegel's expanded conception of Reason was in reality a kind of fatalism which falsified facts to fit the *a priori* demands of the "march of world spirit." Nowhere was this truer than in Hegel's philosophy of history, which culminates in "Germanic" civilization, of which the final and most rational realization was the Prussian state.

Whether or not this interpretation of Hegel is a caricature is not the issue; given that it was widely accepted, making Hegel acceptable in France would require separating his logic from his odious philosophy of history. That meant, in particular, rejecting Hegel's claim that all phenomena are the product of a universal Spirit that stands behind them and rules over them, and confining his logic to making intelligible the empirical genesis of totalities, and the relations between whole and part in their development (in organisms, societies, chemical reactions, and so on.) In short, it meant abandoning the speculative side of Hegel and making him into a philosopher of science. Octave Hamelin, for example, looked to Hegel for "a principle which would be both a source of intelligibility, that is, of necessary connection, and of fecundity, or indefinitely new production," a method of "deduction by synthesis."[20] It was a matter of going beyond a reason capable only of dividing and classifying to conception of reason as productive.

Making Hegel into an epistemologist or a philosopher of method entailed a drastic reduction of the scope of Hegelian philosophy, not to mention a distortion of Hegel's intentions. Even so, French acceptance of Hegel was limited. The idea of a neo-Hegelian philosophy of science did not stand up to the onslaught of French neo-Kantian criticism of the sort meted out by André Lalande and Léon Brunschvicg.[21] For these critics, the "concrete universal" was not a solution to philosophical difficulties, but an escape hatch, a merely verbal way of solving the problem. The very idea of "a concrete universal" was an intellectual "seduction,"

based not on the requirements of science but on an irrational Romantic longing for organic unity. The truly concrete, said Brunschvicg, was nothing other than the totality of positive, empirical science, not some synthesis of thought and feeling or reason and unreason (*Progrès*, 397–98). Thus, for the neo-Kantians, the Hegelian idea of a "concrete universal" was not simply mistaken, but dangerous. Brunschvicg quite explicitly regards Hegel as a Romantic,[22] and Romanticism as a turn away from the true path of Kantian reason, and indeed as a form of irrationalism. Hegel's attempt to incorporate the irrational into a new kind of Reason, Brunschvicg claimed, could only come at the expense of the genuine analytical reason of Descartes and Kant.[23] This sort of charge was not new, and was part and parcel of the then-current belief in the superiority of supposedly "rational" French culture over "irrational" German culture.[24] As evidence of Hegel's irrationalism, Brunshvicg pointed to the "emotional" or "*pathétique*" character of Hegel's dialectic, especially in passages such as the introduction to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Hegel speaks of consciousness' struggle to attain the absolute standpoint as "a way of doubt and despair," a series of self-negations in which consciousness tears itself away from the illusions it took to be its own truth, and so "suffers violence by its own hand" (*Progrès*, 383–84). The element of pathos in this dialectic, far from making it more attractive by emphasizing its "existential" character, was for Brunschvicg merely a sign of its illogicality, and fit with the view already put forward by Lucien Herr that the progression from one stage to the next in Hegel's dialectic was based more on Hegel's emotional make-up than on logic.[25]

In Brunschvicg's view, the emotional character of Hegel's dialectic rendered the whole of Hegelian philosophy a dangerous illusion. Instead of recognizing the gap between reason and reality, Hegel's "impatience for a conclusion" leads him to bring about an irrational mixture of being and thought in his supposed "synthesis," a witches' brew of a "logic militant" with a "history triumphant" (400–1), one that in its haste to find a concrete universal leads to the subordination of the individual under totalitarianisms of the right and left (428–30). In short, there was no possibility of constructing a Hegelian epistemology innocent of Hegel's pernicious philosophy of history and the state; the two were, in the end, inseparable (397f). Through Brunschvicg's great influence, by the 1920s Hegel had been in large measure relegated to the margins of French intellectual life,[26] in no small part because of the suspicion that Hegelian pan-logicism formed the basis for the "pan-Germanism" which the French blamed for the 1914–1918 war.[27]

3. HEGEL'S RETURN: FROM EPISTEMOLOGY TO HISTORY

After Brunschvicg's critique of the "concrete universal" as the product of an irrational longing for unity, it became apparent that if Hegel were to be absolved of the charge of pan-logicism, this could not be done by making Hegel into an epistemologist and discarding his philosophy of history. Perhaps, it came to be felt,

the real blame for Hegel's pan-logicism lay with his logic itself. As Alexandre Koyré, an influential member of a new generation of Hegel interpreters, noted in 1930, Hegelianism "is a pan-logicism only if one adopts Hegelian logic" (*EHPP* 232n), that is, the assumption of the identity of thought and being, since it is this that leads to the belief that what is rationally necessary must also exist, and hence that what exists is identical to the ideas we form of it, provided that these are rational. Precisely this over-hasty equation of the rational with the real in the "concrete universal" is what Brunschvicg took to be the root of Hegel's "worship of the state." If one could avoid this unwarranted equation of thought with being, then perhaps one could overcome the problem of falsifying reality to make it conform to the demands of philosophical speculation.

The trick would be to find a domain in which the equation of thought and being, necessary for the Hegelian dialectic to have any purchase on reality and any explanatory use, would not be a dangerous mystification. In a surprising reversal of the earlier strategy, the best hope for Hegelian philosophy, it was thought, was not Hegel's logic, with its unreal and wholly speculative dialectic, but his philosophy of spirit, only this time interpreted as a philosophy of freedom and of action. By 1940, the transition was so complete that Hyppolite would consider the "concrete universal" not as an epistemological ideal or method, but as "the relation, which today one would call existential, between the freedom that transcends all situations, and the particular situation, which is always that of man and history."[28]

The basis for this transition was laid during the 1920s and 1930s. Despite what Sartre and others have claimed, even during the ascendancy of neo-Kantianism, Hegel's philosophy did not pass into complete obscurity. There were Alain's courses on Hegel at the Lycée Henri IV from 1923–1928,[29] which were attended by Hyppolite and students of the École Normale,[30] including perhaps Sartre. Although the Lycée Henri IV certainly fell below the Sorbonne in prestige, Alain's influence on the coming generation of philosophers and intellectuals, the *génération intellectuelle* of Sartre, Aron, Lévi-Strauss, Nizan, Canguilhem, Beauvoir, and Merleau-Ponty, should not be underestimated.[31] Alain is certainly no Hegelian, and although his sympathetic presentation of Hegel did not counterbalance the philosophical establishment's solidly negative view, it did provide an opening to Hegel's thought for the generation of philosophers that rose to prominence after 1945, especially as his reading emphasized the "existential" elements of Hegel's thought.[32] In addition to Alain's courses, Charles Andler's 1928–1929 lectures at the very center of French intellectual life, the Collège de France, also focused on the "anthropological" aspects of Hegel's religious philosophy and *Phenomenology*;[33] the latter formed the basis for Andler's article for the 1931 special Hegel issue of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*,[34] an issue often credited with helping to spark the Hegel "revival" of the 1930s.

But if Alain and Andler kept Hegel's philosophy before the university students of the 1920s, they did not undertake to absolve him of the charge of pan-

logicism. That task fell first to Victor Basch, whose *Les doctrines politiques des philosophes classiques d'Allemagne* (1927)[35] was, by his own admission, an attempt to rehabilitate Hegel.[36] As a Sorbonne professor and president of the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*, Basch spoke with some authority; he was prominent enough that his sympathy for German philosophy led to his classes being disrupted by Royalists, Phalangists, and members of Maurras's Action Française,[37] while his well-known involvement with the cause of human rights and pacifism would remove any suspicion that he was an apologist for German militarism or imperialism. Basch would try to clear Hegel of the related charges of pan-logicism and pan-Germanism by presenting him as a philosopher of freedom. For Hegel does not, says Basch, subordinate the individual to the state; on the contrary, Hegel's state replaces arbitrary will and brute force with a system of laws under which the individual is guaranteed certain rights. As in Rousseau, the state marks the transition from the rule of animal nature and blind necessity to that of the rule of reason and moral freedom, from actions governed by impulse to actions based on rational and universal law (297). Laws for Hegel are the rational codification of the customs of a people or society, and although Hegel holds that these *völkische* customs form the basis of any concrete morality, this no more makes Hegel a pan-Germanist than it does Durkheim, who held the same view (295).[38] In any case, argues Basch, Hegel's state, unlike Plato's, must balance the social character of morality with Christianity's respect for the conscience of the individual, and actually enshrines that respect in law. Private right, for Hegel, is a synthesis of individual autonomy and the universal will of a people, since rights depend on social recognition backed by state sanctions.[39] Rather than trampling on individual freedom, then, Hegel's state allows it its fullest expression (303–5), and for that reason Hegel is more rightly counted a precursor of "the socialism of Marx, and even of Proudhon" (311) than of Fascism.[40]

Like his contemporary Bernard Groethuysen, Basch tried to portray Hegelianism as essentially progressive, whatever the intentions of Hegel the man.[41] However, making Hegel's philosophy relevant to "progressive" politics would not be enough to absolve Hegel of the charge of pan-logicism in the eyes of those who regarded Marxism itself as a rationalist fatalism, one that forces empirical history into an *a priori* theoretical framework.[42] Whether or not Hegel's philosophy was pan-logicist came down to this: was Hegelian history a "slaughter-bench" in which the individual is sacrificed to the idea and empirical facts discarded in favor of *a priori* schemata, or did it exhibit a concrete, dialectical logic that remained true to the reality it described?

The question would be decided by making Hegel's philosophy of history a philosophy of the realization of freedom through human action. Alain, and later his student, Hyppolite,[43] argued that Hegel's doctrine that the realization of spirit requires that nature be transformed in accordance with the demands of autonomous reason is implicitly a philosophy of action, and even a form of historical materialism. Hegel finds progress in history, says Alain, because he finds

a unity of spirit and matter in action, which gives form to matter in view of an end (*Idées*, 225–26, 245–46, 257). According to Alain, for Hegelian thought "History would be an endless revolution" (*Idées*, 252), since, as Hyppolite later explained, "At each revolution, social substance is further penetrated by the conscious subject," until the contradictions between the individual and society, freedom and nature are overcome in a society in which each individual finds himself in the collective enterprise (*l'oeuvre générale*).[44] Rather than sacrificing the individual at the altar of Universal Spirit, in a kind of historicist pantheism,[45] "Hegelianism," wrote Alain, "would be . . . a humanism," since the realization of spirit through human historical action would also be the concrete realization of human freedom.[46]

Here was a way of getting around the charge of pan-logicism, and in particular the accusation that Hegel's philosophy of history is a fatalism in which human beings are the mere playthings of World-Spirit. If the *logos* that rules history does not stand above it like some puppeteer pulling the strings, but is simply the immanent logic of human self-development through action, then it is hard to make the charge of pan-logicism stick. Spirit does not have to infuse being with reason by animating it, as Boutroux would have it, nor is there a gap between thought and reality that is being forced closed by the demands of the system. Rather, in human action, thought and being, freedom and nature are already one, and the dialectic, rather than having to join these two terms together, merely has to trace the course of the development of the two as they are unified in human history.[47]

Similarly, in his contribution to the 1931 Hegel issue of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*,[48] Nicolai Hartmann argued that if anything were to be saved from the Hegelian enterprise, one would have to confine the dialectic to real conflicts and real solutions, such as those described in Hegel's analysis of the master and slave. Transposed to the realm of concepts, however, the dialectic is "without foundation in reality," and Hartmann singles out the dialectic of Being and Nothingness in the *Logic* as a particularly egregious case: real being and real nothingness do not really run into each other and fuse in becoming, unlike the *concepts* of "Being" and "Nothingness," which pass into each other in thought because of their shared total lack of determinacy. In the case of master and slave, by contrast, the master's dependency on the slave makes him the slave of the slave in reality, so that here there is a real dialectical progression through real negations.[49]

On the other hand, confining the dialectic to history meant that there could be no dialectic of Being or of nature. Outside of human existence, Being does not act—transform nature for the sake of an end—and so in and by itself, it cannot be said to be united with thought—at least not without supposing that it is the product of a Spirit which is transcendent to human action and history, which is precisely the pan-logicist supposition that the new interpretation sought to avoid.[50] By the same token, nature, having no memory of its development and no explicit

conception of its goal, cannot be said to have a history, but only a past.[51] History is not the mere passage of time or the succession of stages of life from birth through old age and death, but the negation of the present for the sake of an end, and memory's retention of the past as what has been transcended in action; only then is history present to consciousness as the record of self-development through work upon nature, including one's own nature. True history requires that one transcend nature instead of remaining within it; for that reason, only man has a history. A Hegelianism that confined the dialectic to history would thus be a philosophical anthropology instead of a general metaphysics.[52]

4. CONCLUSION

The emerging importance of Hegel as a philosopher of history during the period from 1920 to 1940, and of the connection between Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, is well known. My point here, however, is that this version of Hegel was a reinterpretation, an attempt to overcome what were seen as the deficiencies of the earlier interpretation. Contrary to post–1945 commentators, the pan-logicism controversy makes it clear that Hegel was never absent from the French intellectual scene. Yet the post-war interpretations reflect the fact that by 1940, the Hegel whose System was to provide the basis for a new epistemology had yielded to Hegel the philosopher of history and human existence. Because this transition was so complete, the older interpretation was almost entirely forgotten, making French interest in Hegel appear to be the invention of the 1930s, a product of the emerging French interest in phenomenology, existentialism, and Marxism.

It is ironic that this "humanist" version of Hegel would later be castigated as a mystification when it was arrived at precisely in order to find a domain in which the Hegelian dialectic could be applied without falsifying the facts and without confusing concepts with things.[53] Whether or not this version succeeded, its ambition was to limit Reason's empire in order to save the contingent, the particular, and the irrational from the tyranny of an idealism that identifies the actual with the rational. Quite clearly, in the view of the critics of Hegel who emerged during this same period, and of those who would dominate after 1960, this effort was contaminated by ambiguity, since it wished to criticize Hegelianism only in order to preserve it. For those who came later, such criticism did not go nearly far enough. It did, however, set the stage for the anthropological interpretation of Hegel that dominated French thought up until the 1960s.

Chapter Two

Pan-Tragicism

Within the broader anthropological turn toward a historicist reading of Hegel, a decisive move occurred when Alexandre Koyré and Jean Wahl discerned an anthropological problematic at the very core of Hegel's system, in the philosophical "notion" (*Begriff*) itself.[1] The origins of this re-interpretation can be traced as far back as Victor Delbos' Sorbonne lectures on post-Kantian philosophy in 1909,[2] which argued that in Hegel, the initial or immediate moment (the thesis) is conditioned by the resulting synthesis, which thus "mediates" and precedes the origin, and is thereby "doubled" into both the origin of the "original" thesis and its result; the effects of this line of thought extend, via Hyppolite, at least as far as Derrida. When Wahl and Koyré followed up on this insight in 1929–1934 and found that it was possible to interpret the logic of the notion in terms of the structures of consciousness, in particular in terms of the unhappy consciousness, the resulting reinterpretation of Hegel's logic made this "doubling" into an antithetics without synthesis or reconciliation, a play of opposed terms within a unity that continually subverts and divides itself, a tragic self-division. For Wahl and Koyré, it is a matter of finding the painful "restlessness" of the unhappy consciousness in the concept, and since the *Begriff* governs every aspect of the System, this places tragic self-division in being itself: a "pan-tragicism" that Hyppolite argues is also a pan-logicism. This logic of division, "doubling" and "duplicity" is at the core of Derrida's critique of "presence," which, despite Derrida's disavowals of "the pathos of negativity," makes its own peculiar use of the pan-tragicism of Wahl, Koyré, and Hyppolite.

1. FROM DELBOS TO DERRIDA: THE SYNTHESIS AS ORIGIN

What most struck Delbos about the moment of "synthesis" is that it is both the *origin* and the *result* of a dialectical progression, and it is this feature that would

lead Delbos to identify the moment of synthesis with Hegel's *Begriff*, and the latter with an Absolute Subject. On the one hand, the moment of synthesis for Hegel is the result of spirit's self-development through increasingly inclusive and determinate conceptions, and so is the end-point of a dialectical development (*RMM* 32 [1925]: 271–73). Because speculative reason is not content with apprehending distinctions, but instead seeks to grasp opposed terms in relation to each other (278), it must go beyond the distinctions it has produced and determine their inter-relations by reference to a higher term that encompasses them all, and this higher term is the synthesis, an identity that surpasses and yet preserves the oppositions contained within it (*RMM* 35 [1928]: 550). Hence it is the synthesis alone that is the true notion (*Begriff*), since it is through the synthesis that opposed terms are brought into relation to each other, and in such a way that their mutual implication can be apprehended *systematically*, as parts of an articulated whole. The *Begriff*, then, is already the system, and the synthesis is the *Begriff*.[3]

Delbos' most important insight is that the synthesis—the whole—is *prior* to its parts, and prior to the opposing terms from which it only *apparently* emerges as a resolution. The Hegelian synthesis is not implicit in the thesis and anti-thesis, but "is genuinely creative; it is the *reason* for the moments it subordinates and comprises," in the sense of being both their *cause* and their *goal* (*RMM* 32 [1925]: 279; my emphasis). Thesis and anti-thesis exist in order that the synthesis that resolves them may come into being, and it is only through the synthesis that relates them that thesis and anti-thesis can be posited as contraries. The chief interest in this interpretation is the implication that the synthesis precedes and doubles itself. Since the synthesis is the condition of the thesis and anti-thesis, and yet results from the union of these, it is its own condition of possibility, and in that sense, *prior to itself*. Since the synthesis is also the end (*telos*) towards which thesis and anti-thesis tend, the end (synthesis) is a beginning *prior* to the "immediate" beginning (thesis). As Delbos points out, this is merely an instance of Hegel's general rule that "the higher is the reason for the lower" (*RMM* 32 [1925]: 279). Because the *Begriff* is a synthesis that conditions itself through its own ends, and is in that sense the cause of itself, it must, says Delbos, be thought of as an Absolute Subject (*RMM* 32 [1925]: 272; *RMM* 28 [1931]: 38). As in Kant, the Hegelian synthesis is both the conditioned and the conditioning, but understood temporally (as the conditioning of the past by a future end) and subjectively (as a subject spontaneously affecting and determining itself). Only in this way could the *Begriff* partake of the autonomy and self-sufficiency of Reason itself.

The implications of Delbos' emphasis on the temporal structure of the *Begriff* would not be brought out for nearly two decades, when Koyré related it to Heidegger's notion of "temporality," which holds that the future is "prior" to the past. Not until much later, in Derrida's philosophy, would French thought work out the implications of the idea that the synthesis is a prior condition of the first term (thesis), an origin of the origin, but one that is not "given" or "present," but

rather always a result, and so subsequent to itself. In fact, Derrida's description of a "non-originary origin" that both precedes and is subsequent to itself, and is so irreducibly double that even in the first instance it is a repetition, strongly resembles Delbos' interpretation of the *Begriff* as a synthesis that returns to itself from its future. Derrida writes: "The present offers itself as such, appears, presents itself, opens the stage (*scène*) of time and the time of the stage . . . only in repetition, in representation. . . . For if one appropriately conceives the *horizon* of dialectics—outside a *conventional* Hegelianism—one understands, perhaps, that dialectics is the original movement of finitude, of the unity of life and death, of difference, of original repetition, that is, of the origin of tragedy as the absence of a simple origin. In this sense, dialectics is tragedy, the only possible affirmation to be made against the philosophical or Christian idea of pure origin, against 'the spirit of beginnings' " (*WD* 248).[4] The question is how Derrida may lay claim to a conception of "origin" bearing the marks of Hegelian synthesis, while at the same time denying both the possibility of such a synthesis and the dialectic of thesis and anti-thesis for which this synthesis, and in particular in the form of an *absolutely self-conditioned subject*, is the necessary foundation. How, in other words, could there be a doubling of origin such as occurs when the apparently third term, synthesis, stands at the origin of the immediate origin when for Derrida, opposed terms pass into one another but "*without ever* constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics"?[5] Although Derrida interprets this doubling as an "originary synthesis," or as a never-present "originary trace" indicated only by its after-effects, the logic of this trace is that of "retaining *the other as other* in the same," very much as the logic of the *Begriff* is that of the opposition of thesis and anti-thesis in a "same" that has already divided itself (see *OG* 62f). What is at issue is what difference lies between Derrida's logic, in which the other is retained *as other*, and the Hegelian logic of an "identity of identity and difference" in a synthesis that sublates *and preserves* difference in a higher identity, an identity that is by no means the simple identity of "A=A." The full answer involves Derrida's replacement of dialectics by instituted and material systems of differences (writing), and is the focus of chapter seven. The short answer is that doubling without synthesis fractures and sets adrift all terms and concepts.

2. JEAN WAHL: THE *BEGRIFF*, SUFFERING, AND RECONCILIATION

To see how the Hegelian dialectic moves from duplicity to tragedy in Derrida, we must look to the work of Jean Wahl, who was not only familiar with Delbos' work,[6] but influenced Derrida's teacher, Hyppolite, and later supervised Derrida's research. Wahl's approach to Hegel's *Begriff* retains the logic of duplicity Delbos had emphasized, but bases this logic in the structures of consciousness, and

indeed, in the suffering resulting from consciousness' negation of itself. According to Wahl, Hegel's search for a "concrete universal," the speculative *Begriff* that overcomes and reconciles oppositions, was motivated not by purely theoretical concerns, but by the feeling that "abstraction is by its very definition a dismemberment of life" (*LMC* v).[7] When Hegel unites opposed terms in the *Begriff*, Wahl says that Hegel has found a philosophical way of arriving at the kind of wholeness which he had earlier sought in love and in religion. The Hegelian "notion" aims at a synthesis of the duality of the sensible and the intelligible that preserves their differences, a unity of duality (difference) and unity (identity) that Wahl calls a "triplicity," and behind which we see reflected the Triune God. Even though, as a rational reconciliation of opposites, the notion stands higher than love or faith, the motivation for reconciliation is affective: for separation is pain, contradiction is evil (*le mal*), and the awareness of these renders consciousness unhappy. The *Begriff* is then the answer to the unhappy consciousness's prayer: "the unhappy consciousness, in seeing this separation of united elements, that is, of the sensible and the intelligible, will have the notion of their union and will be the happy consciousness . . . the concrete universal" (*LMC* 154).

For Wahl, the *Begriff* is thus the transposition into philosophical thought of a personal ideal.[8] The speculative notion corresponds to an ideal of a self that is not the simple immediacy of "I am I," but a higher synthesis which mediates the opposition between a faculty of concepts (*Verstand*) and sensibility, a synthesis that does not seek to overcome sensibility through the imperatives of practical reason (as in Fichte), nor to eliminate the distinctions of the understanding in an immediate intuition (Jacobi, Schelling), but to preserve both terms in their difference from each other even while going beyond them and constituting them as "moments" of itself. In that way the *Begriff* translates into philosophical-theoretical terms a desire for the organic unity of the self in which the parts are subordinated to the whole without for all that being eliminated. The suffering of the self, then, and its longing for reconciliation with itself, stand at the basis of philosophy. In Wahl's words, "The beginning of philosophy, as of religion, is less wonder than non-satisfaction and the divided consciousness [*la conscience déchirée*]" (*RPFE* 101 [1926]: 289). Before being a method, the dialectic is the experience of a divided consciousness striving for unity.

The dialectical progression from one stage of experience to the next is driven by the reversals suffered by consciousness. The understanding is forced to define each of its categories with reference to its opposite: I cannot define being without reference to non-being, sameness without reference to difference, and so on.[9] Each time consciousness seeks to define its object in terms of these categories, it is "driven from the one to the other of these categories by the negative force of reason" (*RPFE* 101 [1926]: 282–83), with the result that each of them turns into its opposite. This creates a form of ontological insecurity: every affirmation of consciousness comes to naught (*RPFE* 101 [1926]: 281–89); consciousness

becomes aware of itself as "absolute negativity"[10] and as the vanishing nothingness of the finite determinations it produces (448–49). As Hegel puts it, "Consciousness thus suffers violence at its own hands, a violence through which it spoils for itself every limited satisfaction. In the feeling of this violence, anxiety may very well withdraw before the truth, aspire and strive to preserve the very thing whose loss is threatened, but this anxiety cannot be calmed: it is in vain that consciousness wishes to fix itself in an inertia without thought" (*PS* 51/*PE* 71).

After consciousness has discovered that it is essentially the negative, when it seeks to define itself as a determinate awareness of a correlatively determinate object, it instead inevitably becomes aware of *not-being* that object, or as the negation of that object, and so experiences itself as a nothing that would be something, a *lack* of being. The tranquil, positive being sought by consciousness it finds only outside itself in its object; within itself, it finds only movement from one determination to another, from negation to negation (Wahl, 1927, 451). This contradictory and unfulfilled consciousness, says Wahl, is Hegel's "unhappy consciousness," and the whole *Phenomenology* is the narrative of consciousness' attempts to fill the void it feels within itself (443–44). The unhappy consciousness' antithetical movements mirror the play of attracting and attracted forces which, like the reflections in facing mirrors, pass into each other;[11] the division between its being (as thought) and its nothingness (as mutability) reflects the division between the master who is essential in the eyes of the slave and the slave who goes unrecognized by the master.[12]

In a way that would profoundly influence Sartre, Wahl's interpretation seizes on the aporetic and contradictory structure of consciousness. Consciousness cannot *be* its own "nothing" or "lack" (448): it is both being and nothingness (451). It both is and is not its object (444); it is both the infinite power of universal thought and the finite transitoriness of particular thoughts, without being able to think these two together (446). Its unhappiness arises, then, out of its dual nature or *duplicity* (444): "for what is more unhappy than the opposition at the heart of a unity at which consciousness has arrived?" (446). If it were simply being or simply nothingness, consciousness would be tranquil. As it is, it is "absolute unrest" (444), because every time it affirms its being (as thought, for instance) it discovers its nothingness (in this case, as changeable thought contents), and it discovers its being in the very act of affirming its nothingness, for in affirming "I am not," I am (451). Consequently, consciousness finds no rest; "it is too small for itself because it is greater than itself" (*LMC* 155). Even when consciousness tries to overcome duality in reflection, it encounters divisions. On the one hand, "The more consciousness feels its dismemberment, the better it grasps its unity" (447), not as simple self-identity, but as the unity of a consciousness that separates from itself in order to unite with itself in reflection (450). On the other hand, since consciousness can try to coincide with itself only by *producing* the divisions within itself that allow it to double back on itself, in its search for unity, consciousness discovers that it is not simply different from itself, but *opposed* to itself (449). "Just

at the moment when consciousness attains its unity, we are in the presence of a game of 'loser wins,' where there is a continual reversal and an incessant irony, where consciousness ends up with, it seems, the opposite of what it sought" (467). In Wahl's interpretation, the "duplicity" or "doubling" that Delbos found in the *Begriff* becomes a division the self produces within itself as its own lack. Since for Wahl the *Begriff* mirrors the self, this painful self-division is also found within the *Begriff*, and hence within the whole of Being: thus, *pan-tragicism*.

Wahl's discovery of a pan-tragicist Hegel behind the pan-logicist of the System set the tone for subsequent French Hegel studies; the truth of Hegel is to be found not in the *Encyclopedia*'s "desiccated" results of the dialectic, but in the striving and pathos of the dialectical movement itself, which corresponds to consciousness' search for reconciliation with itself.[13] Wahl himself later rejected as illusory the Hegelian attempt to reconcile existence through speculative thought, and so turned away from the mediation of the *Begriff* and the dialectic based on it.[14] What's left, in that case, is a self that is never able to arrive at a synthesis, haunted by duplicity, and caught up in a perpetual game of "loser wins," in which each time the self tries to identify itself with one of its aspects it finds itself confronted with that aspect's contrary. But before exploring further Wahl's investigations, and their influence on Sartre and Derrida,[15] we must turn to the decisive moment in the subjectivization of the *Begriff*: Alexandre Koyré's inscription of a phenomenological theory of time into the logic of the "notion."[16]

3. ALEXANDRE KOYRÉ: TIME AND THE CONCEPT

In his review of *Le malheur* (*RPFE* 110 [1930]: 136–43), Koyré praised Wahl for restoring life and blood to Hegel's system in seeking its origin in a "tragic, romantic, religious" intuition. At the same time, however, Koyré criticized Wahl for emphasizing the young, "Romantic" Hegel over the philosopher of the system: "Does the Romantic Hegel give us anything more than do Hölderlin or Novalis? I don't think so. . . . What in Hegel . . . is *Hegel,* is the *Logic* . . . the *Selbstbewegung des Begriffs*."[17] The chief aim of Koyré's interpretation will be to find tragedy in the "self-movement of the *Begriff*" itself, such that the restlessness proper to consciousness becomes a feature of Being itself: "Since in the human soul . . . it is the universe that becomes conscious of itself, the unhappiness of human consciousness and the unhappiness of man is the sign, the symbol, of a rupture, an imbalance, an unhappiness at the very heart of Being" (*RPFE* 110 (1930): 138). But this unrest does not proceed, as it does in Wahl, from the insufficiency (*Unselbständigkeit*) of abstract or finite determinations, but from the *temporal structure* underlying both the concept and being, a temporal structure which Koyré argues is modeled on the temporality of human existence, in which the future determines—and so is prior to—the past and present. In Koyré, then, the doubling-back of the synthesis on the thesis emphasized by Delbos is linked

to a doubling-back of the future on the present, and to the restlessness of a consciousness that is always "ahead of itself."

Trained in Husserl's phenomenology in Germany, Koyré regarded Hegel's philosophy as a phenomenology in the Husserlian sense (152n, 178) and as a philosophical anthropology (179n) akin to Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (a view later shared by Kojève).[18] This is true not only of the *Phenomenology*, says Koyré, but even of Hegel's earlier Jena *Logic* and *Realphilosophie*.[19] The reason is that, according to Koyré, "Hegel's philosophy in fact seems to be, in its deepest intuitions, a philosophy of time" (163), and indeed of "*human* time, *the time of man* (177)," the time of which the primary dimension is the future (160n, 170, 176–77). Human time is primarily futural because man is a being "who is what he is not and is not what he is,[20] a being who negates what he is to the benefit of what he is not, or is not yet, a being who, starting from the present, negates it, seeking to realize itself in the future" (177). Consequently, Hegelian time is the time of human self-realization through action, "the constitution in and through the thought and activity *of man* of the *human* world in which he lives" (178–79). Because this time is that of progressive self-development, it is essentially historical (177), or future-oriented, rather than being cyclical or repetitive, as is the biological time of natural "life" (153n): "In the historical *nunc* [now], the present itself only has meaning in relation to the future that it projects ahead of itself, that it heralds, and realizes in cancelling it. The primary category of 'historical' consciousness is not memory, but anticipation, tidings, the promise. The first example of this consciousness is Abraham's. . . . Perhaps one could say that it is by the comparative analysis of the ahistorical mentality of classical antiquity and the essentially historical mentality of Biblical Judaism that Hegel discovered the dialectical significance of time and the *specific historicity* of spirit, which is different from, and even opposed to, the ahistorical temporality of life" (160n).[21] Koyré's interpretation deliberately conflates Hegel's definition of *natural* time—"a being which is what it is not and is not what it is" (Encyclopedia § 258)—with Heidegger's definition of *Dasein* as *Zeitlichkeit* (see 178n). The result is a series of identifications: of the notion with Spirit, of Spirit with time (175), of time with human temporality (179): "This primacy of the future over the now, of the possible over the actual, is this not the analysis of man? And the dialectic of the instant, 'which is insofar as it is not and is not insofar as it is,' which negates what it is to the benefit of what it is not, is this not the expression of the unrest of *human* being, for whom time 'stops' when he has no more future, when there remains nothing more to come, when everything has already come to pass?"[22] Since human temporality stands at the basis of historical time, and historical time is the model for Spirit's self-development, Hegel's logic, which recounts this development, is identical to a philosophy of (human) history (178, 187): "the identity of logic and history was the foundation not only of the philosophy of history, but of the entire Hegelian system" (163). Outside of history, argues Koyré, there is

neither Spirit nor dialectic. This thesis, usually attributed to Kojève,[23] is already present in Koyré's interpretation of Hegel, with the difference that for Koyré, Spirit and history encompass the whole of Being.

In Koyré's hands, Hegel's logic becomes an anthropology. Quite simply, the dialectic and the *Begriff* reflect the temporal structures of historical human existence. When Koyré states that "the time and space Hegel describes are not those of things, they are the time and space of man,"[24] it might be thought that he is making Hegel into a philosophical anthropologist as opposed to a logician. In fact, he is subordinating Hegel's logic and metaphysics to anthropology. Because Hegel's time and space are not only those of man, but also those of Spirit and the concept (175), *everything* is to be understood on the basis of human existence (188). Even Being is modeled on human temporality. According to Koyré, just as Hegel makes the eternal historical (162n, 176n, 187) by incorporating negation in the Absolute, he finds unrest and movement in Being itself, which flees and negates itself to become its other and to realize itself in and by that self-negation (162–63). Kojève shares this position: "Being itself is essentially temporal (Being-Becoming) and creates itself as it is discursively revealed in the course of history (or insofar as it *is* history: revealed Being=Truth=Man=History)."[25] The fundamental difference between Kojève and Koyré is that whereas Koyré historicizes being by introducing the dialectic of human temporality into its heart, Kojève reduces being to history, and excludes the dialectic from nature. Kojève argues that the application of an essentially anthropological ontology to Nature in the *Logic* is in error (*ILH* 39), the reason being that Nature has no history (*ILH* 503), and consequently lacks the dialectical temporality upon which Hegel's logic depends (*ILH* 385). Koyré, by contrast, historicizes nature. Nevertheless, both agree that the properly historical being is man, for only man is conscious of his historicity and of his ability to negate the present for the sake of the future.[26]

So although for Koyré, as for Wahl, the model for Hegel's *Begriff* is human existence, this model is not the *wholeness* of a self that has surmounted its internal oppositions, but rather the historical temporality which consists in transcending what one is towards one's possibilities through creative action (189). The *Begriff* includes the temporal structure of historical self-transcendence within itself because it is the victorious outcome of the struggle in which spirit posits, negates, transcends and annihilates itself (174), a *historical result*. Human historicity is the speculative notion; logic *is* history.

This apparently "heroic"[27] Hegelianism might seem very far from the unhappy consciousness. Yet for Koyré there can be no final reconciliation, no "happy" outcome of this process of self-realization, because the condition of the possibility of history—human self-transcendence and self-negation—is what renders impossible an *end* to history:

> It is because man is essentially dialectical, that is to say, essentially negating, that the dialectic of history, no, that history itself is possible. It is because man says "no" to his present—or to himself—that he has a future. It is because he negates himself that he has a past. It is because he is time—and not simply temporal—that he has a present. . . . [Yet] if time is dialectical and if it is constructed *from out of the future*, it is—whatever Hegel says—eternally unfinished. . . . One cannot foresee the future, and the Hegelian dialectic does not permit us to, since the dialectic, the expression of the creative role of negation, at the same time expresses freedom. . . . The philosophy of history, and similarly Hegelian philosophy, the "system," would only be possible if history were at an end, if there were no future, if time could stop. (188–89)

For Koyré, the historical consciousness reflected in the *Begriff*, can only be an unfulfilled and an unhappy one, with no possibility of being happy save at the price of ceasing to transcend itself, that is, ceasing to be altogether. Conversely, the historicity of the *Begriff*, its inseparability from the self-negations that constitute it as a result, render problematic the *Begriff* itself as a final reconciliation. For both consciousness and the *Begriff*, completion or fulfillment would require an end to negation and transcendence, and so a kind of death.[28] Without the open future of transcendence, there could be no human time, and since human time is at the basis of the *Begriff*, the end of human time would mean the end of the *Begriff*, and of the dialectic. Koyré is left affirming what Hegel would call a "bad infinite," a series of transcendences or negations that are never "summed up" in some end-point that gives each of them their *raison d'être*. Even though Koyré wishes to call this process "dialectical," it involves no mediation through a final term. The difference between Koyré and Kojève on this question is that the former holds that if history came to an end, that *would be* the death of man, whereas the latter holds that history *is* over, man is *already* dead, and enjoys a kind of post-human animal "happiness" (*ILH* 95, 153–55, 194–95, 383–85).[29]

Besides Koyré's interpretation anticipating Kojève's,[30] and Koyré's definition of human reality as "a being which is what it is not and is not what it is" being the same as Sartre's, Koyré's "Hegel à Jena" articles were, for Wahl and Hyppolite, "decisive" for French Hegel studies,[31] and were, for Kojève, the key that unlocked Hegel's thought, "a revelation."[32] The revelation was that *Geist ist Zeit*, that the "time of man" was the time of the concept and of the entire Hegelian system. Once this "anthropological turn" has been taken, the differences between Kojève's supposed dualism (of Spirit and nature) and Koyré's (and others') more orthodox "monism," or between Kojève's view that "the end of history" is central to Hegel's thought and Koyré's view of it as an aporia,[33] are of little consequence.

The importance of thesis of "the primacy of the future" in later French thought is manifest. It is the primacy of the future that prevents consciousness from ever catching up with itself to form a closed totality, rendering

consciousness "an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of escaping its unhappy state" in Sartre's philosophy. This same "primacy of the future" forms the basis for Derrida's theory of time, in which the "beginning" or "origin" is never arrived at since it is conditioned beforehand by a future to which it is destined but at which it will never arrive. If the future synthesis can never be attained, then neither can the origin it founds: the origin recedes along with the future, both of which remain "to come" (*à-venir*). In other words, the openness of the future prevents the circular doubling back whereby the synthesis is prior to thesis and antithesis and establishes the oppositional relation between the prior moments. In that case, this openness comes to affect the prior moments as well, which are affected with the indeterminacy of the future, rather than being established as "determinate differences" in relation to a totality (or synthesis). This constitutes a breach creating an unrest or "unhappiness" that affects the system as whole, setting its entire structure adrift. The following chapters trace this "drifting" and "unrest" in French philosophy. Koyré's interpretation of Hegelian time, in which "the finite and the infinite pursue and dissolve (*s'abîment*) in one another" (*EHPP* 153)[34] in an open future, allowed for the extension of this theme beyond consciousness.

4. HYPPOLITE AND THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS OF ONTOLOGY

In his review of Jean Hyppolite's *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Mikel Dufrenne argues that "in introducing negation into the heart of being, tragedy into the heart of the Absolute, Hegel is more existentialist than existentialism. For existentialism, only consciousness is negative. . . . For Hegel, the unhappiness of consciousness is the unhappiness of being."[35] Extending the theme of the unhappy consciousness into being, language and discourse, Hyppolite plays a key role in the Hegel interpretation of his students, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, and Althusser.[36]

Hyppolite has made clear how much his work on Hegel is indebted to Wahl[37] and Koyré.[38] He praises Wahl's *Malheur de la conscience* for having "renewed French interest in Hegel's philosophy" (*IPHH* 12n), and following Wahl, he makes the unhappy consciousness the "fundamental theme" of the *Phenomenology* (*GS* 190/184; *IPHH* 31–39). From Koyré, Hyppolite takes the dictum that "spirit is time," and so "pure restlessness" (*PE* I 40n), a "pure unrest of difference" in Being itself (*LE* 188/245), but primarily grasped through "one of the fundamental intuitions of Hegelianism . . . the dialectic of human unrest" (*PE* I 71n), "the unrest of consciousness which sees itself outside itself" (*GS* 579/559) and negates its present "now" through a future "now" (*GS* 33, 91–92/37, 91–92).[39] The key question concerning Hegel's thought, says Hyppolite, is whether the primary locus of the "pure unrest of difference" is in human existence or within Being

itself, either culminating in a philosophy of human history (humanism), or in a philosophy of language and logic, a logic of the concept,[40] a "logic of sense" (*LE* 170/221) that would be "a philosophy of the absolute that exists as Logos only in language" (*LE* 42/50), and in which man's "natural Dasein" is "bracketed" through a phenomenological reduction (*LE* 42/50, 158/207–8, 166/216). In effect, Hyppolite's philosophy, like Hegel's, "is a pantragicism that becomes a panlogicism,"[41] which in transposing the structures of the unhappy consciousness from man to being, "has more or less transposed an ontic negativity into an ontological negativity, real opposition into a logical contradiction" (*LE* 106/136).

In his earlier writings, Hyppolite argues that "the pantragicism of history and the panlogicism of logic are one and the same" (*GS* 31/34). Hegelian negation is to be understood in terms of "the *Self*, which in positing itself in a determinate manner, opposes itself to itself, and thus negates and transcends itself" (*GS* 15/20, 148/144). In logical terms, "Every determination, insofar as it is finite, is contradictory. . . . To grasp a limited determination as infinite is to grasp it in its restlessness to transcend itself, in its 'becoming other than itself' " (*IPHH* 78; see *GS* 151–52/146). This ontological movement reflects the movement of "the self which . . . never coincides with itself, for it is always other in order to be itself. . . . It is the being of man, 'who is never what he is, and always is what he is not' " (*GS* 149–50/145), who "is always beyond himself, who has a future" (*GS* 166/160) because he negates what he is for the sake of what he will be (*GS* 27–34, 322/31–38, 312). But the movement of negation and transcendence at the heart of human historical becoming also characterizes the selfhood (*ipséité*) of the concept, the concept's "teleological activity . . . the self-production of a self, the circular process in which the result emerges not only as a result but implies a first term in which the result becomes what it is," making the "first" term a result as well (*GS* 245–47/236–38; see *GS* 588, 599/567, 577; *PE* 1 40, 217–18).

We have already seen this identification of the concept with an infinite, teleological subjectivity that doubles back on itself in Delbos. Like Wahl, Hyppolite uses this identification to underline Hegel's thesis that "the Absolute is a subject," but "an absolute that divides and rends itself [*se déchire*] in order to be absolute, which cannot be a yes except by saying no to the no" (*GS* 150/146; see *GS* 527/509); "the heart of the absolute is negativity" (*GS* 564–65/543–44/602–3/580–81). In that way, says Hyppolite, Hegel expresses pantragicism in panlogicism, which develops "difference into opposition, and opposition into contradiction" (*GS* 151/146). Contradiction is the lot of the self that alienates itself in external reality in order to "negate that first negation" and return into itself (*PE* I 46), and the unhappy consciousness is consciousness of this contradiction, of this doubled or split self, of an "I" that is torn within itself, such that "the unhappiness of consciousness is contradiction, the soul of the dialectic, and contradiction is properly the unhappiness of consciousness" (*GS* 194/187–88). In logical form, since judgment (*Ur-teil*), the primordial "power to divide, . . . which constitutes

the finitude of every determination, is not excluded from the absolute" (*GS* 584/564; see *LE* 101/130), and since finite determinations must be mediated and negated, even in the absolute, the self finds itself "in the tragedy of its alienation" (*GS* 351/340). The self that "finds itself through a rending and a separation" is thus the "foundation of the Hegelian dialectical schema" (*GS* 385/372–73) in its entirety, from finite consciousness to the Logos of Being.

Surprisingly, even in *Genesis and Structure*, Hyppolite denies that his interpretation of Hegel is reducible to philosophical anthropology. Although Hyppolite says that the *Phenomenology* "appears as a heroic effort to reduce 'vertical transcendence' [religion] to 'horizontal transcendence' [history]" (*GS* 544/525), "Man must necessarily transcend himself," so that the moment man reduces the "beyond" to himself, he loses himself, and falls into the *human-all-too-human* (*GS* 557/537); "his greatest suffering—a form of the unhappy consciousness—is to be reduced to himself alone" (*GS* 543–44/524). Man must transcend his natural, finite and historical being towards absolute spirit, and human reason must transcend itself in the Logos, which is both human thought and "the absolute's thought of itself," both logical and ontological, being thinking itself through the categories in their movement and mutual determination (*GS* 582–85/561–64). The self immanent in the logical transition from one concept to another (*GS* 589–91/567–69) is universal and absolute, not the finite and empirical self of any existing individual.

Later, in *Logic and Existence* (1952), Hyppolite would make a sharper distinction between the human self and that of Being, partly due to the influence of Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism" (1947),[42] which decried Sartre's "humanism" for reducing "Being" to "human reality." The goal of self-transcendence is not "Man," but "the absolute Idea," a freedom immanent in history, the absolute autonomy of thought positing and negating itself (*LE* 186–87/243–45). In a very Heideggerian vein, Hyppolite calls man "the dwelling place [*demeure*] of the Logos, of being which reflects and thinks itself" (*LE* 74/92), the place where "the universal self-consciousness" of Being manifests itself (*GS* 585/564). Although Hyppolite continues to maintain that "Being is basically identical to the self" whose self-negation is the basis of "the role of contradiction and negation" in Hegel's logic (*GS* 585/564), he now is much more emphatic that the self in question "is no longer the human self taken into consideration by an anthropology or a phenomenology" (*LE* 73/91). "The self must decenter itself from the purely and solely human in order to become the self of being" that "posits itself, doubles itself, and relates itself to itself" (*LE* 74/91). "The Absolute as subject," as "infinite negativity," "is no longer only subjective, but inherent in being" (*LE* 92/118).

The place where this "decentered self" of Being is manifest is language, which by its very nature operates with universal categories and concepts that belong to a community of speakers and listeners, and thus presupposes the universal mutual recognition of consciousnesses that makes a universal self-consciousness possible. Already in *Genesis and Structure*, Hyppolite called lan-

guage "the *universal self-consciousness being-there in 'divine universal man'*" (*GS* 595/574); in *Logic and Existence*, "man" is suppressed in favor of Being itself: "human language is constituted as the being-there of Spirit and the meaning (*sens*) of being" (*LE* 6/6; see 19/23). In *Genesis and Structure*, Hyppolite analyzed language as Spirit's negation of man's natural Dasein, which by actualizing and expressing the individual self who speaks, produces a split between the natural, particular self and the "universal" self expressed by the pronoun "I." The "laceration" (*déchirement*) of language thus both expresses and effects the laceration of consciousness, reflecting back to Spirit its alienation from itself (*GS* 401–3, 414–17, 518/388–391, 400–3, 500–1) in "a new form of the unhappy consciousness," but on the objective "social, intellectual, political" level (*PE* 1 51, 53; *GS* 327, 351, 380–83/317, 340, 368–71). By contrast, in *Logic and Existence*, it is *being* that expresses and alienates itself in language, which is the being-outside-itself of meaning or sense, sense in turn being the "return to self" or internalization and "memory" (*Erinnerung*) of language. The natural being-there of language is the sensible and material sign in which signification is alienated, just as the sensible side of the sign is negated when transcended towards its sense. This dual negation, of sense by its sensible expression and of the sensible sign by its sense, is also a *déchirement*, but in Being itself (*LE* 107/137). Insofar as sense is *beyond* the sensible appearance of the linguistic sign, and insofar as being, in order to be intelligible, must alienate itself in its sense, we have here "the unhappy consciousness of ontology" (*LE* 64–65/79, 174/226). "Being is a lost sense, a forgotten meaning, as meaning is the interiority of memory (*souvenir*) taken back (*repris*) into being" (*LE* 175/228).

Transposed into language, the unhappy consciousness belongs to a "transcendental subjectivity" that is not merely human (*LE* 81/101). In language, each term is defined by its difference from all the others, and since each is defined through what it is not, "words are no longer external to one another" (*LE* 33/40), but each internalizes what differs from it as its other, such that each term differs from itself, and contradicts itself, and in this negative movement, "difference actualizes itself" (*LE* 113–164/145–49). "The power of the negative" (*LE* 104/134) is no longer that of human existence, but of negativity in language.

It is easy to gather from this the many ways in which Hyppolite influenced his most famous students. Derrida develops the notion of a transcendental subjectivity without a human subject, and like Hyppolite, he finds this in the negative differences in language, in which each term is defined through what it is not, but deprived of the mediating synthesis that for Hyppolite makes what each term *is not* into its other.[43] Deleuze, while he agrees with *Logic and Existence*'s thesis of the "absolute identity of being and difference," disagrees with the negative conception of difference, and will argue instead for "a theory of expression where difference is expression itself," and where sense is a "surface effect" of positive differences, rather than the alienation of being: a different logic of sense than Hyppolite's.[44] According to Deleuze, the transposition of the negativity of

consciousness into being and language does not take ontology beyond anthropology; the negative conception of difference is merely an "inverted image" of difference.[45] For Foucault, finally, Hyppolite's analysis of the genesis and structure of discourse, conceived as "the discourse of being," especially his grasp of "the singularity of history, the regional totalities of science, the depths of memory," "traversed and formulated the most fundamental problems of our age."[46] Foucault further credits Hyppolite with imparting to him a "historical sense," a sense of the finitude and limitations of philosophy due to its historical situatedness.[47] In sum, Hyppolite's shift from "man" to language, from human history to the historicity of discourse, decisively moves the problem of "the unhappy consciousness" beyond consciousness itself, in ways that profoundly marked the philosophies of the 1960s.

Chapter Three

The Existential Protest: Wahl and Fondane

In one of those comic reversals so beloved by the dialectic, the very existentialist current that brought Hegel into the mainstream of French thought produced a new critique of Hegelianism that still resonates today. The critique began with the person who introduced France to the "existentialized" Hegel, Wahl himself; it continued in the work of Benjamin Fondane, who linked Hegel's unhappy consciousness to the "existential contradictions" discussed by Nietzsche, Freud, and Kierkegaard. Both Wahl and Fondane took up the existentialist version of the by-now familiar protest against the reduction of being to thought, but, in a further irony, they did so in such a way as to make Hegel an unavoidable reference for French thought. In doing so, they also introduced a range of concerns that would dominate French thought for the next fifty years: the fragmented and "diasporatic" nature of the self; *déchirement* (rending) and passion as forms of experience beyond rational comprehension; the difference between real difference and conceptual difference. In all this, Wahl and Fondane, however forgotten and neglected, remain our contemporaries.

1. WAHL'S EXISTENTIAL EMPIRICISM

The Difference between Thought and Being: Empiricism

Soon after *Le malheur de la conscience*, Wahl attacked Hegel's speculative solution to the problem of the unhappy consciousness for confusing a synthesis in thought with genuine existential unity of the self. Wahl's strategy involves a number of themes revived in the 1960s: a concern for difference anchored in a meta-empirical or transcendental empiricism (Deleuze); the positing of an absolutely transcendent Other as the ground of subjectivity (Levinas); and the themes of

déchirement, dispersal, and dissemination, grounded in distance as spatio-temporal ek-stasis (Derrida). All these strategies can be called "existentialist" in the broad sense: they are grounded in Kierkegaard's "philosophy of existence," and unite a concern with the lived immediacy of passion and decision with a Bergsonian theory of time as duration. As Deleuze gratefully acknowledged in 1968, "The entire oeuvre of Jean Wahl is a profound meditation on difference; on empiricism's possibilities of expressing free and wild poetic nature; on the irreducibility of difference to the simple negative; on the *non-Hegelian* relations of affirmation and negation."[1]

Nevertheless, Wahl remains a marginal figure, in large part because his work did not fit in with the preoccupation with language and writing of the 1960s. Wahl distrusts language. Not for him the delight taken by Derrida in affirming Hegel's argument that "it is just not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we *mean*" (*PS* 60) because language "has the divine nature of reversing the meaning of what is said, of making it into something else, of not letting what is meant *get into words at all*" (*PS* 66). Derrida happily uses Hegel in his own arguments that the intended meaning (*le vouloir-dire*) of an utterance must pass through a "detour" of language as a system of differences that inevitably alters and renders "other" what was meant. But then Wahl had no inkling of Saussure's thesis of *langue* as a "system of differences," or a set of structural relations of which the speaker is largely unaware. Wahl distrusts language because he views it in a Hegelian way (as did Kierkegaard): language expresses a meaning that is objective and universal, and so necessarily fails to capture the singular subjective experiences of real individuals, such as Abraham's meta-ethical anxiety, or the concrete, qualitative singularity of a feeling. It would take Deleuze's revival of Wahl's "transcendental empiricism" in *Difference and Repetition* to bring Wahl's insights into line with structural linguistics.

The difference between Wahl's views on language and Derrida's are evident in the Preface to Wahl's *Vers le concret*,[2] in which Wahl criticizes Hegel's argument in the "Sense Certainty" chapter of the *Phenomenology*.[3] According to Hegel, the most concrete and richest reality—that designated by the words "I," "here," "now" and "mine"—turns out to be the poorest and most abstract, since when these words are used by others, or by myself at another time, they refer to other things. The "this," not being any other "this," is not something *positive* and *simple*, but is defined by a series of negations, and so is a *negative universal*; likewise, every "I" can say "I," and so what I take to be most specific about myself is revealed to be the most empty kind of universality. Derrida uses this argument to devastating effect in his critiques of Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* and Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* in *Writing and Difference*,[4] arguing that neither Foucault nor Levinas can say what they mean. By contrast, Wahl cautions that rather than language revealing the unreality of what was intended by "I", "here," "now," Hegel's argument on the contrary reveals the impotence of language.[5] In modes of experience other than the *objective knowledge* expressed in language, these "particularities" are the most concrete element of experience, with a richness that cannot be

sublated in the "notion" or dismissed as an empty and immediate intuition. Beyond the determinations produced by thought, there is something to which these determinations apply, something that cannot be constructed or even described by thought, but only analyzed after thought encounters what is other than it. Though the mind may recognize itself in the determinations it gives the object, "it also knows that there is something in the object that cannot be completely assimilated or exhausted by the mind" (*VC* Preface).

Against Hegel's speculative identity of thought and being, Wahl counterposes a kind of empiricism, "defined by its affirmation of the non-deducibility of being" or "the irreducibility of being to knowing." This is not the empiricism of Locke or Mill, in which being is taken to be a discrete "given" revealed in sensation, but the "meta-empirical empiricism" or "transcendental empiricism" (*EHT* 10) of the later Schelling, of Whitehead and Marcel, all of whom, says Wahl, conceive of concrete being as a totality "in which no element is absolutely transcendent to any other," where all elements penetrate and are immanent to each other. In contrast to Idealism, this interpenetration is due not to the logically necessary relations between terms, but to the particulars being constituted through a totality of mutually determining forces (*EHT* 14). Consequently, each singularity is both concrete and ineffable, an "infinite Absolute" in virtue of the virtual multiplicity it expresses (*EHT* 11). Far from being given, then, the "concrete being" of empirical particulars is "a beyond through which knowledge has a meaning [*sens*], towards which it directs itself, from which it derives nourishment." It is only in subordinating experience to the demands of language (expressibility) and of objective knowledge that the concrete particularities of existence appear to be empty: they are empty for conceptual thought, but not empty in *being*, which is *other* than thought.

Deleuze's critique of Hegel will follow Wahl in making *non-sens* the condition of meaning (*sens*), and in distinguishing real difference from conceptual difference.[6] He also agrees that transcendental empiricism seeks "the conditions under which experience is not possible, but real; and this realism will be founded on the reality of the contingent (which goes together with the contingency of the necessary)" (*EHT* 18). Both Deleuze's and Wahl's empiricisms join together Hume, Russell, Bergson, and Nietzsche, to construct "a theory of contingency and a theory of reality" based on the felt absolutes of subjectivity, or the density of existence manifested in intensity of feeling (*EHT* 20). The program could be given the name of Deleuze's first book: *Empiricism and Subjectivity*. It's a matter of showing how subjectivity is not *merely* subjective, but also being-outside-of-oneself, the relation of consciousness to its real and unconscious conditions.

Everywhere, Wahl insists on the concrete and rejects grand abstractions. Concerning Hegel's famous dialectic of being and nothingness, in which being turns out to be identical to nothingness, Wahl argues that Hegel has confused words with things: real being with the concept "being," the concept "nothingness"

with the real nothingness described phenomenologically by Kierkegaard and Heidegger. The "inane" Hegelian dialectic concerns only abstractions, and "the concrete is not explained by the abstract."[7] The genuine pursuit of the concrete, on the other hand, involves a transcendence towards a reality that is "not immanent to the idea," "something outside of positing" that both resists and answers to our expectations, and is "the limit of the dialectic and its origin."[8] This self-other relation is not Hegel's knowledge-oriented subject-object dialectic (*EHT* 17), but an existential dialectic which leads "to ecstasy through a play of antitheses that destroys itself" (*EHT* 10). Because the starting point of the dialectic is the differential tension between the immanent and a transcendent "beyond or below consciousness" (*EHT* 17, 21–22), it does not point to a resolution within thought. Consciousness is always "between" itself as pure relation-to-self (immanence) or a pure transcendence in which it could lose itself in an Other (*EHT* 23), and between itself and its unconscious determinations. Consequently, the existential dialectic "implies distance, rupture, fracture, . . . rending-apart [*déchirure*]" (*EHT* 22), a detachment from "the absolute" within the absolute itself, a wound in being (*EHT* 27, 58). The negativity of the existential antitheses of being, then, is a "more essential negativity" than that of thought, "more negating, more destructive" (*EHT* 23).

Given the radical difference between reality and thought, "it is only in the absence of thought that the concrete can reveal itself to us" (*VC* Preface). Wahl thus follows Gabriel Marcel in proposing intense feeling as the only genuine access to the real (*VC* 235–38). "The Absolute is not the totality. . . . It is intensity, density . . . a sensed absolute, which can be sensed or felt in the tiniest of things" (*EHT* 11; see *EHT* 23, 61). If Hegel considered this position to be equivalent to Jacobi's doctrine of immediate intuitive knowledge,[9] and as already surpassed in the System, this is only because he reduces "reality in its thickness" (*VC* 8) to the determinations of thought, rather than grasping its true nature as "an irrational and unthinkable unity" (*VC* 238). For although the concept of "being" is the emptiest and most abstract, the feeling of being is the fullest and the richest (*EHT* 56), an "affirmation of a plenitude" (*EHT* 54), of "a multiple idea" (*EHT* 26) expressing a plural absolute (*EHT* 11).

Wahl readily concedes the manifest difficulty in his position: he cannot persuade us of the reality of this irrational concrete reality through reason; he can only appeal to our subjective experience, and this he can only do through language, which is incapable of expressing "the concrete." When we subject it to rational scrutiny, the feeling of existence flies from us; the gulf between the feeling "I" and that of the "I" that thinks and expresses itself in language is unbridgeable (*EHT* 33). But the failure here lies with language, Wahl insists, and not with the concrete. Rather than resolving the opposition of being and thought in a higher synthesis, the subjective experience of the concrete maintains this difference in "an incessant movement between two poles"—the transcendence from

consciousness to what is other than it and cannot be assimilated by it (*EHT* 17, 21–22). Moreover, only when the lived intensity of feeling relates consciousness to "an *absolutely* Other, the absolutely different, the transcendent" does it becomes aware of itself as subjectivity (*EHT* 42–43). Consciousness simply is transcendence, the effort to go outside itself (*EHT* 13, 22, 27, 29nl), to a limit beyond its transcending-toward (*EHT* 35). Defined by its relation to and separation from this Other, consciousness is a *separation from* and *distance from* itself (*EHT* 23, 26, 29, 65–68), a failure to coincide with itself; it cannot fail to be unhappy (*EHT* 23, 68).

Transcendence, the movement outside self that is the basis of consciousness, is what is "most internal to us" (*EHT* 19, 62). Its primary manifestation is time, "an essential diaspora" whereby the self relates to itself through its distance from itself (*EHT* 65–67).[10] But this diaspora is also the basis of space. "There is no consciousness except at a certain distance from itself," and "in this sense, consciousness is space" (*EHT* 68–69). It follows that "space is the son of time" (*EHT* 83), and derives from the separation from self that renders consciousness unhappy (*EHT* 66–67): not the objectified and neutral space of science, but "existential" space as sensed or felt by us (*EHT* 83–84) in the experience of "a felt presence" "of things and beings we cannot join up with" (*EHT* 90). In that respect, space is "internal" to time, as the *distance* within self constituted by its temporality. Much as Derrida's notions of "spacing" and "*différance*" as temporal delay or "spacing in time" exhibit a "back and forth" movement between space and time (*OG* 66–68), Wahl argues that time is spacing and space is temporal. Existence, whether of the self, time or space, is a tension between cohesion and dispersion, division and unity (*EHT* 57–58).

Wahl's essential point against Hegel is that the conceptual resolution of the difference between thought and being takes place only by suppressing genuine being and replacing it with its conceptual representation; the difference between thought and being is precisely not a conceptual or linguistic difference, which would be a difference *within* thought, rather than the difference *between* thought and what is other than thought. It doesn't matter to Wahl that the "other than thought" can neither be thought nor spoken of. Only "empiricist mysticism," in Wahl's view, can free us from reason's solipsistic palace of ideas, and allow us to encounter genuine being (*VC* 26, 226).[11]

Empiricism, Pluralism, and Individuality

Empiricism had been the topic of Wahl's earlier study, *Les Philosophies pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique* (1920). In Wahl's view, empiricism's affirmation of contingency and the non-deducibility of being from thought makes it a philosophy of the many, a pluralism. In Idealist monism, where terms are related to each other through the mediation of a totality, all relations are really internal, and so

only various aspects of a non-relational and single Absolute (*PPAA* 2–15). Empiricist pluralism, by contrast, insists on the externality of relations, in which individuals stand outside the relations linking them to other individuals, and relations can be specified independently of the individuals that enter into them (*PPAA* 28–29, 83, 93). If relations are external to their terms, then realism, which asserts the independence of the known object in relation to the knowing subject, is possible, for then it follows that the reality of the known object is not relative to the knower, even if its manner of appearing is (*PPAA* 217). In a phrase taken up by Deleuze, Wahl asserts that "A consistent pluralist must be a realist. . . . To be a realist is to negate absolute unity, it is to affirm the externality of certain things in relation to certain others" (*PPAA* 94), and the "irreducible multiplicity both in the world of relations and the world of terms" (*PPAA* 215–21).

The issue here is not just philosophical. Like many critics of monism, Wahl regards pluralism as an essential safeguard of difference and individuality, a democratic, polytheistic and anarchist remedy for absolutism of all kinds (*PPAA* 69–70). Above all, pluralism is the basis of freedom. For if all individuals are merely aspects of the Absolute, related to each other through logical necessity, then the true standpoint is the timeless eternity of logical relations, and time is illusory. On the other hand, if the multiplicity of beings is real, then beings can enter into relations contingently, and produce new combinations that are not logically necessary. "If there is a plurality of beings in the world, there can also be the creation of new points of application for the forces present in it" (*PPAA* 45). As Deleuze also argues, pluralism makes possible real development and the real temporal duration of that development, along with the mutability of forces through new combinations that arise contingently (*PPAA* 22, 59–62, 74, 95–6, 222). Individuality, contingency, and freedom are then linked: nothing new can emerge if there are no independent individuals to enter into contingent combinations with each other; without contingency, there can be no temporal development and so no future; without the future there is no freedom. "Only chance explains growth, the developing complexity, the infinite diversity of the universe; and at the same time as it explains diversity and irregularity, chance also explains regularity itself, as the calculus of probabilities teaches us" (*PPAA* 82). Beneath the order of law lies the sovereign anarchy of chance. As Wahl puts it, " 'anarchic and multiform' nature laughs at our systems . . . nature cannot be circumscribed and has its center everywhere" (*PPAA* 58). Only a metaphysics that allows for individual and finite physical forces, and so for the production of new combinations of forces over time, can ground a moral and political individualism.

Pluralism "wants to restore to things 'their multiple determinations, determinations of variety and relation, which they must have in order to condition the sequence of the facts of experience, which is so varied' "[12] (*PPAA* 46). Rather than empiricism being, as Hegel claimed, the poorest form of knowledge, Wahl argues that "A world populated by particular, concrete, definite things, seen in

their detail, in all their differences, would be . . . a superabundant world" (*PPA*A 104). Only in such a world are individuals seen as such, rather than as "instances" of a universal. It was only natural that Wahl became interested in the thinker most closely linked to the affirmation of the reality of individual human existence, Soren Kierkegaard.

Individual Existence and the Philosophy of Difference

Second in importance only to *Le malheur*, Wahl's *Études kierkegaardiennes* (1938) established him as the principal French exponent of the thought of Kierkegaard, who, in Wahl's words, uttered "the protest of that unhappy consciousness that Hegel considered a transcended moment of evolution."[13] For Kierkegaard had pointed out that Hegel's speculative mediations do not touch individual human existence, which is marked by qualitative disjunctions (either/or) held together only through passion—resolute decision and the leap of faith—and not resolved through an immanent dialectical progression. Passion cannot abolish oppositions, and the individual's passionate decision is not justifiable or communicable through universal norms. Rather than finding reconciliation in language or in the *Begriff*, then, passion finds in these its truth as *others* would understand it, a truth that is both 'objective' and yet alienating, since it is the negation of the subjective way in which passion is lived (*EK* 92). On the other hand, subjective existence's inassimilability to objective thought "shakes the columns of knowledge [*connaissance*] and precipitates everything into the nothingness of non-knowing [*non-savoir*]."[14] Once again, it's a question of playing the game of "loser wins."

Now, having dealt with this question in *Le malheur*, Wahl knows perfectly well what Hegel would reply: "No doubt the Hegelian will say that Hegel studied the state of Kierkegaard's soul in advance and gave it a name, that of the unhappy consciousness. . . . This consciousness is divided in two within itself, it oscillates between the immutable and the particular, takes the immutable into account in order to oppose itself to it and to be reborn as a particular out of this very opposition . . . [it is a] consciousness of antinomies and of contradictions."[15] But once again Wahl argues that Hegel does not see that "an individual does not have a conceptual existence" (*EK* 113), and that "the problems of existence are not logical problems."[16] "Kierkegaard places us before the *here* and *now*, whereas for Hegel, on the contrary, the here and now must be reabsorbed by the dialectic into generalities, into vaster and vaster universalities" (*EHT* 42). Kierkegaard's here and now "is obviously not only the corporeal here and now," but the here and now of decision, of passionate choice made "in fear and trembling . . . in the presence of an *Other*, an *absolute* other, the absolutely different, the transcendent" (*EHT* 42). This Other is not posited or op-posited by the self, but is given only in the intensity and passion of one's response to the summons it addresses to us (*EHT*

90). Since, as Kierkegaard argues in *The Sickness Unto Death*, the relation to an Other who "summons" us is the condition of subjective existence (passion), the relation and the Other are prior to the self (*EHT* 28–29, 42–43).[17] The here and now of the existing subject is thus that of choosing itself in a moment of decision, in the face of an Other that it encounters only as the absolutely different limit of its transcendence.

Just as empiricism is important to Wahl because it refuses to reduce objective being to thought, so Kierkegaard's importance lies in his refusal to identify objective thought with subjective existence. To Hegel's philosophy of identity, "Kierkegaard opposed a philosophy of difference" (*EK* 121–22). The difference between existence and the concept is only in part the impossibility of adequately expressing inwardness in language, however (*EK* 92, 123). It is also the fact that human existence, like existence in general, cannot be demonstrated by thought (*EK* 114), but rather simply *is*, contingently, without any rational necessity (*EK* 89–90). Wahl is thus able to marshal Kierkegaard's arguments in support of his position that being in general "cannot be deduced," but only encountered, and then only in an inward or subjective experience that cannot be translated into rational concepts (*EHT* 42–43).

As it is for Heidegger and others, the subjective experience most revelatory of the difference between existence and thought is anxiety (*angoisse*). Anxiety is "the vertigo of freedom" (*EK* 221) before contingent possibilities of existence, and since nothing can determine existence to choose one possibility rather than another, anxiety is anxiety before this "nothing," which is freedom itself (*EK* 227, 458–59). Yet since subjective existence *is* this free relation to its own possibilities (*EK* 259), anxiety is also "the relation of spirit to spirit," that is, of a self that both is its future, and yet is separated from that future by its own act of choosing it (*EK* 224; *EHT* 31–32, 50). Because the temporal dispersion between the present act of choice and the chosen future is characteristic of every subjectivity, and because choices always could have been otherwise, "every man is anxious, even the happiest" (*EK* 232, 257–66). Even though subjective existence seeks to escape this anxiety in the only way it can, by pursuing the complete self-identity of determinate, objective being, its attempt to coincide with itself is doomed to fail, since as long as it exists, subjectivity transcends what it *is* towards the future it will be.

At the same time that Wahl's Kierkegaardian meditations insist on the irreducible reality of individual existence, then, they desubstantialize that existence, inaugurating that deconstruction of the self that Sartre and Derrida would carry further. Rather than being identical to itself, subjective existence is always outside of itself, "in a state of dissemination in space and time" (*EK* 114). Existence is not immediacy or unity, but distance—"between instants in time, the points of space, subject and object, and between thought and being"—since it is relation-to and distance-from itself (*EK* 114; *EHT* 66–69). In fact, existence is always other than it is at present, "a becoming that is to come," "something that will be, a task" (*EK*

266). It is not itself. Yet it is precisely because it is incomplete, ec-static and different from itself that human existence is free: free to err because it lacks the necessity of God, eternal truth or reason (*EK* 353–56), passionate only because choice is contingent, rather than determined by God or Reason (*EK* 280–81). Only if decisions are genuinely free can an exister choose itself authentically, or be responsible for itself (*EK* 261–69).[18]

What subjective existence gains in individuality and freedom, it pays for in disunity and unjustifiability. The *Begriff*, even if it is a "moving unity of determinations," is a circumscribed and controlled unity, and justified as rationally necessary. By contrast, "to exist is to choose, it is passionate being, becoming, isolated and subjective being, being in infinite self-concern [*souci de soi*]" (*EK* 361). Following Kierkegaard, Wahl leaves existence anxiously projecting itself towards an open and contingent future, separated from its future by its unjustifiable decision to realize some possibilities at the expense of others ("either/or"), with no possibility of coinciding with itself and no *raison d'être*. "Man's state is a divided, problematic state . . . unhappy, happy in its unhappiness" (*EHT* 69–70). Like Kierkegaard, Wahl wouldn't have it any other way.

It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of Wahl's criticisms of Hegel or his interpretation of Kierkegaard. The echoes in Sartre, particularly in the interrelated themes of contingency, anxiety, and vertigo, are striking enough, but so is the insistence on difference, dispersion and dissemination, later given so much play by Deleuze and Derrida. Derrida, it might be thought, has an altogether different project, since his philosophy seeks to displace consciousness as a primary term in favor of writing. But we have seen that in Wahl, as well, consciousness points to something beyond itself: to an Other towards which it transcends, and to its unconscious conditions. Even the themes of writing and aporetics, so closely connected to Derrida, are foreshadowed, at the very least, in Wahl's statement that "our mind advances only by negations, writes only by crossings-out [*ratures*], and asserts only by dilemmas from which it accepts one of the terms" (*EHT* 65). Apart from the obvious thematic affinities, Derrida certainly knew Wahl's work,[19] as Wahl did his;[20] Derrida was for a time Wahl's research assistant.[21] We have already noted Deleuze's indebtedness to Wahl's empiricism, and should note Wahl's major review of Deleuze's *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (in *RMM* 68 [1963]: 352–79).

Yet it would be unjust to conclude this section by leaving the impression that Wahl was a mere "precursor." By 1938, Wahl was a well respected exponent of "existentialism" (as it was already called)[22] in his own right.[23] In addition, Wahl's contribution to French intellectual culture in the period between the wars was considerable. We know of Wahl's contacts with Bataille and others through the journal *Acéphale*[24] and the Collège de Sociologie in the period just before the war,[25] as well as his involvement with *Recherches philosophiques*, where he would have come into contact with Kojève.[26] The thinkers involved in these intellectual enterprises would greatly influence the direction of post-war French

thought, and it is perhaps high time that we recognized Wahl's part in shaping the intellectual climate from which they emerged. In the words of Emmanuel Levinas, Wahl, "during over half a century of teaching and research, was the life force of the academic, extra-academic and even, to a degree, anti-academic philosophy" of France.[27]

Quite apart from Wahl's role in introducing existential thought into French culture, he directly inspired his contemporaries to pursue their own versions of existentialism. One of these pre-war existentialists, Benjamin Fondane, takes up Wahl's Hegel interpretation in an interesting and original way. Like Wahl, Fondane finds "the unhappy consciousness" not a mere "figure of spirit," but a diagnosis of the modern condition: the contradictions between the social and the individual, between instinct and reason, between knowledge and the unknowable, thought and existence.

2. FONDANE'S *LA CONSCIENCE MALHEUREUSE*

There's perhaps no better way to discredit the thought of a living author than to claim that someone dead said it first and said it better. Thus, the French Marxist intellectual, Henri Lefebvre, in an entirely tendentious 1946 book on existentialism,[28] sang the praises of Fondane's 1936 work, *La conscience malheureuse*,[29] in order to discredit Sartrean existentialism, which then threatened to seduce French youth away from the true path of Dialectical Materialism.[30] It was convenient to oppose Sartre's "excrementialism" (*E* 42), his "metaphysics of shit" (*E* 82) and the "dishonest" ambiguities of Sartrean philosophy (*E* 65) by praising Fondane as "the most consistent and 'profound' of contemporary existentialists" (*E* 111), possessed of a clarity and rigor lacking in Sartre (*E* 220, 245), and "an honest philosopher, a profoundly honest intelligence" (*E* 247) who "went to the limit of himself and of his philosophy" (*E* 245). As Fondane said of the way Catholics and Surrealists used Rimbaud, Lefebvre "forgave" Fondane "on condition that he be dead or play dead, and not intervene in the debate."[31]

Despite Lefebvre's disingenuousness, Fondane was a brilliant existentialist thinker, whose radical individualism includes a critique of phenomenology and of humanism that in many ways looks ahead to French philosophy in the 1960s. If Fondane were merely a Sartrean *avant la lettre*, he would hardly be worth talking about. If anything, Fondane's existentialism is opposed to the sort of "existential phenomenology" later practiced by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. The postwar existentialists attempt to synthesize elements of the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel, even if this is in order to challenge other elements of those philosophies. By contrast, Fondane attacks the existential *philosophy* of Husserl and Heidegger for betraying existence to the benefit of philosophy (42, 170–71, 196–97). One must choose: *either* philosophy, which justifies, explains, and proves that what is, is necessary (xxi–xxii, 256), and so counsels obedience (246)

and servile resignation (196–97); *or* existence, which counsels rebellion and insubordination (6), and lays claim to the "absurd hope" that flees reason's law in order to promise the impossible (x–xi, 5, 254). Only through this opening to the impossible, says Fondane, can freedom be safeguarded.

Freedom and the Impossible

If Sartre is famous as the phenomenologist of freedom, Fondane presents an anti-phenomenology. The ambition of phenomenology is to reveal the phenomena "as such," the "essence" or "truth" of phenomena: *zu den Sachen selbst!*[32] Freedom, on the other hand, opposes necessity, and hence logic and knowledge (21, 37, 268). "Every existential inquiry implies a merciless struggle not only with logic and morality, but also and especially with the 'concept' of truth," since "truth = the reality principle = principle of contradiction = evidence = necessity = renunciation = submission to death = nothingness" (37).[33] Outrageous as Fondane's equation appears, its warrant comes from philosophical reason itself, both in the rational necessity of its deductive logic, and its identitarian procedures (both those of classification of individuals under a genus and those of equating one term or series with another). Philosophy is always, in its own view, on the side of thought, the universal, and necessity; consequently, according to philosophy's own logic, it must be against existence, the individual, and freedom.[34] "Existential philosophy" is thus a contradiction in terms, and worse, a sign of intellectual and moral cowardice (171–72).

For Fondane, such cowardice is particularly grave in the case of Heidegger, whose attempt to combine Kierkegaardian *Angst* with phenomenology's search for universal essences is sheer confusion. Although Heidegger's analysis of anxiety shows that Nothingness precedes negation, and so is prior to and outside of reason (178), he fails to appreciate that for Kierkegaard, anxiety is meant "to abolish, forever, *the very possibility of any knowledge*" (243). As an opening onto the absurd possibility of the impossible—such as the "repetition" that undoes the past—anxiety shatters the rationally possible (which is always reducible to the rationally necessary), making it the anti-concept *par excellence*.[35] But Heidegger "domesticates" anxiety (178) by linking it to resignation before the finitude of time and being (189), "freedom for death" being merely submission to the inevitable (197).[36]

Whether this is an accurate interpretation of Heidegger is debatable; Derrida, for one, sees in Heidegger's existential analysis of death precisely what Fondane finds lacking, namely, a meditation on the possibility of an impossibility.[37] Derrida even defines deconstruction "as the very experience of the (impossible) possibility of the impossible, of the most impossible," the name of which is death.[38] Although Derrida disputes Heidegger's contention that death is a uniquely human possibility, he agrees that it is a necessary possibility of impossibility, or a

necessary impossibility (*Aporias* 87n18). Fondane wants to break the link of the impossible with the necessary, and hence of the possible with the necessary, in order to find freedom from death (even and especially death as the singular and necessary possibility of human existence). Derrida, on the other hand, in linking human death with the necessary and "impersonal" deaths of animals, underlines the necessity of death in order to make it less uniquely human (*Aporias* 75–78). Fondane would regard this as one more attempt at reconciling existence with death. In this light, Fondane's uncompromising attitude puts him at odds not only with existential philosophy, but with all the philosophies that take up Heidegger's reconciliation with finitude. "Henceforth, it is not a matter of *reconciling*, but of *living* oppositions . . . : 'passion is contradiction' " (209).

The thinkers who arouse Fondane's admiration and sympathy are thus those who live contradiction to the limit, who are not afraid of "a philosophy of internal division [*déchirement*] and of the despair of Reason" (229–30). Hence he is drawn to Kierkegaard, "who does not oppose Hegel's synthesis, mediation and reconciliation by *contradiction*, *despair*, *the* paradox and *sin*, but by *his* contradiction, *his* despair, *his* paradox, *his* sin" (208–9); to Dostoyevsky, who in order to escape the clutches of reason is ready "to go mad, *on purpose*" (186);[39] and to Nietzsche, who counsels us to go beyond tragedy, and beyond good and evil, because he demands that we "abandon God for frivolity," that is, "sacrifice God to nothingness" (87). In each case, it is a matter of throwing off the constraints of reason and knowledge, whether in the form of logic, sanity or ethical duty.

Lefebvre was perhaps right, then, to see in Fondane's work a more radical form of existentialism than Sartre's. Fondane's revolt against reason (*RV* 155–58) in the name of a divided and unhappy existence that will not be surpassed, mediated, or reconciled (xiv) seeks an "irrational concrete" in place of Hegel's "concrete universal" (xvi), a concrete which "is not given as 'thought' but as struggle" (57), "given in the *failure* of every attempt to apprehend it" (24). This is not a search for universal essences: "Reality begins only at the limit of the intelligible," in "the unusual, the accidental, the catastrophic, the aberrant . . . disorder, caprice, arbitrariness, free power" (*FT* 71), outside of any universal law. If there is a solution to unhappiness, it lies not in reason's speculative reconciliation of thought and existence (56–57), but in a way out, a flight from reason and knowledge (*savoir*), into the absurd or a madness which may be right against reason (*avoir raison contre la raison*)(xvii, 268, 276; *RV* 199).

Of course, this is completely unreasonable, and even mad, but Fondane sees no other way out. Even the "reasonable" attempt to make existence and reason into complementary terms, peacefully coexisting within their proper "spheres of influence," amounts to recognizing reason's absolute right to set limits: for it's reason that determines the "proper share" or allotment of each party. There can be no question, then, of justifying "the absurd needs of existence" before what Kant called "reason's tribunal," or of existence handing its "identity papers" to reason

(*FT* 37, 108n7).[40] With no resolution possible, it is better, says Fondane, to choose existence, freedom, madness, and the absurd, rather than reason, knowledge, and science. Better the impossible than the necessary; better to be wrong before God, like Job, than right before reason (239). The alternative is submission to knowledge's natural laws, its necessity, and its inescapable death (xii, 268; *RV* 86–88, 91–92).

Like Wahl, then, Fondane argues that Hegel's description of the unhappy consciousness is an accurate diagnosis of what ails modern existence, but that the Hegelian remedy—the speculative resolution of oppositions—is worse than the disease (47–53). Hegel is right that "As long as consciousness produces a beyond that it tries in vain to attain, spirit can find no rest" (51), and will be "a duality that does not succeed in grasping its unity" (47). But he is wrong to think that this beyond is Absolute Knowledge (53) or that it can be reached through reason (47). "[The] unhappy consciousness . . . senses . . . that there is something beyond consciousness and beyond unhappiness" (255), but this "beyond" is madness and the absurd, which lead to the impossible possible that lies beyond necessity (5, 58, 231). The tragedy of existence is not that Hegel's concrete reason has not been attained, but that reason is so tenacious and implacable that it blocks off access to the impossible.

Fondane's Critique of Reason

Surprisingly, Fondane insists that this refusal of reason is not "irrationalism," but merely the refusal to accept reason's hubristic insistence on logical necessity. When reason takes *what is* to be necessary and eternal (283), its denial of contingency is excessive (114). Yet reason is blind to its excesses because its criterion of legitimacy is eternal validity, a criterion that it takes, in a circular fashion, to be itself eternally valid. By holding this position, reason both justifies itself (as eternal and necessary) and refuses to recognize anything that falls outside of its scope (110). Consequently, reason must suppress disorder, freedom, and existence (113) in view of the contingency and "irrationality" these involve. Such an act is tantamount to "a provisional and illegal 'state of siege' of the mind" (117), a form of "idealist" terror[41] that at every point refuses to recognize what is other than reason (*RV* 51). At a deeper level, the tyranny of reason is that it "not only wants to impose its truth on men, at whatever cost, but first and foremost wants to *persuade* them" (108), which means first of all forcing them to recognize and accept rational necessity and the necessitating power of reasons (*RV* 156f), all in order to enslave men to duty, progress, work, or some other end of reason (*FT* 91; *RV* 97–98, 104). Those it cannot persuade—"the heretics and anarchists"—have to be "shot, put in prison, sent into exile," or, like Pascal, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche, cast out from the Temple (116).

Fondane's description of the domain of Reason as a repressive police state invites comparison with Foucault's analysis of the domination of madness by

Reason in "the classical age," or "the age of Reason." In both Fondane and Foucault, modern reason is essentially bureaucratic,[42] and consequently is intolerant of whatever refuses to produce its "identity papers," whether Fondanian "existence" or Foucauldian "madness." In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault describes the confinement of the mad to institutions as first and foremost a police action (*MC* 46, 63), the aim of which is to isolate and classify madness, and thereby to "know" it within the frame of reference of rational thought (*MC* 35–36). This operation deprives madness of its claim to a tragic knowledge that reveals a truth unknowable to reason—namely, the nothingness of existence within existence itself (*MC* 16)—and transforms madness from "that fugitive and absolute limit" outside of reason into something incorporated into reason, with a fixed place and identity. "No longer a ship but a hospital" (*MC* 35): madness in the classical age is no longer the free and wild "outside" of reason, but integrated within reason and society, precisely by being marked off and segregated through the essentially administrative and controlling operations of confinement and classification that constitute both the "mental hospital" and psychiatric knowledge. But this integration of madness within the administrative apparatus of reason only serves to radically exclude its self-understanding and view of the world, which become a mere lack of reason, a failure to attain reason's norms, or an alienation of reason from itself (*MC* 58). Madness is excluded precisely by being entirely contained within a system that "identifies" and "classifies" it according to criteria that deprive madness of any claim to "truth."

Fondane's view of reason's suppression of its other is strikingly similar. For Fondane, reason stands at the opposite extreme to the "wonder" that finds "the same" negligible and heeds "the other" that calls it into question and disturbs it (*FT* 71). By reducing difference to identity, and the other to the same, reason reveals its "undisguised horror of arbitrary, contingent and transitory empirical reality," dismissed as "an irrational sensory hallucination" (*FT* 25–26), mere appearance (54; *FT* 64–66). The fault here lies not merely with Hegelian reason; a more modest reason could do no better. Identity, non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle constitute the essence of reason, and it is precisely these principles which are incapable of grasping otherness and difference.[43] Reason's vain efforts to explain the unknown through the known (*FT* 81), and to grasp confused reality through clear and distinct ideas (241), unmask its ambition to incorporate its other as sheer presumption.

Like Foucault, then, and against Hegel, Fondane argues that what is *other* than reason should not be construed as the *negation* of reason. Negation is a logical operation that would fall within the scope of the principle of contradiction; it is only a formal and discursive principle and does not touch existence itself (21). Only from the standpoint of reason is existence the contrary or negation of reason, and hence a finite determination of infinite thought (*FT* 37–39). From the standpoint of existence, there can be no contradiction between existence and log-

ical demonstrations (21). There could be a contradiction only if reason and existence had something in common, or if existence were a "principle," either of which would permit the same logic to apply to both, and that is precisely what Fondane denies.

To found a contrary principle such as "irrationalism" would thus be playing reason's own game. Fondane would likely agree with Heidegger's dictum, "When irrationalism, as the counterplay of rationalism, talks about things to which rationalism is blind, it does so only with a squint" (*SuZ* 136). Nor is it a matter of establishing some form of "humanism" (78). "Humanism" is for those who are satisfied to be men, and nothing more (80); indeed, it is even less possible for humans to reconcile "infinite oppositions" than it is for Hegel's "concrete reason" to do so (280). Humanism, by making man "the measure of all things," is a rationalism that subsumes the unknown under the known. In place of humanism, Fondane calls for Nietzsche's benevolent pessimism, which "puts negation *in practice*" in delirium and "magnificent frivolity" (78–86). These sharpen the divisions between inner and outer, the individual and the general, existence and reason, instead of obscuring these divisions by pretending to reconcile them (48). At best, once aware of the internal divisions that render it unhappy, existence is free "to *struggle* against the unhappiness that forms it and to *distinguish* itself from that unhappiness" (xxiv). It is not free, however, to overcome those divisions (*RV* 102f, 204f): "It is not at all a matter of justifying [existence's] contradictions, of resolving them by means of a 'negation of the negation,' of a synthesis formed by the Hegelian dialectic, but, on the contrary, it is a matter of not resolving them at all, of underlining the *impossibility* of any reconciliation" (*RV* 246).

One way to resist reason, says Fondane, is to exploit its internal weaknesses (gaps in knowledge, aporiae, dilemmas).[44] "Let a single hole, a single crack, just one, appear for only a second in the seamless web of logical laws, and we will be there to take advantage of it, to sabotage the whole mechanism" (117). Moreover, these cracks do not appear merely by chance; they are an inherent danger of reason's efforts to assimilate the real:

> Each time that philosophy undertakes to found or legitimate its *autonomous* origins, powers and rights, it runs up against some barrier, which is always considerable; Schelling's *Urgrund*, irrational and irreducible, reappears; and it is not simply a rebarbative fragment of the real that refuses to let itself be thought; it is the real in its totality. Even if one resolves on the disappearance of this real to the benefit of reason alone . . . this does not abolish the contradiction, as it might seem. For it remains the case that reason is exceeded [*débordée*] by this real at every step of the way; the pavement is barely laid down before the grass cracks it and pushes up between the fissures. . . . Finitude, death, unhappiness, continuously pressed down, do not cease to spring up again (193–94).[45]

Or, Fondane notes, existence can *exceed* reason in poetry and laughter, which are "beyond reason" (*RV* 77–81). Laughing at life, however "tragic" it may appear to others, is

> the sign of and key to a new universe, which overflows on all sides the mechanical universe of necessity. It is a sign of a deeper inner life, a plethora of vitality, of a strange *lack of application* to the real, a *maladaptation* to the social. This *less*, which, from the point of view of the social . . . is a deficiency, appears to us, on the contrary, as a *more*, a superabundance, a presence. (211)

Although from the point of view of reason, this laughter manifests an absence of logic, it is not so much laughter which "lacks" logic and good sense as it is logic which "lacks" the laughter that exceeds it. Whether existence escapes reason by slipping through its internal fissures or by exceeding it, the aim in either case is to return existence and freedom to the individual, to give the individual "the absolute right to place his 'drama' at the centre of the philosophical problem" (225; see *FT* 54).

It is reason's ambition to total knowledge that causes it to encounter non-rational phenomena as limitations, and hence as negative (190–91). In that sense, reason itself produces the fissures and divisions that make consciousness unhappy, much as Hegel had argued. But taking Kierkegaard's part against Hegel, Fondane asserts that these fissures, because they exceed reason rather than negating it, cannot be mended or reconciled through rational comprehension.

The Individual and the Social

The impossibility of a rational reconciliation is most acutely manifested in the conflict between the individual and the social, a conflict that Fondane does not regard as a passing "crisis" that would allow for a socioeconomic solution, but one which, following Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he sees rather as an insuperable conflict between instincts and reason (2–3). Duty, necessity, law, and work "constitute the edifice of our civilization," but at the same time cause the individual to feel hemmed in and chained down (*FT* 91; *RV* 97–98, 115–20). In an argument that anticipates those of Bataille and Lefebvre, Fondane cautions that while it is true that the alienation and unhappiness caused by social injustice could be remedied by creating a more egalitarian social structure (x–xi), social revolution will not relieve the internal divisions of the unhappy consciousness (xvi), which is torn between the individual being of its instincts (xiv–xv) and the demands of social existence, which require the sacrifice of the individual to the universal (xiii, 48, 209) and of the "affective, imaginative, real self" to the idealistic and ethical superego (*FT* 40).

It is on this terrain that Fondane deals with Marxism's proposed solutions to the problem of the unhappy consciousness. For Fondane, Marxism, like existentialism, has the virtue of refusing to grant "what is" the *right* to eternal existence; in historical dialectics, the future emerges from the past without being bound by it or merely repeating it (xv). But even Marxism, which wants to change the world, rather than to understand it, relies on universal concepts, and is "forced to reject the singular, the exceptional, the individual, the lived states of consciousness, as being neither an object of clear thought nor an object of social interest" (xiii; see *FT* 26). Consequently, even the Marxist version of the historical dialectic is "a blind and devouring force, . . . unaware that the contraries it posits, transcends and negates are not simple 'convenient' abstractions, but flesh and blood human individuals" (xiii).

Because the dialectic cannot account for the individual as such, it must make the individual into something else, a "set of social relations" (54). But social relations, argues Fondane, are abstractions in relation to real individuals, a point he makes by turning Marx's critique of Hegel against Marx. In *The German Ideology*, Marx ridiculed Hegel's idealism for making the abstraction "Fruit" the substance, of which individual pears, almonds, and apples are mere appearances, when in reality it is as easy to proceed (in thought) from real fruits to the abstraction "Fruit" as it is difficult (in reality) to produce real fruits from that abstraction (54). Similarly, there remains a difference between a person's individual being and his social being. To reconcile the individual's *social being* with society is one thing; to reconcile society with the individual's *individuality* is quite another. In virtue of its reduction of the individual to universal categories (*RV* 197f; 56), Marxism turns out to be philosophy's continuation by other means, not its overcoming.

Fondane's Significance

Lefebvre's accusation of irrationalism notwithstanding (*E* 245), Fondane does not so much oppose unreason to reason as show that reason, especially when it tries to incorporate the irrational, is itself unreasonable, and that this is as much the case when it comes to historical materialism as it is for idealism. In that respect, Fondane's position is closer to philosophers such as Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrida, who want to call into question such traditional dichotomies as "reason/unreason," than he is to the forms of "irrationalism" (vitalism, biologism, racism) that flourished in 1930s Europe.[46] Fondane does not hold that unreason stands higher than reason, or that it somehow subsumes or incorporates reason. Making reason into a sort of epiphenomenon, a mere appearance in relation to the unconscious or the will to power, may grant unreason ontological priority, but it is yet another way of resolving the conflict between the individual and the universal at the expense of the individual, who again becomes an unreal and

unimportant appearance in relation to an irrational universal. That the universal to which the individual is sacrificed would in this case be irrational would in no way make that sacrifice more acceptable. In any case, a supposedly irrational universal would, in Fondane's view, find itself on the side of reason simply in virtue of being a *universal*, that is, a law under which particulars are subsumed, a law of identity.

This opposition to universals of any form puts Fondane at odds with some aspects of the post-1960 philosophies with which he otherwise shares so much in common. The revolt against reason, the celebration of madness, excess, and the heterogeneous are aspects of contemporary French philosophy Fondane would have found congenial. But he would have rejected the reduction of the individual to the mere locus of intersecting, unconscious codes, or the effect of unconscious structures (language, myth, Lacan's unconscious). These doctrines all tend to deny the lived reality of individual existence in favor of a view of the individual from the outside, which would situate the individual within publicly discoverable processes (of language, social conditioning, discursive regimes, and so on). Inasmuch as these processes are hidden from the individual, either contingently or necessarily, these theories also place the unconscious above consciousness, and universal laws over particular instances. So even though recent French theory differs significantly from the irrationalism of the 1930s, Fondane would argue that all too often it, too, subordinates the individual to the universal.

For their part, philosophers such as Deleuze argue that the singularity of an existence should not be confused with the individuation of a conscious ego, and Derrida would argue that Fondane's attempt to express pure individuality is doomed in advance to express the universality of language. Both Deleuze and Derrida argue for a difference that incorporates and exceeds structure, and that puts determinacy in the service of difference, rather than looking for difference in an unstructured ineffable. In short, while philosophers of the 1960s might have some sympathy for Fondane's goals, they would find his methods utterly inadequate. Consider Deleuze's description of Melville's "superior irrationalism": "Why should the novelist believe he is obligated to explain the behaviour of his characters, and to supply them with reasons, whereas life for its part never explains anything and leaves in its creatures so many indeterminate, obscure and indiscernible zones that defy any attempt at clarification? It is life that justifies; it has no need of being justified. . . . What counts for a great novelist . . . is that things remain enigmatic yet nonarbitrary: in short, a new logic, definitely a logic, but one that grasps the innermost depths of life and death without leading us back to reason."[47] It is this "new logic" that Fondane found inconceivable, but which Deleuze and others would later try to articulate.

Fondane himself is not here to intervene in the debate. A Romanian Jew who emigrated to Paris in the 1920s, Fondane joined the resistance in 1941, and in

1944 was captured and deported to Auschwitz, where he died in a gas chamber. Marginal, without disciples, neither a member nor a founder of any school,[48] this unwavering champion of the individual and the unhappy consciousness was not recuperated by the historical dialectic. He demonstrated in his own person that death is not, as Hegel would have it, a "sacrifice" by means of which Spirit attains "wisdom" (see 87), but rather "the supreme moment when man finally exits from History. He leaves good and evil, virtue and works, the consolations of reason and the *Zeitgeist*; alone, he no longer needs anyone's help" (285).

Chapter Four

The Uses of Negativity: Breton and Lefebvre

1. HOPE THEN (AND NOW)

Compare the fortunes of Hegel's unfaithful heirs in France. Fifty years after its heyday, existentialism is still very much with us. Sartre's *Nausea* and Camus' *L'Étranger* have become classics of twentieth-century literature, and are widely read and admired. The problems raised by existentialism—the divided self, freedom, and alienation—have been at most displaced, and sometimes reconfigured, but have never really gone away. How different it is with Surrealism and Marxism. If Surrealism is known today, it is more through its paintings (Miro, Dali, Magritte) than its literary productions or revolutionary manifestoes. Otherwise, it remains a curio, known only by a few aficionados in academic and artistic circles. As for Marxism, which once enjoyed such political and intellectual prestige that Sartre declared it the "unsurpassable philosophy" of the age (*CRD I*, 9), the anti-Marxism of ex-Marxist French intellectuals of the 1970s and 1980s (Bernard-Henri Lévy, J.-F. Lyotard) and the self-congratulatory triumphalism of the post-Soviet "New World Order" have pushed it so far to the margins that even Derrida has been moved to try to save it from oblivion.

Politics and fashion aside, the greatest gulf between our present age and these revolutionary movements is their unquenchable optimism. Existentialist anxiety and despair are not out of place in an age with little faith in significant social change, an age of irony, where it seems the greatest sin is to take things too seriously: "how hopelessly naive!" And perhaps the ironists are right; the past century bears witness to the tremendous costs of optimism. But it's our age which is hopeless, and ill-equipped to sympathize with Marxism's and surrealism's great expectations. For the hopes of surrealism and Marxism were huge: a social revolution, which would also be a personal revolution, was imminent. The end of

class conflicts and socioeconomic alienation would usher in the "whole man" (*l'homme intégral*), freed at last from inner psychic conflicts. The productive forces liberated would thus be psychic as well as social and economic; the revolutionary vanguard would comprise poets and artists, as well as soldiers and workers. In the 1920s and 1930s, these hopes constituted an affective link between Surrealism and Marxism that went beyond whatever theoretical similarities derived from their common debt to Hegel's theory of negation.[1]

These links also assumed a concrete and personal form. Surrealism's attempted alliance with the French Communist Party was signalled most dramatically when André Breton, Louis Aragon, Benjamin Péret, and Pierre Unik joined the party in 1927. From the other side, the most intellectually promising group of Marxists, the young intellectuals who during the 1920s participated in the journals *Philosophies* (1924–25), *L'Esprit* (1926) and then *La Revue marxiste* (1929)—Henri Lefebvre, Norbert Guterman, Georges Friedmann, Pierre Morhange, and Paul Nizan—were close enough to the Surrealists to be denounced in 1929 by Breton in his *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*.[2] Nevertheless, the only actions taken to link the two movements were largely symbolic ones on the part of the Surrealists: expulsions of Surrealists Philippe Soupault (who co-authored *Les champs magnétiques* with Breton),[3] and Antonin Artaud, the "director" of the Bureau of Surrealist Research, for "apoliticism;" renaming the review *La révolution surréaliste* (1924–1929), *Le surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930–1933). Yet despite the Party's mistrust of the Surrealists' "subjectivist tendencies," at the heart of this would-be "alliance" was the shared conviction that, through the proper use of negativity in destroying bourgeois society, a new society would be created where human beings would be able to realize or fulfill themselves as "total" and complete beings, more or less free from internal and social conflicts. As Blanchot sardonically remarked, "The service that surrealism expects from Marxism is to prepare for it a society in which everyone could be surrealist."[4]

Even at its zenith, this optimism was not universally shared. On the fringes of both surrealism and Marxism dwelt another figure equally impassioned about the destruction of the bourgeoisie: Georges Bataille. Bataille is chiefly known to us for the work he produced in the 1940s and 1950s, and thanks to admirers such as Derrida and Foucault, is still a figure of considerable interest. In 1929–1930, he was the editor of the Surrealist review *Documents*, and shared with Marxists such as Lefebvre the privilege of being denounced by Breton in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*. He replied (along with Michel Leiris, Jacques Prévert, Robert Desnos, Raymond Queneau, and others) in 1930 with the equally vitriolic *Un cadavre* ("A corpse").[5] Bataille and Breton mended their differences in 1935 to produce *Contre-Attaque*, a violently worded manifesto calling for "an adamant dictatorship of the armed people,"[6] but in 1936, hostilities resumed. Bataille's contribution to the 1947 Surrealist exhibition constituted his last act directly connected with that movement.

From the outset, Bataille's pessimism set him apart. For though Bataille sympathized with the destructive aspects of surrealism, he derided its optimism, especially its willingness to put negativity to work in the service of 'an idea.'[7] Bataille wants a negativity that would be purely negative: not just destructive, but having no use at all. His pessimism about useful negativity is especially apparent in his attitude toward the self. Like the Surrealists, Bataille seeks "integral man" through the ecstatic annihilation of finite and rational self.[8] But when Troppmann, the hero of Bataille's novel *Blue of Noon*, declares that he has attained a "happiness that defies all reason" through sheer negativity,[9] the "summit" reached through self-annihilation gives way to vertigo, leaving him with this dejected thought: "There was no more authentic reality in me."[10] Bataille regards this fall into nothingness as inevitable. In general, the activity of work, which raises man above nature, is also the basis of man's "fall": "The negation of Nature accomplished by man—raising himself above a nothingness which is his work [*oeuvre*]—sends one directly back to vertigo, to the fall into the emptiness of the sky [*vide du ciel*]," "the empty infinite" of freedom, which Bataille, following Heidegger, links to death as the most essential human possibility (*IE* 69–74, 93–94/*EI* 83–87, 78–79). From affirmation through negation, or loser wins, Bataille is thrown back on the negation and emptiness of the initial victory: winner loses (*N* 100). This pessimism separates him from surrealism's and Marxism's "total humanism" ("Troppmann" is "all-too-human," *trop* "man"). As we shall see in the next chapter, Bataille's thought serves as a bracing reminder that negation, once unleashed, is not so easily contained by productive ends.

2. SURREALISM'S NEGATIVE DIALECTICS

Many of Surrealism's and Marxism's hopes rested with what they called Hegel's "dialectical method" (*SeM* 96),[11] the dialectic of negation and "the negation of the negation," even though, much like the existentialists, both the Marxists and Surrealists agreed that Hegel had dissolved genuine social problems in the ether of pure thought, instead of seeking a concrete dialectic in social relations and upheavals and the psychic conflicts within individuals. Like so many others, they wanted Hegel's method, but not his metaphysics. Equally attractive was Hegel's notion of a final and total synthesis of all oppositions. This inspired Breton to dream of that "point of the mind where life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low cease to be perceived as contradictories," the point where "construction and destruction cease to be opposed to each other" (*SeM* 76–77). The royal road to the undoing of oppositions is Hegelian negation, freed of the limitations of the System, and applied to life, rather than concepts. No wonder Breton exclaimed that "Even today [1935] it is Hegel whom we must question about how well-founded or ill-founded Surrealist activity in the arts is."[12] Yet despite Breton's admiration for Hegel, surrealism's undoing of oppositions, unlike Marxism's, was not a "synthesis" in Hegel's sense. As Sartre argued, the surrealist refusal to place any limits on

negation means that surrealist negation is not regulated by a totality that governs negations as component "moments" of a progressively developing whole.[13] Consequently, surrealist negation is what Hegel calls a "spurious infinite": not the internal and genuine infinity of the interrelations of the various moments subsumed under the concept, but a series of negations and surpassings that extends *ad infinitum*.[14] This, according to Hegel, is really nothing but an alternation between the finite and the infinite, since each specific negation is itself a finite act which can be negated in turn, with the result that the product of these negations is not a concept, but a contradictory object which both is something in some respects and is not that thing in other respects. In that sense, surrealism is not truly "dialectical" (*Sit II* 216–18, 320–23).[15] Be that as it may, surrealist negation is the motor of a poetics of objects and of the self that is breathtaking in its audacity.

In the *Second Manifesto*, Breton explains:

> It seemed to me impossible to assign limits, such as those of an economic nature, to a thought definitively formed for negation and the negation of the negation. How is it possible to admit that the dialectical method can only be validly applied to the resolution of social problems? Surrealism's whole ambition is to provide this method with possibilities of application which in no way coincide with the most immediately conscious domain . . . the problems of love, the dream, madness, art and religion. . . . There was for us as well a need to finish with idealism . . . and not get stuck at the infantile development of . . . "The rose is a rose. The rose is not a rose. And yet the rose is a rose." For us it was necessary, if one will allow me this parenthesis, to take "the rose" through a profitable movement of less benign contradictions, where it would be successively the rose which comes from a garden, a rose which has a particular place in a dream, a rose that can't be abstracted from the "optical bouquet," one which can totally change its properties in entering into automatic writing, one that has no more of the rose than what the painter wished in a surrealist painting, and finally, the one which, totally different from itself, returns to the garden. (*SeM* 95–97)

Breton's "parenthesis" gives us the clearest picture of what dialectics were to the Surrealists: a becoming-other of the object without limits, guided by the imagination, which is itself propelled by the unconscious. As Salvador Dali defines the "simulacrum," it is a power of seeing in each object an infinite number of others, the range and number depending on the strength of desire and obsession.[16] In Breton's words, "A principle of *perpetual mutation* has taken over both things and ideas, leading to their total deliverance, and man's as well."[17] Against logic's regime of identity, "the incurable mania which consists of reducing the unknown to the known, to the classifiable,"[18] surrealism opposes the reign of the other: the multiple transformations of objects in poetry, madness, and automatic writing, where objects undergo "the absolute power of contradiction"[19] that Hegel

attributed to ideas,[20] but with surprising ups and downs and interruptions which, in Aragon's words, "have value because they give expression to the unknown."[21] The most striking example of this "perpetual mutation" is the series of hands in Breton's *Nadja*:[22] Nadja, the young madwoman Breton accompanies through Paris, sees an hallucinatory hand against the sky, which then becomes Breton's real perception of a red hand pointing on a poster, which then becomes a "hand of fire" (134), recalling the malformed hands of Nadja's former lover (83), and the unusual woman's glove turned into the Bureau of Surrealist Research (66–68, 72). This series, one of many found in Breton's and Aragon's writings of the 1920s, puts into practice the *Second Manifesto*'s meditations on the rose.

The ultimate target of surrealist negation, however, is not objects, but the self (*SeM* 97). As one commentator puts it, surrealism expresses "an indomitable desire to become . . . indefinitely other, through all the cycles of death and annihilation, up to the point of erasing all limits."[23] For the "self" attained through the destruction of the conscious ego is not that of an individual, but that of a (mostly unconscious) collective mind (*l'esprit*), with an infinite capacity to negate "the reality principle," and in particular, the laws of cause and effect and of the mutual exclusion of opposites (life/death, dream/reality, conscious/unconscious). "What," asks Breton, "happens to time, space and the principle of causality in dreams?"[24] In dreams, there is a wider conception of "possibility" than that of science and logic,[25] and dreams are precisely where consciousness is overpowered by its unconscious substratum, where the imagination abolishes the distinction between opposites. Unlimited negation, then, is to erase all limits, including the conventional notions of what is possible and impossible. Aragon had claimed in *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926) that the only inconceivable idea is that of an absolute limit.[26] Poetry was a way of erasing limits: in *Point du jour*, Breton writes, "Poetry knows no rest until it has placed its negativist hand on the whole universe,"[27] negating what determinism and logic consider *possible*. As Blanchot notes, for surrealism, poetry is "an activity that concerns man as a whole, . . . at once the awareness of this endless surpassing, its means, and this surpassing itself" (*The Work of Fire*, 92). It thus cannot be limited to "writing" in its usual sense; it is rather any means for giving the imagination effective reality in practice. Imagination, Breton declared, has no limits, falls outside the rules,[28] and throws off the shackles of the individuated ego.

Surrealist practice looks to those experiences that manifest this power of the unconscious and non-individuated subjectivity, such as "black humor" and "objective chance." "Black humor" is "the paradoxical triumph of the pleasure principle over actual conditions;"[29] it is unconscious desire's negation of reality and of the rational self. As Aragon writes, "Humor is of the opinion that where there is a solution, there is no humor" (*TS* 68). Humor is not then a solution to the insoluble, or even an escape, but the dissolution of the problem through laughter.[30] It is an assertion of chance against necessity, "the fleeting image of the

arbitrary unbound."[31] To the extent that humor is based on desire and the pleasure principle, it is subjective, but it is the subjectivity of an unconscious, a more *objective* subjectivity, free of the limitations of personal choice.[32] The objective counterpart to this subjective negation is "objective chance," where an object not only meets but exceeds the expectations of desire, in completely unpredictable ways.[33] When "desire searching for the object of its realization makes strange use of external things, tending to take from them only what serves its purpose,"[34] the object as a thing of use, having a determinate place within the system of the world, is negated, and becomes free to take on new relations and properties. Both humor and objective chance negate the reality principle to the advantage of desire and the imagination, but from different directions: humor is desire dissolving objective reality; objective chance is "the form in which external necessity appears as it makes its way through the human unconscious (to make a bold attempt to reconcile Freud and Engels on this point)."[35] Whereas Fondane sought liberation from logical necessity through God and the absurd, the Surrealists hoped for the same result from humor and objective chance.

The Absolute Point

The power of the unconscious to negate was not an end in itself, but the means of destroying the antinomies and contradictions which the Surrealists saw as the source of human unhappiness.[36] Dreams, automatic writing, and other practices unite the personality around the "unique, original faculty," the imagination's power of establishing relations.[37] Breton argues that a liberated imagination is the only means of resolving the antinomies of human life, "antinomies which, because they existed prior to the social regime under which we live, may well outlast it." Breton continues: "These antinomies demand that one remove them, because they are cruelly felt, for they too imply a servitude, but a deeper servitude, a more definitive servitude, than any temporal servitude; these antinomies demand that this suffering must not find man any more resigned than he is to the other [politico-economic] ones. These antinomies are those of waking and sleep (of reality and the dream), of reason and madness, of the objective and the subjective, or perception and representation, of past and future, of collective meaning and love, and even of life and death."[38] Hence Breton's declaration in the *Second Manifesto* that the search for that point of the spirit beyond contraries is the entire motive of every Surrealist activity (*SeM* 76–77).

This search united the Surrealists with Marxists in their desire to overcome social divisions and the contradictions of capitalist society. Thus Breton approvingly cites Trotsky's claim that the proletarian revolution will replace "the man of today, contradictory and unharmonious," with "a new, happier human race."[39] Nevertheless, Breton argued that because negation and contradiction are not limited to the sphere of politico-economic problems, they do not admit of a purely

political solution. That is why the surrealist revolution is a necessary supplement to Marxist revolution, and why although both revolutions aim at the same final harmonious synthesis, neither can substitute for the other. Not surprisingly, then, the Surrealists bridled against Communist accusations that their preoccupation with subjectivity made them "idealist;" for Breton, the "opposition of an interior reality to a world of facts" was no more valid than any of the other antinomies surrealism sought to abolish.[40] A pre-Communist Aragon even denied that dreams and real action are opposites at all: "The dream is the opposite of the absence of a dream, and action is the opposite of inaction" (*TS* 114).

At least one French Marxist sympathized with this line of thought: Henri Lefebvre. Long after his break with Breton, and at a time when he was a leading Party intellectual, Lefebvre wrote in his 1939 book on Nietzsche,[41] "The political revolution, if it ever took place, would not resolve all the problems of individual life, of love, of happiness. At most, the revolution would bring about the practical (social) conditions that would enable the individual to pose and to resolve his problems more freely. . . . Socialism does not resolve all of man's problems. On the contrary, it inaugurates the era in which man can pose in real terms (unmixed with social prejudices) the human problems of knowledge, love and death. . . . The great culture to come must integrate the cosmic in the human, instinct within consciousness. It will be the culture of total man."[42] But after 1945, faced with the hardening of the Party's line against rival radical movements, Lefebvre left the realization of "total man" to the proletariat.[43] By then, Marxism's alliance with surrealism, such as it was, was long past.

The Unconscious at Work

The paradox of surrealist negation was that it was supposed to be both unlimited and yet in the service of a determinate end (the dissolution of opposites), and this gave it an ambiguous character.[44] When negation is used to overcome contradiction, and not merely to perpetuate it, negations are limited by the final state of reconciliation aimed at. The final synthesis absorbs the previous negations and contradictions as "moments" contained and ordered by the logic of its concept. On the other hand, if negation persists when Surrealism's "absolute point" is reached, then the absolute point is not a synthesis in the Hegelian sense, but a mere juxtaposition of opposed terms, together with the simultaneous affirmation and denial of that opposition, which permits a kind of oscillation between one opposed term and the other. Surrealism aims at synthesis and totality, but it actually realizes something else: the production of what Sartre calls "the impossible, . . . the imaginary point where the dream and waking, the real and the fictional, the objective and the subjective blend together." Instead of resolving contraries in an articulated whole which "dominates and governs its internal contradictions," the impossible is "an irritating evanescence, . . . a mixture, an ebb

and flow, but no synthetic unity," because both contradictory "moments" are presented as equally essential in "the regrettable absence of any mediation" (*Sit II* 218, 321–22).

Of course, it's open to question just how regrettable this is, but Sartre has a point. Surrealism, Sartre notes, was a negative and destructive movement, but its primary means of destruction and negation required the real creation of objects (*Sit II* 217). Unlike the slave of Hegel's *Phenomenology,* who destroys matter as he found it in order to create a manufactured object, the Surrealist creates in order to destroy by producing objects that are internally contradictory (*Sit II* 321). Sartre's chief examples are the marble sugar cubes of Marcel Duchamp—a rather curious choice—and the "wolf table" of the 1947 Surrealist Exhibition. In the case of Duchamp's sugar cubes, real marble cubes (affirmation) negate the reality of sugar (negation), producing an oscillation between affirmation and negation (*Sit II* 216, 320). The wolf table presents "a reciprocal contestation of the inert [table] by the living [wolf] and of the living by the inert . . . in the unity of a single movement" (*Sit II* 320). Since no synthesis reconciles this opposition, the consciousness encountering the object is driven from affirmation to negation and back, so that, as Hegel says of skepticism, "consciousness truly experiences itself as consciousness contradicting itself within itself" (*PE* I 175–76; *Sit II* 322). All surrealist activity is "the descent of the negative *into* work: skeptical negativity *is made concrete*; the Duchamp sugar-cubes like the wolf-table are *works* [*travaux*], that is, the concrete destruction, with effort, of what skepticism destroys only in words" (*Sit II* 320). In these contradictory objects, as in Surrealist poetry, "the objective destroys itself and suddenly refers to the subjective," dissolving the world in transitory and unstable images "placed in the service of the reality of our mind," but the subjective is destroyed in turn, "allowing to appear behind it a mysterious objectivity," that of the unconscious (*Sit II* 217).

As a characterization of surrealist objects, and even of surrealist activity, this seems fair enough: the goal of surrealism is to reveal the unity of the subjective and the objective by causing the one to refer us to the other. But for Sartre, who in 1947 is increasingly tempted by Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, this back-and-forth movement between two opposed terms is unsatisfactory: no real *progress* is being made, and in post-war France, progress was an imperative.[45] Today, by contrast, surrealism's refusal of synthesis has regained much of its allure. Resolute modernists, the Surrealists can now be enlisted as precursors by postmodernists precisely because surrealist *practice* resists totalitarian synthesis, however much Surrealist *theory* proclaims it. Surrealism's oscillation between the subjective and objective "poles" establishes a connection between the opposed poles but without abolishing their opposition. Like that of a magnetic field, surrealism's force is neither at one pole nor the other, but between them. It could be counted as an instance of objective chance, then, that surrealism begins with a work entitled *The Magnetic Fields*.

The celebration of the gap between terms as a locus of opposing forces has its attractions. What postmodernists (and Bataille) find "regrettable" in surrealism is its concern with results, its subordination of the imagination and negation to ends. The play of negations unleashed in surrealist poetic transformations of experience, such as black humor, automatic writing, and encounters with objective chance: all these constituted a rejection of the ego's prohibitions, restrictions, and denials. This revolt against limits is also expressed through a rejection of seriousness; the ego demands results, hard work, the saving and investment of energy, but the unconscious seeks nothing but unbridled expenditure and play. Freedom from the ego is freedom from work and utility, which is one reason why Surrealists sought this liberation through dreams, where the "reality principle" doesn't apply (*SeM* 23).

The difficulty comes when you wake up: what is to be done with the dream then? How can the dream retain its liberating force without being made to serve the rational ends of the conscious self? As Aragon puts it: "The purity of the dream, the unusable and uselessness of the dream: this is what must be defended against the new-fangled pen-pusher's craze that is about to be unleashed. The dream must not become the prose poem's twin, nor the cousin of nonsense, nor the haiku's brother-in-law" (*TS* 94). But Aragon does not want to simply leave dreams to the dreaming state; he wants to translate the dream into waking life, in the form of poetry, transformed perceptions, and creative invention. The "pen-pushers" are content to merely write down their dreams and call them poetry. The surrealist wants more; instead of consciousness working on dreams by recording them and analyzing them, the dream and the unconscious are to be put to work in conscious life: "Surrealism is a conscious form of inspiration. . . . inspiration recognized, accepted and put to work. No longer as some inexplicable apparition, but as a faculty that is exercised" (*TS* 94). This same ambition to harness the power of the unconscious is evident in Breton's *First Manifesto*: "If the depths of our mind conceal strange forces capable of augmenting those of the surface, or of struggling victoriously against them, it is vitally important to capture them, to capture them first in order, if need be, to later submit them to the control of our reason."[46] The Surrealist productions—poems, paintings, the alteration of perception described in *Nadja*—allow the dream-mechanisms of object-transformation to function in waking life, thereby capturing the forces of the unconscious and putting them to work.

Once the unconscious is put to use in the production of objects, however, it is no longer free. As Sartre rightly points out, surrealist negativity is made to labor, and is limited by the object it labors on. Worse, since labor is by nature foreign to the unconscious, any labor it has to perform is by definition *forced* labor. In a different way from Hegel's Spirit, Surrealist *esprit* seeks to absorb and control the irrational, harnessing its power instead of letting it run free. The indefinite series of negations surrealism proposes becomes limited as soon as it is tied to an

object, such as a painting, a poem, or a "found object." Even the continuing oscillation between one negation and its opposite decried by Sartre is not unlimited negation, but negation defined by the particular thing that is negated, or determinate negation (see *Sit II* 323). In that case, as Hegel argues, the negation takes on the finite and limited character of what is negated.[47] As soon as that happens, the totalizing force of Hegel's system asserts itself, and negation is assigned a place within a rational order. Reason and the reality principle return.

The problem of whether the negative power of the unconscious could be completely unbound, and of whether the uselessness of the dream could be sustained in waking life, never receives a satisfactory solution in surrealism. It preoccupied Bataille, who expressed great admiration for Breton's attempt to allow "unchained poetry" to invade the great and small decisions of life.[48] But before turning to Bataille, we will look at ex-Surrealist Henri Lefebvre's attempt to find a Marxist use of Hegelian negativity that would address the problems surrealism had raised.

3. THE LABOR OF THE NEGATIVE: HENRI LEFEBVRE'S SUR-MARXISM[49]

In the 1930s, Henri Lefebvre accomplishes an impressive synthetic *tour de force* of themes from existentialism, surrealism, and Marxism, all centering on the figure of a consciousness torn by contradictions within itself and with reality.[50] Lefebvre had indeed earlier been an "existentialist" of sorts,[51] and was actually introduced to Hegel's thought by Breton in 1924.[52] Lefebvre's Marxism bears the stamp of existentialism and Surrealism, and particularly the latter's preoccupation with the problem of subjectivity and its relation to the unconscious. Like the Surrealists, Lefebvre sees consciousness as permeated and to an extent dominated by an unconscious "other," and subjectivity as penetrated by objectivity. But for Lefebvre, the "absolute point" where subjectivity and objectivity fuse is not to be found in the dream but in human praxis, the shaping of matter through human activity, which itself is a material and bodily response to material conditions and needs. Praxis and the historical dialectic praxis produces generate the antinomies of the unhappy consciousness (by producing a social regime where the products of praxis are turned against their producers), and consequently have the power to overcome those antinomies and realize "total man." Lefebvre argues negativity is most liberating when it assumes the form of determinate negation, in the transformation of conditions of existence in work, revolt, and critical thought.

In the unhappy consciousness, Lefebvre sees not an inescapable truth of existence, as Fondane claimed, but a mystified consciousness reflecting determinate historical conditions, such as the division of labor in a class-based society (*CDH* 53–56; *CM* 212–13).[53] The proper term for this condition is "alienation" (*CM* 148, 176f; *CDH* 93–101): "The alienation of man is a living fact, attested to

at each hour of the day by all of us. This solitude in the midst of the crowd is alienation. That ignorance of self, that lucidity without content, that abstraction without matter, this dispersion, this instinct without thought and thought without instinct, this despair: the alienation of the human" (*CM* 148). Unlike more orthodox Marxists, Lefebvre does not hold that alienation results from the passive reflection in consciousness of physical reality (*CM* 176–78, 253–58; *CDH* 59; *MCM* 17). On the contrary, alienation is possible only if consciousness is active, and yet does more than it knows: because we think through the body and through praxis (*CDH* 59), there is an unconscious *within* thought, "a content of consciousness that determines consciousness but which consciousness does not grasp or know" (*CM* 256; see *MD* 98, 122–23). Consequently, alienation cannot be overcome by reflection or thought alone, but only by a praxis that would give us mastery over our natural and social selves (*CDH* 62; *MCM* 24–25; *MD* 102; *MCH* 17). Man's return to himself from out of his alienated state is accomplished in the "unity of the individual and the social, man's possession of nature and of his own nature [which] defines 'Total Man' " (*CDH* 98; see *CDH* 25–27, *MD* 149); the means to this end is social revolution: "changing the world and . . . really abolishing existing contradictions in order to arrive at the truly human" (*MCM* 29; see *MD* 58–60, 144–45). The revolutionary thus seeks to overcome unhappiness (*CM* 212–13) by a "practical victory" (*CM* 193) over a regime under which men are dominated by commodities produced through their own labor (*CM* 180–91; *MCM* 18; *MD* 140–42). "The critique of the bourgeois world and of all human 'alienation' can only cease with their practical elimination" (*MCM* 25; see *MD* 45–53) in a new social organization that makes possible "the free individual in the free community" (*MD* 58).

Attempting to beat the existentialists at their own game, Lefebvre maintains that the proper response to the claims of the individual raised against Hegel by Kierkegaard is not Kierkegaardian "irrationalism," but Marxism.[54] Existentialist individualism is an illusory liberation of the individual, one which "exalts individuality in appearance in order to crush it in fact," since it is impossible for an individual to be fulfilled and non-alienated in a society based on exploitation and class antagonisms (*M* 58; *MCM* 53–59). In such a society, "The man who believes he is 'free' thinks in a void and does not see the real problems. . . . Detached from everything, he has no hold over [social] forces, which sweep him along. He is defeated at the moment when he believes he has 'freely' realized himself" (*MCM* 25; see *MD* 144–45). Marxism, by contrast, argues that each individual can "transcend himself" only when society as a whole places its productive forces at the individual's disposal (*M* 57–58), by eliminating the private property regime that turns a product of human activity and social relations into "an alien and non-human object."[55]

In Lefebvre's terms, total man, who has "transformed nature, his own nature" through praxis, is "the old notion of the absolute, but dialecticized,"[56]

"the Ideal without idealism."[57] Lefebvre gleaned this notion of Marx's "humanized" totality, the reappropriation of human existence through praxis, from Marx's recently published (1932) *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*,[58] which Lefebvre and others were just then making known in France.[59] The Rationalist systems of Spinoza and Leibniz contained "the admirable idea of *totality*, the demand for a total intellection of the universe, grasped in the reciprocal relations of its elements and moments" (*CM* 31), and Hegel had set that totality in motion by discovering the contradictions within reality, but it was Marx who finally succeeded in grasping Hegel's dialectical totality in concrete, human terms by basing dialectical development on "the relations of man to nature, that is, on *forces of production and social relations* . . . in social praxis, in daily life and in the life of the masses" (*CM* 57–58; see *MCM* 28–29). Marx and Engels thus "put practice in place of the Notion as the unity of the real and the ideal, of subject and object," and make the "determining moments" of the totality desire and work (*M* 63–65). In the final analysis, "dialectical materialism is even more Hegelian than Hegel," since although "it accepts the notion of internal transcendence, passing from one level to another within the total movement," it ties the totality to praxis and practical relations instead of to thought and conceptual relations, and so does not, like Hegel, make totality into a closed System (*CDH* 27, 81; *MCM* 17; *MCH* 7–9; *MD* 38). Rather, dialectical materialism proclaims that "All reality is a totality, one and multiple . . . open towards its future, that is towards its end" (*MD* 90). Well before Sartre or Merleau-Ponty, Lefebvre attempted to develop a Hegelianized Marxism that made room for freedom and contingency, and that tried to "rationalize the irrational" by bringing nature, action, and history within the scope of dialectical reason, instead of leaving these to the supposed "irrationalism" of Bergsonian intuition or Heideggerian *Angst*, as Lefebvre alleged Wahl had done (*CDH* 95).

Alienation and the Problem of Consciousness

However much Lefebvre's emphasis on alienation and internal psychic divisions addressed Surrealist and existentialist concerns, it was out of step with the thinking of the French Communist Party, which had taken Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* as its Bible. In this work Lenin had made consciousness a direct reflection of material reality. Although Lenin's *Notebooks on Hegel's Dialectic* takes a much more dialectical view of consciousness, the Party greeted Lefebvre and Guterman's translation of this work with nearly total silence: orthodox "dialectical materialism" placed the emphasis on "materialism" at the expense of the dialectic, and Hegel, in particular, was suspect because of his "idealism."[60] Yet for Lefebvre, no theory of consciousness as entirely passive could account for how consciousness could mystify itself, or suffer alienation (*CM* 178–79, 253–54).

Consciousness, argues Lefebvre, is neither an autonomous substance (*M* 109–10), nor a mere "reflection" or epiphenomenon (*CDH* 59), but a reality which is born, develops, and dies along with human life; it is based on a material and social substratum without being reducible to either; and it always belongs to individuals, not to a collectivity (*M* 60–61, 114). Within each individual consciousness, there persists an Other in the form of the unconscious, an unconscious that can affect consciousness from within in such a way that consciousness is not fully aware of the nature of its acts (*CM* 256). At its most basic level, as a determinant of human needs and desires, the unconscious is nature, the Other that man carries within himself (*M* 42), "with all this harbors of the unknown and the tragic" (*MD* 98, 106–7). As a being of instincts and objective needs, man is passive and limited, dependent on objects outside of himself, and consciousness "reflects" this dependency as felt privation and lack (*MD* 51, 100; *M* 32–36; *CDH* 13, 52). But as soon as man makes nature into an object of practical activity by transforming it, man "creates his own nature in acting on nature," since by satisfying his needs, man at the same time creates new needs based on socially acquired knowledge and techniques. These social needs, being creations of human praxis, differentiate man from creatures governed solely by sense and instinct (*MD* 102–3; *CDH* 72). Hence, "it is not nature as such but the changes in it produced by man that are the original and essential basis of [human] thought" (*CDH* 72). As man transforms his needs through work, he transforms himself, raising himself up from unconscious instincts to activity conscious of its ends and means (*MD* 103–8).

Marx's critique of Feuerbach had already pointed out this difference between man as a passively determined biological being and an active practical one (*MD* 49), a distinction that derives from Hegel. In a passage highlighted by Lefebvre and Guterman, Hegel argues: "the 'in-itself' and the 'for-itself' are moments of activity; the act is that which contains these distinct moments. But the act remains essentially *one*; and this is the concrete" (*MCH* 75). Lefebvre and Guterman conceive of consciousness as such an act: "Consciousness, the 'for-itself,' supposes a content, the 'in-itself.' It is their unity. Consciousness is thus *won* in a becoming that is infinitely rich in moments and aspects" (*MCH* 15). Human consciousness is both the act and the product of an act. What separates this theory of consciousness from idealism is the contention that consciousness' synthesis of being-for-itself and being-in-itself is expressed as "the crystallization of activity in determinate behaviours" (*MD* 108) which rely on socially acquired techniques and knowledge, such that consciousness expresses man's social and historical being (*M* 61, 118–19; *MD* 52–54, 110–17; *CDH* 72; *CM* 178). Consequently, Lefebvre argues that the true dialectic of consciousness is not between inert matter and consciousness, but between already acquired techniques and newly posited ends (*CDH* 59). Action has an objective basis in previously produced techniques and social relations, which are prior to and shape individual

consciousness, even though they have no existence apart from the living individuals who produce and make use of them (*PCPKM* 119–20; *M* 118–19). Only at the final stage of the dialectic, when being has become totally dominated by praxis and no contradiction remains between means and ends (*CDH* 23), would consciousness perfectly reflect being and become self-transparent (*CDH* 45).

Nevertheless, Lefebvre admitted that because human praxis cannot dominate everything, such transparency is bound to be elusive (*CM* 253; *CDH* 16–17). Even in ideal conditions, chance and nature remain "inhuman others." Within human nature, chance takes the form of the Freudian unconscious, which remains irrational to the extent that it is not a product of conscious human activity (*MD* 122–23). Nature as a whole, apart from the activity by which we organize and understand it, is also governed by chance, and hence is unintelligible and representable only by myths. These ineliminable irrational elements account for the persistence of religion, ideology, art and magic even in modern technological societies, and continue to give rise to contradictions between man as he is and man as he would be (*MD* 123–28). Despite Lefebvre's optimistic affirmations that total man, free of internal divisions and contradictions, *would be* the product of the full humanization of the inhuman other (*MD* 133–53), he has reason to cast doubt on whether the conditions of "total humanism" (*MD* 149) could ever be realized.[61]

Views such as these led Lefebvre to argue against the "economistic" view that economics determines the whole of human life, or that economic reform alone would be enough to ensure an end to alienation (*MD* 68–69). As a result, despite his post-war efforts to bring himself in line with official Communist thought, including a "self-criticism" that Lefebvre later characterized as "a stain on my honour as a philosopher,"[62] eventually Lefebvre would be expelled from the French Communist Party for "subjectivism."[63] After his expulsion, Lefebvre dismissed dialectics as capable only of revealing "formal" links between concepts, rather than real connections.[64] Still later, "structuralist" Marxists such as Althusser and his followers would dismiss "alienation," "history" and "total man" as Lefebvre had understood these terms,[65] putting an end to any further attempt to account for consciousness using the combined insights of surrealism, existentialism, and Marxism.

Negation and Praxis

Nothing would approach Lefebvre's astonishing synthesis until Sartre sought to combine Marxism with existentialism in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where like Lefebvre, Sartre would found a dialectic on need and praxis. Yet neither Sartre nor Lefebvre grant negation the free scope it has in surrealism. Like Sartre, Lefebvre sees the Surrealists' endless chains of poetic transformations as a form of sophistry, playing on an equivocal oscillation between being and nothingness (*CDH* 19; *MD* 8) and leading to "relativism" and skepticism (*CDH* 19–20,

31; *MD* 7–8). In reality, overcoming contradictions is achieved only in a rationally intelligible movement of thought and action that actually changes the opposed terms (*CDH* 20), instead of imaginary negations which leave things just as they were (*CDH* 25). In the revolutionary's "art of action," an increasingly acute consciousness of contradictions is the motive to the actions aimed at removing them (*CDH* 61). Instead of seeking liberation through dreams or the imagination, "the revolutionary act proposes to lead the present to its consummation in 'totally' integrating the past, in removing the barriers between classes, men and the powers of men" (*CDH* 66–67). Thus, against the Surrealists, Lefebvre argues that if negation is to be concrete and productive, it must be determinate: "The negative is a positive element; that which is contradicted is not reduced to zero, to an abstract nothingness, but is essentially resolved into the negation of its particular content" (*MD* 10). "Every negation is thus . . . the beginning of new determinations. In being and in thought, negativity is creative" (*MD* 13). By contrast, surrealism's oscillation between opposed terms is a movement without development or progress.

Lefebvre's objection to Hegel is not that Hegel wants to restrict the movement of negation, since Lefebvre wants to do the same, but that he construes negation too idealistically. Contradiction is "division, destruction, annihilation, death" (*MD* 19), and it is foolish optimism to believe that all conflicts can be resolved "without mutilation or renunciation" (*MD* 27–28), or resolved in thought rather than action (*MD* 30–31). Confusing action with the thought of action, Hegel hypostatizes negation into an "absolute nothingness" void of objective content (*MD* 37–38). Without the corrective of Marxist materialism, then, Hegelianism leads to the nihilism of Fascism, surrealism, or existentialism (*CDH* 12).

It is necessary to correct Hegel by restoring to practical humanity the activity Hegel reserved for speculative thought (*MD* 49), and to look for "genuine universality" (*MD* 54) in the interactions between human activity and its products (*MD* 74–78, 92–95, 102–19). For praxis is a synthetic unity of thought and matter, "both the starting point and the end point of dialectical materialism" (*MD* 95). "Idealism, which begins with pure activity devoid of content, necessarily results in a 'formalization' of this activity. Positivism, empiricism, or even ordinary materialism, posit the object first, or the given or the fact, outside of activity" (*MD* 103). Dialectical materialism avoids both these errors, by seeing how human products determine human activity, and how human activity in turn produces the social forms that determine whether products alienate or serve human creativity (*MD* 140–45).

Like Sartre (and unlike structuralist Marxists), Lefebvre argues that human liberation is possible because, in the final analysis, the dialectic governing praxis and its products is a *historical* result of praxis, which makes humans, not their products, the real subjects (*MD* 79). Invoking Hegel, Lefebvre writes, "According to the *Phenomenology*, the relation of man to himself and to the human species, man's realization of himself, is only possible thanks to the activity of the whole of

humanity, and supposes the entire history of humanity" (*MD* 43). To define action merely in terms of determination by biological need would be to lose sight of Marx's point against Feuerbach that "the being of man is a totality [*ensemble*] of social relations" (*MD* 49), and that systems of social relations are historical products of collective human activity. Only humanity as a historical *subject* could replace alienating social forms with non-alienating ones, thereby undoing the alienation humanity has brought on itself.

Therein resides the glory and the downfall of Lefebvre's Marxism. Despite his occasional skepticism, the belief in total man orients Lefebvre's analyses of negation, making negation part of a total dialectical process that is both progressive and finite (history has an end). Yet Lefebvre's postulation of a total reconciliation in a revolutionary future arguably constitutes a subordination of oneself to a beyond, characteristic of the unhappy consciousness in its religious form.[66] Lefebvre's humanistic "dialectical materialism" may have brought this Hegelian Spirit down to earth, but it is still in essence a theology, the belief in a supreme synthesis which could mediate all oppositions. Far from seeing in negativity a means of escaping the control of reason and "the reality principle," Lefebvre, like Hegel, wants to incorporate it in an expanded "dialectical reason" (*MD* 15–26, 61–97; *CDH* 35–41, 98–101). It was just this project that the existentialists and Surrealists tried to resist.

4. THE DREAM OF SYNTHESIS

What separates surrealism from Marxism is not Marxism's valorization of total synthesis, which corresponds in so many ways to the Surrealist's dream of an "absolute point" of a fusion of contraries; the difference lies in the attitude toward reason and work, which Marxism valorizes, and which surrealism seeks to escape. It was surrealism's *malheur* to have produced works, and to have sought an "absolute point" where opposites would be "reconciled;" both these aspects of surrealism brought it within the scope of reason's dialectical overcoming of opposites and its subordination of negation to practical ends. One could look on this aporia as a contradiction of means and ends, so that (as Bataille argues) the Surrealists could have attained their goal of transcending reason and its oppositions if only they had not sought to make negation productive, or had not produced works. At a deeper level, however, the contradiction inheres in the goal itself. Surrealism's "absolute point" is where the being of the self coincides with its nothingness, its activity coincides with its negativity. As Lefebvre and Wahl (and later Sartre) argue, this sets up a perpetual oscillation between being and nothingness. Far from "abolishing" the opposition between terms, this oscillation sets up a perpetual tension and polarity. The absolute point of fusion, consequently, is in reality a divided point, a divisible atom, rent asunder in its most internal structure. The question that divides Lefebvre's Marxism from the existentialism of Wahl

and Sartre is whether this internal division is necessary and inevitable, irrespective of any alienation arising from social conditions, or whether it is the product of praxis turned against itself. On the existentialist view, the indivisible point *does not exist* for the reason that every point *divides itself*, and must do so. In other words: no terms are "simple," and any unity is founded on a prior division. This theme, elaborated by Wahl and taken up by Sartre, will be taken up in still a different way by Derrida, in particular through his insistence on the "divisibility of the letter" and of the signifier.[67] Division prior to unity, a "doubling" prior to sameness, thus becomes an aporia that is deepened and radicalized by French philosophy from the 1930s to the 1970s, leading the "unhappy consciousness" to a domain where a return to the unity of the self from out of its alienated state is impossible.

Chapter Five

Bataille: Negativity Unemployed

Of all the thinkers discussed in this book, Georges Bataille is perhaps the most intriguing. An inspiration to the generation of French philosophers who came to prominence in the 1960s, such as Foucault[1] and Derrida,[2] Bataille's thought prolonged and radicalized the Surrealist and Marxist reflections on Hegelian negativity. In the end, Bataille broke with both movements because he saw them as subordinating human negativity to its productive uses in work, and for Bataille, work constitutes a submission to the reality principle, including the reality of death, which work is meant to postpone. If the fear of death motivates work, as Bataille argues, then the only way of overcoming that fear is to release negativity from its connection to labor, which neither Marxism nor surrealism succeed in doing. To attain the surrealist impossible, negativity must be unbound. This critical engagement with surrealism and Marxism over the issue of negativity, and Bataille's fascination with and resistance to Hegel's dialectic, makes Bataille a rope linking 1930s radicalism to that of the 1960s.

1. BATAILLE'S FIRST CONFRONTATIONS WITH HEGEL

An early text that presages many of Bataille's distinctive approaches is a Marxist critique of Hegel that Bataille co-wrote with a fellow Surrealist, Raymond Queneau, "Critique of the foundations of the Hegelian dialectic."[3] Bataille and Queneau rely on Hartmann's argument that the dialectic is found not in logic or nature, but in the class struggle analyzed in Hegel's dialectic of master and slave,[4] but they go on to argue that if Hegel was wrong to look for a dialectic in "the aprioristic clouds of universal concepts," Engels was equally wrong to look for a dialectic in nature. Against orthodox Marxism, they claim that "dialectical materialism" is not

an existing science, but the project of constructing one on an experiential basis (*CFD* 47–49): "The dialectic is valid for the agent, and not for the object of scientific activity" (*CFD* 55). The lived experience of negativity, such as that of the Oedipal complex (*CFD* 57–58), is the basis of "the fundamental dialectical themes of the Marxist conception of history," namely its view of negative forces as a means, especially the negativity of "revolutionary activity, which . . . constitutes the basis of a new society" (*CFD* 58–59).

Negativity as "the basis of a new society" is the most important point shared by Marxism and surrealism, and so it is not at all surprising that this idea figures in Bataille's attempt to link political revolution with a "dialectical psychology." Like the Surrealists, Bataille wants to expand Hegel's "theory of negation and of the negation of the negation" beyond orthodox Marxism's theory of the economic base and the ideological superstructure in order to raise "the problems of love, the dream, madness, art and religion" (*SeM* 95–96). The categories of negativity and experience remain central for Bataille in the decades that follow, even though he would increasingly doubt whether negativity could be made to serve as a means, especially in a modern technological society where the primary problem would not be that of work, but rather of "what to do" with nonproductive, leisure time.

He had not always harbored such doubts. In fact, in his earliest essays, Bataille attached himself to a materialist critique of Hegel superficially similar to that of Marxists such as Lefebvre.[5] In an essay in the surrealist review *Documents*, "Base Materialism and Gnosticism,"[6] Bataille criticizes Hegelian negation for being a perfect system of *reduction*: of facts to ideas, of matter to thought, of difference to contradiction. But materialism, as soon as it is freed of the "thing-in-itself" or other dubious ontological presuppositions, "is necessarily and above all the obstinate negation of idealism" (*BMG* 96), since matter "exists outside of me and outside of the idea . . . Base matter is external and foreign to ideal human aspirations and refuses to let itself be reduced to the grand ontological machines born of those aspirations" (*BMG* 103). In dialectical materialism, there is thus a reversal of values and priorities: matter takes on the role Hegel assigned to thought, and what is "lowest" (matter) "immediately takes on the value of a higher principle," as the foundation of the dialectic and the limit of thought. Ironically, what enables historical materialism to defeat Hegel is its dialectical character, which renders it less abstract than classical materialism or empiricism, since matter is not "the given" (a pure abstraction), but the source of the actual contradictions in things that lead to "the development of material facts" (*BMG* 96, 222). Hegel's own dialectical method is thus indispensable to the materialist undoing of his system.[7]

This undoing of systems particularly attracts Bataille. For Bataille, all systems are by their very nature idealist: the very idea of a materialist system in which every being has an assigned place within a hierarchical totality is a virtual contradiction in terms, since such ontologies convert real matter into an essence or idea that would be its "truth."[8] As Bataille makes clear, system, hierarchy, and servility are insepa-

rable: "There is no perceivable difference between humility—the least humility—before the *system*—in short, before the idea—and the fear of God."[9] That is why it is necessary to resist the system by any means possible. It is particularly vital to resist Hegel's speculative dialectic, which makes even the absence of a relation into a relation, since this move renders resistance to the system impossible (*FH* 61). The way out of this impasse, for Bataille, is to oppose "improbability" to contradiction, as for example the improbable existence of "the fly on the orator's nose," which is not a "contradiction" between the individual being and the metaphysical whole, but a chance encounter of two equally "improbable" beings (*FH* 61).

In his first phase, then, Bataille relies on materialism as the best means of negating Hegelian idealism. Matter against ideas, contingency and improbability against logical necessity, the "low" against the "high." In Breton's eyes, this revolt was a little simple-minded. By opposing matter to ideas, Bataille falls back into "the old anti-dialectical materialism," with its naive ambition of gaining a "direct interpretation of brute phenomena . . . founded immediately on social and economic phenomena."[10] Bataille's misfortune, says Breton, is that he *reasons* about matter, and so converts it into an idea despite himself. Worse, believing he can think about matter without ideas, Bataille fails to understand his own thoughts (*SeM* 144–46). In Lefebvre's terms, any materialism that posits an absolute opposition between matter and thought is a naive empiricism: "the particular in the first place being a sensation, an impression, an interpretation, a fact or a law taken by itself is precisely what is least concrete," since it fails to grasp things in their interconnections (*CDH* 85). Such empiricism is blind to the fact that in the social world, there are no purely material or sensible objects; all objects have a (social) meaning, which makes every object "a content of consciousness," a moment of a (social and objective) idea (*MD* 113).

Faced with such difficulties, Bataille was forced to rethink his own position. Instead of linking contingency with matter, Bataille will follow Heidegger in linking it with the individual and death.[11] Instead of opposing materialism to the System, Bataille tries to develop a "heterology" and a "theory of expenditure," a non-science of those elements not assimilable into systems,[12] and a paradoxical System of "non-knowledge" (*non-savoir*). But even in leaving surrealism and Marxism behind, Bataille retained key elements of those doctrines, especially their focus on negation.

2. NEGATIVITY BOUND: WORK

Negativity and the End of History

When Bataille develops his most distinctive thought in the 1930s and 1940s, he never strays far from the themes of lived experience and negativity first enunciated in his 1932 "Critique."[13] But under the influence of Kojève's lectures,

Bataille became increasingly pessimistic about the uses of negativity proposed by surrealism and Marxism. We saw earlier that Kojève holds that when history ends and man dies, the unhappy consciousness is overcome: man achieves total "satisfaction." There is no more struggle and conflict, no more effort to change the world, because there is no longer anything to strive for.[14] At that point, however, rather than ushering in the era of "total man," total satisfaction returns humans to a kind of animal existence, and so a new *inhumanism*.[15] "Man in his objective reality is action,"[16] says Kojève, and action is negation, the destruction of the world as it is for the sake of the world that should be. Without action—in the specific sense of deeds contributing to world-transformation—human beings are no longer human.

On this model, universal history—the history of the entire human race—initially unfolds in the technological world created by the transformation of nature through work: human action shapes nature to satisfy our needs.[17] But the mainspring of the historical dialectic is not any biological need, as in Lefebvre, but the uniquely human need for recognition: satisfaction is achieved when one's creative power, as embodied in work, is valued by others. History comes to an end when the desire for recognition is fully satisfied, as it is in the "universal homogeneous state," a classless society where every citizen is equal before the law, and which no longer makes distinctions on the basis of race or nationality.[18] Definitive satisfaction is the realization of "universal value" in the rights accorded each citizen by the State representing them all, the State in its turn being the incarnation of the universal and rational aspect of the existence of modern individuals. The achievement of such a State renders any negation of the world in imagination, poetry, or faith, "as well as any genuine surpassing of the given World produced by the negating effort of struggle and labor," both "useless and impossible" (*ILH* 155; see *ILH* 145, 385, 435n, 560). "There is nothing more to *do*" (*ILH* 385), and man, the historical man of creative and negating action (*ILH* 114, 385, 560), is dead.

Kojève's "end of man" thus rules out both Marxist praxis and surrealist "poetry." The poet reduces himself to the nothingness of pure negation, by retreating into himself and negating the world only in his imagination. But this alienated attitude of the "beautiful soul," who has no faith in action, is impossible to maintain in an era of total satisfaction (*ILH* 151–52). Equally impossible is what Bataille wanted from surrealism: a purely negative negativity, without works or positive results. At the end of history, there are only three essential possibilities for the inhuman automata that men have become: "In the final state there naturally are no more 'human beings' in our sense of an historical human being. The 'healthy' automata are 'satisfied' (sports, art, eroticism, etc.) and the 'sick' ones get locked up. As for those who are not satisfied with their 'purposeless activity' (art, etc.), they are the philosophers (who can attain wisdom if they 'contemplate' enough). By doing so they become 'gods.' "[19] Three choices then: consumerism ("happy automata"), madness, or philosophical contemplation of the

meaninglessness of life. Satisfaction isn't very satisfying. As Bataille puts it in a famous letter to Kojève,[20] the question is what becomes of human negativity, now that it no longer has the goals of satisfaction and recognition that hitherto had given it a meaning (*G* 51, 132): "If action ('doing') is (as Hegel says) negativity, then the question arises of knowing whether the negativity of someone who has 'nothing left to do' [at the end of history] disappears, or whether it remains in a state of 'unemployed negativity [*négativité sans emploi*]'. . . . What does 'unemployed negativity' become, if it's true it becomes something?" (*G* 123–24, translation altered)

The Surrealists' answer was: art. Art, after all, is free creative activity, activity not subordinated to any practical need or goal, just the sort of outlet one would look for once all practical needs have been satisfied. Bataille is tempted to agree. Unlike political action, art does not accomplish any real change, and so is a form of "powerless negativity" (*LX* 172), exempt from history's dialectic because it "does" nothing,[21] withdrawing from the world instead of transforming it.[22] This makes art "a minor 'free zone' outside action" (*N* xxxii), "negativity turning away from action" (*LX* 173), or "aesthetic action, motivated by feeling and seeking a sentimental satisfaction, wanting to do, in a word, that which cannot be *done*, but only experienced" (*AS* 195n13). Yet like Kojève, Bataille rules out this "poetic attitude" as a post-historical possibility, but he does so for entirely different reasons. Bataille's objection is not that "the unhappy consciousness" of the poet is untenable in an era of "total satisfaction" (quite the contrary), but that *works* of art have a dissembling character that can no longer be hidden at "the end of history, when evasion is no longer possible (when the *moment of truth* arrives)" (*LX* 124), when negativity becomes fully conscious of itself as such. Artworks necessarily mask the negativity of artistic creation in the positivity of the resulting object (*LX* 173): "Negativity isn't recognized *as such* in the artwork . . . it's introduced into a system that annuls it, and only the affirmation is recognized" (*LX* 173n; *G* 124). Once man has attained a full and lucid awareness of his own negativity (*AS* 188), the only negativity that can be "recognized" as "true" is negative activity without positive results, that of "a consciousness that henceforth has nothing as its object" except the negativity of consciousness itself, "pure interiority, which is not a thing" (*AS* 190, 197n21). "Thus there is a fundamental difference between the objectification of negativity in the form the past has known and the one that remains possible *at the end* [of history]" (*LX* 173, *G* 124–25). In the past, powerful negativity (action) produced historical results, and powerless negativity produced artworks. At the end of history, neither of these options is viable.

As we've seen, this is one source of Bataille's disagreement with surrealism: surrealism still aims at producing *works*, even if those works are meant to embody negativity. But the concern for objective results submits negativity to the reality principle's laws of cause and effect. Instead of Breton's vaunted freedom of imagination, artistic negativity, preoccupied with the effectiveness of its

means (*S* 415), "subordinated itself to things by attempting to subordinate them" (*S* 257), and alienated itself through the positivity of its effects (*S* 413). To be free, negativity must be exercised "outside the real domain," and its only effect would be a transformation of the artist's experience (*S* 257), rather than a product that others could use or enjoy (*S* 418). Entirely inward self-negation, without any outward results: this is the essence of what Bataille names "inner experience" (*IE* 46, *EI* 59), where negativity is an end in itself. Negativity negating itself, robbing activity of any "meaning" or justification, is not the man of action's heroic self-sacrifice for an ideal, but the discovery of one's own negativity in the experience of failure or ignorance. That's all that's left.

For this reason Bataille argues that while surrealism's aim of liberating negativity is valid (*IE* 148, *EI* 171), it will never be attained through "poems, pictures and exhibitions" (*IE* 170). He goes on to suggest that "the movement expressed by Surrealism is now no longer focused on the object," but rather involves "a more personal type of destruction . . . a limitless questioning of self," which receives expression in Bataille's own books (*N* 190–91). "Poetic undoing [*désoeuvrement*], poetry made project, that's what an André Breton could not tolerate naked, what the willed abandonment of his sentences was to conceal" (*EI* 62–63). True poetry is beyond the use of words (*G* 78): "The possibility exists that in Breton's search for the object he goes astray. . . . The Surrealist object is to be found essentially in aggression, its job being to annihilate or 'reduce to nothingness.' But this doesn't of course make it slavish, since its attacks have no reason or motive. It isn't any less effective, however, in bringing its author—whose will to immanence remains beyond question—into a play of transcendence." (*N* 190)

Recognition and Communication

What are we to make of this entirely inward negativity of self-questioning that Bataille proposes? Bataille refuses Kojève's designation of "the beautiful soul," since the "beautiful soul" chooses thought over action, whereas the man of "useless negativity" is faced with the impossibility of genuine action (*LX* 172). Similarly, although "sin" might seem an appropriate designation for negativity without positive ends, "sin" too belongs to a previous era, to the time when humanity is still alienated from itself, and experiences its separation from its possibilities (God) in the "unhappy consciousness." At the end of history, when the reign of universal satisfaction has been ushered in, "the feeling of sin no longer has any force" (*LX* 174). Useless negativity has no meaning at all. Even so, at the time of his letter to Kojève (1937), Bataille proposes that if the man of "useless negativity" could get his useless negativity *recognized* as such, this would be the source of a new satisfaction (*LX* 174–77), for negativity as such is "negativity without content," rather than the negation of what is in the name of (positive) ends (*LX* 173; *G* 124–25).[23] By 1938, however, Bataille already regards this position as untenable.

Negativity as such is *unrecognizable*, not simply unrecognized.[24] And with his unabated antipathy to "the system," Bataille quickly realizes that this is for the best, since recognized negativity would be a "truth" recuperated by a system of knowledge or the universal state (which Kojève had argued are one and the same).

Bataille's first move against recuperation is to invoke the unconscious. Hegel's negativity, negation through action (*G* 51, 136), is only "the shadow projected across the conscious region of the mind by a reality that, being unconscious, remained unknown or very obscurely known by Hegel" (*AR* 216). Unconscious negativity, however, is unrecognizable either to the person who experiences it or to others; it is "beyond the reach of phenomenological description" (*AR* 212). Perhaps such negativity is amenable to scientific description, whether sociological (Mauss) or psychoanalytical (Freud), but science "brings external data, foreign to immediate lived experience," quite unrecognizable to the subject of experience. Hence, even if science could make unconscious negativity a *knowable object* (*AR* 213), it cannot be a *recognizable subject* in the Hegelian sense whereby one subject recognizes the subjectivity of another as the same as its own (*PS* 109–12).[25] In place of Hegel's model of mind as a self-consciousness capable of recognizing itself through an Other, anthropology and psychology posit a mind largely unaware of itself, analyzable only from the outside (*AR* 216–17).

It's not surprising that Bataille would seek to escape Hegel through an unconscious negativity; he had recourse to the unconscious earlier, when he opposed matter to consciousness. What *is* surprising is that he looks for negativity there, when Freud and the Surrealists had been fairly insistent that "the unconscious knows nothing of negation." As he develops his theory of "inner experience," though, Bataille's resistance to "the system" appeals more to a conscious negativity that would resist conversion into truth of knowledge. He finds it in laughter, poetry, and ecstasy, none of which produce results for knowledge to understand, or in which an intention can be recognized (*IE* 111/*EI* 130; *G* 96). Since "Expenditure, sacrifice, celebration" destroy rather than create works, they cause a "rupturing and disequilibrium of the system" (*G* 136–38), which is why "In the 'system,' poetry, laughter and ecstasy are nothing; Hegel disposes of them in haste" (*IE* 111/*EI* 130). The term Bataille uses for "unintelligible, unrecognizable" negativity (*IE* 209) unconnected to any use or function (*S* 421) is "sacrifice."

By sacrifice, Bataille means an unproductive expenditure of energy in an act of consumption that is not undertaken for any further end: "Sacrifice is the antithesis of production."[26] Bataille, in part, has in mind what anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss have designated by the term,[27] but he wants to move beyond the standard conception. Traditional sacrifice does serve an end, such as social cohesion or the achievement of dignity or rank; it is tied to objective institutions and to mythological forms of thought (*IR* 55, 103; *AS* 12, 70–73; *S* 233). For these reasons, it is a "servile negation of servility," negativity in the service of extrinsic ends. The sacrifice that interests Bataille is negativity turned away from the real

world of work and objects and instead directed onto itself. Unlike the labor of the slave, this is not a self-making, but a self-unmaking (*désoeuvrement*), one that frees the self from the concerns of work and action, and from the fear of death based on individuation. Contrary to Kojève's "death of man" thesis, sacrifice's destruction of the profane world of work thus "will not destroy humanity itself," but only the individual defined by his separation from objects he subordinates to his use (*TR* 103–4). In sacrifice, human negativity has the strength to face itself at last, without the detours and subterfuges of work, allowing it to confront the death it harbors within itself (*N* 34).[28]

Since nonproductive negativity cannot be recognized through a result that others can discover and know, Bataille proposes a different mode of intersubjectivity: communication: "It is not enough to recognize; that only involves mind. It is also necessary for recognition to take place in the heart (in half-blind, intimate movements). This is no longer philosophy, but sacrifice (communication)." (*IE* 51/*EI* 65) We would normally understand communication to mean the outward expression of thoughts in words and deeds whose meaning can be grasped objectively by others, but this is not Bataille's meaning. Communication is an entirely inward affair, more communion than expression, the commingling of two souls, each sharing with the other its incompleteness and lack of knowledge (*N* 103). Contrary to others' recognition of the universal validity of one's experience ("truth"), communication is the process whereby the interiority and non-knowledge (*non-savoir*) of one individual is felt by another who also has "some experience of extremity." "My giddy fall," writes Bataille, "and the difference it introduces into the mind [*l'esprit*] can be grasped only by those experiencing it for themselves" (*N* 183).

Although most commentators take Bataille's vaunting of a useless and irrational negativity as a response to Kojève's reading of Hegel,[29] his protests against reason and history also bear more than a passing resemblance to those of Dostoyevsky's "underground man,"[30] particularly in Shestov's reading.[31] The narrator of *Notes from Underground* also worries that once the history of human progress has been completed, and the formula for human happiness has been found, "there won't be anything for us to do," except, perhaps, to destroy and to contrive chaos, or deliberately go mad, simply in order to salvage human freedom from the reign of rational necessity.[32] Bataille's antipathy to "the System" and Fondane's share a common source.

Labor and its Discontents

Since Bataille follows Kojève in linking recognition to satisfaction, to reject one is to reject the other. As we have seen, for Bataille, "satisfaction does not satisfy us and . . . humankind's glory is its awareness of not knowing anything but glory and non-satisfaction" (*G* 14–15). Beyond the desire for satisfaction lies a desire

that is "avid not to be satisfied," a desire for the impossible (*G* 151) that expresses "a state of mind radically opposed to Hegelian 'satisfaction' " (*TR* 123).

Hegel's "satisfaction" is unsatisfying, says Bataille, because it is based on an incomplete understanding of human reality, one that reduces human existence to purposeful activity (see *PS* 12), or "the project":

> Hegel's construction is a philosophy of work, of the "project." Hegelian man—Being and God—realizes himself, completes himself in the appropriateness of the project. . . . The particular, the slave engaged in the ways of labor, arrives after many turnings at the summit of the universal. The only obstacle to this way of seeing things . . . is what there is in man which is irreducible to the project: non-discursive existence, laughter, ecstasy, which link man—ultimately—to the negation of the project which *he is* nevertheless. . . . The Hegelian caving-in—the completed profane character of a philosophy whose principle was movement—follows from the rejection in Hegel's life of everything that could appear as *sacred drunkenness*. Not that Hegel was "wrong" to dismiss the lax concessions to which vague minds resorted in his time. But in confusing existence with work (discursive thought, project), he reduces the world to the profane world: he negates the sacred world. (*EI* 96/*IE* 80–81; see *AS* 127).[33]

On Bataille's interpretation, for Hegel the "complete man" is man at work, the individual laboring to satisfy his needs (*IE* 111/*EI* 130), "living in order to work without fully enjoying the fruits of his labor" (*AS* 46; see *AS* 58, *EI* 71/*IE* 56). Through work, the subject negates matter through the imposition of form (*HE* 76–77). This requires that the worker not simply and immediately enjoy matter, by consuming it, but that he instead put off that enjoyment until the work is done (*EI* 59–60/*IE* 46), making a future satisfaction the meaning of an otherwise unsatisfying task (*HE* 82–83; *TR* 87). The result of this deferral is that instead of being merely given, and opposed to the subject, the worked object reflects the subject's power of negating nature (*G* 96; *N* 186; *IE* 118/*EI* 138). Work thus gives nature human dimensions, to such an extent that in the modern world of technology the totality of what exists is reduced to "the fulfillment of tasks as they are defined materially," in terms of human needs and satisfactions (*N* xxviii; *S* 344–48). Accordingly, human autonomy is "procured through action by which the world is transformed" into man's image (*N* 47).

The catch, says Bataille, is that this autonomy is at bottom servile: the work that grounds it arises from the slave's fear of death. Bataille owes this view to Kojève's reading of Hegel. The man who is unwilling to risk his life is subjugated by the master who does not fear death, and becomes the slave who works for the master, to whom he owes his life (*S* 219).[34] "For Hegel . . . labor is the action of the man who, rather than *die* free, chooses to *live* in servitude" (*S* 283), whereas the master "had put magnificence before life" (*S* 353). All work, then, is a slavish

flight from anxiety before death (*S* 218–19). "One flees from anxiety and resorts to the project" (*EI* 62), in other words to purposeful negativity (see *G* 93). The master, on the other hand, enjoys rather than works, consumes rather than produces, and submits to no law but that of his own desires (*S* 198). It is the master who is the *subject*, whose experience of enjoyment has a value in itself. The worker is only an *object* of use for the master, and since his negativity is at the service of another, he cannot recognize it in the products enjoyed by the master (*S* 240–45). Autonomy is thus attained when negativity serves no end save its own enjoyment, in which case it becomes pure, sovereign subjectivity. It then resists knowledge's attempt "to reduce its objects to the condition of subordinated and managed things" (*AS* 74), because it produces no results, and is not subject to work's deferred future (*AS* 189–90, 197n18; *S* 218, 371, 419, 429), its "primacy of the future over the present" (*N* 34; see *AS* 58, 190). "The subject I speak of has nothing subjugated about it" (*S* 442n15). Autonomy would be the enjoyment of the master without his dependency on the slave, sovereign self-sufficiency (*S* 369), desire independent of ends or results.

In Bataille's view, Hegel was unable to conceive of such sovereign subjectivity because his fear of madness and of death caused him to restrict the scope of negativity's power. For Hegel saw that extreme negativity would destroy even reason itself (*IE* 46–47/*EI* 60);[35] it would be the pure destructiveness of death, unredeemed by any "meaning."[36] Bataille writes: "Hegel, I suppose, touched the extreme. He was still young and thought he was going mad. I even suppose that he developed the system to escape (every sort of conquest, no doubt, is the deed of a man fleeing a threat). In the end, Hegel arrives at *satisfaction* and turns his back on the extreme. . . . Hegel gained salvation while still living, killed supplication, *mutilated himself.* There was nothing left of him but an empty shell, a modern man. . . . Modern man, cancelled [*l'annulé*] (but without cost), enjoys salvation on earth" (*EI* 56/*IE* 43).

For Marx and Hegel the salvation through the work that gives the slave mastery over nature in the end allows the slave to become the free working citizen, who is neither master nor slave (since all citizens are equal), but a synthesis of both. Hegel's (and Marx's) account of the history of humanity is thus that of the slave emancipated through work (*G* 96). Bataille disagrees. For him, this "liberation" leads only to a new form of servitude, servitude to work and its products (*IE* 129/*EI* 150). This is so even though Bataille feels that Marx's analysis of work is substantially correct.

For Bataille accepted that Marx was right that what separates humans from other forms of animal life is the construction of tools (*HE* 28), the forming of objects that reflect human purposes, and which have no value beyond their utility (*TR* 27–28; *S* 213). Work thus establishes "the world of things," where each thing is reduced to the use it has (*AS* 132), and activity is subordinated to useful results (*AS* 56–57, 129). In this profane world (*HE* 112, 126), most fully realized in post-

Reformation, bourgeois society (*AS* 127; *S* 345; *TR* 126), the modern worker is subordinated to the real more than ever before. Defined by her power to transform nature, her effectiveness depending on her adaptation to technology and "the rational laws of work" (*HE* 150),[37] the law governing the worker's activity is not that of her own desires, but the technical requirements of production. This makes the worker's mind a tool, a mere adjunct of the machine. "Starting [in the bourgeois era], *things* dominated man, insofar as he lived for enterprise and less and less in the present time" (*AS* 133).

Following Marx, Bataille argues that in this world it is not the worker who is sovereign (through his freedom to negate matter), but rather the commodity she produces. What commands the worker's activity is what is necessary *for the production of the commodity*, not what is necessary *for the worker*: "the calculations and labors of *profane* life, in which man hoped to find *independence* with respect to nature, soon became revolting in that they ensured man's subordination to *means*" (*HE* 150). In subjugating nature through work, the worker thus subjugates her own nature as much as the world's (*TR* 41), curbing and shaping natural impulses according to the demands of work (*HE* 52–53, 61; *S* 341–44). The bourgeois world, which strives as far as possible to reduce human beings to their labor power, is thus "based on the primacy and autonomy of commodities, of *things*," and conversely "reduces what is human to the condition of a *thing* (of a commodity)" (*AS* 129; see *HE* 138, *S* 352, 360).

Up to this point, Bataille's analysis is standard Marxism. Unlike Marx, however, Bataille sees no solution to the "self-estrangement" of bourgeois production in the non-alienated labor of a socialist society. Laboring in the service of all ("to each according to his needs") is still a servile deferral of the moment of enjoyment until a future time (*HE* 15, *AS* 135, *TR* 28). For as long as he works, "The mind of man becomes his own slave" (*EI* 154/*IE* 133; see *S* 214, 239). Work fragments us "and limits us to the horizon of a particular activity," so that "the activity that subordinates each of our aspects to a specific result suppresses our being whole" (*N* xxvi–xxvii); only those human possibilities useful for the attainment of the result are valued, to the detriment of the rest. Just as "the purpose of a plow is alien to the reality that constitutes it," the purpose of the worker at work "is not his own purpose," but that determined by the task at hand, even when he is working for himself (*TR* 41–42; *S* 199). No matter *for whom* it is done, then, work makes man "a stranger for himself" (*TR* 42), a tool rather than an end, not a whole person but a useful fragment (*N* xxvii). Real freedom comes only from *not* working, when human negativity is independent "relative to useful ends" (*HE* 431n2).

The contrast with Lefebvre's ideal of non-alienated praxis could hardly be stronger. If Lefebvre's "total man" is the worker-militant totally satisfied with productive activities that help build socialism (see *S* 314, 323), Bataille's "whole man" is the mystic or drunkard who consumes without producing, and is totally caught up in the lived qualities of experiences that are ends in themselves.[38] "Life

is whole only when it isn't subordinate to some specific object that exceeds it" (*N* xxvii), when it wills no outcome (*N* 176, 185–87) and performs no action (*G* 96, *HE* 183). "What is sovereign is to enjoy the present time without having anything else in view but this present time" (*S* 199). Only by giving themselves unreservedly to the moment can humans attain "the 'whole man,' unmutilated" (*EI* 36/*IE* 23). When that happens, existence becomes its own end (*S* 367), valuable for itself, not as a means (*S* 226; *TR* 29). If Bataille agrees with Marx that "life beyond utility" becomes possible only once the necessities of life are assured (*S* 198–99, 245–47), he also argues that the real goal of left-wing politics is freedom from work (*S* 293–300, 422; *TR* 92; *AS* 158–67).

When existence thus achieves "being without delay" (*EI* 60),[39] without any future goal that would provide a reason for existing (*N* 37), it attains Surrealism's limitless possibility of "the dream of the unknown" (*EI* 41/*IE* 28), beyond reason's grasp and yet still conscious of itself. "The conscious presence of human reality in the world inasmuch as this is *nonmeaning*, having nothing to do other than to be what it is, no longer able to go beyond itself or give itself some kind of meaning through action" (*N* xxx) is "the apotheosis of nonmeaning" (*EI* 55), lucidly self-consciousness negativity (*TR* 13, 97, 111). Self-consciousness is achieved, then, only when the mind renounces action and becomes "indefinite desire," negativity in revolt against itself (*N* 187), without any "transcendence" towards ends, a "freedom for which nothing matters any more" (*S* 345), signifying nothing (*N* 160, *S* 229). Thus, in very much a Surrealist vein, Bataille says that what humans ultimately seek through negativity, whether it is productive (action) or nonproductive (sacrifice), is what "we vainly call poetry, the depth or intimacy of passion." But "we are necessarily disappointed," since the object of our search is something that cannot be an *object* (*AS* 130, 189–90, 197n21; *S* 380), but is a purely subjective and immanent negativity (*S* 237, 242).

3. NEGATIVITY UNBOUND: POETRY, SACRIFICE, AND NON-KNOWLEDGE

Post-Historical Freedom

As did the Surrealists, Bataille wants to remove constraints on imagination's "inner freedom" (*N* 53; *AS* 13, 57–58; *S* 235), and restore to human negativity its full rights, unharnessed to ends. Even in its posthistorical form, though, human freedom for Bataille remains the negation of nature (*N* 46; *HE* 150). History is "the exploration . . . of all man's possibilities, which the negation of nature establishes" (*HE* 76), and when history is over and universal equality is achieved, there can be no return to the animal's union with nature (*HE* 90–91; *TR* 17–25; *S* 403), or to its "life without history" (*HE* 94). Human life after the end of history is still

constituted by an autonomy which animals lack (*TR* 19), the freedom of not submitting to the given (*AS* 82–83, *HE* 169). Autonomy freed from utility (*S* 311) is *post-historical*, not *ahistorical*: "It is only a question of overthrowing the established order that subordinates us to some objective reality, independent of us . . . of refusing to submit to that which remains alien to us: the natural order in the first instance, then the profane order" (*HE* 169). As in Hegel, Bataille's negation of the original negation (work and history) does not constitute a return to some original position (*S* 215–16, 343).

That is enough to distinguish Bataille's position from Kojève's, since for the latter, at the end of history everyone save for the insane or the philosophers returns to the entirely satisfied animal existence of "happy automata."[40] True, Bataille at times appears to agree with Kojève's "death of man" thesis, saying that "At the end of history, with everything now manifest, humanity would change, become immutable nature" (*G* 105), and "disappear as humanity" (*G* 106). But this holds only to the extent that man is defined by the historical struggle for recognition that culminates in universal harmony and agreement (*HE* 190). We have already seen that for Bataille this is far from the whole story: the Kojèvian-Hegelian saga leaves out of account humanity's desire for *dissatisfaction* and disharmony, a desire for incompleteness in the self and incommensurability with the world. Humanity is tension, Bataille often declares, because it affirms itself as negativity in negating itself, but were it to try to negate itself entirely, it would be forced nevertheless to affirm itself as a negating power; not even death, that final "negation," would be capable of cancelling this affirmation of negativity. Irreducible negativity is precisely what enables Bataille to envision a post-historical existence for "a somewhat changed species of humanity," which would combine "action and questioning (work and laughter)." The very idea of post-historical negativity would be nonsense in Kojève's view, since post-historical negativity, being purposeless, would be an empty gesture, not an act, and so not "human."

Which of course was Bataille's point: post-historical negativity would be pointless. Sovereignty, or free negativity, refuses to submit to ends, whether the dictates of nature or morality's prohibitions (*S* 403–5, 458n61; *TR* 53, 68–72); it belongs to man's post-historical existence, not the prehistory of animal submission to instinct.[41] Since it is the very same negativity reason uses to produce knowledge, but beyond the bounds of reason or knowledge, it arises only *after* freedom and knowledge have reached their limits in absolute knowledge. It would be, says Bataille, a conscious and atheist mysticism, where self-conscious negativity lives in an "absolute rending [*déchirement*]" that would "maintain itself in ambiguity" rather than, as in Hegel, making "a Being out of Nothingness" by *doing*.[42] Unattainable through works, sovereignty can only be received like grace.[43] Those who receive it would belong to a post-historical, post-human, and posthumous humanity.

Non-Knowledge

Hegel's absolute knowledge, for Bataille, is the reduction of all objects to the subject's knowledge of them, of the known to the knower, the equivalence of the object *in-itself* with the object *for consciousness* (see *PS* 53–55). In a sense, the particular individual (*ipse*) becomes "everything, i.e. God" (*IE* 109/*EI* 127), but at the price of the negation of her particularity in the universality of her knowledge (see *PS* 45). Accomplishing this does indeed require "the enormous labour of world history" (*PS* 17; see *ILH* 398; *S* 201–2, 369), but once history has done its work, the philosopher's identity with the universe gives her a sovereign self-sufficiency: "in the final state of things possible, the philosopher could not in fact will anything that was not the dominant reality, and the latter could not bring about anything that did not correspond to the philosopher's thought" (*S* 369).

This is a Kojèvian thought, and it is as far as Kojève goes. For better or for worse, Bataille "goes further." As soon as absolute knowledge is accomplished, he argues, a new limit presents itself, that of the contingent existence of the knower. Instead of Leibniz's question of "why is there something rather than nothing?," Bataille asks "why is there *anything to be known* at all?" (*EI* 128). Logically prior to the question of *how* a subject achieves knowledge is the question concerning *the being of the knower*: why is there a knower at all? After reason has destroyed all fixed and partial notions, and arrived at the completed truth of the entire dialectical development (*G* 25), it is then faced with the question of its actual, contingent condition, the existence of the knower (*EI* 129/*IE* 110–11). But since the being of the knower is irreducible to the knowledge she (or anyone else) can have of it, it is something unknowable. Knowledge's necessary presupposition of the being of the knower then effects a reversal of knowledge's reduction of the unknown to the known: absolute knowledge dissolves into non-knowledge (*non-savoir*) (*EI* 130/*IE* 111; *S* 369). The individual's particular being isn't as easily forgotten as Hegel thinks.

What makes the knower so unknowable is that death, by cutting man off from the future self for the sake of whom he acts, prevents man from ever becoming a complete object (*S* 218). Since Bataille agrees with Hegel that knowledge depends on completeness (*G* 24), death makes individual existence an unknowable subjectivity without determinate limits (*TR* 32n). Of course, if non-knowledge were restricted to the particular domain of the knower, then non-knowledge would be a determinate limit *within* a system of knowledge. But since Hegel's "whole" or System is a product of mind, at one with the knower, the unknowability of the knower extends to whatever is known. Without the finite and mortal knower, knowledge "wouldn't have been realized effectively, and would only exist as a possibility" (*G* 132); yet the knower's finitude renders impossible the completeness knowledge requires (*G* 48). If the reality of the subject is a "changing, fragmented, incomprehensible reality" (*G* 30–32), threatened by death

(*G* 61), then this is also true for the object of knowledge. Dialectical reason, which negates the irrationality of the given (nature), is left with an irrational universe, limited by the the "horizon" of nothingness (*N* 188–89), simply because it must presuppose the being of the knower.

Beyond absolute knowledge's identity of subject and object, Bataille proposes a fusion of the knower and the known in a mystical non-knowledge (*EI* 66): "There's identity of subject and object . . . if incomplete and incompletable knowledge admits that the object, incomplete itself, is also 'incompletable' " (*G* 25). Through consciousness of its own incompleteness, in its anxiety before death, the subject thus becomes aware of the incompleteness of being, and "communicates" with that incompleteness: "I communicate with the 'unknown' opposed to the *ipse* I am, I become *ipse*, unknown to myself; two terms are confounded in the same tearing apart [*déchirement*]" (*EI* 145/*IE* 124–25). In this way, I encounter both my own irrationality (*déraison*) and that of the whole (*IE* 115/*EI* 134–35).

Similar to the Surrealists' ideal of an open-ended series of metamorphoses, Bataille's fusion of an irrational and indeterminate subject with an irrational and indeterminate reality (*G* 42) is not a static "identity," but "several types of identity," the encounter of an unknown with an unknown (*IE* 115–16/*EI* 134–35). Non-knowledge is an endless movement of questioning and anxiety (*G* 128), an "ecstatic" annihilation of self and universe (*N* 31; *EI* 65–67, 135/*IE* 51–53, 116), in which both coincide in their nothingness (*EI* 74/*IE* 59–60). As Bataille sums up, the difference between his position and Kojève's (or Hegel's) is that Bataille makes the destruction of the subject "the condition—necessarily unrealizable—of its adequation to the object" (*TR* 123), whereas Kojève makes the adequation of object to subject the result of the subject's transformation of the object through work.

Non-knowledge is not just the "beyond" of absolute knowledge, or its antithesis; it is the "return" of an unlimited negativity that undoes reason's limited negations, consciousness of "the moment of rupture, of fissure" when "anticipation dissolves into NOTHING" and negativity is not subordinated to future results (*S* 203, 493n3). Thus, instead of the closure of absolute knowledge, which reduces being to the known, non-knowledge is an opening to new possibilities (*S* 370), to the unanticipated miraculous, the impossible that nevertheless *is* and is revealed in desire (*S* 206–11). In Bataille's words, "We anticipate . . . what it is reasonable to anticipate . . . but we don't anticipate [desire's object] if we anticipate it *against all reason*. . . . Thus desire gives rise to the unjustified hope that reason condemns" (*S* 210). The possibility hoped for "against all reason" is the impossible, before which "everything gives way," including reason and meaning (*IE* 39–42/*EI* 52–55). Like Fondane, and like the Surrealists, Bataille prefers absurd impossibility to rational necessity.

Bataille and Surrealism

Despite Bataille's criticism of surrealism's faith in works, his theory of non-knowledge has many affinities with it, not least being the idea of a point where contraries coincide (subject-object, individual-whole, possible-impossible). Even though he calls Breton's absolute point *ignoble* (*N* 70)—on the grounds that any idea of an *absolute* "maintains a relationship of superiority, going from men to God," and perpetuates servitude (*N* 55)—Bataille also invokes the possibility of "a point where laughter that doesn't laugh and tears that don't cry, where the divine and the horrible, the poetic and the repugnant, the erotic and the funereal, extreme wealth and painful nudity coincide" (*S* 439n3). As in surrealism, attaining this impossible "point" requires a suspension of reason's law of non-contradiction, and a negation of the rational ego's negations of desire (*S* 254).

Bataille's means of overcoming reason overlap with surrealism's. Both look to eroticism, where desire is no longer tied to considerations of results (*HE* 179), and to the power of the imagination, which can bring together into a single object "the erotic, laughable, terrifying, repugnant or tragic" (*S* 235). For both, though, the main avenue to the impossible is the unlimited negations of what Bataille calls "poetry," the dreamlike becoming-other of self and objects, "an endless contradiction that multiplies without destroying anything" (*S* 215; see *IE* 126–27/*EI* 147–48). As in Surrealism, poetry in this sense is "the familiar dissolving into the strange, and us along with it" (*EI* 17/*IE* 5), the movement from "the known to the unknown" (*IE* 110–11/*EI* 129–30; *G* 25). Only superficially is poetry a "holocaust of words" that rescues them from use (*EI* 158/*IE* 137); more profoundly, it is "a restorative ravage [that] dissipates the illusions of an ordered world" (*EI* 169/*IE* 146). Poetry's unlimited negations overcome even death's negating power, for death too is tied to the ego's priority of ends over immediate experience and of the future over the present (*S* 219–23; *SeM* 23).

Along with the thirst for the impossible, Bataille shares surrealism's affinity for "miraculous" (*S* 200–13) or "marvelous" (*EI* 112/*IE* 95) moments. Such moments can never be produced deliberately; like "objective chance," they occur only when uncalculated reactions, arising from unconscious desires (*S* 209–26), coincide with a totally unpredictable event. Bataille calls this phenomenon simply "chance" (*N* 70–74, 91, 104; *G* 71–85; *S* 226). In chance, an object revealed as something that had been unknowingly desired all along (*G* 77) thus gives rise to "an intimate, incomprehensible, lacerating impression of déjà vu" (*N* 54, 69). By answering a desire that was hidden from us, the object negates the separation of object and subject (*N* 73), and makes "us slide from the external (objective) plane to the interiority of the subject" (*IE* 16/*EI* 28), from an unknown object to an unknown subjectivity. "It is always a matter of an object having powerful prolongations in us," but only when it is detached from the utilitarian-scientific system that subordinates it to the ego (*IE* 183). In an echo of Breton's *Nadja*, Bataille

declares that what the lover seeks in the beloved is chance (*G* 74), the traversal of two beings by a single unconscious force.

Like the Surrealists, Bataille sees chance as a negation of reason, work and the ego, and of seriousness in general. Whereas work and reason depend on the predictable unfolding of time, chance disrupts predictability with the randomness of the purely contingent (*N* 70), which reason's supposedly necessary laws of nature only mask (*G* 71–76, 96). By contrast, play involves the acceptance of chance and of whatever the moment brings (*G* 72), as in gambling (*G* 82–83), provided the gambler doesn't try to tame chance by calculating probabilities (*G* 71; *N* 110). Chance sacrifices reason to attain "the only way out of necessity," the impossible (*N* 104, 137; *G* 83). Since reason negates chance in order to affirm rational necessity (*EI* 155, 176–78/*IE* 134, 153–55; *G* 83–85, 96; *N* 115), substituting logical order and rational explanations for the immediacies of life in its wild state (*G* 131; *S* 335), only the sacrifice of reason makes "impossibility" possible: "As a means to triumph over . . . the opposition between individual and collective, or good and evil, over the exasperating contradictions from which, generally speaking, we are able to disentangle ourselves only through negation—it seems to me that certain chance movements, or the audacity that comes from taking chances, will freely prevail. Chance represents a way of going beyond when life reaches the outer limits of the possible and gives up" (*N* xxv).

"When life reaches the outer limits of the possible and gives up," there's not much to do but laugh. Bataille's laughter, as Sartre wryly noted, doesn't make us laugh; it's somewhat bitter. Like the Surrealists' black humor, it is a way out, fraught with tension:[44] "Laughter hangs suspended, it doesn't affirm anything. . . . Laughter is a leap from possible to impossible and from impossible to possible. But it's only a leap. To maintain this leap would be to reduce the impossible to the possible *or the other way around*" (*G* 101). In laughter, the improbability that the individual *is* (*G* 85; *EI* 83–87/*IE* 69–74) spontaneously responds to chance *outside* the individual, rather than the ego trying to master chance through rational effort (*G* 103–4). Laughter slips between the possible and the impossible as the spontaneous and affirmative reaction in the face of defeat or unpredictable chance (*N* 114): loser wins. But it succeeds only if it is not intended; intended laughter rings false (*N* 58), and would be an action or a project, instead of a free and non-productive negation. Work's negation of chance submits to reality; laughter's affirmation of chance is "divine freedom" (*G* 16–17, 110), belonging to the post-historical existence of those who refuse "to have only a useful value, to be a tool in the world" (*HE* 134, 145, 173–74). Negating rational and natural necessity, laughter thus raises humans above both animal nature (*HE* 90) and human misery (*G* 115); at the same time it destroys the finite self (*N* 189), overcoming the separation of individuals in the wordless "communication" of its contagiousness (*IE* 95–96, 191–96/*EI* 112–13). This dissolution of the finitude of the individual is as close to a promise of immortality as atheology can muster.

4. BATAILLE AND THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS

Like Fondane, Bataille wants to overcome the fear of death by taking refuge in an irrational "impossible." But whereas Fondane sees God as a bulwark against reason and guarantor of the impossible or the absurd, for Bataille, God is just the opposite, at least to the extent that he is a God of reason who denies time and chance.[45] For both Bataille and Fondane, taking refuge in the impossible is not meant to achieve some sort of reconciliation or harmony; that would be a capitulation. Bataille calls the search for harmony "a great servitude" that tries to annul time and difference (*IE* 56/*EI* 70), and denounces the "spirit of synthesis" for suppressing violence (*TR* 109). Instead of harmony, Bataille wants to preserve his inner oppositions and divisions in all their violence: "I refuse to be happy" (*IE* 43/*EI* 56). Just as Fondane before him, Bataille finds the remedy for suffering to be worse than suffering itself: "One who dominates suffering . . . needs to be broken, to engage himself in division [*la déchirure*]" (*IE* 43/*EI* 56). Better a broken man in a fragmented universe than to suffer the reduction of Being accomplished in Hegel's system (*IE* 36/*EI* 48)—a system whose harmony Bataille wants to resist with the obstinacy of a toothache (*IE* 169; see *G* 69–70).

Placing Bataille in the company of Fondane as an exemplar of the unhappy consciousness is taking sides in a debate: the debate between Sartre's "Un nouveau mystique" and Derrida's "From Restricted to General Economy." The question is whether Sartre is right that Bataille holds that "man is an insoluble contradiction" (*Sit I* 188), or whether Derrida is correct in asserting that "far from suppressing the dialectical synthesis, [Bataille's sovereignty] inscribes this synthesis and makes it function within the sacrifice of meaning" (*WD* 261). To put it another way, does Bataille's thought properly belong to Hegel's category of "the unhappy consciousness," or like the ladybug wandering to the words "unhappy consciousness" on a page of Bataille's notebook during a lecture by Kojève, is this an accidental conjuncture with something "only nominally relevant to it" (*G* 43–44)?[46]

No doubt Bataille would repudiate the label of "unhappy consciousness," since this Hegelian category is a stage of spirit prior to its full self-realization in absolute knowledge, to which Bataille's "non-knowledge" is subsequent (*WD* 253). But that does not settle the question. Bataille's atheist mystic, like Kierkegaard's extreme Christian or Fondane's believer in a God of the absurd, lives in the unhappy consciousness not as a surpassable phase of spirit, but as a permanent condition subsequent to all "surpassings," beyond *Aufhebung*.[47] It hardly matters that Bataille's non-knowledge is in a sense the completion of absolute knowledge, and includes absolute knowledge within it as the restricted form of knowledge tied to results and objects (see *EI* 69/*IE* 55; *WD* 271). This does not in itself show that Bataille is free from Hegel's categories. On the contrary, all of the characteristics of non-knowledge can be specified only in *opposition* to absolute knowledge; the divisions Bataille celebrates make sense only

against the background of the harmony and closure of the philosophical system. Against the closure of knowledge, Bataille opposes the openness of non-knowledge; to meaning, he opposes non-meaning; to work, play; to productive negativity, non-productive negativity; to the "time" of work, the "moment" of enjoyment. To the extent that Bataille's categories are the negation of Hegel's, they are inescapably bound to that which they negate. And indeed, in his later writings, Derrida argues that a "general economy" of "expenditure without return" can only be thought within the horizon of "economy" in general, and ultimately of classical and restricted economy, even if the relation of general to restricted economy is not one of opposition, that is, of a negation rendered determinate and regulated by a closed system.[48]

In his earlier essay, Derrida argues that Bataille's categories (laughter, expenditure, sacrifice) are not the negation of Hegel's, on the grounds that in Bataille there is a rupture due to asymmetry: Hegelian negation requires a symmetry of thesis and antithesis, a stable opposition, but Bataille's categories are not those of an enduring presence opposed to Hegel's categories as their antithesis (*WD* 271). This argument is hardly decisive, however, since this strategy merely introduces another opposition, that of the ephemeral to the enduring, or of the negation that lasts through its results (work) to the negation that consumes itself (sacrifice). That there is a difference between the Hegelian negation that lives on through its objective result and Bataille's more thoroughgoing negativity goes without question. Nevertheless, Bataille's "useless negativity" makes sense only against the background of Hegel's useful kind, which is not to say that Bataille's negativity is Hegelian, but that it is the negation *of* Hegel's "negation." What persists in Bataille is opposition itself, but opposition made indeterminate by the multiple self-negations and becoming-other of poetic undoing (*désoeuvrement*). Even this unstable opposition is made possible and rendered determinate by what it opposes, the stability of the monolithic system.

Just as the unhappy consciousness sees in God the sufficiency it feels lacking within itself, so the incompletion and *déchirement* of the atheist mystic remains within the horizon of the unity and completion of the Idealist system. Subsequent to the closure and completion of absolute knowledge, non-knowledge opens up new divisions and oppositions, which, precisely because they are subsequent to the ultimate synthesis of absolute knowledge, are insoluble contradictions, or in Bataille's language, being's never-to-be-healed wound. In this condition, as Sartre says, "contradictions coexist without dissolving, each referring back to the other indefinitely" (*Sit I* 189), one of the primary characteristics of the unhappy consciousness.

Yet Derrida is also right against Sartre. If Bataille's unhappy consciousness indeed does not occupy the same position as the unhappy consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is because Bataille's unhappiness is post-historical. It is, in Hegelian terms, the "truth" of the harmonious synthesis achieved in absolute

knowledge, since the post-historical non-knowledge of the unhappy consciousness surpasses that final synthesis. Derrida is then correct in criticizing Sartre's claim that Bataille suppresses the moment of synthesis, and so substitutes a tragic vision of the world for a dialectical one (*Sit I* 188). Bataille's vision is not at all tragic in the classic sense of pointing to some dramatic resolution, but is tragedy beyond resolution, "a sacrifice without return" (*WD* 257). Derrida is also right that Bataille is not a morsel or fragment (*miette*) opposed to the totality of the system, alluding to Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* (*WD* 260),[49] but again only in the sense that the idea of a fragment implies something missing from the totality, whereas Bataille describes a position that is not so much lacking in the system, but rather exceeds it and resists incorporation into it. Indeed, Bataille's refusal to be incorporated into absolute knowledge's final synthesis amounts to declaring that the synthesis can never be completed.

That creates a tension in Bataille's thought, since if the synthesis is incompletable, then neither is history, and if something exceeds absolute knowledge, then absolute knowledge is not really absolute, but a subsidiary truth, relative to the non-knowledge that surpasses it (*G* 26–27). But the apparent paradox dissolves if we consider more closely Bataille's theory of history and its connection to knowledge. Bataille's "history" is the struggle for mutual recognition through the productive use of negativity in work, which at the same time is the accumulation of determinate knowledge; this "history" comes to an end in the modern state's universal "rights of man and the citizen." What remains outside the synthesis is the individual *as* an individual, considered apart from his work and knowledge, that is, the individual of unrestrained negativity and internal divisions, the wild and irrational *ipse* (*EI* 134/*IE* 115) rather than its domesticated and recognized cousin, the ego who masters negativity for the sake of an end (*AS* 151–52). For his part, the irrational individual has no further knowledge that could be added to the system, since what he knows in non-knowledge is precisely nothing: the irrational *ipse* and its non-knowledge are both characterized by incompleteness and internal divisions, in contrast to the completion and integration of absolute knowledge. As Sartre puts it, Bataille's man is the unity of a dismemberment [*déchirement*] that dismembers itself and is the unity of that dismembering, "a strange unity . . . that loses itself in order to maintain the opposition" (*Sit I* 189). Derrida's necessary corrective to Sartre is simply the addition that this dismemberment persists after all the dialectical remedies of history and discursive thought have been exhausted (*WD* 269).

The other issue between Derrida and Sartre is the status of Bataille's negativity. Both agree that Bataille's negativity is opposed to the seriousness of work and the "project" (*Sit I* 205–7, 211; *WD* 259–60). But Derrida objects to Sartre's characterization of Bataille's laughter as Hegelian negativity (*Sit I* 210; *WD* 256, 259). Bataille's laughter, says Derrida, is not negativity, since it vanishes in the moment, and is not preserved for knowledge in a further negation that would give it a deter-

minate place in the system; hence, it is "neither the positive nor the negative," as these terms make sense only *within* the dialectical system. And to the extent that Bataille's unrestricted negativity produces no lasting results, Derrida is surely correct. On the other hand, if we are to take this to mean that unrestricted negativity bears no relation to the system of knowledge at all, or is "absolved of every relationship" (*WD* 264–66), this makes sense only in a *relation of opposition* to the *system of relations* that constitute absolute knowledge, and which Bataille saw (perhaps better than Derrida) made even the absence of a relation into a relation (*FH* 61). In other words, "the absence of all relation" that supposedly differentiates Bataille's negativity from dialectics can mark that difference only by being related to the system of relations that constitutes dialectics. Even though Bataille's negativity is not a determinate negation *within* the system, it is a negation *of* the system, which gives it at least a certain kind of determinacy. On the other hand, although Sartre is correct that Bataille's "negative dissolution" owes much to "Surrealist forms of disrespect and sacrilege" (*Sit I* 210), his error lies in linking either of these forms of unrestricted negation to the restricted and determinate negation of Hegel's dialectics, to which both Surrealism and Bataille are opposed.

There is something odd in the Sartre-Derrida debate, and something odd in the relation of both to Bataille. Derrida was at least frank enough to more or less admit that he had used Bataille for his own project, that of producing a theory of writing (*WD* 277), which explains his insistence that "we must interpret Bataille against Bataille" (*WD* 275), resulting in a number of "interpretations" that contradict what Bataille explicidy says.[50] This at least gives some plausibility to the conjecture that Derrida had to read Bataille in the way he did, and to read Sartre in the way he did, in order to make room for his own project, which wants to retain much from Bataille (and Sartre), but which also wants to be free of the taint of "subjectivism" and "voluntarism" (see *WD* 267).[51] As for Sartre, many of his critical and often ungenerous remarks concerning Bataille[52] can perhaps be best explained by Sartre's sense of how close his own position was to Bataille's. Sartre's repeated assimilations of Bataille to surrealism ("the young people of 1925") are an attempt to consign Bataille's thought to the past, and make it seem "out of date" in 1943, where it must appear as a naive frivolity in the serious and revolutionary time of war, resistance, and occupation (see *Sit I* 176–77, 209–11). This is a strategy Sartre adopted with the Surrealists as well, the better to demonstrate the novelty and superiority of his brand of existentialism in dealing with the very problems of negativity surrealism had raised. Sartre would not have felt the need to do so had he not seen Bataille and Surrealism as rivals. Be that as it may, Sartre's description of Bataille as one of those "unfaithful disciples of Hegel" who believes that "reality is conflict," but "without solution" since "of the Hegelian trinity [thesis/antithesis/synthesis], he suppresses the moment of synthesis" was not completely accurate. But it is a perfect description of Sartre himself.

Chapter Six

The Unhappy Consciousness in Sartre's Philosophy

When French philosophy of the 1960s took its leave of phenomenology and Hegelian dialectics, it left Sartre behind as well. Sartre was damned on several counts: as a philosopher of consciousness who had ignored the unconscious determinants of life (Lévi-Strauss, Lacan); as an ontological dualist and voluntarist (Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger); as a "nineteenth-century" system-builder and believer in historical progress (Foucault, Lyotard); and perhaps most damningly, as someone whose misinterpretation of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, according to Derrida, misled an entire generation (*MP* 111–19). It was also Derrida's contention that Sartre had either ignored or misunderstood the most important intellectual developments of his time, such as psychoanalysis and structuralism, and the literature of Bataille and Blanchot.[1]

In a strange reversal, Bataille, largely neglected in his lifetime, has become our "contemporary," and Sartre, once paramount in French letters, seems largely forgotten. This is due in no small part to the continued ascendancy of the philosophy of the 1960s, the "philosophy of difference" which is sympathetic to *déchirement* and *désoeuvrement* and antipathetic to "authenticity" and *engagement*. Bataille has become, in Derrida's phrase, *incontournable*, and Sartre is about as relevant as Brunschvicg or Ribot. But what if things were not quite so simple, if Sartre were still, in some sense, our "contemporary"? Certainly there have been moves to rehabilitate Sartre, such as Alain Renault's attempt to pit Sartre against the "errors" of post-1960 French thought.[2] Even among 1960s philosophers, we may note Deleuze's declarations that Sartre was "the outside" that freed French philosophy students from the new scholasticism of orthodox phenomenology (*D* 12), or Barthes' dedication of *Camera Lucida* to "Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Imaginaire*"[3] and his prediction of a rediscovery of Sartre's philosophy. More recently, and extraordinarily, there was Derrida's article in the fiftieth anniversary issue of

Les Temps Modernes, a tribute both to *Les Temps Modernes* and to its founder, Jean-Paul Sartre,[4] followed in June 1999 by Derrida's participation in the *Groupe d'études sartriennes*' annual conference for a two-day session on the relation of Derrida's philosophy to Sartre's. What is being rediscovered "in the most natural way possible" (Barthes), it seems, is that Sartre is not a philosopher of the subject, but one of the first to deconstruct the subject, and that far from being a facile and Eurocentric historical optimist, Sartre has a keen eye for the aporias and impasses of "commitment" in historical situations that always exceed our knowledge. What Frederic Jameson calls "the not necessarily guilty, but . . . certainly suspicious" silence with which contemporary anti-essentialism and theories of performativity had passed over their Sartrean heritage appears to be lifting,[5] and it is no longer quite so "generally accepted," as Denis Hollier once wrote, "that the Sartrean problematic has by now been essentially relegated to the past."[6] On the contrary, in the wake of Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Le Siècle de Sartre*[7]—an over-600-page monument to Sartre from his erstwhile ideological foe—"Sartre's return" became the cover story of French mainstream magazines and scholarly journals alike.

As Lévy and others have made clear, behind the question of Sartre's contemporaneity stands the problem of his relation to Hegel. Yet Sartre's attitude towards Hegel was deeply ambivalent; he was both attracted to Hegel's dialectic and deeply mistrustful of it. What Sartre wanted, both in *Being and Nothingness* and in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*,[8] was the dialectic without the totality, or that strangely Sartrean entity, the "detotalized totahty."[9] The dialectic in Sartre, then, becomes an endless series of negations without any final resolution (what Hegel called a "spurious infinite"),[10] as in the theory of history Sartre elaborates in his *Cahiers pour une morale* [*Notebooks for an Ethics*].[11] More fundamentally, it becomes the series of reversals and aporias elaborated in *Being and Nothingness* and then in the *Critique*.

Still, however explicit Sartre's denials of totality and synthesis, he implicitly affirms them in his very use of dialectical methods. Of course, critics complain that Sartre cannot have it both ways: this contradiction between the goals his philosophy explicitly sets for itself and the way it actually proceeds is exactly the contradiction that Hegel sees as the "motor" driving Spirit's self-development, a development culminating in Spirit's resolution of its contradictions in "absolute knowing." But Sartre does have it both ways, which makes him not only an avowed champion of the unhappy consciousness, but also its exemplar. Rather than the philosopher of dialectical totality his critics and defenders have taken him for, Sartre is a philosopher of irreconcilable tensions.[12] That in itself would not be enough to make Sartre *our* contemporary, though it would make him a contemporary of the 1930s. What is distinctive about Sartre's unhappy consciousness is that it is based on an ontology and theory of time that also lies at the heart of Derrida's *différanee*: a temporality that fragments and divides any would-be unity (consciousness, meaning). It is this theory of "being and time" that explains Sartre's ambivalence towards Hegel, and connects him to our current concerns.

1. THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS IN *BEING AND NOTHINGNESS*

We first see Sartre's ambivalence in *Being and Nothingness*, where he is torn between Lefebvre's ideal of a dynamic totality[13] and Wahl's belief in the impossibility of a total synthesis. Sartre finds himself awkwardly affirming that human reality is a totality (*BN* 139, 726f/*EN* 128, 628f), but that this totality is "unrealisable" (*BN* 145/*EN* 133), "detotalised" (*BN* 250/*EN* 221) by consciousness' dispersal over time, and by the plurality of other consciousnesses. When Sartre accuses Hegel of "assimilating being to knowing (*connaissance*)" (*BN* 324/*EN* 285), or of "ontological optimism" (*BN* 328/*EN* 288) for relying on pre-given totalities as a way of resolving conflict (*BN* 339/*EN* 298), or when he states that Hegel offers a merely verbal solution to an ontological problem (*BN* 48/*EN* 50), Sartre is influenced by Wahl: not only by *Le Malheur de la conscience*, but also by *Vers le concret* and *Études kierkegaardiennes*.[14] Similarly, Sartre's refusal of any resolution of the conflict between the individual and society, or between individuals, repeats Wahl's criticism of Hegel for "forgetting" individual existence (*BN* 328/*EN* 288–89). But it is the phenomenological theory of the temporality of consciousness, not Wahl's existentialism, that primarily grounds Sartre's repudiation of any final synthesis.

Consciousness Is Unhappy

Like the Derridean signifier, Sartrean consciousness differs from itself through a temporal movement of "deferral," whereby the present can be what it is only through the mediation of the future. For Sartre, all consciousness is, as Husserl said, consciousness *of* something, and it is nothing other than this directing of awareness to something, which Husserl calls "intentionality."[15] Yet consciousness only becomes aware of something by transcending it as it presents itself to consciousness (its immediate appearance, or "aspect") towards the "horizon" of its other possible appearances, the sum of which define the object and are correlative to future consciousnesses of that object. The present of consciousness, as consciousness of an appearance of an object, is thus defined on the basis of an *irréal* totality of consciousnesses which are not yet, but which would constitute a total experience of the object in all its aspects. That means that present consciousness implicitly *is* those future consciousnesses/appearances that it (actually) is not. Sartre thus describes consciousness as a being which is what it is not, and which is not what it is (*BN* 100/*EN* 94). To borrow from Derrida's analysis of signification, for consciousness, "an interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself," and hence "this interval that constitutes [the present] as present must . . . divide the present in and of itself" (*MP* 13).

"Not being what it is" is only one of the aporiae of consciousness elucidated by Sartre, however. Consciousness further finds itself in the curious position of

seeking to define itself through the closed and determinate totality which defines its object, and yet which would be a totality of consciousnesses, that is, a totality of the open-ended acts of transcending the given appearance/consciousness towards future possible consciousnesses. As Sartre puts it, this totality "is not the pure and simple contingent in-itself" being of its object, but the totality of the possibilities of consciousness, possibilities which are, however, "congealed in in-itself" being (*BN* 139–40/*EN* 128), and so rendered determinate. The object's present appearance becomes determinate only by limiting consciousness' transcending of the given to the determinate set of consciousnesses correlative to the set of all possible appearances of the object, a totality defined by the object's "essence": a purely *ideal* limit to consciousness' possibilities (*BN* 250–54/*EN* 221–24). Although this totality is an impossible synthesis of openness and determinacy,[16] an *irréalisable* that consciousness seeks but will never find, consciousness is implicated in it to the extent that consciousness is nothing other than the intending *of* its object.[17] Thus, consciousness both is and is not the totality of future appearances/consciousnesses through which it defines itself (*BN* 140/*EN* 129), and suffers the absence of that totality as a "lack" of its own being (*BN* 138–39/*EN* 124–25).

Now, even if, *per impossibile*, consciousness succeeded in satisfying this "lack," this would be because the totality had become truly closed, which could occur only if consciousness ceased to be intentionality and transcendence. In short, such satisfaction would be the death of consciousness, much as, for Kojève, satisfaction constitutes the end of history and the death of man (*ILH* 145–47, 155, 194, 387, 413). Because its desire must necessarily remain unsatisfied, human reality "is *perpetually haunted* by a totality which it is without being able to be it, precisely because it cannot attain the in-itself [closure, identity] without losing itself as for-itself. It is thus by nature an unhappy consciousness, with no possible transcendence of its unhappy state" (*EN* 129/*BN* 140).

To some extent, this argument had been anticipated by Wahl, who also interpreted Husserl's "intentionality" in light of Heidegger's theory of temporal ecstases. Existence, says Wahl, is *exstase*, exiting outside self (*sortie hors de soi*) in order to be near (*auprès*) the phenomenon appearing to consciousness (*EHT* 13, 29n). To exist, *ex-istere*, is to separate oneself from oneself in order that the phenomenon be present to consciousness (*EHT* 27) in "the ecstasy of perception" (*EHT* 10), and this requires that the self's present be separated from it by its own future: "It is from out of the future that I ceaselessly construct myself" (*EHT* 31–32). Both ex-istence as intentionality and as temporal ec-stases require a separation of self from self, an "essential diaspora, . . . distance in relation to myself" (*EHT* 65–66). Since "There is no consciousness save at a certain distance from itself," consciousness is an internal externality or being-outside-self, one which seeks but fails to rejoin itself (*EHT* 66–70). Thus, "there are no consciousnesses save for unhappy ones" (*EHT* 68). Sartre's own account of the unhappiness of

consciousness, including the "diasporatic" character it has in virtue of its temporality (*EN* 176), is indeed an elaboration of Wahl's, and one that attempts, at least, to base this position on more rigorous philosophical argumentation. Where Wahl presents a series of startling theses, Sartre means to provide those theses with premises, and to demonstrate, rather than merely assert, the connection between the temporality of consciousness and its unhappy condition.

Manifestations of the Unhappy Consciousness in *Being and Nothingness*

In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the dissatisfactions of the unhappy consciousness constitute the "motor" driving consciousness to Absolute Spirit's satisfaction and unity with itself; *Being and Nothingness* is Sartre's anti-*Phenomenology*, the narrative of the unhappy consciousness' vain attempts to fulfill itself by becoming the impossible totality, the in-itself-for-itself, or God (*EN* 678, 685/*BN* 784, 789). In its futile efforts to achieve satisfaction, consciousness suffers countless reversals. To the extent that human reality tries to *be* itself, it finds it is not itself, but instead transcends itself; to the extent it tries to flee its being by affirming its transcendence, it discovers its inescapable facticity—the givenness of its past, its body, its relations with others, and its historical situation.

These reversals are prominent in Sartre's analysis of "bad faith." The best example of this is not the (all-too) famous one of the waiter, but that of the woman, who when her dinner partner puts his hand on hers, can affirm her hand is "just a hand" in order not to see that it is also a signifying gesture (of acceptance), and at the same time affirms that she is not *merely* a body in order to deny that it is to her (living, sexual) body that her companion's advances are addressed (*BN* 96–98/*EN* 91–92). Such conduct involves an exploitation of the ambiguous character of human reality (*BN* 145n/*EN* 133n). Human reality cannot be its transcendence in the way a table is a table, as transcendence goes beyond the present towards a future that *is not* (*BN* 120–26/*EN* 112–16). On the other hand, human reality cannot not be its facticity in the way in which a table *is not* an ink-well; the given aspects of its existence belong to it as *its* past, *its* body. Human reality is thus unable either to be or not be its transcendence or its facticity straightforwardly; it must be both in the mode of not-being them.

Yet it is not just in bad faith that consciousness is unhappy; at every level, according to Sartre, consciousness seeks unity and finds division. At the reflective level, the consciousness that reflects on itself does not coincide with the consciousness upon which it reflects, yet both consciousnesses belong to one and the same consciousness. Again we find an anti-thetical movement: insofar as consciousness seeks unity with itself in reflection, it finds the division between the reflecting and the reflected-on, and insofar as it affirms this separation from itself, it finds that reflecting consciousness is not nonidentical to the reflected consciousness in the way that consciousness differs from something that transcends

it. This makes reflective consciousness "not a unity which contains a duality, not a synthesis which transcends and raises up the abstract moments of thesis and antithesis, but a duality which *is* unity" (*BN* 123/*EN* 114), a dyad. When Sartre claims that a synthesis should be possible, as when he claims that facticity and transcendence "are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination" (*BN* 98/*EN* 92), he is merely *asserting* the possibility of such a synthesis, the impossibility of which is demonstrated by his analyses of the "ambiguous" nature of human reality. As so often happens with Sartre, "synthesis" is posited as an ideal, but this *ought* with no basis in reality is what Hegel would call a mere *Sollen*: A being which is what it is not and is not what it is cannot escape from "contradictory concepts . . . which unite in them an idea and the negation of that idea" (*EN* 92/*BN* 98). The anti-thetics of bad faith are, as it were, consciousness' natural condition.

This is even more evident on the intersubjective level. When consciousness seeks validation in the consciousness of another, it finds that it both is and is not the object it is for the Other. Although I may not see myself the way the Other sees me, says Sartre, experiences such as shame reveal that I acknowledge being the object of the Other's judgment. On the other hand, I cannot coincide with my being-for-others; as soon as I become aware of what others think of me, I pass judgment on their judgment, accepting or rejecting it, usually implicitly, in emotions such as pride, anger, or disgust (*BN* 350–84, 671–75/*EN* 307–37, 581–87). Consciousness can neither be its being-for-others, then, nor escape that being. It affirms what it negates and negates what it affirms.

Sartre and Kojève

The problems of intersubjectivity bring us to a consideration of the oft-asserted claim that Sartre learned all he knew of Hegel from Kojève.[18] There is no good evidence that Sartre attended Kojève's lectures, and some evidence that he did not. Kojève states that Sartre did not attend his celebrated lecture course in the 1930s,[19] and Simone de Beauvoir makes the same claim;[20] nor does Sartre's name appear on the list of auditors.[21] It is certainly possible that Sartre read the important chapter on master and slave when it appeared in *Mesures* (January 1939),[22] but Sartre uses Lefebvre and Guterman's terminology rather than Kojève's, and their *Morceaux choisis de Hegel* is the source of all of Sartre's citations of Hegel in *L'Etre et le néant*. The first concrete evidence that Sartre did actually read Kojève doesn't appear until 1947, in Sartre's *Cahiers pour une morale*, and there Sartre is responding to the publication in book form of Kojève's lectures (*CPM* 24, 62, 64, 68–69, 73f, 97, 172, 467). Even the themes of consciousness as a "lack" and of the antagonistic relation between consciousnesses, common to both Sartre and Kojève, were very much in the air at the time. Spirit's being a *néant* was a commonplace among French Hegelians, particularly Hyppolite, whose

preface to the 1940 French translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* emphasizes spirit as negativity and the related theme of freedom-for-death.[23] Nor was the picture of the master-slave dialectic as a "struggle to the death" unique to Kojève; Wahl had earlier used the phrase,[24] as had Alain,[25] and Sartre had read them both. And it was Wahl who first defined the unhappy consciousness as a lack, a perpetually doomed effort to coincide with itself.

The more important issue concerns the differences in Sartre's and Kojève's treatment of the master-slave theme. For Kojève, the master-slave dialectic moves from antagonism to reconciliation. Consciousness raises itself above the mere self-feeling of animal desire when the object of its desire is another self (*Moi*), which remains when desire is satisfied, rather than being consumed and destroyed. Desire for another self desires the other as subject, specifically, the other's desire. What this means, says Kojève, is that each consciousness desires that the other one make it into an absolute value, "the meaning of its life." Since both cannot be this absolute value, a struggle ensues: a battle to the death for pure prestige. The victor in this struggle, the one who becomes the master, is the one ready to risk his life in order to make himself a value, and in so doing he raises himself *above* life. The slave, on the other hand, does not risk his life because he is too attached to life, too dependent, and so was already essentially a slave even before his contest with the master (*ILH* 11–34). Sartre, too, holds that intersubjective relations are in the first place a conflict, where each consciousness tries to dominate the other (*BN* 319–24, 473–90, 528–34/*EN* 280–85, 411–26, 458–63). For Kojève, though, the "fight to the death" is merely a stage of inter-subjective relations; it is transcended in work and humanity's technological mastery of nature (*ILH* 34; see *BN* 550/*EN* 477), which ushers in the universal recognition of the "universal homogeneous state, . . . a classless society comprising the whole of humanity."[26]

By contrast, Sartre argues that reciprocal recognition is impossible, because of the irreducible plurality of consciousness. I cannot simply be the object I am for the other without ceasing to be consciousness, and I cannot assimilate the other into my world, since the other is not an object (*EN* 287–88/*BN* 326–27), but rather is encountered as a *subject* in my experience of *myself* as an object for the other (*EN* 302–7/*BN* 344–50). There is no common ground that would enable self and other to exist on the same level. The only possible mediation between these anti-thetical standpoints would have to come from a standpoint that comprised both, that of the totality. And according to Sartre, no individual can take the point of view of the totality, a point of view which Sartre does not call "totalizing" but rather "totalitarian" (*totalitaire*; *EN* 288–90, 298/*BN* 328–30, 339): "the multiplicity of consciousnesses would not be a *collection* but a *totality*—to that extent Hegel is right—because each other (*autrui*) finds its being in the other (*l'autre*); but this Totality is such that in principle it is impossible to take the 'point of view

of the whole'. . . . Moreover this totality, like that of the for-itself, is a detotalized totality, because existence-for-others being the radical refusal of others, no totalitarian and unifying synthesis is possible" (*EN* 298/*BN* 339).

If there is no Totality, Kojève's "Man" does not exist; "humanity" is not a totality, or a collective enterprise unified by a single goal that gives everyone a common apprehension of the whole (*BN* 332–37, 534–37, 547–55/*EN* 292–96, 464–65, 474–81), but a "detotalized totality" of individuals and groups in conflict (*BN* 543, 546–47/*EN* 470–71, 474). Of course, a unified totality could exist for a "Third" outside of the historical event (*EN* 480), but historical agents appear to the Third "as *equivalent* and *solidarized* structures" only to the extent that the Third transcends *all* these agents towards his own ends. Consequently, the Third's unification of agents' differing projects cannot coincide with the "totalisations" produced by the historical agents themselves. Humanity as a totality exists only for a non-human witness: "Thus the humanistic 'we'—as a we-object—is proffered to each individual consciousness as an ideal that is impossible to attain, even though each retains the illusion of being able to achieve it by progressively enlarging the circle of communities to which he belongs: this humanistic 'we' remains an empty concept, purely an indication of a possible extension of the ordinary use of 'we' " (*EN* 474/*BN* 547). At best, universal solidarity is merely a heuristic regulative idea, a useful fiction. At worst, the biological synthetic idea of a human species leads to "The worst error, the humanitarian error" (*WaD* 22/*CDG* 34), the "humanism" that consists in viewing man as an eternal essence outside of history (*WaD* 21/*CDG* 34; *CPM* 101–3), "the privileged species, which [is] absolute and an end in itself." This amounts to a "racism of humanity" (*WaD* 24–27/*CDG* 38–41), the basis for Fascism.[27] Far from being a "humanist" of this sort, Sartre holds that if Man existed, it would be necessary to abolish him.[28]

In every way, Sartre champions difference over identity and plurality over totality, and not only in his "existentialist" phase, but during his Marxist period of the *Critique* as well. In the *Critique*, Sartre defines "totalization" as either a method of investigation guided by an idea of the total context in which individual facts find their significance, or as the process whereby actions constitute circumstances as instrumental complexes. He distinguishes "totalization" in either sense from "a Scholasticism of the totality" that reduces individuals to interchangeable components of a determinate totality, and which in practice results in "the physical liquidation of particular people" (*SFM* 27–28/*CRD* 28). Even at his most Marxist and totalizing, Sartre defends the irreducible reality of the individual, and is consequently left with the tension between the individual and the social. He may well invoke the idea of "synthesis" as an ideal, especially when criticizing others such as Bataille (*Sit I* 188), the Surrealists, or Merleau-Ponty[29] for lacking it, but his ontology undermines the very possibility of such a synthesis being brought about.[30]

2. THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS IN HISTORY: SARTRE'S CAHIERS POUR *UNE MORALE*

The impossibility of a totalizing synthesis remains in Sartre's postwar writings, but with a change in register. In place of consciousness, the irrealizable totality becomes a society in which each recognizes and is recognized by all the others, so that the meaning of an act is the same for the agent as it is for the others;[31] or it is "history" as the totalization over time of all human actions, which would give a meaning to those actions and to the lives of the agents.[32] Or, finally, in *L'Idiot de la famille*, the missing totality is the sum of the individual's relations with her historical "epoch," which would reveal the meaning of the individual's life in light of the epoch and, complementarily, the meaning of the epoch in light of how the individual lived it. Under the political pressures of the day, Sartre's desire for this meaning-giving totality becomes more urgent, but the object of his desire eludes him. All he is left with is the ideal, expressed in frequent declarations that the desired synthesis should be achievable *in principle*, although it has not been realized *in fact*. Examples include his contention that it is possible to say everything about an individual (*IF I* 9/ *FI I* ix); or most grandly, the assertion in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that there can be a single meaning of history, even though history is not the product of a single agent who totalizes all of its elements in the manner of Hegel's Spirit (*CRD* 131, 754–55/*CDR* 35, 817–18). Yet when it comes time to make good on these claims, Sartre invariably demonstrates the opposite of what he set out to prove: that even in conditions of equality and reciprocity the meaning of an individual's act is alienated by what others make of it (*CPM* 375–80); that even in the "apocalyptic" moments of collective group action, a fusion of individuals into an organic whole remains transitory and elusive (*CRD* 562–66, 664–67/*CDR* 576–81, 705–8); and that after millions of words and thousands of pages, more remains to be said about Flaubert.[33]

Authenticity, Action, and History: 1945–1949

Having promised a work on ethics as a follow-up to *Being and Nothingness* (*BN* 798/*EN* 692), after 1945, Sartre straightaway encounters the impossibility of this project. His pre-war ethical ideal of "authenticity," he now believes, is not within the individual's responsibility or control, but is linked to history and the overcoming of oppression. Authenticity requires a "moral conversion" that involves the renunciation of the project of being a closed totality (*EN* 463n, 532, 536–37), and aims instead at revealing being. In this new project, consciousness' separation from itself is no longer a misfortune, but a condition of the "horizonality" that reveals the meaning of what is. The difficulty is that this radical conversion cannot be accomplished by the individual alone. Until its validity has been recognized by others, consciousness' revelation of being is only a subjective certainty,

valid only for the individual who experiences it (*VE* 81–82; *PS* 104–38/*PE* I, 146–54). Consequently, authenticity requires the existence of a society where each is recognized by all: morality begins with the end of history (*CPM* 95, 149, 169). The end of history, however, remains forever to come, awaited but absent.

Because Sartre holds that the "revealing" human beings accomplish is achieved through action, what Sartre elaborates here amounts to an ethics of praxis. Action, says Sartre, is a temporal synthesis of ends and means, causes and effects, future and present, which reveals the "coefficient of adversity" and pliability of things, as well as the linkages of causes to effects. For this revealing to become a "truth" recognized by others, two conditions are required: 1) that the person who uses the means be the one who chooses the ends, and 2) that the revealing accomplished by the action be confirmed by others' free and independent judgment. If, as *Being and Nothingness* has it, authenticity involves assuming responsibility for oneself as a situated freedom (*EN* 692), and gaining a clear and truthful awareness of one's situation,[34] it now turns out that this requires that others freely recognize the "truth" of an action's revelation of a shared empirical world,[35] and not (as in the project of "being") some absolute meaning or "truth" of the *agent* as such.

Despite what Sartre takes to be the differences between his theory of recognition and Hegel's, it bears the stamp of the Hegelian morality of salvation through work discussed by Kojève and Bataille, and seems very far from his notorious "hell is other people."[36] Sartre's postwar engagement with history and historicity (*Sit II* 85, 241–46, 320–24) was due in no small part to the tremendous prestige enjoyed by the French Communist Party ("the Party of Resistance") immediately after the war, which also attached to its philosophy, Marxism, and forced French intellectuals to enter into discussion with Marxism on questions concerning history and dialectics. Only after 1945 does Sartre begin reading Hyppolite's translation of the *Phenomenology* or Kojève's and Hyppolite's commentaries on it. In the *Cahiers*, both Kojève and Hyppolite receive several mentions, including a contrasting of "Hegelian negativity" as expounded by Kojève (*ILH* 476) with Sartre's theory of consciousness as distance from itself (*CPM* 62–64), and a critique of Kojève's theory of history (*CPM* 64–66) for not recognizing that "History is not the history of *one* freedom, but that of an *indefinite* plurality of freedoms" (*CPM* 65, 74–75; see *ILH* 508). More tellingly, Sartre disputes Kojève's dialectic of master and slave (*CPM* 79–80, 403–20, 579–94), accusing it of being abstract and ahistorical for ignoring the concrete details of the actual lives of slaves and masters, who coexist harmoniously (for the most part) in roles that both accept as natural. And far from advancing human progress through technological development, the work of the slave is uninventive and repetitious: slaves have neither the time nor knowledge to make history, which remains the prerogative of the masters (soldiers, statesmen, philosophers, merchants), who enjoy the leisure and resources necessary for innovative work (*CPM* 79–80, 467–70).

Sartre's own account of the master-slave relationship is a recasting of his earlier analysis of the "spirit of seriousness." In *Being and Nothingness*, the spirit of seriousness consists in regarding values as objective moral imperatives that exist independently of one's choice to realize them. This is described as a form of bad faith, a flight from the anxiety of moral choice (*EN* 73–74/*BN* 77–78; *EH* 50–52/*EH-F* 79–85). In the *Cahiers*, on the contrary, the spirit of seriousness is an adaptation of powerless individuals (slaves) to an otherwise untenable situation. The belief in the objectivity of values is a "consequence of the desire to substitute a *de jure* existence for a *de facto* existence" (*CPM* 103) on the part of the slave, and this desire is correlative to the slave regarding the master (to whom he owes his life) as a "man of divine right." If he wants to live, the slave must recognize the master as an absolute, confusing the master's desires with objective necessity (*CPM* 199) and what *is* with what *ought to be* (*CPM* 153). From that point on, his existence has meaning only in terms of the master's values and choices (*CPM* 250, 277f): the meaning of "having been born to serve; of being, in relation to the man of divine right, the man of divine *duty*" (*MR* 185; see *CPM* 250). Duty, then, is merely "the violence of others, only internalized" (*CPM* 265), rather than the law Kant says one autonomously gives oneself.

The way out of this situation is not a "moral conversion," but a rectification of the power imbalance. The slave does not choose life over freedom, as Kojève and Bataille would have it; such a choice is an option only for someone who has the power to resist and threaten the other with death (*CPM* 196): "The slave originally is not the man who preferred life but on the contrary the man who challenged like the other but was unlucky and got defeated" (*CPM* 399). Once defeated, the slave's powerlessness renders resistance futile: "the Other's freedom can reduce my own to nothing more than a vain appearance" (*CPM* 347). Thus, since slavery results from powerlessness rather than the fear of death, the slave's victory over the master is achieved through revolt, not work (which tends to be boring and repetitious), and revolt is possible only when the power of the slaves (through alliances and techniques) can challenge that of the masters (*CPM* 150, 274, 343–44, 410f; *MR* 187–89, 217–18). "Revolutionary activity is violence as the negation of the negation" (*CPM* 172; see *CPM* 419, *MR* 218), fully successful only when the master's power is destroyed (*CPM* 412–14), and meaningless when this is impossible (*CPM* 249). Insisting on a purely inner freedom to choose constitutes a withdrawal into Stoicism's "purely abstract negativity" (*CPM* 401), an illusory and merely symbolic refusal of the master's power (*CPM* 235, 274, 344, 419).[37] An effective rejection of the "spirit of seriousness" requires that the slave no longer suffer the powerlessness that makes him a slave; only then can he create his own values.

This does not mean, as one might too easily conclude, that history comes to an end when slaves assume a position of power. A mere role reversal, where the former masters become slaves and the slaves become masters, does not liberate from the spirit of seriousness. As long as the slave rebels in order to become the

master, the "man of divine right," he remains stuck in the slavish belief in essential values and rights (*CPM* 275, 399). A radical refusal of the spirit of seriousness aims at the destruction of the very notions of "right" or "duty" and the violence these entail (*MR* 189; *CPM* 185, 265, 276–77). Rather than becoming Kojève's worker-citizen whose rights are recognized by the universal State, Sartre's rebel slave renounces both rights and duties,[38] along with the project of self-justification that motivates the subjugation of others (*CPM* 103, 498, 500–1).

Instead of Hegel's "mutual recognition" of persons and rights, Sartre calls for a recognition of the revealing power of action (*MA* 42f; *CPM* 499–507; *VE* 69). Action discloses being by transcending actual existence towards an end, that is, a future one necessarily awaits (*MA* 166; *EN* 544). Without this delay, there would be no way to distinguish action from a dream or a wish (*EN* 539–40; *CPM* 364),[39] or for action to reveal the resistance and compliance of things, the efficacy of my freedom, and the series of causes and effects involved in the process of realizing the end (*CPM* 174–76, 250–55, *VE* 44–45, *MR* 204). Against Bataille, Sartre argues that without the primacy of the future over the now, without temporal deferral, no revealing of being can occur. The "satisfaction" of action *is* this revealing, not the gratification of animal needs, or of the human desire to be recognized. Similarly, the temporal delay that separates action from dreams is not, as it is for Bataille or surrealism, a delay of gratification: the gratification that occurs without delay is only a dream of gratification. Temporal delay is necessary for the satisfaction of the *desire to reveal being*, not a postponement of a satisfaction that could have been enjoyed earlier.

Since action is a temporal synthesis of the intended end (future), the process of its accomplishment (present), and the end achieved (*MA* 167; *CPM* 174, 215–16, 250f, 550f), if the synthesis is broken, the action's revelation is diminished. When an agent realizes an end chosen by someone else, he works without understanding the end involved (*CPM* 267–71, 403), and the other enjoys the product of work without understanding how it was produced. In both cases, the result is a mystified consciousness, deprived of the truth of action. Even when action is undertaken autonomously, it achieves "truth" only through objective confirmation by others (*VE* 23–25, 31, 68 and 72), and this requires that the action or its result assume a public and objective form.[40] Finally, that confirmation is valid only if it is freely and independently given, by others who are competent to judge the success or failure of what was accomplished, and have no interest that would bias their judgment in one way or another (*MA* 358–61). In short, the desire to reveal being through action is satisfied only when the actions of a free agent are recognized by other agents who are equally free. History, then, although it is primarily the story of human alienation (*CPM* 13, 51-54, 123, 487), is nevertheless oriented towards an end, the moment of universal truth.

The difference between this universal truth and that of Hegel and Marx (or Kojève and Bataille) is that "truth" here is not some proposition universally

acknowledged, except for the purely formal principle of taking "for a concrete end each consciousness in its concrete singularity" (*CPM* 95). From this point of view, the irreducible otherness of others (*CPM* 54), far from being regrettable, is a necessary condition of the pluralist truth achieved when everyone recognizes the singular truth of others' actions and experiences (*CPM* 285–86, 290–94, 522). "In a word, agreement concerning truth would be an agreement concerning *truths*" (*CPM* 55). As soon as one realizes this, one can then accept "the synthetic and often contradictory" (*Sit II* 311, 330n) "detotalized totality" of one's generation as the genuine "concrete universal" (*CPM* 22, 26–31). Sartre views the shift from a totalitarian to a pluralist conception of truth as an historical event, and a change in the meaning of history, away from the reduction of individuals to the universality of their "function" in relation to the whole (*CPM* 77, 137–40), and towards finding in individual experience an "absolute at the heart of relativity itself" (*Sit II* 245), "an ahistorical absolute" at the heart of history (*CPM* 32, 96, 99).

Individual and Historical Truth

The theme of the irreducible reality of the individual is a constant in Sartre's writings. In the immediate post-war period, Sartre's pluralist conception of truth leads him to resist the reduction of the truth of lived experience to the synthetic Whole of human history: "If humanity were a totality, then each moment of its development would be relative to the others as a middle term, mediation, etc. Thus suffering as a moment of the total development would be justified and dissolved into the whole. But the separation of consciousnesses necessarily implies that the suffering of the victim is not recoverable. Thus the nothingness that separates consciousnesses from each other makes of each determination of these consciousnesses an absolute" (*CPM* 32). *One* humanity with *one* truth is thus an illusion. It is only from the deceptive perspective of the future generation that the sufferings of past individuals are "justified" as the price of "progress" (*CPM* 47, 85–87, 91–92; *Sit II* 247–48); this doesn't correspond to the meaning a life had for the person who lived it, for whom the values and ideas of later generations are quite alien (*CPM* 20, 39, 85–86, 113–14, 142–45; *IF III* 433; *CDR* 666–68/*CRD* 633–35). Consequently, the later generation's totalizing historical narrative is only a quasi-synthesis of the past (*CPM* 481). History, rather, is a perpetual dislocation of historical meaning in a plurality of subjects (*CPM* 144), each of whose lived experience is an absolute (*CPM* 129–30, 444–45, 466–67, 477): "each historical conjuncture is relative and the absolute is immanent to the relative . . . it is the way in which each man and each concrete collectivity *lives* its history" (*CPM* 437).

This argument is not confined to Sartre's "existentialist" period. As late as *The Family Idiot*, Sartre maintains that the "subject" of history is "broken into generations for whom the future of the previous generation is the past," and none

of whom take up the projects of the previous generation from the earlier generation's perspective, due to the change in knowledge and circumstances in the interim (*IF III* 433). "Humanity *is not* and does not correspond diachronically to any concept. . . . History is perpetually finite [*finie*], that is, composed of broken sequences, each of which is the (not mechanically but dialectically) deviated continuation of the previous one," such that members of a previous generation would not recognize themselves in the continuation of enterprises which nevertheless "never ceased to be *theirs*" (*IF III* 433, 436). In the *Critique*, similarly, Sartre writes that "we must abandon any idea of humanity historialising itself in the development of a single temporalisation which began with the 'first men' and will finish with 'the last';" humanity "treated as *one* Man" is an illusion (*CDR* 666/*CRD* 633) because the project of each generation is "diachronically alienated" in those that follow.

Beyond the problem of diachronic alienation, there is the irrecuperability of inwardness. Speaking of his own generation, Sartre writes: "You can explain our period, but that doesn't prevent it from having been inexplicable for us, and it doesn't take away the bitter taste that it will have had for us alone, and which will disappear with us" (*Sit II* 254). This is especially true of all those experiences that do not yield positive results: uncertainty, waiting, ignorance, failure (*CPM* 61, 306–14, 483). History can integrate the knowledge and success of past individuals into humanity's present accomplishments, or even the knowledge gained from their failures, but it cannot integrate their ignorance and failures *as such* (*CPM* 61, 306–14);[41] these refer us back to the qualities of lived experience (*CPM* 305, 450–54; *Sit II* 86–87, 254–55). "Pure events" of passion and willing, "inimitable and incomparable absolutes" at the depths of our historical relativity,[42] belong to non-knowledge (*non-savoir*) rather than to knowledge.

To the extent that Sartre here absolutizes the irreducibility of inner experience and non-knowledge, and separates both from action and objective truth, he considerably limits and qualifies the "truth of action" of his ethics of praxis, and comes as close as he ever could to the positions of Bataille and Fondane. He also comes close to Kierkegaard, that champion of "the *unsurpassable* opacity of lived experience" and of "the irreducibility of the real to thought" (*SFM* 8–13/*CRD* 18–20). Indeed, when Sartre develops this argument most fully in "The Singular Universal" (1964), he makes Kierkegaard a paradigm of "the transhistoricity of historical man" (*US* 154/142). Kierkegaard's despair and failure can be lived, and even understood by other subjectivities through their own experience of it,[43] but explanations of the causes of his failure, and history's recuperation of its results, in no way touch on the experience itself. Indeed, like Bataille and Fondane, Sartre argues that subjective absolutes such as sin and failure call into question knowledge's claim to absoluteness, as they refer experience to the unknowable being of the knower. The beginning of knowledge is not a universal and necessary concept, but the singular contingency of a knowing subject conditioned by his historical

epoch (*US* 153–57/168–74). Rather than being Hegel's "incarnation of a necessary moment of universal history," Kierkegaard's unhappy consciousness is "an irreducible contingency" rooted in a dismal family drama, produced by chance determinations that could very well have been otherwise (*US* 161/180). He lived this chance as his *personal* necessity, outside the dialectic's *objectively* necessary transitions (*US* 156–61/173–80). Each subject, then, is a singular universal, "totalized and thereby universalized by his epoch" which "he retotalizes in reproducing himself in it as a singularity" (*IF I* 9/*FI I* ix).[44] This "singularization of the universal," based on the chance and contingent singularity that constitutes the "facticity" of the person, makes every individual's lived experience a "transhistorical absolute" at the heart of history.

It is worth emphasizing again how close Sartre's position comes to Bataille's. Both hold that the non-knowledge and subjectivity of the knower call knowledge into question, and link the unknowability of the knower to the experiences that produce no positive result, such as sin and failure. Both insist on the irreducibility of the being of the knower to the known by pointing to the contingent and chance elements of the knower's existence. In 1943, Sartre denounced Bataille's position for having confused improbability, which assumes an objective and external viewpoint, and facticity, which is the manner in which contingency is taken up and lived in the context of a personal project (*Sit I* 191–97); his post-war theory can be seen as his attempt to "correct" Bataille on a point they fundamentally agree on.

Alienation, Works, and Objective Spirit

To the extent that the "truth" action reveals is that of the deed and not the doer, Sartre's ethics of praxis might withstand the doubts raised by the unknowable being of the knower. Yet even graver difficulties arise from the problem of alienation. There are two problems: the relation of the singular meaning of the act for the individual to its universal historical meaning for others, and the alienation of action in its objective results. We've seen that in order for an action's disclosure of being to be more than a mere "subjective certainty" it must be confirmed by others, but in order to be confirmed by others it must be objectified, which opens up the possibility of its being misinterpreted or even used in ways that run counter to the agent's aims.[45] In addition, to the extent that the act relied on techniques and knowledge belonging to the age, its meaning is determined by what Hegel calls "Objective Spirit," rather than individual intentions, and is integrated into the general culture of the period. Either by its results being "stolen" by others or by being assimilated to Objective Spirit, the "truth" of action is alienated from the agent.

Sartre tackled the problem of Objective Spirit using the framework of Raymond Aron's *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, which Sartre read assiduously during the "phony war" of 1939–1940 (see *CDG* 227, 251, 358–59),[46] and

made use of as early as *Being and Nothingness*. For Aron, each individual is a product of collective institutions (mores, language, customs, techniques), but remains separate from others. On the one hand, "social systems are the crystallization of ideas" that penetrate individuals' "concepts, judgments of fact and value, their preferences," insofar as they are "members of the group first, bearers of a function, and only later individual consciousnesses" (*IPH* 81). On the other hand, "consciousnesses . . . in their concrete totality . . . are eternally separated from each other" (*IPH* 80). Moreover, because individuals belong to several groups at once, "Objective Spirit is multiple, incoherent, with neither definite unity nor distinct limits," there being no continuity "between the spirit of a regiment or a school, or a period or a nation" (*IPH* 94). In that case, Objective Spirit exists as externalized by individual actions and as internalized by individual thoughts, but lacks the independent and substantial existence of a "national soul;" it is, rather, "a reality both transcendent and internal to men, social and mental, total and multiple" (*IPH* 94).

In the *Cahiers*, Sartre agrees with Aron that although culture is the work "of all and each," it does not reflect the subject's individuality so much as what is common to all members of society, or the subject's existence as "anyone" (*CPM* 137–39). The imperatives that morality, custom, language, and technology address to individuals are not the will of any individual as such, but necessarily remain on the level of the "general will" of an anonymous Other (*CPM* 269, 423). Universal conformity to cultural norms would thus be "purely and simply *the reign of the Other*," or universal heteronomy, rather than the emergence of an autonomous collective subject (*CPM* 282). "If my will is identical to my neighbour's will, this is precisely to the extent that this will is neither mine nor my neighbour's, but a will that is *always other* . . . the will of no one" (*CPM* 283). In other words, the culture that is the universal objectification of individuals is at the same time universally alienating.

Far from being a real fusion of subjects, Objective Spirit's supposed subjectivity is reducible to the awareness individuals have of it in transcending it towards their own ends. Objective Spirit's norms form the unconscious substratum of individuals' thoughts and actions, and unify those subjects as inhabitants of the same cultural world, dated by techniques and implements (*EN* 579–80), but because norms remain outside the individual and are internalized in different ways, Objective Spirit is subjected to the disintegrating and pluralizing force of the multiplicity of subjects (*CPM* 444–45): "Individuality is the perpetual beyond of the universal, the singular usage of universal tools for a singular end" (*CPM* 76). Consequently, as Sartre later says in *The Family Idiot*, Objective Spirit is always individualized for those who live within it, and only takes on the unity of "the spirit of the age" for subsequent generations, who view individuals as interchangeable representatives of the period (*IF III* 50).

Again, what is interesting here is how Sartre's critique of Hegelian Objective Spirit (or Hyppolite's version of it),[47] raises problems for his own ethics of praxis.

Objective Spirit unifies the *universal* aspect of individual actions, their meaning *in and for the culture of a period*, without unifying the meanings of the actions for individuals. Not only may the agent fail to recognize her intentions in the general cultural meaning of her actions, but so might others: their responses of love, hate, admiration, disdain, solidarity, or opposition are all cancelled out in the general result. Moreover, these individual responses are a source of further alienation for the agent. Once an action produces an objective result, its meaning is whatever others make of it, through their interpretations, and even more so through their actions. An anti-dialectical *pseudo-causality* operates here: to the extent that an action's results participate in the inertia and passivity of nature, they can be transformed into means for other agents, working for other ends (*CPM* 474, 560–62). Since action takes place in the world, it is freedom alienated in exteriority (*CPM* 370, 562), "being-outside-itself-in-matter" (*CRD II* 317). Actualized in results, freedom is made into a thing for others (*CPM* 516): "The consequences of the act of each consciousness are stolen by other consciousnesses" (*CPM* 43).

Such alienation is strictly inevitable. Like Bataille, Sartre holds that the condition of an action being effective is that it transcend nature by subjecting itself to nature's causal laws (*CPM* 70–71, 367–69). The alternative is ineffective action, which for Sartre (as for Lefebvre) is a merely abstract negativity, incapable of revealing being (*CPM* 494). Since the agent must act in the world and cannot prevent others from using the results of her actions in ways that deviate or even defeat her intentions, the only hope of overcoming alienation would be to trust in the good will of others. Such trust requires a leap of faith: I can never be sure that the Other will respect or even understand my intentions, let alone make my ends her own, and act in solidarity with me.

A "leap of faith" is just what Sartre proposes as a way out of this dilemma, however much it smacks of the arbitrary and of wishful thinking. The solution, in a word, is the work of art: "The contemplation of the work of art permits us to grasp how I could apprehend the goal of the Other: the work of art presents itself to me as an absolute end, a demand and an appeal. It is addressed to my pure freedom, and thereby reveals to me the pure freedom of the Other. If I thus grasp the Other's work (*whether or not it is a work of art*) as an absolute demand requiring my approbation and concurrence, I grasp the man who is making it as freedom" (*CPM* 516; my emphasis). The work of art stands as a paradigm of an objective result that seeks to be recognized as an absolute end, and not used as a means (*CPM* 461). As Sartre says in *What is Literature?*, the acts of reading and writing are a "pact of generosity" between an author and reader who each take the other's ends as her own, and collaborate in the realization of the world of the literary work (*Sit II* 107f). The reader responds to an appeal from the artist to bring the work into being by transcending the work's features toward the meaning embodied in its organization, guided by the regulative idea that every aspect of the work results from the author's intentions (*CPM* 516), and the free and uncoercive

nature of this appeal recognizes the reader's freedom. Generosity thus allows for objective expression without alienation.

Sartre is convinced that this generosity can also be found in exceptional moments of "Apocalypse" and festival, where freedom becomes an end in itself, freed from normative and utilitarian constraints (*CPM* 388–89, 429–30, 487). In the *Cahiers*, these Apocalyptic moments, where one freedom generously takes up the goal of another as an absolute end, serve as a kind of ethical ideal. The Apocalypse of generosity would make possible the achievement of the "truth" of an action's revelation of being, passing from "subjective certainty" to "truth" through the free recognition of others, without any alienation of that "truth" in universal cultural norms or in actions contrary to the agent's intentions. Each action would be recognized in its *singular* truth, just as a work of art has a singular truth that is irreducible to general technical or cultural considerations. In that way, Sartre's ideal of a *universal pluralistic truth* would come to fruition.

Unfortunately, nothing in the *Cahiers* supports the view that harmonious collaboration and mutual generosity is anything more than an exception in a world dominated by conflict. In effect, Sartre's postwar ethics of praxis tries to make a rule out of the exception, and solves the problem of freedom being alienated in its results through the *deus ex machina* of the essentially gratuitous work of art (which satisfies no material need), and the equally gratuitous response of the Other who takes the artist's end as her own. Surely that places a rather heavy load on such a light thing as grace. Indeed, Sartre's ideal is entirely unrealizable, for reasons I will discuss in the following section.

Still, Sartre's attempt to base a universal ethics on the "pact of generosity" between author and reader is surely no madder than the Surrealist attempt to found a politics of the dream, or Bataille's dreams of a society founded on useless sacrifice. It is perhaps no less mad than these. Like the Surrealists, too, Sartre for a time believed that Marxism could somehow bring about the Apocalyptic "reign of freedom" through the detour of the rigorous necessity of dialectics. But even during his Marxist phase, Sartre found the "moment of synthesis" to be lacking, leaving intact the conflicts between the individual and the universal, among individuals, and between the freedom of praxis and its alienation in objective results.

3. THE ELUSIVENESS OF HISTORY

Several times after 1945, Sartre espouses the view that "History" will somehow unravel the problem of human alienation. And yet in all his postwar writings, History proves reluctant to oblige. As early as 1948, Sartre bravely declares that one day he "will describe that strange reality, History, which is neither objective nor completely subjective, where the dialectic is contested, penetrated, corroded by a sort of anti-dialectic, yet still is dialectical" (*Sit II* 86). By 1960's *Critique*, Sartre's project becomes the effort to demonstrate the possibility of understanding history as "the unity of a dialectical movement" (*CDR* 35) with a single,

determinate meaning. In each case, the question facing Sartre is "how to get there from here?" More precisely: can one, starting with an individualist ontology, construct a theory allowing for a unitary History that includes all subjects, but without positing a single Absolute Subject? The answer, despite Sartre's best efforts, would seem to be no.

The Impossible End of History

In the *Cahiers*, Sartre criticizes the idea of there being a single history with a single meaning. Along with his insistence on the pluralistic nature of history, Sartre makes the essentially Heideggerian point that the end of history, like death for the individual, is never arrived at, but it is something that humans *transcend toward*, or "anticipate" (*CPM* 436–42). Similarly, creating an object that fully realized one's intentions, and had the same meaning for others as for the agent, would mark a perfect adequation between the objective truth of the action and one's subjectivity, but at the cost of reducing subjectivity to an object: "this reconciliation eliminates any possibility of transcendence" (*CPM* 453). For that reason, it can function only as a regulative ideal that can never be fully realized (*CPM* 177–78, 216). The end of History and of alienation, is, like death, constituted entirely in our "being-towards" it, and so entirely lived from within. If ever objectively realized, "finitude" would annihilate the subjectivity that lived it, and simply disappear (*CPM* 437, 478).

In a critique of Engels' account of alienation in *Anti-Dühring* (*CPM* 375–80, 395f, 429–30, 444), Sartre shows that the impossibility of an ending mirrors the equally illusory projection of an absolute beginning.[48] Although directed at Engels, Sartre's critique here applies to himself as well. For the *Cahiers*, like Engels, posits that history begins with oppression: humans are alienated from each other and from the results of their actions because some dominate others, and impose a "meaning" on their acts in which they cannot recognize themselves. An ethic of generosity has no chance of being effectively realized as long as oppression continues. Similarly, Engels' account of human origins is oriented towards the hidden value of "humanity's recuperation of itself, towards the moment where primitive communism is synthesized with the technical domination of Nature" (*CPM* 357).[49] In both cases, defining the beginning in terms of some desired ending is a manifestly circular procedure (*CPM* 359, 445). This same vicious circularity dogs Sartre's *Critique*, where the beginning of history is scarcity and the ensuing alienation, and the end of history is the overcoming of both. As so often happens, Sartre's critique of other "totalizing" thinkers can be turned against his own efforts.

Like Sartre, Engels argues that since alienation is the result of inequality or oppression, the end of alienation would be to make everyone equal. But in an analysis that anticipates the *Critique*'s theory of "seriality" (*CDR* 202/*CRD* 265), Sartre shows how equality and alienation can coexist. I can be equal to the Other,

and the same as the Other, insofar as I am Other to myself in the same way as the Other is other to himself; both of us are equally alienated. This is the "alienation of all by all" (*CPM* 376); in the language of the *Critique*, even as equals, everyone is the same as the other insofar as everyone is other than himself (*CDR* 300f/*CRD* 345f). Nor is this universal alienation an occasional and avoidable happenstance; rather, it is a necessary result of the constitution of group identity. Each individual achieves identity as a member of the group through a form of "narcissism" that makes the group into an object, seen from the point of view of an Other outside the group, such as God or ancestral spirits (*CPM* 388).[50] Even in groups practicing primitive communism or communal ownership, the "ontological priority of the Other" in the formation of identity ensures that although oppression might be overcome, alienation never will be (*CPM* 395–96, 429).

The upshot of this is that Sartre's ideal of others giving my action the same meaning that I give it, remains merely that: an ideal. The meaning of my acts will always be alien to me, even in a situation of complete equality and absence of oppression, because of the sheer multiplicity of subjects: "Man creates himself through the intermediary of his action on the world. That is what we can concede to the Marxists. But at the same time, humanity being a detotalized totality, there is an internal theft of the work [*l'oeuvre*], thus man's image of himself is perpetually alienated. It is perfectly true that if the Absolute were one subject, it would be God, because the world would reflect back the image of a harmonious work. But in fact there are subjects. From then on, God is captive: his creation is alienated; it is perpetually for itself in the element of the Other" (*CPM* 129–30). If even God is subject to alienation, there's little chance of humans overcoming it. What remains of Sartre's ideal is only its function as a guide for action, one that can be realized "marginally, in putting forward one's work before other freedoms" (*CPM* 178), and more concretely, by treating others as ends rather than as means in an ethic of generosity (*CPM* 216).

In the *Critique*, Sartre does not so much solve this problem as give it a different basis. It is materiality, argues the *Critique*, which, together with the plurality of subjects, is the origin of alienation, rather than the priority of the Other as such. This theory had already been sketched out in the *Cahiers*' argument that in order to transform nature, it was necessary to submit to natural laws of causality (*CPM* 70–71). Not only can the means defeat the end that they simultaneously make determinate and realize (*CPM* 174–75, 250–56), but insofar as these means are inertly material, this "deformation" is inevitable. Sartre's classic analysis in the *Critique* (*CDR* 162f/*CRD* 232f) concerns the case of the Chinese peasants who cleared away forests in order to provide themselves with more arable land, but instead produced deforestation, soil erosion, and silted up rivers which then flooded the valley land. The end result was even less farmland than before, the exact opposite of what was intended. The reason for this "counter-finality" is that although each peasant acts alone, the effects of all the actions cannot be isolated

from each other, since they are material modifications of the environment, connected with other acts through determinate physical laws. Neither the plurality of subjects nor materiality as such produces alienation, but rather both together work to produce alienation.

What is significant is that the *Critique*'s analysis does not place the blame for alienation on a lack of 'generosity' toward others. That represents a departure from both *Being and Nothingness* and the *Cahiers*. By clearing land, each peasant in fact seeks to avoid the conflict with others brought on by scarcity. Yet generosity, as represented by refraining from clearing land in order to prevent deforestation, would indeed be treating others as ends, but it would also be to treat oneself as a means: by adopting such a policy, the individual peasant risks death either through starvation, or through violence at the hands of those for whom she would be one mouth too many. Counter-finality thus results from the relative independence of each agent: anyone who renounces the pursuit of private ends for the sake of the general good cannot count on the others doing the same (*CDR* 277/*CRD* 325). This renders individual conversion to generosity ineffective, and not, as in the *Cahiers*, because others may continue in their project of oppression, but simply because each individual's decisions are governed by what the other might do (*CDR* 308/*CRD* 350), with the result that no one acts "in his own person," but as the other of the others (*CDR* 300f/*CRD* 345f). Illusory as independence and individual autonomy may be, the inability of each to control the others' responses nevertheless ensures reciprocal powerlessness.

The problem as defined in the *Critique* is how to move from a situation of mutual powerlessness to one of mutual aid, where the separateness of agents can be used to advantage (*CDR* 350f/*CRD* 385f). At times, Sartre sees this as coming about through the adoption by all and each of a collective project, for example in the face of an apocalyptic external threat, as in Sartre's famous description of the crowd of the Quartier Sainte Antoine uniting in the face of attacking royal troops on July 14, 1789 (*CDR* 351f). On a grander scale, he sees it as the meaning of human history as a whole, which in the *Critique* is no longer simply the *Cahiers*' struggle against alienation and oppression for the "city of ends," but instead the struggle against the material scarcity that Sartre now sees as the origin of oppression (*CDR* 123–25, 137, 151, 701, 792f, 805, 815; *CRD II* 23). In very much a classical Hegelian-Marxist vein, Sartre sees the overcoming of oppression, and the move from mutual powerlessness to collective praxis, as "the human adventure," the single "Truth of History" (*CDR* 52), the "Truth of Man" (*CDR* 800, 822).

The Meaning of History

At this level of "grand narrative" or legitimating myth,[51] the transition from negative to positive reciprocity is the meaning of the totality of human history as "the unity of a dialectical movement" (*CDR* 35) with a single, determinate meaning,

where "the complex products of the conflicts and collaborations" of different individual agents can be understood as "the synthetic products of a totalitarian *praxis*," that is, as elements of "one intelligible totalization from which there is no appeal," "one totalization without one totalizer" (*CDR* 64, 817). What makes this whole enterprise deeply problematic from the start is Sartre's commitment to "methodological individualism,"[52] his view that understanding the meaning of a historical event requires comprehending the actions of the historical agents in terms of their goals and knowledge. Agents themselves comprehend their situation through their actions: "*Comprehension* is simply the translucidity of *praxis* to itself" (*CDR* 74). The historian's task, on the face of it, is to comprehend the agent's comprehension of the event, by grasping the givens of the agent's situation in relation to the agent's ends in the same way as the agent had (*SFM* 170). Naturally, this means taking into account the agent's reasons for action, her beliefs, purposes, and principles,[53] and reproducing the agent's totalization, or, as Collingwood would say, "re-enacting so much of the [agent's] experience as [the historian] wishes to understand."[54] Any supra-individual or collective agent of history is ruled out, as is any objective and transcendent point of view.[55] There are only individual actions, each of which totalizes, or "gathers together my neighbour, myself and the environment" (*SFM* 155) in "a unity of materials and means" (*CDR* 87) or "practical field" (*CDR* 121). Each totalization is in turn connected to the totalizing praxis of others through the material environment and its physical laws (*CRD II* 311, 317).

As Aron points out, the problem is that if "each consciousness totalizes the perceptual field or field of action . . . from its point of view" (*HDV* 200), then "how can one pass from these multifarious points of view . . . to a single truth,"[56] which would be the truth of history? To take Lévi-Strauss' example, in the French Revolution, the Jacobin and the aristocrat both "totalize" the situation in relation to their praxis, but in anti-symmetrical fashion.[57] Hence, Lévi-Strauss argues, either we choose Jacobin or aristocratic history, or we recognize all totalizations as equally real, and give up hope of finding a "totalization of the set of partial totalizations" which would be *the* history of the French Revolution.

The idea of totalizing contradictory totalizations presupposes a single project, a single end of humanity as a whole that could subsume all individual projects and partial totalizations as subsidiary "moments" (*HDV* 103, 204f). For Sartre, this is the struggle to overcome scarcity. But there remains the problem of finding a supra-individual agent who not only carries forward this project, but does so in such a way that this project supersedes even those projects which appear to oppose it. Sartre's "solution" to the problem of contradictory totalizations follows from this: in the struggle against scarcity, the oppressed, and particularly the proletariat, enjoy a privileged role, since their aim is to eliminate scarcity, the basis of oppression (*HDV* 103; *CRD* 742–43/*CDR* 701, 792f). Because of this, the oppressed's project takes precedence over the oppressor's.

Although the antagonistic groups "totalize" each other's opposed praxes in contradictory ways (*CDR* 805, 811), the oppressed are united by a common undertaking, whereas the oppressors are merely reactive, united only in their opposition to the revolutionary project (*CDR* 792f).

The problems with this supposed solution go beyond the evident incongruity of making the oppressed more active than the oppressors. Lévi-Strauss famously complained of the Eurocentric character of Sartre's supposedly universal history, pointing to passages where Sartre acknowledges that in some "static" societies, where social forms are repeated without being modified (*CDR* 126), "scarcity" is not an engine of dialectical progress. When Sartre admits that such societies do not participate in humanity's project of overcoming scarcity, Lévi-Strauss takes him to imply that these societies are less than human,[58] a point that is nevertheless hard to reconcile with Sartre's steadfast solidarity with anti-colonial revolutions, often at considerable personal risk.[59] Aron, though, makes the much more telling point that in Sartre's theory, scarcity functions as a magical solution to the problem of the origin of history (in particular, of violence and conflict), and so also of the problem of the *end* of history, which would be the end of violence through the elimination of scarcity (*HDV* 51, 107, 161, 239). This criticism of the circularity of the "end" and the "beginning" of history is precisely the objection that Sartre's *Cahiers* raised against Engels. On Sartre's own terms, a single and unitary meaning of history is ruled out: because one "project" or "totalization" presupposes an organically unified humanity that Sartre's ontology disallows (see *CDR* 37, 708); and because the very idea of such a human project presupposes an end of history that is the mirror image of an imaginary beginning.

Other passages of the *Critique* show that Sartre has not ignored these difficulties. We've seen how Sartre insists on the "diachronic alienation" whereby subsequent generations reinterpret and deviate the acts of earlier ones (*CDR* 666–68; *CRD II* 321–26; *CPM* 20, 85–86, 114, 142f; *IF III* 433f). Even more crucially, though, group action is *synchronically* alienated as well. Although Aron and others rightfully point out that for Sartre, the moment of "revolutionary apocalypse," when groups spontaneously converge toward a common goal, serves as a kind of ideal (*HDV* 74–77, 161f), Sartre argues that even in moments of fusion, the unity of the group's totalization is "detotalized" by the plurality of individuals composing it (*CDR* 576–77). This plurality is in turn a function of the *materiality* of praxis, which is the basis both of the *efficacy* of praxis and of the material *separation* of individuals (*CDR* 251–52). For even where individuals are united by a common aim, there is not one organically united subject; rather, every individual is a "common individual" who stands at the center of the totalization in relation to which the practical field is organized (each common individual sharing the same organizing end). The center of control is thus dispersed over all the group members (*CRD II* 76–81), and each participant is "sovereign over the sovereignty of all," in that everyone is regulated by the praxis of that "common individual"

which every participant is. Contrary to seriality, where everyone is the same as the other to the extent that each is other to himself, for "common individuals," everyone is the same as the other to the extent that each one acts "in his own person," for his own ends. The material separation of individuals persists (*CDR* 579), and indeed constitutes the power of group praxis: it is not destroyed through the destruction of one group member. Yet the very same material multiplicity that gives group praxis its power makes group praxis a process over which no single individual has complete control (*CRD II* 316f). Again, then, the results of group praxis may not correspond to the intentions of any of its members (*CDR* 663, 698). What aggravates the problem is that separate "common individuals" can interpret the goals and praxis of the group in contradictory ways, so that the group divides into warring factions, united *and* separated by a common aim (*CDR* 696–97).[60] Even in the fused group, there is neither a single praxis, nor a single meaning of praxis.

If Sartre's *Critique* does not solve the riddle of alienation, this is because, as Sartre admits, *pure* groups and *pure* praxis never exist (*CDR* 705); they are only an ideal of historical interpretation in which the meaning of human action would be completely transparent. This ideal stands at the opposite pole from positivist explanations, which grasp human actions "from outside," as variables governed by laws of cause and effect which may be entirely opaque to historical agents (*CDR* 143, 698). Sartre's considered position falls somewhere between the two extremes: historical events, involving a plurality of interrelated totalizations, are not wholly opaque, but they are not wholly transparent either. The event as a whole may not correspond to any one agent's view of it. To the extent that it is hidden from the participants, the meaning of the event is also hidden from the historian, who cannot then grasp it by reenacting the agents' thoughts (*CDR* 222–25),[61] but can "grasp it only as a *process*, that is, as a limit of dialectical comprehension" (*CDR* 708).

Of course, the intelligibility of historical events is even more problematic when "We are in the presence of two autonomous and contradictory totalizations" (*CRD II* 13) of opposed groups (*CRD* 75–76, 805–9). Each group's comprehension of its opponents' goals contradicts the others', and the "third-person" standpoint of the historian resolves nothing: the unity of these contradictory totalizations *for the historian* does not guarantee their real unity in and for themselves (*CDR II* 14–16).[62] In the absence of a single end of humanity, there can be no totalization "at the very core of struggle" (*CRD II* 60) which would make each contradictory praxis a partial determination of the whole (*CRD II* 308). History would remain an ambiguous plurality of opposing significations (*CRD II* 131), instead of one process with one meaning.

Sartre clearly regards this conclusion as a defeat, a denial of the truth of Marxism (*CRD II* 25) and a relapse into "positivism" (*CRD II* 131). But we need not share Sartre's pessimism. Instead, we can see this as yet another example

where Sartre's theoretical premises undermine his attempts to arrive at a totalizing synthesis. Sartre's basic positions led him from the beginning to "detotalized totalities;" the search for synthesis in the post-war period was at least partially driven by ideological concerns. The would-be totalizer of history shows as well as anyone the extent to which history is always detotalized, and riven by insuperable differences. The unhappy consciousness in Sartre, whether of the single individual or the movement of history, would appear to be unsurpassable, and yet, in Wahl's words, "happy in its unhappiness," given that the very failure to achieve a unifying synthesis is what best protects the irreducibly plural freedom that Sartre prized above all else.

Chapter Seven

The Persistence of the Unhappy Consciousness: Derrida

1. AWAY FROM HEGEL

It is often said that the distinguishing feature of French philosophy since 1960 is "a generalized anti-Hegelianism" (*DR* 1) or an attempt "to flee Hegel" (*AK* 235).[1] This continues to be the case with Lyotard's disdain for "grand narratives" expressing "the necessary movement of spirit in search of its own expression,"[2] or Derrida's critique of *Geist* (and of Hegel's doctrine of *Geist* in particular) in *Of Spirit*. But to move away from Hegel is still to take him as a point of reference. In Foucault's words, "It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a 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 ruses directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us" (*AK 235*, translation altered).

In this homage to his teacher, Jean Hyppolite, Foucault was perhaps speaking from rather bitter personal experience. It took Foucault's former pupil, Derrida, to reveal that Foucault's flight from Hegel had been a nightmarish rush into Hegel's clutches. I speak, of course, of Derrida's critique of Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* in "Cogito and the history of madness." This critique is notable not only as the scene of a confrontation between two of the foremost philosophers of their generation; it also reveals two distinctive responses to French Hegelianism. On the one side were those who were more or less structuralist, and who favored synchronic totalities over diachronic totalizations as a means of understanding human society. Derrida, never one to mince words, branded the search for structural totalities "totalitarian." His response to Hegel would be to deepen Hegel's

dialectic, calling for a "Hegelianism without reserve" in which negations and differences could proliferate endlessly without ever being recuperated into a positive and totalizing synthesis. His inspirations were Georges Bataille's notion of "expenditure without return," certainly, but also Jean Wahl's championing of irreconcilable divisions and differences. The different responses to Hegel thus reveal what Foucault called "an important dividing line between those who believe that they can still locate today's discontinuities (*ruptures*) in this historico-transcendental tradition of the nineteenth century," such as Derrida, "and those who try to free themselves once and for all from that tradition," such as Foucault.[3]

2. SAINT JACQUES: ACTOR OR ASSASSIN?

Often classified as post-Hegelian,[4] Derrida is certainly not *anti*-Hegelian. In his commentary on Derrida, Vincent Descombes postulates that Derrida pretends to speak Hegel's language ("the Master's language") in order to kill him. In contrast to the anti-Hegelians, whose efforts are all too easily recuperated as a "moment of antithesis" by the Hegelian dialectic, Derrida does not simply criticize or attack Hegel. Instead, he *uses* Hegel's language and concepts to analyse Hegel. This is Derrida's "double move": pretending to speak Hegel's language, he must speak it, and so is only pretending to pretend. But Derrida is not thereby a Hegelian; he speaks Hegelian, but without believing what he says. The intent of his speech is in fact murderous, says Descombes: "If the traitor pretends to assassinate the tyrant, then the crime has not taken place; but if he feigns the pretence, he kills in earnest, and the actor was concealing an assassin all along."[5] Using Hegel's language (or philosophy) to *pretend to pretend* to attack him, Derrida attacks Hegel at his "blind spot;" Hegelian philosophy does not realize it is under attack until it has been fatally wounded from the direction it least expected: itself. Hegel's philosophy, succumbing to wounds from its own weapons (its words, concepts, and the conditions of their possibility), suffers violence at its own hand, and Derrida only assists the suicide of the Hegelian system. Derrida's *Glas*,[6] then, is not simply a parody of Hegel; it's a parody of a parody, a *serious* parody. A mere parody could be laughed off as a joke; Derrida's parody of a parody wants to make Hegel die laughing "from out of the wrong side of his mouth" (*OS* 125–27n).

This would be a nice trick if Descombes is right about Derrida pulling it off. But let's have a closer look at the "logic of duplicity" Descombes sets out. Can Derrida pretend to pretend to be Hegelian without being Hegelian? Can he pretend to pretend to attack Hegel without attacking him? The way Descombes sets the scene leads us to suppose that both questions must be answered in the same way, which is not the case. No one can convincingly pretend to speak a language without *actually* speaking it, which does indeed make any effective pretending to speak *a pretense of a pretense*. For Derrida to pretend to speak in the Hegelian

language amounts to *really* speaking Hegelian. But one *can* pretend to pretend to kill the king without actually killing him. An actor (A) often pretends to pretend to kill another actor (B) when the first actor (A) is acting in a play in which the script has her pretend to kill the second actor (B): the actors represent a fictional feigned murder. Fortunately, this is not fatal for the second actor (B), and the play can be staged repeatedly. In Derrida's case, his pretended pretense of killing the Master may be the work of an actor rather than an assassin; Hegel still lives, and the comedy continues.[7]

It is noteworthy that Derrida has little patience with most anti-Hegelians.[8] Even the ones he admires most, like Levinas, are not immune to the criticism of either not having understood Hegel, or of not being sufficiently dialectical. Others, such as Foucault, Derrida accuses of having forgotten or suppressed Hegel. In no case does Derrida engage in the sort of anti-Hegelianism that consists in devaluing Hegel's thought altogether.

Derrida, Hegelian Critic of Difference

Derrida's criticisms of Levinas and Foucault are particularly instructive for the Hegelian style and method of his critique, especially his use of Hegel's critique of sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology*.[9] Neither Levinas nor Foucault, argues Derrida, can say what he wants to say, and in fact, in trying to say it, they say just the opposite of what they had intended. This dialectical reversal is very familiar to readers of Hegel, and an indication of the extent of the debt that Derridean deconstruction owes to Hegelian dialectics.[10]

As Derrida might say, Hegel's spirit haunts his critique of Foucault, and indeed in the form of Hegel's "unhappy consciousness." Derrida's original lecture was before the Collège Philosophique, of which Wahl was president. As editor of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, Wahl also assured the original publication of the written text.[11] Derrida's argument, finally, hinges on an early text by the thematiser of the unhappy consciousness, Wahl's *Du rôle de l'Idée de l'Instant dans le Philosophie de Descartes* (1920). So Wahl, whose introduction of the theme of the unhappy consciousness in Hegel was to be so influential on subsequent French Hegel interpretation, stands both at the framework of Derrida's presentation and at its centre. Besides Hegel's presence through the mediation of Wahl, there are numerous direct references to Hegel in Derrida's text: "a Hegelian law" (*WD* 36) that decrees that "the revolution against reason . . . can only be made within reason" (466), a Hegelian dimension of Foucault's text of which Derrida was aware despite the dearth of references to Hegel (466), and, in general, "Hegel, again, always" (473)."[12]

At the outset of his talk, Derrida describes his own relationship to Foucault as that of disciple to master, and so of an "unhappy consciousness" who finds its truth in an Other (*WD* 31–32). This reference is hardly fortuitous: the theme of

the unhappy consciousness guides Derrida's entire presentation. Whereas Foucault, according to Derrida, has attempted to write an "archeology" of the silence of madness, and a history of the "decision" that separates madness from reason as its Other (*MC* ix), Derrida argues that the opposition of reason and madness is a dissension within reason: "it's a matter of a self-division, of a partitioning and an inner torment of Meaning *in general*, of logos in general, of a partitioning [*partage*] in the very act of feeling [*sentire*] . . . Hegelian *Entzweiung*" (469). *Entzweiung* was translated by Koyré (*EHPP* 204–8) and Wahl as *déchirement*, the "rending" or "tearing" through which the unhappy consciousness divides and opposes itself. Derrida follows Wahl and Hyppolite in locating this dissension (470), the affective character of which he does not fail to underline, in Absolute Spirit itself (see *LE* 107/137, *PE* 1 18), that is, in an absolute reason which divides itself, exiling a part of itself outside itself and making that aspect of itself into its Other (hubris, madness). The history of reason is in fact inaugurated by the "decision" or "dissension" through which reason divides itself, reason's history being, as Hegel argued, that of its determinate conflicts with itself (470–73). Moreover, says Derrida, there is no other history than this: "all history can only be, in the last instance, the history of meaning, that is of Reason *in general*" (463n). If history must be subsequent to the division within Reason that produces determinate figures of Reason (473), "If this great division [*partage*] is the very possibility of history, of the historicity of history, what can it mean here 'to render [*faire*] the history of this division'?"[13]

What Foucault should have realized, argues Derrida, is that reason is divided against itself from the very beginning, so that the crisis between reason and madness which Foucault locates in the classical age is an "essential and eternal" self-division of Reason that is the *a priori* condition of its history (*RMM* 69: 119). But on that interpretation, Reason does not "intern" madness or "exile" it; it harbors it within itself as the madness of a reason that has forgotten itself by forgetting its self-division (493). Foucault's attempt to separate reason and madness, and to locate the moment of their division in the seventeenth century, would then amount to "a violence of a totalitarian and historicist type" (487), a repetition of reason's confinement of madness to a determinate region (465).

It is precisely the point where Foucault claims madness is expelled that Derrida finds a madness internal to reason, namely, where Descartes supposedly dismisses madness and announces the *cogito* ("I think") in his *Meditations*. And this is where Wahl's early text on Descartes intervenes in a decisive way: Derrida's argument here depends on his interpretation of "the role of the instant in Descartes' philosophy," an interpretation that follows "all interpretations opposed to Laporte's" (*RMM* 69: 118), specifically Wahl's.

In opposition to Wahl, Laporte argued that "If time . . . for Descartes were reducible to indivisible instants, and if . . . our thought were dissolved into punctual acts corresponding to each of these atoms of duration, then we would have

only momentary [*instantanées*] certainties, ceaselessly vanishing, and we could not demonstrate the existence of God, nor any other truth."[14] In order for the *cogito* to provide any truth, it must take place in a *praesens evidentia* that "includes some duration in its unity," rather than in a vanishing instant.[15] Derrida, however, follows Wahl's contrary argument that "The mind can overcome its doubts by an instantaneous act of thought," doubt itself being only an instantaneous act (*RII* 1). Since every reasoning and every discourse implies time (*RII* 2), the *cogito* must be "an instantaneous certainty, a truth that encloses its certainty, which would be essentially different from a process of reasoning or a memory" (*RII* 4–5). The *cogito ergo sum* is not, then, despite its appearances, a piece of deductive reasoning. Nor does it express a concept, a concept implying both a past concept formation and a future completion of the concept. "The necessity of reasoning" the *cogito* expresses "only translates the simultaneity of intuition," a "necessary simultaneity" of intuiting (*cogito*) and intuited (*sum*), without temporal succession (*RII* 13–15). In the durationless instant, "I think, I am" (*RII* 24–25). But each instant being discontinuous with other instants (*RII* 10–11), the passing of the instant is the negation of the instant that passes, and of "all that is not real and present" in the succeeding one (*RII* 43–45). The *cogito* is thus a thought that admits of no temporal development (*RII* 32), and must be rediscovered at each vanishing instant (*RII* 4–5).

As Derrida elaborates, because it is atemporal, the *cogito* is valid only "in the instant of intuition," and not in reflection, which requires a temporal synthesis of past, present, and future (489). Being outside of time and memory, the *cogito* is prior to and outside of speech and language (490) and so outside of reason (463n): "Whether or not I am mad, *Cogito*, *sum*" (487). Even the most irrational or mad person could be certain of it (487–88). For that reason, Descartes' *cogito* does not exile madness but rather incorporates it within itself as its own "truth": every madman is "the madman of a Logos as Father, as Master, as King," that is, the exiled "son" of reason. On the other hand, philosophy, reason's legitimate heir, is carried out "only in the *terror*, but the *admitted* terror, of being mad" (492–93).[16] Madness and reason, even Descartes' "classical" reason, pass into one another, "according to a Hegelian law," one might say, whereby any term thought to its limit passes into its contrary, a law of division and dissension characteristic of the unhappy consciousness.[17]

This dialectical critique of Foucault's project brings us, finally, to dialectical reason itself, and what Derrida considers the fundamental flaw in Foucault's approach. Bataille's *malheur*, said Breton, was that he wanted to *reason* about unreason (*SeM* 146). Likewise, Foucault wants to do an archeology of madness' silence, but an archeo-logy is a logically ordered work (465), the recuperation (and forgetting) of negativity in the language of philosophy (463n). The unreasonableness of "reason in the classical age" can only be ruled on by the tribunal of *reason in general* (466), "a bit like how the anti-colonialist revolution can only

liberate itself from a *de facto* Europe or West in the name of transcendental Europe, that is, of Reason, and by letting itself first be won over by its values, its language, its technology, its armaments; an irreducible contamination or incoherence that no cry—I am thinking of Fanon's—could exorcise, no matter how pure and intransigent it is" (466).[18] Reason is denounced in the name of a greater reason (465), not by the "inaccessible and wild silence of madness" (468). Because madness cannot speak, Foucault can only speak for it, producing an *éloge à la folie* which, because it has to make use of language (logos), becomes its opposite, an *éloge à la raison* (473).

Derrida's critique of Foucault thus has the same structure as Hegel's critique of sense-certainty: sense-certainty, as soon as it speaks, says the opposite of what it wanted to say (*PS* 60–66). More generally, Hegel "is always right [*a raison*], as soon as one opens one's mouth to articulate meaning" (*WD* 263). Only silence, Kojève had argued, cannot be refuted: "Hegel cannot refute, 'convert' the unconscious 'Sage.' He can refute him, 'convert' him, only with *speech*. Now, by beginning to *speak* or to listen to a *discourse*, this 'Sage' already accepts the Hegelian ideal. If he truly is what he is—an unconscious 'Sage'—he will refuse all discussion. And then one could refute him only as one 'refutes' a fact, a thing, or a beast: by physically destroying him" (*IRH* 84). But the moment silence is made to speak, it refutes itself. There is thus a deeper silence that lies beyond the historically determinate silence of which Foucault speaks: the general silence of what cannot be said, or what language excludes from itself (484), a non-meaning (*non-sens*) that is the "limit and deep resource" of language (485). This silence includes the impossibility of the words "here," "now," "I" saying the particular "here," "now," "I" intended, rather than universality of any "here," "now," or "I" in general that they actually express.

The gap between what speech intends and what it says, which Koyré had linked to a *déchirement* within consciousness (*EHPP* 204–8), is, Wahl argued, felt as a pain, evil (*mal*) or unhappiness (*malheur*). Like Hegel and Wahl, Derrida also links the difference between what speech promises and what it loses to 'the unhappy consciousness' of the nomadic Jew, who wanders in the desert "struck with infinity and the letter" (*WD* 69). But the Jewish "noncoincidence of self and self" (*WD* 75) is only the paradigm of the unhappy consciousness: in connecting this phenomenon with the "intention" that "surpasses itself and disengages from itself in order to be said," or the *Entzweiung* Hegel finds in language, Derrida repeats Wahl's thesis, taken up by Hyppolite, that the unhappy consciousness is characteristic of all self-divisions, whether that of an individual "self" (*soi*) or of Objective Spirit (language or culture). Derrida departs from Hegel, as Wahl did, by refusing any "reconciliation" in a "synthesis" that would close the gap between intention and meaning, between self and self; his unhappy consciousness remains in the desert instead of making the Greco-Christian return "home" to an origin (*WD* 69).

The connection between the division within self and the one within language also figures in Derrida's essay on Levinas' *Totality and Infinity*, "Violence and Metaphysics."[19] Not only does this essay treat "the unhappy consciousness" thematically, but in it Derrida again argues that as soon as Levinas gives utterance to what he means to say, his words convey a meaning opposite to what he intended: "As soon as Levinas *speaks* against Hegel, he can only confirm Hegel, has *already* confirmed him" (436). The Infinity that Levinas opposes to totality, the Other he opposes to the Same, pass into their contraries, just as his anti-Hegelianism, like all classical anti-Hegelianism, passes into Hegelianism (*WD* 99, 111).

Derrida's essay begins by situating Levinas' anti-Hegelianism within a tradition. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas opposes two desires: a desire for the Other which transcends toward the other; and the Hegelian desire for recognition, which desires to possess the Other's desire (*WD* 93). Levinasian desire, says Derrida, "can be what it is only paradoxically, as the renunciation of desire," since it desires without desiring to possess, a "movement" which is described, says Derrida, in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (*WD* 93). Such a "trans-ascendance" toward the Other—"an expression borrowed from Jean Wahl"[20] to denote a vertical but non-spatial transcendence—would be a "transcendence beyond negativity." Instead of "transcending" the Other by negating and objectifying him,[21] desire opens up the self to an ethical commandment originating from the Other ("thou shalt not kill"). Yet contrary to all appearances, writes Derrida, this loss of self in unreciprocated desire is not an "unhappy consciousness." Is it then the happy and satisfied consciousness of requited and reciprocal love, or mutual recognition? Not at all; it is not a *Hegelian* unhappy consciousness, and for the sole reason that here the separation between Self and Other does not even aim at a reconciliation or a return from the Other to the Self. Rather, in Wahl's phrase, this unhappy consciousness is happy in its unhappiness. Reconciliation and any "ideal of fusion," such as Hegel's "I that is we and we that is I" (*WD* 90; *PS* 110), are to be resisted, since fusion amounts to "a totalitarianism of the Same" (*WD* 91; *TI* 38–39) that reduces the difference of the Other, and renders impossible a genuine encounter of self and Other.

Aiming to preserve the distance that makes an encounter possible, Levinas calls us to enter into a relation of "thinking" and "interrogation" with "an irreducible other who summons me without possibility of return from without," a wholly and infinitely other (*WD* 104). This point again brings Levinas close to that other thinker of "the unhappy consciousness," Kierkegaard (*WD* 314n27), and to Wahl, whose *Études kierkegaardiennes* serve as a reference point for Derrida's analysis (see *WD* 314n27). For Kierkegaard as well, says Derrida, "subjective existence" is determined by its respect for "the irreducibility of the totally other [*tout-autre*] . . . in the religious beyond" (427), the *existence* of the other [*d'autrui*] being that which escapes the totalizing and homogenizing power of the concept (*WD* 104). In Wahl's words, Kierkegaard "expresses the attitude of a soul

which, without merging with [*se fondre en*] God, places itself in relation to God, sees itself before God, is founded [*se fonde*] on God," who is an absolute Other, "that reef [*écueil*] which, inexplicably, is a call [*appel*], a welcome [*acceuil*]" (*EK* 415), "a being that is not for us save in this relation and with whom we cannot be in any relation" (*EK* 451).[22] In short, these relations are between two terms that exceed reason's power to mediate and reduce the distance between them (*EK* 389, 411).

Derrida's account thus places Levinas squarely within "the existentialist protest" against Hegel's reduction of being to thought, exemplified by Kierkegaard and Wahl, Feuerbach, and Jaspers (427). As with these other thinkers, the basis of Levinas' criticism of Hegel is ethical: Levinas is concerned to establish the possibility of a relation to the Other which would not involve the violent struggle between master and slave for recognition, a struggle that has made all history "violence against violence" (433). Non-violence requires not negating the Other: not objectifying the Other, not making the Other into the not-Self (or into the not-not-Self, the not-Self negated and returned to the Self as a "We"). This idea, says Derrida, "would have struck Hegel as mad [*insensé*]: how can one separate alterity from negativity?" (435–36). For Derrida, as for the Surrealists, alterity and negativity are inseparable, and any "attempt to erase negativity" to protect an Other outside of reason, whether Levinas' Other or Foucault's madness, is bound to fail (*WD* 310).

At this point, Derrida carries out a very Hegelian critique of Levinas. In the first place, transcendence toward the Other is possible only through my recognition of the otherness of the Other, and hence of my being Other for the Other in my very selfness (*ipséité*). If I were not aware of myself as the Other's Other, says Derrida, then I could not respect the Other as another subject (442–44). If the Other is not to simply be an object, if its being is to exceed its *being-for* me (as an object), then that can only be to the extent that the Other is another Self, that is, another Same: "The Other is for me an ego which I know to be related to me as to an Other" (442). Consequently, the Other "cannot be absolutely external to the Same without ceasing to be Other" (444). Earlier in his essay, Derrida writes that Levinas "would doubtless say with Sartre, 'one *encounters* [*rencontre*] others [*autrui*], one does not constitute them' " (439n). By the same token, Derrida would doubtless agree with Sartre that in making the other into an object of respect or "an end in-itself," I immediately bring the Other within the circuit of my own ends or the *ipséité* of my own being-for-self, for treating the Other as an end is precisely *my* project (*EN* 459–60/*BN* 529–30). My effort to simply transascend *toward* the Other is also, inevitably, a transcendence *of* the Other and brings the Other within my own Selfness. As Derrida puts it, my respect for the Other is based on a transcendental and pre-ethical violence, the constitution of the Other in and through my own ipseity. Transcendental violence is thus the basis for both empirical respect and empirical violence (444). The only way of encountering the Other is as an Other Self opposed to my Self. At this level of opposed and

finite Selves, violence and war are inevitable: "Pure non-violence is a contradictory concept" (466).

That is hardly the end of the matter, though, since for Levinas, the Other is in the first instance the Infinite, or the totally Other, even when presented through the everyday experience of the encounter with a human Other (*TH* 22–23, 27–29). Would a relation to this non-finite Other permit a way out of the totalizing history of "violence against violence"? Could there be another history, "the history of exits from the totality, history as the very movement of Transcendence, of the excess over the totality without which no totality would appear" (433)? What, then, is this "excess over the totality" that Levinas names the Infinite?

Here again Derrida subjects Levinas' thought to a dialectical reversal: infinity must be thought on the basis of the Same. For Levinas, the infinite as an object would be a "false infinite"—an expression Levinas refrains from using "perhaps because it is Hegelian"—that is, "the indefinite, the *negative* form of the infinite" (435–36). The "false" and "negative" aspect of the Infinite as object would be, for Levinas, its negative relation to the self, the reduction of the Other to its simply *not-being* the Same. The wholly-other Other would then be the true Infinite, and the false Infinite would belong to the Same as its infinite power of negation. Yet, argues Derrida, the very difference between the Same and the Other would appear to have no meaning in the infinite, for only a finite Same could posit itself as *different* from the Other, whether in violent conflict with it or in harmonious peace (335–36, 445). On the other hand, a Same that is infinite could not exclude the Other, for if it did, it would be limited and bound by the Other, and so less than truly infinite (an argument Derrida borrows from Hegel).[23] The true Infinite, to speak "like Hegel and against Levinas" (445), would then be the Same, not as a "violent" and finite totality or the negation of difference (457n3), but as "the unrest [*inquiétude*] of the infinite that determines and negates itself" by making itself Other than itself, and then returns that Other to itself through the relation determined by this negative movement. In short, it is absolute Spirit, which "suffers violence by its own hand." Such transcendental violence belongs to transcendental history, the history of spirit, which is the *a priori* condition of the empirical intersubjective violence of human history: "It is not by chance that Hegel refrains from pronouncing the word 'man' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and describes war (for example, the dialectic of Master and Slave) without anthropological reference" (446).[24] Transcendental history is the history of "Difference itself," an Infinite beyond all determinations which grounds determinate differences (431).

Nevertheless, at the very moment where Derrida comes closest to Hegel, he takes his distance: "Hegel himself only recognizes negativity, unrest or war in the absolute infinite as the movement of its own history and *in view of* a final appeasement where alterity would be absolutely subsumed [*résumée*], if not lifted [*lévée*]" (446). If Levinas wants to preserve the alterity of the Other, then he must not, as Hegel ultimately does, suspend or sublate "the difference (conjunction or opposition) between the Same and the Other" (446). For it is indeed

Difference that grounds the possibility of any ethical relation (445). As much as Levinas, Derrida too wants the possibility of a journeying out from the Same that would not end in a return, but would dwell in the desert of separation which Hegel, because he conceived it within the horizon of home-coming, named "the unhappy consciousness" (*WD* 93). But for Derrida, preserving difference means war without end. For "Being itself is war" (463), the "fundamental Difference" of Being (*Être*) and beings (*L'Étant*) (458n), prior to any difference among beings, and prior to any negation or determination (463–64): "here negativity has its origin neither in negation nor in the unrest of an infinite and first Being [*Étant*]. . . . Being, being nothing (determinate), necessarily *produces* itself in Difference (*as* Difference, Finitude or History)" (469). Being is neither, as Levinas would have it, the negation of difference, the One or the Identical (457–58), nor as in Hyppolite, being that negates itself and differentiates itself in order to return to itself (*LE* 61/74, 75/93, 104–5/134–35); it is irreducible difference, "the Same" as itself only insofar as it continually differs from itself. The Same and the Different are not, then, simple contraries; "absolute difference" involves the same (*WD* 320n91), which "is not a category but the possibility of any category" (457n3).

In an important note added when "Violence and Metaphysics" reappeared in *Writing and Difference*, Derrida explains this point by citing Hegel's *Science of Logic*: "Difference in itself is difference in relation to itself; thus it is its own negativity, not in relation to an *other*, but in relation to itself [i.e., difference "in itself" is *itself*, or the same as itself, but being itself *as* difference, it differs from itself]. What differentiates difference is identity [i.e. difference's relation to itself as different or its being-itself]. Difference, thus, is both itself and identity [or: it is itself and its Other, being Other than itself]. Both together [difference and identity] make difference."[25] Difference can be *itself*, then, "only in relation to Identity." *Pure* difference, in Derrida's words, or difference without any admixture of the Same, is impossible (470).[26]

Pure difference would be the goal of empiricism, the "radicalisation of the theme of the infinite exteriority of the Other" (471), but empiricism is "the *dream* of a thought that is purely *heterological* at its source," a dream that "vanishes . . . as soon as language wakes up" (470). Once again, Derrida uses Hegel's argument against empiricism in the "Sense Certainty" chapter in the *Phenomenology*.[27] As soon as empiricism speaks, as soon as it tries to be a philosophy, it is no longer outside the system of concepts, but becomes an impoverished concept, a childish "stammering,"[28] from which "the possibility of the system" or philosophy itself protects us (*WD* 81).[29] It is a non-philosophy, even in the metaphysical form it takes in Schelling or Bergson (*WD* 320n), doomed in advance to succumb to an absolute speculative logic such as Hegel's, which is capable of reconciling empirical heterology with logical tautology, existing difference with thought's same (472–73). "As Hegel says somewhere, empiricism always forgets

at least this: that it makes use of the word *Being*" (455). It cannot be a philosophy without making use of language, and of concepts that are necessarily universal in their application, and rather than the singular empiricities it aimed for. Levinas' resistance to Hegel thus founders on the same reef as Foucault's: the impossibility of putting into language the thought of the difference between thought and being. If there is an "outside" of thought and speech, it must, according to Derrida, be thought in a different way.

I have presented Derrida's critiques of Foucault and Levinas entirely in Derrida's terms,[30] not in order to endorse Derrida's arguments,[31] but to show what is at stake in the conflict between anti-Hegelians and Derrida. First, it is clear that any effective anti-Hegelianism will have to overcome Hegel's critique of empiricism. Wahl had taken a number of steps in this direction, and his efforts received a sympathetic echo in Levinas.[32] But Wahl's empiricism, as we have seen, tends toward an ineffable being that Hegel would have dismissed as irrational, and hence (according to Hegel), false. An effective empiricism, transcendental or otherwise, will need all the determinacy that modern knowledges afford; the hope of Foucault and Deleuze's genealogical empiricism is to grasp singularities without having recourse to negativity or dialectics. Second, the ethical resistance to Hegel needs to conceive of a relation of the Same to the Other which maintains the Kierkegaardian ambiguities and paradoxes of a relation to an Other that is a non-relation because it falls outside the circuit of ipseity that would reduce the Other to a moment of the Same (see *TI* 39). This is the core of Levinas' ethics, which goes "from the unique to the unique, from the one to the other, beyond any relatedness," in "responsibility for the other person."[33] Over time, Derrida took increasingly seriously the possibility of such an ethics, together with the aporia of a relation to an "absolute other" that does not relativize the Other.[34] However, it would take me beyond the scope of this chapter to deal with these questions here. I deal with the new empiricism of Foucault and Deleuze in the next chapter; studies of Levinas' ethics, and their relation to Derrida's thought, are not hard to find.[35]

The Infinite Horizons of Radical Phenomenology

For Derrida, any move beyond what is "conventionally, quite conventionally" called Hegelian thought (*WD* 132) must seek another horizon, beyond the supposed contradictions and tautologies of empiricism (see *WD* 26–27). This horizon is horizonality itself, as conceived of in Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl's "horizon," which orients consciousness' directing itself toward ("intending") what becomes present to it, cannot become an object, and in that way be reduced to the circuit of selfness, for the simple reason that all objects are presented to consciousness *within* a horizon that necessarily exceeds those objects (*WD* 120). Intentionality, then, through which consciousness encounters objects within a

never-present horizon, is an opening to an "other" that is irreducible to objecthood (*objectité*). Even the phenomenological constitution of objects requires a temporal synthesis of different intentional acts, in each of which consciousness not only transcends itself toward something "outside" of it, but also transcends its present toward the otherness of past and future intentional acts, which are then presented as other consciousnesses of the same object (*WD* 132).[36] For that reason, says Derrida, ethics, or the opening to the Other, finds its meaning or sense in phenomenology, which makes consciousness itself ("the 'subjective *a priori*' ") an opening to what is Other (*WD* 121, 132).[37] With its inadequation and incompleteness, and the infinity of its horizons, intentionality already amounts to respect for exteriority, or the irreducibility of the Other, and not, as Levinas thought, the contrary (*RMM* 436–37).[38]

Derrida is of course not the first to see in phenomenology a way out of the impasses of idealism. As noted in the previous chapter, Sartre found in phenomenology a "realism" that would place us "on the road, in the city, in the midst of the crowd, a thing among things, a man among men" (*Sit I* 42), and thus provide a basis for "an absolutely positive ethics and politics."[39] Derrida's critical engagement with Husserl's phenomenology occupies his two first major publications, a translation of Husserl's *Origin of Geometry* and *Speech and Phenomena: Introduction to the Problem of Signs in Husserl's Phenomenology*,[40] and despite Derrida's criticisms of phenomenology, he never repudiated it entirely. As recently as 1989, Derrida explained that far from leading beyond phenomenology, the dislocation of "the subject" accomplished by deconstruction remains "on the border" of phenomenology's horizons, "on the very line of phenomenology's possibility."[41] In short, by investigating the "conditions of possibility" of phenomenology, Derrida hopes to radicalize it into an "opening" to the Other that will not be subject to the Hegelian critique of empiricism. Whether he succeeds is an open question; before answering it, we must examine Derrida's encounter with Husserl's thought.

We saw in chapter six how for Husserl, consciousness' present is determined as the "intending" of an object that is not present, but which corresponds to the totality of other possible consciousnesses of that object, which then provide the present consciousness with a context that then determines it as a determinate and partial *consciousness of* **x**. As *possibles*, these other, absent consciousnesses are the future of consciousness, its never-present "horizon" (*WD* 132). To constitute its object in a living present, finally, consciousness must take up past consciousnesses (retention) and synthesize these along with the projected future consciousnesses (protention) into a unity ("the same" object), in accordance with the orientation and implicit rule of synthesis provided by the absent horizon (*WD* 132; *HOG* 136–37).[42] The horizonal future, then, is "prior" to both the present and the past, a "to come" that comes before and orients past and present, a "non-originary origin" that comes later in order to constitute the supposed "origin"

(*HOG* 49, 55, 64). "The notion of horizon thus makes the *a priori* and teleological coincide" (*HOG* 117).

For Derrida, the consequence is that neither consciousness (as intentionality) nor its object is ever fully present, without *différance*; the horizons of both consciousness and its object always recede into the future.[43] Each context of an intention, each horizon, engenders "an infinity of new contexts" ("Limited Inc" 220) in that the context is itself made up of further *dépassements*, further transcendences of the present toward yet further horizons. Because these horizons make "the presentation of being-present possible" as *consciousness of* **x** (*SP* 134), horizonality "fissures and retards presence, submitting it simultaneously to primordial division and delay" (*SP* 88). The Living Now "is present only in being *différant*," in differing from and deferring itself (*HOG* 153; see *SP* 65–67; *Aporias* 17, 55; *SM* 75). Consciousness then is "primordial Difference," transcendental unrest (*inquiétude*) and "the openness of the infinite future" as "a *lived* possibility" (*HOG* 137). In its inmost depths, consciousness is distance-from-self, transcending itself towards itself without coinciding with itself, "constituted only in being divided from itself" (*P* 29; see *OG* 112, 153).

At this point, Derrida shifts from exposition to critique. What consciousness is "in the beginning," in its initial intention, is a function of the final and absent meaning it aims at, so that the final end of the intention retroactively determines the beginning as *its* beginning (*HOG* 64). The question then concerns how this is possible. Here Derrida takes the intending of objective ideal essences as a way of showing that the conditions of possibility of consciousness lie outside of consciousness, in language. An objective and ideal essence is universal: it must have the possibility of being valid for all subjects. This requires that the essence exist in such a way that it is not simply *for* a single subjectivity; its mode of being is necessarily that of intersubjectivity or being-for-others (*SP* 75–76), and must be expressed in such a way that it is accessible to others (*SP* 6–8). "Historical incarnation" in a language is thus a transcendental condition of intending objective essences (*OG* 27); linguistic expression may be empirically subsequent to any given intentional act, but it is logically prior (*HOG* 77–78). By the same token, language and intersubjectivity are internal to the conscious ego (*HOG* 66, 87n90; *SP* 40). By its very nature, then, consciousness is historical, possible only within a concrete intersubjectivity, culture and language (*HOG* 89n92). These constitute a necessary condition of universality that is also, in virtue of the incommensurable differences among languages and cultures, a sufficient condition of universality's impossibility (*HOG* 80–82).[44]

Derrida's argument here builds on Hyppolite's thesis that "consciousness is always sense, discourse" (*LE* 18/21), made possible by an "open system of language and speech" (*LE* 29–30/34–35). Yet not all language grounds consciousness for Derrida, but only *writing*. Speech, the living encounter of a speaker with a hearer, is incapable of providing the transcendental ground of ideal essences,

because an *objective* essence must be expressed in such a way that it is in principle accessible to any other subject at any time. This is possible only through writing (*HOG* 87–88; *SP* 24–25). Writing does not require the presence of a speaking or listening subject; the written "I" is there for any possible "I," not for some living, empirical "I" (*SP* 97–99; *HOG* 88; *WD* 178). Writing thus forms "a subjectless transcendental field" that is the necessary condition of "absolutely permanent ideal objectivities;" as such, it is both a "transcendental 'condition' of transcendental subjectivity" and "the highest possibility of '*constitution*' " (*HOG* 88–89), without being either "subjective" or conscious. It is the *a priori* ground of both ideal meanings and their empirical expressions; a "later" that comes "before" the beginning (*OG* 27, 88).

As we have seen, in determining its present through a future essence, consciousness must synthesize its various intentional acts over time as belonging to *the same* consciousness of *the same* intentional object. For that object to be the same, it cannot be confined to any single moment of consciousness; nor could the various moments united in a temporal synthesis be *identical*, for then nothing would be added to the original consciousness, and the object would effectively be horizonless. Rather, it must be possible to intend the same object through different moments that are grasped *as* different, "again and again" (*HOG* 135n161), but also as moments of a single object (*OG* 91; *SP* 143). Again, it is writing that makes this possible. The model for the *repetition of the same* through differing moments, the "structure of repeatability," is the repeatable mark or "trace" that can indicate the same object over an infinite number of instances (see *HOG* 46, 89n92; *SP* 50–52; *OG* 62). The trace's non-subjective intentional structure (*SP* 25, 65–67), the being-outside-itself of the written sign, is thus the condition of intentionality (*SP* 60–61), of consciousness' "intimate possibility of a relation to a beyond and to an outside in general" (*SP* 22; see *OG* 14, 70). All consciousness must pass through the "delay" or "detour" of writing (*SP* 136), through the mediation of the universality and impersonality of written signifiers ("Limited Inc" 200). In short: "immediacy is derived" (*OG* 157), mediated by "the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer" (*OG* 127; see *OG* 145, 215, 292),[45] namely, the repeatable signifier that allows consciousness to synthesize its different moments into consiousness of "the same" object.

The "duplicity" and "unrest" of consciousness thus stem from a "transcendental unrest" in writing and language (*SP* 14). In the first place, words "do not possess any resistant or permanent identity that is absolutely their own . . . The 'same' word is always 'other' through the multiplicity of its possible associations as this is given in a particular language" (*HOG* 104). At a deeper level, because any signifier can function only through the "structure of repetition" that allows it to be recognized as "the same" over various instances (*SP* 50), and so is constituted by its relation to past inscriptions and future repetitions (*SP* 63, 67; *P* 29), even "in itself," the signifier differs from itself, both because of its iterability, and

because of its differential relation to other signs, which "mark" it and constitute its "identity" (*WD* 297; "Limited Inc" 175, 185, 190; see Hyppolite, *LE* 33/40, 115/16/148–49).). The very interiority of the signifier, its "intimacy," is in that sense a return from otherness, a doubling back on itself "that requires a synthesis in which the completely other [*tout autre*] is announced as such . . . within what it is not" (*OG* 47), through its "retaining the other as other in the same" in "an originary synthesis not preceded by any absolute simplicity" (*OG* 62). The signifier is thus "always already split" (*OG* 112), "different from self" (*Glas* 239), riven by *déchirement* (*Diss* 252–53; *P* 33), "immediately the thing is its double."[46] Moreover, the signifier's structure of "distance from self" grounds the self-difference that makes consciousness a "perpetual referral" [*renvoi perpétuel*] from reflected to reflection without ever attaining substantial unity (*EN* 117; see *LE* 85/107, *SP* 45–46n, 82).

Even as writing's time and difference ground consciousness' internal possibility, they are prior to consciousness and transcend it. "Time cannot be 'absolute subjectivity' precisely because" as being-outside-itself, time is exteriority, space, spacing, interval (*SP* 136; *OG* 66–9): "spacing is the impossibility for an identity to be closed on itself, on the inside of its own interiority, or on its coincidence with itself" (*P* 94). Subjective time is only the internalization of this exteriority (*SP* 86). Space and time pass over into each other (*WD* 205, 225),[47] and the signifier's time as difference (*PC* 361/384), or subjective interiority in "external" form, calls into question the opposition of internal/external.[48] Difference over time (repeatability) passes over into difference at a time (the structural differences among signifiers), in that the synchronic difference among signifiers requires the sameness of signifiers over different inscriptions; yet this sameness is mediated by the synchronic difference among signifiers, since the sameness of one signifier with its iteration requires distinguishing this signifier-signifier relation from the relation of a signifier to "contemporary" signifiers that are *not* its iterations. *Différance* is thus both structural and historical-genetic (*SP* 142).

At the same time as Derrida locates the temporality of consciousness in writing, he makes consciousness itself the effect of a largely unconscious "psyche," which can also be considered a "text,"[49] "a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to other differential traces."[50] Within the psyche, a trace is both the "after-effect" of the impression on the nervous system by a stimulus, and a possibility of its repetition at a different time, making it a "deferred repetition" or "originary delay" (*WD* 202–4). Like the signifier, then, it differs from itself because it is iterable and is constituted by its relation to other traces (*WD* 209–11). How and where in the psyche a trace is inscribed depends on the unconscious difference between the forces of a stimulus and that of the psychic apparatus, which constitutes a "facilitation threshold," and on the difference between the facilitation thresholds of different psychic functions (*SP* 149, *MP* 18; *WD* 202–4; *PC* 346–49/367–70).

The temporal structure of the unconscious, in which the subsequent repetition of a trace is an "after" that is necessary to determining what was "deferred" in the earlier trace (*WD* 217, 224, 249), closely resembles that of phenomenology, but with the difference that neither the future nor the past were ever present as conscious experiences. The "past" of the trace is an unconscious and never-present past, knowable only through its subsequent effects (conscious perceptions, symptoms, etc.): a phenomenon Freud called *Nachträglichkeit* (*WD* 217, 224; *OG* 67; *SP* 149–52). Yet to the extent that, because of the trace's repeatability, its unrecoverable "past" is a *past future*, or a past that transcended itself toward a future that determines what it "was" (*Diss* 190–92, 309),[51] it is inscribed within a temporal structure similar to phenomenology's.

What is truly "past" or "prior," the "absolute *prius*" (*SP* 152), however, is not any given trace, but the differential system through which traces receive a function in relation to each other. Logically and temporally prior to conscious *différance* and meaning is "a 'formal' organization that in itself has no meaning" (*MP* 134). This organization is both that of language (as a formal structure) and that of the individual psyche; it is an "it" that comes before and after any "I" (*Glas* 17) and is undecidably "internal" and "external" to the psyche. Consciousness' essential relation to an other—whether the Other is the transcendent intentional object, other temporal moments of itself, or another consciousness—is thus grounded in unconscious differential structures.

These, it seems to me, are the principle traits of Derrida's *différance*. Temporality as futurity, ec-stasis, transcendence and "active difference;"[52] as centrifugal dispersion;[53] a "decentred circle" that cannot close on itself because both its past and its future remain out of reach (*Diss* 181–82, 265; *P* 12). *Différance* is the fruit of a radical phenomenology, a phenomenology that wants to think its conditions and its limits, but always within the horizon of phenomenology, that is, within the horizon of horizonality.[54]

Difference, Dialectics, and Writing

If Derrida's key move consists in making the temporality of the sign the transcendental ground of intentionality, then he may also be seen as having shifted the structures of consciousness into such non-conscious domains as signification, language, writing, and texts. It is on this ground that Derrida's main engagement with Hegel takes place. Very much like Sartre, and unlike Hyppolite (see *LE* 97–99/124–27, 149/195), Derrida favors the "false infinite" that negates endlessly over the "true infinite" that returns to itself; and very much like the Surrealists, Derrida champions a process of infinite self-negation and infinite becoming-other.[55] Difference as untotalizable negations and the indefinite becoming-other of each term would be, in sum, a "Hegelianism without reserve," a "dialectic" without either a final term or a first term, and which for that very reason escapes

dialectical synthesis (*Diss* 207). The "irreducible *generative* multiplicity" (*P* 45) of language and writing, structured by differences prior to any "simple" term, is what grounds this infinite becoming-other.

On the face of it, this seems an essentially *negative* conception of difference. A key resource for Derrida here is Saussure's thesis that "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system."[56] Since the linguistic sign is a duality-in-unity of a material signifier and a conceptual signified (*P* 19), Derrida draws the consequence that "the signified concept is never present in itself" because it is "essentially inscribed in a chain or system, within which it refers to . . . other concepts by the systematic play of differences" (*SP* 140; see *OG* 7, 73; *P* 26–27). In short, a concept is *constituted* by its differences from other concepts, so that what it *is not* is constitutive of what it is: *it is what it is not*. The same goes for the other concepts by which a concept is determined; they too are not what they are. Each concept is then caught up in a "play of differences" that leads it into a process of indefinite becoming-other, in relation to an Other that is always other than itself (see *PC* 382/359).[57]

Yet Derrida wants to say that this endless play of otherness is "without negativity" (*TP* 95) to the extent that it never becomes determinate by being mediated by a closed system. It is not the servile negativity of the slave or the anti-thesis, which is only the obverse of the positivity of the master or the thesis (*WD* 259), but an endless negation of negations that is never recuperated in a positive synthesis (*P* 44). Through *différance*, terms differ, but without opposition or anti-thesis, since these presuppose some stable and unitary term (a thesis) which they negate, and a mediating "third term" that "watches over" and regulates their relations (*TP* 35; *OS* 57). Here, all terms are fluid, caught up in "the indefinite referral of signifier to signifier" in a movement without rest (*WD* 25), without a "last instance" that would serve as its terminal "signified" (*Diss* 207–8; *P* 82), rendering impossible the closure of movement in a totality (*WD* 26, 155, 162). This infinite becoming-other and self-division (*Glas* 235–40), without reconciliation or mediation (*P* 40–44, 58; *WD* 274, 299), is far from being "the simple negativity of a lack," however; it can be considered "lacking" only in relation to the impossible and contradictory ideal of "a simple parousia of meaning" in which the signified meaning would be absolutely present in the signifier (*Diss* 261). The supposed "failure" to achieve this synthesis is in fact what makes possible the "limitlessness of play" among signifiers (*OG* 50). According to Derrida, then, difference must be understood as the positive power of iteration and the limitlessness of signification through different contexts ("Limited Inc" 197; *MP* 317–18; *P* 43), and for that reason, escapes "the metaphysical or romantic pathos of negativity" (*P* 86).

Difference is a non-dialectical and "non-negative" negativity to the extent it falls outside the totalizing schema of thesis-anti-thesis-synthesis, and it achieves

this "escape" through the mobility and undecidability of its terms. The clearest manifestation of this is Derrida's celebrated "undecidables," in which occurs "the diverted and equivocal passage from one difference to another, from one term of the opposition to the other" in such dyads as sensible/intelligible, culture/nature, signifier/signified ("Limited Inc" 244–46). An undecidable such as "pharmakon" (or hymen, supplement, spacing) is both contraries (remedy/poison) and neither, neither the same as the contraries nor other than them (*Diss* 210–25; *Glas* 125–33; *P* 42–43). This produces a dyadic oscillation between contraries, "a structure of duplicity that plays and doubles the dual relationship" (*P* 86), taking it beyond the symmetry and complementarity of thesis/antithesis. A subsumption of these contraries into a higher identity would resolve their opposition, but only at the expense of disabling the functioning of dyadic difference (*SP* 148–49; *MP* 17; *Diss* 24–25; 220–25), in which each term passes into the other while yet differing from the other "in an indefinite oscillation" (*Diss* 58).

What makes possible endless self-doubling, becoming-other, and reversals is the system of differences in which each term is inscribed (*P* 26–27). Because terms are not defined through their contraries, in a one-to-one fashion, but through all the various differences that define the entire structure, instead of a monogamous pairing, each term enters into multiple liaisons with others (*TP* 278, 284, 326, 332–35, 364, 377). "The structure of *différance* . . . can open onto an alterity that is even more irreducible than that attributed to opposition," and from which oppositions "borrow" their being-other (*PC* 283/302), then, because it is the system of differences that brings terms into relation to each other. Hence, "contradiction and pairs of opposites are lifted from the ground [*fonds*] of this diacritical, differing, deferring reserve," from the "groundless ground" [*fonds sans fonds*] of *différance* (*Diss* 127, altered). Infinite and "structural" difference is thus what enables the infinite becoming-other of terms without contraries being subsumed into either a higher synthesis (*Diss* 219–25) or a coincidence of opposites (*Diss* 127). The other of speculative dialectics is thus that in which the Other, the different and negation no longer take the form of opposition and anti-thesis (*Diss* 261; *Spurs* 117–19), where the Other of a term is no longer *its other*.[58]

The non-dialectical difference of the signifier/signified dyad in particular plays a key role in Derrida's resistance to Hegel's idealism.[59] According to what Derrida calls the classical theory of the sign, "The sign unites . . . a concept (signified) and a sensory perception (or a signifier)," making the signified meaning the "soul" of which the signifier is its material "body" (*MP* 81–82; see *WD* 240; *OG* 13). In Hegel, says Derrida, "The process of the sign is an *Aufhebung*" of the signifier in the signified, or of the exteriority and spatiality of the signifier in the temporality of signification, in such a way that the signifier "must erase itself . . . before *Bedeutung*, before the signified ideality, all the while conserving itself and conserving *Bedeutung*" through the temporal passage from signifier to signified (*MP* 88; see *OG* 24–25, 69; *Glas* 8–9, 196).[60] In that case, however, the

relation of signifier to signified would seem to be not only arbitrary but inessential: on the one side, there would be an ideal and transcendental signified, fully present to consciousness without the intermediary of a signifier (*OG* 18–20, 73; *P* 19); on the other a superfluous signifier devoid of any signifying function, a mute material presence (*Glas* 8, 66).

Obviously, this separate and stable presence of independent terms would render signification impossible. The determination and functioning of signifiers requires, on the contrary, their instability and movement. We've seen that every signifier, and every signified, has its "value" determined through its differences from other signifieds or signifiers within a system (*P* 26; *OG* 49–57; *WD* 292). Indeed, because both signifier and signified involve an essential reference to the other elements within the system, "the distinction between signified and signifier is problematical at its root" (*P* 20; see *P* 82, *OG* 7, 73): all terms are "signifiers" that first signify the other terms from which they differ (*OG* 237). This does not mean, though, that there is no difference between signifier and signified, such that the one could pass into the other without remainder (*Glas* 11). On the contrary, "that this opposition or difference [between signifier and signified] is not absolute does not prevent it from functioning" (*P* 19). Both signifier and signified can function only in relation to each other, and through the system of differences that establishes this relation (see *P* 20; *WD* 281). Consequently, the signified can neither completely reduce or internalize its signifier, nor completely "expel" it (*Diss* 3, *P* 32).[61] We must say instead that the signifier is both external and internal to the signified: external, so that an irreducible gap makes possible the temporal movement of signifier to signified; internal, insofar as the signified belongs to a system of differences marked out by signifiers (*WD* 281). The exteriority of the signifier to the signified, and its relation to other signifiers, thus constitutes the transcendental condition of the signified, and forms its most "internal" possibility (*P* 33; *OG* 73; *D* 100). The being-outside-itself of systematic difference, which makes signification possible, thus prevents any *Aufhebung* of the exteriority of the signifier into an ideal, self-present and unitary signified concept (*MP* 268–70, 285–87; *Diss* 6, 98, 351; *PC* 361–63/384–85; *P* 20).

The role of systematic difference in the signifier/signified relation once again explains the importance Derrida gives to writing. One reason Derrida tends to privilege the written signifier is that the material subsistence of the signifier, and its independence from a speaker or hearer, are obvious guarantees of its resistance to an *Aufhebung* into an ideal meaning (*MP* 92; *Diss* 95). Yet we should not be misled into thinking that it is solely the materiality of the written signifier that resists dialectical sublation. Even where the phonic signifier is privileged, as it is by both Hegel and Saussure (*MP* 82, 90–93; *P* 21; *OG* 24–26), the place of the signifier within system of differences rules out any absolute coincidence of signifier with signified: both signifier and signified are "outside themselves" (*P* 94; *OG* 204), caught up in a play of infinite substitutions that can produce reversals of

meaning (*Diss* 89, 119). Systematic difference is the exteriority prior to the material exteriority of the signifier, prior to both writing and speech, and prior to space and time (*OG* 53–57, 69–71). Yet for differences to be systematic, they indeed must be "instituted" through what Derrida calls "writing" in the broad sense—the marking of differences in a "sensible" and "spatial" element traditionally designated as "exterior" (*OG* 44–46, 62, 70).

We can see, then, that Derrida's insistence on the importance of writing should not be taken as an aestheticization of philosophy, or as the banality that philosophy is a kind of writing. Rather, his philosophical argument seeks in writing a way of resisting the totalizing and internalizing power of the Hegelian dialectic, and of preserving difference, alterity and conflict, particularly when it is a matter of "self"-difference, self-otherness, self-conflict. For according to Derrida, "alteration does not simply happen to the self . . . it is the self's very origin" (*OG* 153). As with the other authors discussed in this book, such a strategy is ethical-political, and the farthest thing from a narcissistic "preference" for the literary. Too many supporters and critics of Derrida regard him as merely a clever wit, an unabashed punster, a dab hand at wordplay, a modern Gorgias intent on demonstrating both the power and duplicity of writing. All of which is true, no doubt. But it is a way of deciding in favor of the frivolous as opposed to the serious, according to the logic of decidable binary oppositions that is the main target of Derrida's "deconstruction." The play of language resists the seriousness of the dialectical negation, but resistance is not an idle jest.

Difference and the Unhappy Consciousness

Resistance to appeasement and reconciliation is a key theme in the philosophies of the unhappy consciousness we have considered so far: in Koyré, Wahl, Bataille, Sartre, and Fondane. The affirmative character of Derrida's *différance* does not obviate comparisons with these other philosophies, inasmuch as they, too, *affirm* the unhappy consciousness. They too argue that unhappiness and *déchirement* are by no means merely negative phenomena, but are the condition of human freedom. They also argue, against Hegel, that the sort of "unhappy consciousness" they have in view is not a surpassable historical stage, or a process subject to dialectical mediation and supersession. Finally, they agree with Derrida that the *déchirements* and reversals of this consciousness can be considered "unhappy" only in relation to an impossible ideal of total unity and self-presence that is not even desirable, inasmuch as its realization would amount to a kind of death. In short, their arguments in favor of the unhappy consciousness are much the same as the ones Derrida puts forward for rejecting the Romantic "pathos of negativity" that consists either in seeking out an utterly transcendent "beyond"[62] or in "nostalgia for lost unity" (*Diss* 341). Any express disavowal of the "unhappy consciousness" would be beside the point. In Derrida's words, "We are not concerned with comparing the content of doctrines, the wealth of positive knowledge; we are concerned, rather, with discerning the repetition or permanence, at a

profound level of discourse, of certain fundamental schemes and certain directive concepts" (*MP* 139).

We may begin by considering the thesis that complete reconciliation amounts to a kind of death. For Derrida, "absolute self-presence in consciousness" would be realized in absolute knowledge, "the unity of the concept, logos and consciousness in a voice without *différance*," but a cancellation of *différance* would be the cancellation of time and the future, an end of history equivalent to death (*SP* 102; *OG* 26). Intentionality and signification are movements of transcendence-toward that require "intervals," distance-from self or *dehiscence* ("Limited Inc" 197), or time as incompletion (*Glas* 229). The prime example of non-self-coincidence and historicity is that of the signifier (*WD* 178),[63] and a complete identity of signifier and signified would be the death of the signifying movement that constitutes the sign (*SP* 52–54), as it would close the gap or "inadequation" that forms signification's condition of possibility (*Diss* 166–68; *OG* 62). Difference must be "implacable" because it is grounded in a difference in language and writing that never having been a unity (*Diss* 351; *OG* 47, 62, 112, 157, 237), cannot return to unity (*OG* 114–19; *PC* 362–63/385–86), or "reappropriate itself" in a living present that would in fact be death (*WD* 166, 194, 297, 326n; *OG* 71, 131, 155; *Diss* 331). Its "history" neither can nor should come to an end: as a self-transcending movement, it cannot cease to transcend itself except by ceasing to be altogether.

Despite the impossibility of complete unity, however, difference cannot exclude unity entirely: *pure* difference is a dream. Much as Sartrean consciousness both is and is not the totality towards which it transcends, the meaning-giving difference between signifier and signified presupposes the two being joined together in the sign which they thus are and are not (*WD* 333n). Such a difference is necessarily "impure," or contaminated by its contrary, unity, and not "pure" difference (*Glas* 90–97, 239–42). The sign, then, like the Sartrean self, is "an already self-corrupted being" (*BN* 116/*EN* 107) because it is "not a unity which contains a duality, not a synthesis that transcends and lifts up the abstract moments of thesis and antithesis, but a duality that *is* unity" (*EN* 114/*BN* 122), that is, a dyad (*Diss* 24–25; *OG* 36), separated from itself by a "nothing" that is always elsewhere (*BN* 126; *OG* 23).

Taking a problematic that has its origins in an "existential" analysis of human existence and consciousness, and then transposing it into an analysis of the linguistic sign, may be a move away from the supposed "voluntarism" of phenomenology (see *P* 87, 94). Yet by making "intentionality"—defined by futurity, going-beyond (*dépassement*) and non-coincidence with self—into a feature of the linguistic sign itself, Derrida's theory, like Hegel's logic, expands an anthropological problematic beyond anthropology. To be sure, the temporality of writing and the signifier transcend and exceed human time, constituting the *a priori* condition of the temporality of consciousness, but it does not follow that this transcendental temporality is free of any essential reference to human time, any more than Heideggerian *Zeitlichkeit* can easily be freed of the structure of *Sorge* or

"care," as Wahl very early pointed out,[64] and as Derrida later agreed.[65] Although Derrida's *différance* does not restrict itself to humans, nor are humans the primary locus or "center" from which *différance* is thought, the terms through which *différance* is articulated—temporality as futurity, distance-from-self, *déchirement*, death—partake of that humanizing dramatization of ontology that was the great achievement of Wahl, Koyré, Sartre, and Hyppolite.

Derrida and Sartre: Filiation/Parricide?

I have noted in passing many similarities between Sartre's theory of consciousness and Derrida's *différance*. Here I would like to examine the resemblance in more detail, along with the question of whether Derrida's repudiation of Sartre's supposed "humanism" is merely the parricidal gesture of a new generation trying to make room for its own ideas by liquidating the old.[66]

Derrida's assertions notwithstanding, it is simply not the case that in Sartre's consciousness, *différance* "cancels itself as difference" in the "stable subsistence" of the for-itself (*Glas* 242), since Sartre's for-itself never succeeds in returning to itself or completing itself. This is partly because consciousness can never catch up to its own future, but it is also because consciousness is unable to "found" itself, and for that reason cannot catch up to its past, either. Consciousness is caught between a future that is always to come and a "never present past" or "original contingency" that coincides with its facticity, thrownness, birth, and the body (*BN* 404–8, 429, 431), and which it has to assume "from behind" (*BN* 172–73).[67] Like the trace, consciousness bears the traces of an irretrievable past that pre-exists and orients it (*BN* 459), the meaning of which remains to come in the future that this past transcended towards (*BN* 205–6, 643f). If this past is not a Freudian unconscious, it is not consciousness either, and it is certainly not an unmediated presence-to consciousness. Consciousness "has its being outside it, before it and behind" (*BN* 179); it is between past and future (*BN* 186): "There is never an instant at which we can assert that the for-itself *is*, precisely because the for-itself never is. Temporality, on the contrary, constitutes itself as the refusal of the instant" (*BN* 211). For all these reasons, Sartrean consciousness fits Derrida's description of "a self-presence that has never been given but only dreamed of and always already split, incapable of appearing to itself except as its own disappearance" (*OG* 112), "something that promises itself as it escapes" and so can't be called "presence" (*OG* 154). The temporality of consciousness makes it non-contemporaneous with its present (see *SM* 25, 75), an inadequation to itself (*SM* xix), a relation to self grounded in self-difference and self-otherness (see *SM* 145; *BN* 125). What could be more Derridean?

Derrida's critique of Sartre takes a different tack in his famous critique of "totality" and "lack," of consciousness and the *cogito*: in short, of the "humanism" of post-war French philosophy. Derrida argues that Sartre, for all of his

desubstantialization of human reality and his valorization of the "detotalized totality," makes use of a framework of "lack" and "totality" that Derrida finds questionable (*MP* 115–16). It is in this spirit that Derrida enjoins us to conceive of the "noncenter as other than a loss of the center" (*WD* 292) and without nostalgia for lost unity. Yet matters are not as simple as they appear. In Derrida's discussion of the "lack" and the "supplement" in *Of Grammatology*, the supplement makes up for a lack, or substitutes for it, and even "marks" it and renders it determinate (*OG* 158), much as consciousness is defined by the totality it lacks. More significant, however, Derrida's interpretation of the ethical import of Sartre's theory seems wrong. In Derrida's view, "lack" and "need" for Sartre are gaps in being that should be filled. Yet Sartre does not accept or valorize human reality's futile desire for totality ("Man is a useless passion," *BN* 784). On the contrary, in his ethical theory, where the question of value is explicitly formulated, the affirmation of "distance from self," contingency, and a transcendence that rules out closure, are posited as necessary conditions of "authenticity." Sartre's ethical theory prizes openness and acceptance of incompletion, and the freedom that "chooses not to *reappropriate* (*reprendre*) itself, but to flee itself, not to coincide with itself, but to be always at a distance from itself" (*EN* 692/*BN* 798). At the ontological level, "unity" is both a desired "lack" and the death consciousness tries to avoid, with the result that "satisfaction" is always held "in reserve." The desire constitutive of Sartrean consciousness is, in Derrida's terms, an anticipation of an ending that can neither be accepted nor denied (*Glas* 6), a detour and self-distancing (*éloignement de soi*) through which the living organism seeks a self-adequation found only in death (*PC* 354–56/377–78).

Rather than being radically at odds with Sartre's philosophy, Derrida's philosophy of *différance* brings out the radical nature of the conclusions that can be drawn from it. Sartre's "phenomenological analysis" of horizonality seeks to disclose its essence. Since it is the "essence" of the object that in turn is indicated by its horizon, the essence being the unrealizable totality of the object's appearances, Sartre's analysis leads into an inquiry concerning the essence of essence. What this inquiry reveals is that the achievement of essence is impossible, since the totality is unrealizable. This is what Sartre summarized, with such consequent misunderstanding of his work, in the catch-phrase "existence precedes essence." But existence not only precedes essence, as its *a priori* condition; the transcendence and distance-from-self of existence renders essence impossible. There is every indication that Derrida would agree with this conclusion.[68]

That Sartre did not see that the impossibility of essence is the impossibility of "phenomenological ontology," or of an "eidetics of bad faith," is one of Derrida's main criticisms of Sartre, and of phenomenology in general (*MP* 116, 134). If essence is impossible, then so is a "deep meaning" of human actions that "does not imply any other meaning and which refers only to itself" (*BN* 589; see *BN*

717–19). Derrida's most savage criticisms of Sartre are directed at "the onto-phenomenologist of freedom," intent on discovering "fundamental projects," oblivious to the interminability and undecidability of signification (*Glas* 28).

Yet even this criticism requires an oversimplification of Sartre's work. Sartre was also concerned with the aporias that so exercise Derrida. This is particularly true of Sartre's preoccupation with the aporias of moral duplicity and "loser wins," the subject of both Sartre's and Derrida's treatments of Jean Genet (in *Saint Genet* and *Glas*). Sartre finds in Genet's "treachery" a "negation of the negation" (evil done to evil) that "is not a return to the good" or an "affirmation," but negations "lost, coiled within each other, in the demented night of the 'No' " (*SG* 195–96).[69] This logic of negation without affirmation or synthesis is an aporia of "non-being," since "the Being of Evil is both the Being of Non-Being and the Non-Being of Being" (*SG* 177), that is to say, undecidably both being and non-being, and neither being nor non-being.[70] This aporia is also undecidably metaphysical-ethical, founded on the duplicity of human reality that makes moral duplicity and bad faith possible, and which makes the circular "return to self" of Hegel's dialectic into a *tourniquet*, a metaphysical merry-go-round that never catches up with itself (*SG* 171; see *TP* 26, 373), a doubling that cannot be resolved into a simple unity (see *OS* 62).

But it is probably Derrida's critique of humanism that most forcefully distinguishes his thought from Sartre's in the minds of many interpreters. According to Derrida, humanism makes "man" a supreme value and measure, and in so doing not only excludes animals, women and children, but also defines "humanity" according to specific cultural norms that have the effect of excluding a great many people from the human race.[71] This critique links Derrida (however ambiguously) to Lévi-Strauss, whose critique of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* for having excluded from the properly human all the supposedly "ahistorical" societies of "repetition" first made the link between humanism and ethnocentrism.[72] However, Sartre always repudiated the sort of humanism that consists in making man "the measure of all things," or a "supreme being," which Sartre agrees constitutes a form of racism (*CDG* 38–41), a practice of exclusion (*CRD* 702). It is by no means obvious that the racist humanism Sartre rejects necessarily follows from his basic ontology; Sartre offers considerable arguments to the contrary, which Derrida's criticisms of Sartre largely ignore, substituting instead *a priori* arguments of his own explaining why an ontology of consciousness *must* be racist, by some logical necessity.

One can only wonder why Derrida felt it necessary to repudiate Sartre's philosophy, by any means available. For despite Derrida's explicit repudiation of Sartre, the similarities are striking. It is possible that these resemblances constitute a superficial and wholly external relation, as Freud claimed concerning his precursors, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (*PC* 266). Derrida, though, does not endorse Freud's view; he writes, rather, that "what is closest *must* be avoided, by

reason of its very proximity" (*PC* 263/281): "How to both feel and not feel in advance acquitted and guilty of the debt of another when the latter, lodged within oneself by the effect of a singular topic, comes back to [*revient à*] oneself according to a filiation concerning which everything remains to be thought?" (*PC* 263/281). Such may be the case for Derrida's relation to Sartre. Derrida, who has written so much of the ghost that returns to haunt (the *revenant*), appears haunted by the philosopher who wrote of human reality being haunted by a totality it aims for and cannot attain.

If Derrida's exorcisms of Sartre result from a too close proximity between Sartre's thought and his own, then Derrida (in his own words) "*himself* pursues relentlessly someone who almost resembles him to the point where we could mistake the one for the other; a brother, a double, thus a diabolical image" (*SM* 134). In pursuing Sartre's ghost to chase it away, Derrida thus pursues the ghost of himself (*TP* 373), himself as ghost, a ghostly "double" (*TP* 376). Derrida would then be *Sartre*'s double, a double of his double: a doubled double that arouses anxiety and puts the identity of the "self" in jeopardy (*PC* 270/289). What complicates matters further is that if Sartre is Derrida's uncanny double, it is not just as a "father" and "precursor," but as an elder brother, a rival to the inheritance bequeathed by Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel. The point of a dialectical critique of Sartre, like Derrida's earlier critique of Foucault, would then be clear: "The disciple must break the glass, or better the mirror, the reflection, his infinite specular on the master. And start to speak" (*WD* 32).

It would be easy enough to exhume texts by Derrida that exhibit an animus against the ghost of Sartre, particularly the ghost of the then *living* Sartre: "The Ends of Man" (1968), "From Restricted to General Economy" (1967), *Glas* (1974), are the most obvious examples. Then there are the interviews. In them, the now-dead Sartre is castigated as a "nefarious and catastrophic" model of the intellectual, who "rejected or misunderstood so many theoretical and literary events of his time . . . accumulated and disseminated incredible misreadings of Heidegger, sometimes of Husserl," and whose style was determined by university norms "in the most internal fashion." On the other hand, Derrida praises Sartre for having introduced him to Husserl, Heidegger, Blanchot, Ponge, and Bataille (in *Situations I* and *What is Literature*?), and calls Sartre his first major philosophical influence.[73] In such texts, the ambivalence of gratitude and guilt in relation to a debt is apparent.

Things have changed. Most recently, Derrida has expressed his "boundless gratitude" toward Sartre, and acknowledged his "immense debt" to him, in the lead article for the commemorative fiftieth-anniversary issue of *Les Temps Modernes*.[74] Here, to the astonishment no doubt of many, Derrida declares that he was always "*for* and *with Les Temps Modernes*, but not *of* it, which doesn't mean that I was *against* it" (8). He also confesses to a curious amnesia: he had "forgotten" that Sartre had put in question the rhetoric of fraternity (11), that commitment

(*engagement*) is not a decisionary heroism of the will, but a gamble taken in circumstances "in which one is engaged, i.e. passively thrown before any decision," on a basis (*fond*) that is "*undecidable* and in a space heterogeneous to all knowing [*savoir*]" (12). Concerning "Sartre's opposition to himself and his antinomies, *and* Sartre's refusal of antinomies," Derrida avows himself to be Sartre's heir (14). It is this self-contradiction that most touches him (23), this "disaccord" or disagreement with self in Sartre with which Derrida is most in agreement (32), and which Derrida places in a temporality and historicity that designates "the rigour of a non-coincidence of the 'present' and the 'future,' and of the present to self insofar as it must 'return to itself *from out of* this future' " (32). Derrida admits that he "wouldn't have dared" to admit his affection for Sartre and *Les Temps Modernes* some decades ago, but now he is moved to "do justice" to them, without the slightest trace of resentment (40).[75] With this, it appears, Derrida hopes to acquit himself of a debt too long unacknowledged, and perhaps to remove the malignity of his ghostly double, not by laying the ghost of Sartre to rest, but by welcoming this ghost and the future from which it returns, and that in it which remains a promise, the announcement of something always yet "to come."

3. HEGEL'S GHOST: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS

All of this leaves unresolved the question of Derrida's relation to that other inheritance, Hegelian dialectics. On the face of it, it is hard to see *différance* as anything other than the negative other of dialectics, of *Aufhebung* and totality, and for that reason inescapably bound to what it negates. Derrida seems to grasp the problem (*Glas* 207) when he writes that the relation of difference to *Aufhebung* involves an oscillation between "a dialectics (of the undecidable and the dialectical) . . . [and] an undecidability (between the dialectic and the undecidable)." This move is meant to decide in favour of a meta-undecidability (since it is undecidable whether undecidable difference or dialectics takes precedence), which would then exceed the dialectical framework. Even then, however, difference exceeds dialectics only as the "outside" of that very framework, which dialectics then will seek to internalize by determining it as a relation to its own system of relations (see *Glas* 22–23). Difference thought apart from any relation to dialectics, including such negative relations as "resistance" (*P* 43–44) or the "disgusting,"[76] would seem to be impossible. Difference may be a "surplus" and a "remainder" rather than a "lack," but it is Derrida himself (in *Of Grammatology*) who has shown that a supposedly external "supplement" passes over into an internal "lack," and how the "outside" passes over to the "inside" (see *TP* 59–63). Moreover, it's all one whether the impossibility of synthesis derives from an excess or a lack; both can be thought only in relation to the possibility of a fully totalized totality.

Yet we have seen in what respect *différance* is not simply the negative other of dialectics. Writing exceeds dialectics because it is the "instituted trace," or a

system of marked differences, that is the transcendental condition of conceptual opposition, of concepts themselves, and hence of the dialectical "movement" of concepts. Even the "transcendental/empirical" distinction is itself "inscribed" within a system of differences, from which it follows that "writing" exceeds the "transcendental/empirical" distinction as well, being the condition or ground of that distinction. According to this argument, difference necessarily exceeds dialectics as the latter's condition of possibility.

However, this argument brings us to a deeper criticism. As the condition or ground of even the transcendental/empirical distinction, writing would be the *a priori* of the *a priori* realm of concepts, a *meta-transcendental*. As a condition, it would have to be thought in terms of what it makes possible or conditions. Like Kant's transcendental realm, Derrida's meta-transcendental would then be the reflection of the empirical realm it is supposed to ground, the reflected image of the conditioned.[77] It would not be "the tain of the mirror" (*Diss* 33), but a moment of the process of reflection-reflected-reflecting that forms the substance of speculative dialectics. Because a condition of possibility, even if it is also a condition of impossibility, can only be grasped through what it makes possible/impossible, it is undecidably outside and inside what it grounds. Rather than being a means of resistance, this undecidability makes writing and difference an "exteriority" that is the internal possibility of dialectics. If *différance* is the groundless ground of contrariety and opposition, it is for that very reason not "external" to them. Rather, as the ground of reflection that is infinitely reflected into itself, *différance* exhibits the "genuine infinity" of Hegel's Idea. As a meta-transcendental, *différance* is prior to reflection and dyadic oscillation, but as an *a priori* condition that reflects what it conditions.

In saying this, I am taking issue with Derrida's foremost philosophical expositor, Rodolphe Gasché, whose *Tain of the Mirror* remains a benchmark of rigorous and thoughtful interpretation of Derrida's philosophy. Gasché argues that Derrida's "infrastructures," or what I term his "meta-transcendentals," cannot be understood simply as grounds in the classical philosophical sense; rather, they are both grounds and un-grounds, conditions of possibility and impossibility, abysses that both include and are included by what they ground in the manner of the *mise en abîme*, in which something includes within itself another thing which includes it (as when a picture contains a picture or mirror image in which the whole picture is represented).[78] Infrastructures are not transcendental laws, since they do not govern themselves and cannot account for themselves; they lack "autonomy" (*TM* 162–63). Rather, they are subject to radical heteronomy: every infrastructure is governed by what is other than it, and by the alterity that is internal to it as an inscribed system of differences. For that reason, infrastructures "represent the *surplus* of the conceptual dyads or the totality of a discourse as well as what prevents them or that totality from achieving closure" (*TM* 174). As an infinite movement of self-othering and self-differing, infrastructures are themselves "irretrievably plural" (*TM* 103); consequently, they prevent the closure and totalization of finite

systems of differences, and allow for non-totalizable infinities (*TM* 184). An infrastructure, then, is never a stable and unitary ground, but a moving ground, as varied and variable as what it grounds, an "open system" (*TM* 224).

If this interpretation is correct, as it seems to be,[79] rather than saving Derrida from my criticisms above, Gasché's analysis confirms my own. The very term "infrastructure" situates Derrida's meta-transcendentals within the structure of ground/grounded. To say that the ground is not self-governing or autonomous, but that it is also conditioned by what it grounds, does not take this structure out of the problem of a mirroring reflectivity between ground and grounded; it simply exacerbates this mirroring through the infinite, undecidable and "unclosable" reflection of the *mise en abîme*, in which the ground and grounded pass into each other. This is a pluralizing of difference and otherness, but one that remains within a "transcendentalist" framework that searches for conditions of possibility, albeit one in which the "infrastructures" or meta-transcendental grounds increase and deepen division and duplicity, rather than mediating differences into a unity. It is a dialectic without end that remains, for all that, dialectical. The true "tain of the mirror," the condition that *produces* reflection, cannot be conceived on the basis of the reflection, as its condition of *possibility*. Rather, it would be a condition of the *actuality* of reflection, of concepts, and of consciousness, and a condition that would not resemble what it conditions. Such conditions would be the object of the "transcendental empiricism" dealt with in the following chapter.

As for Derrida, even if he has broken free of the dream of a complete comprehension, based on a totalizing synthesis that mediates all terms and allows a translation from one term into another, that shows only that he has broken free from the dominant post-war version of the Hegelian Absolute. While, on the one hand, the demand for meaning and identity is the demand to internalize and master the differences that both constitute and divide a term, a demand that "is by definition insatiable, unsatisfied, always making a higher bid" (*TP* 368), on the other hand, "There cannot not be this dream" of a unitary meaning "that would be what it is."[80] Unhappiness is thus inescapable. To the degree that Derrida locates the unrest of the unhappy consciousness in an expanded conception of "writing" that includes all forms of difference, this makes the domain of the unhappy consciousness coextensive with being itself. To champion a play of signification over the labor of meaning is to valorize incompletion and lack of meaning; it is to be happy in one's unhappiness. Mikel Dufrenne said that "in introducing negation into the heart of being, tragedy into the heart of the Absolute, Hegel is more existentialist than existentialism. For existentialism, only consciousness is negative. . . . For Hegel, the unhappiness of consciousness is the unhappiness of being."[81] Perhaps we could also say that Derrida, too, is "more existentialist than existentialism," and the greatest Hegelian of them all.[82]

Chapter Eight

Beyond Hegel? Deleuze, Foucault, and the New Empiricism

In the last chapter, I showed how Derrida's "Hegelianism without reserve" places him among "those who believe that can still locate today's discontinuities (*ruptures*) in the historico-transcendental tradition of the nineteenth century." Foucault and Deleuze, by contrast, would claim to be among "those who try to free themselves once and for all from that tradition" (*TFR* 105). The question is whether they succeed. Instead of trying to refute Hegel, Deleuze's later work, along with Foucault's, puts Nietzschean philosophy into practice through "genealogical" investigations of the production of subjects, experience, and history. Deleuze develops a good part of the theoretical underpinnings of this stance, whereas Foucault's historical studies can be seen as its practical and historical elaboration, one that both clarifies and situates Deleuze's theories by bringing genealogy itself within the scope of genealogical analysis. No longer anti-Hegelianism, this non-Hegelian philosophy claims to discard the categories, problems, and terms of reference of Hegelianism (negation, dialectic, recognition, representation). But in order to clear the ground for this new philosophy, an anti-Hegelian battle first had to be waged.

Initially, it was far from clear on what terrain or using what strategy Deleuze and Foucault would conduct this battle. In Foucault's case, in particular, we can witness many differing and seemingly incompatible approaches, from the attempted non-Hegelian tragicism of *Histoire de la folie* to *The Order of Things*'[1] search for synchronic totalities (the "epistemes" or infrastructures that explain the interconnections between the bodies of knowledge, practices and institutions of an historical period), and finally, the "genealogical" studies of power in works such as *Discipline and Punish*[2] and *The History of Sexuality*.[3] The one factor these extremely varied approaches share in common is a search for history without teleology, and an opposition to "an entire historical tradition (theological or

rationalistic) [which] aims at dissolving the singular event into an ideal continuity—as a teleological movement or a natural process" (*TFR* 88). Arguably, only the genealogical perspectivism and particularism of Foucault's last period is able to combine a recognition of historically determining processes with the search for the singularity of the event; for Derrida was certainly right to notice "a Hegelian dimension" in *Histoire de la folie*—that *Phänomenologie des krankes Geist*—and Foucault's move to genealogy implicitly recognizes the insufficiencies of an archeology that verges on historicist idealism.

As for Deleuze, his anti-Hegel campaign has always been fought under the banner of empiricism. Whether relying on Hume, Bergson, or Nietzsche, Deleuze's concern is to refute Hegel's contention that empiricism is the poorest and emptiest kind of knowledge (*NP* 4). In the last chapter, we saw how effectively Derrida used Hegel's critique of empiricism against Foucault and Levinas: as soon as one tries to express the singularities of sense experience, they are transmuted into empty universals (the vague generality of any "now," "here," or "I," without the determinacy of any *particular* "now," "here," or "I"). The same problem dogged Wahl's existential empiricism; however much Wahl protested that Hegel's refutation of sense-certainty confused words with things, the concrete richness of the qualitative differences and intensities of sensory experience, far from leading us to determinate singularities, led instead to the ineffable, to a "mysticist realism" in which experience encounters an unknowable totally Other. This indeterminate real, which can only be thought, and not known, would, says Hegel, be the indeterminate Idea of Being, the mere notion that "there is" something, but with no notion of *what* that something is. As Breton said of Bataille's materialism, "mysticist realism" is an Idea that refuses to recognize itself as an Idea. To this we may add Lefebvre's criticism that empiricism's focus on the particular fails to grasp things in their interconnections with the social world that gives all objects a social meaning (*CDH* 85), and makes them moments of a social Idea (*MD* 113). If *D*eleuze's empiricism is to overcome Hegel's critique, then, it must demonstrate that it is able to grasp concrete singularities non-dialectically, but without falling back on either a mystical ineffable or isolated, contextless givens. It's a tall order; we'll begin this chapter by looking at how Deleuze proposes to pull it off.

1. DELEUZE AND EMPIRICISM

Unlike textbook versions, Deleuze's empiricism is not "the doctrine according to which the intelligible 'comes' from the sensible" (*D* 54), but rather a concern for "the concrete richness of the sensible" (*D* 54), for contingency, difference, and incommensurability, and a resistance to universalizing abstractions through an emphasis on the particularity of situated, historical practices (*D* 112). Deleuze intends his empiricism to serve as the basis of a philosophy of difference, where

difference is no longer understood through negation (*NP* 8–10, 156–59), and explicitly lays claim to the heritage of Hume and Bertrand Russell. Indeed, Hume is the subject of Deleuze's first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1953), which, although sincerely and respectfully dedicated to Jean Hyppolite, who was France's leading Hegelian of the time, follows Wahl's *Philosophies pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique* in using empiricism's theory of external relations *against* Hegel. Deleuze pursues his search for a "higher empiricism" with articles on Bergson, which try to elaborate a non-negative conception of difference; and he makes his grand entry onto the French philosophical scene with *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), a book that spoke so vehemently against the prevailing French synthesis of Hegel-Marx-Christianity-phenomenology that even Wahl, in his review in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*,[4] seemed somewhat taken aback by Deleuze's "ill humor" (*mauvaise humeur*) with Hegel.

Nietzsche and Philosophy is a tireless denunciation of the unhappy consciousness from a philosopher who believes that the very essence of Hegel's philosophy *is* the unhappy consciousness, whose characteristic *déchirement* Deleuze identifies with the Nietzschean "bad conscience" (*mauvaise conscience*), a symptom of an impotent and reactive mentality, a "sad passion."[5] This book announces the first attempt in France to break not just with Hegel, but with dialectical thought altogether. It sets out the indictment against Hegel in terms that recall Wahl's: Hegel substitutes abstractions for concrete differences; he makes terms into functions of the system of relations governing them; he renders difference in purely negative ways. In almost every respect, Deleuze and Foucault never deviate from these critical positions. Just as significantly for French philosophy, Deleuze looks to philosophers outside the mainstream (Spinoza, Hume, Bergson, the Stoics) to attack the stifling dialectical-phenomenological consensus, and create space for new thought. Deleuze's "new thought" was in many ways a revival of Wahl's prewar project of "transcendental empiricism" (*DiR* 18), but buttressed by all the resources of structuralism; its crowning moment is Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968).

Like Wahl's, *D*eleuze's empiricism starts from the assertion that there is a difference between real difference and conceptual difference (*DR* 21–23, 36, 41, 48), and locates this difference in "the being of the sensible" (*DR* 80). Yet it is important to grasp the sensible in a way that would avoid idealist reductions of it. In a Kantian view, for example, the sensible differs from the concept insofar as the concept determines the possibility of repeatable experiences that are identical in their organizational form, whereas the sensible is the unrepeatable actuality of any given experience (*DR* 79–80). Accordingly, the sensible as the reality of a specific actualization falls outside of the concept; the concept determines the equivalency among actualizations (they are all actualizations of the same concept), the sensible is the ground of their difference. On this view, the sensible would only be the indifferent occasion for the actualization of a representation

whose nature and qualities are essentially determined by the concept (*DR* 21). The particularities of the actual (here and now) sensations of a representation are merely extrinsic (*DR* 46), as other qualitatively similar sensations at other times could be synthesized into a representation that would be equivalent from the standpoint of knowledge. Beyond this Kantian challenge to empiricism lies the even greater Hegelian challenge, which does not discard sensible particularity as accidental, but instead makes it a moment in the self-articulation of the Idea, which includes within itself its empirical actuality, in the same way in which a work of art's form does not stand apart from its content, but must be grasped as the synthetic organization of just the contents it has (*DR* 36–38).

Deleuze's response to these idealist reductions is twofold. Against Kant, Deleuze argues that the empirical is not what the concept determines *would be* in a representation if it occurred— something hypothetical (*DR* 10)—but actuality itself, real existence as opposed to the possibility of existence indicated by the concept.[6] Against Hegel, the difference between performances of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*, which is a unity of form and content equivalent to the Hegelian Idea, is not included in the Idea, since with respect to content, what is performed is identical, but the actual performances differ (*DR* 79). The Hegelian Idea, to the extent that it transcends its actualizations, can no more explain the existence of any particular actualization than can the Kantian concept. Empirical actuality, then, is not to be explained through possibility, however "concretely" determined, but only through empirical causes which contain no more and no less reality than their effects, and are immanent in their effects, as Spinoza's God is entirely immanent in his attributes (see *EPS* 42, 57–59, 80–81, 173, 178, 180). Instead of being explicable through the concept, empirical actuality, "difference without concept . . . [is] expressed in the power belonging to the existent, a stubbornness of the existent in intuition" (*DR* 23). Like classical empiricists, Deleuze locates this intuition in sensory consciousness, a receptivity which grasps what comes to thought from outside (*DR* 74).

Still, the empirical as pure actuality outside of the Idea is without content from the standpoint of knowledge; this was Hegel's essential point about the emptiness of sensible particularity (*PS* 58–66). With respect to its utter indeterminacy and lack of content, being, the here and now existence of something, is identical to nothing.[7] In short, Deleuze's empiricism, like Wahl's, would commit him to a form of mysticism, a transcendence toward an ineffable Other. So it is here that Deleuze's debate with Hegel begins in earnest. Deleuze, like Wahl and Sartre, rejects the epistemological model on which Hegel's argument is based and according to which whatever does not make a difference *to knowledge* makes no difference (*DR* 7–9, 18–19). More important, the empirical is the transcendental condition of the possibility of concepts, in two senses: 1) it is the condition of the application of concepts over different cases and so of universality in general; 2) it is the real condition of experience. Contrary to Kantianism or Hegelian Idealism,

it is the empirical that explains the conceptual and the abstract conditions of all possible experience, not the reverse. As such, the empirical is both metaphysically and logically prior to any conceptual determinations.

At first glance, the empirical can be grasped as the basis of the non-conceptual difference between one representation and another, and hence as the basis of multiplicity, of an external and non-conceptual relation between instances, such that one can say there are many instantiations of one concept. Without a multiplicity, there could be no concepts, that is, no rules of synthesis that apply over different instances, or as Kant would say, over different representations. Empirical multiplicity is not the logical restriction of one concept by another, which is negative and formal ("not cats in general, but this type of cat, which differs from others in respects a, b, c . . ."), but an existential condition, "the swarming of individuals that are absolutely identical with respect to the concept and yet participate in the same existential singularity" (*DR* 22). Indeed, contrary to Hegel,[8] negative relations, such as those between particular "thises," presuppose rather than constitute multiplicity (*DR* 73–82). Multiplicity is thus a positive fact, the empirical and prior condition of the conceptual determinations of thought, something that thought can only encounter after the fact. This is the priority of the *a posteriori* characteristic of empiricism (*ES* 87–88).

This formulation of the argument still looks far too Kantian. Deleuze is not arguing that the condition of the application of concepts is the existence of a given sensory manifold; the sensory manifold is just one instance of empirical multiplicity. There are also multiplicities of discrete elements, such as sets in which a term's membership is determined on a case by case basis rather than on the basis of some antecedently specifiable rule, or in which one could repeat indefinitely the operation by which members are added to the set, as in a regressive series (every set can be a member of another set, every name can be named, but no class can be a member of itself: *LS* 29, 36–37, 60, 68–69), a multiplicity of dispersed singularities that would not be synthesized into a manifold, but would follow what Deleuze calls a nomadic rather than a sedentary distribution (*DR* 54; *LS* 60). Even so, since it is the "here and now" empirical actuality of each instance that distinguishes it from other instances (*DR* 22–23), empirical actuality is the *a priori* of any multiplicity, including, but not only, the empirically given manifold (*DR* 310, 328).

Rather than internal dialectical necessity, the logic of difference[9] governing Deleuze's multiplicities concerns the purely contingent relation between actualities: there is no necessity for a set to have *n* number of members, as this number corresponds to the quite fortuitous conjunction of circumstances producing the set's actual members (*DR* 80). Because actuality is not included within the concept, the relation between actualities is not internal and conceptual, but external and contingent (see *EPS* 32, 209–10). For Deleuze, then, "empiricism is fundamentally linked to a logic . . . of multiplicities" (*D* viii), of relations that "are

external and irreducible to their terms" (*D* 55), as in Hume, for whom "relations may vary without the ideas varying" (*D* 56–57; see *EPS* 243f; *ES* 65–66, 96–102). Deleuze regards the logic of external relations both as empiricism's greatest achievement and as the greatest impediment to Hegelianism, since it allows one to grasp terms as having come into relation through contingent events, that is, through a chance interplay of forces (*D* 122–23), a "throw of the dice" (*D* 5, 40, 67; *DR* 255; *NP* 25–29),[10] rather than through the internal necessity of the Idea. Empiricism can thus be defined in opposition to "any theory according to which, *in one way or another*, relations are derived from the nature of things" (*ES* 109). "Whether as relations of ideas or as relations of objects, relations are always external to their terms" (*ES* 66; see *ES* 98–100). In contrast to Hegel's dialectic, in which all relations are internal because the System establishes the relations among terms, for Deleuze, as for Wahl and Russell,[11] empiricism's externality of relations founds a pluralist metaphysics (*ES* 99; *DR* 81): "I am an empiricist, that is, a pluralist" (*D* vii).

Important as it is, empiricism's logic of externality is not self-subsistent; it is founded on the empirical actuality of instances that makes non-conceptual difference, and hence the purely additive and external relation of the AND, possible (*D* 9; *DR* 71). Not only multiplicity, but exteriority as such—including space understood as parts external to each other—as extension and dimension (*DR* 360)—time as a succession of mutually exclusive instants, and "number, infinitely divisible matter"—have empirical actuality as their *a priori* condition (*The Fold*, 20, 46; *DR* 72, 79–81, 286–87, 296, 310; *B* 38, 77; *ES* 90–92). Empirical actuality is the "groundless ground" of exteriority and multiplicity, their aconceptual and yet transcendental source (*DR* 296). Prior to the law and measure of *a priori* forms of intuition is "movement and change without identity or law" (*ES* 87), the ontological unmeasure (*démesure ontologique*) of the empirical, "nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy" (*DR* 55, 388; see *PPAA* 58, 67–70). Even Kant's forms of intuition, such as space and time, are empirically conditioned, rather than pure, and hence not necessary and universal, but contingent and particular. Additionally, these conditions are in each case already conditioned and differ from case to case, rather than being the same for everyone.

Yet, however much this may explain how the empirical can itself be a transcendental condition, it is not an adequate response to Hegel's critique of sense-certainty. Even if the basis of multiplicity and exteriority is the difference between empirical actualities, if this difference can be expressed as the *non-identity* of actualities, then each actuality is really *identical* to the others in that, as in Sartre's "seriality," each is *the same* insofar as each is other than the Others. Such a negative account of difference is unacceptable to Deleuze, since, unlike the Surrealists or Derrida, rather than wanting to liberate negation from the constraints of the dialectic, he wants to dispense with negative difference altogether. So Deleuze needs to give a positive account of empirical difference if it is to be irreducible to

non-being, and a key step in this endeavor is a "higher empiricism" (*B* 30; *DR* 80) in which terms are singular not as a function of negation (*NP* 189) but due to individuating causal processes, their actual genesis under real empirical conditions (*DR* 56). This part of Deleuze's theory constitutes his most innovative and important response to Hegel's critique of empiricism.

Following Bergson, Deleuze argues that, far from being prior to experience, the possible expressed in the concept is only the reflected image of the real, "a retrograde movement of the true," intelligible structures abstracted from real experience and then projected backward in time, creating the illusion of being prior to, and of conditioning, the experience (*B* 18–20). In that case "it is not the real that resembles the possible, but the possible that resembles the real, because it has been abstracted from the real after the real is made" (*B* 98). This is but an instance of Whitehead's empiricist maxim, namely, "the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained" (*D* vii; see *PPAA* 37, 92–93).[12] How, then, to explain the abstract? Not abstractly, certainly; that was Hegel's great mistake. No amount of abstraction will ever generate the concrete, not least because empirical actuality is not an intersection of concepts or a difference between concepts, but the difference between the conceptual and the empirical, difference as Being or Being as non-conceptual difference itself (*DR* 23, 52–61, 80, 94, 376–84; *B* 17–18, 77, 85; *LS* 190–97, 208–11, 300–2/162–68, 177–80, 260–62). Because the concept does not include within it or explain its own empirical actualization, what empiricism requires is "the conditions under which something new is produced" (*D* vii) the actual, empirical conditions of experience and of concepts (see *DR* 3–4, 12f).

Bergson's "higher empiricism," instead of generalizing from experience, goes beyond experience to conditions that are neither general nor abstract, but are themselves concrete and empirical, the conditions of "real experience in all its peculiarities" rather than Kant's conditions of "all possible experience in general" (*B* 27–28; see *LS* 300–2/260–62; *DR* 80, 94; *NP* 93).[13] For although Kant was right to seek the conditions of experience beyond experience, he was wrong to search for that "beyond" in supposedly transcendental conditions that merely reproduce and reflect the conditioned (*LS* 29–30, 98–106). The real conditions of experience are themselves actual, not possible; contingent, not necessary; particular rather than universal: "the conditions are never more general than the conditioned element, and . . . are therefore not 'apodictic' but problematic" (*F* 114; see *F* 116, *NP* 50). Rather than being antecedently given rules or schemata, the forces that actually produce experience are for the most part without form or law (*DR* 94), and are for the most part unconscious (*B* 37, 54, 62–63). Unlike universal concepts in relation to representations, real conditions need not resemble their effect in any way (*B* 95–97), any more than an organism need resemble its genetic material, even though the causes are "virtually" present in their effect (*DR* 240; *F*

37; *EPS* 172, 232–33; *ES* 132–33). The important consequence is that the actuality of the empirical, instead of instantiating a rule or concept given by the understanding, is empirically constituted through a chance concatenation of forces, of converging and diverging series (*D* viii; *F* 78; *The Fold* 60), or differentials of intensity and rates of change (*D* 31–33, 123; *B* 77–85; *EPS* 196–99, 205–6, 236), which together produce something new and unforeseeable (*EPS* 242; *ES* 132). This production of the new is the event of becoming-actual itself (*LS* 13–21, 23–35, 67–73/4–11, 12–22, 52–57), "a mixture of the dependent and the aleatory" (*F* 86, 117), that is, of the necessary production of an effect by its cause and the purely contingent effective presence of those causes at that particular moment (*EPS* 208–10, 212, 230, 238f, 249–50).[14] Moreover, just as actuality is the unpredictable but necessary result of its causes, different causal sequences can produce analogous effects in several independent ways.[15] For Deleuze, then, coming into existence or "becoming-actual" is not a transition from the possible (the concept) to the real (its instantiation), but the production of something new by already existing forces entering into new relations through chance encounters, encounters which are nevertheless the extrinsically determined effects of previous encounters.

Together with the logic of external relations, "higher empiricism" thus affords another way of resisting Hegel. The empirically actual is not a bare particular, a "this" like any other, but a singularity that has a determinate content in virtue of the history of its coming into being (*DR* 56). It is both simple and, because of its multiple causes, "a virtual multiplicity" with "a plurality of meanings and irreducible multiple aspects" (*B* 14; see *EPS* 64f, 81, 195f; *NP* 4–8). It is neither "a pure *Many*, a purely disjunctive diversity," nor a self-identical unity, but a many-in-one, a singularity[16] that is a function of multiple causal processes, not of the unity or simple particularity of a "this" or an "I" (see *LS* 107). Consequently, "the terms distinguished each retain their respective positivity, instead of being defined by opposition to each other" (*EPS* 60).[17] Hegel's critique of the abstractness of sense-certainty can gain no hold here.

We can now see that Deleuze's empiricism is immune to Hegel's critique of sense certainty only because it departs so widely from the naive empiricism that Hegel attacked. In Deleuze, there are no simple and unanalyzable givens, such as sense-data, for empirical singularities have determinate content in virtue of their causal geneses. Moreover, although Deleuze follows Bergson's suggestion that we grasp this actuality through "intuition," intuition is neither an immediate impression nor spontaneous recognition, but an encounter with the different and the new as such (*DR* 52–61, 376–84; *LS* 190–97, 208–11/162–68, 177–80) through an insight capable of relating singularities to their causal history or "genealogy" (*NP* 2, 6, 52f, 75, 91, 157f; *F* 114–16). In practice, intuition uses genealogy to grasp things and events neither as new instances of an old rule nor as mere exceptions, but as new and contingent interactions between terms that have

no intrinsic, conceptual connection (*F* 21f, 36f, 78f). In Wahl's words, this method links "the different to the different," such that "the new cannot be deduced from the old" (*PPA'A* 38; see *DR* 52).

Yet the very differences that distinguish Deleuze's empiricism from the "naive" sort might make his empiricism appear to be a variant of Hegel's historical dialectic. Since the singularity of actual existents is a function of their genesis, and since their empirical actuality is the basis of the multiplicity that is the *a priori* condition of concepts and of the sensory manifold, it follows that *a priori* conditions are historical and *a posteriori* (*F* 56, 59–60, 84, 114–16). Hegel likewise wants to account for concrete actuality in terms of its historical self-genesis. However, the difference between Hegel and Deleuze lies in their different conceptions of historical development. For Hegel, development is a series of negations resulting in a synthesis, and so requires that each developmental factor be intrinsically or logically related to the others. In addition, for Hegel the result of the historical process is not simply a causal outcome; it is also the goal and reason that gives the entire process a direction or meaning (*sens*).[18] Deleuze, by contrast, holds a completely non-teleological view of causal processes. A causal process involves the interaction of extrinsically related terms which produce an unforeseeable result, with no final goal that regulates the process and which would make the relation between terms internal. Instead of logical necessity, causal geneses are governed by a mixture of the necessity of efficient causation and the contingent presence of causal factors. Genealogy thus stands opposed to any conception of history that would subordinate events and processes to a teleological process, and which would annul time by substituting logical relations for temporal ones (see *PPA'A* 22, 59–62, 74, 95–96, 222). Even though an empirical singularity is constituted by the relations of various forces, these relations are subject to an external causal determinism, and thus contingent and external, rather than dialectical and internal.

In any case, for Deleuze, the dialectic is based on negation, and negation expresses only comparative difference mediated through a third term or genus common to both, and not the incomparable difference between one singularity and another (*DiR* 28; *NP* 17).[19] To this argument, Deleuze adds the Nietzschean thesis that negation and contradiction presuppose a reactive standpoint (*NP* 56, 68; *DiR* 235; *B* 46, 75–76, 103), an "ideology of ressentiment" that sees oppositions rather than differences (*NP* 87, 121, 125, 132, 157). "The negative is the image of difference, but a flattened and inverted image, like the candle in the eye of an ox" (*DiR* 51; see *DiR* 235; *NP* 196); the reactive image of the slave-type whose identity and "goodness" consists in *not-being* the resented master, making the slave's affirmation the pseudo-affirmation of "the negation of the negation." By contrast, affirmation is itself multiple and differentiated (*DiR* 55), finding qualitative differences both among the various terms, and among a single term's own constitutive differences (*DiR* 267). For example, the qualitative difference

between a superior force and a lesser force (*NP* 5, 8–9, 35), where the greater affirms the lesser through the specificity of their distance (*LS* 172–74), does not depend on any relation of "opposition;" on the contrary, opposition depends on the relative degree of actualization of each force, that is, on how far a force has accomplished what it is able to do, or has actualized a real capacity, and even then the relation appears oppositional or negative only from the standpoint of a force that regards the superior self-actualization of another as a diminution of its own powers (*NP* 22, 51, 61–62). Only a reactive force measures itself in terms of its *not-being* others, or regards other forces as a limitation of its capacities. Hegel notwithstanding, difference does not require negation.

In sum, whether or not Wahl's existential empiricism is reducible to a mystical effort of transcendence towards an ineffable Other, Deleuze's great achievement is to have rendered the richness of concrete being both rational and thinkable without reducing being to thought. Deleuzian empiricism tries to grasp empirical actuality through determinate causal processes, and so as the singular results of singular encounters between forces, or as *determinate* singularities. Because the relations which enter into the production of concrete actualities themselves may shift according to contingently-given contexts and circumstances, each singularity is capable of entering into many and various relations, and so is a singular process of "becoming," the function of which is determined by how it relates to the stable relations of forces constituting a system (whether a physical system, a language, or a social system). Nothing could be further from the truth, then, than the criticism that empiricism's main tendency, in all its forms, is "to substitute the discrete, the particular, for the concrete in the dialectical sense, to isolate the individual datum in such a way that its relationship to the totality never has to be dealt with because the latter never comes into view."[20] Rather, Deleuze's empiricism grasps particulars through a real, concrete totality, expressing the "differential mechanisms" of "irreducible causal chains" and their *a posteriori* interaction, including both social and impersonal forces, and not through the vague and facile abstraction of the dialectical unity of opposites.[21]

2. DELEUZE'S *DIFFERENCE* AND DERRIDA'S *DIFFÉRANCE*

Despite Deleuze and Derrida being yoked together under the rubric of a "philosophy of difference,"[22] and despite their admiration for each other's work (*SP* 148; *DiR* 315), fundamental differences remain between a philosophy that links difference to negation but refuses the mediation of a totalizing synthesis (Derrida), and a philosophy that tries to think of difference in positive terms, in itself (Deleuze). There is a crucial difference between Derrida's *différance* as the delay and deferral that negates presence, and Deleuze's difference as the coexistence of divergent series that produces new differences, or between Derrida's phenomenological conception of temporality, in which the future is prior to and conditions the present, and Deleuze's Bergsonian conception of duration as the actualization of the

virtual. Finally, there is a crucial difference between a theory of language as a system of differences without positive terms, and one which conceives linguistic differences without negation.

Having already considered Derrida's theory of temporality, I will turn to Deleuze's views on time. Following Bergson, Deleuze considers temporal duration (*la durée*) to be a process of differentiation internal to a thing, the "internal time" through which it actualizes its virtual capacities (*B* 95). The virtual is the essence of a thing, its internal differential relations or structure, and as such is already fully real and determinate (*DiR* 208), "real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" (*B* 96); the actual is the incarnation of structure in an individual as a result of intensive qualities or differences within the structure (*DiR* 245–48). It follows that the virtual is immanent in the actual, without separation or distance, as its real and *a priori* condition (*B* 30). Duration, then, simply is "creative actualization" (*DiR* 216; see *B* 98–103): "the virtual insofar as it is actualized . . . inseparable from the movement of its actualization" (*B* 42–43). As the passage from virtual to actual within a thing, the true genesis of the thing from out of itself,[23] duration is "an internal succession that is both heterogeneous *and* continuous" (*B* 37), a process of development (*B* 47) that is in no way negative. In contrast with the dialectical development whereby Spirit develops by negating itself and "suffers violence at its own hands" (*PS* 51), actualization does not negate the virtual, but affirms and completes it (*The Fold* 73–75), moving from a fully real virtuality to an actuality that embodies it in a determinate manner (*DiR* 208–12).

Rather than the determination of the meaning of the present by a future possible that negates it, in the passage from a virtual and *a priori* structure to an actuality, what determines the present is not a horizonal future, but the "pure past" of the virtual, a never-present past that is logically contemporaneous with the actual as its real but non-actual condition (*DiR* 62–65, 82; *B* 28, 55, 58, 71). "Difference is essentially implicated" (*DiR* 228) as the structural differences of the virtual, and these are unfolded in the process of actualization, which is literally a *development* of "a system of connections between differential elements, a system of differential relations between genetic elements" (*DiR* 181). In this determinate passage from a fully determinate virtuality to an equally determinate actuality, "time itself unfolds" (*DiR* 88). Present actualities give place to emerging ones, and pass into the past of their own accord, instead of waiting to be "negated" by a new present, since that new present could never arise if the former present remained present and did not "pass" into the past it already was (*NP* 48), virtually, and with which it co-exists (*B* 58–61).

Even this very rough sketch of Deleuze's theory of time allows us to mark some important differences between his theory and Derrida's. "Delay," for example, which we have seen figure so prominently in Derrida, is for Deleuze the simultaneity of the actual and its virtual condition; it is not, as in Derrida, a negation of the past by the future (*DiR* 124).[24] The "future" actualization of the virtual

is already "present" in the virtual "past" as a real potentiality (in much the way the perceptions of Leibniz's monads are "pregnant with the future"); every event is "delayed" in that all states of affairs and occurrences are logically subsequent to their conditions. Confusion arises, though, if we mistake this *logical* order of priority (of the virtual to the actual) with the *phenomenal* temporality of "before" and "after" that pertains to states of affairs, or grant genuine being to the succession of appearances (*B* 60–62). The "future" of a becoming is not what happens later, an "after" or "to come" (*à-venir*) that then folds back on the present and conditions it. Rather, the future is enfolded in a virtual past, and "delay" is the unfolding of that virtuality, the actualization of potential, a movement from past to present (*B* 63). In general, becoming-actual is a process that is not amenable to the past/present/future schema governing phenomenology and history,[25] because such schemas capture "the way an event is actualized in particular circumstances," or the event as *effect*, rather than *becoming* as such (*Negotiations* 171; *LS* 1–5). For Derrida, by contrast, the past is an "always already" (*dore et déjà*), a "prior" which, as the "before" of an after-effect or trace, can be thought only on the basis of the "after" it conditions as its never-present and non-originary "origin" (*OG* 66–67, 70). It is necessarily implicated in the past/present/future schema, even if this schema is not that of a succession of moments phenomenally present to consciousness. In brief, Derrida's theory of time problematizes origins and endings, making both subject to indefinite deferring/differing through a future that is always "to come," and which "delays" the arrival of the present; Deleuze insists that "it's not beginnings and ends that count, but middles" (*Negotiations*, 161), the creative development of actualities out of the midst of real virtualities. "Everything grows from the middle" (*D* 12, 23), a middle without beginning or end, origin or destination (*ATP* 293).

Deleuze's positive account of actualisation thus permits a sharp differentiation between his "becoming" and Derrida's. For Derrida, becoming is a becoming -other, becoming what one is not, even though he regards becoming-other as "Nietzschean *affirmation*, the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming" (*WD* 292), without "the metaphysical or romantic pathos of negativity" (*P* 86; see *WD* 289–92). For Deleuze, however, negation can only be a "false movement" (*B* 44; *DiR* 8–10, 182, 235; *NP* 158, 183), even in the unchained and "sovereign" form it assumes in Derrida. However free, negation lacks the precision and determinacy of positive difference.

Disagreement concerning the role of negation can also be discerned in Derrida's and Deleuze's treatments of language. Both of them want to break free of the conservative and restraining effects of language, but Deleuze's critique of language differs substantially from the deconstructive strategy of making terms pass over into their contraries, thus rendering them undecidable and unstable (*Diss* 58). For Deleuze, the oscillation of terms, where "we accentuate one of the opposites in order to find the other," still reflects the "measureless contrariety" of negative or oppositional differences, which is, however pluralized and decentered,

"inseparable from the movement of the negative and exclusion" (*LS* 172–73). Oscillation can be the passage through successive but forced choices (*D* 19, 21–22), governed by the dualistic apparatuses of power that break up becomings (*D* 33). However grounded in unavoidable dualisms of language, dyadic dualities are "far from innocent," and must be resisted through the production of new flows and becomings that disrupt the normal functioning of the apparatus (*D* 22, 34).[26] The point is not to show the undecidability of such binary opposites as "public/private," but to investigate how such dyads are produced, what forces maintain their existence, and how these might be overcome.

However, not even this clearly differentiates Deleuze from Derrida, since disrupting the normal functioning of "binary machines" strongly resembles Derrida's project of destabilizing established pairs of contraries. Some have suggested, then, that the key difference is that, whereas Deleuze connects "binary machines" to forces *outside* of language, texts and writing, Derrida notoriously declares that "*il n'y a pas de hors texte*" (*OG* 158).[27] Instead of Derrida's immanent critique, which turns the implicit negativity in language against stable identities, Deleuze seeks transverse movements that establish "flows" *from* language, linguistics, and texts to other becomings (and other apparatuses) *outside* the text.[28] Such movements would not involve binary oppositions (not even to overturn them), but productive becomings, the coming together of revolutionary forces that affirm another mode of being than that permitted by the existing apparatuses of power (*ATP* 293). It is thus argued that Deleuze's thesis that language is an expression of non-linguistic forces enables disruptive uses of language that connect up with other social, political and, ultimately, material and bodily forces, instead of being confined to the deconstruction of texts, as Derrida's supposedly is. Yet again, however, this contrast between Deleuze and Derrida is over-hasty, and based on an interpretation of deconstruction that Derrida has explicitly repudiated. For Derrida asserts, "it is because deconstruction interferes with solid structures, 'material' institutions, and not only with discourses or signifying representations, that it is always distant from an analysis or a 'critique' " (*TP* 19), and any number of Derrida's texts could be cited in support of this.

Yet despite Derrida's intention to broaden the scope of deconstruction beyond textual criticism, the key difference between Derrida and Deleuze does indeed bear on language. Structural linguistics, argues Deleuze, has at hand everything needed for a philosophy of difference: differential structures that constitute language as a system, and which are both immanent in and transcendent to the production of articulated sounds. Despite this, "linguists constantly speak in negative terms, . . . assimilate . . . differential relations to relations of opposition" (*DiR* 203–4), and make differences into "differences without positive terms" (*DiR* 205). One effect of this negative conception of difference is to stabilize difference as opposition, determining the value of each sign (signifier and signified) through a system of binary oppositions (*AO* 242), such that even when signifiers become mobile markers of difference, difference is still regulated by a minimal functional

identity. Deconstruction, even though it tries to destabilize differences and subvert identity, retains the negative characterization of difference in language (*SP* 140), which according to Deleuze comes from taking the side of the one who listens and tries to understand, rather than the side of one who actively generates speech (*DiR* 205–7; *NP* 74–75). Structuralism and deconstruction thus both run the risk of making an epiphenomenon (the negative relation of signifiers from the standpoint of the hearer who tries to grasp a meaning) into the essence of language itself. Theories of "the signifier," according to which "a sign refers to another sign, into which it passes and which carries it into still other signs," belong to a "regime of signification" meant to guarantee the interminability of interpretation, the infinite deferral of meaning (*ATP* 112–13). Questions of the undecidability of meaning arise from the standpoint of the hearer or reader who asks, "Have I understood correctly?" Thus, even while ruling out any possible answer to the question, "what does it mean?," deconstruction assumes the standpoint of the listener who has to make a judgement concerning the meaning of an utterance (see *AO* 240).[29] Indeed, conceptual *aporiae*, or the undecidability of certain concepts (whether they are immanent or transcendent, inside or outside, material or ideal, present or absent) are, at bottom, problems of identification and interpretation. For precisely this reason, Deleuze finds aporetics and problems of identification/identity to be weak and empty (*DiR* 132–40, 148–49; *What Is Philosophy*? 138–39).

In place of interpretative hermeneutics, Deleuze proposes symptomology and genealogy, the investigation of the forces that produce what Foucault calls "regimes of truth": "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general polities' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. . . . 'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it" (*TFR* 73–74). A signifier is an effect or symptom of relations of force expressed in rules implicitly governing the production and use of statements, and of an underlying force, intensity, or will that expresses this structure in a particular way (*NP* 3, 6, 85; *DiR* 222). "From the pluralist standpoint, meaning is referred to the differential element from which it is derived," differentials of force (*NP* 31). To determine the sense or meaning of a signifier through its relation to other signifiers, particularly when this relation is characterized negatively, is like interpreting a symptom through other symptoms (see *NP* 85; *DiR* 222). This is the mistake of confusing real relations between conditioning forces with abstract relations between their phenomenal effects (*NP* 74–75, 157). A signifier

may indeed be, in relation to other signifiers or to other iterations of itself, a being "that is what it is not and is not what it is;"[30] in relation to the differentials of force that produce it, however, a signifier is the non-negative actualisation of a virtual structure constituted by non-negative differences.

Structuralism's great discovery, says Deleuze, was that meaning or "sense" is "a surface effect, a position effect, and a language effect" (*LS* 70), something to be produced, not discovered (*LS* 72). Symptomology thus seeks to uncover the functioning of a system that produces sense-effects. By grouping together "signs" into a system (by isolating some from others, and then connecting them to still others), seeking their functional interconnections and their natures by "looking at their setting, the way they're emitted, their matter, their system" (*Negotiations* 132, 142), Deleuze's clinical criticism of texts investigates their functioning and possible uses, and the functioning of the apparatuses that produce them.[31] For the question is simply *how* a text produces certain effects, and to what uses this effect-machine can be put, not what the machine "means." Sense is the effect of an apparatus, a *non-sens* that, contrary to Hyppolite, is not the loss or alienation of sense, but its condition (see *LE* 13/14, 175/228).

In sum, we should be wary of an over-hasty identification of Derridean and Deleuzian difference on the basis of similarities extracted from their contexts. Derridean *différance* is infinite negativity, freed from productive ends, unconstrained by a mediating synthesis; Deleuze's difference means to be non-negative, "free from opposition and privation" (*EPS* 60). The key question is whether Deleuze's transcendental empiricism does, as he claims, give us a non-negative way of understanding singularities by reference to their genesis from relations of force, rather than relations of *not-being*. Of course, if one were determined, one could express relations of force through negative relations of opposition and negation, but for Deleuze that raises the question of why one would want to do so. The insistence on negation would be a symptom of a reactive will that affirms itself by negating. That seems an *ad hominem* criticism, and it is. It's just that Deleuze, following Nietzsche, argues that the question of *who* wills is as crucial as the question of *what* is willed: genealogy cannot dispense with an evaluation of the *quality* of the will that is expressed.

The whole effort of Deleuze's philosophy is thus to theoretically ground the possibility of construing difference in a non-negative way. That would appear to involve a negation of negative difference and to set up an opposition between affirmative and negative difference. Deleuze, however, argues that the relation between affirmation and negation is asymmetrical and qualitative rather than oppositional: an affirmative will affirms its difference simply by affirming itself, and does not, unlike a negative will, affirm itself through the negation of another. This is perhaps why, with the exception of Hegel, Deleuze finds something to admire and affirm in so many of the philosophers he discusses: Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche, and Spinoza, certainly, but also Kant, Leibniz, Kierkegaard, and

Sartre. But even the most generous affirmation of difference cannot do without the critical diagnosis of crucial distinctions. Otherwise, affirmation becomes the braying of Zarathustra's ass, an idiotic "yea-ah, yea-ah" that in its refusal to draw any distinctions is, in fact, the most negative will of all. For Deleuze to affirm Hegel, and Hegel's conflation of affirmation with the negation of the negation, would amount to negating his theory of affirmative difference, and the astonishing synthesis on which it rests. Indeed, the positive elaboration of this synthesis is what rescues Deleuze's philosophy from being merely *anti*-Hegelian, merely an "other" that Hegelianism could all too easily recuperate through the dialectic that makes even negative and oppositional relations internal to the System.[32] It is through this positive alternative, then, and not his sometimes tiresome critique, that Deleuze escapes *anti*-Hegelianism.[33]

3. FOUCAULT AND HISTORICAL EMPIRICISM

As a genealogist of forces, Foucault is the philosopher with the most affinity to Deleuze, including Deleuze's critique of Hegel. I would like to consider Foucault's work in relation to transcendental empiricism. This will render my account of Foucault both limited and brief. My aim is simply to consider Foucault as an historical empiricist: as both an empiricist historian, and one whose empiricism is "historical." First, though, there must be some consideration of Foucault's "first confrontations with Hegel" in *Histoire de la folie*, and in the anti-teleological "archeology" of *The Order of Things*. For Foucault did not arrive at "genealogy" right away, and we will better understand it if we consider what led up to it.

Pan-Tragicism and Teleology: H*istoir*e de l*a folie*

In the last chapter, we saw how Derrida detected "a Hegelian dimension" in *Histoire de la folie*, and in particular in its emphasis on an experience "not yet divided" of division itself, which then divides itself into the opposition of reason and madness. The Hegelian and dialectical schema here is all too apparent. In the beginning, so to speak, madness is a division within the self, an experience of negativity that has its own tragic wisdom, revealing the uncanniness of existence and the strangeness of the familiar (*MC* 28). In the classical age, however, madness becomes unreason, reason's Other: in Descartes and others, reason has a monopoly on truth, and madness is merely a species of error. A concrete, historical dialectic of social practices separates madness from other forms of unreason (passion, delinquency, crime), both through the physical separation of the insane from criminals and other "unreasonable" types, and through the elaboration of new forms of diagnosis and classification that distinguish madness from other mental and moral disorders. In that way, madness becomes a more differentiated and determinate form of unreason, and consequently the "truth" of unreason, its

most essential manifestation (*MC* 83–84). It then becomes "free for a perception which individualized it, free for the recognition of its unique features and for all the operations that would finally give it its status as an object" (*MC* 234). In short, madness is worked upon, practically and theoretically, until its "subjectivity" is rendered determinate and objective, and thus assumes a rational and knowable form that makes it the object of practical interventions (classification, diagnosis, etiology, treatment). This whole operation of differentiation and objectification, and the passage from subjective inwardness to objective knowledge, replicates the dialectical progression of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and makes liberal use of the Hegelian categories of mediation (*MC* 231, 245, 251), recognition, and alienation.

The Hegelian dimension of Foucault's text is most evident, however, in his use of Hegel's dialectic of master, slave, and work. Not only is the mad person's subjectivity worked over (theoretically and practically) by doctors, lawyers, and institutions; Foucault describes a process through which the mad person works on herself, producing her madness in objective form and internalizing her "objectification" in the eyes of her keepers. This occurs in the eighteenth-century "reforms" of Tuke: the mad person is told "that he would not be subject to any constraint so long as he did nothing against the rules of the house or the general principles of human morality" (*TFR* 145). In short, the mad person must assume responsibility for her actions, and control them in conformity with a moral law that emanates from her masters (doctors, wardens). This of course amounts to *recognizing* the sovereignty of the master and the truth of the master's view of the mad person. Just as Hegel's slave is driven to work by anxiety before death, the mad person works on herself and judges herself "in stifling anxiety before the moral law" of the master. Through the mediation of the master's reason, then, "the madman was returned to himself as a free and responsible subject" (*MC* 247), but free only to be guilty of the unreasonableness of her actions (*MC* 244–48). The internalized law thus subjugates the mad person in the depths of her soul, making her "a prisoner of nothing but herself, . . . chained . . . to transgression and shame" (*MC* 261): "The absence of constraint in the nineteenth-century asylum is not unreason liberated, but madness long since mastered" (*MC* 252). At the same time, madness becomes self-conscious: observing herself through the eyes of the doctor, the mad person recognizes herself as "objectively mad" (*MC* 264). As self-responsible, moreover, she becomes responsible for this madness as her "truth" (*MC* 265), although this "truth" comes to her from the doctor, who is thus the "truth of her truth" (*MC* 270–78). In having this "truth" returned to her, then, the mad person completely alienates her truth in an Other.

The whole framework here derives from Hegel, with the mad person taking the role of the slave, the doctor that of the master, and work being performed, not on a material object, but on the mad person's subjectivity. More like Sartre (or Hyppolite) than Hegel, though,[34] Foucault makes self-objectification an alienation

of subjectivity, particularly when, as in the case of the mad, the slave must work according to an Other's reasons. But Foucault's pessimism concerning work applies in general. It's well known that Foucault defines madness as the absence of work [*l'oeuvre*], "the absolute break with the work of art" (*MC* 287). The reason is that Foucault, like Bataille, sees in work a submission of freedom "to laws that are those both of morality and reality, . . . a submission to order" (*MC* 248), and a penance for the Fall, "the effect of a curse" (*MC* 55) that expelled man from Paradise and forced him to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Work undertaken by the mad, in particular, is forced labor (*MC* 57), the harnessing of an "excessive" freedom to the yoke of reason. As does Bataille, Foucault sees in madness a *désoeuvrement*, the undoing of reason and work's reality principle. Madness returned to itself would be madness free from work, and free from the recognition that attaches to works: it would be non-objectified, sovereign subjectivity.

This Paradise Lost forms the horizon of Foucault's study, and gives it a teleological dimension despite his express disavowals of terminal truths (*MC* ix). Madness as the experience of the tragic (*MC* 31–32, 288–89), or a "breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself" (*MC* 288), "the absolute laceration" (*MC* 32), "beyond the promises of the dialectic" (*MC* 285), which opens onto "the familiar foreignness of the world" (*MC* 28) and "the nothingness of existence" (*MC* 16): this is the original truth of madness, now and then glimpsed in the works of Artaud, Nietzsche, and Van Gogh, a truth that passes judgment on the truth of the world and on reason itself. In that sense, Derrida is right: reason here is denounced in the name of a greater reason, one that could do justice to the truth of madness and establish the true relation between the truth of madness and that of classical reason. It's this wider truth which *Histoire de la folie* tries to render.

Archeology and Objective Spirit

One can only speculate about whether Foucault abandoned the quasi-existentialist pantragicism of *Histoire de la folie* as a result of Derrida's critique. In any case, Foucault's aversion to terminal truths and teleological history is much more sharply and consistently expressed in *The Order of Things*. Indeed, despite Foucault's disavowals of such readings, *The Order of Things* was widely understood to dispense not only with teleology, but with diachrony altogether. No more would history be read as a continuous process—either as progress toward an ideal, or as the varied effects of uniform, quasi-natural processes. Instead, each epoch was to be interpreted in terms of its own logic, with the logic of one epoch so incommensurable with that of its predecessor or successor that the transition from one to another was on the order of a "paradigm shift," an abrupt transition at a critical point, rather than any sort of "development" (*OT* 50). Within each epoch, on the other hand, a system of relations between the various sectors of science is discernible, and constitutes the conceptual infrastructure of the various

discursive practices that constituted knowledge for a particular society at that time, including the rules determining which sort of practices counted as "knowledge." In sum, the knowledge of any given era was to be explained by a logic that was entirely immanent to that era, but which could be unearthed and brought to light through careful comparative analysis. Such was Foucault's "archeological" method.

It's easy to see why so many regarded such an approach as structuralist, despite Foucault's subsequent repudiations of the label.[35] His notorious gibe at "certain half-witted [French] 'commentators' " who "have been unable to get it into their tiny minds that I have used none of the methods, concepts or key terms that characterize structural analysis" (*OT* xiv) is not without a certain element of bad faith. As commentators point out, Foucault's study "exhibits systems of rules, and their transformations, which make different kinds of statements possible," rules not consciously formulated by the participants in the discursive practices.[36] Although Foucault specifies that he is concerned with the rules that give a discourse "value and practical application as scientific discourse" (economic, naturalist, grammatical), rather than the "formal structures" that make speech in general possible (*OT* xiv), the hypothesis of unconscious rules of formation that make scientific discourse possible, "a *positive unconscious* of knowledge" (*OT* xi), is at the very least strikingly analogous to the relation of *langue* to *parole*, of the rules enacted in the speech of all (but of which only the linguist is aware) to actual utterances. The relations among disciplines and an epoch's distinctive manner of establishing "an order among things" (*OT* xix), between its rules of formation and the content of its scientific discourse is, like linguistic "structures," one of making possible certain types of utterances without necessitating or causing them (*AK* 38, 73, 121).

Where Foucault differs from at least some forms of structuralism is his historicism: the rules governing discursive practices and forms of knowledge are not timeless and universal, but specific and conditioned, varying from one period to another. They are not, then, transcendental conditions in a Kantian sense. Yet they remain "conditions of possibility" of what counts as knowledge *in a given period*, albeit immanent to and relativized by the period in which they function. In that sense, they take on a quasi-transcendental function that renders their status ambiguous. For are these conditions themselves discursive practices "that constitute the 'conditions of existence' for other discursive practices"?[37] In that case, there would be a reciprocal conditioning among the various discourses, with perhaps some "primary" discourses having a greater determining role, but in any case with the conditioned and conditioning discourses existing on roughly the same plane. Or are the conditions of possibility to be found outside all the "scientific" discourses of the day, whether in the system of relations between them, or in some underlying logic they all share? In that case, the conditions are less immanent than transcendental, more conditioning than conditioned.

However attractive the first alternative, it's the latter that best captures what *The Order of Things* actually says: for each period, Foucault is concerned with

discerning "the fundamental configuration of knowledge" (*OT* 33) underlying all the particular "discursive practices" of an epoch. Rather than being one discursive practice among many, then, this configuration is common to all, without belonging to any single one (*OT* xi–xii); however immanent it is in the totality of the discursive practices, this logic enjoys a different status than the discourses themselves. So it is tied to the empirical and yet transcends it, very much like those "empirico-transcendental doublets" of Critical philosophy, in which "what is given in experience and what renders experience possible correspond to one another in an endless oscillation" (*OT* 336).

Whether this make Foucault a Neo-Kantian[38] or idealist[39] depends on the status and role of Foucault's historicized conditions of possibility. To take but one example, Foucault argues that Cuvier's biological classifications formed "the condition of the historical possibility of Darwin's work," even though Cuvier's was "a biology without evolution" (*OT* 294).[40] Yet Cuvier's work did not necessitate Darwin's; it did not cause or produce it. Moreover, it was not Cuvier's work alone that made Darwin possible, but the place of Cuvier's classification system within the wider "anatomical" approach common to linguistics (philology) and biology, both of which belong to "the same archeological event" (*OT* 294). So, it is not a question of an earlier empirical discursive practice (Cuvier's) determining a later one (Darwin), but rather of the logic governing a set of discourses—an *episteme*—determining what was possible for a later *episteme*. To the extent that the logic or "fundamental configuration" of discourses is not itself part of the empirical sciences in question, and exists not for the practitioners of those sciences, but for the "archeologist" who discovers as it were the "truth" or "essence" of these sciences in relation to their epoch, it appears to be something ideal, a form of "objective spirit"—the "substance" in which the learned discourses of a period and their practitioners live and breathe, but which only the philosophical historian can *know*. If this is not something like "the spirit of an age" or a *Weltanschauung* (*OT* x), this is presumably because the latter are global characterizations of an age, involving the conscious awareness of the participants, whereas Foucault insists on the unconscious and "regional" nature of a period's rules of formation.

Yet the truly idealist element in Foucault's search for overarching ordering principles is that these principles not only govern the relations among the discourses of a period; they are indispensable or necessary elements in the transition from one period to the next. For it is only *within* the context of an overall "logic" that a particular discourse, such as Cuvier's, can be the *historically necessary condition* of a later one. The key difference between Foucault's history and Hegel's in this respect is that Foucault's does not involve any dialectical necessity in the transition from one *episteme* to another; historical conditions only make possible a certain range of effects, but they do not necessitate any of them (*AK* 191; *OT* xi–xiv). For Foucault, like Deleuze, every effect shares in the contingency of its cause; nothing is *existentially necessary*. At the same time, though,

there is a *logical necessity* in history: there are necessary conditions for the emergence of phenomena, and necessary relations among the learned or scientific discourses of a given period.

We seem then to be in the presence of a strange and remarkable entity: an idealist history that is not a history of consciousness, and which is neither dialectical nor teleological. It is not that any attempt to "organize [facts] into intelligible configurations" or totalities must count as idealist;[41] if that were so, we would be left with the sterile alternative of either idealist totalities or heaps of unorganized, empirical facts. Rather, idealism here consists in the relative independence of the configurations from the facts they organize, and the determining function of these configurations, which together make them quasi-transcendentals, rather than merely heuristic. It is not, as so many thought, that Foucault's method could not make allowances for the shift from one *episteme* to another; such transitions, he wrote, "probably [begin] with an erosion from outside" (*OT* 50). The problem was how this "outside" could achieve any historical efficacy if its action was fully mediated and conditioned by the overall "configuration" it entered into. The problem can be stated as a dilemma: *either* outside factors alter a configuration by entering into it (for example, by being taken into account by the scientific discourses of the period), in which case they become subject to the logic of that configuration, and are absorbed by it, rather than altering it; *or* these outside factors are not absorbed by an *episteme*, in which case they do not affect or alter it. In short, it would appear that the logic of the configuration—the Idea itself—determines the effects of any factor, whether outside or inside. Alternatively, if the logic of relations among discourses is merely descriptive and heuristic, or "nominal" rather than "real," then the *episteme* becomes merely an interesting comparative description of various disciplines, and loses much in the way of explanatory power. Indeed, it was the ambiguous status of historical conditions of possibility, and the difficulty of accounting for historical change, that led Foucault to the next phase of his philosophy of history: the search for the actual conditions of existence of historical phenomena. Rather than an archeology of *epistemes*, Foucault would attempt a genealogy of practices; rather than searching for quasi-transcendental conditions of possibility, Foucault would turn to the real conditions of actuality. The result would be a history in which the causes were fully immanent in their effects, in which cause and effect would exist on the same ontological plane, and in which both would develop in time and history, diachronically, from one period to another, rather than in the synchronic logic governing the relations among one era's discursive practices.

Genealogy and Empiricism

It is well known that Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" essay eschews Hegelian history in favor of a genealogy that analyzes the configurations of power that result from the haphazard play of forces (*TFR* 76–100), the interaction of

chance encounters and causal necessity: "the iron hand of necessity shaking the dice-box of chance" (*TFR* 89). Instead of being the progressive realization of Spirit, history is merely the repetition of "a scene where forces are risked in the chance of confrontations" (*TFR* 93), forces ruled not by "destiny or regulative mechanisms," but by "haphazard conflicts" (*TFR* 88), moving not towards freedom but "from domination to domination" (*TFR* 85). In his historical studies (*The Birth of the Clinic*,[42] *Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality*), Foucault offers a practical demonstration of how historical forces not only have no center, but cannot be grasped as part of a totality that could relate them to each other as negations, or thesis and anti-thesis. "There is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root or power relations" (*HS* 94) that could point to a resolution or synthesis, for forces differ and interact in a multitude of ways, only rarely achieving the complementarity of opposition.[43] Each force is determined through the effects of resistance or reaction it induces in other forces and other forces induce in it (*HS* 95). This chain of actions and reactions is forged entirely through efficient causality, without any implicit teleology.

In Foucault's "effective history," the causes of historical effects are not transcendental, but are themselves effects that vary in accordance with their causes, the causes in every case being immanent and specific rather than transcendent and universal (*HS* 98). In contrast to archeology's search for fundamental configurations, the later Foucault declares that "nothing is fundamental. . . . There are only reciprocal relations."[44] To take but one example, the rise of disciplinary power in schools, factories, and prisons "cannot be separated" from "the technological mutations of the apparatus of production [and] the division of labour. . . . Each makes the other possible and necessary; each provides a model for the other" (*DP* 221). Where each term "makes the other possible *and necessary*," no term is a transcendental condition of possibility, and all terms are empirical conditions of existence, or empirically determining and determined conditions.

It has often been wrongly argued that "power" does constitute a fundamental term in Foucault's explanations. Yet for Foucault, power is not a single and uniform entity; there are only "power relations as they existed" during a given period,[45] power that is "exercised rather than possessed," in variable relations that "define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of the power relations" (*DP* 26–27). Far from being "a transhistorical condition,"[46] power changes through the course of historical becoming, determined by a "moving substrate of force relations" that engender "states of power" that are "always local and unstable" (*HS* 93): "Power should be studied not on the basis of the primary *terms* of the power-relation, but on the basis of that relation itself, insofar as it determines the elements on which it bears. . . . Rather than seek the one and only form, the central point from which all forms of power would derive, as consequences or as developments of it, we must first give these forms their full

weight, in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, their reversibility. We must study them, then, as intersecting relations of force, which cross-refer to each other, converge, or on the contrary oppose each other and cancel each other out."[47] In short, like any other empirical cause, power is as much produced as it is productive: "Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal conditions of these differentiations" (*HS* 94). For that reason, power "circulates"[48] and is "produced from one moment to the next" (*HS* 93) in the relations of reciprocal determination among multiple variable forces, which either reinforce each other in "a chain or system," or enter into relations of opposition that isolate some forces from others (*HS* 92–93, 102). Consequently, knowledge of power is always problematic and conjectural, rather than apodictic, since it is in no way independent of the practices that express it. The genealogy of power relations is thus very far from the search for unvarying structures underlying the relations of force in a particular society (*HS* 93). Unlike a quasi-transcendental *episteme*, power does not enjoy even a relative independence from the phenomena that express it.

Historical empiricism, then, is an investigation of conditions of actuality, not conditions of possibility; it is always a matter of determining the conditions of the existence of some phenomenon (a discursive practice, a discipline, a science) on the basis of historically contingent, actual, and empirical conditions. Foucault's final method is, in other words, empiricist in the Deleuzian sense. Instead of a "global history," Foucault proposes a "general history" that would "describe the peculiarity of practices, the play of their relations, the form of their dependencies,"[49] taking each of these configurations in their specificity according to a method that Foucault, like Deleuze, labels "pluralist."[50] Indeed, because it focuses on specific causes, rather than transcendent and universal ones, Foucault's approach requires that the actual form the method takes will vary with the field of inquiry, both in terms of questions of scale and those features selected as most relevant.[51]

Not that Foucault has no method. If empiricism appears a-methodical, this is because of the contrast with *aprioristic* methods that apply ready-to-hand concepts, categories, and schemata to phenomena. The only rule empiricism brings with it is the search for the real conditions of actual phenomena, conditions which are always "to be determined," in accordance with heuristic and regulative ideas such as adequacy, consistency and completeness. As Paul Rabinow summarizes, "Strictly speaking, the genealogical approach . . . presents a series of discrete elements that, while following their own periodicity and their own dynamics, assemble at the same conjuncture. These processes are complex and contingent, that is why Foucault's descriptions are laden with historical details and necessarily localized."[52]

The motivation for Foucault's empiricism, however, is not knowledge for its own sake; its aim is also a critique in the Kantian sense, "a history of the present" (*DP* 31) that would not judge the past's insufficiencies in terms of the present's truth, but would rather bring into question the ideas and practices of the present by tracing them to historical contingencies, errors, accidents, and "petty causes" (*TFR* 80). This type of empiricism, says Foucault, would "transform the field of social institutions into a vast experimental field, in such a way as to decide which taps need turning, which bolts need to be loosened here or there, to get the desired change."[53] For this tinkering to work, we would have to know how the machine works, and how it produces certain effects. It is here that history becomes important: "recourse to history . . . is meaningful to the extent that history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been, i.e., that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history. . . . since these things have been made, they can be unmade, *as long as we know how it was that they were made*."[54] Genealogy is "an historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (*TFR* 46). Only through rigorous and empirically exact investigations of the processes that have made us can we effectively pursue "liberating alternatives to what seem to be inevitable conceptions and practices."[55]

Of course, this presents a major challenge to Foucault's theory. If the aim of genealogical empiricism is to free us from our current practices, including our practices of knowledge and self-knowing, how is this possible if the very methods of knowing utilized by this critique are part of what is being criticized? The genealogist cannot stand outside his way of knowing.[56] How can critical reason, which aims to free us from dogmatism, free itself from itself?[57] He writes: "We have to give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that could give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits. . . . The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived of 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 possibilities of going beyond them" (*TFR* 47, 50). Although genealogical reason could give an account of its own emergence, and so make use of itself to examine "both itself and everything else" (*CS* 47), this account would at the same time point to the historical contingencies of its emergence and the consequent limitations and fallibility of its approaches. It would not be a transcendental self-justification, but a limitless self-questioning that puts its own methods in question in its problematization of existing institutions, practices and self-conceptions. Critique need not be undertaken from the standpoint of apodictic or universal norms; taken to the

limit, it shows how norms result from a form of error, the necessary limitations on thought and action without which a certain society would not survive.[58]

Even this insight, moreover, is rooted in a historically produced conception of the relation of the true and the false, and a genealogy of genealogy that runs from Genesis to Filmer, to Darwin and biology, to Nietzsche, to Deleuze and Foucault. It is an insight that thus proclaims its own provisional nature, and points to its own correction or surpassing,[59] but without in any way being able to predict the form this correction will take (*TFR* 93). Critique in this sense is a continuation of Nietzsche's radicalization of Kant's analysis and reflection on limits (*TFR* 43, 45),[60] revealing the contingency of the particular limits of our current knowledge, rather than the necessary limits of knowledge in general. Nietzschean critique, questioning itself as the product of a historically determinate Enlightenment (*TFR* 43), can never fully grasp the forces that stand behind it; it is always in certain measure opaque to itself. But that does not prevent us from investigating the qualities of the "will to truth" it manifests (see *NP* 88–99), or the "place occupied by whatever is singular, contingent and the product of arbitrary constraints" in "what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory" (*TFR* 45). It not only allows us, but enjoins us to engage with the historical singularity of our situation.[61]

Engagement cannot be detached.[62] What is perceived as a problem, a danger, or a limit to be overcome will always depend on a particular perspective that expresses a particular configuration of forces. What is an impediment for one can be a means for another; a necessary and fruitful limit for one can diminish another. Foucault never abandons this aspect of Nietzsche's perspectivism. Not only is there unlikely to be a consensus on solutions, there might not be any agreement on what's at stake, on how the problems are to be identified, or the terms of the investigation: all these will vary with the interests, social position and abilities of those involved. But such perspectivism is not equivalent to nihilism: for each group, certain approaches will be, given their concerns, more effective than others. The ultimate test of a theory, then, is what it enables certain people to do within their particular historical situation: "a theory is like a box of tools."[63] No effective tool consists in arbitrary interpretations endlessly negating one another;[64] even from *within* the specific perspective of specific groups or individuals, any interpretation that will enable them to change themselves or their conditions would have to somehow reveal how the forces producing them operate, and how those forces have been produced. So although Foucault's method does indeed show that the same body of facts can be subject to varying interpretations, and reveals the conditioned and contingent character of the currently predominant historical effects, this is not equivalent to showing that all interpretations are equally valid, or that facts are fictions,[65] or indeed that Foucault's works are fictions,[66] notwithstanding some of his occasional remarks.[67]

Foucault's "deeper coordinations and correlations" of facts (*NP* 132) are valuable only insofar as they cast new light on our history.[68] While historians

argue vigorously concerning the accuracy of Foucault's factual claims and the adequacy of his interpretations, few seriously question his overall approach of seeking the conditions for the production of discourses and institutions.[69] Whether or not Foucault succeeds, his *aim* is to elucidate facts by treating them in a comparatist and differential manner.[70] Historical empiricism is not amassing isolated facts, but the search for singular events understood through the specificity of their conditions. So for Foucault, the questions he asks are: *how* does madness become a form of "unreason" in the classical age? *How* is disciplinary power produced in Western Europe in the eighteenth century? *How* are a new series of discourses, which produce "sexuality" as an object of knowledge and control, produced in the nineteenth century?[71] However questionable his answers, Foucault's questions, and the method implicit in them, constitute his greatest accomplishment.

4. BEYOND THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS

If Derrida can be seen as the last great expositor of Wahl's theme of *déchirement*, this theme is left behind in Deleuze and Foucault: in Deleuze's case, this is in part thanks to Wahl's transcendental empiricism; in Foucault, it is in part because of the historical sense bequeathed to him by his teacher, Jean Hyppolite, from whom Foucault gleaned not a theory of history as teleological development, but a sense of the finitude and limits of philosophy due to its historical situatedness.[72] In both cases, the Hegelianism they reject is the pan-tragicism of Wahl's *Malheur de la conscience*, according to which the internal divisions of the unhappy consciousness are the "pivot" of the entire dialectic, and although Foucault begins by accepting the unhappy consciousness' *déchirement*, but without teleology or reconciliation, he ends up, like Deleuze, seeking a post-Hegelian empiricism that retains historicity without either the teleology or negativity of Hegel's dialectic. Whereas Derrida remains faithful, at bottom, to Hegel's account of history as the narrative of reason's self-divisions and self-negations, Foucault and Deleuze inaugurate a new conception of historical reason, concerned with establishing the singularity of events, and the limitations and possibilities for historically determined perspectives. Rejecting Hegel's philosophy was only a first step toward a new conception of reason; rather than being merely the negation of Hegel's dialectical negation, genealogical empiricism is an invention, an unforeseeable and genuinely creative solution, not the predictable result of dialectical necessity.

Although Deleuze lays much of the theoretical groundwork for a "philosophy of difference," it is Foucault who carries this through, both in his empirical-historical studies of madness, prisons, and sexuality, and in his political actions (though this is open to more debate). Without being carried out in action, Deleuze's theoretical overcoming of Hegel might have been an empty gesture; at

worst, it would have merely reaffirmed Hegel's dominance of French philosophy, in as much as anti-Hegelianism is still defined in relation to Hegel. But with the work of Deleuze and Foucault behind them, philosophers, historians, and critics have been able to move on to new tasks, whether in the form of Foucauldian "New Historicist" studies and "discourse analyses," or "micropolitical" interventions that do not appeal to some totalizing ideology. It would be beyond the scope of this book to map out this new territory. But it would not be at all out of place to nominate Deleuze and Foucault as the discoverers of this New Found Land.

Conclusion

The Career of the Unhappy Consciousness in France

French reception of Hegel was always based on the needs of French philosophy and culture, and this accounts for both the resistance to Hegel and to the outbursts of enthusiasm for some aspects of Hegel's work. So it is that in the aftermath of the First World War, Hegel the "pan-Germanist" was rejected, but during the same period, Hegel's fluid and dynamic dialectic was welcomed by French epistemologists and philosophers of science looking for a way out of the impasses of rationalism and empiricism, both of which were felt to be too rigid and abstract to account for developments in modern science. At this time, Hegel's philosophy was looked to for a method capable of analysing the actual becoming of concrete wholes, such as organisms and societies. Hegel's method, then, was seen as a philosophy of "becoming" that describes the real development of being, and not merely the static, logical relations of concepts; scholarly publications of the period link Hegel with Bergson and Nietzsche, and Hegel's philosophy of history is put to one side.

As French philosophy moved away from epistemology and towards social and psychological concerns, Hegel's philosophy of Spirit and his historical dialectic enjoyed a revival, and his political reputation underwent a rehabilitation. For Basch and Groethuysen, Hegel is a philosopher of freedom, not a Prussian autocrat; for Surrealists and Marxists, Hegel's negative dialectics are not only the key to unlocking the class struggles of society and the psychic divisions of the mind, but point the way to a final reconciliation of individuals with each other, with society, and with themselves: "total" and "integral" man, living in a society that is the work of each and all (*l'oeuvre générale*), will be the final outcome of the dialectic. In the 1920s and 30s, French Hegel interpretation took the "anthropological turn" that would dominate French thought until the 1960s, and Hegel was looked to for a philosophy of history, of action, and of consciousness. This

wave of Hegel interpretation crested with Kojève and Merleau-Ponty in the 1940s; it was a historicist philosophy of existence that saw the end goal of the dialectic as a harmonious and organic totality that would transcend and reconcile all oppositions. In the wake of structuralism, this wave was reduced to a trickle, petering out after Lévi-Strauss' criticisms of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The Hegel to which *D*errida and others are "post" is the totalizing philosophy of history of Lefebvre, Kojève, and Sartre, and of the "Western Marxism" that Merleau-Ponty repented of and denounced in 1955 in *Adventures of the Dialectic*.[1]

Obviously, the French intellectual and cultural context also explains the emergence of Hegel's "unhappy consciousness" as an important theme in French philosophy. The impact of Wahl's *Malheur de la conscience* is due to the fact that it spoke to French concerns of the time, the same concerns that accounted for the warm reception given to Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's existentialism in the 1930s. No wonder that from 1929 to 1960, Hegel was linked with Husserl and Heidegger. The French sought in all of them a way towards the "philosophy of the concrete" that was the concern of Wahl and Gabriel Marcel, and which would deal with the existential problems of the individual: problems of decision, choice, and meaning, the real dilemmas of life itself. For these interpreters, Hegel the metaphysician of "becoming," and even Hegel the philosopher of history, were of secondary importance to the "existentialist" Hegel who diagnosed the divisions and suffering of the human spirit, the Hegel of the "youthful writings" and the *Phenomenology*, rather than of the *Science of Logic*. The reason for subsequently rejecting Hegel was that some, such as Wahl and Sartre, felt that Hegel did not go far enough in this direction, and was too ready to forget individual existence for the sake of the dialectical development of the "World-Spirit." In short, the problem with Hegel was that he was not Kierkegaard! Despite this rejection of Hegel, the existentialist current in French thought ensured that the unhappy consciousness remained prominent, along with the themes of "pan-tragicism" and *déchirement*: Wahl, Sartre, Hyppolite, Bataille, and Derrida are representative in this respect, as is Foucault's *Histoire de la folie*. Rather than fading away in the 1960s, this tendency became even more powerful in some areas of French thought thanks to the revival of Kierkegaardian themes in the work of Levinas and the emphasis on doubling/duplicity, undecidability/decision in Derrida, not to mention the posthumous elevation of Bataille's meditations on a *déchirement* that extends beyond the individual and attains literally cosmic proportions. Beyond totalization and *Aufhebung*, the unhappy consciousness and Hegel persist even today. In that sense, the Kierkegaardian-existential resistance to Hegel is, indeed, the sort of anti-Hegelianism that leads not away from Hegel, but to a "Hegelianism without reserve," *déchirement* without resolution, unbridled and sovereign negativity, and so is, in Foucault's words, one of Hegel's "ruses directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us" (*AK* 235). To

cite Derrida, "what remains for us, today, of Hegel" (*Glas* 1), especially in Derrida's own work, is precisely the Hegelian unhappy consciousness.

Earlier I cited Sartre's remark that human reality is an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of surpassing its unhappy state. I do not mean to endorse or deny this view; I have merely tried to suggest the extent to which it is true for modern French philosophy, which can be seen, in part, as the history of various manifestations of the unhappy consciousness. Even when French thought takes its leave of Hegel, as I argue it does with Deleuze and with the later Foucault, it does so not merely by dispensing with totality and *Aufhebung*, but by rejecting negation and dialectics altogether. Unlike Wahl, Sartre, or Derrida, Deleuze and Foucault do not seek to substitute an oscillation between terms for the closure of synthesis, but rather try to move beyond the unhappy consciousness, beyond its reversals and negations. Rather than trying to extend and deepen negation by liberating it from the constraints of totality and some final, reconciliatory synthesis, their philosophies attempt to elaborate non-negative and productive differences. They no longer want even a *déchirement* that refuses to be healed and made whole, whether that *déchirement* is found in consciousness, in Being, or in the signifier; in order to move away from Hegel, it is necessary to move away from Kierkegaard as well.

The end of the career of the unhappy consciousness as an important theme in French philosophy is, like its beginning, a function of the needs and objectives of French thought, from the 1960s and afterward. Although Deleuze and Foucault did not so much discover a way out of Hegelianism as invent one, it remains the case that they used materials that lay ready to hand, but which had been neglected: Wahl's transcendental empiricism; Canguilhem's philosophy of science and epistemology, with its emphases on "objective" forms of thought rather than subjective experience; and Nietzsche's genealogy. Given the availability of the materials, the fact that no one before Deleuze and Foucault had exploited them can be accounted for in one of two ways: philosophers prior to Deleuze and Foucault lacked the creative insight that enabled these two thinkers to synthesize divergent tendencies into a coherent philosophy of difference; or the time was not yet ready for such a philosophy. The inventiveness of Deleuze and Foucault notwithstanding, the latter alternative surely contains more truth. Just as Hegel's unhappy consciousness came into vogue because of its timeliness, it passed out of vogue because it had become untimely, no longer answered the needs of French philosophy, and it had in the meantime been played out in so many different ways that its possibilities had been mostly exhausted. At that point, Nietzsche's philosophy of "untimeliness" became more timely than Hegel's phenomenology.

In an irony that Hegel would have appreciated, the philosophies of the unhappy consciousness, which champion irreconcilable differences, can, in retrospect, be reduced to a single figure, that of the unhappy consciousness such as Hegel described it, with its internal divisions and antinomian reversals. Despite

the many guises it assumes in Wahl, Fondane, Bataille, Sartre, and Derrida, there is a fundamental sameness underlying the differences, an "identity" of non-identity. To that extent, Hegel's dialectic triumphs, even if its final, mediating, and meaning-giving synthesis is suppressed. When French philosophy moves beyond Hegel, it moves beyond the unhappy consciousness, including its "unsurpassable" Kierkegaardian form. It does so not so much because of the limitations of this form, but because it is a form of life grown old, the outlines of which emerge clearly only in retrospect, when philosophy paints its grey on grey. But as for the incomparable taste of the age in which the unhappy consciousness lived and flourished in French philosophy, that will remain, as Sartre says, a lived truth that the future is powerless to recover or reduce.

Notes

Notes to Introduction

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *La phénoménologie de l'esprit*, trans. Jean Hyppolite (Paris: Aubier, 1939–1941); hereafter cited as *PE*; *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); hereafter cited as *PS*.
2. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, ed. Raymond Queneau (Paris: Gallimard 1979); hereafter cited as *ILH*. Partly translated by James Nichols, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); hereafter cited as *IRH*. On Kojève's attitude to his seminar participants, see Leo Strauss' letter to Kojève of May 9, 1935, in Strauss, *On Tyranny*, rev. ed., ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (New York: Free Press, 1991).
3. See, for example: Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Michael S. Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Aimé Patri, "Dialectique du maitre et de l'esclave," *Contrat social* 5 (1961): 231–235; Jacques d'Hondt, *Hegel et hégélianisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982).
4. Jean Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: Rieder, 1929); hereafter cited as *LMC*.
5. See Hegel's *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988); hereafter cited as *IPH*. See *IPH* 12: "The only thought which philosophy brings with it, in regard to history, is the simple thought of Reason—the thought that Reason rules the world, and that world history has therefore been rational in its course."

6. See *PS* IV. B., "Freedom of Self-Consciousness; Stoicism, Scepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness."
7. See Jacques Derrida, "L'âge de Hegel; La philosophic et ses classes; réponses à *La Nouvelle Critique*," in *Du droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990); trans. Susan Winnett, "The Age of Hegel," *Glyph* 1 [n.s.] (1986): 3–43.
8. See Michael Rosen, *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).
9. See Benjamin Fondane, *La Conscience malheureuse* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1936).
10. See Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality*: *The Adventures of a Concept* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 512: "Attracted neither by the nostalgia for a lost order . . . nor by the hopes of a future one they see in the Western Marxists, the post-structuralists affirm instead the infinite play of desire, non-identity, difference, repetition and displacement that earlier thinkers had decried as an expression of alienation and estrangement. . . .That 'unhappy consciousness' which Hegelians and Hegelian Marxists had found so repellent turns out to be not so morose after all."
11. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (New York: Viking Penguin, 1983), 287.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la* Phénoménologie de l'esprit *de Hegel* (Paris: Aubier, 1946); trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974); hereafter cited as *GS*, English page number first, French second. Where there is only one page number, reference is to the translation.
2. See Mikel Dufrenne, "L'Actualité de Hegel," *Esprit* 16 (1948): 396–408, and "La thèse de Jean Hyppolite", *Fontaine* 11 (1947): 461–70; Gaston Fessard, "Deux Interprètes de la Phénoménologie de Hegel: Jean Hyppolite et Alexandre Kojève," *Études* 255 (1947): 368–73; Henri Niel, "L'Interprétation de Hegel," *Critique* 3 (1947): 426–37; Georges Canguilhem, "Hegel en France," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 28–29 (1948–1949): 282–97.
3. See Jean Wahl, *LMC*; *Vers le concret* (Paris: Vrin, 1932), hereafter cited as *VC*; *Études kierkegaardiennes* (Paris: Aubier, 1938), hereafter cited as *EK*.
4. See chapter four.
5. See Hyppolite, "La *Phénoménologie* de Hegel et la pensée française," "Hegel, Kierkegaard et la pensée française contemporaine," and "Hegel à l'ouest," in Hyppolite, *Figures de la pensée philosophique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971); Roger Garaudy, *Perspectives de l'homme*: *existentialisme*, *marxisme*, *pensée catholique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), 114–117, 230, 329; and John Heckman, introduction to *GS*, xv–xli.
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Vintage, 1968), 17; hereafter cited as *SFM*; originally in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 22; hereafter *CRD*. Garaudy also

claims (*Perspectives de l'homme* 228) that apart from Wahl's *Malheur de la conscience* and the special 1931 Hegel issue of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, Hegel was hardly known in France until the Second World War.

7. See Jean Hyppolite, "L'Existence dans la Phénoménologie de Hegel," *Études germaniques* 1 (1946): 132–45, and "Situation de l'homme dans la Phénoménologie hégélienne" in *Figures*, 109–21. Merleau-Ponty gives a sympathetic account of the former article in "L'Existentialisme chez Hegel (à propos d'une conférence de J. Hyppolite)," in *Sens et Non-sens* (Paris: Nagel, 1966), 109–21.
8. Aimé Patri, "Dialectique du maitre et de l'esclave," usefully summarizes Kojève's reasons for believing that Hegel provides a synthesis of Marx and Heidegger.
9. Catholic interpretations of Hegel that emerged in this period in various ways reacted to and were influenced by existentialist and Marxist interpretations. See Henri Niel, *De la médiation dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: Aubier, 1945), especially 299–369, and "L'Interprétation de Hegel," *Critique* 18 (1947): 426–37; Gaston Fessard, "Deux Interprètes," 368–73; Alexandre Kojève, "Hegel, Marx et le christianisme," *Critique* 3–4 (1946): 339–66, and "Christianisme et communisme," *Critique* 3–4 (1946): 308–12. Despite the debate over whether Hegelianism was theistic or atheistic (with Kojéve strenuously arguing for the atheist interpretation), both sides took an "existential" approach centred on the themes of alienation and reconciliation.
10. The *Encyclopedia* was translated into French by an Italian, Augusto Vera. His translations have been called incompetent and unreadable; see René Maublanc, "Hegel et Marx," in Jean Baby et al., *A la lumière du marxisme*, vol. 1 (Paris: Editions Sociales Internationales, 1935), 202; Alexandre Koyré, "Rapport sur l'état des études hégéliennes en France (1930)," *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), 226, hereafter cited as *EHPP*; Lucien Herr, "Hegel" article of the *Grande encyclopédie Larousse* [1911], reprinted in Herr, *Choix d'écrits*, vol. 2 (Paris: Rieder, 1932), 109–140; Canguilhem, "Hegel en France," 284; Garaudy, *Perspectives*, 228.
11. For a list of early French Hegel commentaries and translations, see Koyré, "Rapport," *EHPP* 226n3. Koyré lists ten French commentaries devoted in whole or in part to Hegel, published from 1836 to 1866. See also Michael Kelly, "Hegel in France to 1940: A Bibliographic Essay," *Journal of European Studies* 11 (1981): 29–52.
12. See Bernard Bourgeois, "La philosophie du monde," in the special Hegel issue of the *Magazine littéraire* 293 (November 1991), 39–42: "The destiny of Hegelianism can thus be expressed in the alternative: either the *Phenomenology* or the *Encyclopedia*" (40).
13. The *locus classicus* of this critique is Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1964); partially translated by Richard Howard as *Madness and Civilization* (London: Tavistock, 1967); hereafter cited as *MC*. See Jacques Derrida's critical review of this work in "Cogito and the History of Madness," in Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press, 1978), 31–63; hereafter cited as *WD*.
14. See Koyré, "Rapport," *EHPP* 232f: "it was a matter of combating a false traditional interpretation, which had invaded the text-books, and of substituting for the

absurd dialectician and outrageous reactionary of the text-books a livelier, more profound and truer image," and this meant above all refuting those interpretations that made Hegelianism into "an absolute determinism" or "a pan-logicism."

15. René Berthelot, "Le sens de la philosophie de Hegel," *Évolutionisme et Platonisme* (Paris: Alcan, 1908).
16. See Émile Boutroux, "Sur la nécessité, la finalité et la liberté chez Hegel," in his *Études de la philosophie allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1926). Parenthetical references in the text are to this work.
17. Merleau-Ponty, "L'existentialisme chez Hegel," *Sens et Non-sens*, 109–10.
18. This is Levinas's objection to Hegel. In many respects, it is Derrida's as well. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969); hereafter cited as *TI*.
19. See Mario Roques, *Hegel, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Alcan 1912), 15: "Who does not see that the common accusation of rationalizing the real and of pan-logicism, incessantly charged against Hegel, at bottom threatens every idealism?" Boutroux thus has to tread warily here; he also wishes to equate the real with the intelligible.
20. Dominique Parodi, "La philosophie d'Octave Hamelin," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 29 (1922): 182, 196; hereafter cited as *RMM*.
21. André Lalande, "L'épistémologie de M. Meyerson," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Etranger* 93 (1922): 259–80; hereafter cited as *RPFE*; and Leon Brunschvicg, *Progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale* (Paris: Alcan, 1927).
22. The section on Hegel in Brunschvicg's book (*Progrès*, 382–401) is part of a chapter on "The Romantic reaction" to Kantianism; "reaction" should also be understood in a political sense here.
23. See Brunschvicg, introduction to *Les tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande*, by Georges Gurvitch (Paris: Vrin, 1930), 7.
24. See Koyré, *EHPP* 227 and 235. Bergson's notorious anti-German polemics of the 1914–1918 war contrasted German barbarism with French civilization. Although Bergsonism was never as entrenched in the universities as neo-Kantianism, it nevertheless occupied an important position in French intellectual life; Bergson was elected to the French Academy and taught at the prestigious Collège de France from 1900 to 1921. Bergson's influence thus constituted a far from negligible obstacle to any sympathetic reading of Hegel in France. Georges Politzer's *Fin d'une parade philosophique: le bergsonisme* (Paris: Les Revues, 1929) did much to discredit Bergson's arguments in the eyes of the younger generation of French philosophers then coming on the scene, while making German philosophy (from Hegel to Husserl) appear more "concrete" and attractive. See also Paul Nizan's Marxist polemic against the "official" philosophy of "the three B's" (Bergson, Brunschvicg, and Boutroux), *Les chiens de garde* (Paris: Rieder, 1932); *The Watchdogs: Philosophers of the Established Order*, trans. Paul Fittinghof (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971). Just as the rise of interest in Hegel in France more or less coincides with the decline of Bergsonism, Hegel's decline after 1960 coincides with a resurgence of Bergsonism, particularly in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. See chapter eight.

25. Herr, "Hegel" article in the *Grande Encyclopédie*. Herr's article was actually fairly sympathetic to Hegel, and his point about the affective basis of Hegel's dialectic is a major theme in Wahl's *Malheur de la conscience*, but the same emotional factor in the dialectic that renders Hegel more human and less abstract for Herr is stigmatized by Brunschvicg as irrationalism.
26. Koyré, "Rapport," *EHPP* 227; Hyppolite, "La Phénoménologie de Hegel et la pensée française contemporaine," *Figures*, 232; Garaudy, *Perspectives de l'homme*, 228; René Maublanc, "Hegel et Marx" and *La philosophie du marxisme et l'enseignement officiel* (Paris: Bureau d'éditions, 1935). Émile Bréhier also counts as a Neo-Kantian opponent of Hegel; see Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie allemande* (Paris: Payot, 1921) and *Histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Alcan, 1932).
27. See Koyré, "Rapport," *EHPP* 235; Charles Andler, *Le Pan-germanisme philosophique* (Paris: Conard, 1917); Edmond Vermeil, "La pensée politique de Hegel," *RMM* 38 (1931): 441–510; and Alfred Stern, "Hegel et les idées de 1789," *RPFE* 128 (1939): 353–63. Stern links Hegel with Fascism and National Socialism.
28. Hyppolite, "Préface" to *Principes de la philosophie du droit* by Hegel, trans. André Kaan, (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), reprinted in *Figures* vol. 1, 73–91; see *Figures*, 79.
29. Canguilhem, "Hegel en France," 285n, gives 1923 as the starting date for Alain's Hegel lectures. Jean-François Sirinelli, *Génération Intellectuelle* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 92, mentions Alain's course on Hegel in 1927–1928.
30. Sirinelli, *Génération Intellectuelle*, 441. It was at the Ecole Normale that Hyppolite would in turn teach Derrida, Deleuze, Althusser, and Foucault.
31. See Sirinelli, *Génération intellectuelle*. Sirinelli notes (87) that Alain's position had previously been held by Victor Delbos, Bergson, and Brunschvicg himself.
32. See Alain, *Idées. Introduction à la philosophie. Platon, Descartes, Hegel, Comte* (Paris: Hermann, 1932). Alain gives Hegel a much more "humanistic" interpretation, highlighting the *Phenomenology*'s themes of action, the unhappy consciousness (244), and the master-slave dialectic (245, 250–252). Alain characterizes the dialectic of master and slave as "a life and death struggle" for value and honor, which may have been a source for Kojève's extravagant description of it as a "struggle to the death for pure prestige" (*ILH* 20).
33. See Koyré, *EHPP* 248–49.
34. Charles Andler, "Le fondement du savoir dans la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* de Hegel," *RMM* 38 (1931), 317–40. The article deals with the progress of consciousness from sense-certainty to self-consciousness, although, curiously, it manages to do this without bringing in the master-slave dialectic. Hyppolite cites this article *PE* II, 295 and *GS* 67, 90, 95, 121.
35. Victor Basch, *Les doctrines politiques des philosophes classiques d'Allemagne: Leibnitz-Kant-Fichte-Hegel* (Paris: Alcan, 1927). Further references given in parentheses in the text.
36. See Basch, *Doctrines politiques*, vi–vii, and "De la philosophie politique de Hegel. A propos d'un ouvrage récent," *RPFE* 111 (1931): 381–408.
37. See Sirinelli, *Génération intellectuelle*, 239 and 248.

38. See Durkheim, *Sociologie et philosophie* (Paris: Alcan, 1924), 53.
39. Hyppolite makes a similar argument, "Préface" to *Principes de la philosophie du droit* (*Figures*, 84–87), where he criticizes Bréhier for having argued (*Histoire de la philosophie*, vol. 3: 765) that in Hegel, private right in no way supposes the existence of the state, but belongs to the domain of "civil society." On the contrary, argues Hyppolite, nothing is a right without social recognition backed by law, i.e. a state power of enforcement.
40. Basch had not always been of this view; see his earlier *L'Individualisme anarchiste* (Paris: Alcan, 1904).
41. See Bernard Groethuysen, "Les Jeunes Hégéliens et les origines du socialisme contemporain en Allemagne," *RPFE* 95 (1923): 379–402 and "La conception de l'état chez Hegel et la philosophie politique allemande," *RPFE* 97 (1924): 180–207. Groethuysen was the first to draw the attention of French philosophers to Lukacs' important book, *History and Class-consciousness* (1922), and its Hegelian Marxism; he also cited Engels' view that Hegel's affirmation of the eventual triumph of the Idea was in essence progressive, despite Hegel's reactionary politics. This became a commonplace among Marxist interpreters of Hegel in the 1930s.
42. See Brunschvicg, *Progrès*, 425–30, and Henri Sée, *Le matérialisme historique* (Paris: Giard, 1927); in English, *The Economic Interpretation of History* (New York: Adelphi, 1929).
43. See Hyppolite, "Signification de la révolution française dans la *Phénoménologie* de Hegel," *RPFE* 128 (1939): 331–32.
44. Hyppolite, "Signification de la révolution française," 351.
45. This was Henri Sée's charge; see his "Remarques sur la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel," *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie* 1 (1927): 321–34.
46. This was also, of course, Kojève's view; see chapter two of this volume.
47. For Marxist Hegelians, even this interpretation was too "idealistic;" the true dialectic is of necessity materialist. Maublanc, for example, writes in "Hegel et Marx" (212–14) that there are accidents in history that a rationalist reconstruction, such as Hegel's, cannot account for, since they correspond to no rational necessity, but are rather the contingent product of the chance play of forces.
48. Nicolai Hartmann, "Hegel et le problème de la dialectique du réel," *RMM* 38 (1931): 285–316. Hartmann is the author of the respected *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1923–1929). Volume 2 deals with Hegel.
49. See also Charles Werner, "Hegel et la philosophie de l'esprit," *Les Etudes Philosophiques* 6 (1932): 26–31. Raymond Queneau recalls Hartmann's importance in "Premières confrontations avec Hegel," *Critique* 195–196 (1963): 694–700.
50. Some felt this reduction was a betrayal of the Hegelian project. See Wahl, "A propos de l'Introduction à la Phénoménologie de Hegel par A. Kojève," *Deucalion* 5 (1955): 77–99. From a Marxist perspective, Tran-Duc-Thâo complains that Kojève's dualism "places him outside of the Hegelian horizon" and results in "a new form of spiritualism;" to this, he contrasts the unified, dialectical materialism of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin: see his *Phénoménologie et le matérialisme dialectique* (Paris: Editions Minh-Tan, 1951). See also J.-T. Desanti, "Hegel, est-il le père de l'existentialisme?," *La nouvelle critique* 6 (1954): 91–109.

51. Cf. Hyppolite, "Préface" to *Principes de la philosophie du droït*, *Figures*, 79.
52. See Alain, *Idées*, 275; Hyppolite, "Signification," 322, "Vie et prise de conscience de la vie dans la philosophie hégélienne d'Iéna," *RMM* 45 (1938): 45–61, and "Situation de l'homme dan la phénoménologie hégélienne," *Figures*, 113; Kojève, *ILH*.
53. Derrida in particular decries the humanist misreading of Hegel, even if it furnished the best resources of French postwar thought; see Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 111–19; hereafter cited as *MP*.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Wahl and other French commentators used "notion" to distinguish Hegel's *Begriff* from the Kantian "concept," although the distinction does not exist in German. See Alexandre Koyré, "Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégéliennes," *RPFE* 111–112 (1931): 403–39; Wahl, "Le rôle d'Alexandre Koyré dans le développement des études hégéliennes en France," *Hegel-Studien*/Beiheft 3 (1966): 15–26.
2. Published as articles between 1919 and 1928 under the title "Les facteurs kantiens de la philosophie allemande de la fin du XVIIIe siècle et du commencement du XIXe siècle;" *RMM* 26 (1919): 569–93; *RMM* 27 (1920): 1–25; *RMM* 28 (1921): 27–47; *RMM* 29 (1922): 157–76; *RMM* 32 (1925): 271–81; *RMM* 35 (1928): 529–51; in book form, D*e Kant aux postkantiens* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1940).
3. Delbos, "La méthode de démonstration chez Hegel," *RMM* 35 (1928): 279; "L'idée de la philosophie comme système," *RMM* 27 (1920): 12–13; "Le Premier Principe comme Pensée Infinie," *RMM* 28 (1921): 37–38.
4. See also *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 61, 157; hereafter cited as *OG*.
5. Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago University Press, 1981), 43; hereafter cited as *P*.
6. Wahl recalls one of Delbos' courses in "Le rôle de A. Koyré dans le développement des études hégéliennes en France," 18.
7. See Wahl, "Sur la formation de la théorie hégélienne du Begriff," *Revue de l'histoire de la philosophie* 1 (1927): 437–56 and 2 (1928): 72–92; "Note sur les démarches de la pensée de Hegel," *RPFE* 101 (1926): 281–89. Although these two articles reappear as chapters of *Le Malheur*, all citations here are from their original versions.
8. See Hyppolite, *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel* (Paris: Seuil, 1983) [hereafter cited as *IPHH*], 104: "The Hegelian dialectic will later simply translate into logical terms this pan-tragic world view [of his early writings]."
9. See *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1989), 82–83, 413–414, 417.
10. Wahl, "Commentaire d'une passage de la Phénoménologie de Hegel," *RMM* 34 (1927): 441–71, reprinted as a chapter of *Le Malheur*; page references within the text to *RMM*.
11. See Hyppolite, *GS* 156/151. Sartre makes extensive use of the conceit of reflections reflecting each other in his analysis of consciousness as a "*jeu de reflets*;"

L'Etre et le néant (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 114; hereafter cited as *EN*; *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 122; hereafter cited as *BN*.

12. Hyppolite (*IPHH* 45, 57–58; *GS* 195–96/188, 211/204) also treats the master-slave dialectic as a form of the unhappy consciousness, or of a conflict *within* a single consciousness, rather than, as Kojève does, primarily a conflict *between* consciousnesses.
13. See Hyppolite, "Les travaux de jeunesse de Hegel d'après des ouvrages récents," *RMM* 42 (1935): 399–426 and 549–78; Pierre Bertrand, "Le sens du tragique et du destin dans la dialectique hégélienne," *RMM* 47 (1940): 165–86.
14. See chapter three. See also Emmanuel Levinas, "Jean Wahl: Neither Having nor Being," in *Outside the Subject*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 67–83. Levinas writes that even at the time of *Le Malheur de la conscience*, Wahl's "kinship with the family of Kierkegaardian spirits is manifest" (70).
15. Sartre's notion of "bad faith" owes much to Wahl's description of the duplicity of consciousness; see chapter six of this study. The theme of "loser wins" is also prominent in Sartre's essays and plays. See his *Saint Genet, comédien et martyre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952) [herafter cited as *SG*] and his play, *Le diable et le bon dieu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951); it also surfaces frequently in Derrida's work; see chapter seven, below, and Christina Howells, *Sartre. The Necessity of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chapter 9, "A contemporary perspective: Qui perd gagne," 194–201. See especially Philip Knee's excellent *Qui perd gagne: essai sur Sartre* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993).
16. See Koyré's two "Hegel à Iéna" articles, *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 5 (1935): 420–28, and *RPFE* 118 (1934): 274–83; references in the text are to the reprint of the 1935 article in *EHPP* 147–89.
17. Koyré's criticisms are echoed in Claude Estève's review of Wahl's *Malheur* in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* 35 (1930): 745–48.
18. See Kojève, *ILH* 38–39: "[Hegel's] *Phenomenology* is a phenomenological description (in the Husserlian sense); its 'object' is man as 'existential phenomenon.' " See *ILH* 57, 417 and 527nl. Dominique Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève, L'état, la fin de l'Histoire* (Paris: Grasset, 1990), 381–85, argues that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel is not "Heideggerian" because Heidegger neglects the themes of work and struggle (*ILH* 566n, 575n). Be that as it may, Heidegger's influence, via Koyré, is on Kojève's interpretation of time as "the time of human action," in which the future has primacy over the present and past.
19. See *RPFE* 118 (1934): 280. Koyré's "Hegel à Iéna" articles refer to Hegel, *Jenenser Logik*, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1925), and Hegel, *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1932). Koyré translates excerpts from these works in *EHPP* 165–73 and 180–87.
20. Sartre uses this definition of *la réalité humaine* throughout *BN*, as do Kojève (*ILH* 12) and Hyppolite, *GS* 412/399, and *Logique et existence: Essai sur la logique de Hegel* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), 240; *Logic and Existence*,

trans. Leonard Lawlor and Amit Sen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 184; hereafter cited as *LE*, English page first, French page second.

21. The relation of the future to a promise that is "to come" is a prominent theme in Derrida's later thought; see Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the state of the debt, the work of mourning and the new international*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), hereafter cited as *SM*; *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
22. Koyré, "Hegel à Iéna," *RPFE* 118 (1934), 280–81; see *ILH* 382.
23. Kojève, *ILH* 198: "If the *Phenomenology* has a meaning, the *Geist* in question is none other than *human* spirit: there is no spirit *outside of* the world, and Spirit *in* the world is Man, humanity, universal History." Kojève supports this interpretation of Hegel using the same Jena period texts cited by Koyré (*ILH* 386–93, 419–20).
24. Koyré, "Hegel à Iéna," *RPFE* 118 (1934): 280–81.
25. Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, ed. by Allan Bloom (Ithaca: Agora Paperbacks, 1968), 161.
26. See also Hyppolite, "Vie et prise de la conscience de la vie dans la philosophie hégélienne d'Iéna," *RMM* 45 (1938), 45–61.
27. The term is Roth's, *Knowing and History*, part one, chapter one. Roth includes Hyppolite's early writings (1935–1948) under this heading, along with Koyré's 1935 "Hegel à Iéna" article.
28. I will bring out the parallels with Derrida's theory of time in chapter seven. Derrida, like Koyré, sees great affinities between Hegelian and Heideggerian temporality; see *MP* 44–45. Derrida cites "Hegel à Iéna" in "Differance" (*MP* 13–14).
29. See Gaston Fessard, "Deux interprètes de la Phénoménologie de Hegel: Jean Hyppolite et Alexandre Kojève," *Études* 255 (December 1947): 368–73.
30. Koyré preceded Kojève at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where Koyré had lectured on Hegel from 1931 to 1933; Koyré, Kojève and Wahl also collaborated on the periodical, *Recherches philosophiques*. Kojève also, quite famously, equated the end of history with the death of man (*ILH* 388n, 435n). Kojève states explicitly that his lectures on Hegel follow Koyré's "method of interpretation" and "leading ideas." Dominique Auffret (*Alexandre Kojève*, 232–41) rather underplays Kojève's "debt" to Koyré. For a more generous assessment, see Wahl, "Le rôle de A. Koyré dans le développement des études hégéliennes en France."
31. Wahl, "Le rôle de A. Koyré," 20. Hyppolite says that for him, Koyré's article was as fundamental as Wahl's *Malheur*; see Hyppolite, "Discours d'introduction" to "Le rôle de A. Koyré," by Jean Wahl, *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3 (1966): 11–13.
32. Kojève, "Préface à la Mise au jour du Système hégélien du Savoir," *Commentaire* 9 (Spring 1980): 131–35; cited by Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 17.
33. See Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 17, 233–36.
34. This passage anticipates Derrida's theme of the *mise en abime*, whereby the "part" and "whole" mirror each other, and the "part" can be "larger" than the whole, as for example when a portion of a painting, such as a mirror, "represents" the whole painting; Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and

Ian McLeod (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 17–36 and elsewhere; hereafter *TP*.

35. Mikel Dufrenne, "La thèse de Jean Hyppolite," 470.
36. See Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, 18–32; Roth, *Knowing and History*, 19–45, 66–80; Heckman, "Introduction," *GS* xv–xli.
37. See Hyppolite, "Discours d'introduction," 11: "I must say that the first real impetus came from Jean Wahl and that reading *La conscience malheureuse dans la philosophie de Hegel* (*sic*) was a sort of revelation." See also *PE* I, vi, 176, 181.
38. See Heckman, *GS* xix–xx; Hyppolite, "Discours d'introduction," 11.
39. Hyppolite cites Koyré's "Hegel à Iéna" in "Vie et prise de conscience de la vie dans la philosophie hégélienne d'Iéna," *RMM* 45 (1938): 45–61; in *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, trans. John O'Neill (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 3–21. Hyppolite particularly takes note of Koyré's thesis of the "primacy of the future" in Hegel's theory of time.
40. See Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, 183.
41. Hyppolite, "Préface," Hegel, *Principes de la philosophie du droit*, 17.
42. Martin Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus* (Bern: A. Francke, 1947); trans. Frank Capuzzi with J. Glenn Gray in Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 190–242.
43. See chapter seven. On Derrida's relations with Hyppolite, see Derrida, "The time of a thesis: punctuations," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 36, 43–45. In 1957, Hyppolite became the supervisor of Derrida's thesis on "The ideality of the literary object," and in 1967, when Derrida registered a second thesis topic, on the Hegelian theory of the sign, Hyppolite was again the supervisor. Derrida remarks that Hyppolite's death in 1968 was for him "a moment of great sadness." Derrida's essay, "The Pit and the Pyramid" (in *MP*) takes up themes from *Logic and Existence*, and was first presented at Hyppolite's seminar at the Collège de France, in January, 1968.
44. See chapter eight of this volume and Deleuze's review of *Logique et Existence*, in *RPFE* 94 (1954): 457–60; English translation, *LE* 191–95. Deleuze refers to *Logique et Existence*, 146–57, in his critique of negative difference in *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 44, 310; hereafter *DiR*.
45. On Deleuze's relations to Hyppolite, see Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 12 [hereafter cited as *D*]: "I was taught by two professors whom I liked and admired a lot, Alquié and Hyppolite. Everything turned out badly. . . . [Hyppolite] rhythmically beat out Hegelian triads with his fist, hanging his words on the beat. . . . We threw ourselves like puppies into a scholasticism that was worse than that of the Middle Ages." Nevertheless, Deleuze's first book, *Empirisme et subjectivité. Essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), is respectfully dedicated to Hyppolite; *Empiricism and Subjectivity*: *An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); hereafter cited as *ES*.

46. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," trans. Rupert Swyer, in Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 235–237; hereafter cited as *AK*.
47. Foucault, "Hommage à Jean Hyppolite," *RMM* 74 (1969): 132–33. On the importance of Hyppolite for Foucault and his generation, see Didier Eribon, *Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 16–22, 70–71; on "historical sense" see Roth, *Knowing and History*, 204–6, 210–11.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Gilles *D*eleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 81n; hereafter cited as *DR*. See also *D* 57–58: "Apart from Sartre . . . the most important philosopher in France was Jean Wahl." Deleuze cites Wahl in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 217n12 [hereafter cited as *NP*] and in *The Fold*: *Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 153n2.
2. The preface also appeared in *Recherches philosophiques* 1 (1931–1932), 1–20. Sartre, Bataille, Lacan, Kojève, Pierre Klowssowski, and others all contributed important articles to this journal, which also published one of the first French translations of Heidegger, "De la nature de la cause," trans. A. Bessy, *Recherches Philosophiques* 1 (1931–1932): 83–124.
3. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, A. I., "Sense-Certainty, Or the 'This' and 'Meaning.' "
4. I discuss these critiques in chapter seven.
5. In *Existence humaine et transcendance* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Editions de la Baconnière, 1944), 56 [hereafter cited as *EHT*], Wahl again makes this point, citing Koyré's essay, "Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégéliennes" (*RPFE* 1931), 283. As Hyppolite later does in *Logic and Existence*, Koyré argues that for Hegel, "language incarnates spirit," from which it follows that for Hegel, the indeterminacy of the words "here," "now," "this" reveals an indeterminacy in the feelings they express and in the felt "here" and "now." According to Wahl, however, Hegel has simply confused the word with the reality it expresses.
6. See chapter eight.
7. Wahl, *Philosophies Pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique* (Paris: Alcan, 1920), 93; hereafter cited as *PPAA*. Deleuze says the same thing (*D* vii), and points out that the denunciation of the Hegelian dialectic as a "pseudo-movement" is common to Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, and Bergson; Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 44, 120n14; hereafter *B*. See also *DR* 16–19, 73f.
8. Wahl "Notes sur l'idée de l'être," *Recherches Philosophiques* 4 (1934–1935): 62–64.
9. See *Hegel's Logic. Being Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), §61–§70 (95–105).
10. Sartre, *EN* 176, also defines the being of the for-itself as "diasporic."

11. See Albert Spaier's review of *Vers le concret* in *Recherches Philosophiques* 2 (1932–1933): 468–69. "[Wahl's] realist is closer to the mystic than he realizes. He is constantly aware of the plenitude of the real . . . Every perception is full of this unreasoned realism [*réalisme irraisonné*]."
12. Internal quotation from Hermann Lotze, *Logik* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1912).
13. Wahl, "Hegel et Kierkegaard," *RPFE* 111–112 (1931): 321–80; see 361–62.
14. Wahl, "Hegel et Kierkegaard," 371. Georges Bataille examines the theme of non-knowing in *L'Expérience intérieure* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), hereafter cited as *EI*; *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), hereafter cited as *IE*. See chapter five, below.
15. "Hegel et Kierkegaard" 361. Sartre expresses similar ideas, in "L'Universel singulier," *Situations* IX (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 152–90; "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," in Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. John Matthews (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 141–69. Hereafter cited as *US*; the first page number refers to the French, the second to the English.
16. Wahl, "Hegel et Kierkegaard," 348.
17. The priority of the Other who addresses and summons an "I" that exists only through that summons and its response (or non-response) is a key idea of Emmanuel Levinas'. *Totality and Infinity* was dedicated to Jean Wahl and Wahl's wife, Marcelle.
18. Derrida, in his later writings, also insists on a tight connection between logical and conceptual "undecidability" and the possibility and necessity of choosing, and like Kierkegaard and Sartre, makes this the basis of a theory of moral responsibility. See especially *The Gift of Death*.
19. Derrida cites Wahl's *Études kierkegaardiennes* in an article where he compares Kierkegaardian anti-Hegelianism to Levinas's; *WD* 110–11 and 314n27. In chapter seven, I will compare Derrida's discussion of the "instant" in Descartes' *cogito* ("Cogito and the History of Madness") with Wahl's *Du rôle de l'instant dans la philosophie de Descartes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1953); hereafter cited as *RII*.
20. Wahl introduced Derrida's talk on "*différance*" before the Société française de philosophie (see the Société's *Bulletin*, 62 [1968]: 73–101). It was Wahl who suggested that Derrida's essay "Cogito and the History of Madness" be published "in its spoken form" in the *RMM* (see *WD* 307n1). Wahl was at the time editor of the *RMM* and President of the Collège philosophique, before which Derrida originally presented his talk.
21. See Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 119.
22. The first use of the term "existentialism" in France is probably in Georges Gurvitch's *Tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1930). Gurvitch uses it as a name for Heidegger's philosophy (218), which he elsewhere calls "existential phenomenology" (24n).
23. See Sylvain de Coster, "La crise de l'existentialisme (A propos des *Études kierkegaardiennes* de Jean Wahl)," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1 (1939): 398–402, and Alphonse de Waehlens's review of *Études kierkegaardiennes* in the *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie* (May 1938).
24. See Allan Stoekl, introduction to *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–1939*, by Georges Bataille, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekel, Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), xix.

25. See Denis Hollier, *Le Collège de sociologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979); *The College of Sociology (1937–39)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
26. See Anna Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and Les Temps Modernes*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 62–66, 145–46.
27. Levinas, "Jean Wahl: Neither Having nor Being," 67.
28. Henri Lefebvre, *L'Existentialisme* (Paris: Sagittaire, 1946); herafter cited as *E*.
29. Benjamin Fondane, *La conscience malheureuse* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1936). Further page references given in parentheses in the text.
30. See Lefebvre, *La somme et le reste* (Paris: La Nef, 1959), vol. 2, 509–26.
31. Fondane, *Rimbaud le voyou* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1933), 6; hereafter cited as *RV*.
32. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979), 27; hereafter cited as *SuZ*.
33. The Surrealists deny the "reality principle" for similar reasons; see chapter four.
34. See Fondane's *Faux traité d'esthétique* (Paris: Plasma, 1980), 73; hereafter cited as *FT*.
35. See Sartre, *US* 183/164: "as Jean Wahl has pointed out, even the title *The Concept of Anxiety* is a provocation. For in Kierkegaard's terms, anxiety could never have been the object of a concept. . . . [As] the source of a free and temporalizing choice of finitude, it is the non-conceptual foundation of all concepts . . . a false concept."
36. Fondane's knowledge of Heidegger was limited, and mostly based on Henri Corbin's French translation of *Was ist Metaphysik?* in *Bifur* 8 (June 1931). On the impact of this translation on French letters, see Denis Hollier, "1931, June. I've Got Plenty of Nothing," in Hollier, ed., *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 894–900.
37. Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 68–77.
38. Derrida, "Sauf le nom," trans. John P. Leavey, Jr., in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 43–44.
39. This motif is taken up by Bataille, who, like Fondane, was influenced by Shestov; see chapter five of this volume and Michael Richardson, *Georges Bataille* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).
40. On reason, supervision (*arraisonement*) and identity, see Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 102–5.
41. See *RV* 160: "I call 'Idea' everything which claims unique certainty, infallibility, authority, everything that commands and constrains, everything which oppresses and kills, everything which defines truth once and for all, a single and immutable truth . . . [everything which] submits exceptions to the majority, judges the abnormal by the normal, the individual by the crowd, and reduces living, moving reality to a static and dead formula, and which uses the principle of contradiction to reject from society, willingly or forcibly, *anyone who suffers and who rebels*."
42. Deleuze also calls reason "a rational administrative machinery," staffed by "bureaucrats of pure reason;" Deleuze, "Nomad Thought," in *The New Nietzsche:*

Contemporary Styles of Interpretation, ed. David B. Allison (New York: Delta Books, 1977), 149.

43. See Alexis Philonenko, "Chestov ou la lutte contre la raison," *RMM* 72 (1967): 465–85.
44. Derrida's pursuit of aporias puts this strategy into effect. See, for example, *Aporias*; *The Gift of Death*; "Force de loi: Le 'Fondement Mystique de l'Autorité," *Cardozo Law Review* 11: 919–1045.
45. For similar thoughts on "cracks," "fissures," and the grass which breaks through and breaks up reason's smooth pavement of identity and continuity, see Deleuze, *D* 30, 126–27, 131–32.
46. See in particular Fondane's criticisms of surrealism's "rational exploitation of the irrational" (*FT* 35), its reduction of the unknown to the known—"[Breton] ventures into the dream only with the Freudian *Baedeker's Guide* in hand"—(*FT* 75) and its tendencies to proclaim "universal and obligatory" principles (*RV* 48f). As for the Nazis' use of myth and the doctrine of "will to power" for political ends, Fondane argues that "a reason that negates itself for rational ends is still reason" (*FT* 24), a position similar to Bataille's in *Sur Nietzsche* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945); *On Nietzsche*, trans. Bruce Boone (New York: Paragon House, 1992), hereafter cited as *N*.
47. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 81–82.
48. On the differences between Shestov and Fondane, see Shestov's letter to Fondane, *La Conscience malheureuse*, rev. ed. (Paris: Plasma, 1979), Appendix; and Fondane's "Rencontres avec Chestov," in Chestov, *Le Pouvoir des Clefs* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), 18–19.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. See Gaëtan Picon, "L'Aventure surréaliste," in *Panorama de la nouvelle littérature française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 41–46; Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964); *The History of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Maurice Blanchot, "Reflections on Surrealism," in *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).
2. André Breton, "Second manifeste du surréalisme," *Manifestes du surréalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963); hereafter cited as *SeM*; *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969). See Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, *Surrealism*, trans. Vivian Folfenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, chapter nine; and Lefebvre's autobiographical *La Somme et le reste* and *Le Temps des méprises* (Paris: Stock, 1975).
3. André Breton and Philippe Soupault, *Les champs magnétiques* (Paris: Sans Pareil, 1920).
4. Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, 96. See also Anna Balakian, *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute*, 2nd ed. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970); Michel Carrouges, *André Breton et les données immédiates du surréalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

5. See Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme*, 131–33.
6. *Contre-Attaque*: *Travailleurs, vous êtes trahis*!, Bataille, Breton et al. (Paris: 1935).
7. See Bataille, "Le 'Jeu lugubre,' " *Documents* 7 (December 1929), and "La 'Vieille taupe' et le préfixe *sur* dans les mots *surhomme* et *surréaliste*" (1929), in *Visions of Excess*, 20–44.
8. See Bataille, "La Pratique de la joie devant la mort," *Acéphale* 5 (June 1939): 1–8; *The College of Sociology*, 325–28; *Visions of Excess* 235–39.
9. Bataille, *Blue of Noon*, trans. Harry Mathews (New York: Urizen, 1978), 24; see *IE* 80.
10. *Blue of Noon*, 116.
11. For the standard Marxist position, see René Maublanc, "Hegel et Marx," in *A la lumière du marxisme*, vol. 1: dialectical materialism is not a "system," like Hegel's, but a method (193, 215, 228–29), "the art of identifying and transcending opposites" (195), not in the realm of ideas, but in the realm of real being (196–97). Whereas neo-Kantian "idealism" is a "theory of knowledge" that reduces objects to ideas, Hegel's dialectic is a law of thought and of the world, and of the latter because of the former (201). Marx simply reverses this priority: thought is a reflection of being, not vice versa, and rather than the resulting synthesis producing the beginning teleologically, it is the opposed terms and their interactions that produce the synthesis (217–21), the opposed terms being not concepts but human groups (222). Similar arguments are made in the same volume by Georges Friedmann, "Matérialisme dialectique et action réciproque," and Jean Baby, "Le matérialisme historique."
12. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 259.
13. Sartre, *Situations II*: *Qu'est-ce que la littérature*? (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 218, 228, 320–23; hereafter cited as *Sit II*.
14. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, vol. I, book one, chapter two, sect. c ("Infinity"), 137–56.
15. I return to Sartre's criticisms of Surrealism later in this chapter.
16. Salvador Dali, "L' Ane pourri," in *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution* no. 6 (May 1933); see Balakian, *Surrealism*, 174. The notion of "simulacrum" later had a brilliant career in postmodernist thought, particularly that of Jean Baudrillard.
17. Breton, "Introduction," *Anthologie de l'Humour Noire* (Paris: Sagittaire, 1940), 100.
18. Breton, "Premier manifeste," 17.
19. *La Révolution Surréaliste* no. 11 (1928), in Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme*, 110.
20. See René Crevel's article on Hegel, "Résumé d'une conférence," and André Thirion, "En lisant Hegel," in *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* 3 (1933). Thirion's article is an account of Lenin's notebooks on Hegel's logic, which Guterman and Lefebvre would translate as *Cahiers sur la dialectique de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938); hereafter cited as *CDH*.
21. Aragon, *Treatise on Style*, trans. Alyson Waters (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 98; hereafter cited as *TS*. Originally *Traité du style* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928).
22. Breton, *Nadja* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928); parenthetical references are from this edition.

23. Carrouges, *André Breton et les données immédiates du surréalisme*, 130.
24. Breton, *Les Vases communicants* (Paris: Cahiers libres, 1932), 16.
25. Breton, "Premier manifeste," 12–13, 19.
26. Aragon, *Le Paysan de Paris* (Paris: Gallimard, 1926); see Balakian, *Surrealism*, 48.
27. Breton, *Point du jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934), 22.
28. Breton, "Premier manifeste," 12–13.
29. Breton, *Position politique du surréalisme* (Paris: Sagittaire, 1935), 143, and "Limites non frontières du surréalisme," *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (Feb. 1, 1937).
30. On Bataille's similar thoughts on laughter, see chapter five.
31. *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* no. 6 (1933); Chénieux-Gendron, *Surrealism*, 93.
32. See Aragon, *TS* 95–98: "In surrealism all is rigor, inevitable rigor. Meaning is formed outside of you . . . everything in the strictly surrealist experiment [*expérience*] occurs as if the trajectory of a moving object, about which we know nothing, were being inscribed." (Translation amended.).
33. Breton, *L'Amour fou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1937), 46.
34. Breton, *Les Vases communicants*, 122–23.
35. Breton, *L'Amour fou*, 35.
36. See Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, 86.
37. See Breton, *Point du jour*, 250.
38. Breton, "Limites non frontières," cited Carrouges, *André Breton*, 25–26.
39. Cited by Chénieux-Gendron, *Surrealism*, 153.
40. Breton, *Légitime défense* (Paris: Editions surréalistes, 1926); see Nadeau, *History of Surrealism*, 252.
41. Henri Lefebvre, *Nietzsche* (Paris: Editions Sociales Internationales, 1939).
42. Cited by Lefebvre in *La Somme et le reste*, 468 and 473.
43. See Lefebvre, *Pour connaitre la pensée de Karl Marx* (Paris: Bordas, 1947), 135–58, 174; hereafter *PCPKM*.
44. See Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, 90, 96–97.
45. Sartre writes concerning the Surrealists and the other "negative" writers of the inter-war period (*Sit II* 229): "They were the heralds of catastrophe in the years of fat cattle; in the years of lean cattle, they have nothing left to say."
46. Breton, "Premier manifeste," 19.
47. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, "Determinate Being," 109–16.
48. Bataille, "Le surréalisme, sommation morale, et la nécessité d'une instance collective," in *Les critiques de notre temps et Breton*, ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Garnier, 1974), 37.
49. See Henri Lefebvre and Norbert Guterman, "Préface" to *Morceaux choisis de Marx* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934), hereafter cited as *MCM*; *La Conscience mystifiée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936), hereafter cited as *CM*; *Morceaux choisis de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), hereafter cited as *MCH*; and Henri Lefebvre, *Le matérialisme dialectique* (Paris: Alcan, 1939), hereafter *MD*.
50. Roger Garaudy (*Perspectives de l'homme*, 329) called *La conscience mystifiée* Lefebvre's best book. There is a freshness and boldness in his 1930s writings that

is absent from Lefebvre's postwar work, in which Lefebvre had to distance himself from existentialism for ideological reasons.

51. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, 512f.
52. See Lefebvre, *Le temps des méprises*, 49; Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, 293.
53. Guterman and Lefebvre's *La conscience mystifiée* is in many ways a reply to Fondane's *La conscience malheureuse*. Guterman and Lefebvre refer to *La conscience malheureuse* in *MCH* 17–18.
54. See Lefebvre, *La critique de la vie quotidienne* (Paris: Grasset, 1947), vol. 1, 64–70.
55. Lefebvre, *Marx* (Geneva and Paris: Editions des Trois Collines, 1947), 44.
56. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, 588.
57. Lefebvre, *Le marxisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), 56; hereafter cited as *M*.
58. *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, Part One, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1932).
59. See in particular Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx: l'homme et l'oeuvre. De l'hégélianisme au matérialisme historique (1818–1845)* (Paris: Alcan, 1934). Pages 328–41 discuss the 1844 manuscripts, focusing on the notions of alienation and praxis; Comu concludes (394) that the young Marx is "dominated" by Hegel's thought. Lefebvre's group published parts of the 1844 manuscripts, entitled "Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," in the *Revue marxiste* 1 (February 1929) and 5 (June 1929), and Lefebvre and Guterman translated further selections in *Avant-Poste* 1 (June 1933): 32–39 and 2 (August 1933): 110–16; see Lefebvre, *Marx*, 29–30, 45 and *MD* 41–42. *La conscience mystifiée* contains an appendix with translations of excerpts from the *1844 Manuscripts* as well; a complete translation by J. Molitor appeared in *Oeuvres philosophiques de Marx*, vol. 6 (Paris: Editions Costes, 1935). Perhaps the fact that most of Lefebvre and Guterman's works of the 1930s were destroyed by order of Daladier's government in 1939 (see Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, 126–27) accounts for Poster's otherwise incredible assertion that Marx's 1844 manuscripts were "ignored until after the Liberation" (*Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, 42).
60. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, 497–99.
61. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, 591.
62. *La Somme et le reste*, 541.
63. See David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (London: André Deutsch, 1964), 155, and George Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), 87–89.
64. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, 591. By contrast, in *MD* 1–40 and *Logique formelle, logique dialectique* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1947), Lefebvre opposes dialectical to formal logic. Yet even before the war Lefebvre expressed doubts concerning the possibility of a dialectical logic. Both Lenin and Hegel had to borrow concepts from the old "static" logic, and had to "force" these concepts in using them to elucidate change, movement, and becoming (*CDH* 49–50).
65. To cite one representative passage: "The criterion [of a higher mode of production] is the fact that the *structure* of socialist relations *corresponds* functionally with the conditions of rapid development of the new, gigantic, more and more socialized

productive forces created by capitalism. . . . *This correspondence is totally independent of any a priori idea of happiness, of 'true' liberty, of the essence of man, etc.*" Maurice Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in *Capital*," in *Ideology and Social Science*, ed. Robin Blackburn (London: Fontana, 1972), 354.

66. See Wahl, "Commentaire d'une passage de la Phénoménologie de Hegel," *RMM* 34 (1927): 441–71, and Kojève, "Hegel, Marx et le Christianisme," *Critique* 3–4 (1946): 339–66.
67. See chapter seven, below, and Derrida, "Le facteur de la vérité," in *La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1980); *The Post-Card: from Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); hereafter cited as *PC*, the first page number refers to the French, the second to the English.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. See Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 29–52; original "Préface à la transgression," *Critique* 195–196 (1963): 751–70.
2. Jacques Derrida, "De l'économie restreinte à l'économie générale," *L'Arc* (May 1967); "From Restricted to General Economy," *WD* 251–77.
3. Georges Bataille and Raymond Queneau, "La critique des fondements de la dialectique hégélienne," *Critique sociale* 5 (1932); reprinted in *Deucalion* 5 (1955): 45–59. The latter hereafter cited as *CFD*.
4. Nicolai Hartmann, "Hegel et le problème de la dialectique du réel," *RMM* 38 (1931): 285–316.
5. Bataille cites Lefebvre's assertion (in *Nietzsche*) that Nietzsche and Marx both belong to "the aftermath of Hegelianism" (*N* 171), and that Marx and Nietzsche both call for a universal liberation, through the emancipation of the proletariat (Marx) or the "freeing of human life under the example of its best representatives" (Nietzsche). Like Lefebvre, Bataille sees this liberation as ushering in a new era, the era of *l'homme intégral*.
6. Bataille, "Le bas matérialisme et la gnose," *Documents* 2 (1930): 1–8; reprinted in Bataille, *Documents*, ed. Bernard Noël (Paris: Mercure de France, 1968), 93–104; *Visions of Excess*, 45–52. References to Noël's version, hereafter cited as *BMG*.
7. This argument was a commonplace among Marxists during the 1930s. See chapter four.
8. Bataille, "Materialism," in *Visions of Excess*, 15–16; originally in *Documents* 1 (1929).
9. Bataille, "Figure humaine," *Documents* 1 (September 1929); Noël, 214. The latter is hereafter cited as *FH*.
10. Bataille, "Materialism," as cited by Breton, "Second manifeste," 145.
11. See *Inner Experience*, and "Le labyrinthe," *Recherches Philosophiques* 5 (1935–36): 364–72, in *Visions of Excess*, 171–77.
12. See Bataille, "The Use Value of D. A. F. de Sade," *Visions of Excess*, 91–102; "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," *Visions of Excess*, 137–160; "The

Notion of Expenditure," *Visions of Excess*, 116–129. All originally published in *Critique sociale* in 1933–1934.

13. See Queneau, "Premières confrontations avec Hegel," *Critique* 9 (1963): 694–700. Bataille also gained some familiarity with Hegel from Bréhier's *Histoire de la philosophie allemande* and Gurvitch's *Tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande*; see Georges Surya, *Georges Bataille, La Mort à l'Oeuvre* (Paris: Librairie Séguier, 1987), 198.
14. See Fessard, "Deux interprètes de la Phénoménologie de Hegel," 368–73.
15. Fessard, "Deux interprètes," 371. See Leo Strauss, "Restatement," *On Tyranny*, ed. Gourevitch and Roth, 208–9, and Strauss's letter to Kojève of August 22, 1948, pages 236–39.
16. Kojève, "Hegel, Marx et le christianisme," 344. See *ILH* 376–77, 387, 490–92.
17. "Hegel, Marx et le christianisme," 354; *ILH* 226, 376–77, 384–85.
18. "Hegel, Marx et le christianisme," 355–56.
19. Kojève, letter to Strauss of September 19, 1950, *On Tyranny*, 255.
20. Bataille, "Letter to Blank, Instructor of a Class on Hegel," in *Guilty*, trans. Bruce Boone (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1988), 123–25; hereafter cited as *G*. An earlier, longer version, "Lettre à X., Chargé d'un cours sur Hegel," is in *Collège de Sociologie*, 170–77; hereafter cited as *LX*.
21. See Bataille, "Hegel, La Mort et le Sacrifice," *Deucalion* 5 (1955): 21–43: "the pure beauty of the dream cannot act, it is impotent;" beauty "seeks nothing" and has no end (29); "Hegel, Death and Sacrifice," trans. Jonathan Strauss, *Yale French Studies* 78 (1990): 9–28.
22. See Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, vols. 2–3, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 257; hereafter cited with reference to the subtitles, *History of Eroticism* and *Sovereignty* respectively, as *HE* and *S*. *The Accursed Share* vol. 1, *Consumption*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), is hereafter cited as *AS*.
23. See Bruno Karsenti, "Bataille, anti-hégélien?," *La Magazine Littéraire* 293 (November 1991): 54–57: "Perhaps the end of history, far from coinciding with an unrest that has at last been pacified, will make room for an exacerbated negativity, void of all content and conscious of itself, confronted henceforth by the insubstantiality of its own being." This would be a "resolute affirmation of negativity as such, cut off from its promises and its realizations."
24. See Bataille, "Attraction et répulsion," *Collège de Sociologie*, 188–231, hereafter cited as *AR*; originally given as lectures to the Collège de Sociologie in January and February of 1938.
25. See *EI* 163–64: *connaissance* (knowledge) is discursive and objective; *reconnaissance* (recognition) is non-discursive and subjective. See also *AS* 134.
26. Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 49. Hereafter cited as *TR*. This work was written in 1948.
27. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990). See *AS* 193n24.
28. Bataille, "Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice," 23, 36; English translation, 14, 21–22.
29. See Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Harvard, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

30. On Bataille's fondness for this work, see Michel Leiris, *Brisées*, trans. Lydia Davis (San Francisco: City Lights, 1990), 238–47.
31. According to Michael Richardson's *Georges Bataille*, Shestov was one of Bataille's early influences. Kojève's reading of Hegel may also have been influenced by Dostoyevsky; see Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, part one.
32. Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground* and *The Double*, trans. Jessie Coulson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 35, 38, and 41: "After twice two is achieved there will of course be nothing left to do, much less to learn. All that will then be possible will be to shut off one's five senses and immerse oneself in meditation. But with consciousness . . . at least one could sometimes resort to self-flagellation, and that stimulates, at any rate."
33. Bataille's judgment on Hegel more or less ignores Hegel's criticisms of the inward negativity of Romantic irony. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that for Hegel, negativity expressed in action is superior to non-productive negativity.
34. See "The Labyrinth" in *The College of Sociology*, 171; *EI* 128n*IE* 109n–10n; *AS* 151–52. Bataille says (*TR* 123) that his ideas are "substantially present" in Kojève's reading of Hegel.
35. See Bataille's novel *L'Abbé C.* (Paris: Minuit, 1950), trans. Philip A. Facey (London and New York: Marion Boyars, 1983), 107: "It is unhealthy to endure the labours of the mind which incessantly contradict what they have just established." The mind's infinite power of (self)-negation can lead to pure nothingness, or despair; see *PS* 19, 49. Hegel, however, argues that "tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being" (*PS* 19).
36. See Bataille, "Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice," 32–33/"Hegel, Death and Sacrifice," 19 and *EI* 114–15: when death has done its work [*a fait son oeuvre*], *consciousness* of death ceases.
37. See *L'Abbé C.*, 11: "All at once I saw that I would have to work; the world no longer offered its divinity to my whims, and in order to eat, I had to submit to its laws." See also *G* 109: "As soon as you lose what you love, you're told—work! Submit to this or that reality, live for it, or live for the interest you have in such reality!" Bataille's view of work as a malediction and exile from paradise is very far from Hegel's or Marx's view.
38. See *IE* 177; *EI* 20–21/*IE* 8–9; *L'Abbé C.*, 123. Sartre also famously remarked that the "quietism of the drunkard" possesses a higher degree of self-awareness than "the vain agitation of the leader of nations" (*BN* 797/*EN* 691).
39. The phrase does not appear in the English translation. See also *L'Abbé C*, 57 and *AS* 154.
40. Kojève came to regard the end of history as the birth of liberal-democratic consumer society, "materialist and atheist," whether "capitalist" or "socialist," in which material needs are satisfied along with the specifically human desire for recognition, and held that "Marxism will be better realized by capitalism of the Fordian type," in which workers earn sufficiently high wages to consume what they produce, "than by Soviet socialism," which prolongs capitalism's accumulative phase; Kojève, "Capitalisme et socialisme, Marx est Dieu, Ford est son prophète," *Commentaire* 9 (1980): 135–37. Bataille agreed that Soviet socialism exhibited the "servile and utilitarian negativity" (*S* 296, 310–25) of capitalism's

accumulative phase. Expenditure without return is better realized in an economy of mass consumption.

41. For this reason, I cannot agree with Auffret (*Alexandre Kojève*, 369–72) that Bataille's "sovereignty" is "a myth of "*pure animality*, outside of nature and civilization," a "surhumanity" that is the "unavowed simulacrum of a *pure* animality" outside of all laws and mores, both "a radical ritualisation of death" and "the narcissism of rebellious individuality." Bataille might wonder how a being could be both a pure animal and a narcissistic self anxious before death.
42. "Hegel, La Mort et le Sacrifice," 29–30n; see Hegel, *PS* 19.
43. See Michel Surya, *Georges Bataille: La Mort à l'Oeuvre*, 414.
44. Sartre, "Un nouveau mystique," *Situations I*, 209. Sartre says Bataille's laughter is closely related to "the Surrealist's black humor, which is also a radical destruction."
45. At times, Bataille invokes "negative theology," and a God who is not a God of reason or of works, that is, not a Creator. See *Inner Experience* and *Theory of Religion*.
46. Wahl places Bataille's thought under the rubric of the "unhappy consciousness" in *Tableau de la philosophie française*, rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 174.
47. See "Hegel, Death and Sacrifice," 17n: "The atheist mystic, *self-conscious*, conscious of having to die and to disappear, would live, as Hegel *obviously said concerning himself*, 'in absolute dismemberment [*déchirement*],' but for Hegel, it is only a matter of a certain period: unlike Hegel, the mystic would never come out of it." (Translation amended)
48. Derrida, *PC* 426–29, 468–70/399–401, 439–41. See Derrida, "Living On: Borderlines," trans. Jane Hulbert, in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, Harold Bloom, Paul DeMan, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller, Jr. (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 76n, and "Economimesis," trans. R. Klein, in *Diacritics* 11 (1981): 3–25.
49. Often referred to in French as *Les Miettes philosophiques*; see Kierkegaard, *Postscriptum aux Miettes philosophiques*, trans. P. Petit (Paris: Gallimard, 1941).
50. Examples: inner experience is neither inner nor an experience; sovereignty is not the pleasure of consumption; Bataille is not a mystic; transgression is not a negation (of a prohibition).
51. While Bataille is very much concerned with subjectivity, the whole of *On Nietzsche* is a critique of voluntarism. Linking subjectivism to voluntarism is a move Derrida borrows from Heidegger, and seems rather out of place in this context. Derrida maintains this link in subsequent works. See *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); hereafter cited as *OS*; and "Force de loi: Le 'Fondement Mystique de l'Autorité'," 950–53.
52. See for example *Sit II* 241: "George Bataille's glosses on the impossible are not worth the most meagre Surrealist tract."

Notes to Chapter Six

1. "Derrida l'insoumis," in *Points . . . : Interviews 1974–1994*, ed. Elizabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 115–31; "A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking," *Points*, 342–45.

2. Alain Renault, *Sartre, le dernier philosophe* (Paris: Grasset, 1993).
3. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: reflections on photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), frontispiece.
4. Derrida, " 'Il courait mort': Salut, salut. Notes pour un courrier aux *Temps Modernes*," *Les Temps Modernes* 587 (March-April-May 1996): 7–54.
5. See Frederic Jameson, "The Sartrean Origin," *Sartre Studies International* 1 (1995): 1–20.
6. Denis Hollier, *The Politics of Prose: Essay on Sartre*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 2.
7. Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Le siècle de Sartre: Enquête philosophique* (Paris: Grasset, 2000).
8. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: Verso Books, 1982), hereafter cited *CDR;* the incomplete and posthumous *Critique de la raison dialectique; Tome II, L'intelligibilité de l'Histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), is hereafter cited as *CRD II*; *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Volume Two*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1991); hereafter cited as *CDR II.*
9. Sartre is never totally free of the ideal of totality; the chief premise of his proposed "existential psychoanalysis" is the idea that each person's existence is united into a totality by an existential "project." See Sartre, *Baudelaire*, trans. Martin Turnell (New York: New Directions, 1950); *Saint Genet*; *L'Idiot de la famille*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971–1973), hereafter cited as *IF*; *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert*, trans. Carol Cosman, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981–1993); hereafter cited as *FL* This aspect of Sartre's philosophy truly does seem over and done with.
10. Sartre explicitly rejects Hegel's "true infinite," in which the infinite movement of negation returns to itself (*EN* 114/*BN* 122).
11. Sartre, *Cahiers pour une morale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983); hereafter cited as *CPM*.
12. Dominick LaCapra's *A Preface to Sartre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978) is representative of "deconstructive" critiques of Sartre as a "totalitarian" thinker seduced and held captive by the ideal of "synthesis." For the supporters' view, see Poster, and also Thomas W. Busch, *The Power of Consciousness and the Force of Circumstances in Sartre's Philosophy* (Indiana University Press, 1990) and Ronald Aronson, *Jean-Paul Sartre—Philosophy in the World* (London: Verso, 1980). Sartre's admirers tend to regard his move away from the unhappy consciousness and towards the more dialectical positions of the *Critique* and the *Idiot of the Family* as constituting a kind of "progress," but it is not clear that Sartre ever ends up with a genuinely dialectical position.
13. All of *Being and Nothingness*' Hegel citations come from Lefebvre and Guterman's *Morceaux choisis de Hegel*; see Christopher M. Fry, *Sartre and Hegel: The Variations of an Enigma in L'Etre et le Néant* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1988). Sartre also cites Lefebvre's *Le matérialisme dialectique* in his "Matérialisme et révolution," *Situations III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 165.
14. On Sartre's reading of Wahl's *Le Malheur*, see Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, trans. Peter Green (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company), 44. Wahl was an examiner for Sartre and Beauvoir's *agrégation*, responsible for

the topic, "contingency and freedom;" see Ingrid Galster, "Cinquante ans après Le Deuxième Sexe: Beauvoir en débats," *Lendemains* 94 (1999): 27–35. Sartre cites *Études kierkegaardiennes* in *BN* 65/*EN* 64, in "Un nouveau mystique," *Sit I* 219, in *Carnets de la drôle de guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 166 [hereafter cited as *CDG*], 166; *The War Diaries*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 131 [hereafter cited as *WaD*]; and in "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," 150, 158 and 164. He acknowledges the importance of *Vers le concret* in *CDG* 228/*WaD* 186, as well as in *CRD* 18, 21, 33/*SFM* 10, 15, 19; he refers to Wahl's Heidegger interpretation in "Aminidab, ou du fantastique considéré comme un langage" (*Sit I* 168). Beauvoir read *Le Malheur* in July 1940, while studying Hegel (apparently for the first time); see Beauvoir, *Lettres à Sartre*, vol. 2 [1940–1963] (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 171 and *Journal de guerre; septembre 1939-janvier 1941* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 343. Curiously, Wahl asserts that Sartre was dominated by Kojève (*Tableau de la philosophie française*, rev. ed., 149), even though in the first edition (Paris: Fontaine, 1946), he discusses Sartre in relation to Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel (216–17, 222), but not Kojève, who is mentioned separately (248).

15. See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*: *General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1962) paragraphs 35–37, 84.
16. See Simone de Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*, in *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 272–73 [hereafter cited as *MA*]: a completed consciousness would be "a concrete being, completed and closed in on itself, and at the same time indefinitely open, because its existence would be an endless transcendence."
17. "Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: l'intentionnalité," *Sit I* 38–42.
18. In addition to Butler, Descombes and Poster, see: William Ralph Schroeder, *Sartre and His Predecessors: The Self and the Other* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 58; Anna Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise*, 81; Jean Hyppolite, "La *Phénoménologie* de Hegel et la pensée française," in *Figures*, 236; Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 220–21; Wilfrid Desan, *The Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 25 and 52n; Elizabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 98–101.
19. See Kojève, letter to George L. Kline, in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Edward N. Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), vii.
20. See Christopher M. Fry, *Sartre and Hegel*, 5.
21. See Michael Roth, *Knowing and History*, Appendix.
22. Auffret, in *Alexandre Kojève* (14, 238n, 259), asserts that Sartre was profoundly influenced by the article in *Mesures*, but produces no evidence to substantiate this claim.
23. See Hyppolite, "Préface," in *Figures*, 73–91, especially 79, 82–83.
24. Wahl, "Commentaire," 442.
25. See Alain, *Idées*, 250: "Ici est un combat. Combat à la vie et à la mort. . . . Nos plus cruels combats ne sont pas pour l'existence, mais pour l'honneur."

26. Kojève, "Hegel, Marx et le Christianisme," 354–56. See also chapter five of this volume.
27. Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), 54–55 [hereafter cited as *EH*]; *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Nagel, 1970), 90–92 [hereafter cited as *EH-F*].
28. This is even more evident in Sartre's writings on colonialism; see his preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 26: "with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man by creating slaves and monsters."
29. Sartre, "Merleau-Ponty vivant," *Situations IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 276.
30. See Philip Knee, *Qui perd gagne*, 120, 129.
31. As well as the *Cahiers*, see "Matérialisme et révolution," *Situations III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), hereafter cited as *MR*, and *Vérité et Existence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), hereafter cited as *VE*. The latter was written in 1948.
32. This is the problem addressed by the *Critique*, as well as the "Réponse à Albert Camus," *Situations IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).
33. See *L'Idiot de la famille*, vol. 3, rev. ed., ed. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 665–812, which contains Sartre's notes and outlines for a projected fourth volume.
34. See Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 110; *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken, 1965), 90.
35. See Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions* (Paris: Hermann, 1965), 66–67; *L'Imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 354–55.
36. "L'enfer, c'est les autres;" *Huis clos*, in Sartre, *Théâtre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 167.
37. Sartre's conception of Stoicism derives from *PE* I, 167–71. Sartre differs from Hegel, however, in his insistence that Stoicism was invented by masters, not slaves; see *CPM* 79.
38. Sartre's argument has been lost on Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, who want to recruit Sartre for their anti-postmodernist program of universal human rights; see Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les Modernes* (Paris: Grasset, 1988), and Renault, *Sartre: le dernier philosophe*.
39. See *L'Imaginaire*, 327–28, 354–56.
40. This contrasts with Bataille's notion of a purely subjective and inward negation producing no observable result; see chapter four.
41. See Sartre, "We Write for Our Own Time," in *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, Vol. 2, *Selected Prose*, ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 175: " 'At the time,' [the period's] limitations and lack of understanding did not exist. . . . Or, rather, the time then was a perpetual transcending of its limitations toward a future which was *its* future and which died with it."
42. "We Write for Our Own Time," 174.
43. The point is similar to Bataille's view that the incompletion and non-knowledge of one individual can be understood through that of another, but not "known."

44. Cosman's translation of this passage completely obscures Sartre's conceptual apparatus: the words "totalized" and "retotalize" are rendered as "summed up" and "resumes."
45. Sartre's example of this is the boxer whose attempt to strike the other boxer becomes an opening for the other boxer to strike him; see *CRD II* 13–15, 26–60.
46. Raymond Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938); all references are to the new edition prepared by Sylvie Mesure (1986), hereafter cited as *IPH*.
47. Sartre refers to *GS* 278/268.
48. See Derrida *OG* 114–15: the search for origins is a search for a "paradise lost," which then presents the possibility of being regained, in an "archeology [that] is also a teleology and an eschatology: the dream of a full and immediate presence closing history, the transparence and undividedness of a parousia, the suppression of contradiction and difference."
49. Sartre refers to Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) and *Anti-Dühring* (1878). All of Sartre's references are to the French translations.
50. Sartre refers to Jacques Lacan, "Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individu," *Encyclopédie française*, vol. 8, *La Vie mentale*, ed. Henri Wallon, (Paris, 1938), 42.1–42.16. Republished as *Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individu* (Paris: Navarin, 1984).
51. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972), 254f.
52. The term "methodological individualism" comes from Raymond Aron, *Histoire et dialectique de la violence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), hereafter cited as *HDV*.
53. See William H. Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 124–30, for a similar position.
54. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 97; see also 115, 172–75, 213–15. Sartre nevertheless would have regarded as idealist Collingwood's refusal to distinguish between historical facts and the historian's understanding of them (see 181).
55. See Sartre, *Situations VII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 280–81.
56. Raymond Aron, "Sartre's Marxism," in *Marxism and the Existentialists* (New York: Clarion, 1970), 174; "La lecture existentialiste de Marx," in *Marxismes imaginaires* (Paris: Gallimard), 163–191.
57. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 258.
58. See Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind*, 248–49; Aron, *HDV* 205.
59. See Howard Davies, *Sartre and 'Les Temps Modernes'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 125: "Sartre . . . never implies that non-accession to history is non-accession to humanity. . . . Sartre uses the term, 'société sans Histoire' . . . only in a conventional way and as an explicit borrowing from explicit ethnographic usage." It is worth recalling that the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* twice bombed Sartre's apartment because of Sartre's support for Algerian independence, whereas Lévi-Strauss refused to sign the "Manifesto of the 121" French intellectuals in support of France's withdrawal from Algeria; see Annie

Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, trans. Anna Cancogni (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 418, 440.

60. Sartre's study of this problem with regard to the Bolsheviks takes up a good deal of the *Critique*'s second volume; see *CRD II* 77–238.
61. At this level Sartre parts company with Collingwood, Dilthey and the Neo-Kantians. Aron fails to recognize this divergence.
62. Contrary to Aron (*HDV* 260), who says the unity of the battle of Waterloo is constructed by the historian. Sartre is often mistakenly believed to hold the same view, based on an oft-cited passage (*CDR* 144) where the gaze of the observer (Sartre) is what unites the activities of the road-mender and the gardener.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. See Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 9–16.
2. Jean-François Lyotard, "Presentations," in *Philosophy in France Today*, 121. See Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?," trans. Régis Durand, in *The Post-Modern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 81–82: "We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and communicable experience. . . . Let us wage war on totality . . . let us activate differences."
3. Foucault, "What is an Author?," trans. Josué V. Harari, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Random House, 1984), 105; hereafter cited as *TFR*.
4. Derrida situates his work within "the historical space that I will call . . . *post-Hegel* [*après-Hegel*]" (*P* 79, translation amended), or "the morning after Hegelianism;" Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (University of Chicago Press, 1981), 107–8; hereafter cited as *Diss*.
5. Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 139.
6. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).
7. See *P* 77: "We will never be finished with the reading or rereading of Hegel."
8. I will limit myself to some characteristic instances. In "The Ends of Man," Derrida criticizes "the *anthropologistic* readings of Hegel" (*MP* 116–18). Although Bataille, unlike his admirers, takes Hegel seriously, Derrida points out the "restricted and indirect access" Bataille had to Hegel's texts (*WD* 251–53). Even Heidegger is criticized for his "hasty . . . oversimplification" of Hegel's concept of time in "Ousia and Gramme," *MP* 46n. Poor Francis Fukuyama not only failed to understand Hegel, he failed to understand Kojève; see *SM* 56–74.
9. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, A. 1, "On Sense-Certainty." Two passages are of key importance: "What is called the unutterable is nothing else but the untrue, the irrational, what is merely meant. . . . [Language] has the divine nature of reversing the meaning of what is said, of making it into something else, of not letting what is meant *get into words* at all" (*PS* 66); "We do not strictly say what in this sense-certainty we *mean* to say. But language, as we see, is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we *mean* to say, and since the universal is the truth of sense-certainty, and language expresses only this truth, it is just

not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we *mean*" (*PS* 60, Translation altered).

10. Derrida held a seminar on Hegel's argument in 1967; see "Between Brackets," in *Points*, 11: "And how could a here-now pass through writing unscathed? Perhaps we interpret today more effectively, with or without Hegel, the intervention of the written trace (in the ordinary sense) in the chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on sense-certainty and its here-now." Derrida takes up this theme again in "At this Very Moment in this Work Here I Am," trans. Ruben Bevezdivin, in *A Derrida Reader: Between The Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 405–39. See also Derrida, "L'âge de Hegel," *Du droit à la philosophie* 181f; "The Age of Hegel," 32f.
11. Unless otherwise noted, all references are to "Cogito et histoire de la folie" as it appeared in *RMM* 68 (1963); page numbers will be given parenthetically in the text.
12. In Derrida's additional notes to "Cogito et histoire de la folie," *RMM* 69 (1964): 116–19, he also claims that the horizon of Foucault's study is the Hegelian infinite, in which "beyond determinations and negations, 'exclusions' and 'internments,' the reconciliation of time and thought (of truth) is produced."
13. Rendering the history of this division was Foucault's aim; see *Histoire de la folie* (Paris: Plon, 1961), vi.
14. Jean Laporte, *Le rationalisme de Descartes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 158. Laporte explicitly takes issue with Wahl's *RII*; see Laporte, 158n.
15. Laporte, 159.
16. Recall that Bataille was fascinated by the idea of Hegel philosophizing out of the terror of going mad; see chapter five.
17. Derrida (*Glas* 31–35, 55–56) also repeats Wahl's contention that Hegel's "youthful writings" on Christianity herald "the conceptual matrix of the whole systematic scene to come," namely, the reconciliation and unification of a primordial division in the speculative concept and the "triplicity" of Spirit. See also *Diss* 22–24.
18. This entire passage, with its reference to Fanon, not to mention the political resonances such an utterance would have had in the context of Algeria's war of independence, is left out of *L'écriture et la différence*, published four years after Derrida presented this paper.
19. Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique," *RMM* 69 (1964): 322–54; 425–73. Parenthetical references are to this version; references to *Writing and Difference* are designated by *WD*.
20. *TI* 35n. Levinas also states that "We have drawn much inspiration from" Wahl's *Existence humaine et transcendance* (*TI* 65n). Levinas gave a short précis of *Totality and Infinity* before the *Société française de philosophie* in 1962, presided over by Wahl and entitled "Transcendence and Height;" in Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernansconi, trans. Tina Chanter et al. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 11–31; hereafter cited as *TH*.
21. For Sartre, we either trans-descend the Other ("when we apprehend him as an object and integrate him in the world") or are trans-descended by another ("when

we experience him as a transcendence which transcends us"), in which case we trans-ascend toward him. Either we negate the Other or we are negated by him (*BN* 529/*EN* 459).

22. Levinas uses similar language, *TH* 17: "The putting into question of the self is precisely a welcome to the absolutely other. . . . And the putting into question of the Same by the Other is a summons to respond" to an Other who "sees but remains invisible, thus absolving himself from the relation that he enters and remaining absolute."
23. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, book one, section one, chapter II, c. "Infinity."
24. See Hyppolite, *LE* 20/25: "In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel does not say man, but self-consciousness . . . being itself that knows itself and says itself."
25. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, Miller trans., 417.
26. One key difference between Derrida and Deleuze hangs on just this point: Deleuze tries to think "difference in-itself," or non-negative difference. See chapter eight, section 2.
27. See also Hyppolite, *GS* part II, chapter 1, and *LE* part I, chapter 1.
28. See Hyppolite, *LE* 17/20, on sense-certainty as a "stuttering consciousness," and Deleuze, *NP* 4, who disagrees with this characterization of empiricism.
29. For Derrida's criticisms of empiricism, see *WD* 288; *TP* 30, 61, 366; *P* 64–65; *MP* 192; *OG* 60, 162; *Diss* 33–35; "The Age of Hegel," 32–33 and *SM* 123.
30. For a critique of Derrida's reading of *Histoire de la folie*, see Deborah Cook, "Madness and the Cogito: Derrida's Critique of *Folie et déraison*," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 21 (1990): 164–74. See also Foucault's "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu," in *Histoire de la folie*, rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 583–603; trans. Geoff Bennington, *Oxford Literary Review* 4 (1979): 5–28. Notwithstanding the brilliance of Foucault's article, it does not deal with the temporality of the *cogito*, which is central to Derrida's argument.
31. On Levinas' empiricism, for example, Derrida's analysis goes against Levinas' understanding of himself. Levinas specifies that however "everyday" the encounter with the Other [*Autrui*] is, it is not an "empirical fact," because the empirical is "that which receives signification, not that which gives it. . . . The situation of the I in the face of the Other" is a "metaempirical" structure in virtue of its revelatory character (*TH* 22–23).
32. In addition to "Jean Wahl: Neither Having nor Being," see Levinas, "Jean Wahl and Feeling," in *Proper Names*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 110–18.
33. Levinas, "Preface," *Outside the Subject*, 3.
34. See Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 66, 72–73, on a relationship to the Other that is not a relation.
35. See Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford; Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1992); Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1993); Robert John Sheffler Manning, *Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger: Emmanuel Levinas's Ethics as First Philosophy* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1993); Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, eds., *Re-Reading Levinas* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

36. Derrida's view derives from Husserl's *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, ed. Martin Heidegger, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* vol. 10 (Halle, 1928), 367–498; *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).
37. See also Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. (New York: Nicholas Hays, 1978), 86; hereafter cited as *HOG*.
38. Derrida expresses diffidence about giving a lesson in phenomenology to Levinas, whose *Théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Alcan, 1930) was among the first major French studies of Husserl; see André Orianne's "Translator's Forward" to *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), xxiv–xxvii. Sartre apparently read Levinas' book in passionate haste, hoping (and fearing) to discover in it the "theory of contingency" he was working on. See Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, 91; Simone de Beauvoir, *La force de l'âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 157–58.
39. Sartre, *La transcendance de l'Ego*, ed. Sylvie Le Bon (Paris: Vrin, 1966), 87.
40. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974); hereafter cited as *SP*.
41. Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy, "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject," *Points*, 263–64.
42. Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, 386–424f.
43. Derrida, "Limited Inc abc," trans. Samuel Weber, *Glyph* 2 (1977): 162–251; see 194. Hereafter cited as "Limited Inc."
44. Derrida calls "aporias" situations where the conditions of possibility of a phenomenon are conditions of its impossibility; see *The Gift of Death*, 24, 61; *Points*, 359–60.
45. See Hyppolite, *LE* 68–69/84–85, 115–16/148–49.
46. Derrida, "Living On: Borderlines," trans. Jane Hulbert, in Harold Bloom, Paul De Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller, Jr., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 172. See also *TP* 230.
47. We earlier saw Wahl make a similar argument; *EHT* 66–68, 70, 83–84.
48. Since Derrida argues that the inside/outside opposition is the matrix of all philosophical opposition of terms taken as external to each other (*Diss* 103), his apparent privileging of the "exteriority" of writing should be seen as one of those "provisional" moves in which the "inferior" term of a classical opposition is made superior, but only in order to question this very opposition (see *P* 22–33, 41, 82).
49. See "Freud and the Scene of Writing" in *WD*, as well as *The Post-Card*. On intentionality in the text, see *Diss* 211.
50. Derrida, "Living On: Borderlines," 84.
51. Compare Sartre, *BN* 185, 205–6, on the phenomenological past as a "past future."
52. Derrida borrows this term from Koyré's "Hegel à Iéna" in "Différance" (*SP* 143–44; *MP* 14).
53. See Derrida, "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," trans. Ruben Bevezdivin, in *A Derrida Reader*, 394–401.

54. See Derrida, "Force de loi: Le 'Fondement Mystique de l'Autorité,' " 966–69: "A horizon . . . is both the opening and the limit of the opening that defines an infinite progress or a waiting [*soit un progrès infini soit une attente*]," and so is linked to a future (*avenir*) that always remains "to come" (*a-venir*), but is never present and never "arrives." See also *Aporias*, 43.
55. See D*iss* 210, 275–76 and 281 for examples of Derridean metamorphoses very similar to Breton's (hoir/soir/noire/miroir/grimoire/ivoire/armoire), and "Living On: Borderlines," 154–64, on the various metamorphoses of "rose" (flower, color, signifier, name, and so on).
56. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 120. Cited by Derrida, "Differance," *SP* 140; see also *OG* 52f.
57. See also "Living On: Borderlines," 84, 115–18, 121–23, 170–72.
58. Contrary to Hyppolite, *LE* 113–16/145–49: "The Hegelian dialectic will push otherness up to contradiction;" difference is reduced to "essential and internal difference, the difference between a thing or determination and *its other*."
59. See Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology," *MP* 69–108; first presented to Hyppolite's seminar in 1968.
60. Derrida refers here to Hyppolite, *LE* Part I, chap. 2.
61. See also Derrida, "Fors," trans. Barbara Johnson, *The Georgia Review* 31 (1977): 64–116, and "Istrice 2: Ick bünn all hier," in *Points*, 300–26.
62. See Wahl, *EHT* 34, on "the bad transcendences" [*mauvaises transcendances*] of the Romantic beyond and of "behind-worlds."
63. Primarily, but not exclusively; see Derrida's frequent references to a "divided self" in "Fors," 66, 69–72, 109.
64. Wahl made this point in reply to a letter from Heidegger that is reproduced in *EHT* 134–35. In his letter, Heidegger stated that "the question that preoccupies me is not that of man's existence; it is that of being-as-a-whole as such." Wahl replies that Heidegger's chief contribution to ontology is his theory of the temporal ec-stases, and this theory is hard to isolate from such "existential" elements as "care." This exchange predates the exchange between Jean Beaufret and Heidegger that resulted in the latter's famous "Letter on Humanism."
65. See *MP* 126–27: "Dasein—the being which *we ourselves are*—serves as an exemplary text, a good 'lesson' [or: 'reading'] for making explicit the meaning of Being. . . . Dasein, though *not* man, is nevertheless *nothing other* than man. . . . a repetition of the essence of man, permitting a return to what is before the metaphysical concepts of *humanitas*." Derrida specifies that this return takes place through Heidegger's notion of *Sorge* (*MP* 129).
66. See Michel Tournier, *The Wind Spirit: An Autobiography*, trans. Michael Goldhammer (Boston: Beacon Press 1988), 133: "This reaction [against Sartre] should be taken for what it was: the liquidation of the father by overgrown adolescents afflicted with the awareness that they owed him everything." Christina Howells calls Derrida's failure to acknowledge his affinities with Sartre "a form of philosophical parricide;" *Sartre: The Necessity of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 201.

67. Compare Derrida, "A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking," *Points*, 339–40; my birth is a past that is never present *to me* and which promises a future; hence, my birth is a future to come (*à venir*), right up to the moment of my death.
68. Derrida attempts to demonstrate the impossibility of the phenomenological "as such" in *Aporias*, 35–37, 40–41, 73–81. The "as such" is linked to the thematic object, essence, domain.
69. On treachery, bastardy and other negative hybrids as themes in Sartre's works, see Francis Jeanson, *Sartre par lui-même* (Paris: Seuil, 1955).
70. See Christina Howells, "Derrida and Sartre: Hegel's Death Knell," in Hugh J. Silverman, ed., *Derrida and Deconstruction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 169–81.
71. Derrida develops this critique at length concerning "spirit" or "mind" as the defining feature of "humanity" in *Of Spirit*, but the argument is scattered among many of his texts.
72. In "Ends of Man," Derrida chastises the anti-humanist "structuralists" for not seeing that the "humanist" reading of Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger was erroneous.
73. Derrida, *Points*, 122–23, 342–45.
74. Derrida, " 'Il courait mort': Salut, salut. Notes pour un courrier aux *Temps Modernes*," 44.
75. Derrida writes: *rendre la justice*, "to render justice," which carries the connotation of the repayment of a debt, and an acknowledgment of the prior "belonging" of the thing rendered (justice) to the one to whom it is rendered, i.e. *Les Temps Modernes*. Given Derrida's extensive analyses of debt, the gift, repayment and "rendering" in recent years, his choice of words can hardly be regarded as accidental. This makes Derrida's statement all the more astonishing to all those who have long regarded him as Sartre's adversary, and who have regarded Sartre and *Les Temps Modernes*, with their politics of *engagement*, as outside or beneath a justice of "difference."
76. See Derrida, "Economimesis," trans. R. Klein, *Diacritics* 11 (1981): 3–25 and *TP* 203–4.
77. On Kant, see Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), hereafter cited as *LS*; *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969). References are to the English translation; when reference is made to both, French page numbers are given first.
78. Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 15; hereafter cited as *TM*. For the *mise en abîme*, see especially Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*.
79. For a contrary view, see Richard Rorty, "Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 2 (1989): 205–17; reprinted in David Wood, ed., *Derrida: A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 235–46. See also Rorty's "Philosophy as a Kind of Writing," in Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 89–109; "Deconstruction and Circumvention," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984): 1–23. Rorty tends to emphasize the element of "play" in Derrida's "text," at the expense

of the philosophical seriousness of that play. Admittedly, Derrida's "play" is not "work," i.e. the production of meaning; it is *désoeuvrement*, which has its own kind of seriousness and "rigor."

80. Derrida, "*D*ialanguages," *Points*, 136.
81. Dufrenne, "La thèse de Jean Hyppolite," *Fontaine* 11 (1947): 470.
82. See Derrida, *SP* 151: "we shift and recommence the very project of philosophy under the privileged heading of Hegelianism."

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973); hereafter cited as *OT*.
2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979); hereafter cited as *DP*.
3. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), hereafter cited as *HS*; *The Use of Pleasure. History of Sexuality, Vol.* 2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1985), hereafter cited as *UP*; *The Care of the Self: History of Sexuality, Vol. 3*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), hereafter cited as *CS*.
4. Jean Wahl, "Nietzsche et la philosophie," *RMM* (1963): 352–79.
5. See *NP* 196: "The unhappy consciousness is the subject of the whole dialectic." See also *NP* 159: "The discovery dear to the dialectic is the unhappy consciousness, the deepening, the resolution and glorification of the unhappy consciousness and its resources. *It is reactive forces that express themselves in opposition, the will to nothingness that expresses itself in the labour of the negative*. The dialectic is the natural ideology of *ressentiment* and bad conscience." On the identity of the unhappy consciousness and what Nietzsche calls a "bad conscience," see *NP* 19, 132, 157f.
6. See *D*eleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 36; hereafter cited as *EPS*.
7. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, book I, chapter 1, 82.
8. See Hyppolite, *LE* 109–10/139–42.
9. Deleuze identifies four elements of the logic of the concept: 1) identity of form, 2) analogy of relations, 3) opposition of internal determinations or differentia, and 4) resemblance of the determined object to its concept; *DR* 44–45. A logic of difference would have to avoid or subvert all four elements (*DR* 52).
10. On the theme of "the throw of the dice," see Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 29–30, and Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 165–96.
11. See Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," in *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901–1950*, ed. R. C. Marsh (London: Unwin Hyman, 1956), 177–281.
12. See A. N. Whitehead, "The Anatomy of Some Scientific Ideas," in *The Organization of Thought* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1917), chapter 7, and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), part III.

13. See Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 60; hereafter cited as *F*: Although Foucault analyses "*a priori* conditions under which all ideas are formulated and all behaviours displayed, . . . the conditions are those of real experience . . . they are on the side of the object and the historical formation, not a universal subject (the *a priori* itself is historical)."
14. See Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights, 1988), 67, 71, 76f, 93–96, 102–3; hereafter cited as *SPP*.
15. Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty," in *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 46.
16. See Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 20–21, 32–33 and elsewhere; hereafter cited as *ATP*.
17. Translation altered. See also *EPS* 80 and *SPP* 94–97.
18. See Hyppolite, *LE* 186/242–43: "It is impossible to conceive history, at least retrospectively, without determining it as *sens*."
19. The complex logical arguments distinguishing difference from negation are seemingly ignored by Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter one, who claims that Deleuze fails "to appreciate Hegel's somewhat rarefied point of logic," according to which negation and mediation are "immanent in affirmative being" (8). Deleuze's review of Hyppolite's *Logique et Existence* (*RPFE* 94 [1954]: 457–460) shows that Deleuze takes issue with this Hegelian point of logic.
20. Frederic Jameson, *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 210.
21. See Deleuze, *Masochism*, 14, 46, 58.
22. Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, chapter 5, "Difference."
23. Deleuze, "Bergson," in *Les philosophes célèbres*, ed. Merleau-Ponty (Paris: Art Lucien Mazenod, 1956), 292–99.
24. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy*?, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 156–57.
25. See Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 152–53: "Becomings are quite distinct from history: even structural history generally thinks in terms of past, present, and future."
26. In *Dialogues* and in Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), Deleuze calls for a resistance to language through a "minoritarian use of language" that can make language stammer or stutter. See also Réda Bensmaia, "On the Concept of Minor Literature: from Kafka to Kateb Yacine," in C. Boundas and D. Olkowski, eds., *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 213–28.
27. See Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 78: "Deleuze, unlike many deconstructionists, believes that there is something outside the text, and that thought need not be restricted to a critique of metaphysical oppositions embedded in language." Similarly, Foucault's "My body, this paper, this fire" (27) calls Derrida "the most decisive representative" of the metaphysical system that reduces "discursive practices to textual traces" and teaches "that there is nothing outside the text" in order

that he can interpolate his voice into the gaps and silences of the text, which gives him "the limitless sovereignty which allows it to restate the text indefinitely."

28. See Deleuze, "Pensée nomade," in *Nietzsche aujourd'hui I.* (Paris: Union Générale d'éditions, 1973), 186–87: "With regard to the method of deconstruction of texts, I see well what it is, I admire it greatly, but I don't see it having anything to do with my own. . . . A text, for me, is only a little wheel in an extra-textual practice. It is not a question of commenting on a text by a method of deconstruction . . . or by any other method; it is a question of seeing what use a text is in the extra-textual practice that prolongs the text." See Alan Schrift, *Nietzshce's French Legacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 62–65.
29. See Deleuze and Guattari, "On *Anti-Oedipus*," *Negotiations*, 21–22. "We've no use for signifiers," says Guattari; rather, "what we're interested in is how something works, functions—finding the machine. But the signifier's still stuck in the question, 'What does it mean?' . . . But for us, the unconscious doesn't *mean* anything, nor does language."
30. See Catherine Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?," in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 119.
31. See Deleuze's *Essays Critical and Clinical.*
32. See Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire*, 176–84.
33. I cannot agree with Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 52–53, who argues that Deleuze achieves a complete rupture with Hegel "through an unrestrained, savage attack," or by moving away from the dialectic and "forgetting" it. These moves are still too tied to Hegel as the *object* of negation.
34. See Hyppolite, "Alienation and Objectification: Commentary on G. Lukacs' *The Young Hegel*," *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, 70–90. Contrary to Marx, Hyppolite argues that the unhappy consciousness results not from man being "alienated from his labor in the capitalist system," but from "a *tension inseparable from existence* . . . in the very centre of human self-consciousness" due to the self becoming conscious of itself only through the recognition of the Other: "objectification and alienation are inseparable" (88).
35. See Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," in Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et al. (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), 22: "I have never been a structuralist." In this interview, Foucault argues that outside of the precisely defined domains of linguistics and comparative mythology, the term "structuralist" has no clear meaning.
36. Arnold I. Davidson, "Archeology, Genealogy, Ethies," in David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 222.
37. Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29.
38. Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 114.
39. Gary Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 47–70; see 63–66.
40. Georges Canguilhem, "The Death of Man, or the Exhaustion of the cogito," trans. Catherine Porter, *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 79.

41. Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 64.
42. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage, 1973).
43. Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 38.
44. Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power," *TFR* 247.
45. See Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, 39.
46. David Ingram, "Foucault and Habermas on the subject of reason," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 235. Ingram argues that Foucault's concept of power conflates transcendental and structural relations with empirical actualities, so that power as a generative and transcendental condition is conceived on the basis of the disciplinary forms power assumes in the "will to knowledge" of the modern era. In that case, Foucault would be guilty of the reflective doubling of the grounded, empirical actuality into its grounding, transcendental condition. However, Foucault maintains that he does not conceive of power as a transcendental condition in the sense of "conditions whose necessity and universality can be ascertained with reflexive certainty" (Ingram, 226). Rather, "power" is always specific and problematic, a function of contingencies and probabilities rather than apodictic certainty.
47. Foucault, "War in the Filigree of Peace. Course Summary," trans. Ian Mcleod, *Oxford Literary Review* 4 (1979), 15.
48. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 98.
49. Foucault, "History, Discourse, Discontinuity," *Salmagundi* 20 (Summer-Fall 1972), 240.
50. "History, Discourse, Discontinuity," 226.
51. Gutting, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 14.
52. Paul Rabinow, "Modern and counter-modern: Ethos and epoch in Heidegger and Foucault," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 203.
53. Foucault, "Social Security," *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, 165.
54. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 37; my emphasis.
55. Gutting, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 3–4.
56. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, "What is Maturity?," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, 109–21.
57. See Foucault, "Introduction" to *The Normal and the Pathological*, by Georges Canguilhem, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett with Robert S. Cohen (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 12.
58. See Foucault, "Introduction" to *The Normal and the Pathological*, 21–24.
59. Foucault, "Introduction" to *The Normal and the Pathological*, 22.
60. Contrary to Christopher Norris' interpretation in " 'What is Enlightenment?': Kant According to Foucault," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 159–96. I do not think that Nietzschean genealogy goes "beyond . . . rational intelligibility" (178), except insofar as it brings particular criteria of rational intelligibility into question. But it is not "irrationalism."
61. See Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What is Maturity?," 112.

62. Contra Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What is Maturity?," 115.
63. Deleuze, in Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 208.
64. This is Richard Harland's view of Foucault in *Superstructuralism: The Philosophy of Structuralism and Post-structuralism* (London: Methuen, 1987), 166. Descombes expresses a similar view (*Modern French Philosophy*, 116–17).
65. Foucault, "The Concern for Truth," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, 256–57: "Thought, too, has a history; thought is a historical fact . . . What I am trying to do is write the history of the relations between thought and truth. All those who say that, for me, truth doesn't exist are being simplistic."
66. On Foucault's histories as fictions, see Alan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 234. For a contrary view, see Deborah Cook, "History as Fiction: Foucault's Politics of Truth," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 22 (1991): 139–47. Cook argues that genealogies are "histories of the present" to the extent that they contest the received "regimes of truth" and the histories that justify them as inevitable and progressive historical developments, but "Foucault's genealogies analyse what Foucault believes is really and literally there . . . the very regimes of power and truth," and expose their contingent character so that "resistance may effectively be waged" (144).
67. Foucault states, "I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions" (*Power/Knowledge*, 193). However, he elsewhere explains that he aims to "provoke an interference between our reality and the knowledge of our past history. If I succeed, this will have real effects on our present history. My hope is that my books will become true after they have been written . . . that the truth of my books is in the future;" Foucault, "Truth is in the future," in *Foucault Live: Interviews 1966–1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext[e], 1989), 301.
68. See Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History," 33.
69. On Foucault as historian, see (among others): Gary Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 47–70; Allan Megill, "The Reception of Foucault by Historians," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 117–41; Patricia O'Brien, "Foucault's History of Culture," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 25–46; Roy Porter, "Foucault's Great Confinement," *History of the Human Sciences* 3 (1990): 47–54; Clare O'Farrell, *Foucault: Historian or Philosopher?*, (London: Macmillan, 1990); Paul Veyne, "Foucault revolutionne l'histoire," in *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1978); Jan Goldstein, ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1994); Jacques Revel and Raymond Beliour, "Foucault et les historiens," *Magazine littéraire* 101 (1975): 10–13.
70. See Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History," 41.
71. See Foucault, "The Concern for Truth," 257: "The notion common to all the work that I have done since *Histoire de la folie* is that of problematization. . . . In *Histoire de la folie* the question was how and why, at a given moment, madness was problematized through a certain institutional practice and a certain apparatus of knowledge. Similarly, in *Surveiller et punir*, I was trying to analyze the changes

in the problematization of the relations between crime and punishment through penal practices and penitentiary institutions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. . . . Problematization doesn't mean representation of a pre-existing object, nor the creation by discourse of an object that doesn't exist. It is the totality of discursive or non-discursive practices that introduces something into the play of the true and the false and constitutes it as an object for thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)."

72. Foucault, "Hommage à Jean Hyppolite," *RMM* 74 (1969), 132–33. Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" first appeared in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971). See also *AK* 235–37.

Notes to Conclusion

1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Les aventures de la dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955); *Adventures of the Dialectic*, trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). For Merleau-Ponty's earlier totalizing Hegelian philosophy of history, see *Humanisme et Terreur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947); *Humanism and Terror*, trans. John O'Neill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

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