

Sabbatical Report

Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

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Copy of the:

**Sabbatical Reading Project Proposal
Mount San Antonio College**

Title of Project:

“European Continental Philosophy since 1960”

Submitted by:

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Sabbatical Reading Project Proposal

Abstract

Title of Reading Project: Continental European Philosophy since 1960

Objective of the Reading Project:

The objective of my reading project is to be acquainted with the main philosophical ideas that have dominated the European Continent since the 1960s.

The knowledge I will acquire from my reading will not only enrich me personally, but will also greatly benefit my students, my colleagues in my own department as well as in the other departments of the Humanities division. Many of the philosophers I will be reading have in fact had great impact on the other disciplines of the Social Sciences and the Humanities.

Projected work:

My aim is to read the most important works of the philosophers I have selected. To gain better understanding and appreciation, I will also be reading concurrently the commentaries on those works, or the main studies done on the thought of the philosophers. During my reading I will, of course, be taking extensive notes that will form the basis of my sabbatical report.

The Product of the Reading Project:

The Project has for aim to produce a written summary of the main ideas and thoughts of the selected philosophers. This in turn will be the source from which I will be drawing to organize workshops for colleagues in my department and for all those who are interested in participating in them. There will also be a separate Sabbatical Report which will present in narrative form the work done and the results achieved by the Sabbatical Project.

Benefit and value of the reading project:

The sabbatical project will provide me with an opportunity to enrich myself intellectually as well as professionally. But more importantly it will benefit my department as well as the others since the thinkers I will be studying are at the crossroads of many disciplines. By studying these thinkers, I believe that an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas between the various departments can be established. And I believe I can become a resource person in such an exchange.

Sabbatical Reading Project Proposal:
European Continental Philosophy since 1960

Background to the Reading Project

There has been a divide between the philosophical tradition of the British Isles (and later, by extension, the English speaking world) and that of Continental Europe (namely France, Germany, Italy, Spain; and by extension, the countries of Latin America) since at least the end of the 18th century. This divide has become even more pronounced for most, if not all, of the 20th century. Today, Western philosophers identify themselves as either belonging to the Analytic tradition (i.e. Anglo-American, or simply the philosophy dominant in the English speaking world) or in the Continental tradition. In fairness, there have also been attempts by prominent philosophers (e.g. Richard Rorty, 1931-2007) at reconciling these two traditions.

Although Continental Philosophy prior to 1960 is studied in many colleges and universities in the United States, the philosophical ideas that have been circulating in the European Continent since the 1960s have not found their way in our anthologies and textbooks. Thus, as a result of this, not only students, but even philosophy teachers remain, for the most part, unacquainted with them.

Objective of the Reading Project

The objective of my reading project is to become acquainted with the main philosophical ideas that have dominated the European Continent since the 1960s.

My PH.D. is in the History of Modern Philosophy, and my graduate courses concentrated in the 18th, 19th and early 20th century philosophy. Thus, the philosophers I will be studying are unknown to me although I am familiar with their names and the schools of

philosophy to which they belong. Also, I have not had a chance to read them since I left graduate school over 22 years ago.

Upon completion of my sabbatical year, I will organize a series of three or four workshops or lectures to share the results of my reading with members of my department and other colleagues of MSAC. The workshops will be advertised through the Department of Philosophy and will be open to students to MSAC as well. I will also integrate in my teaching this area of philosophy that is hardly ever included in standard textbooks on the subject. This will be done in the form of short monographs, handouts and WebPages.

Why are these philosophers important to study? The simple answer to this is that these philosophers are present day's preeminent thinkers on modernity, ethics, language, politics, history and social studies. Ignoring them would amount to depriving students of a good education.

Method of Selection of the Philosophers to be studied

Many are the philosophers and ideas (e.g. Gadamer and Ricoeur on Hermeneutics, Marcuse and Habermas in Social and Political thought, The post modern thought of Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard, just to name a few) that have dominated the Continental European Philosophical scene since the 1960s. So how did I pick and choose the philosophers to be read and studied?

This is a project I have had in mind for some years; so I have had plenty of time and opportunity to explore the subject. I have been helped by many studies on the subject in making my final selection, but I would like to list three that have been extremely valuable to me. These are:

1. Simon Critchley *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press 2001

2. Simon Critchley and William R. Schroeder *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, Blackwell 1998
3. Richard Kearney and Mara Rainwater *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, Routledge 1996

Projected work

My aim is to read the most important work(s) of the philosophers I have selected together with the main studies done by others on their thought. During my reading I will, of course, be taking extensive notes that will constitute the basis of the summaries I will be preparing on the ideas and thoughts of each selected philosopher.

Although the reading list may appear short for a two-semester sabbatical leave, one must be reminded that philosophical works in general, and continental philosophical works in particular, are extremely dense and difficult. Thus they require a high degree of concentration, time and patience from the reader.

Moreover, I will be consulting with specialists of the various philosophers on points of particular difficulty that I will be unable to resolve by myself. In this I shall have the assistance of the members of the Department of Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University at Los Angeles; namely of V.S.K. Cameron for Gadamer and Habermas, Elizabeth Murray for Phenomenology, Brian Treanor for Levinas. My contacts with these professors will be on as needed basis.

The final tangible product of my reading project will consist in a compilation of all the summaries I will be writing on the individual philosophers' main ideas and thoughts. This will also be the source from which I will draw to organize the workshops mentioned above, as well as to supplement my philosophy courses.

In addition to the above, I will prepare a Sabbatical Report which will present in narrative form the work done and the results achieved by the Sabbatical project.

Reading project schedule

I will be reading the main works of at least six of the seven philosophers listed below together with the secondary literature listed under their works over the two semesters of my sabbatical leave. The secondary literature is neither definitive nor comprehensive: other works will be consulted as needed. I plan to dedicate about five weeks to each philosopher. The first four weeks will be reserved for reading the primary and secondary literature. The fifth week will be entirely dedicated for writing a summary of the main ideas and arguments contained in the main works of the selected philosophers.

Benefit and value of the Project

At a personal level, I am certain that this sabbatical project will provide me with a rare opportunity to enrich me professionally and intellectually. I believe that a renewed, enriched and better informed teacher is in and by itself an asset to his or her institution. However, to mention some of the more immediate and practical benefits of my reading project, I will repeat by saying that the philosophers I intend to study are key to understanding the many facets of our modern life. More specifically these philosophers are at the crossroads of many disciplines. Their importance is not restricted to philosophy alone, but extends to sociology, politics, economics, ethics and the humanities in general. Thus, my study has the potential of benefiting students and colleagues of other departments and the college in general. I believe that by studying these philosophers closely I can become a resource person for all those interested in studying them or in trying to learn about them. Thus my endeavor can extend beyond my regular courses.

Timeline for Reading and Writing

August 25 – September 26

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002)

1. *Truth and Method*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1975
2. *Reason in the Age of Science*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981
3. J. Weinsheimer *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

****September 22-26:** Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Gadamer

September 29 – October 31

Paul Ricoeur (1913-)

4. *Fallible Man*, Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965
5. *The Symbolism of Evil*, New York: Harper & Row, 1967
6. S.H. Clark, *Paul Ricoeur*, London: Routledge, 1990

****October 27-31:** Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Ricoeur

November 3 – November 29

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995)

7. *Totality and Infinity*, Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969
8. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997
9. J. Llewelyn, *Levinas: Genealogy of Ethics*, New York: Routledge, 1995

****November 24-28:** Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Levinas

December 1 – December 19 (2008) and February 23 to March 6 (2009)

Jurgen Habermas (1929-)

10. *Theory of Communicative Action*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984/1987,
2 volumes
11. *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1975
12. D. Ingram *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason*, New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1987

****March 2-6: Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Habermas**
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(Continued from previous page)

March 9 – April 10

Michel Foucault (1924-1984)

13. *The Order of Things*, New York: Random House, 1970
14. *The Archeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon, 1977
15. G. Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archeology of Scientific Reason*, Cambridge:
Cambridge University Pres

****April 6-10: Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Foucault**

April 13 – May 15

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)

16. *Of Grammatology*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974
17. *Writing and Difference*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972
18. P. Deutscher *How to Read Derrida*, New York & London: W.W. Norton &
Company, 2005

****May 11-15:** Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Derrida

May 18 – June 12

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998)

19. *The Post-Modern Condition: A report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis, MN:

University of Minneapolis Press, 1979

20. *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Manchester, Manchester University Press,

1988

21. J. Williams, *Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy*, Malden MA: Blackwell

Publishers Inc., 1998

****June 8-10:** Writing the summary of the main ideas and thoughts of Lyotard

*****June 11 and 12 Writing the Sabbatical report**

Fall 2009: In the second month of the Fall Semester of 2009 (**October 1 - 30**), I will hold a series of workshops to communicate the results of my reading project to my colleagues and to all those who are interested in the subject. The exact dates of the workshops will be coordinated with the schedule of the department.

SABBATICAL REPORT

Sabbatical Activities Report

The objective of my sabbatical leave was to read the main works of six or seven of the most important continental philosophers of the past fifty years. I chose to read these philosophers' works for two main reasons. One, they were simply too important not to be mentioned in any survey of the history of contemporary philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences. Two, although I was familiar with their names and some of their ideas, I had never read any of their works, or any book-length study on their contribution to philosophy. The sabbatical leave has allowed me to achieve my goal in reading the main works and the subsidiary literature on the following six philosophers: Hans Georg Gadamer; Paul Ricoeur; Emmanuel Levinas; Michel Foucault; Jürgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard.

There were two possible ways of conducting my reading. One was to read directly the primary texts of the chosen philosophers, and then read the secondary literature for better comprehension. The other was to begin with the secondary literature and then read the primary literature. I chose to alternate between the two depending on the level of difficulty of reading. Some philosophers like Gadamer, Foucault, and in part Lyotard I was able to read directly without assistance first from secondary literature. The secondary literature in this case helped me to firm up and expand my understanding of the primary texts. In the case of Levinas, Ricoeur and Habermas I had to read the secondary literature

before reading the primary texts; they were simply too difficult to read for a person not acquainted well with their ideas. Furthermore, the style of writing of nearly all of these writers made them more often than not almost impenetrable. In the case of Levinas, I found that even his own interpreters did not seem always sure about the meaning of his quasi mystical writing. I was never able to read more than a dozen pages per hour (in the case of Levinas considerably less!). The reading, therefore, took me a great deal of time.

My original intention was to summarize the main ideas of each work when I finished reading it. But given the level of complexity of the ideas, arguments, and insights contained in the works, I decided very early on to summarize the main points immediately after each reading session. In most cases the writing of these summaries took me as much time as the reading itself, because I had to re-read, sometimes more than twice, the most pregnant passages. Thus I wasn't able to proceed as fast as I anticipated. However, I found this method of working to be extremely helpful in trying to reproduce the thoughts of the philosophers. The summaries I have written form the basis of the written project that follows this report.

Although the philosophers I chose to read fall all under the label of continental philosophy, I chose to approach them as forming two groups. The first one which include Gadamer, Ricoeur and Levinas belong to the hermeneutic phenomenological current of thought; the second one that include Foucault, Habermas and Lyotard concerns philosophers engaged more with questions of modern societies and the social sciences. I chose to read them in this same order.

When writing the project, I was guided by three main objectives: clear organization, readability and brevity. Considering that I have read at least a dozen of the

primary works of the philosophers, and more than a dozen of the secondary literature, I think I have achieved my objectives. But most importantly, through this wonderful opportunity afforded me I have gained confidence to impart my new acquired knowledge to students and colleagues alike.

Benefits and Value of the Sabbatical Project

I. Benefits and Value to the College

All other things being equal, I believe that a college's quality is first and foremost determined by the quality of its educators. And there is nothing that improves the quality of educators than giving them the time to expand and update their knowledge. Therefore, this sabbatical leave has given me the opportunity to contribute in raising the quality of our college by allowing me to expand and update my knowledge.

Although my chosen sabbatical project has been the reading of the works of six philosophers, it should not be forgotten that these philosophers have had enormous impact in other disciplines. Together, their contribution has been as fruitful in the social sciences and well as in the humanities. Thus the product of my sabbatical studies will certainly benefit my colleagues in my department of Philosophy and Sociology, not to mention those in the department of English, History, Art History and Political Science.

As stated in my sabbatical proposal, I plan to organize several workshops to share the results of my study with both colleagues and students. The date of these workshops will be decided in our next department meeting. Furthermore, I plan to prepare shorter monographs, handouts and WebPages based on my sabbatical studies, to reach a wider audience.

II. Personal Benefits

Not since my graduate student days have I had so much time to read and reflect on the works of philosophers I was particularly interested in. The sabbatical leave has afforded me the opportunity to engage in the study of philosophers I was interested in but neglected to study for lack of time. Although reading the works of these philosophers was often quite challenging, the rewards I reaped were enormous. For many years the names of the philosophers I studied were great names to mention without being able to say much about them. Now I have acquired a great deal of confidence of having gained insights into their works to be able to share them with students and colleagues. As an educator, I know that a great deal of confidence comes from being acquainted with primary sources. This, in essence, is what the sabbatical leave has made it possible for me: a renewed confidence in my knowledge of the subject matter and the enthusiasm of sharing it with others. I am grateful to the sabbatical committee, the salary and leaves committee and the Board of trustees of Mounts San Antonio College for this wonderful opportunity.

SABBATICAL PROJECT

CHAPTER ONE

Hans Georg Gadamer

Introduction

The two works of Hans Georg Gadamer I have chosen to study are his *Truth and Method*¹ [In German: *Warheit und Methode*], his magnum opus, and *Reason in the Age of Science*², a collection of essays which elaborate some of the basic themes expounded in *Truth and Method*.

Truth and Method, from here on simply TW, was published on Gadamer's sixtieth year. Until then, Gadamer had not made his mark on the philosophical world with an original contribution of his own, although he was highly respected for his very unique interpretations of some ancient and modern philosophers.

What was the general aim of his works? Not one simple sentence can answer this question. However, Gadamer's intention has been consistently to vindicate the legitimacy and epistemological value of what are called in German *Geisteswissenschaften*, usually translated as the moral sciences or human sciences. What I am going to do in the coming pages is to explain how Gadamer goes about doing this.

1. The constituting concepts of the human sciences in the humanistic tradition.

Gadamer maintains that the human sciences are a type of knowledge is not something that we can dispute. The true question is what type of knowledge are they, and how do they go about building knowledge? Does the fact that they share the term science

makes them science in the same sense the natural sciences are science? Do they need to? Why would the human sciences need call themselves science in the first place?

Gadamer, from the very beginning of TM states that: "The experience of the socio-historical world cannot be raised to a science by the inductive procedure of the natural sciences" (TM 4). This clearly means that the "scientificity" of the human sciences is not based on the fact that they share a "common" method with the natural sciences, because quite simply: "historical research does not endeavor to grasp the concrete phenomenon as an instance of a universal rule" (ibid.). In a sense a human science, such as history, has for objective to understand the phenomenon (read event) in its uniqueness or concreteness. It is not studied to confirm a law, or a universal principle. If this is so what constitutes knowledge in the human sciences?

To explain what constitutes knowledge in the human sciences Gadamer begins by investigating the concepts of *Bildung*, a German word that has been translated as formation, cultivation, culture in English, and those of *sensus communis*, judgment and taste. Why does he want to analyze these concepts? He wants to analyze them because they are the key concepts underlying and governing the human sciences going back to the humanistic tradition.

What in essence is *Bildung* and how does it relate to the human sciences? For Gadamer *Bildung*: "...designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities" (TM 9). It presupposes a going beyond what is naturally given; it implies a rising above: "as rising to the universal...sacrificing particularity" (TM 11). It is, in a way, "a universal sense".

According to Gadamer, we must look therefore to the concept of *Bildung* to find the scientificity of the human sciences instead of looking for it in: “the modern idea of scientific method” (TM 16)

What is *sensus communis* and what is its relation to the human sciences? The concept of *sensus communis* is implied and connected to the concept of *Bildung*. Common sense is not, as the term clearly implies, knowledge of the universal, but of the particular: it is concrete knowledge. It is a sense that is acquired by living in the community upholding shared values. It is practical, just as wisdom (*phronesis*); it is a principle of action, i.e., it is meant to guide [human] action. If so, why found the human sciences on *sensus communis*? Gadamer thinks there is a good reason for it: what is sought is not a: “conclusion based on universals” (ibid.) but the [understanding] of the circumstances.

Judgment is a concept that is closely related to common sense, because, like common sense it is directed to application (action). Or perhaps it is a concept derivative of *sensus communis*. Judgment is not something that can be learnt because as Gadamer says: “non demonstration from concepts can guide the application of rules” (TM 27-28). In explaining the concept as it is used by Baumgarten, Gadamer declares that judgment would be: “not the application of the universal but internal coherence” (ibid.). As in *sensus communis*, judgment is directed towards the individual.

Taste, at least in the humanistic tradition, is not a question of private matter. Nor is it something to be exclusively attached to birth and rank. Taste, Gadamer informs us: “in its essential nature, is not private, but a social phenomenon of the first order. It can even encounter the private inclinations of the individual like a court of law...” (TM 32).

Taste, for Gadamer is a sense, but “has no knowledge of reasons” (Ibid.). In the concept of taste is also implied judgment. But most importantly, taste, according to Gadamer: “constitutes a special way of knowing” (TM 34) and: “embrace the whole realm of morality and manners” (Ibid.)

Kant: a subverter of the humanistic tradition?

Gadamer thinks that Kant by subjectivizing aesthetics subverts the very foundation of the human sciences as laid out by the humanistic tradition. The question here is therefore how Kant subjectivizes aesthetics and what indeed is the meaning of subjectivization in this given contest for Kant?

Aesthetics is not founded on judgment of fact, but on judgment of taste, and taste cannot: “be decided by argument and proof” (TM 37). Kant is obviously aware of this. However, just because it cannot be proven by argument or proof, it does not mean that it lacks validity. As it were, aesthetic judgment has claim to universal validity. This is true for Kant and even more for Gadamer. But Kant’s conception of taste, which he borrows from the humanistic tradition, does not have the same latitude: for the humanistic tradition taste is anchored in: “the great moral and political tradition of the concept of *sensus communis*” (TM 38). Kant conceived: “the universality of this sense only negatively” (TM 39). Similarly Kant’s distinction of free and dependent beauty, though secondary in his aesthetic consideration, is more “dangerous” for Gadamer for understanding Art.

For Kant free beauty stems from pure judgment of taste without the concurrence of the intellect. Examples of this kind of beauty are arabesques, instrumental music, and

ornamental flowers. The beauty of these things is an end in itself. Bound or dependent beauty has finality in and beyond the aesthetic. Exemplars of such beauty are found in architecture, and in works of art having moral dimension in them. Here beauty is not present in its pure form but bound to other concepts.

Why does Gadamer think that such distinction is dangerous? Because the assumption becomes that what is veritably beautiful can only be free beauty. And it is free beauty alone that contains a moral finality, a *telos*. By linking aesthetics to teleology Kant is in effect relinquishing the autonomy of aesthetics. But, ironically, this is precisely what Kant set out to establish in the first place!

From Taste to Genius

How then should “bound” and “dependent” beauty be constituted since: “taste implies a denial of this binding and compelling quality”? What would give aesthetics objectivity? Kant wants to recover objectivity for art through the concept of genius, not art’s aesthetic foundation. As it were, art remains dependent on nature. For Kant: “Through genius, nature gives the rule to art”. For art does not possess a peculiar identity of its own over and against nature. Gadamer, on the contrary, wants precisely the validity and independence of aesthetic judgment. How does he plan to recover it?

For Art to maintain its autonomy and validity it cannot attach itself to the concept of taste, or cannot found itself on it. As Kant has already realized taste changes and is transient, and cannot serve the eternity that Art presumes. Thus Art must be art of genius. This art cannot be judged by taste. Genius, rather than being a rational principle, becomes an unconscious (or subconscious?) element /principle.

The art of genius emanates from what Gadamer calls *Erlebnis* (loosely translated as experience). But to understand this concept, Gadamer contrasts it to that of *Erfahrung* (another word that means also experience, but in a different sense). For Gadamer art is "*Erlebniskunst*" [Experience art]; it constitutes essentially itself as experience. Not only that, but art experience is the very essence and definition of experience itself: "Aesthetic experience is not just one kind of experience among others, but represents the essence of experience per se" (TM 60). But what does Gadamer understand by *Erlebnis*? For Gadamer *Erlebnis* is "no longer just something that flows past quickly in the stream of conscious life, it is meant as a unity and thus attains a new mode of being one" (TM 61).

The "Truth" of Art

Besides being considered as experience, art must also be considered knowledge. Thus: "art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing in that knowledge" (TM 84). In fact, Gadamer seems to rhetorically ask whether the task of aesthetics is not to ground the experience of art as a mode of knowing or knowledge (ibid.). For this to be achieved the concept of *Erfahrung* must be expanded beyond what Kant conceived it to be (Ibid.). According to Gadamer it is Hegel who rightly conceives Aesthetics as a history of truth. In this context, Gadamer's objective is to legitimate the fact that there is truth in the experience of art or more precisely: "the knowledge of truth that occurs in the experience of art" (TM 84).

2. The Ontology of the work of art

The immediate impression one gets is that Gadamer wants to accomplish in aesthetics what Heidegger has done in metaphysics, i.e., recapturing truth. But how does truth reveal itself in Art?

In order to capture the truth of art or in art, Gadamer begins by analyzing the concept of play. But why play? Because it is only through understanding what play involves that we understand the essence of art and its truth. Play, in a way, defines art.

Also the reason that Gadamer uses the concept of play is to overcome the traditional dichotomy inherent in the conception of art where the opposition between subject and object is stated and where the truth of art would not be recovered.

“Play fulfills its purpose if the player loses himself in play..., seriousness in playing is necessary to make the play wholly play. Someone who doesn’t take the game seriously is a spoilsport” (TM 103). The losing oneself in the play is analogous to the experience of art, and that is: “the work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it” (Ibid.).

Playing should not be understood as something a person does, it rather happens by itself: “The structure of play absorbs the player into itself, and thus frees him from the burden of taking initiative” (TM 105). All playing, Gadamer tells us, is a being played; it is the game that masters the players and not the other way around. “The real subject of the game is not the player, but instead it is the game itself” (TM 106).

Thus as in play: “The subject of the experience of art, what remains and persists, is not the subjectivity of those who experience it, but rather the work of art itself” (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the artwork reveals its essence when it is no longer objectified for a subject, but rather when there is a unity between the two.

The other similarity of play and art is that both impose on the players and the spectators the rules by which they need to abide. There are restrictions inherent in their structure; otherwise they both become meaningless. But at the same time both allow a free play: they have an inbuilt unpredictability; no one plays a game twice in an identical fashion. The fact that a game can be played in infinite ways within the rules, or that art can be experienced or understood in a variety of ways, does not result automatically in their misunderstanding (although this is not an impossibility!)

All plays are plays for oneself; e.g. children playing house, or a game being played (soccer, for example). We are allowed to peek in, but as such: "The game is representation itself". As artwork, the play involves the player and the spectator. Indeed the play is the ensemble of players and spectators.

Art as *Mimesis* (imitation)

Art as *mimesis*: "starts from play in the form of dancing" (TM 113). Imitation is founded essentially on recognition; recognition of something and oneself (Cfr. Ibid.). In recognition the recognized is elevated into something. And in performance art is brought into existence. An un-interpreted work of art is almost a contradictory concept for Gadamer. The work of art exists in its being interpreted (e.g. the performance of a play, say of *Romeo and Juliette*).

The question then becomes how an interpretation is deemed true, or truer than another one? To answer this, Gadamer reverts here to the concept of taste: the truth of an

interpretation becomes a matter of taste. Taste, Gadamer maintains insistently has its truth; it has the ability for truth. Truth, as he reminds us, must not be conceived only in the narrower sense of needing proof to be so.

Temporality and contemporaneity of the work of Art

Artwork in many ways is like a festival. Since it is repeated, re-presented, re-created, it is temporal. "It has its being only in becoming and returning" (TM 121). Artwork is also contemporaneous; it lives in the present; the past is re-created, re-manifested in the present. Tragedy exemplifies best artwork as play: it works on the audience

The ontological status of the other arts: the picture; the decorative and occasional art; literature and architecture

What is the mode of being of these art forms? What is their ontological status? Gadamer begins by stating that: "The mode of being of art is presentation (in German: *Darstellung*). If this is so how can we verify that this is the case with the picture?"

Picture and Copy: Gadamer believes that the picture's essence can be elicited by differentiating and contrasting it to the copy: "The essence of a copy is to have no other task but to resemble the original. The measure of its success is that one recognizes the original in the copy" (TM 133). The copy's function is to mediate; its ideal is to be is to be a mirror image, it must "efface" itself; it must absorb itself in the other; it must point to the other.

By contrast, the picture directs the attention to itself; to what it represents, to its content: “What is represented and is inseparable from its presence” (TM 134). The picture is irreplaceable, thus wholly fragile, and as such sacred. Whereas a copy is appearance, the picture has a being, a reality of its own contrary to what Plato thinks. Even when a picture represents something, like a portrait for example: “the content of the picture itself is ontologically defined as an emanation of the original” (TM 135). It even contributes to the original: “It is only through the picture that the original becomes original” (TM 136)

The essence of the picture is situated halfway between the extremes of the sign and the symbol. Sign is pure indication; whereas symbol is pure substitution. The sign (in German *Verweisung*) only points at something; it is a reminder. It wants the attention away from itself.

The symbol, on the contrary, is like the picture: “It manifests the presence of something that is really present” (TM 147). A symbol takes the place of something: it is a substitution. It calls the presence of something else. It generates reverence. However, a picture, though similar to the symbol it is not a symbol. Though it does take the place of something other than itself, it preserves its own content. Symbols do not acquire the content from within but from outside themselves.

Signs receive their significance through institutions: e.g.; the flag or even traffic laws. On the contrary, the work of art does not require the act of an institution to receive its meaning. (It does not become art because it is placed in a museum). The work of art retains its substantive-ness wherever it may be.

Architecture. Architecture has multivalence that the other arts do not possess (quotation see p. 151 here)

Literature. Like all artwork, literature possesses the element of play, i.e.: representation and interplay (to and fro).

Two activities are present in literature: reading and understanding. Both involve reproduction, performance and interpretation. Thus Gadamer states: “The work of art is actualized only when it is presented and we are drawn to the conclusion that all literary works of art are actualized only when they are read” (TM 157). “Only in the process of understanding them is the dead trace of meaning transformed back into living meaning” (TM 156).

Hermeneutics as Aesthetics

In the end, Hermeneutics’ task is essentially to absorb the aesthetic or as Gadamer puts it: “Aesthetics has to be absorbed into Hermeneutics” (TM 157), because: “understanding must be conceived as a part of the event in which meaning occurs, the event in which the meaning of all statements, those of art and all other kinds of tradition is formed and actualized” (TM 157).

3. Hermeneutics in the modern period: A Historical outline

In this context, Gadamer situates his own hermeneutics vis a vis the great hermeneutical traditions of the past. He does this by retracing Dilthey’s steps and disregarding the hermeneutical problem posed by the Old Testament in the early church

and focusing more narrowly on: “the hermeneutical method in the modern period” (TM 175)

He first begins with a pre-history of hermeneutics going back to Luther and the humanistic education. At this point he distinguishes two kinds of hermeneutics: the philological (Classics) and the theological (Scriptural).

The presentation of scriptural hermeneutics was based on the dogmatic principle that the Bible constituted a unitary whole, where the parts were interpreted in function of the whole. But for hermeneutics to rise up to become a universal instrument (in Greek *Organon*), it had to liberate itself from its dogmatic moorings; namely the dogmatic principle of the unity of the Bible. This was done, according to Gadamer, by Semler and Ernesti.

Thus for Dilthey, hermeneutics becomes independent when it ceases to serve a dogmatic purpose: i.e.: “the right proclamation of the Gospel” (TM 178).

The hermeneutics of the Fathers of the Church and of Reformation were techniques. Although [Dilthey] calls his own hermeneutics technique his conception of it is quite different: “He seeks the theoretical foundation of the procedure common to theologians and philologists... the understanding of thoughts” (TM 179).

The hermeneutical presupposition of Schleiermacher was to understand: “...understanding each other with respect to something” (TM 180); here understanding becomes agreement.

Through Spinoza, Gadamer traces his way to Enlightenment. Spinoza’s hermeneutical principle becomes understanding the author’s mind historically: “we want to know the meaning of the statements, but not their truth”. The author’s life does not

seem to be relevant to the text. For Spinoza, Euclid's life could not be relevant to understanding his geometric principles.

For Chladenius, an obscure author that Gadamer brings to illustrate his point, interpretation's goal is not to capture the true meaning of a passage, but: "to remove obscurities in texts... that hinder the student from achieving full understanding" (TM 183). In the end, his (Chladenius') hermeneutical principle consists in: "to understand the true meaning of the books themselves" (TM 184).

Schleiermacher's hermeneutical principles

For Schleiermacher, according to Gadamer, interpretation and understanding are completely interwoven: "every problem of interpretation is, in fact, a problem of understanding" (TM 185), similarly, he defines hermeneutics as: "the art of avoiding misunderstanding" (quoted in TM 185). What is understood is the truth: "not as a thought considered as part of another's life".

In Schleiermacher we observe thus a fundamental shift from Spinoza. For him: "The author can really be understood only by going back to the origin of the thought" (TM 186). Moreover, the psychological component of interpretation is as important (or perhaps even more important) than the grammatical or philological components. Hermeneutics involves, or must involve: "a placing of oneself within the whole framework of the author, an apprehension of the inner origin" of the composition of the work (Cfr. TM 186). Thus: "a text is not to be understood in terms of its subject matter but as an aesthetic construct" (TM 187)

Hermeneutics presupposes, according to Schleiermacher: “a pre-existing bond between individuals” (TM 188). What was a hermeneutical textual principle, namely that the part is understood by the whole, becomes for him a hermeneutical psychological principle, i.e.: understanding every structure of thought as an element in the total context of a man’s life.

Hermeneutics thus must be based on empathy, it must involve feeling, i.e.: sympathetic understanding. One must put oneself *empathetically* in the author’s shoes in order to understand; it is not sufficient just being an empathetic reader. Schleiermacher’s famous dictum in this regard is: “to understand a writer better than he understood himself”. The act of understanding involves: “the reproduction of the production” (TM 191).

Gadamer interprets Schleiermacher by stating that the author does not have a special privilege in interpreting his own work. Because: “in so far as he reflects on his own work [the writer] is his own reader” (TM 192). And: “the meaning that he, as reader gives his own work does not set the Standard” (ibid.). In the end what is to be understood is not “the author’s self-interpretation, but the unconscious meaning of the author” (ibid.). This, in essence, constitutes Schleiermacher’s paradoxical formula.

According to Gadamer, although Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical principles may appear universal; they have ‘perceptible limits’. Schleiermacher’s goal was the precise understanding of particular texts.

Dilthey's hermeneutical project: appraisal and criticism

What Dilthey has done, according to Gadamer is to take up romantic hermeneutics and turn it into a historical method; and indeed into: "an epistemology of the human sciences" (TM 196). For Dilthey, historical reality itself is a text that offers itself for understanding.

Gadamer questions this very hermeneutical conception of Dilthey because he believes that we, as interpreters of history are situated in it and apparently cannot presuppose a detachment from the object of our interpretation. The heart of Dilthey's project lay in the fact that: "just as Kant had answered the question of how pure science was possible, Dilthey had to answer the question of how historical experience can become a science" (TM 216). Thus: "he thought to discover the categories of the historical world that would be able to support the human sciences" (TM 216).

However, these two forms of thought are essentially different, i.e.: the natural sciences and the human sciences. A person studying history is part of it, not outside of it; something which does not occur in the pure sciences. The study of history involves the student of history. What in the end founds the possibility of historical knowledge is the intimate relation (homogeneity) of subject and object.

Dilthey's historical categories are drawn from life because knowledge of the historical is based on experience (*Erlebnis*). Whereas causality is at the root of scientific knowledge, structure (i.e.: "the experiential character of psychological continuity") stands at the foundation of the historical knowledge. In historical knowledge: "meaning was not to be located in a transcendental subject, but emerged from the historical reality" (TM 218).

Again here in Dilthey, according to Gadamer, we see the relation of the part to the whole: "Every part expresses something of the whole of life" (ibid.). Gadamer's judgment on Dilthey was that he never was able to make the transition from the psychological to the hermeneutical grounding of the human sciences. In the end for him life constitutes the real ground of the human sciences.

But there is another question that needs to be addressed here; and that is "how is infinite understanding possible by finite human nature?" This, in essence, is also the question that Dilthey had considered vis a vis Hegel, since he had claimed that one must preserve 'the consciousness of one's own finitude'. But what does this mean? According to Gadamer this does not simply mean that consciousness is finite or limited, but rather: "that awareness bears witness to the capacity of life in energy....it represents the potential infinity of the mind" (ibid.). But how, again, can historical consciousness transcend its own relativity, and achieve objective historical knowledge? For Dilthey to achieve this, the subject must adopt auto reflection and reflection on the tradition to which one belongs. The subject understands oneself in terms of one's own history. Indeed historical consciousness is a mode of self knowledge.

Before any scientific view, there is the lived life with its natural views embodied in proverbs, legends, etc... But above all it is embedded in great works of art. For Dilthey, art constitutes a form of understanding life; it indeed reveals itself to a level that is beyond the reach of observation, reflection and theory (Cfr. TM 229).

For Dilthey there wasn't mere 'extrinsic accommodation' between the methods of the human sciences and the natural scientific, instead there was genuine commonality between the two, in as much as both aimed at an objective knowledge. This agrees with

Dilthey's conviction that there was essential connection between life and knowledge. On the certainty of the two, however, Dilthey seems to maintain a Cartesian presupposition: scientific certainty is essentially based on: "what cannot be doubted" (TM 231); a criterion that does not seem to apply to the human sciences.

But are these two sciences equal? Dilthey believed to have established there equality: "by conceiving the historical world as a text to be deciphered". Thus from being experience history becomes for Dilthey a text.

Gadamer believes that Dilthey's conception is inadequate. It is simply borrowed from the natural sciences. For Gadamer, the objectivity of the human sciences is not the same as the one for the natural sciences. The objectivity of the human sciences is acquired in a different manner. In conclusion, according to Gadamer, Dilthey never overcame his Cartesianism. Thus for Gadamer the objective is: "namely to describe more adequately the experience of the human sciences and the objectivity they are able to achieve" (TM 235). How does Gadamer plan to achieve this?

Gadamer plans to achieve his goal by utilizing the phenomenological method of Husserl and Heidegger. In fact Dilthey had used Husserl, but not, as Gadamer explains, with sufficient adequacy.

Husserl proves a valid instrument for Gadamer's conception of the hermeneutical task because he introduces such productive concepts as life-world (which is antithetic to all objectivism) and meaning of experience. But Gadamer maintains also that even though Husserl made no genuine advance over Dilthey, although he made it possible for Heidegger to utilize these concepts more productively. Heidegger was able to do this

through his constitution of *Dasein's* historicity. The following quotation from TM summarizes lucidly and succinctly Heidegger's contribution to this discussion:

Heidegger gave this matter a new and radical turn in light of the question of being which he revived. In legitimating the special methodological nature of the historical sciences, he follows Husserl in that historical being is not to be distinguished from natural being, as Dilthey does. On the contrary, the natural sciences' mode of knowledge appears, rather, as a subspecies of understanding "that has strayed into legitimate task of grasping the present-at-hand in its essential unintelligibility", (*Being and Time*). *Understanding* is not resigned ideal of human experience adopted in the old age of the spirit, as with Dilthey; nor is it, as with Husserl, a last methodological ideal of philosophy in contrast to the naïveté of unreflecting life; it is , on the contrary, the *original form of the realization of Dasein*, which is being-in-the-world. Before any differentiation of understanding into the various directions of pragmatic or theoretical interest, *understanding is Dasein's mode of being, insofar as it is potentially-for-being and "possibility"*. [My emphasis the last line].

Gadamer's own project is made possible by Heidegger's new positing of the concept of understanding. For Heidegger: "Understanding is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself". Thus, for Gadamer, Heidegger gives understanding "its full ontological background" (TM 251). As Gadamer sees it : "Heidegger was the first to unfold in its full radicality: that we study history only in so far as we are ourselves 'historical' means that the historicity of human *Dasein* in its expectancy and its forgetting is the condition of our being able to re-present the past" (TM 252). In simple terms what legitimates understanding in the human sciences is the self understanding of *Dasein*.

4. Elements of a theory of hermeneutic experience

A this point the question is how hermeneutics: "can do justice to the historicity of understanding" (TM 268). Gadamer plans to achieve his objective by 'examining Heidegger's description of the hermeneutical circle' (Cfr. TM 269).

Following Heidegger, Gadamer conceives the interpreter's constant task: "as one guided by the things themselves and not by him" (Cfr. Husserl). In the act of trying to understand a text, there is always a projection that takes place. The interpreter projects a meaning in the text as a whole: "as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text" (TM 269). This is in essence what Gadamer calls "fore-projection", i.e.: reading a text always involves: "particular expectations in regard to certain meaning" (Ibid.). So interpretation is a dynamic process where 'fore-conceptions are replaced by more suitable ones' (Cfr. Ibid.). There is, of course, the danger that the person trying to understand a text can be distracted by fore-meanings. However, the proper task of understanding is to work-out appropriate projections, which are anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed by: "the things themselves" (TM 270). Thus for Gadamer: "it is quite right for the interpreter not to approach the text directly, relying solely on the fore-meaning already available to him, but rather explicitly to examine the legitimacy, i.e.: the origin and validity the fore-meanings dwelling in him" (TM 270). In the final analysis, the objective is to: "remain open to the meaning of the other person or text" (TM 271). The interpreter should in no way stubbornly impose on the text but rather should be: "prepared for it [i.e.: the text, the person] to tell him something" (TM *ibid.*). This involves being sensitive to the text's alterity which eventually must lead: "the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices" (TM *ibid.*). Thus Gadamer's prescription is: "to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own meanings" (TM 271-72). This involves bringing to the conscious level our anticipatory ideas: "so as to check them" (Ibid.)

The nature of “prejudice”

Gadamer informs us that the concept of prejudice did not have a negative connotation it acquired during the Enlightenment. In Rationalism it appears that the objective of scientific knowledge is to discredit prejudices. For Descartes, for example, nothing should be accepted if it can be doubted. Enlightenment, on the other hand, distinguishes, two kinds of prejudices: “the prejudice due to human authority and that due to over-hastiness” (TM 274). Neither forms of prejudice are acceptable for Enlightenment philosophers, since: “Enlightenment tends to accept no authority and to decide everything before the judgment seat of reason” (Ibid.). Since no tradition can claim any authority of any sort: “it is reason that constitutes the ultimate source of all authority” (Ibid.). For Enlightenment tradition is an object of critique.

Romanticism, on the other hand, is in clear opposition to Enlightenment’s attitude. To begin with, it is during Romanticism that we see the emergence of the historical school and historiography as an objective of knowledge: “which stands on a par with the knowledge of nature achieved by modern science” (TM 277). But the problem with Romanticism is that it absolutizes historical consciousness to the extent that it involves: “a radicalization of the Enlightenment”, so that Romanticism critique of Enlightenment ends up becoming itself Enlightenment; discrediting in the process all prejudices.

However: “The overcoming of all prejudices...will itself prove to be a prejudice” (TM 277), and removing it is an objective of philosophical hermeneutics, so that: “an appropriate understanding of the finitude which dominates not only our humanity but also our historical consciousness” (277).

For Gadamerian hermeneutics, prejudice is not a type of distorted consciousness but defines: “the historical reality of his [the human being’s] being” (TM 278). We, as human beings, understand ourselves through the lenses of our historical life.

Prejudice as precondition for understanding

Gadamer’s primary intent at this juncture is to rehabilitate the concept of prejudice. This becomes necessary if we take into account the fundamental finiteness and historical-ness of the human being (*Dasein*). The question then is: “What is the ground of the legitimacy of prejudices” (TM 278).

Here, Gadamer tries to overthrow Enlightenment “prejudice against prejudice”. Enlightenment had rejected prejudice because it either was derived from authority or over-hastiness. Gadamer would in fact want to rehabilitate the concept of prejudice by precisely rehabilitating authority.

Firstly, authority is not “bestowed but earned and must be earned if someone is to lay claim to it” (TM 281). Thus submitting to authority is not an irrational act, but a well reasoned act which emanates from awareness of limitations of the person assenting. It is no blind obedience, but an act of knowledge.

Tradition as a form of authority. According to Gadamer, we owe it to Romanticism the rehabilitation of tradition. Tradition is a form of authority that we cannot afford to dismiss as irrational: “the real force of morals” (TM 282), and the determining element of institutions and attitudes is anchored to tradition. It makes them valid. What sustains tradition is not irrationality; on the contrary, it maintains itself through willing affirmation and cultivation. As it were, we are: “always situated within

traditions"; we conceive it to be part of us. Not even the natural sciences escape the elements of tradition. In short, tradition permeates all.

The consequences of tradition in Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics was based on the principle that the whole must be understood in terms of the parts and vice-versa: "Thus the movement of understanding is constantly from the whole to the part and back to the whole" [TM 291] (This is what Gadamer often calls the to and fro of Hermeneutics). "The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding" (Ibid.).

How is understanding possible? For Schleiermacher understanding is made possible by transposing oneself into the perspective within which one has formed his views. But this is what Gadamer does not accept, because this would involve trying: "to understand how what is he [the author] is saying is right" (TM 292). So what is the alternative that Gadamer proposes?

Gadamer turns here to: "Heidegger's description and existential grounding of the hermeneutic circle" (TM 293) in order to illuminate the miracle of understanding. According to this view: "the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding" (Ibid.). More to the point, understanding is: "the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter" (Ibid.).

"The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition" (Ibid.).

But it must be noted, however, that tradition must not be conceived as a static condition. The interpreter, as it were, participates in the evolution of tradition.

The understanding of traditionary (this is a technical word!!) text, e.g.: The Bible is based: “on the expectations drawn from our prior relation to the subject matter” (TM 294). Thus: “the most basic of all hermeneutic preconditions remains one’s own fore-understanding, which comes from being concerned with the same subject” (Ibid.). In essence, hermeneutics is possible only where a bond to the subject matter is recognized.

Temporal distance as precondition for understanding

The fact that there is temporal distance between the traditionary text and the interpreter (or reader) is not a negative condition, but: “a positive and productive condition enabling understanding” (TM 297). There is, in a sense, a purgative effect of temporal distance: “Only when all relations to the present time have faded away can their real nature appear, so that the understanding of what is said in them can claim to be authoritative and universal” (Ibid.). This is what generates historical objectivity, i.e.: historical closure of a historical event is what allows us to see it in its whole-ness. Paradoxically it needs to be dead too become interesting.

Historical distance: “lets the true meaning of the object emerge fully. But the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process” (TM 298). Temporal distance is, we should not forget, a dynamic process, i.e.: constant movement.

Wirkungsgeschichte: History of Effect

What Gadamer wants to establish with analysis of this concept is that: “consciousness of being affected by history is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation” (TM 301). This is a condition that we need to take account in order to understand what understanding involves: we are always, as it were, situated historically: “and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished” (Ibid.).

The concept of situation (or situated-ness) equates with the concept of horizon and: “The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Ibid.). According to this meaning: “horizon is rather something into which we move and that moves with us” (TM 303). Thus there aren’t two closed horizons, i.e.: the one belonging to the person who is trying to understand and the historical horizon in which he places himself, but: “one great horizon that moves from within... and embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness” (Ibid.). Indeed: “to acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand.... [in other word] to gain perspective...It involves foregrounding”. The assumption is that: “The horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past” TM 305). Thus understanding involves: “the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves” (Ibid.).

Hermeneutics as application

According to Gadamer, Hermeneutics was conceived has having three parts: *subtilitas intelligendi* (understanding), *subtilitas explicandi* (interpretation), and *subtilitas*

applicandi (application). The latter was added in later times. None of them was conceived as methods, but rather as talents (subtleties).

Understanding and interpretation are not as such two distinct elements but are aspects of the same event: “interpretation is the explicit form of understanding” (TM 306). The third element of component of hermeneutics, i.e.: application came about through the: “fusion of understanding and interpretation” (Ibid.). For Gadamer, application, e.g.: preaching the Scripture as edification, should be perceived as a distinctive or separable element of hermeneutics, but should be considered as an integral part of it.

This is clearly the case, for example, with philological, legal, and theological hermeneutics: here application is inseparable from understanding and interpretation. Legal and theological texts are not simply meant to be understood historically, but to be concretized: “understanding here is always application” (TM 308). What Gadamer wants to do in the end is to apply this conception of legal and theological hermeneutics to the human sciences; he declares: “our thesis is that historical hermeneutics too has a task of application to perform” (TM 310).

Analogy between the Aristotelian conception of ethics and hermeneutics

As we know, for Aristotle ethics is a practical science. For him “arête” (virtue) is based on “praxis” (practice) and “ethos” (custom); unlike Plato or Socrates who equate virtue and knowledge. The objective of ethics for Aristotle is: “to determine what the concrete situation asks of him [the person]” (TM 311). The abstract knowledge must address the individual concrete situation if it wants to remain meaningful. Similarly,

hermeneutics cannot be a pure abstraction detached from the concrete, just as in ethics: “the knower is not standing over against a situation ...”(TM 312). The moral agent for Aristotle is never really involved in what is always the same; moral circumstances vary always. The purpose of moral knowledge is to guide action.

Nevertheless, Gadamer wants to make it clear that ethical knowledge differs substantially from technical knowledge, although both involve application. Gadamer outlines their differences as follows:

“What is right, for example, cannot be fully determined independently of the situation that require a right action from me, whereas the *eidos* of what a craftsman wants to make is fully determined by the use for which it is intended” (TM 315).

Similarly, application of the law requires a different set of consideration: it is not a simple question of applying the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law. This indeed is what Aristotle meant by *Epieikeia* (equity), i.e.: correction of the law. Since there is no simple application of the law, the law is in essence deficient because human reality is imperfect. What in the final analysis Gadamer wants to convey is that understanding in hermeneutics involves: “relating the text to this situation” (TM 321).

By similar approach, Gadamer finds points of comparison between the jurist and the theologian. Both: “when faced with a text, have an immediate expectation of meaning” (TM 323), and: “in every hermeneutical instance interpretation involves concretization”, i.e.: the law is meant to be applied. Similarly in theology, in preaching the interpretation finds its concretization.

The structure of historically effected consciousness

What defines experience at its core is repeatability. And this holds true for either the natural or the human sciences: “just as in the natural sciences experiments must be verifiable, so also must the whole process be capable of being checked in the human sciences also” (342). But experience does not coincide with science, or with induction: it is only a necessary condition for science (Cfr. TM 345). Experience is tied to individual instances: it is open by its very nature to constant confirmation. It is open to another experience. To illustrate this point, Gadamer brings up the notion of “the experienced person”.

An experienced person is not one who: “knows everything and knows better than anyone else” (TM 350), rather it is one who is un-dogmatic; one who is predisposed to be open to new experiences. Thus the very essence of experience or the projection of experience is not towards a definitive knowledge, but in openness to experience. It is in this sense, therefore, that: “experience...belongs to the historical nature of man” (Ibid.)

What does experience produce, what knowledge does it bring? “Insight into the limitations of humanity” (TM 351). Thus ‘experience is experience of human finitude’. The experienced person then is one with an awareness that he is not: “master of time, nor the future... [he is aware that] all foresight is limited and plans are uncertain” (Ibid.). In the end then: “genuine experience is experience of one’ own historicity” (Ibid.).

This, in essence, is what Gadamer wants to do: apply the general structure of experience to hermeneutical experience. He remarks that: “hermeneutical experience is concerned with experience” (TM 352) and “tradition is language” and expresses itself like a Thou; “a Thou is not an object; it relates itself to us” (Ibid.). Our relation with

Thou, the experience of the Thou or any other typical event is based on predictability: i.e.: knowledge of human nature. This indeed what experience means. The idea here is not to objectify tradition. This would lead to a naïve faith in method. And method by excluding everything subjective thinks to find the truth. What this in the end does is to flatten out “the nature of hermeneutical experience” (TM 353).

The second way the Thou is experienced is when the Thou is acknowledged as a person, i.e.: recognition. Thus tradition must be related to as if a living person: “A person who reflects himself out of a living relationship to tradition destroys the true meaning of this tradition in exactly the same way” (TM 354). As with a person, we need to relate to tradition with expectant openness: “openness...involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so” (TM 355).

The hermeneutical precedence of the question

Gadamer maintains that: “the essence of the question is to have sense” (TM 356). In a way a question gives the direction of the question: “a question places what is questioned in particular perspective” (Ibid.). Asking questions is more difficult than answering them [Cfr. Plato’s Socrates] provided the questions stem from genuine desire for knowledge, and not simply meant to win an argument. The desire to know is what, in the end, forms the question and it implies as well that does not know.

What is observed in the Platonic dialogues is the: “Priority of the question” in all human knowledge and discourse. The question marks the path to knowledge. The question: “breaks open the being of the object” (TM 356), because it reveals “the

questionability of what is questioned” (TM 357). Every question, i.e., genuine question, has the character of openness and indeterminacy. If it does not, then we cannot speak of a true question, e.g.: the rhetorical question. However, “the openness of the question is not boundless. It is limited by the horizon of the question” (Ibid.). In other words it also limits it in that it explicitly establishes presuppositions.

The distinction between a right and wrong question is based on these considerations: a wrong question is one that: “does not reach the state of openness but precludes reaching it by retaining false presuppositions” (Ibid.). In “deciding the question is the path of knowledge” is decided (TM 358). A question is decided by the preponderance of reasons. That, in sense, the reason why: “only a person who has questions can have knowledge” (TM 359). Although the essence of the question is to be posed, Gadamer speaks also of the occurrence or emergence of the question: it is as if it breaks into our consciousness.

True dialogue intended for knowledge and not as talk for cross purposes should: “has the structure of question and answer” (TM 360). This means that the first condition of the dialogue is: “ensuring that the other person is with us” (Ibid.) [Cfr. Platonic dialogues) so that both parties let themselves be: “conducted by the subject matter” (TM 361) and: “try to argue the other person down” (TM 361). According to Gadamer, the objective is: “not in trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength” (Ibid.).

Gadamer sees the hermeneutical task in precisely these terms: the interpreter is in a dialogue rapport with the text (Cfr. 362). He thus again returns: “to the conclusion that the hermeneutical phenomenon too implies the primacy of the dialogue and the structure

of the question and answer” (TM 362). In this case, it is the text which poses the question to the interpreter: “interpretation always involves a relation to the question that is asked of the interpreter. To understand a text means to understand this question” (TM 363). In this consists, for Gadamer, the horizon of the question: “we understand the sense of the text only by acquiring the horizon of the question” (Ibid.) and in the end: “the logic of the human sciences is a logic of the question” (Ibid.)

What the human scientist is then required to do is to: “attempt to reconstruct the question to which the traditional text is the answer” (TM 367). All of this derives its validity from the fact that ‘the question is part of the tradition’ (Cfr.370).

5. Language and Hermeneutics

Language as the medium of hermeneutic experience

What Gadamer wants within this context is to situate language at the center of the hermeneutical experience. In order to this he draws parallels between conversation, translation and to illuminate the hermeneutical experience.

Conversation. It is more accurate to say, Gadamer tells us, that we “fall into conversation” or that we find ourselves in it, rather than perhaps to say that we actively produce it. In conversation we are led rather than lead: “...a conversation has a spirit of its own...” (TM 385) we don’t know where conversation leads us. Naturally in conversation it is language which is at the center of it all. Where the conversation takes place into two different languages there is the intermediary function of translation. The function of the translator is to preserve the meaning of what is to be understood across the languages. For this reason translation becomes invariably interpretation (TM 386).

Similarly, the hermeneutical problem is not concerned about the: “mastery of language, but coming to a proper understanding about the subject matter, which takes place in the medium of language” (TM 387). When one has to rely on the translation (of say a traditional text), the hermeneutical task is further complicated since: “there is one conversation between the interpreter and the other and second. the interpreter and oneself” (Ibid.). In conversation, the aim is to come to an understanding. This is also what is aimed at in hermeneutics, the aim being ‘understanding the texts’.

Translation has its own intrinsic limits. Translation, as Gadamer tells us: “like all interpretation is highlighting” (TM 388). As translator one is caught in a situation where: “he must make a constant renunciation” (Ibid.). Just as in conversation, we try to put ourselves in the shoes of the interlocutor. The translator tries to: “transpose himself completely into the author” (Ibid.). But in neither complete understanding is reached.

The analogies between conversation, interpretation and translation can be summed up as follows:

As stated, translation coincides with interpretation. The interpreter relates to his text as the partners of a conversation relate to each other ‘in reaching an understanding’. What binds together the conversation partners is a “common subject matter; and the same with the text and its interpreter. Participation is what guarantees understanding between conversation partners. The same happens with the translator and with the interpreter and his text. Gadamer refers to this phenomenon as “hermeneutical conversation” (TM 384).

The above comparisons lead Gadamer to conclude that: “language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs” (TM 390), that: “understanding occurs in interpreting...and all understanding is interpretation” (Ibid.).

The verballity of tradition

Tradition, according to Gadamer, is essentially verbal. And this is clearly made manifest in the case of written tradition. Written tradition is the one to express best what tradition is essentially as opposed for example to monuments which are mute (or dumb). Written texts are such because they always: "express a whole" where archaeological remnants are fragmentary.

The hermeneutical task is primarily concerned with the written text. "Non-literary monuments" have hermeneutical significance only by extension, because: "...they cannot be understood of themselves" (TM 392). "...Writing is central to the hermeneutical phenomenon" (TM 393) because writing has in essence "a life of its own" (Ibid.). "What is fixed in writing has raised itself into a public sphere of meaning in which everyone who can read has an equal share" (TM 393).

Although writing has the peculiar nature of "having a life of its own", it is also doomed by weaknesses. Whereas conversation partners have the opportunity to clarify their meaning in the present and to an understanding, the written text and its interpreter have such no possibility. Thus the written will ever fall: "victim to misunderstanding, intentional or unintentional. Plato pointed out this in Socrates rejection of the written; and Gadamer concurs. This why he speaks of the: "helplessness of the written". The written words are unaided; they stand, as it were, in their own nakedness, and as opposed to the spoken word, they cannot use: "manners of speech", "tone of voice", "tempo", etc... to come to an understanding. That is why it is so important for the text: "the art of writing". Thus the written text lets itself be handled by the reader: it makes the reader: "the arbiter of its claim" (TM 396).

In the end: “the horizon of understanding cannot be limited either by what the writer originally had in mind or the horizon of the person to whom the text was originally addressed” (TM 396). In essence: “what is fixed in writing has detached itself from the contingency of its origin and its author, and made it free for new relationships” (It seems her that Gadamer is speaking about an unencumbered bachelor!!).

Language and understanding

There is a fundamental connection between language and understanding. In order to understand what a text is saying: “we must translate it into our own language” (TM 397).

Interpreting involves bringing our: “own preconceptions into play so that the text’s meaning can really be made to speak to us.” (TM 398). All interpretation is in the end verbal, even where the object of interpretation is not considered verbal, e.g.: the performative arts such as music and dancing. Even these “interpretations will take place in verbal form” (TM 401).

To illustrate his point Gadamer traces the history of the theories of language dating back to the Greeks.

In the conventionalist theory the meaning of words are reached by agreement and practice. Selection theory holds that there is a natural agreement between word and object ‘governed by the idea of correctness (*orthotes*). Although Plato makes these distinctions in the *Cratylus*, he does not side with either of them, and does not arrive at any conclusion. What Plato achieves in the dialogue, according to Gadamer, is to capture the true nature of language as opposed to the Sophists. It is not possible to realize perfect

adequation of words and things. The truth of a word: “lies rather in its perfect intellectuality”, and as such all words are true: “their being is wholly absorbed in their meaning” (TM 411), i.e.: they cannot suffer the consequences of being copies of something, judged by reference. The truth of words lies within them and in their mutual relations: “The name, the word, seems to be true or false to the extent that it is used rightly or wrongly” (TM 412).

Language for Gadamer is not a tool, an instrument. To further elaborate on this theme he revisits the concept of sign and copy which he discussed earlier in TM. Are words sign or copies? To answer this question he explores Leibniz’s conception of language, in order to refute it. According to Gadamer: “language is something other than a mere sign system denoting the totality of objects” (TM 416), it is: “...rather, the ideality of the meaning lies in the word itself” (TM 417).

The medieval *verbum* is not exactly the Greek *Logos* The medieval *verbum* had a richness of meaning that permitted it to not only explain incarnation and creation, but also the mystery of the Trinity. For example, Aquinas discovers in the process of thought the presence of the word (*verbum*), or even perhaps the analogy between the two. There is simultaneity between thought and word, just as there is simultaneity in the: “process of the divine process” (TM 423): Cfr. *Actus ex actu*. Thus for Aquinas:

- A. The word is like a mirror in which the thing is seen; the word is considered here as a perfect reflection of the thing.
- B. The word is never perfect: “No human word can express our mind completely” (TM 424); this is why, unlike the divine word, the human word consist of many words.

C. The human word cannot contain entirely its object unlike the divine word.

The conclusions are: “that the inner mental word is not formed by a reflective act” (TM 425); “the word does not emerge in a sphere of the mind that is still free of thought” (Ibid.) and finally: “...the word is that in which knowledge is consummated” (Ibid.) This in the end leads one to conceive of language as an event.

Language as horizon of a hermeneutic ontology (language and world)

We owe to Humboldt, according to Gadamer, the reflective approach to language: as there are many languages, there correspondingly many world views. In essence, for Humboldt, each individual language reflects a worldview. By this, he does not however mean that all languages are equally endowed, but that each enjoys a “relative perfection”. In learning a new language we enter the worldview of the community which speaks it. By the same act, we expand our worldview. This, however, is not as such a clear cut process. For Humboldt, when we acquire a new language we are not free from the one we already possess, i.e.: we carry, or are bound to over our own “language view” in a foreign language.

According to Gadamer, in the hermeneutical experience the reverse seems to happen: “to have learned a foreign language and to be able to understand it... means nothing else than to be in a position to accept what is said in it as said to oneself”.

On the question of the origin of language, Humboldt clearly stated that: “language was human from its beginnings” (TM 440). This is something that Gadamer agrees with.

For him, language is not one of the things invented by humans; neither one of their possessions. It is through language: “that man has a world at all” (Ibid.). And this world of man is essentially verbal. To this Humboldtian view of language, Gadamer adds: “that man’s being in the world is primordially linguistic” (Ibid.). The world of man is verbal.

In order to situate this vision in the right perspective, Gadamer makes here a distinction between the concepts of environment and world. Environment as a milieu in which a living creature makes its living is a concept that applies to all living creatures, including man himself, of course. But the concept of world applies only to man, because only man has a relationship with the world. At the same time, it is this relationship which gives man: “freedom from the environment” (TM 441). This freedom is largely contained in language; e.g.: freedom to name. Environment does not and cannot impose itself on man.

The fact: “language and world are related in a fundamental way does not mean that world becomes the object of language” (TM 447). Language does not objectify the world, on the contrary: “the world presents itself through language. Thus no science, be it physics, biology or even: “a world equation that contained everything” (TM 448) can aspire to absolute knowledge, because every knowledge contains its observer. No type of knowledge can claim to know the being in itself.

Similarly: “...there is no point of view outside experience of the world of language which it could become an object” (TM 449). However, “to have a language involves a mode of being that is quite different from the way animals are confined to their habitats” (Ibid.). Thus language and science have essentially different relationships to the

world: the factualness of language should not be confused with the objectivity science (Cfr. 450)

Language and finitude

It is through language that the order and structure of our experience is formed and changed: “the event of language corresponds to the finitude of man in a far more radical sense” (TM 453). And it is from this point that our: “hermeneutical experience unfolds”. At this juncture, Gadamer links the three above considered concepts of language, hermeneutics and finitude.

Language has the function of relating to the totality of being, of mediating: “the finite, historical nature of man to himself and the world” (TM 454). The finitude of man is contained in the verbal character of his world; that is why Gadamer states that: “All human speaking is finite...laid up within it infinity of meaning” (Ibid.).

The polarity of subject-object was not the foundation on which Greek thought was based upon: “Their thinking always regarded itself as an element of being itself” (TM 456). Thus dialectic for the Greeks was not: “a movement performed by thought; what thought experiences is the movement of the thing itself” (Ibid.). Hegel, Gadamer informs us, has this Greek conception of dialectics. What he [Gadamer] has done or attempted to do is to overcome the dichotomy subject-object to detach in the end: “our selves from the Cartesian basis of science” (TM 457). This does not mean, however, that Gadamer wants us to revert completely to Greek or German idealism. What he wants to propose instead, following apparently in the footsteps of his teacher Heidegger, is to conceive the hermeneutical experience as fundamentally linguistic and thus a: “dialogue between

tradition and its interpreter” (Ibid.). Here Gadamer analyses three related concepts in the hermeneutical experience: Hearing, Dialectic and Speculative element.

Hearing. (in German: *hören, zugehörigkeit*). Gadamer links the hermeneutic experience to the experience of hearing. He, like Aristotle, believes in the primacy of hearing over seeing in hermeneutics. Hearing is about language, and not with vision. Tradition has to do with language and involves hearing: “the hearer who understands it relates its truth to his own linguistic orientation to the world” (TM 459). It is correct, says Gadamer, to say that language speaks to us, rather than to say that we speak the language. In a sense we are acted upon by language.

Dialectic. For Plato dialectic had more to do with clearing obstruction on the path to knowledge. This is precisely what Socratic dialectic was about: to make the truth emerge. Similarly in thought: “it is the thing itself that asserts its force...if we disregard obvious appearances and opinion...and rely on the power of thought” (TM 460).

But unlike in the sciences, there is something peculiar that happens in the hermeneutical experience, it is an event that happens to us. Hermeneutical experience is founded on listening.

Speculative element. There is also the speculative element in the hermeneutical experience. Here speculative should be contrasted to dogmatic. The concept of speculative is made to adhere by Gadamer to its etymology: i.e.: reflection in a mirror. A thought is speculative when it asserts a relationship: “as a mirroring...in which the reflection is nothing but pure appearance” (TM 462).

Speculative relation is supposed to pass into dialectical presentation. For Hegel indeed: “the dialectical is the expression of the speculative...and is the “truly” speculative” (TM 463).

Coming to language, Gadamer asserts the speculative nature of language in the sense of: “the realization of meaning”, as the event of speech, of mediation, of coming to an understanding (Cfr. 464). The meaning of a statement is actually concealed “by methodological exactness”. What goes on record does not contain the whole meaning: on the contrary there is the: “infinity of what is not said” that awaits disclosure and understanding. Thus: “the hermeneutical relation is a speculative relation” (Ibid.). And in the end its task is to reveal: “...a totality of meaning in all its relation” (TM 467).

The hermeneutical task is: “not a regrettable distortion that affects the purity of understanding, but the condition of its possibility” (Ibid.). It is only when there is no [definite] accord between text and its interpreter that a hermeneutical task begins: the dialectic of question and answer precedes the dialectic of interpretation.

Hermeneutics is not just a field of knowledge, a subject. It is indeed a “universal aspect of philosophy”, and not simply: “the methodological basis of the so called human sciences” (TM 471)

Concluding results

What has Gadamer shown so far? He believes that he has shown or done the following:

- A. The wrong headed presumption of the natural sciences and their methodologism aimed at scientific objectivity.

- B. The linguistic nature of our experience of the world
- C. Founding a universal hermeneutics concerned with the relationship of man and the world.
- D. The finitude of the verbal event.

The Beautiful and the Good (Kalos kai Agathos)

The thesis upheld by Gadamer, following a reflection on Plato, is that beauty is a mediating event between idea and appearance. Beauty is self-revelatory; it is never deceptive; it is there to be seen (and heard). Unlike the good, “it can be grasped” (TM 475). The Good, on the other hand, is never manifest: indeed there can be an appearance of goodness! It has not an obvious “light of its own”. It is for this reason that Plato chooses Beauty as the mediating concept between the idea and appearance.

The mode of being of beauty is radiance, and thus it “makes itself manifest”(TM 477). It has also the power of making other things visible; it illuminates. What does this mean in the end?

- A. It shows us “the radiance of the beautiful and the evident-ness of the intelligible
- B. Beauty and understanding have the character of an event
- C. Both, beauty and understanding have the character of immediacy: truth and beauty manifest themselves in their immediacy

Based on these points, Gadamer concludes his magnum opus with the following summarizing thoughts:

Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event through which meaning asserts itself. So it is well founded for us to use the same concept

of play for the hermeneutical phenomenon as for the experience of the beautiful. When we understand a text, what is meaningful in it captivates us just as the beautiful captivates us. It has asserted itself and captivated us before we can come to ourselves and be in a position to test the claim to meaning that it makes. What we encounter in the experience of the beautiful and in understanding the meaning of tradition really has something of the truth of play about it. In understanding we are drawn into an event of truth and arrive, as it were, too late, if we want to know what we are supposed to believe.

Thus there is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, however much the will of our knowledge must be directed toward escaping their thrall. Throughout our investigation it has emerged that the certainty achieved by using scientific methods does not suffice to guarantee truth. This especially applies to the human sciences, but it does not mean that they are less scientific; on the contrary, it justifies the claim to special humane significance that they have always made. The fact that in such knowledge the knower's own being comes into play certainly shows the limits of the method, but not of science. Rather, what the tool of method does not achieve must – and really can – be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth (TM 484).

CHAPTER TWO

Paul Ricoeur

Introduction

Paul Ricoeur's *Fallible Man*³ [*L'homme fallible*] is a division of the second part of what Ricoeur had planned to be a two part study of "Philosophy of the will". The first part, which appeared in 1950, was submitted as his thesis for the "Doctorat d'Etat" (France's highest and most prestigious academic title until recently) and bears the title of *Le Volontaire et l'Involontaire* [in English it has been translated as *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*]. The second part is titled *Finitude et Culpabilite'*, and contains the two divisions of *Fallible Man* and *The Symbolism of Evil* [in French *La Symbolique du mal*]. A third part called *Poetics of Transcendence* was projected, but never published (or perhaps never completed).

The entire Philosophy of Will series belongs roughly to the middle phase of Ricoeur's philosophical career. His early works were studies of the works of Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, i.e.: focused on Phenomenology and Existentialism. His later works, from 1965 onwards are almost entirely dedicated to Hermeneutics. Ricoeur is today best known mainly for his hermeneutical philosophy. Indeed he is considered, along with Gadamer, as the pre-eminent philosopher of Hermeneutics. The works that I will be studying in the following pages pre-date the strictly hermeneutical phase of Ricoeur's thought, and they have not received in recent years the kind of attention that his later works have attracted. But this does not in anyway

mean that they are dated or superseded by his subsequent works. They contain very interesting ideas that continue to enrich our conception of the human person.

Objectives of *Fallible Man*

The question that *Fallible Man* [from here on FM] intends to explore is: "...the human locus of evil" (FM xliii); and that is: what is the point of insertion of evil in human reality (Cfr. Ibid.). Thus the study is about fallibility, i.e.: weakness that makes evil possible (Cfr. Ibid). Its ultimate goal is the understanding of human reality. And as such what Ricoeur does in these works is what is known as philosophical anthropology, i.e.: the philosophical reflection on the human condition or reality.

Fallibility is a concept that allows us to understand: "that evil could 'come to the world' through man" (Ibid.). Whereas in the first part of his *Philosophy of Will* Ricoeur had focused on the phenomenology of will, here he directs his attention to human fallibility. The two are essential in comprehending human reality.

How does Ricoeur justify his approaching the problem of evil from the perspective of human fallibility? The answer of Ricoeur is direct and simple: however we want to approach this problem, it always presupposes human reality. In his own words: "In all hypotheses, evil manifests itself in man's humanity" (FM xliv). This is isn't arbitrary as one might think according to Ricoeur. Evil is necessarily connected to choice; freedom that is. Though freedom may not be its origin, it is its sphere. Where to begin then?

Ricoeur begins his study with two fundamental hypotheses:

First Hypothesis: Fragility and fallibility are defining characteristics of the human person. Here Ricoeur makes reference to the Fourth Meditation of Descartes (On Truth and Falsity). The answer sought is how the human person becomes fallible in knowledge and thought.

Second Hypothesis: There is a non-coincidence of man with himself (consider the greatness and misery of the human being). It would be through this non-coincidence that evil finds its way into human reality. This is also at the same time what reveals the human being as an intermediary being. Not an intermediary being between the divine and the brute, but within the human being's selves. This intermediacy Ricoeur intends to explain not through Descartes, but through a transcendental synthesis of the imagination: i.e.: certainty and truth; intention and intuition; etc...

After setting the above two hypotheses, Ricoeur begins by analyzing the composite nature of the human being: "The non-coincidence with him/her self"; i.e.: his/her disproportion (FM 4). The non-coincidence with oneself of the human person must be given, according to Ricoeur, in a way that is prior to philosophy: "in a pre-comprehension that lends itself to reflection" (Ibid.). Where does Ricoeur plan to find this? He plans to find it in: "those excellent expressions which tell of man's pre-comprehension of himself as miserable" (FM 5).

The two philosophers of the misery of man whom Ricoeur analyzes are Plato and Pascal. Plato who thinks the soul miserable because she holds opinions and makes mistakes and is always in tension, i.e.: unfulfilled; and Pascal who speaks of "two infinities, the mean"; i.e.: Man who stands between infinity and nullity; his smallness, weakness and mortal condition.

Point of Departure

Ricoeur chooses the power of knowing as a point of departure for a philosophical anthropology. He chooses this following Plato to determine the intersection where fallibility (finitude) occurs.

Following Kant, but not entirely, Ricoeur opts for a method based on reflection and not introspection, which is obviously Cartesian. He believes that this would be the only method appropriate to shed light on the object. In fact it is reflection which permits a scission between subject and object, between perceiver and perceived, knower and known.

A reflection on finitude refers us directly to the body. However, the body is not apprehended immediately. What is immediately experienced are: "things, living beings, persons in the world" (FM 19). My finitude emerges only when a contradiction arises with what I believe.

How should the body be perceived? Ricoeur conceived the body as essentially a mediator: "between myself and the world" (Ibid.). It is not an envelope or an enclosure; a fact that "thingsify" (objectify) me. Rather: "it opens me onto the world...by everything it is able to do" (Ibid.). To some extent this is also the locus of my finitude. But in what way? In the way that it presents me only with a point of view: "It consists in perspectival limitation of perception" (FM 20). I never perceive objects in their entirety, only their

particular sides. Thus objects are the sum of "silhouettes". It is this that in the end what reveals me as: "a finite center of perspective" (FM 21). As much as my body is openness to the world, it is also a delimited: "here from where the thing is seen" (Ibid.).

Obviously my body moves, and by moving it can change the object of its perception. The body's movement in space is also what reveals its unity with the self; with it, it determines the specific locality of perception and thus the finitude of perception. This in turn is what establishes the intrinsic inadequacy of perception: its one-sidedness. In sum: "to perceive from here is the finitude of perceiving something. The point of view is the ineluctable initial narrowness of my openness to the world" (FM 23)

In the second section of this chapter, Ricoeur passes to analyze language as "infinite verb" by contrasting it to perception. As he puts it: "...I am not merely a situated onlooker, but a being who intends and expresses as an intentional transgression of the situation" (FM 27). Language has a peculiarity that perception does not have: it has the capacity to transcend the given, the present: "I say more than I see when I signify" (FM 28). Language must come: "to the aid of the body..." (FM 29). It is through language that perception becomes significative (meaning signifying something).

For Ricoeur then perception and language create the dialectic of infinitude and finitude (What he calls the dialectic of "name" and "perspective"). Whereas perception is exhausted in certainty, only verb (i.e.: language) possesses truth. And the two are irreducible. What this reveals is that the human person is not completely immersed in the world but transcends it through speech.

The "great mediator" between perception and speech is transcendental imagination because it brings about consciousness (but not self-consciousness) and

because it is consciousness that: "... spends itself in founding the unity of meaning and presence in the object..." (FM 45). In the Final analysis the fallibility of the human being resides precisely in this: in his/her intermediate status and mediator of the infinite and the finite in things (Cfr. FM 46).

Fault

After exploring fallibility in knowledge and thinking, Ricoeur attempts to do the same with human will. The theory of will, to be exact is something that Ricoeur had dealt with in the first part of his philosophy of will in *Le Volontaire et l' involontaire*. But here he apprehends the will from the perspective of fallibility.

According to Ricoeur, the theory of will occupies an intermediary position between the pure and the total, i.e.: "...the point where the abstract is directed into the concrete" (FM 50). That is why perhaps he calls this chapter of the book practical synthesis. And that is: from theoretical finitude to concrete finitude. The locus where practical finitude occurs is in character: "...the transcendental notion of finite perspective may be summed up in the notion of character" (Ibid.).

Ricoeur approaches the problem of fallibility in the will by degrees. First he analyzes motivation, not as explained by applied psychology, but from a philosophical perspective. He perceives motivation as defining essentially human freedom: "I *constitute* my actions to the extent that I gather in reasons from them" (FM 52).

Ricoeur sees also the analogy that exists between "sensory receptivity" and "motivation". As such sensory receptivity's transcendental reflection presents the key to

analyzing motivation. There is even a metaphoric link between the two; for example we say that we “see” someone’s reasons for acting in such and such a way.

The finitude of human will is located by Ricoeur in the very fact that it: “is not pure act but a motivated project” (FM 52). The other analogy that Ricoeur finds between perception and desire is the fact that both are projected outward: they are open, “outside myself” (FM 53).

The finitude of desire is to be found in its intrinsic opacity or confusion. But at the same time there is also clarity in it. Whereas “zero origin” constitutes the point of beginning for perception (“the subject-pole of all perception”), “delection of oneself” (i.e.: love oneself) becomes the zero-origin of desire. This, in turn, is what leads to “Affective finitude”.

From this perspective, Ricoeur moves on to analyze habit and character. The finitude of character is to be found in: “...the limited openness of our field of motivation taken as a whole” (FM 60). But at the same time again Ricoeur affirms the open-ness and closed-ness of character: in as much as character is defined by the notion of humanity it is open-ness and the same it constitutes its partiality.

Feeling and Fallibility

The projectory of Ricoeur’s study is from the theoretical to the practical to end with the affective (Cfr: Knowledge, Will, and Emotion). In this third part of his study, he attempts to demonstrate “the fragility of the heart” or indeed to show that the locus *par excellence* of human fragility in the human heart.

Ricoeur defines first the phenomenological constitution of feeling. Like knowing, feeling is framed on an intentional stance; i.e.: feeling is feeling of something; the lovable, the hateful, etc... By being intentional feeling falls into a paradox: "an intention and an affection coincide in the same experience" (FM 84). But again in feeling, the object of feeling and the object of perception are identical and inseparable: the object of feeling must be present for the feeling to exist. However, feeling does not posit its object as knowing does; nor does it: "constitute the duality of subject and object" (FM 85). The question becomes: what dimension does feeling add to the understanding of human reality?

Feeling is a nodal point where the intermediary condition of the human being is revealed. The situation called by Ricoeur the metaphysics of disproportion, i.e.: infinite vs. finite. How is it so? And how does Ricoeur plan to demonstrate this?

He first proposes to analyze the three concepts of *Epithumia*, *Thumos* and *Eros*; by beginning first with the two extremes, *Epithumia* and *Eros*, to converge into *Thumos*. This way he hopes: "to reach an understanding of the whole of man's fragility through feeling" (FM 92).

The perfection of *Epithumia* (pleasure) is paradoxically finite: the repose, i.e.: the satisfaction, pleasure brings impedes: "the dynamism of activity to a standstill and screen the horizon of happiness" (FM 94). It is happiness in the here and now as such that: "threatens to arrest the dynamism of acting in the celebration of living" (FM 94).

In order to find the intermediary nature of *Thumos* and that is within a philosophical anthropology of disproportion, Ricoeur engages in the analysis of having, power and worth. In these he finds the inherent contradiction existing with *Thymus*, and

with it: “the structure that makes fallibility possible without making it inevitable” (FM 107).

Pleasure itself is of two kinds: one that terminates and completes itself in the object, for example the pleasure of eating; and the one that involves the other, is dependent on the other, for example sexual love or friendship. The place of Thumos must be found within the interpersonal, the inter-human. This is what leads Ricoeur, following Kant’s anthropology, to analyze: “the trilogy of passions formed by possession (Habsucht), domination (herrschaft) and honor (Ersucht)” (FM 111). What Ricoeur wants to establish with such analysis is to: “restore the primordial state that is at the root of the fallen...” (Ibid.).

Before the fallibility of these passions is taken as a given, one has to establish first their primordial innocence. What establishes in the end both their primordial innocence as well their inherent fallibility is to consider them from the perspective of: “the relationship of the self to another self” (FM 113).

Ricoeur begins first with “having” in its innocent stage. Although we are immediately drawn to consider having as alienating desire (aberrations of possession), we must consider it first as: “...an appropriation that is constituting before alienating” (Ibid.). Having must first be conceived in its economic framework as revealed in the reality of work: “Inasmuch as he produces his livelihood, man is a being who works” (FM 114). Through work the human person establishes economic relation: “...establishes himself among things in treating them as possessions” (Ibid.), unlike animals who merely preserve themselves. Going beyond the satisfaction of need, the availability of things:

“creates the whole cycle of feelings relative to acquisition, appropriation, possession, and preservation” (Ibid.)

Where does fragility enter here? It comes as a feeling of control of the thing possessed and the dependence that engenders in the self. The possessed is not secured, never possible to secure. It can: “degenerate, be lost, or taken away....and this is what creates the breach between the I and the mine” (FM 114). “Possession is thus the ensemble of forces that hold out against loss” (Ibid.)

From the interpersonal perspective, possession is also what creates exclusivity among the selves, it is what: “...differentiates the I and the you through the spheres of belonging” (FM 115). Then, wherein lies innocent having, since every having seems to involve unjust having? Ricoeur thinks that it is possible to recreate the possibility of innocent having through: “...the myth of paradise in which man possesses only what he cultivates, has only what he creates...” (FM 115-116).

The second passion of power and dominion is: “implied in the relation of man to having” (FM 116) technologically and economically. Technologically, the aim is dominance of nature: “...through work, human existence takes the character of a rationally organized battle against nature...” (Ibid) Economically, in the above described battle, through work men enter: “into a relations of subordination” (Ibid). In the final analysis however, it is having (possession) which is at the source of power relation between men. It is in such a relation that can arise “alienated labor” [as Marx would have it] (FM 117).

When it comes to dominion in the form of political power, there is the possibility of conceiving of a state of innocence. Without it, it is not possible to conceive of a fallen

state. Thus, philosophers and theologians have imagined a “Kingdom of God”, a “City of God”, and a “Kingdom of Ends” (Cfr. FM 120). By means of this imagination and utopia power is discovered as primordially inherent in the human being.

The passion of honor is defined by Ricoeur as: “the quest for worth in the eyes of another, the quest for esteem” (Ibid). Where shall we then find the fragility of honor? The fragility of honor lies in the fact that it is dependent on the opinion of another. And the opinion of the other is merely *doxa* in the platonic sense of the word. When honor (or esteem) is perceived as re-cognition, our perspective of it changes: “Only beings capable of cognition are beings capable of re-cognition” (FM 122). As regards to the original state of honor, Ricoeur introduces a Kantian perspective: “Rational beings are designated ‘persons’ because their nature indicates that they are ends in themselves” (Ibid). The intrinsic worth of the human is: “not merely for us, but in itself” (Ibid). But however this may be, there is no denying that my self-worth or “the image of my humanity” is in another person. The locus of my own esteem lies in the reality that: “I esteem myself as thou for another. I esteem myself in the second person” (FM 124). Whatever the case may be, self-esteem is always plagued by fragility: it is based in a belief that can err. Beliefs can be illusory, deceiving, constructed, etc...: “nothing is more fragile, nothing is easier to wound than an existence that is at the mercy of a belief” (FM 125).

Conclusion

In the end to call the human being fallible for Ricoeur is to say essentially that: “the possibility of moral evil is inherent in man’s constitution” (FM 133) i.e. his fragility. He concludes:

Fragility is not merely the “locus”, the point of insertion of evil, nor even the “origin” starting from which man falls; it is the “capacity” for evil. To say that man is fallible is to say that the limitation peculiar to a being who does not coincide with himself is the primordial weakness from which evil arises. And yet evil *arises* from this weakness only because it is *posited*. (FM 146)

The Symbolism of Evil

The Symbolism of Evil (from here on SE) begins exactly where *Fallible Man* ended. As Ricoeur clearly states in the introduction of the book, his intention is to inquire and explore how to: “make the transition from the possibility of evil in man to its reality, from fragility to fault” (SE 3). How does he plan to do this? He plans to do it by: “re-enacting” in ourselves the confession that the religious consciousness makes of it” (Ibid). The question becomes then to find the precise locus where this re-enactment occurs. This locus is neither religious, nor yet philosophical; but can be found in the original sin, or original fall myth or account. Thus it is to myths, or more precisely, in: “the myths that speak of the beginning and the end of evil” (SE 5) that Ricoeur directs his attention and inquiry.

His obvious choice is the Biblical account of fall. However, it is the original sin that reverts us to original fall, which in turn: “sends us back to the confession of sins” (SE 6). Thus, it is: “through confession that the consciousness of fault is brought into the light of speech” (SE 7). The confession of sin reveals guilt or the experience of guilt, a fact that puts man before God. For this reason there are three fundamental aspects to the problem: guilt, sin and defilement. Ricoeur dedicates to each a chapter.

Sin, guilt and defilement give us also: “the language of fault”. However, since language is symbolic essentially, a criteriology of symbols is in order before proceeding to analyze these three concepts.

According to Ricoeur, symbols have three functions or better are expressed in three ways:

- a. By denoting objects (cosmic realities), the Sun, the Sky, the Moon...what Ricoeur calls “symbol-thing” (SE 11)
- b. Symbol words
- c. Taboo

Our understanding of symbols must also follow a similar approach.

- a. Symbol-objects: when objects such as the Sun, the Moon, etc...take on symbolic dimension (e.g. height....)
- b. Symbol-words: when descriptive words meant for objects are transposed to denote abstract conditions: e.g. “unclean”, then: “the literal and manifest sense, points beyond itself to something that is like a stain or spot” (SE 15)
- c. Symbol as analogy: the symbol as: “movement of the primary meaning which makes us participate in the latent meaning” (SE 16)
- d. Symbol as allegory: the best differentiation of these two concepts is given by Ricoeur as: “symbols precede hermeneutics, allegories are already hermeneutics” (Ibid)
- e. Symbol as formal sign; as in Logic
- f. Symbol as myth. According to Ricoeur, myths are a species of symbols: “as symbols developed in the form of narrations” (SE 18)

The question at this point is where to begin, what tradition to study?

Ricoeur feels perfectly justified to begin with his own Greco-Judaic thought tradition (borrowing the famous Justinian expression: Athens and Jerusalem) (SE 20). Because first of all, one must indeed allow that there is an intrinsic limitation to this kind of research: “neither the history of religions nor philosophy can be a concrete universal capable of embracing all human experience” (SE 23). Secondly, the contingency of the philosopher’s situation must be taken into account: he cannot know everything, and even if he does, he wouldn’t understand anything because there can’t be: “a non-situated objectivity” (SE 24).

Defilement

Defilement brings with it the idea of stain and filth. But wherein lies defilement? It is in the concept of interdiction that Ricoeur finds the locus of defilement, i.e.: “the objective violation of an interdict” (SE 27). For example: theft, lying and even homicide become evil only in a system of references, i.e.: “in connection with the confession of divine holiness, respect for inter-human ties, and self-esteem” (Ibid.). Thus it is in the division of the sacred and the profane than we need to look for it.

The sexual, as such, exemplifies the nature of defilement: consider the interdictions associated with it. Only through the reciprocity described above can it become ethical, e.g.: marriage aiming “to remove the universal impurity of sexuality” by establishing “an enclosure within which sexuality ceases to be a defilement” (Cfr. SE 29). A second component of defilement is ethical terror. The ethical is entered into through fear and not through love. Because defilement expects vengeance; and this causes fear

and terror. It demands punishment and suffering: “suffering is the price for the violation of order; suffering is: “to satisfy” the claim of purity of revenge (Cfr SE 30). Thus: “the evil of suffering is linked synthetically with the evil of fault” (SE 31).

From this perspective, purificative acts should be seen as: “prevention of suffering” (Ibid.) in all areas of life: childbirth, etc...The bond between defilement and suffering in fear is the source of rationalization of evil: if you suffer it is because you have defiled some interdict!

The Biblical Job opposes exactly this view: here the just is punished for what he has not done. This according to Ricoeur is the cause of anguish for the human spirit. But it also causes one to see the spiritual meaning of sin. In the end, what this has produced is that: “the evil of defilement becomes the evil of fault” (SE 32).

The symbolization of Stain

According to Ricoeur: “it is the rite that exhibits the symbolism of defilement” (SE 35), because: “defilement, in so far as it is the object of this ritual suppression, it is itself a symbol of evil” (Ibid.)

Defilement enters human reality through speech: “the impure is taught in the words that institute the taboo” (SE 36). “Only he is defiled who is regarded as defiled; a law is required to say it”. The interdict is itself a defiling utterance. In short, the impure has to be declared, uttered, in order to be what it/he/she is. By the same token: “it is necessary also to say what must be done in order that the impure may become pure” (Ibid). Simply, there are no rites without words!

Impurity and dread

The function of speech does not stop at constituting defilement, impurity and purity; but also gives an ethical dimension to dread (Cfr SE 41): "...it is by being refracted in words that dread reveals an ethical rather than a physical aim" (SE 42). There are three outcomes to ethical anxiety:

First Dread, conceived as fear of vengeance, is a demand for a *just punishment*, i.e.: the law of retribution. This requires proportionality between fault and punishment. It also needs to be purposeful: it has to have some end.

Second: The objective is to *establish order*, and with this happiness [here Ricoeur refers to Plato's *Gorgias* 471d and 474b: "to suffer punishment and pay the penalty for our faults is the only way to be happy"] (Cfr. SE 43).

Third Elimination of fear. This is to be found in Spinoza's ethics, i.e.: the elimination of fear (in the individual person) under the guidance of reason. The objective, of course, is not to eliminate fear from the public sphere, otherwise there will be chaos. In the final analysis, however, fear is un-eliminable or un-eradicable, because: "Only perfect love casts out fear" (SE 45).

Sin

In considering the notion of sin, Ricoeur feels the necessity of establishing first: "the divergence in meaning between defilement and sin" (SF 47). The two, though essentially different, reveal however some continuity or transition from one to the other.

Sin implies a personal relationship to a god: it reveals somehow the breakdown of this relationship. This relationship is presupposed in the concept of covenant. Covenant is the point of origin from which sin must be perceived. It implies one's presence "before God". It must first exist for consciousness of sin to arise. Thus sin is seen as a violation of a covenant.

Covenant is between two beings. It must imply: "a god in the image of man..., but above all a god concerned about man; a god who is anthropotropic, before being anthropomorphic" (SE 51).

The task of speaking of sin in the Judaic tradition is reserved to the prophet: it is the prophet who "prophesies" against sin. But what constitutes sin for him? How do the various prophets conceive sin? In general all the prophets seem to conceive sin as enmity with God. In this enmity lies the wrath of God. The sinner must expect it! In this wrath is also included indignation.

The emergence of the ethical is due to the fact that the prophets expect more because the demand of God is above and beyond the ritual. This is what Ricoeur call the infinite demand which is countered by finite command.

The prophet Amos is the first one: "to elevate righteousness and justice above cult and its rites" (SE 56); a demand more radical than the enumeration of faults. The aim is to go deeper to the human heart. Amos's aim is radical; it penetrates to the: "deeply rooted human evil" (Ibid.). Thus the demand is unbound, not restricted to any specific command. Amos uses the metaphor of adultery to reveal the essence of sin. For him, adultery is desire and preference for another. The man who sins is like the man who is adulterous.

For Isaiah sin is essentially pride in the presence of God. The man who doesn't deserve to stand in the presence of God is the man whose heart is filled with pride, arrogance.

According to Ricoeur, the ethics of the Old Testament must be viewed not as a transition from legalism to prophetism, but an integration of both. In fact this is well the case in the Decalogue. Legalism and prophetism are concepts that reveal also the: "...tension between the absolute, but formless demand and the finite law, which breaks the demand into crumbs" (SE 59).

Josiah's reform is to be founded on the First Commandment which is the commandment of faith. His reform and his conception of sin therefore are based on the notion of faith. However, along side this he also appeals to ritualistic observance. Jeremiah, on the other hand, wants to go beyond legalistic piety.

However one may see it, Ricoeur affirms the continuity lying in the Jewish conception of sin which is attached to the idea of Covenant. But where does the wrath of God fit in this?

The wrath of God reveals both the distance that dwells between God and man. It states the sinfulness of man which fills his heart with terror. But wrath does not mean abandonment, or a turning away. Nor anguish is rapture with the divine: "just as jealousy is an affliction of love, so is anguish a moment that dialectizes the dialogue, but does not annul it" (SE 69). This is the condition in which separation is not a break, but remains a relation. Man and God remain in an "I and Thou dialogue" [Cfr. e.g.: the penitential psalm 51]. The wrath of God is the wrath of love.

How is sin symbolized in the Hebrew Bible? There isn't a single abstract word which is equivalent to sin in the Hebrew Bible. So how is it expressed?

The symbolism of sin is necessarily tied to the symbolism of redemption. The one implies the other. Ricoeur goes on, therefore, to analyze them jointly. Whereas the symbolism of sin reveals rupture or loss of a bond, the symbolism of redemption reveals one of "return". Ricoeur identifies several Hebrew words which stand for sin. *Chattat*, meaning missing the target; *awon*, meaning tortuous road; *pasha*, meaning revolt, which he then compares to their Greek counterparts. All of these terms express, according to him: "a violated relation" (SE 71). Thus: "the symbolism of sin...suggests the idea of a relation broken off" (SE 74). This, in essence, being symbolism of negativity, gives rise to the conception of sin as nothingness.

As a counterpart to sin conceived in the above way, pardon must be understood as return; a return which becomes repentance: "Just as sin is a 'crooked way', the return is a turning away from evil" (SE 80).

In what way sin may be conceived as positivity? The term positivity here is not used obviously to mean good, but to state the objective, independent existence of a condition called sin. How can one prove this metaphysical status of sin? Sin is seen as a condition in which man is deprived of his god (or spirit) (e.g.: his god has gone out of his body). A sinner is a man bereft of the divine in him. Sin is also seen as: "evil disposition"; in other words, when evil takes possession of a man's soul.

God can also be complicit in the corruption of man: God and man conspire to produce evil: God that renders man's heart hard [God hardens the heart of the Pharaoh]; a

condition, thus a positive state, in which man finds himself. But more than anything else, there is the original sin that man inherits from the womb.

The parallel between the symbolism of defilement and the symbolism of evil can be seen in their corresponding symbolism of purification and pardon, or redemption, e.g.: buying back; exodus; expiation, etc...

Guilt

Guilt, warns us Ricoeur: "is not synonymous with fault". And this for two reasons: to begin with, guilt can lead us in several directions: in the ethico-juridical direction, as in penalty and responsibility; or in the ethico-religious reflection, as in the scrupulous conscience; or the psycho-theological reflection, as in the condemned conscience. Guilt is also understood through the double movement of rupture and resumption. The first which gives rise to the guilty man and the second where it is: "charged with...symbolism of sin and defilement" (SE 101).

How should then sin and guilt be differentiated? "...guilt designates the subjective moment in fault as sin is its ontological moment" (Ibid.). Guilt essentially designates a condition of being burdened by a weight. In it is contained the anticipation of chastisement. "Guilt is a moment contemporaneous with defilement itself" (Ibid.). In guilt is also contained the readiness to be chastised. Although this may imply the assumption of responsibility, it is not its core essence. The core lies in being weighed upon. Guilt does not demand vengeance; the chastisement that it implies is only "educative expiation", i.e.: amendment (SE 102).

In the end, according to Ricoeur: “guilt is the achieved internality of sin” (SE 103). Whereas sin, broadly conceived, usually states a communal condition, guilt is personal: it is felt individually; but it is also in it that emerges the possibility of personal salvation.

In his analysis of guilt, Ricoeur outlines three modalities for research:

- a. “The individuation of offenses in the penal sense”.
- b. “The delicate conscience of the scrupulous man”
- c. The hell of condemnation.

These constitute also the three sections of his chapter on guilt.

In the Bible, there is a clear transition from a conception of sin as a communal condition to a personal condition; from Israel who strays from the Covenant to the individual whose heart is filled with wickedness; thus, in brief, a passage from collective guilt to personal guilt.

Ricoeur believes to have found the equivalents of these ideas among the Greeks of the 5th century B.C. These are the concepts expressed by the terms *Erinyes* and *Eumenides*, where the former becomes the latter; i.e.: from hereditary debt to personal debt. In other words: “Everyone pays for his fault” (SE 106).

In the final analysis: “according to the schema of sin, evil is a situation ‘in which’ mankind is caught as a single collective; according to the schema of guilt, evil is an act that each individual ‘begins’” (SE 106-7). The other fundamental aspect of guilt is that it possesses degrees. “Whereas sin is a qualitative situation, guilt designates an intensive quantity” (Ibid.): the guilty conscience confesses that its faults have degrees of seriousness.

Guilt and Penal imputation

The most immediate symbolics of guilt is contained in the; “metaphor of the tribunal”. For this reason, Ricoeur explores the concept of the tribunal within the context of the ancient Greek world. Not because the Greek world had achieved sophistication, but paradoxically because it never did “it offers an opportunity to observe penal conceptualization in its inchoate state” (SE 109).

What the Greek reality offers is of course the tribunal, and hence guilt, within the context of the city (polis). What predominates is consequently: “the ethics of a city of men that constitutes the focus of a reasonable indictment” (SE 110). Within the city, however: “injustice is still synonymous with impiety” (Cfr. for example, *Euthyphro*). It is [only] through the notion of *Adikein* (injustice) that we see the emergence of a purely moral notion of evil.

Among the Greeks, it wasn't the guilt which determined, according to Ricoeur, the penalty to be administered; on the contrary guilt had to be gauged by the penalty imposed. Thus the degree of guilt is correlative “with an evolution of punishment” (SE 110) among the Greeks.

The Scrupulous Conscience

The analysis of the scrupulous mind leads Ricoeur to an extensive exploration of the Pharisaic mind (or what is called Pharisaism).

Although Pharisaism constitutes a particular moment in Jewish religious history, it is not without universal import for Ricoeur. Pharisaism arises within Israel's monotheism, which in itself is also historical. This lends itself well to the symbolism of

sin and repentance, which are both historically grounded. Before, however, Ricoeur passes to discuss the scrupulous conscience; he wants to enter the essence of Pharisaic ethics.

The objective of Pharisaic endeavor is, first and foremost, the establishment of life, individual and civic, “under the Law and by the Law” (SE 120). It is the Law indeed which has held together Israel in times of exile and bondage. It is the Law which will essentially define the Jews, especially during and after the Babylonian Exile. It is also the Law which will secure their survival as people. Thus “the Pharisees are first of all and essentially men of the Torah [The Law]”, but not in the sense of their being legalistic. The Pharisees conception of the Law is not neatly translatable, as is often done, with the Greek conception of *Nomos* or the Latin *Lex*, both of which express an abstract concept. For the Pharisees, the Law is law because it is: “an institution from the Lord” (SE 123). Indeed: “Torah means teaching, instruction, and not Law” (Ibid.).

The Torah embraces both the religious as well as the ethical dimension of the law. It both instructs on conduct, and it expresses the will of God as regards to For the Pharisee, there is an almost an Ignatian concern on “how will God be truly served in the world” (Ibid.). What the Pharisees have endeavored to do is to translate the prophetic ethics into an ethics of detail. The purpose was to practice the Torah in every area of their lives; individual or communal. What this has in the end achieved is: “the abdication of freedom of choice” as expression as “supreme assertion of the will” (Ibid.). And this is what leads Ricoeur to speak about the Pharisees complete heteronomy. It is precisely for this reason also that the Pharisees have been misunderstood and maligned.

But for the Pharisee, the [written] Torah was a living and alive document that was complemented by the oral Torah (the Halachah, the Mishnah) which detailed the conduct of the devout Jew. It is within this framework, that Ricoeur sees the best example of scrupulousness in the Pharisee. How should scrupulousness reveal itself in this context? For Ricoeur the answer is the : “thoroughgoing and voluntary heteronomy” (SE 127). Because the Torah is revelation, and revelation is the Torah, what this ultimately means is that: “God is ethical and the bond between man and God is a bond of obedience to instruction” (Ibid.). And this is precisely where we need to find, according to Ricoeur, the origin of guilty and scrupulous conscience.

The Narrowness and Depth of the Scrupulous Mind

Scrupulousness reveals, by its mere presence, a more “advanced point of guilt”: a personal responsibility (imputation) for evil and the [consciousness] of the polarity between the just and the wicked man.

In the language of guilt is also present the idea of merit; and that is as an idea that can define the ethico-religious vision of the Pharisees. In the idea of merit is contained: “the imprint of the just act... an increase of the worth of man”, which leads to the idea of reward: to merit is to merit a reward: “the reward is the reward of merit” (SE 130). The reward comes from ‘obedience to the Law’. A life of merit, i.e.: of reward, is a happy life.

The fundamental limitation of the scrupulous mind is that it is bound to end up in an ethics of casuistry, which is what we call moralism. Casuistry is bound to reduce the God man relation to a relation of instruction. The whole life of the devout becomes: “a

ritualization of the moral or a moralization of the ritual" (SE 135). The scrupulous conscience judges "its rigor...by its [exact] observance" (SE136). It is precisely the exactness which reveals the dangers, in which the scrupulous conscience finds itself, i.e.: when the spirit of the letter is forgotten in the commandment.

The other limitation of the scrupulous conscience judges is that it is led to incessantly accumulate rules and instructions: it is a conscience: "that forgets nothing and adds incessantly to its obligations" (Ibid.). Another aspect of this is the scrupulous conscience "separateness", i.e.: the separation of the pure and the impure; the observant from the non-observant, etc...

A great danger facing the scrupulous conscience is hypocrisy. Because, as Ricoeur points out: "...the minutiae of observance overshadow the great concerns of life: justice, mercy and faith" (SE 139). In the end the heteronomy of the Pharisee becomes alienation: an externality that is opposed and contra posed to internality (Cfr. Ibid.).

The Impasse of Guilt

Ricoeur approaches the thematic of the impasse of guilt in a theologico-philosophical way through the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. He elaborates closely Paul's doctrine on the close relation of sin and law. Sin is no longer conceived as violation of the Law, but on the contrary: "the will to save oneself by satisfying the Law" (SE 141). As Paul maintained there is a trajectory of defeat and curse that a religiosity based on the Law brings. It is succinctly outline by Ricoeur as follows:

"The two curses give impetus to each other unceasingly. The zealous penitent gives himself the infinite task of satisfying all the prescriptions of the law; the failure of this undertaking gives impetus to the feeling of guilt; the integral observance by which the conscience seeks to exculpate itself increases the

indictment; and as the atomization of the law tends to shift moral vigilance and direct it towards isolated and sometimes minute prescriptions, conscience consumes its energy in single combats with each of them” (SE 145)

For Paul, as well as for Ricoeur I presume, it is only faith that can transcend and overcome the scrupulous conscience steeped in a morality of law.

Evil in the Myths of Beginning and End

What Ricoeur attempts to do in the second part of SE is to capture the presence of evil in the myths of beginning and end, and the symbolization of these latter.

He first begins by advancing his working hypotheses, which he hopes would be verified during the course of his analysis. His working hypotheses are:

1. “The first function of the myths of evil is to embrace mankind as a whole in one ideal history” (SE 162), i.e.: humanity is taken as one community, a unity.
2. The myth of beginning and end are laced through narrative: narrativity is constitutional to it: i.e.: there is a history to be told!
3. The narration begins from a state of innocence, essential nature, to an elaborate state. It accounts, in other words, for the transition: “between the essential being of man and his historical existence” (SE 163)

The Function of Myth

Ricoeur tells us that the fundamental function of myth is *Gnosis* [“an invitation to *Gnosis*”]. It is meant to reveal: “the hidden meaning of human experience” (SE 170). Once he has outlined his working hypotheses, he goes further at attempting a typology of the myths of the beginning and the end of evil. He wants this typology to be a priori as a

posteriori; in other words, a typology which begins with certain theoretical presuppositions as well as bound by the multiplicity of the human experience. Thus he believes that we can identify four kinds of myths of beginning and end of evil:

1. A myth which depicts the co-existence or co-extensiveness of evil with the origin of things (Cfr SE 172).
2. The myth that depicts the mutual exclusivity of creation and fall: "The separation of the problematics of evil from the problematics of creation" (SE 173) or as he puts it further: the fall supervening upon a perfect creation (Ibid.).
3. The myth that conveys the image of fault as the ontological condition of the hero: the hero does not commit the fault, but he is guilty, e.g.: Greek tragedy.
4. The myth of the exiled soul, i.e.: the soul as being exiled and trapped, imprisoned in the body; the soul as coming from elsewhere, e.g.: Greek philosophy [Cfr. Plato].

The myth of creation:

Here "the principle of evil is primordial, coextensive with the generation of the divine" (SE 177). Good examples of this are the Babylonian and Assyrian mythology. In this kind of mythology man is not responsible for the existence of evil in the world: "man finds evil and continues it" (SE 178); "... evil is as old as the oldest being" (Ibid.). In such a world vision "the quest of Gilgamesh has nothing to do with sin, but only with death...with the desire of immortality" (SE 187). Ricoeur thinks that: "there is no place for a myth of the fall alongside a creation myth..." (SE 191). In this kind of mythology: "evil is not an accident that upsets a previous order; it belongs constitutionally to the

foundation of order” (SE 198). The same may be said of history: “Evil and history are contemporaneous” (SE 203).

The myth of beginning and end of evil

This myth is best represented by Greek Tragedy. But why Greek tragedy, and why take this specific historical manifestation of a particular people? Ricoeur justifies his choice by presenting the following reasons:

- a. Greek tragedy is not just a historical example: “but the sudden and complete manifestation of the essence of the tragic” (SE 211). As he puts it more emphatically: “...it is by grasping the essence in its Greek phenomenon that we can understand all other tragedy as analogous to Greek tragedy”. In other words Greek tragedy serves an archetype or a prototype.
- b. Secondly, inherent in Aeschylus tragic vision of man is also the tragic vision of the divine: the tragic theme of the “blinded” man assumes its most virulent expression in its Greek form.
- c. “Finally, the Greek example is especially fitted to persuade us that the tragic vision of the world is tied to a spectacle and not to a speculation” (SE 212).

In the end, the tragic calls for essentially the “tragic hero, a tragic action, a tragic denouement” (Ibid.).

But before, Ricoeur embarks on a direct analysis of Greek tragedy proper; he draws our attention to the various pre-tragic themes in Greek mythological tradition. They precede, as Ricoeur informs us, “the drama and the spectacle” (SE 123). The following are the themes in question:

1. The first is found in the “theology of blindness” of Homer, which essentially recounts the leading astray of man (by the gods); but not as punishment for a fault.
2. The second one is constituted by the reality of birth and death: “...the fatality of death and of birth haunts all our acts, which are thereby rendered impotent and irresponsible” (SE 214).
3. *Moirai* (Fate/fatality) is what underlies the Homeric vision of man and the world, it “denotes the most impersonal aspect of that power; it is the ‘portion’, the ‘share’, the ‘lot’ imparted to a man beyond his choice” (SE 215).
4. And finally, *hybris* as derivative of the jealousy of God towards man. Hybris is seen as affront to gods and has tragic consequences.

Aeschylus was the one to tie up these elements/themes and define the essence of the tragic (Cfr, e.g.: Oedipus and Prometheus). In essence, these pre-tragic themes had to be tied together for tragedy to emerge. According to Ricoeur, deliverance from the tragic on the other hand can only take place within the tragic and not outside of it.

The Adamic myth and the eschatological vision

The main characteristics of this type of myth are:

- a. The myth relates the origin of evil to an ancestor of the human race.
- b. It attempts to separate the origin of evil from the origin of Good.
- c. “The Adamic myth subordinates to the central figure of the primordial man some other figures which tend to decentralize the story, but without suppressing the primacy of the Adamic figure” (SE 234)

By naming an individual, Adam, this type of myth: “makes the concrete universality of human evil” (SE 241). In it we have an account of: “the appearance in a creation already complete of Good” (SE 243). The myth wants to make clear the absolute perfection of God and, on the other hand, “the radical wickedness of man” (Ibid.). What are the significance and consequences of such a myth?

- The myth relates the loss of a condition of primordial innocence.
- Intelligence, work, sexuality are considered fruits of evil, e.g.: knowing good and evil are achieved through loss of innocence; “work ceases to be joyous and becomes toilsome”; nature becomes hostile to man; childbirth, as a consequence of sexuality, will be painful; we shall face death with anguish, etc...

But what innocence was lost?

It is known to be out there, like the Kantian ‘thing in itself’, and it is not comprehended. The reason for this is that there is a certain simultaneity of innocence and sin (or fallen-ness): “In the instant I am created, in the instant I am fallen” (SE 251). Thus evil becomes historical.

Symbology of the elements of the fall: the serpent and the woman

The serpent represents desire: “the desire for infinity...the infinity of desire itself; desire for desire” (SE 253), which will take hold of the human soul; and that is of knowing, willing, doing, being; in short, the desire to be God or to be like God. However,

this is not a likeness that will be achieved only through transgression. If it were so, it would be a likeness that will only produce restlessness [Cfr. Augustine's description of the restless heart].

The woman is the intermediary figure in the dynamics of the temptation leading to the Fall: "the serpent tempts the man through the woman" (SE 254). Here the story points to the 'Eternal feminine', i.e.: "the mediatrix of weakness, the frailty of man" (SE 254-5).

But are the serpent and the woman completely external? Are they really external causes of evil according to the biblical account? Not completely. To believe so, is for St. James – as well as for Ricoeur apparently – bad faith. It is bad faith that: "seizes upon the quasi externality of desire in order to make it an alibi for freedom" (SE 256). Thus the serpent [and so the woman, in another way] "the psychological projection of desire": "He is the image of the 'fruit' plus the bad faith of the excuse" (SE 257). However, at the same time, the serpent is also the externality of evil for the following reasons:

- First and most importantly, the serpent represents the anteriority of evil to the creation of man: in our historicity we find evil "already there". "Nobody begins it absolutely" (Ibid.). Evil is present in our midst as "part of the inter-human relationship" (SE 258), just as language, tools and institutions.
- Secondly, evil has a cosmic structure: there is always dominating us "a feeling of universal absurdity which invites man to doubt his destination". And so, in brief, "...the serpent symbolizes something of man *and* something of the world, a side of the microcosm and a side of the macrocosm, the chaos *in* me, *among* us, and

outside. But it is always chaos for me, a human existent destined for goodness and happiness” (Ibid.)

The Biblical view does not, in the end, portray man as being substantially evil, but, as Ricoeur puts it, *adjectively*; not absolutely, but secondarily. In other words man yields to evil, but does not create it.

The myth of the exiled soul and salvation through knowledge

This myth is distinct from the others because: “it divides man into ‘soul’ and ‘body’” (SE 279). Ricoeur concedes to some extent that this myth owes its existence to Orphism, but does not endorse the conviction that Plato borrowed entirely from it.

What distinguishes this myth from the others analyzed above is that it is the only one which deals specifically with the soul. It is a myth about the soul, the soul considered as divine becoming human; how the soul descends and enters the body, which in itself is considered bad and “stranger to the soul” (SE 280); how this admixture of the soul and the body is what initiates human existence; how this admixture becomes the occasion of the forgetting of the difference of the divinity of the soul and earthliness of the body.

The other myths, as we have seen, are myths that do not question, or even allude to the distinction of soul and body. For the biblical myth, man is a unity. The myth of the exiled soul is, on the other hand, founded on the presupposition that the soul: “seems...to bring with it an anterior evil, which it expiates in the body” (SE 283). In the body, the soul lives its alienated state. It is its jail: “a strange, alien, hostile place” (SE 284). This place, the body, which constitutes in itself a form of punishment is also: “a place of

temptation and contamination” (Ibid.). Thus the body being an occasion of expiation: “it is both an effect of evil and a new evil” (Ibid.).

Since the Orphic myth believes in reincarnation, reincarnation itself becomes another punishment “under the sign of repetition”. Similarly the soul awaits another punishment after death: just as the body is the place of expiation for the descended soul “Hades [is] the place of expiation for the evil committed in this life” (SE 285). Incarnation and reincarnation as repetition renders the body: “the symbol of the misfortune of existence” (SE 287). The idea here is being reborn is being punished.

According to Ricoeur, the myth of the exiled soul as elaborated over thousand years since the 5th century B.C. in Orphism, presents two mutually completing mythological accounts:

- The myth of a situation which emphasizes the otherness of the body, and the dualism of the body and the soul, leads to the question why such duality is forgotten and why such duality leads to a confused existence.
- The myth of the origin recounts precisely the origin of such confusion and the need to: “regain the vision of duality”. This myth was elaborated according to Ricoeur, after the myth of situation (Cfr. Olympiodorus’ myth of Titans).

In the end, the second myth, the myth of origin as recounted in the myth of the Titans: “represents the anteriority of evil in relation to actual human evil” (SE 299).

The myth of the exiled soul is: “par excellence the principle and promise of ‘knowledge’, of ‘gnosis’” (SE 300). For it knowledge is both purifying and salvific [Cfr. Plato’s *Phaedo*].

The Relevance of Myth in our lives

In the last part of this second book, Ricoeur premises his discussion by posing questions that have embarrassed him and may have troubled the reader as well. The questions concern the relevance of myths, the possibility of picking and choosing or courting “them all in turn” (SE 306); why the need of discussing myths that are declared abolished and dead when reasons are given for preferring one, i.e.: the Adamic myth.

Ricoeur response is that he believes in the superiority or more to the point the universality of the Adamic myth because: “the Adamic myth, by its complexity and inner tensions, reaffirms in varying degrees the essential truths of the other myths”(SE309).

Conclusion: Thinking in symbols and with symbols

For Ricoeur philosophy “must comprehend everything, even religion” (SE 348). The philosopher must seek understanding. The symbol: “gives occasion for thought, something to think about” (Ibid.) and in the process: “it wishes to answer to a certain situation of modern culture” (Ibid.).

Our modern world has moved towards a more precise use of language which tends to be univocal and technical; but this seems to empty language: “by radically formalizing it” (SE 349). What is needed to do is to re-create language. In this endeavor the symbol must become the starting point of thought. But how? By respecting: “the original enigma of the symbols, that lets itself be taught by them” (SE 350). Here the challenge is maintaining the immediacy of the symbol together with the mediation of thought. And here again is the locus of hermeneutics, i.e.: where the symbol becomes

object of interpretation. By explaining the symbol, the symbol is restored: "...demythologization is the irreversible gain of truthfulness, intellectual honesty, objectivity" (Ibid.). But since it is impossible to relive symbols with the same naïveté characterizing their original recipients, we must aim at: "a second naïveté in and through criticism". This way interpretation gives rise again to listening.

In order for hermeneutics to fulfill its task it must believe in order to understand [following the famous Anselmian motto: *Credo ut intelligam*]: "never, in fact, does the interpreter get near to what his text says unless he lives in the aura of the meaning he is inquiring after" (SE 351). Hermeneutics is never without presupposition, i.e.: "...it is always directed by a prior understanding of the thing about which it interrogates the text" (SE 351) [This is expressed in almost identical fashion by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*] (Cfr Bultmann as well). The kinship that hermeneutics requires is a kinship of what life aims at and not necessarily a kinship of one life with another. The hermeneutical circle aims precisely at this: "[it] proceeds from a prior understanding of the very thing that it tries to understand by interpreting it" (SE 352).

In the end, hermeneutical activity constitutes one of the ways of rejuvenating philosophy. The wager in this case becomes thinking with the symbols as a starting point as opposed to thinking in the symbols. The wager will be won if one gains better understanding of man and the bond between his being and all beings; all this through symbolic thought. The wager is not won through an allegorizing interpretation aiming at finding a "disguised philosophy", but a philosophy that starts with the symbols. This can be produced though a kind of Kantian transcendental deduction.

In conclusion, the philosopher thinking with symbols will be able: “to break out of the enchanted enclosure of consciousness of oneself, to end the prerogative of self reflection” (SE 356). This practically means to free thought from the Cogito Descartes had locked it in!!

CHAPTER THREE

Emmanuel Levinas

Introduction

The two works of Emmanuel Levinas that I have chosen to study are *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*⁵ [in French: *Totalite' et Infini. Essai sur l' exteriorite'*] and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*⁶ [in French: *Autrement qu' être ou au-dela' de l' essence*]. Both are works of the mature Levinas, and they constitute his most original contribution to philosophy.

Although Levinas had a thorough philosophical training and is responsible, with Ricoeur, in introducing the thought of Husserl to pre-war France, he was also a profoundly religious thinker. In fact, until he was appointed professor 1961 at the age of 56 at the University of Poitiers, he was the director of the Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale.

Totality and Infinity

The Same and the Other

Levinas tells us in the Preface to this book that his intention is to defend subjectivity, not subjectivity understood as: “purely egoist protestation against totality, nor its anguish before death [a clear allusion to an existentialist concept], but as founded in the idea of infinity” [*Totality and Infinity* (from here on TI) 26].

Levinas conceives Totality and Infinity as two antithetic ideas. It appears that for Levinas Totality stands for determination, control and even domination, i.e.: objectification. Whereas Infinity would stand for exactly the opposite, i.e.: indetermination, creativity, subjectivity, etc... By distinguishing the two ideas of Totality and Infinity, the philosopher intends to: "affirm the philosophical primacy of the idea of Infinity" (Ibid.). Infinity is produced, according to him, "in the relationship of the same with the other" (Ibid.). It is produced, enacted in the particular and personal.

Infinity exists in the moment of its revelation: "Infinity does not first exist, and then reveal itself" (Ibid.). Subjectivity is, for Levinas, the welcoming of the other as hospitality. In subjectivity the idea of infinity is consummated.

Metaphysics and Transcendence

Levinas defines metaphysics, at least as it is used in Western thought: "as a movement going forth from a world that is familiar to us...toward an alien outside-of-oneself [hors de soi], toward a yonder" (TI 33). The elsewhere, the yonder if you will, is called by him the other. The other, alterity that metaphysical desire tends to, is "something else". It is the absolute other. The metaphysical desire that Levinas describes does not long to return, because it is : "a desire that cannot be satisfied...it has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it....The desired does not fulfill it" (TI 34). For Levinas desire is desire for the absolutely other; it is a desire that leads to the awareness of the alterity of the other: "the exteriority of the other" (Ibid.). [This is quite reminiscent of Augustine's conception of God's otherness].

The exteriority and otherness of metaphysics

Metaphysics is a movement towards transcendence: “like desire and inadequation, is necessarily a transcendence” (TI 35). By saying this, Levinas appears to re-affirm the thought that metaphysics is constituted in alterity, because “alterity is possible only if the other is other” (TI 36).

The I’s constitutional essence is self-identification “throughout all what happens to it” (Ibid.). It preserves its identity through alteration; i.e.: identity in difference. But can the I distinguish itself within itself? Levinas’s answer is that: “the negation of the I by the self is precisely one of the modes of identification of the I” (TI37). However, the identification of the self does not occur in a formalistic abstraction, but through encounter with the world, in a: “relationship between an I and a world” (Ibid.). This relationship is concretized as “sojourn” [sejour] in the world. In being one with oneself; in finding the world as one’s abode [chez-soi]. In an expression that seems to echo Heidegger’s, Levinas states that this world, this chez-soi, is not merely a container, but a site where I am free, where the world is at hand. It is at my disposal. The world affords me, the self, and the means. The way I am in the world is not as by possession, but it offers [itself] as resistance to be possessed: “It contests possession”. The alterity of the world is affirmed, and not negated, because it “falls under my powers” (TI 38).

The Other conceived as the stranger (or vice versa depending how you want to perceive it), defines his alterity in his freedom: “Stranger also means the free-one”, because I have no power over him. The way the same and the other relate, or the foundation of their relation is language. Metaphysics which essentially is about the

relation of the self with the other: “is primordially enacted as conversation” (TI 39). What conversation reveals is the: “recognition in the other a right over egoism” (TI 40).

Transcendence as non-negativity

It would be easy to conceive transcendence as an expression of negativity (or negation). But Levinas wants to specifically show that this should not be the case. For him, transcendence is an idea (or condition/state) that is tied to the idea of perfection and infinity; because in the very idea of perfection is embedded the idea of transcendence conceived as exceeding understanding and designating distance. In turn, in: “the idea of the perfect is an idea of infinity... [because] it [infinity] designates a height and a nobility, a transcendence” (TI 41). Negativity as an idea cannot include either perfection or infinity, and thus: “negativity is incapable of transcendence” (Ibid.).

Metaphysics precedes Ontology

“As critique precedes dogmatism, metaphysics precedes ontology” (TI 43). The question is how and in what way.

For Levinas, ontology is reductive: “a reduction of the other by the same” (Ibid.). The other becomes an object, and in this objectification lies the reduction of the other to the same: “[The stranger] loses itself and appears, lays itself open to grasp, becomes concept” (TI 43-44). In knowing the other his alterity is emptied “reduced to nothing”. In illuminating the other his resistance is broken. In the realm of human relations this happens when terror is used to subjugate “a free man under the domination of another” (SE 44).

Even phenomenological mediation is not immune from ontological reduction, because, in the final analysis: “An existent is comprehended in the measure that thought transcends it, measuring it against the horizon whereupon it is profiled” (Ibid.). What Levinas appears to be saying here is that ontology wants to understand existents through the supposed illuminating power of Being; and because of this, it is reductive. This is the point, at least in this book, where Levinas moves completely away from Heidegger because for him Heidegger: “affirms the priority of Being over existents”, through this Heidegger also defines the essence of philosophy. (Cfr. TI 45).

Heideggerian ontology, according to Levinas: “affirms the primacy of freedom over ethics” (Ibid.); a freedom that emanates: “from an obedience to Being” (ibid.). As such: “ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power” (TI 46) because of the anonymity of truth that it fosters, and a ‘universality which is impersonal and thus inhumane for which it stands’ (Cfr. Ibid.). Heideggerian ontology founds the relation with the other on the same matrix of the relation with Being (*Sein*), subordinating the former to the latter. For this reason it inevitably leads, according to Levinas, “to imperialist domination, to tyranny” (TI 47).

What Levinas proposes is the reverse of what Heidegger has done to advance the ethical over the ontological: an approach which maintains the society of the I with the other. The relation of the Other as interlocutor precedes all ontology. It is: “the ultimate relation in Being... this is why ontology presupposes metaphysics” (TI 48).

The nature of Transcendence

Levinas wants us to know that there is a clear difference between objectivity and transcendence. Objectivity has characteristics which are *essentially* different from transcendence. Thinking of transcendence, or that matter of the Infinite, the Stranger is not to think of an object. Why? Because first and foremost, the absolute exteriority of the other: “absolves itself from the relation in which it presents itself” (TI 50).

The relationship with the other [“the presence before a face”]: “is a relationship of conversation” (Ibid.); the face does not disclose ‘an impersonal neuter, but expression’; it evolves beyond the structure, form and content. Approaching the other in conversation: “is to welcome his expression” (TI 51). The other makes it possible for the I “to have an idea of Infinity” (TI 50). The relation with the other which is conversation is an ethical relation; which, in essence, is also teaching. Contrary to the Socratic Maieutic, teaching comes from “outside-exterior”, and adds something to the I.

What Levinas intends to do here with this analysis is to propose to describe: “a relationship with the other that does not result in a divine or human totality that is not a totalization of history, but the idea of infinity” (TI 52). This, in essence, is metaphysics itself: “...the I before the other in which the other remains transcendent with respect to me” (TI Ibid.), i.e.: in conversation.

Separation and Discourse

The basis of the relation with the other is not correlation, i.e.: “what I permit myself to demand of myself is not comparable with what I have the right to demand of the other” (TI 53). If it were so, Levinas appears to suggest, this would lead to

totalization, i.e.: conception and approach of the other through rigid categories. However, there is apparently an inherent impossibility: “of seeing oneself from the outside and of speaking in the same sense of oneself and of the others” (Ibid.); and thus the impossibility of totalization.

The Cartesian I is captured through inner life and thus its constitution as separate from the other: “The ‘Cogito’, we said, evinces separation” (TI 54). Thus: “Separation is not reflected in thought, but produced by it” (Ibid.). But what does separation entail? Separation for an existent (i.e.: a person) entails being owner of one’s own destiny. Separation, which emanates from interiority, makes it so that birth and death do not derive their meaning from history, but beyond it.

How one may speak then of the eternity of the soul? According to Levinas the possibility of the immortality of the soul is founded on the possibility/eventuality of: “the dead one’s refusal to fall into the time of the other, the personal time free from common time” (TI 57). If the two “times” were contemporaneous death would be final (no immortality!).

Separation, which is constituted by interiority, is also tied to this idea: separation is radical (true): “only if each being has its own time”, i.e.: if each time is not absorbed into universal time (Cfr. TI 57). This complete separation Levinas calls it Atheism, i.e.: a separation: “without participating in the Being from which it is separated” (TI 58), living outside of God, “at home with oneself” (Ibid.). Thus in its very constitution the soul is atheist. Atheism, in Levinas conception, is not a negation of God, but a condition preceding it.

Truth

Truth is also constituted through separation: “without separation there would not have been truth; there would have been only being” (TI 60). Truth does not “occur” in the union of the knower and the known. Just as forms require contemplation/distance so does truth.

Truth, unlike theory, is exteriority; it is: “sought in the other”, not as deficiency, or lack, but precisely: “by him who lacks nothing” (TI 62). The existing being and truth are separated by a distance which is simultaneously “untraversable, and at the same time traversed” (TI 62). The existent being searches for truth, not because he is lacking or having lost some good, but because he is autonomous and satisfied. Indeed truth comes to him: “Speaks to him” (Ibid.)

Discourse

It is in the face that we must find speech: “the face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse” (TI 66). Discourse is primordially: “an original relation with exterior being” (Ibid.). Meaning in discourse is not produced abstractly, “as an ideal essence” (Cfr. Plato), it is said and taught by presence, the presence of the other with open face (*à visage découvert*), through eyes which speak.

Discourse, language, confirms the separated-ness of the Other: “The Other is maintained and confirmed in his heterogeneity as soon as one calls upon him” (TI 69). By calling the other, I respect him, I acknowledge his autonomy, his separated-ness beyond any totalizing category; even when I say to him I cannot speak to you.

Discourse and ethics

Language presupposes the other: “[It] implies transcendence, radical separation...the revelation of the other to me” (TI 73). In other words, it implies a community of persons. The other, in its fundamental separated-ness and even strangeness stands to instruct me, teach me. Because he is foreign, and resistant to categorization and classification, he imparts knowledge.

Discourse is also what creates the community of human beings: “to speak is to make the world common, to create common places” (TI 76). It is an offering that passes from the same to the other.

Levinas calls ethics a “spiritual ethics”. What he means by this is that any relation with God is possible only through relationship with human beings: “there can be no ‘knowledge’ of God separated from the relationship with men” (TI 78). However, the other should not be considered the incarnation of God, but the face through which God is manifested, revealed. It is for this reason that Levinas wants to establish the primacy of the ethical.

For Levinas, in fact, metaphysics is nothing but actualized ethics: without ethics, theology would be empty with all its formal frameworks. It is moral relations that give spiritual meaning to every metaphysical affirmation. Levinas states: “Everything that cannot be reduced to an inter-human relation represents not the superior form but the forever primitive form of religion” (TI 79).

Signification

Signification arises: “from the face of the other who calls upon the same” (TI 96/97). It does not arise from the needs of the same as if lacking of something, it comes as the “surplus” of the other (Ibid.). “It arises from the other stating or understanding the world...” (Ibid.). “It starts with *the speech* in which the world is at the same time thematized and interpreted, in which the signifier never separates himself from the sign he delivers...” (TI 97).

Meaning requires, in short, the presence and absoluteness (i.e.: independence) of the other: “To have meaning is to teach or to be taught, to speak or to be able to be stated” (Ibid.).

Apparition vs. speech

Apparition does not require as such the presence of the other, while in language (i.e.: speech): “the intermittent afflux of a presence” (TI98) is required. “Apparition reveals and conceals, speech consists in surmounting...the dissimulation inevitable in every apparition” (Ibid.)

In speech, the speaker: “guarantees his own apparition and comes to the assistance of himself, attends his own manifestation” (Ibid.). Speech is an ordering principle: “in function of it the world is oriented, that is, takes signification” (Ibid.). In speech the world is proposed as a theme: “the world issues in speech” (Ibid.). Thus speech is: “the origin of all significations” (Ibid.). It becomes the universal key of all human endeavors.

Interiority and economy

Separation as life

Living on/or from: “the things we live from are not tools, nor even implements, in the Heideggerian sense of the term” (TI 110). In other words, they are not mere tools, fulfilling a utilitarian function: “they are always in a certain measure...objects of enjoyment, presenting themselves to ‘taste’, already adorned, embellished” (Ibid.). The best example of living is nourishment: “Nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is transmutation of the other into the same, which is the essence of enjoyment...[an] energy that is other...sustaining the very act that is directed upon it, becomes, in enjoyment, my own energy, my strength, me” (Ibid.). In enjoyment, there is identification of the same with the object of his enjoyment: “one does not only exist one’s pain or one’s joy; one exists from pains and a joy...the act nourishes itself with its own activity” (TI 111). For example: “if I eat my bread in order to labor and to live, I live from my labor and from my bread” (Ibid.).

But what is enjoyment for Levinas? “Enjoyment is not a psychological state among others, the affective tonality of empiricist psychology, but the pulsation of the I” (TI 113). Happiness, on the other hand, is accomplishment, or fulfillment, where as existing as such is merely ataraxia. Enjoyment is a quenching, it is: “already the exceeding of being, the plenitude of being” (Ibid.).

Conception of need

Need, according to Levinas, should not be conceived as deprivation, enslavement; but as something to be enjoyed [this puts him at odds with the Platonic conception of

need]. Need is something human beings thrive on: “[the human being] is happy for needs” (TI 114). Need is mastery in dependence!

Thus need and desire are fundamentally different: “[Need] is *Penia* as source of *Poros*, in contrast with desire, which is *Pania* of *Poros*” (TI 115). The lacks of need are the source of its fullness and abundance. To live is to enjoy living. To suffer is a failing of happiness. It is not right to say that happiness is the absence of suffering (Cfr. *Ibid.*). There cannot be happiness in a soul that extirpated its needs, but only a castrated soul (Cfr. *Ibid.*)

Need is constituted in relation to another which maintains its alterity. Thus need by its very essence points to an independent being; a being independent of the world. “Needs are in my power; they constitute me as the same and not as dependent on the other” (TI 116); “[my body]...is also a way of possessing and of working, of having time, of overcoming the very alterity of what I have to live from” (TI 117). It is only after recognizing need for what they are, i.e.: as capable of being satisfied, that the I can turn its attention to what it does not lack, and opens itself to desire (Cfr. *Ibid.*).

The unicity of the I entails separation. It does not consist: “in being found in one sample only, but in existing without having a genus, without being the individuation of a concept” (TI 117/8). It is beyond the distinction of the individual and the general. The unicity of the I is eminently revealed in enjoyment because: “[It] is a withdrawal into oneself, an involution” (TI 118); a movement towards oneself. One becomes, is constituted as subject: “...through interiorization of enjoyment”.

Totalitarians and Pluralists on the Individual

In the totalitarian view: "The individual would appear as participant in the Totality: the other would account to a second copy of the I; both included in the same concept" (TI 121). On the other hand: "Pluralism implies a radical alterity of the other, whom I do not simply conceive by relation to myself, but confront out of my egoism" (Ibid.). The alterity of the other, in other words, is in him and not in relation to me. It merely reveals itself to me. I have access to it, not through comparison with myself, but: "proceeding from myself" (Ibid.). I have access to his alterity through his presence, and not through reflection "on its terms" (Ibid.). [This is clearly Levinas response to the famous empiricist argument for the existence of other minds].

Enjoyment and Representation

What is the relationship between these two concepts? How do they compare? Levinas states that the two move: "in an opposite direction" (TI 123). However, it is through representation that the intentional character of enjoyment and sensibility are revealed. Representation is repository of truth. Because truth: "consists in the thinker being determined by the object presented to him" (TI 124). Presentation is a proceeding forward without: "a searchlight preceding it" (Ibid.); it is a projection: "a spontaneity prior to all activity" (TI 125); "it is pure present" (Ibid.). "In representation, the I precisely loses its opposition to its object" (TI 126). Representation reduces: "the instantaneousness of thought everything that seems independent of it" (TI 127)

Enjoyment and Nourishment

The reality of one's exteriority is posited in corporeity. The body is not merely an object among other objects in the world: "The body...is the very reverting...of representation into life" (Ibid.). The body's essence: "is to accomplish my position on the earth...to give me a vision...borne by the very image that I see" (TI 128). To exist corporally is "to touch the earth" (ibid.).

Nourishment as satisfaction is need, and ends: "the alien-ness of the world...it loses its alterity" (TI 129). The energy contained in the food for example becomes my energy, becomes me: "the alterity of nutriments enters into the same" (TI 129).

The elemental

The elemental is non-possess-able. It is that which: "contains without being able to be contained or enveloped" (TI 131); "it is content without form" (Ibid.); "It has no side. It is un-approachable in the sense that 'I am always within the element'" (Ibid.). The access to the elemental is through the domicile; in other words, the field, the sea, the forest, etc...It is the domicile that renders the inner life possible.

The elemental presents itself to us as without origin, from nowhere: "It is mind, earth, sea, sky, air" (Ibid.). It cannot be fixed by thought: "...it lies outside the distinction between the finite and the infinite" (Ibid.); "the element separates us from the infinite".

All objects are present to us for enjoyment; including the utilitarian tools. All things are directed to our enjoyment and enjoyment becomes the common denominator of our relations with things (Cfr. 133). All the things in my possession: furnishings, home, food, and clothing, are not simply things (German *Zeuge*), but objects of enjoyment or

suffering: “they are ends” (Ibid.); i.e.: not simply means to an end!! Even things that have no apparent purpose such as a crust of bread, a flame, etc.: “offer themselves to enjoyment” (ibid.). Every utilization is accompanied, or is simultaneously given, as enjoyment.

Not all actions are purposive, and not all of them are under: “one system of use-references” (Ibid.). Levinas tells us that: “the world answers to a set of autonomous finalities which ignore one another” (ibid.). This, in the end, what leads Levinas to view life as a play: “to live is to play” (TI 134).

Sensibility

Sensibility, quite unsurprisingly, is defined by Levinas in terms very untraditional to philosophy. Sensibility is not conceived as some type of representation, but as a lived experience: “One does not know one lives sensible qualities” (TI 135). In fact sensibility is living, enjoying things in their finiteness: “the finite as contentment is sensibility” (Ibid.). Because the world: “...constitutes the very contentment of existence....sensibility is enjoyment” (TI 136).

What is given to the sense nourishes the senses: “The sense datum with which sensibility is nourished always comes to gratify a need, responds to a tendency” (Ibid.). For this reason, Levinas ties sensibility not to order and experience, but to the structure of enjoyment. The world, then, is not object of my representation, but what “localizes” me, situates me in my perspective. As such it: “precedes me as an absolute of an un-representable antiquity” (TI 137). My sensibility is localized. In a certain sense the world is the localization of my sensibility” (Ibid.).

Sensibility is prior to reason. This should not be understood too mean that it is blind. It means that it: “enacts the very separation of being-separated and independent” (TI 138). However, It remains at the same time self-sufficient, self-contained: “to maintain oneself at home with oneself” (TI 139).

I and Dependence

Joy

The I, through happiness in and of itself, dwells in the non-I, i.e.: the world, and its enjoyment comes from without. However, there is no distance like the one between the same and the other, between the I and what it lives from. As such: “the dwelling, inhabitation, belongs to the essence, to egoism, of the I” (TI 143). “The non-I [The world] feeds enjoyment; the I needs the world, which exalts it” (Ibid.). Enjoyment exists at the expense of need; it depends on the other.

Love of life

Pain and joy stand in direct reference to each other: “pain takes place within its horizons and refers to the joy of living” (TI 145). The love of life is not reducible to the understanding of Being, i.e.: to ontology. The love of life is not love of Being, but the love of the happiness of being. To enjoy life is to love life, it is contentment; it is: “neither a representation of life, nor a reflection on life” (Ibid.). Even the *taedium vitae* is: “steeped in the love of the life it rejects; despair does not break with the ideal of joy” (TI 146). Thus a “being without needs would not be happier than a needy being” (Ibid.). Enjoyment is reached through need and labor.

Enjoyment introduces a separation: “by engaging in the contents from which it lives” (TI 147). And since separation is being at home with oneself, separation is to live-from: “to enjoy the elemental” (Ibid.). Even suicide reveals indirectly the radicality of the love of life.

The Dwelling

Habitation

Is habitation a simple human implement as a tool, e.g.: a hammer? Yes it may be conceived as such, however: “within the system of finalities ...the home occupies a privileged place” (TI 152). Not as in the Aristotelian sense of final end, and not simply as: “possibility for enjoyment” (Ibid.). The special place the home occupies derives from the fact that it is a condition for the human activity. It is its commencement.

My home, my dwelling: “is not situated in the objective world, but the objective world is situated by relation to my dwelling” (TI 153). For Levinas, idealist metaphysics has failed to understand the importance of the home in its conception of the world. Thus: “the for itself of the subject was posited in as sort of ether” (Ibid.). A contemplating, reflecting subject presupposes the reality of a dwelling, a distancing from the elements; a withdrawal to the intimacy of the home. Recollection is an act of separation that presupposes the dwelling.

Habitation and the feminine

The woman is: “the other whose presence is discreetly an absence, with which is accomplished the primary hospitable welcome which describes the field of intimacy” (TI

155). “The woman is the condition for recollection, the *interiority* of the home, and inhabitation” (Ibid.)

To exist, for Levinas, is to dwell. Dwelling is not simply being thrown into a place: “it is recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreatwith oneself as in a land of refuge, a human welcome”. Levinas’ description of the dwelling reveals as much the feminine side of dwelling as much as the feminine itself in general.

Home and Possession

The dwelling is what puts a distance and a break from nature: “with the dwelling the separated being breaks with natural existence” (TI 156). That is its primordial function to allow the I to recollect itself with itself (Cfr. Ibid.). The separation operated by the construction of the home, the dwelling, does not isolate or insulate the I; or as Levinas puts it does not: “extract from these elements” (Ibid.). It rather: “makes labor and property possible” (Ibid.).

In the dwelling the window is a metaphor: it is the way in which the dwelling remains open to the element from which it has separated itself. The open window makes possible: “the look that contemplates” (Ibid.)

The home, the dwelling, is not a possession in the same sense as the possessions it contains within itself. The home is possessed: “because it already and henceforth is hospitable for its proprietor” (Ibid.); and this is what signifies its interiority: the ultimate welcome, the feminine being.

Possession and labor

Labor is what makes possible the access to the: “fathomless obscurity of matter” (TI 159). “Possession is accomplished in taking possession of labor, the destiny of the hand” (Ibid.). It is the hand that establishes not only relation of the ‘elemental to the finality of needs’ but the one that deposits things in the home “conferring on [them] the status of a possession” (Ibid.). In fact, “labor is the very en-ergy of acquisition” (Ibid.). All of this ultimately is made possible, according to Levinas, by the dwelling.

Labor is what makes the elemental yield: “[It] masters it. And puts it at the disposal of a being recollecting...” (Ibid). Matter does not present itself to labor as a face to face, but as resistance; labor will subjugate it obliquely, through use and industry. And because labor deals with a faceless counterpart, it is *not* violence. And because things are proportional to the body, e.g.: a piece of furniture, they are subject to the manipulation of the hand. The substantiality [i.e.: the ‘thing-ness of the thing] is constituted by the offer of itself to the hand: “which takes and takes away” (TI 161). Indeed: “the hand takes and comprehends” (in French: ...*prend et comprend*) (Ibid.). The hand comprehends because: “it is mastery, domination, disposition” (Ibid.); and it is not simply in the order of sensibility.

The body and consciousness

The Body: “Life is a Body” (TI 164). “*To be a body* is, on the one hand, to *stand* [in French: *se tenir*], to be master of oneself, and, on the other hand, to stand of the earth, to be the *other*, and thus to be encumbered by one’s body” (Ibid.). “To be at home with

oneself in something other than oneself, to be oneself while living from something other than oneself, to live from..., is concretized in corporeal existence”(Ibid.)

Consciousness does not fall into a body [perhaps here an allusion to the Platonic image as the soul’s descent into the body]; it is not incarnated. In fact it is a dis-incarnation; or more to the point: “a postponing of the corporeity of the body” (TI 165/66). “To be conscious is to be in relation with *what is*” (Ibid.). This as a form of projection: “the present of what *is* were not yet entirely accomplished...” (Ibid.). “To be conscious is to have time” (Ibid.) in the sense of having a distance with regard to the present itself.

Freedom of representation and gift

The body is what defines our separate existence: “It is the regime of separation” (166); although it may appear to representation: “as a thing among things.” (Ibid)

The other contests my possession because: “the sense cannot lay hold of this other without suppressing him” (TI 171). I perceive the other from the perspective of the home; I open the door for him as a sign of my welcome to him. This is the nature of hospitality: “it coincides with the desire for the other absolutely transcendent” (Ibid.). Open doors and windows define the essence of the home as much as closed door and windows.

The world of Phenomena and Expression

Separation and Economy

“To separate oneself, to not remain bound up with a totality, is positively to be somewhere, in the home, to be economically” (TI 175) [Levinas here seems to use the

word economically in its etymological senses, Cfr. the Greek *oaks*, home]. Separation represented by egoism is made explicit in the home. However, egoism is not perversion but life itself; it is life from..., or enjoyment (Cfr. Ibid.).

Labor is what 'reduces' the other to the same. However, the product of labor: "is not an alienable possession...since it can be usurped by the other" (TI 176). Works have destinies independent of the I whereby they can be exchanged, e.g.: through money.

The State founded on works or which defines its essence through works would be heading towards tyranny. In such context, work can be an alienating experience: "from the work I am only deduced and am already ill-understood, betrayed rather than expressed" (Ibid.).

Levinas does not believe that the other can be approached through his works. It would be interesting to see the contrast here what Sartre states in his *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*]. In his works, "the other signals himself but does not present himself. The works symbolize him" (Ibid.). In fact, there is concealment in works: "To be expressed, by one's life, by one's works, is precisely to decline expression" (Ibid.). Only the word: "can put and end to this absence" (TI 177), i.e. the absence produced in works.

The face

There is a fundamental confusion in posing the question: "who is it?" The who in such a question is really a dissimulated what. Because to such a question, more often than not, the answer refer to what position the person holds, e.g.: "He is the President of the State Council" (Ibid.). As such then: "The answer presents itself as a quiddity; it refers to a system of relations" (Ibid.). For Levinas: "The question who? Envisages a face" (Ibid.),

because: “The face is not a modality of quiddity, an answer to a question, but the correlative of what is prior to every question” (Ibid.).

Thus the human person is not understood through his works. In fact Levinas states: “when we understand man on the basis of his works he is more surprised than understood” (TI 178) [in French the expression is: “*il est plus surpris que compris*”]. As such: “Life and his labor mask him, as symbols they call for interpretation” (Ibid.).

There has to precede: “the society of signifiers for the sign to be able to appear as a sign... [prior to all] the signifier must present himself before the sign, by himself, present a face” (TI 182). Signs are mute by themselves; they await decipherment through language. There is, as it were, “...surplus of spoken language” (Ibid.).

Nevertheless speech does not have the directness or transparency: “of the gaze directed upon the gaze, the absolute *frankness* of the face to face proffered at the bottom of all speech” (Ibid.).

Exteriority and the Face

Sensibility and the face

The question Levinas wants to answer at this point is: how does the epiphany as a face (or of the face) engenders a relationship different from the one we have in our sensible experience.

Levinas first distinguishes enjoyment and perception/sensation. Enjoyment is not outside sensation. In fact one can speak of enjoyment ‘even in the domain of vision and audition’. When sensation is understood as enjoyment then it will be recaptured and rehabilitated. Sensation should not be conceived as: “the subjective counterpart of

objective qualities” (TI 188). Because: “the senses have a meaning that is not predetermined as objectification” (Ibid.). What in essence Levinas is proposing is to abandon: “the Kantian sense of the term...for a phenomenology of sensation as enjoyment” (Ibid.).

Vision has an almost synonymous meaning and use to sensation. In essence it epitomizes in a concrete manner the dynamics of sensation. “Vision is therefore a relation with a ‘something’ established with a relation with what is not ‘something’” (TI 189). “Vision opens upon a perspective, upon a horizon, and describes a traversable distance, invites the hand to movement and to contact, and ensures them” (TI 191)

Ethics and the Face

The face for Levinas is un-containable and it is as such that it presents itself. It is not enveloped, and is not subject to be enveloped as an object, as if its content can be comprehended.

The alterity of the other is not relative. His alterity: “does not depend on any quality that would distinguish him from me” (TI 194). If it were so, then his alterity, his distinction, would be based on a: “community of genus” (Ibid.); which is a contradiction, because it would: “nullify alterity” (Ibid.).

The relation with the other is crystallized in his expression, which: “issues neither in number nor in concept” (Ibid.). The other maintains his transcendence, remaining ‘infinitely foreign’. His revelation, appearance (or epiphany) which comes forth through his face occurs through the breaking of: “the world that can be common to us” (Ibid.).

The possibility of speech resides precisely in this, that it: “proceeds from absolute difference” (Ibid.). It is indeed language which establishes absolute freedom; it breaks the unity of a genus. Levinas reiterates: “Language is perhaps to be defined as the very power to break the continuity of being or of history” (TI 195). It is through speech that the other is addressed. “Speech cuts across vision” (ibid.); “...the ethical relationship subtends discourse...emanates from the other” (Ibid.). Positioning oneself to face someone (an opposition par excellence) is a moral summons. It is a movement emanating from the other. The very idea of infinity “is concretely produced in the form of a relation with the face” (TI 196). It is also the idea of infinity which maintains: “the exteriority of the other” (Ibid.). In essence this represents a structure analogous to the ontological argument: “The exteriority of the a being is inscribed in its essence” (Ibid.).

The other [does not exist] to: “limit the freedom of the same” (TI 197). “In calling it [him] to responsibility, it founds it and justifies it” (Ibid.); “the idea of infinity is produced in the opposition of conversation, in sociality” (Ibid.). But without violence and: “in peace with this absolute alterity” (Ibid.). The resistance of the other is not violence towards me but “has a positive structure: ethical” (ibid.).

The face is resistance to my powers. The expression of the face is not there to: “defy the febleness of my powers, but my ability for power” (TI 198) [In French: *mon pouvoir de pouvoir*]. The face speaks to me; it invites me to a relation that transcends any power. In the face is expressed alterity itself, which provides occasion for negation: “The other is the sole being I can wish to kill” Ibid.

The other opposes me essentially through his transcendence; i.e.: the infinity of his transcendence. “This infinity resists us in his face and is his face” (ibid.). It contains

the primordial command: “you shall not commit murder”. The face is ethical resistance. It is the face, its epiphany, that posits: “the purely ethical impossibility of this temptation and attempt [to kill]” (Ibid.). The face is cause for the ethical.

“To manifest oneself as a face is to *impose oneself*...to present oneself in a mode irreducible to manifestation....without the intermediacy of any image, in one’s nudity, that is, in one’s destitution and hunger” (TI 200). In my [face] presentation to the other I invoke the interlocutor; I expose myself to his response, to his questioning (Cfr. Ibid.). It is the face which: “opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation, which no ‘interiority’ permits avoiding” (TI 201). It is for this reason that for Levinas the ethical plane precedes the ontological plane.

Language and expression

Expression’s significance: “consists in bearing witness to oneself...This attestation of oneself is possible only as a face, that is as speech” (ibid.). As an exchange of ideas about the world, language presupposes the originality of the face. Language is possible when it returns to its essence of being expression. Expression does not mean opening the other’s interiority; because the other maintains the freedom to lie. It is the face which possesses absolute authenticity and is beyond: “the alternative of truth and not truth” (TI 202). As such it is beyond truth value. Truth proceeds *after* the establishment of a: “relationship with a face....whose epiphany is somehow an of honor” (Ibid.).

Language is primordial, because language delimits the boundaries of thought: “language...conditions the functioning of rational thought...conditions thought” (TI 204). It does not enact itself within consciousness; it comes from the other: “and

reverberates in consciousness by putting it in question” (Ibid.). But why is language necessary for thought? It is because it is language that brings meaning. Meaning is contained in the face of the other; and: “all recourse of words takes place already with the primordial face to face language” (TI 206). That something we call signification arises in being with language, because the essence of language is the relation with the other. (Cfr. Ibid).

The meaningfulness of the world resides in the other: “To thematize is to offer the world to the other in speech” (TI 209). It is language that: “makes possible the objectivity of objects and their thematization” (TI 210). Knowing objectively presupposes the thoughts of the others. What we communicate is founded in function of others.

It is here that Levinas wants to go beyond the Cartesian impasse: the difficulties encountered by the Cartesian Cogito could only be overcome in: “positing the relation with the other as ethical”. In technical language, one has to go beyond the *order of knowing* to *the ethical relation*.

Humanity is constituted through the epiphany of the face to face. All humanity “faces” me as an equal: “The presence of the face [is] a command that commands commanding” (TI 213). Humanity, the others (or the third party as Levinas calls it alternatively) is “a kinship of men” and “not a unity of genus” (Cfr. TI214). The equality with the other arises in the moment the other commands responsibility. Human fraternity stems from the common-ness of a father”; it does not stem from resemblance.

The absoluteness of the other

The other presents himself from the outset as an absolute [i.e.: transcendence] and separated-ness. The problem of idealism lies exactly here: it wants to reduce the ethical to the political, Cfr Hegel. When this happens, the I and the Other are reduced to: "play the role of moments in a system, and not of origin". With this plurality will be lost and the consequences are:

"...language loses all social signification; interlocutors renounce their unicity not in desiring one another but in desiring the universal. Language would be equivalent to the constitution of rational institutions in which an impersonal reason which is already at work in the persons who speak and already sustains their effective reality would become objective and effective: each being is posited apart from all the others, but the will of each, or ipseity, from the start consists in willing the universal or the rational, that is, in negating its very particularity. In accomplishing its essence as discourse, in becoming a discourse universally coherent, language would at the same time realize the universal State, in which multiplicity is reabsorbed and discourse comes to an end, for lack of interlocutors." (TI 217).

The Ethical Relation and Time

Subjectivity and Pluralism

It is separation in the form of habitation and economy which makes possible the relation with the detached, absolute exteriority. For multiplicity to exist, to be maintained, there has to be in it subjectivity: "that could not seek congruence with the being in which it is produced" (TI 221). For Levinas the social relation is an ultimate event, not just one among many others.

How is multiplicity/pluralism manifested? Levinas states clearly that it is not in war or economy that such realities are revealed. But nevertheless he goes on to explore war and economy to make his position clear (or almost!!).

For Levinas, war is not a product of: “the multiplicity of beings that limit one another”, as in Hobbes; however: “war like peace presupposes beings structured otherwise than as parts of a totality” (TI 222). “In war beings refuse to belong to a totality, refuse community, refuse law. No frontier stops one being from another, nor defines them” (Ibid.). In war, each “identifies itself not by its place in the whole, but by its *self*” (Ibid.). In war the transcendence of the other is presupposed.

The refusal of totality in war does not exclude relationship; because adversaries seek out one another. Thus violence reveals the exteriority of the other; which is at the source of separation and multiplicity: “violence bears upon only a being both graspable and escaping every hold” (TI 223).

Freedom and Violence

The proper understanding of freedom can be achieved only within the context of temporality: “A being independent [of] the other is a temporal being” (TI 224). It is through time that we come to grasp the notion of finite freedom. The temporal being, i.e.: the human being: “is not a being for death [as existentialists would have it in determining authentic existence] but the ‘not yet’...a way of being against death” (Ibid.); against death’s march towards me.

Violence is not an accident happening to freedom, but a primordial fact that has a hold on the mortal being. Violence is only aimed at a face. Freedom does not account for the transcendence of the other; on the contrary, it is transcendence of the other which accounts for freedom. Thus the force of the other is moral. Freedom cannot and does not

reside in the totality. If it were so, Levinas tells us that it would be tantamount to looking for it in psychology. As it were it lies beyond totality.

Work

Expression is intimately connected with the presence of the same with the other; while work does not require such a condition: the work of the author can attest for him in his absence “as a plastic form”. The product of work has “its market value”. It will assume the meaning others may give it, be treated in contexts not intended by its author. The work is defenseless to the other’s imposition of meaning (in German: *Sinngebung*). “It lends itself to the designs of a foreign will and allows itself to be appropriated” (TI 227). It may even: “turn against its author” (TI 228).

Death

Death does not simply fall into a simple alternative, i.e.: a transition into Nothingness or into Being. In fact, I perceive my death as a: “refusal of this ultimate alternative” (TI 233). I do not capture my death through “the death of the others by analogy; it is inscribed in the fear I can have for my being” (Ibid.). Death is unforeseeable because it lies beyond any horizon; because it is un-graspable.

It is interesting that Levinas considers death an absolute violence, a murderer facing me. It comes to me, as he says, as if fixed at an hour by someone. Death has an interpersonal relation [to me/us]; it: “comes from the other, and this alterity precisely as absolute, strikes me in an evil design or in a judgment of justice” (TI 234). In facing death, I am facing: “what is against me, as though murder” (Ibid.). “The violence of death

threatens as a tyranny, as though proceeding from a foreign will” (Ibid.). ‘It is a menace approaching me as a mystery’.

Thus my temporality consists both as being for death and having time against death. Death does not terrify me for its nothingness, but for its violence which: “extends into the fear of the other” (TI 235).

Suffering in Hatred

Levinas contends: “the supreme ordeal of freedom is not death, but suffering” (TI 339). Suffering is best known through hatred. Hatred is not as such desire for the death of the other; it would be so only if death was viewed as ultimate suffering. In reality in hate, the hater wants to be the cause of the suffering in the hated: hatred does not objectify the other; on the contrary it subjectifies him.

Beyond the Face

Introductory

The relation with the other does not arise with a totality or establish a totality. The relation with the other face to face is not borne under: “the existence of universal truths” (TI 251). The relation with the other is asymmetrical: “it commences in the *inequality* of terms” (Ibid.). The I and the other are transcendent to one another; one does not determine the other. The identity of the other is constituted by its alterity: “the other is the other” (Ibid.), i.e.: the other cannot be reduced to the same. The other is found: “in a dimension of height and abasement...he has the face of the poor, the stranger, the widow,

and the orphan, and, at the same time, of the master called to invest and justify my freedom” (Ibid.).

Levinas’ objective in the last part of TI is to reach a: “a plane presupposing and transcending the epiphany of the other in the face” (TI 253). In order to achieve this, he goes on to consider the events of love, Eros, fecundity, filiality and fraternity.

Love: In love, Levinas maintains “transcendence goes both further and less far than language” (TI 254). For him, love is a relation with the other that can be reduced to immanence; as a relation seeking “a connatural being, a sister soul” (Ibid.). Like Aristophanes speech on love in the *Symposium*, it [love] is a return to the one from whom we have been separated. It is founded on need; “and this need still presupposes the total, transcendent exteriority of the other, of the beloved” (Ibid.). Love is directed to the other; it aims at the other in the other’s moment of vulnerability. To love is to be in apprehension, fear for the other; it is to come to his assistance in his moment of frailty.

Eros: Erotic nudity occurs in the instance of immodesty and profanation (Cfr. TI 257). Caress, on the other hand, is sensibility. A sensibility that does not grasp anything: whatever it maybe aiming, it escapes it: “It searches, it forages...it is search: a movement unto the invisible” (TI 258). It is fed by what it’s not. What occurs in a caress is that the body offers itself as erotic nudity: “The caress aims at neither a person nor a thing” (TI 259).

Voluptuousity begins already in erotic desire and remains desire in every instant: “Voluptuousity is not gratification but desire itself: it is impatience itself, breaths impatience and chokes with impatience; it does not see” (Ibid.). But nevertheless, Levinas maintains, it is experience, indeed “a pure experience” (Ibid.).

Eros, Levinas concludes, does not belong to the face relation: “It goes beyond the face” (TI 264), because it is: “profanation and not disclosure of what already exists as radiance and signification” (Ibid.). There is, in the end, a constitutional evanescence to Voluptuousity because it is extinguished in possession.

Fecundity: By fecundity Levinas means simply procreation of the child, and the relation the child has with the parent. “The I in the child is another: possession of the child by the father does not exhaust the meaning of the relationship that is accomplished in paternity” (TI 267). The child is the father as stranger: “He is me a stranger to myself” (Ibid.). The child presupposes: “the encounter with the other as feminine” (Ibid.). He is: “my future in a very new sense, despite the continuity” (TI 268). In a sense my child is what renders my absolute future, infinite time. Fecundity is what makes history possible without the burden of old age.

Levinas in a rare moment of lucidity of expression proposes the essence of being son. It merits to be quoted *in toto*:

“The son is not only my work, like a poem or an object, nor is he my property. Neither the categories of power nor those of knowledge describe my relation to the child. The fecundity of the I is neither a cause nor domination. I do not have my child; I am my child. Paternity is a relation with a stranger who while being Other (“And you shall say to yourself, ‘who can have borne me these? I was bereaved and barren...’” *Isaiah, 49*) is me, a relation of the I with a self which yet is not me. In this “I am” being is no longer Eleatic unity. In existing itself there is a multiplicity and a transcendence. In this transcendence the I is not swept away, since the son is not me; and yet I *am* my son. The fecundity of the I is its very transcendence. The biological origin of this concept nowise neutralizes the paradox of its meaning, and delineates a structure that goes beyond the biologically empirical” (TI 277)

Filiality and fraternity: Filiality is the converse of paternity: “[It] designates a relation of rupture and a recourse at the same time” (TI 278). In it there is the repudiation

of the father which is aimed at fulfilling and repeating the freedom of the son: “The son is, without being ‘on his own account’” (Ibid.). The son, while preserving the unicity of the father, remains exterior to him. In this sense he is a unique son: “Each son of the father is the unique son, the chosen son” (TI 279). The son is unique in and for himself because unique for his father.

“Fraternity is the very relation with the face in which at the same time my election and equality, that is, the mastery exercised over me by the other, are accomplished” (Ibid.). The human I is conceived by Levinas within universal fraternity of humanity, that “all men are brothers is not added to man as a moral conquest, constitutes his ipseity” (TI 279/80). In other words, human identity is founded on universal fraternity; not through some moral injunction.

The conclusions of *Totality and Infinity*

In the last part of his book, Levinas summarizes the conclusions that his explorations have produced. I have outlined them as follows:

1. From the like to the same:

- a. “...the presence in a container of a content exceeding his capacity, was described in this book as the logical plot of being” (TI 289).
- b. “The identity of the individual...consists in being the same: in being oneself, in identifying oneself from within” (Ibid.)
- c. “Social relations...are the original deployment of the relationship...accomplished from me to the other in face to face [encounter]” (TI 290).

2. Being is exteriority:

- a. Being's exteriority: "is true in a face to face that is no longer entirely vision, but goes further than vision" (Ibid.)
- b. "The true essence of man is presented in his face, in which is infinitely other than a violence like unto me...He arrests and paralyzes my violence by his call" (TI 290/91).
- c. "Man as Other comes to us from outside, a separated – or holy – face. His exteriority, that is his appeal to me is his truth" (TI 291).

3. The Finite and the Infinite:

"The relation between the finite and the infinite does not consist in the finite being absorbed in what faces him, but in remaining in his own being, maintaining himself there, acting here below" (TI 292)

4. Creation:

"To affirm origin from nothing by creation is to contest the prior community of all thing within eternity, from which philosophical thought, guided by ontology, makes things arise from a common matrix" (TI 293).

5. Exteriority of language:

- a. "The exteriority of discourse cannot be converted into interiority. The interlocutor can have no place in an inwardness; he is forever outside. The relationship

between separated beings does not totalize them; it is an 'unrelenting relation'"
(TI 295)

- b. "The relation between the 'fragments' of separated being is a face to face, the irreducible and ultimate relation" (Ibid.)
- c. "In language [and not in vision] exteriority is exercised, deployed, brought about"
(TI 296).

6. Expression and Image:

- a. "The presence of the Other, or expression, source of all significance, is not contemplated as an intelligible essence, but is heard as language, and thereby is effectuated exteriorly" (TI 297).
- b. "Expression, or the face, overflows images" (Ibid.).

7. Against the Philosophy of the Neuter:

"To begin with the face as a source from which all meanings appear...is to affirm that being is enacted in the relation between men, that Desire rather than need commands acts" (TI 299).

8. Subjectivity:

"Subjective existence derives its features from separation....The fact of starting from oneself is equivalent to separation" (TI 300)

9. The meaning of subjectivity:

- a. "In welcoming the Other I welcome the On High to which my freedom is subordinated" (TI 300).
- b. "Subjectivity is ...rehabilitated in the work of truth, and not as an egoism refusing the system which offends it" (Ibid.)
- c. "Metaphysics... [in the end] leads us to the accomplishment of the I as unicity by relation to which the work of the State must be situated, and which it must take as a model" (Ibid.).

10. Beyond Being:

- a. "The being of the object is perduration, a filling of the time which is empty and inconsolable against death as an end" (TI 301).
- b. "To exist has a meaning in another dimension than that of the perduration of the totality; it can go beyond being" (ibid.)

11. Freedom Invested:

- a. "The exteriority of being is morality itself" (TI 302)
- b. "Morality...presides over the work of truth" (TI 304)
- c. "Morality is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy" (Ibid.)

12. Being as Goodness:

- a. “The face to face is not a modality of coexistence nor even of the knowledge (itself panoramic) one term can have of another, but is the primordial production of being on which all the possible collocations of the terms are founded” (TI 305).
- b. “The other is not the negation of the same, as Hegel would like to say. The fundamental fact of the ontological scission into same and other is a non-allergic relation of the same with the other” (Ibid.)
- c. “Transcendence or goodness is produced as pluralism” (Ibid.)

Otherwise than Being or beyond Essence

Introduction

According to Adriaan Peperzak, this book [From here on OB]: “...continues the main ideas of *Totalité et Infini* and answers...some criticisms that were brought up against the first book” [See his *To the Other. An Introduction to the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, p. 209].

The first chapter of OB serves as an introduction to the book; it does not deal with a particular theme. Towards the end of it, in fact, in a subtitle called “Itinerary” Levinas outlines the plan of the book. Also, in this first chapter, Levinas clarifies the main terms/ideas that underlie the work.

1. Being’s “other”: The question is not to be or not to be (Macbeth) as ontologists would have it, but otherwise than being, or beyond essence, i.e.: transcendence.

Transcendence is otherwise than being (Not to be otherwise!!). Being and not being create a dialectic ending with: “a determination of being” (OB 3). “Being’s essence dominates not-being itself” (Ibid.).

2. Being and Interest: Being is Interest: *Esse est Inter-esse*. To be is to be among beings. It is contemporaneousness, immanence: “beings remain always assembled, present, in a present that is extended...” (OB 5).
3. Said and Saying: The saying is prior to verbal signs, to logical syntax. It is for the other, an openness to the other. It precedes all thematization. The said, on the other hand, is thematization. Established meaning. It could in effect be understood as being itself. The said is fixed, substantialized, and essentialized. Thus philosophy’s task should be reducing to saying rather than the said.
4. Subjectivity: In short hand. For Levinas to go beyond being and essence: “signifies subjectivity or humanity, the oneself which repels the annexations by essence”. This means in simpler terms that: “the ego is an incomparable unicity; it is outside of the community of genus and form, and does not find any rest in itself either, unquiet, not coinciding with itself” (OB 8). This is what Levinas refers to as “metaphysical extraction” (Cfr. Ibid.).
5. Responsibility for the other: Responsibility for the other is anterior to all, prior to or beyond essence: “The responsibility for the other cannot have begun in my commitment, in my decision. The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the hither side of my freedom, from a ‘prior to every memory’, an ‘ulterior to every accomplishment’” (OB 10).

6. Essence and Signification: Outside essence, responsibility conveys the infinite: “It inverts relationships and principles, reverses the other of interest: in the measure that responsibilities are taken on they multiply” (OB 12).
7. Sensibility: In *Totality and Infinity*, sensibility was conceived primarily as enjoyment, in OB it includes also the concept of vulnerability: “Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience..., trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution...pushed to the limit is sensibility, sensibility as the subjectivity of the subject” (OB 15).
8. Being and beyond Being: (*Autrement qu’être*). “The present study sets out to not conceive proximity in function of being” (OB 16). “It is on the basis on proximity that being takes on its just meaning”. “...being must be understood on the basis of *being’s other*” (Ibid.)
9. Subjectivity: (...)

Intentionality and Sensing

Questioning and allegiance to the other

The question “what” has already eyes for being. It is a question directly linked to being, The question it asks expects an answer in terms of being. Whether this anticipation concerns entity or the being of entities, entity or being’s essence: “Its quest occurs entirely within being, in the midst of what it is seeking” (OB 24). This, in effect, is ontology. All questions beginning with what are directed to: “the understanding of the being of entities, the understanding of essence” (Ibid.).

Even the question “who” may be reduced to “what” in the sense of asking about “the essence of the who that is looking in its generality” (OB 27). In such instance: “...the ontological nature of the problem is affirmed” (Ibid.). The question “who” thus must be understood in its true significance: “what” does “who” mean? [It appears, to me at least at this point, that Levinas is suggesting that if we uncover the true meaning of the question “who” we may find our way out of ontology].

Time and discourse

“Temporalization is the verb form to be” (OB 35), and “language seems rather to be an excrescence of the verb” (Ibid.), “the lived sensation, being and time is already understood in a verb” (Ibid.). How does this not negate the fact that “language is also a system of nouns”? What is that the verb conveys what the noun doesn’t?

According to Levinas, verbs capture the lived more than nouns can. In a sense the dynamic flow of life, as in consciousness, is revealed more in verbs.

Said and Saying (in French: Le dit, dire).

One of the key distinction Levinas makes in this book is between the said and saying. They represent two modes of conceiving the other. The said seems to emphasize the fixity of exteriority, while saying captures the voluble flow of life. “Essence is not only conveyed in the said... [it] resounds in it qua essence...it is the essence of essence” (OB 39) The said is about: “themes, exhibition, doxa or logos” (ibid.).

Language qua said can be conceived as...designating. But also...can be conceived as the verb in a predicative proposition in which the substances break down

into modes of being, modes of Temporalization” (OB 40). Essence is to be found in the verb. In the essence resounds the verb. “The verb *to be* in predication...makes essence resound, but this resonance is collected into an entity by the noun” (OB 42). Thus the place where ontology is born is the said because ontology speaks of being as an identified entity (Cfr. OB 42/43).

Reduction

Being makes its apparition in the said. On the other hand: “responsibility for another is precisely a saying prior to anything said...it is against ‘the winds and tides’ of being, is an interruption of essence, a disinterestedness imposed with a good violence” (OB 43). “...saying is both an affirmation and retraction of the said” (OB 44). It is also liable to be at the mercy of the said: “The un-say-able saying lends itself to the said” (OB 44).

Reduction for Levinas signifies: “reduction of the said to the saying beyond the logos, beyond being and non-being, beyond essence, beyond true and non true. It is the reduction to signification, to the one-for-the-other involved in responsibility; or more exactly in substitution (OB 45). Levinas’ project appears then to be to start with subjectivity conceived as saying. Saying is intended to signify to the other, a neighbor beyond the signification of the said. This occurs in proximity; and proximity is conceived by him as responsibility for the other.

It is inevitable that saying leads to the said; and that all said arises in saying. This is what has made possible the creation of structures, metaphysical or otherwise. But saying as such is pre-ontic and pre-ontological. This is what Levinas aims to establish:

the antecedence of saying. Thus the saying and the said correlate the subject-object structure.

Saying as exposure to another

Saying, to say, is to approach a neighbor endowing him with signification [signifying dealt the other] “prior to all objectification” (OB 48). “Saying is communication” (Ibid.), and a condition of all communication as exposure. The conventional understanding of communication is the transferring a thought from the speaker to another ego and the capture/understanding of this by the recipient. It involves perception and deciphering of signs. For Levinas communication conceived a saying is far more than this: “It is the risky uncovering of oneself, exposure, in sincerity, the breaking up of inwardness and the abandon of all shelter, beyond nudity, what dissimulation there may be under the exposedness of a skin laid bare. It is the very respiration of the skin prior to any intention” (OB 49).

The [saying] subject’s being is turned inside out: “a concave without a convex...it becomes [itself] a sign” (Ibid.). ‘Saying uncovers the one that speaks’; it drops the guard, makes one defenseless, exposed “to outrage, to insults and wounding” (Ibid.). “Saying is denuding, a giving a sign of its signifying-ness...it involves passivity, being at the mercy of an interrogator” (Ibid.), without clothing, without a shell to retreat into. “It is denuding beyond the skin, to the wounds one dies from, denuding to death” (Ibid.). In saying one becomes a being penetrated and penetrable by the other.

The core of subjectivity is then vulnerability, passivity, sensibility; and saying is a the core of patience and pain.

In the final analysis, Levinas appears to reject the notion that the subject can be described in terms of intentionality; i.e.: objectification, or freedom and will (Cfr. OB 53). It must be described as “passivity of time” (Ibid...). At this point, Levinas contrasts Temporalization and intentionality. Thus his phenomenological reduction consists in “a movement back to the saying”. The ultimate form of passivity derives from: “responsibility for the oppressed who is other than myself” (OB 55).

Levinas whole effort at this point appears to be to escape from the totalizing said to a liberating saying which always points to the other: I am my brother’s keeper, as he repeats it several times. All anthropology, therefore, must pre-figure all knowing (Cfr. OB 59).

Sensibility and Proximity

The project of Levinas here is to move beyond Western conception of sensibility: i.e.: beyond ontology. His aim is to capture the immediacy of the sensible beyond the gnoseological [subject/object dichotomy]. This can apparently be achieved by conceiving sensation as: “exposure to wounding and enjoyment”; in brief, the vulnerability of the subject. “It is vulnerability, enjoyment and suffering, whose status is not reducible to the fact of being put before a spectator subject” (OB 63).

What Levinas is aiming at is to: “show...that signification is sensibility” (OB 67). Signification can be understood in two ways: signification by reference, and signification without reference. In the first one, which Levinas call [signification] of the said, having “a meaning for an element [is] to be in such a way as to turn into references to other elements, and for the others to be evoked by it” (OB 69), i.e.: by association; e.g.:

“perception is understood by reference to memory and expectation” (Ibid.). It amounts to receiving meaning from a system.

Signification without reference [i.e.: the signifying-ness of the one-for-the-other] takes place in reciprocity (proximity?) and “outside of every system, before any correlation” (ibid.). It is a kind of signification: “in which...the ego receives the other and takes on the meaning of an irreplaceable identity by giving to the other” (Ibid.). It is a signification of the-one-for-the-other.

Thus sensibility is not to be understood by starting with receptivity, or by consciousness of X...or even beyond Husserlian intentionality but in pure simultaneity and immediacy: “the psyche...as simultaneity of the act of consciousness with its intentional correlative spread out in the system of the said” (OB 71)

Enjoyment

This topic was explored extensively in *Totality and Infinity*; Levinas re-considers it to sharpen its edges as to eliminate any confusion. He wants to first of all to get rid of the notion that enjoyment as “filling” of avoid of “gustative sensation accompanying the physico-chemical or biological mechanism of consuming”; “a spectacle...interiorized in the tasting”; “epiphenomenal echoing of a physical event” (OB 73). He, instead, wants to capture the intrinsic simultaneity or better the identification of the enjoyer and the enjoyed: “...the irreducible event in which the spatial phenomenon of biting becomes identification called me” (Ibid.), i.e.: pre-reflectively.

The reflection on enjoyment and sensibility leads Levinas to the other: “the immediacy of the sensibility is the for-the-other...it is the immediacy or proximity of the other” (OB 74).

Proximity

Spatiality, as for example in contiguity, cannot derive its core meaning without proximity as in approach, neighborhood, and contact. In effect, what Levinas seems to say is that Space pre-exists as a formal category the presence of man [Cfr. Kant] receiving signification only afterwards. This is not only impossible for him, but absurd. The very notion of space derives from: “an anarchic signification of proximity” (OB 81). Beyond the mechanistic conception of space as emanating from proximity is null-sided-ness [non-lieu]; a non-state, restless. Thus proximity must be understood as a relationship (OB 82).

“The proper signification of subjectivity is proximity” (OB 85). It involves responsibility for the other: the one for the other; “the establishing of the sense which every thematized signification reflects being” (ibid.)

In contact, the touching and the touched are separate. There is no investing or annulling the other; nor suppression of oneself in the other. There is no fusion of the two. The other, the neighbor is not one of the genus, essence or semblance. He is “the first one on the scene” (OB 86). He concerns me, engages me, regardless whether he is an old friend or acquaintance, a lover etc...He happens before any apriori. He presents himself to me in his singularity: “he assigns me before I designate him as *tode ti* [in Greek]”. He concerns me before all assumption, all commitment (accepted or not). I am bound to the neighbor before any liaison. He orders me, commands me. He does not concern me

because we are members of the same genus; but in his alterity. I and the other create our community through my obligation to him. He is my brother. Together we form an indissoluble brotherhood which can be rescinded only through alienation.

Before I even designate him, my neighbor assigns me. We do not relate cognitively but obsessively. Because knowledge can always be converted into creation and annihilation, i.e.: conceptualization (or totalization). Knowledge (cognition) leads to the suppression of the singular, through generalization.

In proximity as obsession, I approach my neighbor as a servant “already late and guilty for being late” (OB 87). I obey him without questioning the source of his authority (e.g.: “where does he get his right to command me?”). I am indebted to him. Consciousness between me and my neighbor is not antecedent but posterior to the relationship of obsession. Levinas concludes: “nothing is more burdensome than a neighbor” (OB 88).

The way of the neighbor is the face. His face unloads on me: “an unexceptionable responsibility, preceding every consent, every pact, and every contract” (ibid.). The time of the other or with the other defies conventional clock: “It is a disturbance” (OB 89). “Proximity...opens the distance of a diachrony without a common present” (OB 89).

Phenomenon and face

A face is a trace given to my responsibility. I am responsible [almost!] for his mortality, guilty of surviving. The other has no other place; he is the one in my arms, in my breast. He is otherwise uprooted: “without a country...exposed to the cold and the heat of the seasons” (ibid.).

The face of the other is looking at me, and nothing is indifferent to me. The infinite is distinguishable from nothingness precisely through: “the committing of the neighbor to my responsibility” (OB 93); the more I answer the more I am responsible. “This debit which increases is infinity as an infinition of the infinite, as glory”!!(Ibid.).

Substitution

Proximity must be understood, according to Levinas, *anarchically* as a relationship with a singularity: “without mediation of any principle” (OB 100). This is found precisely in my relationship with my neighbor “since signification is this very relationship with the other, the one-for the other” *ibid.*

What Levinas appears to contend here is that proximity should be conceived beyond the geometric modality of distance, i.e.: in terms of contiguity. Nor the neighbor should be conceived as a “representation”. The neighbor is there as “an extremely urgent assignation” (OB 101). My neighbor is my obligation prior to any commitment. This anteriority of neighbor as obligation is even anterior to any apriori [read Kant’s categorical imperative?].

The term obsession has a peculiar meaning in Levinas. The neighbor is obsession and as such is beyond thematization and principle, it is anarchical. Not in the sense obviously of dis-order.

The concept of recurrence is intimately bound to the concept of responsibility in Levinas (as one Levinas’ commentator puts it: “answerability prior to answer”; “minding the other before having him or her in mind”). Recurrence involves being devoted “to others without being able to resign, and thus as incarnated in order to offer itself, to suffer

and to give” (OB 105). This is so because: “the oneself comes from a past that could not be remembered” (OB 107), and not simply “made for the present” (ibid.). As such “Oneself is a singularity, prior, to the distinction between the particular and the universal” (OB 108).

The idea of substitution arises in Levinas from his conception of responsibility: “For under accusation by everyone, the responsibility for everyone goes to the point of substitution” (OB 112). Unlike Existentialist philosophy which conceives the uniqueness of the human person in terms of singularity, Levinas captures: “the uniqueness of the self [in] the very fact of bearing fault of another” (Ibid.). I am responsible for the other before even his face appears to me; this is my peculiarity and uniqueness. This unrelenting and obsessive responsibility Levinas calls persecution.

I capture myself through others. The more I revert to myself...the more I discover myself responsible [for the other]. Responsibility for the other is prior to freedom; it is no mere accident. Alluding to Sartre, Levinas states: “[responsibility] precedes essence”. Before I ever acted I am under accusation, persecuted, a hostage. In one of his most eloquent passages Levinas declares: “The word “I” means *here I am* answering for everything and for everyone” (OB 114). This is precisely where the term substitution derives its meaning in Levinas’ philosophy. Substitution of oneself for the others is not a form of alienation, an evading one’s identity; it means simply that: “I exist through the other and for the other, but without this being alienation, I am inspired” (OB 114). He further clarifies this: “as-being-in-one’s-skin, having-the-other-in-one’s skin” (OB 115).

For Levinas, responsibility does not proceed from free choice; it is, as stated earlier, prior to freedom. It stands above and prior to the freedom-non freedom

dichotomy [beyond free-will and determinism?]. “Responsibility for the other is answering without a prior commitment. Responsibility is quite simply human fraternity.

There is the paradoxical nature of oneself: our very uniqueness; the uniqueness of the I [defines itself] through substitution for others. Levinas clarifies this as Substitution not being an act: “indeed it is passivity inconvertible into an act” (OB 117). Why am I my brother’s keeper? [What is Hercules to me?] I am my brother’s keeper because I am a hostage: “older than the ego, prior to principles” (Ibid.).

It is being hostage to the other that creates [in] the world: “pity, compassion, pardon and proximity, courtesy...It is the very condition of all solidarity [Cfr. this with Sartre’s “hell is the other”]. It is substitution, the condition of putting oneself in the place of the other, which stands at the source of the self.

Even communication is perceived by Levinas as deriving from responsibility. To communicate is to open oneself not simply for recognition (otherwise it would be an incomplete communication): “but in becoming a responsibility for himresponsibility for the other to the point of substitution” (OB 119).

Subjectivity and Infinity

Although subjectivity stands at the service of the manifestation of being, i.e.: “disclosure of being”, it also veils or obscures being’s essence, e.g.: ideology. In fact ideology can be conceived as being the effect of the finitude of being.

The subject, being at the service of being: “unites the temporal phases into a present by retention and pretension” (OB 133). The subjectivity of the subject would

consist in: “effacing itself before being” (OB 134); by turning structures into signification. In the process, it cannot but manifest itself, i.e.: “the self-consciousness of consciousness”. As a moment of being, subjectivity shows itself as an object to human sciences” (Ibid.). Outside of a revealing being “subjectivity is nothing” (Ibid.). In the end: “the veracity of the subject would have no other signification than this effacing before presence, this representation” (Ibid.).

The One-for-the-Other as non-commitment

The one is not implicated in the one for the other as commitment, but as an assignation of the one by the other, i.e.: signification, signifying-ness, which in the end justifies all commitment. The fact that I am *constitutionally* not indifferent to the other or to the neighbor derives from the fact that we are reciprocally beyond commitment. I am for the other in my very essence, seems to say Levinas.

In Levinas responsibility for the other is uni-directional and non-reciprocal: “Peace with the other is first of all my business” (OB 139); “I am put in the passivity of an indeclinable assignation, in the accusative, a self” (Ibid.); and so not as a member of a genus, but in my uniqueness, here and now. In fact my: “uniqueness...is not due to a unique trait of its nature or its character...except...in responsibility” (Ibid.). In responsibility: “the humanity of man [is] not understood on the basis of transcendental subjectivity” (Ibid.). A “subject is born...in the endless-ness of obligation” (OB 140). In his assignation: “the infinite is enigmatically heard: before and beyond” (Ibid.).

It is not representation which integrates the responsibility inherent in human fraternity; it is not either commitment or a principle, but: “as a face of a neighbor” (Ibid.).

Responsibility thus is: “exposure of me to the other, prior to every decision” (OB 141). The essence of my responsibility can be encapsulated in the phrase: “here I am” [in French: *Me voici!*] as an inspiration, as an invitation to give with full hands (Cfr. 142).

Saying, in this context, is dedication to the other. As such it would be to maintain openness “without excuses, evasion or alibis” (OB 143). And sincerity should be conceived as an attribute of saying: it is saying that realizes sincerity; a giving without dissimulation. Sincerity eliminates the risk of alienation that “saying undergoes in the said”; for example in the empty discourse uttered to evade responsibility. The responsibility of the other, the other in his exteriority: “orders me by my own voice...the infinitely exterior becomes an ‘inward voice’” (OB 147); a voice making signs to another.

The command that precedes any law, the obedience that precedes any command – receiving the order out of oneself – is a reverting of heteronomy into autonomy. Levinas concurs that what we call conscience, i.e.: inscription of the law in consciousness, is precisely this.

“The here I am [*me voici*] signifies me in the name of God, at the service of men that look at me, without having anything to identify myself with” (OB 149). This is what Levinas calls the “extraditing” of the self to the neighbor which precedes all theology.

Responsibility which is prior to commitment, an origin or a present: “is an infinite responsibility of the one for the other who is abandoned to me without anyone being able to take my place as the one responsible for him” (OB 153). This is what Levinas calls “election”.

How about the third man, the neighbor of my neighbor? Do I have responsibility for him to? What is my relationship to him?

Levinas states that I do not have responsibility for the third person in the same way I have it for the other: I cannot entirely answer for the relationship between the other and his neighbor: "the other and the third party...put distance between me and the other and the third party" (OB 157). This seems to put some limit to my responsibility giving rise to justice: "The relationship with the third party is an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is looked at" (OB 158).

Nevertheless, my relationship with the other is what signifies my relations with the others (Cfr. 159). The consequence of such perspective is that justice should not simply be viewed as "a legality regulating human masses" (ibid.). If it were so, it would simply mean justification of the State; on the contrary, the State and institutions "are comprehensible out of proximity" (Ibid.). At the foundation of justice and the State lies the responsibility of the one for the other.

Justice would be true justice in society only where: "there is no distinction between those close and those far off" (ibid.). And at the origin of an egalitarian state must lie in the: "irreducible responsibility of the one for all" (ibid.); and not the Hobbesian "war of all against all". Justice can only be established where I engage in-non-reciprocable relationship with the other, always for the other

CHAPTER FOUR

Michel Foucault

Introduction

I found Gary Guttings' *Foucault. A Very Short Introduction*⁷, in the "Very Short Introduction" series of the Oxford University Press, very instructive and helpful. I have therefore decided to use his approach, albeit in abbreviated form, to introduce the general project of Foucault before I begin to summarize the main ideas contained in his two mainly theoretical works: *The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences*⁸ [in French: *Les Mots et Les Choses*], and *The Archeology of Knowledge*⁹ [in French: *L'Archeologie du Savoir*].

According to Guttings there are three basic ideas that guide and inform the whole Foucaultian project. These are the ideas of a) Archeology b) Genealogy and c) Problematization. By briefly explaining these threes guiding ideas, I hope to make clear Foucault's aims and intentions in his above mentioned theoretical works.

Archeology of Thought

Foucault's idea of an archeology of thought shares some common presuppositions with the modernist literary theorists that language is not merely an instrument for expressing ideas but a source of thought itself. Thus language can become itself an object of legitimate inquiry.

However, Foucault's objective is not: "to open up language itself to speak" [Gutting 2005/32], but to uncover the constraints imposed on people's thought through language and established forms of thought (i.e.: habits of conception). His assumption is that every form of thought involves rules which restrict "the range of thought". These rules, however, are rarely explicitly stated. The idea then is to uncover these rules in order: "to see how an apparently arbitrary constraint actually makes total sense in the framework defined by those rules" (idem 33). The ultimate objective is to discover: "the underlying structures that form the context for their [i.e. scientists, philosophers, etc...] thinking" (Ibid.); e.g.: what made Hume's thought possible. This is what Foucault means by "marginalization of the subject". By this, Foucault is not denying the importance of individual consciousness, but underscores the determinant force of his/her conceptual environment, of which they are often unaware.

The archeological method has affinity with geology and psychoanalysis: the former as looking beyond the surface, the latter as presenting "the underlying structure as part of an unconscious and as discovered only through analysis of linguistic events of which we are aware" (idem 33/34).

Foucault's aim is not a hermeneutic enterprise; it is not about interpretation. He does not treat texts as documents but as monuments. To give an example: an archeologist of knowledge is not interested in interpreting Descartes' *Meditations* but to uncover 'the general structure of the system in which he thought and wrote' (Cfr 34).

There is in effect a similarity between Foucault's archeology and Kant's transcendental method in the sense that both seek the a priori conditions for the possibility of thought. But there are also fundamental differences between the two:

whereas Kant's a priori are absolute, Foucault's are merely "relativized 'historical a priori'" (idem 36). As Gutting rightly remarks: "Foucault may employ Kant's terminology, but his project seeks no truths beyond those available to the empirical methods of historiography" (idem 37).

How does Foucault's archeology differ from traditional historiography? Standard history of ideas is more concerned in connecting ideas with persons, i.e.: theories of individual persons. Archeology, on the other hand, delves into the underlying structure that made their ideas possible. What Foucault does in the final analysis is: "to construct the general mode of thinking (*episteme*) that lay behind what was no doubt a very diverse range of beliefs and practices" (idem 40).

Genealogy

Genealogy is a concept that Foucault borrows from Nietzsche and in essence is similar to Nietzsche's use of the genealogical method.

For Nietzsche genealogy consists in: "tracing the *Hernunft* (descent) of an idea or practice" (idem 47). As in Nietzsche, Foucault genealogy has also a critical intent. "To provide a genealogy is 'to identify the accidents, the minute deviations, or conversely, the complete reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us' [Foucault as quoted by Gutting idem 49].

Genealogy is also value-oriented. The present is what is meant to be understood through analysis of the past. The intent is not to understand the past for its own sake: "but

too understand and evaluate the present [with in view of] discrediting unjustified claims too authority” (Guttings 50).

There is an intimate tie between knowledge and power. Changes in thought are not due to thought itself. The causes for their change are: “social forces that control the behavior of individuals” (Ibid.): “...power transforms the fundamental archaeological frameworks (episteme or discursive formations) that underlie our knowledge” (Ibid.). Foucault is not claiming that power plays only negative epistemic role. It has also a positive role to play, e.g.: Classical economics as product of capitalist socio-political system.

Problematization

According to Gutting, for Foucault problematization does not constitute per se a third historical method, alongside archeology and genealogy. It is rather: “an object studied by such methods” (Gutting 104).

To put it crudely, problematization is the opposite of marginalization. The problematized group is the mainstream, e.g.: in Foucault’s study of ancient Greece, this latter is constituted by “Free Greek males”. This group is subject to less constraint and has wider “range of further self-definition”, and society provides “them room for self-formation in their own terms” (both Ibid.).

Problematization, however, “does not involve a major change” in Foucault’s historical method; for example in his study of sexuality in the ancient world, he would require “a careful exploration of the structures of ancient discourse on sexuality” (Ibid.).

Also, he need not concern too much himself: “with the power relations that are entwined with ancient knowledge of sexuality” (ibid.).

The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences

In his Foreword to the English edition of *The Order of Things*, Foucault gives five suggestions on to read his book. He calls these suggestions “Directions for Use”. These, in any case, are what his ideal reader would follow.

In the first instance, the ideal reader: “would recognize that it was a study of a relatively neglected field” (*The Order of Things*, from here forward OT, ix) in France, at least. In France, Foucault maintains, the pride of place in the history of science was given to mathematics, cosmology, and physics [usually referred to in France as “Les sciences exactes”]. Foucault wants to include in such field the empirical knowledge, e.g.: the practice of old beliefs, naïve notions, in short the study of non-formal knowledge as having a system.

Secondly, ‘the ideal reader’ would recognize that Foucault intends to study and present various types of knowledge, e.g.: the knowledge of living beings, the knowledge of the laws of language, and the knowledge of economic facts” (OT x) concurrently so as: “to relate them to the philosophical discourse that was contemporary with them during a period extending from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century” (Ibid.).

Thirdly, Foucault’s intention is not to produce another history of science, but the study of consciousness that underlies (is subjacent to) the sciences of that chosen period. In short, he wants to describe: “the unconscious of science”. The positive unconscious, i.e.: “a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific

discourse” (OT xi). What this entails for Foucault is to reveal the underlying rules subjacent “but never formulated in their own rights...in widely differing theories, concepts, etc... by isolating, as their specific locus, a level that has been called archeological” (Ibid.).

Fourthly, how Foucault intends to explore the scientific discourse is not from the viewpoint of the protagonists, not from: “the view of the formal structure of what they say, but from the point of view of the rules that come to play in the very existence of such discourse” (TO xiv). Foucault obviously rejects the phenomenological method because he believes that such a method gives priority to the observing subject; a fact that would ultimately lead to a transcendental consciousness.

Finally, Foucault pleads with the English-speaking readers not to fall into labeling him a structuralist as have some “half-witted” commentators have done in France. However, he ruefully admits: “It would hardly behoove me, of all people, to claim that my discourse is independent of conditions and rules of which I am largely unaware, and which determine other work that is being done today” (TO xiv).

In the Preface of OT, Foucault clarifies the key concepts of the study as well as how these relate to the project of the book.

The French title of the book bears no where the word order, and yet Foucault had wanted this word to be included in it in the original French. It was following the advice of his editor that he allowed a different title. The word order has a key position in this study. And it is important to understand it if one is to grasp properly the Foucaultian project.

Foucault states that: “Order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one

another, and also that which has no existence except in the grid created at a glance, an examination, a language..."(OT xx).

It is on the basis of such order, i.e.: as a firm foundation, that: "general theories as to the ordering of things, and the interpretation that such an ordering involves, will be constructed" (TO xxi). Foucault is convinced that in every culture: "there is the pure experience of order and its mode of being" (Ibid.). What Foucault is attempting to do in his study is precisely to analyze such experience as it developed since the 16th century in Western civilization. The questions that such a study will address are clearly and succinctly outlined in the Preface.

Beyond anything what the study aims at is to: "discover on what basis knowledge and theory became possible" (TO xxi), or to put it in Foucaultian terms: "to bring to light the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge...manifests...its conditions of possibility" (TO xxii). "Such an enterprise – Foucault maintains –is not so much a history... [but].an archeology" (Ibid.). What an archeology does, according to Foucault, is to define: "systems of simultaneity, as well as the series of mutations necessary and sufficient to circumscribe the threshold of a new positivity" (TO xxiii). What concerns in the end Foucault is: "how a culture experiences the propinquity of things, how it establishes the *tabula* of their relationships and the order by which they must be considered" (TO xxiv).

Summary of the main ideas of OT

In summarizing *The Order Things* my intention was to focus on Foucault's theoretical presuppositions rather than their application in concrete historical studies. For this reason the main focus of my summary are Chapters one to three.

Chapter One of OT engages in a long analysis of the painting of "Las Meninas" by Velasquez; a painting found in the frontispiece of OT. It seems that the analysis of this painting serves as a metaphor for Foucault's method of inquiry, i.e.: the archeological method. This is my assumption; Foucault does not reveal his intentions openly as to why he dedicates such a long chapter to such analysis. It would be fruitless to try to summarize his musings here; however interesting they are, they can be understood only while observing at the same time the painting.

It is in the second chapter that Foucault outlines the key ordering concepts of TO. Here, Foucault outlines the key organizing (i.e.: ordering) concepts dominating the episteme between the 16th and 19th centuries. In these centuries there are, according to Foucault, similitudes that subtend the episteme of the period.

Similitudes

Similitude is, of course, about resemblance, and "resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture" (TO 17). It was the guiding principle in the most diverse types of endeavors and types of knowledge; from exegesis to organization of symbols. Foucault identifies four similitudes that serve as organizing concepts during the mentioned period. These are: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, *analogy* and *play of sympathies*.

1. *Convenientia*. Foucault tells us that *convenientia*: “is a resemblance connected with space in the form of a graduated scale of proximity” (To 18). “Those things are ‘convenient’ which come sufficiently close to one another to be in juxtaposition” (Ibid.). How this concept underlies the sciences of those centuries is illustrated by some quite interesting examples: There are perfect correspondence in number between the animals of the sea and animals of the surface of the earth, objects produced by nature and man and the sky (Cfr. Ibid.) This belief stems from the fact that the world is seen as: “the universal convenience of things” (Ibid.); and that it is: “linked together like a chain” (TO 19). This kind of similitude feeds on itself: “resemblance imposes adjacencies that in their turn guarantees further resemblances” (Ibid.)

2. *Aemulatio* is a type of convenience un-localized and motionless, functioning at a distance. Foucault uses the example of the reflection of the mirror to explain this concept. What such concept reveals is a universe where scattered things can answer one another. What the concept allows or maintains is that things can: “imitate one another from one end of the universe to the other without connection or proximity” (TO 19). Underlying such a perception is the belief that there is “twin-ship of things” arising “from a fold in being” (TO 20). As an example, Foucault relates how in the concerned period “the human face from afar” emulates the sky; the two eyes as reflections of the sun and the moon.

3. Analogy is the third form of similitude. The kind of analogy Foucault has in mind is *convenientia* and *aemulatio* as superimposed. Analogy here would be a similitude concerned with: “subtle resemblances of relations” (Ibid.). As it were,

analogy has: “a universal field of application” (TO 22). Foucault illustrates this third type of similitude by the analogy that was made in the period between the seven orifices of the human head and the seven planets of the heavens. In fact the human body was conceived as: “the possible half of a universal atlas” (Ibid.).

4. Play of sympathies. Sympathy is also unhampered by distance; it “plays through the depths of the universe in a free state. It can traverse the vastest spaces in an instant” (TO 23). It produces movement in things as well as draws them together from distance: “It is the principle of mobility” (Ibid.). It is the one that makes heavy things to be drawn to the heaviness of the earth and “light things to the weightless ether” (Ibid.). This is also the principle that reduces or assimilates things to being identical to one another by mingling, and defacing their individuality. “It explains how things grow, develop, .in short, how there can be space...and time”. Finally it subsumes all the other three similitudes whereby they are resumed and explained by it.

Signatures

How are similitudes noted, discovered and become objects of study? If similitudes are buried in things they could not be noticed. For them to be noticed there has to be some outward sign/s: “...similitudes must be indicated on the surface of things; there must be visible marks for the invisible analogies” (OT 26).

Thus to come to the awareness and knowledge of similitudes one has to unearth and decipher the marks, which Foucault calls “signatures”. Signatures are the signs that lead us to the underlying similitude of things. When signs are properly identified: “...the

space inhabited by immediate resemblances becomes like a vast open book” (OT 27). To illustrate this point Foucault describes how from: “the affinity of the walnut and the human head” (Ibid.) one is led to affirm that: “what cures ‘wounds of the pericranium’ is the thick green rind covering the bones – the shell – of the fruit” (Ibid.). Without signatures, resemblances would eternally remain buried: “for none of them would ever become observable were it not legitimately marked” (TO 28).

What constitutes a sign as a signature? The reply is simply resemblance! [But doesn’t this constitute a petition principii?]. “It signifies exactly in so far as it resembles what it is indicating” (Ibid.). Foucault’s conclusion here is that in the sixteenth century there is coincidence of hermeneutics and semiology [i.e.: the study of signs]: “to search for a meaning is to bring to light resemblance. To search for the law governing signs is to discover the things that are alike” (TO 29).

Limits of 16th century episteme

Though limitless, i.e.: resemblances can be recombined ad infinitum, this type of episteme is limited and “poverty-stricken” (TO 30). The world is explored, not for discovery of the unknown, but for the justification of analogies. Only through these are sought certainties. According to Foucault, for this reason: “sixteenth century knowledge condemned itself to never knowing anything but the same thing” (Ibid.).

The analogy between the microcosm and macrocosm [roughly: The self and the world] played a: “fundamental role in the field of knowledge” (TO 31). What these concepts generated was a: “category of thought” that allowed an: “interplay of duplicated resemblances to all the realms of nature” (Ibid.), and even beyond. To use Foucault’s

own words, it allows the folding of the universe, each part being mirrored in the other: "It indicates that there exists a greater world and that its perimeter defines the limit of created things" (Ibid.). According to Foucault in engaging in an archeological investigation one discovers: "...the relation of macrocosm and microcosm" are "mere surface effect" (ibid.):

Sixteenth century learning was a combination or admixture of rational knowledge, notions derived from magical practices, and the authority of ancient authors, Greek and Roman. Thus the learning of the period combines 'a taste for the supernatural, fidelity to the ancients, and rationality' (Cfr. 32). During this period, to know consisted more in interpretation. Knowledge dealt with texts in the same way it did with things of nature: "in both cases there are signs to be discovered" (TO 33). Thus: "divination and erudition are both part of the same hermeneutics" (TO 34).

Language in the sixteenth century is not perceived as an "arbitrary system" but is an integral part of the world and must "be studied itself as a thing of nature: like animals, plants, etc... (TO 35). Thus "the study of grammar in the sixteenth century is based upon the same epistemological arrangement of the sciences of nature" (Ibid.). However, there is a problem here that cannot be ignored. Whereas there is one nature, there are many languages. How to explain this? Sixteenth century episteme explains this by stating that the multiplicity of languages is a result of punishment; [Cfr the biblical tale of the Tower of Babel]; that pre-Babel language was transparent and clear. This language was identified as being Hebrew.

Foucault, in what appears to be a clear opposition to Derrida's contention, believes that Western tradition in general and sixteenth century knowledge in particular

gives primacy to the written over the spoken: “what God introduced into the world was written words” (TO 38). The spoken is merely “the female counterpart of the written”. Sovereignty belongs to the Text; the spoken is merely derivative. In fact commentary is on the written – on the given signs: “as the knowledge of nature constantly finds new resemblance” (TO 41)

The separation (or banishment) of language from the realm of nature occurs in the seventeenth century when one begins: “to ask how a sign could be linked to what is signified” (TO 43); this is the question that makes things and words to go their separate ways. In the pre seventeenth, classical period, the question would have been answered by representation.

Representing

Around the beginning of the seventeenth century, resemblance wanes as a “moving paradigm of thought. Similitude would cease to be considered as a ‘form of knowledge” and comes to be viewed as occasion for error. Descartes expresses this clearly in his *Regulae*. This is the age, as Foucault points out, of trompe l’oeil painting, of illusion, of deception of the senses, and thus of moving away from the episteme of the sixteenth century, considered as a period in which knowledge “had not yet attained the age of reason”.

Descartes is the one to exclude resemblance as a primary form of knowledge which he considered as confused mixture. By excluding resemblance as a primary source of knowledge, Descartes does not however reject the validity of comparison for rational thought. What he wants is to universalize and purify it. He thus distinguishes two forms

of comparison: the comparison of measurement and that of order. "Measurement enables us to analyze like things according to the calculable form of identity and difference" (TO 53), and order, on the other hand: "is established without reference to an exterior unit" (Ibid.). Comparison, in other words, ceased to be the method by which the world was ordered. This is what, in essence, rationalism is about. From here on resemblance will not be simply taken at face value but will be subject to proof by comparison, i.e.: "it will not be accepted until its identity and the series of differences have been discovered by means of measurement with a common unit" (TO 55).

The mind's task, according to the Cartesian project was discrimination in comparison, i.e.: investigation of difference which stands opposite of comparison with the aim of finding (or imposing) similitude. What Descartes and seventeenth century has done is to demarcate and separate clearly the respective fields of history and science [Cfr. e.g.: *Regulae* III]. The direct consequence of such perspective was that language ceases to be: "one of the configurations of the world, or a signature stamped upon things since the beginning of time" (TO 56). For this reason it begins to assume transparency and neutrality.

Just as interpretation was considered the essential method of knowledge in the Renaissance, order becomes the essential method in the Classical age [i.e.: 17th and 18th centuries]

The Sign in the Classical Age

According to Foucault, the sign was defined according to three variables:

1. "From the seventeenth century onward, the whole domain of the sign is divided between the certain and the probable...[thus] there can no longer be an unknown sign, a mute mark" (TO 59); or as Foucault states further: "the sign does not wait in silence for the coming of man capable of recognizing it: it can be constituted only by the act of knowing" (Ibid.). Therefore non divinatio!! The signs perform its signifying function within the confines of knowledge. Its certainty comes from knowledge. Rather than randomly given, it has to be built in an orderly fashion.

2. The Classical age discards: "the circular world of converging signs" for "an infinite progression" (Cfr. TO 60). There has to be simultaneity between the sign and what it signifies, for the sign to be what it is, i.e.: it must be presented as an object of knowledge.

3. Signs are either considered natural, in which case they are: 'constituted as signs by our knowledge' and as such are: "limited, rigid, inconvenient, and impossible for the mind to master" (TO 61). Or they are conventional, in which case they will be of our choosing and would as such be: "simple, easy to remember, applicable to an indifferent number of elements..." (TO 62).

It is the system of signs: "that introduced into knowledge, probability, analysis, and combination..." (TO 63). "It was the system of signs that gave rise simultaneously to the research for origins and the calculability..." (Ibid.).

In the final analysis, according to Foucault, what made possible Classical thought - i.e.: archeologically speaking - would be: "the dissociation of the sign and resemblance"

(Ibid.); which in turn engendered: “probability, analysis, combination, and universal language system” (ibid.); a network [of methods] which made possible the emergence of a Hobbes, a Berkley, a Hume and a Condillac. Foucault summarizes these points lucidly in the following passage:

In the sixteenth century, resemblance was linked to a system of signs; and it was the interpretation of those signs that opened up the field of concrete knowledge. From the seventeenth century, resemblance was pushed out to the boundaries of knowledge, towards the humblest and basest of its frontiers. There, it links up with imagination, with doubtful repetitions, with misty analogies. And instead of opening up the way to a science of interpretation, it implies a genesis that leads from those unrefined forms of the Same to the great tables of knowledge developed according to the forms of identity, difference, and of order. The project of a science of order, with a foundation such as it had in the seventeenth century, carried the implication that it had to be paralleled by an accompanying genesis of consciousness, as indeed it was, effectively and uninterruptedly, from Locke to the ‘Ideologues’.

The Archeology of Knowledge

Introduction

The Archeology of Knowledge begins with the premise that ‘the history of thought, of philosophy, of literature’ appears to be looking for, and finding more and more discontinuities, while on the other hand history, conceived in general, appears to favor “stable structures” (*The Archeology of Knowledge*, from here forward AK, 6). The consequences of transforming documents into monuments – a practice contrary to traditional way of doing history where monuments were transformed into documents – are several.

1st consequence: [already mentioned] consists in the: “proliferation of discontinuities in history of ideas” (AK 7)

2nd consequence: “The notion of discontinuity assumes a major role in the historical disciplines” (AK 8).

In traditional historiography (a term *not* used at this point by Foucault) the scattered elements, i.e.: dispersed events, decisions, accidents, etc...were re-arranged to: “reveal the continuity of events” (Ibid.). Discontinuity was something the historian had to banish. Today it is a primary element of historical analysis.

Three are the components of such analysis:

- a. It requires a deliberate action on the part of the historian: “he must...distinguish the possible levels of analysis, the methods...periodization” (Ibid.).
- b. “It is the result of his description” (Ibid.)
- c. “It is the concept that the historian’s work never ceases to specify

3rd consequence: “The theme and the possibility of a *total history* begins to disappear, “...and we, on the contrary see, the emergence of a *general history*. But how different are these two kinds of history? Foucault declares: “The project of a total history is one that seeks to reconstitute the overall form of civilization, the (material and spiritual) principle of a society, etc... (Cfr. AK 9); in short, to reconstitute ‘the face of the period’. The presupposition of a total history is that: “in all events of a well defined spatio-temporal area,...it must be possible to establish a system of homogeneous relations: a network of causality, ...relations of analogy...[to the point where] history itself may be articulated into great units –stages or phases – which contain within themselves their own principle of cohesion” (Ibid.).

The problem and task of general history is, on the other hand, “to determine what form of relation may be legitimately described between different series, etc...” (ibid.).

4th Consequence: The new history is confronted by a number of methodological problems, such as: “the building-up of coherent and homogeneous corpora of documents”; the establishment of a principle of choice, the definition of the level of analysis and of the relevant elements...” (Ibid.).

Foucault asks: why do such problems deserve attention? He finds two reasons:

1. To be free from a philosophy of history and the questions that it poses, e.g.: rationality and teleology of historical development, etc...
2. “Because it [history] intersects at certain points problems that are met with other fields, e.g.: linguistics, ethology, etc... (Cfr AK 11).

Foucault tells us that his intention for writing this book was in a sense to give more coherence and rigor to the fundamental questions raised in his *Les mots et les choses* [*The Order of Things*]. Thus his principal aims are:

1. To transfer a structuralist method to the historical field and more cogently to the history of knowledge. On the other hand, his stated aim is: “to uncover the principles and consequences of an autochthonous transformation that is taking place in the field of historical knowledge” (AK 15).
2. However, he does not intend to impose a structuralist analysis on history, in other words he does not want to use: “the categories of cultural totalities” (i.e.: ideologies).
3. But he will attempt “to formulate, in general terms ...the tools that these studies have used or forged for themselves in the course of their work” (AK 16).

Discursive regularities

The unities of discourse

In the first chapter of the second part of the book, Foucault tells us that what he plans to do is study: “the use of concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation” (AK 21) as these are found in the history of ideas, of thought, science or knowledge. How do we come to speak of the unity existing in a book, in the oeuvre of an author, or the continuity between authors of the same era?

Foucault maintains that such unity is not *in re* [i.e.: in the works themselves] but: “is the result of an operation; that this operation is interpretative” (AK 24). It is this operation that Foucault sets out to discover: “We must show that they [i.e.: syntheses] do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known” (AK 25). “We must tear away from their virtual self-evidence” (AK 26).

Foucault, of course, like Descartes in some ways, must personally accept as his starting point “whatever unities are already given” (Ibid.); but he will make use of them: “just long enough to ask [himself] what unities they form” (Ibid.). In other words, he wants to suspend the accepted unities; but *Cui bono*, to whose benefit?

Foucault believes the benefits are the following:

1. “to restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence” (AK 28)
2. [restore] It is unique-ness though subject to repetition.
3. It is linked...to the statements that precede and follow

Discursive formation

At this point, Foucault advances four hypotheses concerning discursive formations. By this he means how a group of statements form a continuous unity. To put the matter in a simple question form as Foucault himself has done: “how can we say that the analysis of headaches carried out by Willis or Charcot belong to the same order of discourse?” (AK 30). “What, in fact, are: medicine, grammar, or political economy?” (Ibid.).

1st hypothesis: “...statements different in form, and dispersed in time, form a group if they refer to one and the same object” (AK 32), for example, we may confidently say that: “statements belonging to psychopathology would have for object madness.

Foucault, however, felt that such hypothesis cannot be sustained for long because in the example above: “...the unity of the object “madness” does not enable one to individualize a group of statements... [that would] establish between them a relation that is both constant and describable” (Ibid.). Indeed the group of statements: “is far from referring a single object” (Ibid.). What is meant by madness [i.e.: the object] in one period of time is not what is understood in another age: “it is not the same illness that are at issue in each case” (Cfr. Ibid.).

What in reality takes place is not that: “the permanence and uniqueness of an object – forming the unity of discourse – but a space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed (Cfr. AK 32). To put the matter simply: “the unity of discourse on madness would not be based upon the existence of the object “madness”, or

the constitution of a single horizon of objectivity; it would be the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time” (AK 32-33).

2nd Hypothesis: Could it be that discursive formations arise because certain statements possess some: “form and type of connections”? In other words: “a certain style, a certain constant manner of statement” (AK 33) ‘a way of looking at things, analysis, a same system of transcribing what is perceived’. Is medicine, for example, simply organized as a series of descriptive statements”? (Ibid.).

Foucault rejects such hypothesis by contrasting Bichat and Laennec. The unity [of discourse] does not appear to stem from determined form of statements.

3rd Hypothesis: Can’t discursive formations be the product of a: “system of permanent and coherent concepts” (AK 34)? Again this possibility is rejected by Foucault because it can be argued effectively for the contrary proposition: “...one might discover a discursive unity if one sought it not in the coherence of concepts, but in their simultaneous or successive emergence, in the distance that separates them and even in their incompatibility” (AK 35).

4th Hypothesis: “The identity and persistence of themes” (Ibid.). Foucault states that what he discovered was not persistence of themes but: “rather series full of gaps, intertwined with one another, interplays of differences, distances, substitutions, transformations...too heterogeneous to be linked together and arranged in a single figure” (Ibid.). What we ultimately observe is what Foucault calls ‘systems of dispersion’ which lies at the heart of discursive formations.

The Formation of objects

The question dealt with here is how objects are formed. To better illustrate this question, Foucault presents the discourse on psychopathology from the nineteenth century onward. To put the question in our own words: “what was/were responsible, for example. For madness to become object of discourse?” just to name one element of psychopathology.

First For an object to exist there has to be ‘surfaces of emergence’. “[These are] constituted by the family, the immediate social group, the work situation, the religious community” (AK 41). As such these are not new to the nineteenth century. But it is in this century that other “new surfaces of appearance (emergence) began to function” (Ibid.); such as art, sexuality, penalty. It is in these fields of differentiation, discontinuities, etc... that: “psychiatric discourse finds a way of limiting its domain...of giving it the status of an object” (Ibid.)

Second There have to be *authorities of delimitation*; i.e.: medical profession formed by “individuals constituted as a body of knowledge and practice”; recognized as an authority in society. In addition to it there are also the penal law, religious authority and literary and art criticism.

Third And last, ‘Grids of specification. These are the system by which: “kinds of madness’ are divided, contrasted, related, as objects of psychiatric discourse” (AK 42). In the 19th century these grids of differentiation were the soul, the body, the life and history of individuals, “the interplays of neuropsychological correlations as systems of reciprocal projections” (Ibid.)

Foucault does not consider these three conditions as adequate for his study because they have their own intrinsic limitations. But nevertheless his conclusion is that: “in the nineteenth century, psychiatric discourse is characterized not by privileged objects, but by the way in which it forms objects that are in fact highly dispersed. This formation is made possible by a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification” (AK 44).

What then are the consequences [of such approach]?

1. The object “exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations” (AK 45). The conditions under which the object exists are many and imposing.

2. Institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, etc... are not internal to the object, i.e.: “they do not define its internal constitution” (Ibid.). They do not present or are not constituent of its truth.

3. “These relations must be distinguished...from what we might call primary relations”.

4. Finally, “discursive relations are not...internal to discourse” (AK 48). They are, as Foucault put it ‘at the limit of discourse’

Conclusion: what remains constant are not the objects, the domain they form, not either the point of their emergence or characterization, but the relation between the surfaces on which they appear, are delimited, analyzed and specified (Cfr. 47).

The formation of enunciative modalities

What is that links together all kinds of discourses, e.g.: qualitative descriptions, biographical accounts, etc..., in the 19th century doctors? Before Foucault answers this other questions, he wants to “discover the law operating behind all these statements and the place from which they come” (AK 50). The following itemized points are the ones he is alluding to:

- a. Who is speaking? “who among the totality of speaking individuals is accorded the right to use this sort of language”? “who qualifies?”...not anybody can make pronouncement. [Naturally] it is the doctor because of his competence, institutional backing.... In the end medical statements receive their validity, efficacy, and even therapeutic powers from: “the statutorily defined person who has the right to make them” (AK 51).
- b. The locus from which the doctor makes his discourse: the hospital, the laboratory, the [medical] library [i.e., documentary field].
- c. The procedure of interrogation for diagnostic purpose, use of instruments, surgical techniques; but also registration, notation, description, classification, etc...

The formation of concepts

The intention (aim) of this part is to explore the possibility of there being a law that: would account for successive and simultaneous emergence of disparate concepts or whether ‘it is possible to find a system of occurrence that was not a logical systematicity’. How to describe the organization of the field of statements where concepts appeared and circulated? Foucault proposes the following points:

- a. The organization [of the field of statements] involves forms of succession; example: "...the general arrangement of the statements, their successive arrangement in particular wholes" is the one to account for the appearance and recurrence of concepts in the 17th century "above all, it was a set of rules for arranging statements in series" (AK 57).
- b. "The configuration of the enunciative field also involves forms of co-existence" (Ibid.). This involves a field of presence, a field of concomitance and a field of memory.
 - i) Field of presence: a procedure by which: "all statements formulated elsewhere and taken up in discourse" (AK 57/58), even those criticized....e.g.: Aldovrandi collecting: "in one and the same text everything that had been seen...on the subject of monsters" (Ibid.).
 - ii) Field of competence: "...statements that concern quite different domains of objects...collected or referred to for the purpose of 'analogical confirmation', may serve as models that can be transferred, etc..., e.g.: in Linnaeus and Buffon's period natural history is defined by a number of relations to cosmology, etc... (Cfr. AK 58).
 - iii) Field of memory: consists of "statements that are no longer accepted or discussed...but in relation to which relation of filiation, genesis....can be established" (Ibid.).
- c. Procedures of intervention can transpire in several forms:
 - i. Techniques of re-writing: e.g.: classificatory tables, to contrast with "the Middle Ages lists and groups of kinship"; also used during the Renaissance.

- ii. Methods of transcribing statements: e.g.: formalization and artificial language; Cfr. Linnaeus and Adanson.
- iii. Modes of translating quantitative statements into qualitative formulations...
“to increase the *approximation* of statements and to refine exactitude; but also *delimitation* and *transfer*.”
- iv. Method of systematizing propositions that already exist...

The four schemata that General Grammar uses to describe its elements are: *Attribution, articulation, designation, and derivation*. These make it possible to describe:

1. “How the different grammatical analysis can be ordered and deployed” (AK 61).
2. “How General Grammar defines a domain of validity itself...how it constitutes a domain of normativity for itself...how it constitutes a domain of actuality for itself” (Ibid.).
3. “What relations General Grammar has with *Mathesis*...with the philosophical analysis of representation...with Natural History.
4. How the various conceptions of the verb ‘to be’, of copula, of the verbal radical and the flexional ending were simultaneously or successively possible... (AK 61/62).

The formations of strategies

The question is how to do the various forms of knowledge (discourses) give rise to certain organization of concepts, certain regrouping of objects... As a possible approach

to answering such questions Foucault proposes three directions which his research must take:

1. It must “determine the possible points of *diffraction of discourse*” (AK 65).

And these are:

a Points of incompatibility: Two objects or two types of enunciation appear but without being able to enter the same series of statements. This leads them to be characterized as:

b Points of equivalence: forming as such an alternative. Further, they are characterized as link:

c Points of systematization: from their apparent incompatibility [or alternativity] “a coherent series of objects, forms of statements and concepts has been derived” (AK 66).

2. “Well to the fore is the role played by the discourse being studied in relation to those that are contemporary with it or related to it” (Ibid.).

3. “The determination of the theoretical choices that were actually made is also dependent upon another authority” (AK 67); e.g.: General Grammar played a role in pedagogic practice in the analysis of wealth, in political and economic decisions of government.

The Statement and the Archive

Defining the statement

The definition of statement appears to be necessary to Foucault to understand what he calls 'discursive formations'. But also: "to see whether that definition really was present in [his] earlier descriptions; to see whether I really was dealing with the statement in [his] analysis of discursive formations" (AK 80).

When a statement is considered simply as "the atom of discourse" (Ibid.) a problem would inevitably arise. If a statement is really a unit of discourse, then what does it consist of? "what are its distinctive features?" questions such as these are bound to follow. But before Foucault attempts any definition of a statement, he goes on to state what the statement is not:

- What makes a statement a statement is not: "the presence of a defined propositional structure" (Ibid.) or when there is a proposition in it.
- A statement is not the same as a sentence.
- A statement is not a *speech act* [Cfr. the analytical school, in particular Austin].
"One finds more statements than one can isolate speech acts" (AK 84).
- "A regular linguistic construction is not required in order to form a statement" (AK 86).

Conclusion: "The statement is not therefore a structure... [but] it is a *function* of existence that properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they 'make sense', according to what rule

they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation” (AK 86/87).

The enunciative function of the statement

a : “A series of signs will become a statement on condition that it possesses ‘something else’, a specific *relation* that concerns itself; and not its cause, or its elements” (AK 89). “The relation of a sentence with its meaning resides within a specific, well-stabilized *enunciative relation*” (AK 90). The fact is then that: “A sentence cannot be non-significant; it *refers* to something by virtue of the fact that it is a statement” (Ibid.). Thus a statement is: “linked to a “referential” that is made up of not “things”, “facts”, “realities”, or “beings” but of laws of possibility, rules of existence for the objects that are named, designated, or described within it, and for the relations that are affirmed or denied in it” (AK 91).

b : “A statement also differs from any series of linguistic elements by virtue of the fact that it possesses a particular relation with a subject” (AK 92). Foucault clarifies this point by stating: “If a proposition, a sentence, a group of signs can be called ‘statement’, it is not therefore because, on day, someone happened to speak about them or put them into some concrete form of writing; it is because the position of the subject can be assigned” (AK 95). “To describe a formulation *qua* statement [is] determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it” (AK 95/96).

c : The third characteristic of enunciative function is that: "it can operate without the existence of an associated domain" (AK 96), i.e.: it needs a material basis to exist, and these are e.g.: "a writing surface, sound, malleable material, etc..." (Ibid.). Foucault, going against conventional belief, states that context is not a *sine qua non* for a statement to be so. A sentence or a proposition remain sentence and proposition "even divorced from the natural context that could throw light on its meaning" (AK 97). However, the enunciative function "cannot operate on a sentence or proposition in isolation" (Ibid.); "it must be related to a whole adjacent field" (Ibid.). In simple terms, a statement becomes such always when: "peopled by other statements" (Ibid.); i.e.: "it must be related to a whole adjacent field" (Ibid.). Foucault denies that this constitutes a context. In fact the context arises "against the background...relation between formulations" (AK 98). In a nutshell: "...a sequence of linguistic elements is a statement only if immersed in an enunciative field" (AK 99). A statement must be part of a network of statements to be a statement: "there is not statement that does not presuppose others..." (Ibid.).

d : A statement to be such must have a material existence. Indeed it must participate in the materiality of its medium: "...a statement must have a substance, a support, a place, and a date" (AK 101). But this should not be understood to mean that a statement should be identified with a fragment of matter: "it means instead that its identity varies with a complex set of material institutions" (AK 103).

Description of statements

There are two questions that Foucault feels must be answered at this point:

1. "What do I now understand by the task...of describing statements" (AK 106).
2. "How can this theory of the statement be adjusted to the analysis of discursive formations that I outlined previously" (Ibid.).

The first task is to fix the vocabulary, so that "the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse" (AK 107/08).

Secondly, the statement would be other than what grammarians and logicians want to be: not mere unit that can be added to other units, but "a relation to a domain of objects...a set of possible positions for a subject" (AK 108). Thus the analysis of statements consists in questioning them "as to their mode of existence, what it means to them to have come into existence, to have left traces, etc..." (AK 109). The presumption that the statement hides the unsaid is not something Foucault thinks is part of the nature of a statement.

Thirdly, although the statement is unhidden it does not follow that it is visible: "It requires a certain change of viewpoint and attitude to be recognized and examined in itself." (AK 111). Foucault believes that he has been able "to show that the analysis of discursive formations really is centered on a description of the statements in its specificity" (AK 114). Thus in examining the statement Foucault declares to have been able to show – outside of grammar and logic – that it has the characteristic of being

referential, i.e.: a principle of differentiation; a subject, i.e.: a position that may be filled in certain conditions by various individuals (AK 115); an associated field, i.e.: a domain of coexistence for other statements; a materiality, i.e.: a status, rules of transcription, possibilities of use and re-use.

Discursive formations are groups of statements that are bound to each other at the statement level. The four directions in which discursive formation is analyzed “correspond to the four domains in which enunciative function operates” (AK 116).

These are:

1. “The analysis of the statement and that of the formation are established correlatively” (Ibid.).
2. “A statement belongs to a discursive formation on as a sentence belongs to a text, and a proposition to a deductive whole” (Ibid.). What this means is that “the regularity of statements is defined by the discursive formation itself” (Ibid.).
3. A discourse is “a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation”. It is historical, i.e.: a fragment of history.
4. “...it is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function” (AK 117).

Rarity, exteriority, accumulation

The objective of Foucault here is to find what he calls the principle of rarification (from the term rarity: why some things were said while others were not). This is sought within, again, discursive formation. The following are Foucault's reasons why he thinks he should take this lead:

- As much as discursive formation is about presence, it is also about absence; it is also about: "a distribution of gaps, voids, absences, limits, divisions" (AK 119).
- This is not to link it to repression, i.e.: "to presuppose that beneath manifest statements something remains hidden and subjacent" (Ibid.). It is not about discovering the unsaid in the statement, but what it that the statement occupies a special place.
- It is because it is rare that statements are collected into totalities. This is precisely why the analysis of discursive formations focused on rarity taking it as its object. This is not the same as interpreting where the objective is to compensate for the lack of meaning. To analyze a discursive formation on the other hand is: "to seek the law of that poverty" (AK 120). Foucault summarizes the function of enunciative analysis as follows:

"...the function of enunciative analysis is not to awaken texts from their present sleep, and, by reciting the marks still legible on their surface, to rediscover, the flash of their birth; on the contrary, its function is to follow them through their sleep, or rather to take up the related themes of sleep, oblivion, and lost origin, and to discover what mode of existence may characterize statements, independently of their enunciation, in the density of time in which they are preserved, in which they are reactivated, and used, in which they are also – but this was not their original destiny – forgotten, and possibly even destroyed" (AK 123).

Three, therefore are the function of enunciative analysis according to Foucault:

1. Remanence (in French *rémanence*): Statements are residual, meaning: “they are preserved by virtue of a number of support and material techniques (for example books), in institutions (library), with certain statutory modalities (law, religion, science).
2. Additivity: Statements of various discursive formations accumulate, merge together, complement one another in their own peculiar ways. “These forms of additivity are not given once and for all” (AK 124).
3. Recurrence: “Every statement involves a field of antecedent elements in relation to which it is situated, but which it is able to reorganize and redistribute according to new relations” (Ibid.).

The historical a priori and the archive

The question Foucault is addressing here can be formulated as follows: how do individuals, especially scientists, belong to one and the same discursive formation, i.e.: speaking about the same thing?

Foucault tells us that positivity plays “the role of what might be called a historical a priori” (AK 127). This, as Foucault is clearly aware and states, would be tantamount a *contradictio in termini*; an oxymoron. But he clarifies this term by saying that it: “is an apriori that is not a condition of validity for judgments, but a condition of reality of statements” (AK 127). What this historical a priori would then show is for example that the history of grammar involves a type of history, but not that it involves “an atemporal structure” (Ibid.).

By archive Foucault means “[all] systems of statements” (AK 128), not the place where documents are stored. As such then: “the archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance as unique events” (AK 129). Thus the archive:

- Determines that “all things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass” (Ibid.).
- “defines...the system of ‘enunciability’ (Ibid.).
- “dedifferentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in duration” (Ibid.).

In nuce: “It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements” (AK 130).

It is the archive conceived as such that justifies Foucault’s choice of the term “Archeology” to describe this approach. By it rather “describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive” (AK 131).

Archeology and the history of ideas

What Foucault aims to do here is to try to test his own method, i.e.: archeology, ‘to measure the efficacy of the notions that he has tried to define previously’ (Cfr. AK 135). He wants also to see: “Archeology offers what other descriptions are unable to provide” (AK 136). At this point Foucault asks the question whether he himself is a historian of ideas or not. He responds self-deprecatingly that he is “a presumptuous

historian of ideas” (Ibid.), but one “who set out to renew his discipline from top to bottom” (ibid.). He must also show in the process that his “archeological analysis differs from ‘the history of ideas’” (Ibid.).

Foucault considers ‘the history of ideas’ as a badly demarcated discipline with methods borrowed from ‘here and there’ and “lacking in rigor and stability” (Ibid.). The history of ideas has basically two roles. One is to recount “the by-ways and margins of history” (Ibid.), i.e.: “the history of those shady philosophies that haunt literature, art, the sciences, law, ethics, and even man’s daily life, etc...” (Ibid.). This Foucault refers to as “the discipline of fluctuating languages, of shapeless works, of unrelated themes” (AK 137). And on the positive side “the history of ideas sets out to cross the boundaries of existing disciplines...from outside [in order] to interpret them” (Ibid.). It deals with continuities, shows how ideas, problems, migrate from one field of knowledge to another. It is a “discipline of interferences” (Ibid.). Its greatest themes are: “Genesis, continuity, totalization” (AK 138).

This, in essence, is what the archeological description refuses to do. And as such it is “an abandonment of the history of ideas, a systematic rejection of its postulates and procedures...” (Ibid.). Foucault clarifies further the differences between the two by outlining four points of divergence; these are: “the attribution of innovation, the analysis of contradictions, comparative descriptions, and the mapping of transformations” (Ibid.).

The four principles of archeological analysis

For Foucault there are four principles that are at the basis of his archeological analysis; these are:

1. Archeology “does not treat discourse as *document*....It is concerned with discourse in its own volume, as a *monument*....It is not an interpretative discipline: it does not seek another, better-hidden discourse. It refuses to be ‘allegorical’” (AK 138/39).
2. Archeology does not attempt to retrace the continuity, gradual and insensible, of a discourse: “...Its problem is to define discourses in their specificity; to show in what way the set or rules that they put into operation is irreducible to any other” (AK 139). “It is not doxology, but a differential analysis of the modalities of discourse” (Ibid.).
3. Archeology: “defines types of rules for discourse practices that run through individual oeuvres”. “The [individual] oeuvre is not for archeology a relevant division” (Ibid.).
4. Archeology: “does not try to repeat what has been said by searching it in its very identity....it is the systematic description of a discourse-object” (AK 140).

The original and the regular

Based on the above Foucault outlines what archeology is and is not; what it does and does not as follows:

- Archeological description does not set a hierarchy of discourses or value, e.g.: originality vs. banality, ‘it makes no radical differences’.

- “[Archeology] tries only to establish the regularity of statements” (AK 140).
- “[Archeology] designates, for every verbal performance...., the set of conditions in which the enunciative function operates and which guarantees and defines its existence” (AK 144).
- Archeology is not in search of inventions: “It is not concerned with opinions”. Its objective is “to uncover the regularity of a discursive practice” (AK 145).
- The archeological analysis must distinguish between “linguistic analogy, logical identity and enunciative homogeneity”. Through these “one can see the emergence of a number of disconnections and articulations which does not however ignore there exists...a number of relations and interdependencies” (AK 146).
- Archeology should research “the interior hierarchies within enunciative regularities” and as such it: “may constitute the tree of derivation of a discourse” (AK 147). [To illustrate these points Foucault presents an example from Natural History].

Contradictions

Contradictions play an important role in the emergence of a discourse. It is in order to overcome and translate them that discourse ‘begins to speak’. In effect, contradictions precede discourse, and they function as “the principle of its historicity” (AK 151).

Foucault states that there are two levels of contradictions that are recognized by the history of ideas. These are:

a [Contradictions] of appearances...resolved in the profound unity of discourse.

b [Contradictions] of foundations which give rise to discourse itself.

In the first level, “discourse is the ideal figure that must be separated from their accidental presence. In the second “discourse is the empirical figure that contradictions may take-up and whose apparent cohesion must be destroyed” (Ibid.). The purpose of analyzing discourse is therefore to bring to the surface contradictions. Thus for archeological analysis contradictions are neither appearances to overcome nor principles to be uncovered. They are themselves objects of description.

Archeological analysis does not attempt to establish that somehow beneath oppositions [i.e. contradictions] there are some unifying fundamental theses. On the contrary, archeology is intent at describing “the different spaces of dissension” (Ibid.). Archeology’s objective is not the suppression of contradictions, but it aims at analyzing “different types of contradictions”. What are these?

1. Types of contradictions

There are contradictions that are 1) archeologically *derived*: i.e. these are contradictions arising in the same discursive formation. 2) *Extrinsic* contradictions are the kind “that reflect the opposition between distinct discursive formations” (AK 153). And between these two Foucault identifies a third that he calls (3) *Intrinsic* contradictions. These are the types that beneath discursive formation itself “reveal subsystems” (Ibid.).

2. Levels of contradictions

How do these contradictions reveal themselves?

- a As inadequation of the objects, i.e.: the choice of the object of study is not precisely defined; it appears to be chosen without set criteria.
- b As divergence of enunciative modalities. By this Foucault appears to mean the divergence emanating between linguistic code and the methodical description (?).
- c As incompatibility of concepts
- d As an exclusion of theoretical options.

3. Functions [of contradictions]

Contradictions have functions to perform. They aim at:

- a Additional development of the enunciative field, i.e.: “they open up sequences of argumentation, experiment, verification, and various inferences, etc...” (AK 154).
- b Inducing reorganization of the discursive field: “They pose the question of the possible translation of one group of statements into another...” (AK 155).
- c Playing a critical role: “they put into operation the existence of the “acceptability” of the discursive practice; they define the point of its effective impossibility and of its historical reflection” (Ibid:).

What archeology ultimately privileges then is to erect “the primacy of a contradiction that has its model in the simultaneous affirmation and negation of a single

proposition” (Ibid.). In the final analysis, its purpose is to maintain discourse in all its many irregularities.

The comparative facts

What are the practice and goals of archeological analysis as regards to comparison? Foucault outlines them as follows:

1. In archeological analysis comparison is always limited and regional. In other words, to use a post-modern expression, it does not aim at “grand narratives”; but “to outline particular configurations” (AK 157). Furthermore, Foucault’s aim is “to reveal a well-determined set of discursive formations that have a number of describable relations between them” (AK 158). Archeological analysis must perform methodical exclusion in comparing fields. It cannot take them all together, nor choose them arbitrarily; there are simply internal limitations to be considered. Foucault reiterates the fact that Archeological analysis does not intend “to reduce diversity of discourses” in order “to outline the unity that must totalize them, but is intended to divide up their diversity into different figures”. To put it simply, it has no unifying but diversifying objective. (Cfr. 159/60).
2. “What archeology wishes to uncover is primarily...the play of analogies and differences as they appear at the level of rules of formation” (AK 160). What does this imply? According to Foucault, it generates the five tasks of archeological analysis:

- a. "To show how quite different discursive elements may be formed on the basis of similar rules", e.g.: the concepts of General Grammar are formed on the basis of the same arrangements of the enunciative field as Natural History and Economy; the objective being to show that between different formations there are, what Foucault terms: *archeological isomorphisms*.
 - b. "To show to what extent these rules do or do not apply in the same way...in different types of discourse", i.e.: "to define the *archeological model* of each formation" (AK 160/61).
 - c. "To show how entirely different concepts...are...endowed with an *archeological isotopia* [i.e.: occupy similar position in the discourse]
 - d. "To show...how a single notion...may cover two archeologically distinct elements", that is to display "archeological shifts" (AK 161)
 - e. "To show how...relations of subordination or complementarity may be established, from one positivity to another; in other words to establish *archeological correlations*" (Ibid.).
3. "Archeology...reveals relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains (e.g.: institutions, political events, economic practices and processes" (AK 162); for example: "...the value placed upon the body as a work tool, the care to rationalize medicine on the basis of other sciences" (AK 163); it is all about revealing "how medical discourse, for example medicine, as a practice ...is articulated on practices that are external to it, and which are not themselves of a discursive order" (AK 164).

Thus, in conclusion, what archeological description of discourses is seeking is “to discover what whole domain of institutions, economic processes, and social relations on which a discursive formation can be articulated” (Ibid.).

Change and transformation

How does archeology deal with the reality of change?

1. There appears to be the belief that “archeology...seems to treat history to freeze it” (AK 166); and that it is perhaps ill-equipped to analyze the phenomenon of change; or that it imposes “the constricting figure of a synchrony on a development that may be slow and imperceptible” (Ibid.); or that archeology is valid only “as a sort of motionless thought” (Ibid.). Foucault admits that “there is a suspension of temporal successions...or calendar formations [in archeological analysis] but it is “intended precisely to reveal the relations that characterize the temporality of the discursive formations”. Foucault presents the following counter-arguments to dispel any misconception or doubt concerning the archeological analysis that may linger:

a It must be remembered that “archeology defines the rules of formations of a group of statements... [providing] the principles of its articulation over a chain of successive events” (Ibid.). It does not “deny the possibility of new statements in correlation with ‘external events’” (AK 168).

b Archeology “...tries to show the intersection necessarily successive relations and others that are not so” (Ibid.) “It maps the temporal vectors of derivation” (AK 169).

2. Where historians of ideas to smooth over contradictions “[Archeology] tries to untie all those knots” (AK 170) that have been patiently tied. Archeology takes “differences seriously” with the goal of ‘throwing light on the matter’; how subject matters, i.e.: positivities are divided up, entangled, etc... Archeology in fact rejects reduction [to the same], aiming at overcoming differences, as historians of ideas are wont to do. Its aim is to analyze and state their differences. Thus the following are its presuppositions and objectives from this perspective:

a Archeology does not consider discourse as made up of “a series of homogeneous events” (AK 171), on the contrary “[it] distinguishes several levels of events within the very density of discourse” (Ibid.).

b Archeology aims at describing “how the different elements of a system of formation were transformed” (AK 172); “how the characteristic relations of a system of formation were transformed”; “how the relations between different rules of formation were transformed”; and finally “how the relations between various positivities were transformed” (AK 172)

c “To say that one discursive formation is substituted for another is to say that a general transformation of relations has occurred” (AK 173).

d Finally, archeology tries “in short, to describe the dispersion of the discontinuities themselves” (AK 175).

Science and knowledge

What is the relation between archeology and the analysis of the sciences? Could it be said that archeology concerns itself with the disciplines that are not really sciences,

while epistemology “describes sciences that have been formed on the basis of existing disciplines” (AK 178). Foucault does not think so for the following reasons:

1. “Archeology does not describe disciplines” (Ibid.). It deals with discursive formations and positivities.
2. “Positivities do not characterize forms of knowledge” (AK 181). But they are to be analyzed according to the rules of discursive practice. Their object is knowledge; “knowledge is also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse” (AK 182). “Any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms” (AK 183). Here Foucault makes a formal distinction between “scientific domains” and “archeological territories” (Ibid.). Scientificity belongs only to propositions that obey certain laws of construction. “Archeological territories [on the other hand] may extend to ‘literary’ or ‘philosophical’ texts, as well as ‘scientific’ ones” (Ibid.).
3. “Knowledge is not an epistemological site that disappears in the science that supersedes it. Science...is localized in a field of knowledge and plays a role in it” (AK 184). The purpose of archeological analysis is to show “how a science functions in the element of knowledge” (AK 185). The implications of this are the following:
 - a “Ideology is not exclusive of scientificity” (AK 186)
 - b “Theoretical contradictions, lacunae, defects may indicate the ideological functioning of science” (Ibid.)
 - c “The role of ideology does not diminish as rigor increases or error is dissipated” (Ibid.).

d “To tackle the ideological functioning of a science in order to reveal and to modify it is....to treat it as one practice among others” (Ibid.).

4. Foucault describes the chronological emergence of distinct discursive formations that he treats under the heading “thresholds”. He identifies four of them:

a Thresholds of Positivity. This is “the moment at which a discursive practice achieves individuality and autonomy” (AK 186).

b Threshold of Epistemologization. It happens “when in the operation of discursive formation, a group of statements is articulated, claims to validate norms of verification and coherence and it exercises a dominant function over knowledge” (AK 186/87).

c Threshold of scientificity takes place when the epistemological figure...obeys a number of formal criteria, when its statements comply...with certain laws for the construction of propositions” (AK 187).

d Threshold of formalization happens this scientific discourse is able...to define the axioms necessary to it...the propositional structures that are legitimate to it” (Ibid.)

Foucault puts a caveat on the above by saying that: “not all discursive formation passes through these different thresholds” (Ibid.).

The conclusion of *Archeology of Knowledge* is used by Foucault to answer the many criticisms directed at his work. And as such deals with specific questions that can only be understood well within the historical context in which they were raised.

CHAPTER FIVE

Jürgen Habermas

Introduction

In order to introduce the overall Habermasian project as outlined in his *Theory of Communicative Action*¹⁰ (From this point on TC) I will briefly summarize the points made by D. Ingram in his excellent *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason*.

Habermas' first endeavor in TC is to address the problem of rationality, which he approaches at three levels of analysis: the meta-theoretical level, which takes its model from developmental psychology; at the methodological level, where meaningful social action is perceived to presuppose rational critique, and finally from the level of the theory of rationality, which is meant to 'identify progressive and regressive features of modern society'.

Habermas begins his book with 'a provisional conceptual analysis of rationality and its relationship to action and language'. The presupposition is that every rational action is intimately linked to argumentation. If we were to put the matter in very simple terms this means that the purpose of practical reason is 'to provide arguments for supporting the beliefs that underlie our decisions to act'. Thus a 'rational action is one about which an agent could entertain rationally justifiable beliefs'.

What this translates into for Habermas is that our reasoning takes place within the framework of communication. Although it may be true that individuals as individuals may act rationally to the extent that they satisfy their respective needs, it is as social

agents, as being accountable to others, that they resolve conflicts through argumentation. Thus agreement is reached by force of the better argument.

An action to be fully rational, it needs to be morally and legally right. It must stem from a sincere belief and authentic beliefs of the agent and must be geared towards satisfying the shared values of the community. Thus rational action must be guided by 'normative, expressive, and evaluative beliefs with their claims to rightness, sincerity, authenticity, and appropriateness'. Habermas is Kantian to the extent that he believes that moral actions are fundamentally rational and admit of no exceptions.

Actions presuppose validity as regards to truth, moral rightness, appropriateness, sincerity, and comprehensibility. They also presuppose that there is 'agreement about this world'; in fact the three levels in which the world presents itself: the objective, the social and the subjective.

Could it not be the case that there may be disagreement about the conception of the world among different cultures? How can one reach agreement in such a case? This is the relativist objection that Habermas must address.

Habermas contends that relativists cannot 'criticize rationalism without presupposing its superiority'. He also believes the superiority of the modern conception of the world must be affirmed over the mythic conception of the world [held by, though Habermas does not state it as boldly, primitive cultures]. Simply put the modern [Western?] presents a more rational conception of the world, because it simply contains far more true statements about the world than primitive cultures.

Relativists suffer a kind of bad faith (a Sartrean *mauvaise foi*) in trying to equalize [primitive] and modern conceptions of the world as being both rational [to an equal

degree]. In order to show the superiority of the modern view, Habermas borrows the developmental models of Piaget and Kohlberg. According to these thinkers, the human individual passes through certain observable progressive levels. Habermas adapts these into four as follows:

- The Symbiotic state: the child is incapable of distinguishing himself/herself as a corporeal being distinct from his parents and the physical environment.
- The Egocentric state: The child distinguishes himself from his environment but does not make a distinction between the physical and social reality. The child judges situations from his/her body centered perspective.
- The Sociocentric state: At this stage the child begins to distinguish perceptible and manipulable things and events from understandable subjects and actions.
- The Universalistic stage: At this stage the person thinks critically on values and assumptions, breaking away from the restricted confines of one's culture and tradition.

Habermas takes this model from developmental psychology, and applies it to social evolution. Thus, according to his approach, societies evolve from 'the mythopoetic, to the cosmological religious, to the metaphysical, and finally to the modern. It is thus a decentering trajectory.

The Theory of Communicative Action

Introduction

The summary that follows is of the Introduction and of the two Intermediate Reflections where most of the personal ideas of Habermas are outlined. The other chapters of TC are largely occupied with a critical review of the thinkers against which he situates himself, and it appeared to me that it would be unproductive to summarize them here.

Rationality in four sociological concepts of action

Habermas begins with the premise “that the concept of communicative rationality...[is] to be analyzed in connection with achieving understanding in language” (TC 75). When people reach understanding it means that their rationally motivated agreement can be “measured against criticizable claims of validity” (ibid.).

Before embarking on outlining the four sociological concepts of action, Habermas considers the Popperian notion of the three worlds in as much as this would become the foundation on which he confronts theories of action.

Karl Popper, in his 1967 address “Epistemology without a knowing subject” “had proposed the distinction of three worlds or universes. The first world would be one of physical objects or physical states, the second that of the states of consciousness or simply mental states and the third world would consist of “objective contents of thought” (TC 76), i.e.: scientific and poetic thoughts and those of works of art.

Habermas takes up the ontological concept of world of Popper to replace it with the Husserlian phenomenological pair of world and lifeworld. The lifeworld in this case

would be constituted by the cultural tradition of a community. And it is precisely this that: “forms the background for communicative action” (TC 82).

Four concepts of action

Habermas distinguishes four concepts of actions to situate his own analysis within a theoretical framework. These four concepts of action are:

1. Teleological action: This conception of action is of Aristotelian origin; here “the actor attains an end or brings the occurrence of a desired state by choosing means that have promise of being successful in the given situation and applying them in a suitable manner” (TC 85). One consequence of this concept of action is constituted by the strategic model, here: “the agent’s calculation of success [takes into account and anticipates]...additional goal oriented actor” (Ibid.) [Cfr. Utilitarianism].

2. Normatively regulated action: This basically refers: “to members of a social group who orient their action to common values” (Ibid.). Here norms are conceived as agreement by a social group. Each member is expected and expects others [of his social group] to carry out actions proscribed by his group. What this translates into is that: “complying with a norm signifies fulfilling a generalized expectation of behavior.

3. Dramaturgical action: This conception of action stems from the presuppositions that members of a social group constitute a public for one another. They stylize their expression of their own experience with in view of a public. The objective is accessing their respective subjectivity.

4. Communicative action: Is constituted by: “the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations” (Ibid.). The objective in communicative action is to: “reach an understanding about the action situation and their [participants] action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement” (TC 86).

Underlying each concept of action are theoretical presuppositions that Habermas analyzes briefly.

“The concept of teleological action presupposes *relations* between an actor and a world of existing state of affairs” (TC 87). And “these relations between actor and world allow then for expressions that can be judged according to criteria of *truth* and *efficacy*.” (Ibid.). The teleological action is one that presupposes one objective world; the same holds true for *strategic action*.

On the other hand, the concept of normatively regulated action “presupposes relations between an actor and exactly two worlds: “the objective world of existing states of affair and the social world....to which the actor belongs as a role playing subject..” (TC 88). Within this context, the actor is not moved by the cognitive element but by “motivational complex”.

The dramaturgical action presupposes, according to Habermas, two worlds, the internal and the external. And the concept of communicative action adds a new dimension: that of linguistic medium. As such it embraces all three worlds: “By presupposing language as medium speakers [communicative action] refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of the situation” (TC 95). In each of the other types of action: “only one

function of language is thematized ...by contrast, the communicative model of action...takes all the functions of language equally into consideration” (Ibid.)

Social action, purposive activity and communication

What Habermas appears to do in his first intermediate reflections is to utilize “those analytic theories of meaning that start from the structure of linguistic expressions rather than from speakers’ intentions” (TC 275). For this reason he passes under review the theories of Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle and various others as they appear to him pertinent to his theory of communicative action.

At first, beginning with Weber’s two versions of action theory, he plans to make clear the importance of the problem of coordinating actions. Secondly, following this, he utilizes Austin’s distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts which are fruitful for delimiting action oriented to reaching understanding from action oriented to success. Thirdly, he examines the illocutionary binding effect of the offers contained in speech acts. Fourthly, he follows to examine: “the role of criticizable validity claims”. Fifth, a discussion of competing proposals for classifying speech acts will serve to confirm his views. Finally, he examines some of the transitions from formal pragmatic level of analysis to empirical pragmatics. (TC 279).

Weber’s two versions of action theory

The two versions of Weber’s theory of action are referred to by Habermas as the *official* and the *unofficial*:

In the *official version*, what comes into consideration, or more to the point what Weber begins with, is not the social relationship. What Weber considers rationalizable is: “the means-ends relation of teleologically conceived monological action” (TC 281). If one begins with such perspective what is open to objective appraisal are only: “the *effectiveness* of a causal intervention into an existing situation and the truth” (ibid.); in other words, “the subjective belief about a purposive rational organization of means” (TC 281). These include: a) the purposive rational b) value rationally c) affectually (emotionally) d) traditionally. (Cfr. Ibid.)

The *Unofficial version* is the action theory that explains (social) interaction “based on complementarity of interests” which stems not only by custom but also “at the level of rational competitive behavior” (TC 283).

For Habermas both the official and the unofficial versions of Weber are inadequate for the problematic of societal rationalization. The official is too narrowly conceived, and the unofficial one was not made to be fruitful for such a problematic. Habermas thus re-institutes as alternative to the two version, his own theory of communicative action by drawing upon speech act theory as elaborated by the analytic school. By doing so, he plans “to pursue those aspects of the rationality of action neglected in Weber’s official action theory” (TC 284).

Habermas begins his analysis, by distinguishing, as Weber had done in his official version, two action orientations:

Instrumental action which is an action oriented to success. It follows “technical rules of action and assess the efficiency of an intervention into a complex of circumstances and events” (TC 285).

Strategic action is also success oriented action but is considered “under the aspect of following rules of rational choice and assess the efficacy of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent” (Ibid.).

In contrast to the above two, Habermas proposes to speak of communicative action wherever: “agents are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding” [in German *Verständnis*]. In communicative action individuals are not moved to achieving individual successes, on the contrary: “they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions” (TC 285/86)

Orientation to success vs. orientation to reaching understanding

Social actions can be distinguished as either success oriented or oriented to reaching understanding. Since Habermas’s theory of communicative action is aimed at understanding, his objective therefore is to analyze deeper into the very notion of understanding. His intention is to explain in as thorough a manner as possible what is meant by “an attitude oriented to reaching understanding” (TC 286).

Understanding (in German *Einverständnis*) is not reached “through outside influence; it has to be accepted or presupposed as valid by the participants; ... [its aims] at an agreement that meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent to the content of an utterance; ...it has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party; [it cannot come about] through influencing the decisions of opponents” (TC 287). In communicative action, as in understanding, “agreement rests on common convictions”. (Ibid.).

Reaching understanding for Habermas is the *telos* (goal/finality) of human speech. In fact Habermas intends to show that understanding is the *original mode* of language use upon which all other forms of understanding are based (are parasitic). According to Habermas it is precisely this point that Austin's distinction between illocutions and perlocutions accomplishes to demonstrate.

Austin distinguishes three speech acts:

- a Locutionary: expressing states of affair, i.e.: something is the case.
- b Illocutionary: performing an action in the act of speaking, e.g.: "in now declare you man and wife"; "I baptize you"; "I promise you..."...It is expressed by means of a performative verb in the first person present.
- c Perlocutionary: "speaker produces an effect upon the hearer" (TC 289).

According to Austin illocutionary speech act has communicative intent, i.e.: it is intended for the hearer to understand and accept the content of the utterance. The intention of the agent [speaker] is constitutive for teleological actions.

In perlocutionary acts the aim of the speaker is not as transparent as in illocutionary acts. The aim can only be identified through the agent's intentions. The effects of such type of speech must refer to go beyond the speech act itself. Illocutions are expressed openly; perlocutions are not necessarily so. Perlocutionary acts have intended consequences, i.e.: influencing a hearer.

Thus, for Habermas the notion of reaching understanding must "be clarified solely in connection with illocutionary acts" (CT 293). What count as communicative action for him are only "those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication" (TC 295). On the other

hand, a linguistically mediated strategic action would stem from perlocutionary effects (Cfr. Ibid.)

Meaning and validity

How do we determine the conditions that need to be satisfied by a communicatively achieved agreement in order to fulfill functions of coordinating action? In order to determine this Habermas first explores theories of meaning, specifically the formal pragmatic ones. He begins his quest with the question: “what does it mean to understand an utterance?” For this question to be explored without complexity it must be premised “that the speaker means nothing else than the literal meaning of what he says” (TC 297). Habermas then proposes “to explain understanding an utterance by knowledge of the conditions under which a hearer may accept it. *We understand a speech act when we know what makes it acceptable*” (Ibid.). A speech act is deemed acceptable “if it satisfies the conditions that are necessary in order that the bearer be allowed to take a “yes” position on the claim by the speaker” (TC 298). However, these conditions are not unilateral but inter-subjective, i.e.: they involve both speaker and hearer. Habermas tests this claim by analyzing the dynamics of an imperative: first, a hearer understands an imperative if he knows what he must do or not do in order to bring about a state *p* desired by *s*; he hereby also knows he could link up his actions with those of *s*” (TC 299). Second, “the hearer fully understands the illocutionary meaning of the imperative when he knows why the speaker expects that he might impose his will on him” (TC 300).

In addition to these two, there is also the presupposition that the giver of order – speaker – is believed to possess the power “to redeem, if necessary, the validity claim

raised with his speech act” (TC 302). In the final analysis “only those [illocutionary acts] with which speakers connect criticizable validity claims are constitutive for communicative action” (TC 305).

Validity claims

In contexts of communicative action, speech acts can always be rejected under each of the following three aspects:

- a “The aspect of the *rightness* that the speaker claims for his action in relation to the normative context (or indirectly for these norms themselves).
- b The *truthfulness* that the speaker claims for the expression of subjective experiences to which he has privileged access.
- c The *truth* that the speaker, with his utterance, claims for a statement” (TC 307).

When two speakers come to an understanding (*Einverständnis*) their agreement is achieved at three levels:

- a [The speaker] performs a speech act that is right in respect to a normative context (legitimate relation)
- b That he makes a true statement
- c That he expresses truthfully his beliefs, intentions, feelings, desires, and the like, so that the hearer will give credence to what is said.

When speech is intended towards achieving understanding it serves:

- a “to establish and renew interpersonal relations, whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the world of legitimate orders;

b To represent states and events, whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the world of existing states of affairs;

c To manifest experiences whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the subjective world to which he has privileged access” (TC 308).

In the final analysis, for Habermas: “to understand an assertion is to know when a speaker has good grounds to undertake a warrant that the conditions for the truth of the asserted sentences are satisfied” (TC 318).

Classification of speech acts

Habermas conjectures are based on the above assertions ‘that a system of validity claims underlies different types of speech acts’. He identifies the following four:

1. The verdictive (from the term verdict) expresses appraisals and assessments.
2. The exercitives are declaratives, authorized decisions, e.g.: sentencing, adopting, appointing, etc...
3. The behabitives are constituted by complaints, expressions of sympathy, congratulations, curses, toasts, greetings, apologies, thanks, etc....
4. The expositives (regarding this latter, Habermas states only that: “[they] don’t discriminate between constatives, and communicatives” (?)(TC 320).

This classification was taken up by Habermas from Austin. However it Searle’s classification, who he thinks has sharper distinction, that he takes up in his discussion. He thinks that Searle provides: “a clear and intuitively evident classification” (Ibid.).

For Searle there are five types of speech acts: a) assertive (or constative) b) commissive c) directive d) declarative e) expressive. While retaining this classification, Habermas wants to overcome its difficulties by giving the following revised typology:

1. Imperatives: “the speaker refers to a desired state in the objective world...imperatives can be criticized only from the standpoint of whether the action demanded can be carried out” (TC 325).

2. In constative speech acts: “the speaker refers to something in the objective world...the negation of such utterance means that H contests the validity claim raised by S for the proposition stated” (Ibid.).

3. In regulative speech acts: “the speaker refers to something in a common social order...the negation of such an utterance means H contests the normative rightness claimed by S for his action” (TC 326).

4. In expressive speech acts: “the speaker refers to something in his subjective world...the negation of such an utterance means that H *doubts* the claim to sincerity of self-representation raised by S” (TC 326).

5. Communicatives can be understood as a subclass of regulative speech: questioning, answering, addressing, objecting, admitting, that serve the organization of speech.

6. Operatives: signify the application of generative rules (of logic, grammar, mathematics...). They have performative sense, but not communicative intent, e.g.: inferring, identifying, calculating...

Formal and empirical pragmatics

Habermas maintains the need for empirical pragmatics on the condition that it be informed by formal pragmatics: “if the problem of rationality does not end up, as in Weber, in orientations of action...but in the general structure of the lifeworld to which acting subjects belong” (TC 328). Why else does empirical pragmatics need formal pragmatics: “an empirical pragmatics without a formal pragmatic point of departure would not have the conceptual instruments needed to recognize the rational basis of linguistic communication in the confusing complexity of the everyday scenes observed” (TC 331).

Without formal pragmatics action would only be criticized, as in Weber, on the basis of their purposive rationality. Instead Habermas shows that there are: “different aspects of the rationality of action”. In other words each type of action can be judged under a certain aspect of rationality, e.g.:

a “teleological actions can be judged under the aspect of effectiveness” (TC 333), which depend on technical knowledge that can be criticized in reference to truth claims.

b Constative speech acts can be criticized under the aspect of truth, i.e.: concerning the truth of statement.

c Normatively regulated speech acts can be contested under the aspect of rightness.

d Dramaturgical speech acts can be criticized as untruthful rejected as deceptions or self-deceptions.

System and Lifeworld

Whereas the first intermediate reflection was focused on “the paradigm shift” from purposive rationality to communicative action, the second intermediate reflection intends to address “the unclarified relation between action theory and systems theory” (TC2 113). Whereas in the first intermediate reflection Habermas used Weber as a starting point for his argument, here he takes up Durkheim, and specifically this latter’s “division of labor in society”.

As in the previous part, Habermas outlines clearly what he proposes and how he intends to support his proposal. He first of all proposes that:

1. “we conceive of societies *simultaneously* as systems and as lifeworlds” (TC2 118). This idea will, in turn prove itself in:
2. “a theory of social evolution...[that would] make the connection...between forms of social integration and stages of system differentiation tangible” (ibid.)

Habermas intends to explicate these two points by following the next steps:

- I. ‘In making clear how the lifeworld is related to the three worlds on which subjects acting with an orientation to mutual understanding base their common definitions of situations” (TC2 119)
- II. By elaborating the concept of the lifeworld as present within a context of communicative action and relating to it to Durkheim’s concept of collective consciousness.
- III. By eliciting that “the concepts of the lifeworld...are linked with everyday concepts that are...serviceable only for the narrative presentation of historical events and social circumstances” (Ibid.).

IV. Investigating the functions of communicative action in its role in maintaining a structurally differentiated world would reveal it to originate within this horizon.

V. "This takes us to the limit of theoretical approaches that identify society with the lifeworld.

Habermas final goal is to conceive of society as being simultaneously system and a lifeworld (Cfr TC2 120).

I. Lifeworld and the three worlds

In any given situation, a speaker "in performing one of the standard speech acts" takes a pragmatic relation to something in a) the objective world b) the social world c) the subjective world. Correspondingly the speech acts appear to the speaker as something objective, normative or subjective.

As Habermas has shown in part III of TC, communicative action relies "on a cooperative process" where the above three components are present simultaneously. As such these three functions are points of reference for both speaker and hearer. In fact anyone of them implies the other.

A life world is made up of situations. A situation is a segment of lifeworld contexts of relevance. It is defined by themes, goals and plans of action. A situation is not of course fixed: "It has a moveable horizon" because the lifeworld is highly complex.

As it were the lifeworld is the horizon within which speakers come to an understanding. This is so because the lifeworld is, in Habermas' own words: "a reservoir

of taken-for-granted(s), of unshaken convictions” that serve as the foundation for interpretation.

The lifeworld is something that is transmitted to us by culturally and linguistically organized stock of interpretative patterns (Cfr.124). And as such language and culture are constitutive for the lifeworld.

Members of a society are able to communicate and come to an understanding because they possess a common stock of knowledge, background convictions that are presupposed to be guaranteed. Also it is by using these as springboard that new situations are defined or negotiated. As such there are no completely unfamiliar situations: “Every new situation appears in a lifeworld composed of a cultural stock of knowledge that is ‘always already’ familiar” (TC2 125). For this reason “communicative actors are always moving within the horizon of their lifeworld; they cannot step outside of it” (TC2 126). Habermas thus considers the lifeworld “the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims that their utterances fit the world (objective, social, or subjective), and where they can criticize and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements, and arrive at agreements” (Ibid.). Simply put, participants cannot thoroughly distance themselves from it.

II. The concept of lifeworld as being present within communicative action

Habermas attempts to show the above by comparing ‘the communication theoretic concept of the lifeworld to the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld.

Phenomenological analysis of lifeworld structures aims at elucidating: “the spatiotemporal and social organization of the lifeworld”. According to Habermas, Schutz

and Luckmann do not as much change as to give the borrowed phenomenological concept of lifeworld a new twist. Both Schutz and Luckmann emphasize three moments of the lifeworld:

a The lifeworld is given to the subject as unquestionable (the background is assumed as unproblematical). Here the lifeworld is intuitively present, familiar and transparent; but its complexity is not overlooked.

b The certainty in which the lifeworld is enshrined owes to “a social a priori built is not the intersubjectivity of mutual understanding in language” (TC2 131). My lifeworld is not my own alone, but is shared, i.e.: intersubjectively shared, just as I share to a large degree other people’s lifeworld. The lifeworld precedes all forms of possible disagreements. Each has access to a lifeworld as a common horizon.

c Situations shift and change “but the limits of the lifeworld cannot be transcended” (TC2 132). The lifeworld, as it were, delimits the boundaries of communication aimed at understanding/agreement. “[It] cannot be gotten behind and cannot in principle be exhausted” (TC2 133). Why lifeworld conveys the feeling of absolute certainty is something paradoxical; what we know, what we can count on is not separable from what we pre-reflectively know (Cfr. CT2 135).

III. Lifeworld as *Verstehen*

Lifeworld, at this point, becomes for Habermas “a horizon forming context of processes of reaching understanding” (Ibid.). It is for this reason that Habermas abandons

“the communication theoretic concept of the lifeworld developed from the participants’ perspective” (Ibid.) as non serviceable. He rather opts for “the everyday concept of the lifeworld”.

As communicative beings, persons do not meet only as participants but also as narrators of what occurs in their lives. Narration is a constative speech intended to describe socio-cultural events and objects (Cfr TC2 136). Beyond the apparently trivial need for mutual understanding, narrative practice “has a function in the self-understanding of persons” (Ibid.). As such it helps them “objectivate their belonging to the lifeworld...to which they do belong “as in their personal histories. It serves them to develop social identities, etc...” (Cfr. Ibid.). In the final analysis for Habermas, through narrative form we are choosing a perspective that ‘grammatically’ forces us to base our descriptions on a an everyday concept of the lifeworld as cognitive reference system” (Ibid.).

IV. Necessary conditions for a rationalization of the lifeworld

If culture provides the basis for mutual understanding in a lifeworld, there are two components to consider: a) Legitimation for existing institutions b) socializations patterns. ‘If society is sufficiently integrated to cover the given for coordination in a lifeworld, what needs to be considered are: a) legitimately regulated social membership of individuals b) obligations. If, again, personality systems are at issue, what needs to be considered are: a) interpretative accomplishments b) motivations for actions that conform to norms.

There are three perspectives concerning the rationalization of the lifeworld are as follows.

1. Structural differentiation of the lifeworld: Under this perspective the focus is on “the gradual uncoupling of the institutional system from worldviews’. At the level of the relation of culture to personality: “the renewal of traditions depends more and more on individual’s readiness to criticize and their ability to innovate” (TC2 146). In this context, traditions become reflective and undergo revision from the same culture’s point. From the viewpoint of society: “legitimate orders are dependent upon formal procedures for positing and justifying norms” (Ibid.). Personality wise: “a highly abstract ego-identity is continuously stabilized through self-steering” (Ibid.).

2. Differentiation of form and content: On the cultural level: “identity-securing traditions separate off from the concrete contents with which they are still tightly interwoven in mythical worldviews”. They are reduced to: “world concepts, communication presuppositions, argumentation procedures, abstract basic values and the like” (Ibid.).

At the level of society, general principles and procedures crystallize out of the particular contexts to which they are tied in primitive societies. At the level of the personality system, the cognitive structures acquired in the socialization process are increasingly detached from the content of cultural knowledge with which they were at first integrated in “concrete thinking”.

3. Growing reflexivity of symbolic reproduction: “in modern societies, action systems take shape in which specialized tasks of cultural transmission, social integration, and child rearing are dealt professionally” (TC2 146)

V. Conceiving society as simultaneously system and lifeworld

“The lifeworld that members construct from common cultural traditions is coextensive with society” (TC2 149). When society is conceived as consequence of such perspective, Habermas tells us that: “we are accepting three fictions: a) the autonomy of actors b) the independence of culture, and c) the transparency of communication.

a The autonomy of the actors: The assumption here is that as members of a socio-cultural world, actors are presumed to be responsible participants and communicants. What Habermas means by responsible is that the actors can aim to “criticizable validity claims” (Ibid.). However, it should be clear that actors have no total control of their action situations. They neither control the: “possibilities of mutual understanding and conflict” (Ibid.), nor the outcomes of their actions. As it were they are submerged in their histories, never in total control of the historical horizon of their actions.

b Independence of culture: “Culture is independent from external constraints” (Ibid.). It is a world from which actors derive their convictions, and develop their interpretation, valuation, and expression. As such it would be meaningless for actors to inquire whether the culture they depend upon is itself dependent on anything else [it appears it simply is not!].

c Transparency of communication: “Participants in communication encounter one another is a horizon of unrestricted possibilities of mutual understanding” (Ibid.). They have to presume/assume: “that they can arrive at an understanding about anything and everything” (TC2 150). The fundamental

fact is that there cannot be coercion in such process [this would in effect be contradictory].

These three fictions, as Habermas calls them, become apparent when we renounce identifying society with lifeworld.

Uncoupling of system and Lifeworld

The question is how do system and lifeworld transform each other? To answer this question Habermas begins by analyzing the connections that is generated: “between the increasing complexity of the system and the rationalization of the lifeworld” (TC2 155). He does so by first:

- A. Viewing tribal societies as “socio-cultural lifeworlds” (Ibid.)
- B. Then “as self-maintaining systems” in order to show that at this stage of development “system integration and social integration are still tightly interwoven” (Ibid.)
- C. By describing further “four mechanisms that successively take lead in social evolution, in each case bringing about a new model of differentiation” (Ibid.)
- D. By pointing the role of pacemaker in the transformation by the evolution of law and morality we can understand the rationalization of the lifeworld.
- E. While “action oriented to mutual understanding gains more and more independence from normative contexts, ever greater demands are made upon

...everyday language. When this occurs, rationalization of lifeworld leads to system complexity which in turn will affect the lifeworld it instrumentalizes.

A. Viewing tribal societies as socio-cultural lifeworlds

Archaic societies are prime examples of the lifeworld concept of society. In such societies there is no distinction as yet of system and lifeworld. Tribal societies are for example organized almost entirely on kinship system. As it were: "the system of kinship relations forms something like total institution" (TC2 157). Kinship system defines relations and role differentiation by sex, generation and descent. "It divides the lifeworld into areas of interaction with those who are kin and those who are not" (Ibid.).

How does the kinship system draw its binding force? It derives it from religious foundations. In tribal societies social norms do not derive their validity by making recourse to a state's power of sanction. It is all based on religious grounding; thus, violating "norms of kinship system counts as sacrilege" (Ibid.). Within this context "myth binds the critical potential of communicative action" (TC2 159).

Although there is profound homogeneity in tribal societies, this should not blind us to the fact that there is: "large scope of differentiation" (Ibid.). As indicated earlier "sex, age, descent are the dimensions in which roles are differentiated" (Ibid.).

B. Autarchic systems

If archaic societies can satisfy their material needs why wouldn't they fall into an autarchic system? Habermas thinks that they are prevented from being so by their need of exogamous marriage: in built into their systems is: "a norm that requires exchange of

marriageable women” (TC2 161). Furthermore “the relations established by marriage create a network of lasting reciprocities...” (Ibid.).

Exogamous norms of marriage have also the effect of differentiating tribal societies segmentally, i.e. by “horizontally stringing together similarly structured groups” (Ibid.). Economic activity is not a differentiated activity in primal societies. In “non-monetarized activities of archaic societies, the mechanism of exchange has so little detached itself from normative contexts that a clear separation between economic and non-economic values is hardly possible” (TC2 163).

C. Mechanisms leading to differentiation

The segmental differentiation of which Habermas spoke about earlier leads to two levels of system differentiation: exchange relation and stratification via power relation; in simple words economic relations vs. power/political relation.

Here Habermas appears to give his own modernized version of Historical Materialism, i.e.: Base and Superstructure and the stages of social development. Habermas does wholly embrace the Marxian view, but gives it a more elaborate perspective.

Unlike Marx, Habermas maintains the integration of relations of production with the political order, and that of religious worldviews with ideological functions (Cfr CT2 169). He sees, on the other hand, the progressive differentiation of base and superstructure. The process by which this occurs is as follows:

First Political order differentiates from religious worldviews that legitimate the state.

Second The economy is differentiated from State administration; both in turn are differentiated from cultural reproduction.

For Base and Superstructure to separate kinship system has to break down structurally. The following is the outline of such differentiation.

1. "In hierarchized tribal societies, functional specifications increases along with organizational activities" (Ibid.), i.e.: leadership positions in war and peace, ritual actions, healing practices, can be differentiated. However, they may all be effected by kinship system. It is only with the emergence of the State "that functional specification first encroaches upon the very way of life of social groups" (Ibid.). Thus social stratification is detached from kinship system. We then see the transition from elite founded on kinship system to an elite founded on possessions. Habermas concludes that a society based on State organization is always more complex than any society organized along kinship lines.

Kinship offers membership by birth to a group, a State offers citizenship by legal act. The former is involuntary, whereas the latter "presupposes voluntary – at least in principle – recognition of the political order" (TC2 170). Citizenship can be acquired or lost [whereas, the implication is, kinship has permanency built into it].

2. "in traditional societies the State is an organization in which is concentrated the collectivity's capacity for action" (TC2 171). In modern societies actions are not steered by a single organization but rather "distributed among different subsystems" (Ibid.), i.e.: there is specialization of functions tending to achieving "collective goals via binding decisions" (Ibid.).

Capitalist society enhances system differentiation through money: The State relinquishes this function. While traditional societies “allow for internal and external markets; it is only with capitalism, however, that we have an economic system...carried through monetary channels” (Ibid.). It is the capitalist system that in the end breaks down the traditional State. In the traditional State there is integration between the various functions of the State and the lifeworld. The Capitalist system uncouples them.

D. Institutionalization of system differentiation from the perspective of the lifeworld

The progressive complexity of social systems results in rendering lifeworlds more provincial (TC2 173). “In a differentiated social system the lifeworld seems to shrink to a subsystem” (Ibid.). However, this does mean that the two occurrences are causally linked. On the contrary “increases in complexity are dependent on the structural differentiation of the lifeworld” (Ibid.)

Furthermore, when “new level of system of differentiation is institutionalized it requires the ‘reconstruction in the core institutional domain of the moral legal in regulation of conflicts” (Ibid.). To use a Marxian terminology, Habermas appears to say that the emergence of a form of base, i.e.: economic relations, requires the establishment of moral-legal superstructure.

The purpose of morality and law is “to check open conflict in such a way that the basis of communicative action, and with it, the social integration of the lifeworld does not fall apart” (Ibid.)

Following Durkheim, who “noted a long-term toward heightened abstractness and universality in law and morality between the two”; Habermas applies Kohlberg’s three levels of moral consciousness to trace such a development. These are:

- a. The pre-conventional level where actions are judged by their consequences.
- b. The conventional “on which the orientation of norm and the intentional violation of them are already judged” (Ibid.)
- c. The post-conventional a level in which “norms themselves are judged in the light of principles” (Ibid.).

At the conventional level, ethics and law are undifferentiated; so that the process from the pre-conventional to the post-conventional is a process of differentiation. “This development is part of the structural differentiation of the lifeworld” (TC2 174).

It appears to me that what Habermas posits as his main thesis is the following: a higher level of system and lifeworld integration can only take place when legal institutions develop to such an extent that conventional and post-conventional levels are embodied (Cfr. Ibid.).

E. Rationalization of lifeworld and system complexity

How are actions coordinated? In other words: “how does ego get alter to continue interaction in the desired way? How does he avoid conflict that interrupts the sequence of action?” (TC2 179).

The answer presumably is prestige and influence of ego. Stratified tribal societies exemplify the model where prestige and influence are the basis of action coordination. In politically constituted societies it is “the legal authorities of the State” (Ibid.), because decisions are based on binding norms, i.e.: fidelity to the law. In modern bourgeois society there is a split of morality and legality. In private matters of application of general principles is required; whereas “in the occupational and public spheres obedience to positively enacted laws is demanded” (TC2 180). In the end what becomes the only normative condition is “abstract obedience to law” (Ibid.), and that is “in formally organized domains of action” (Ibid.).

What are the consequences of such a situation? The more “motive and *value generalization* advance, the more communicative action gets detached from concrete and traditional normative behavior patterns” (Ibid.). And “value generalization is a necessary condition for releasing the rationality potential immanent in communicative action” (Ibid.)

When communicative action is freed from value orientations, it induces the separation of action aimed at success from action aimed at understanding.

In conclusion, it is paradoxical and ironic that transition to modern societies makes possible the rationalization of the lifeworld, i.e.: the emergence and growth of subsystems which would in turn become destructive of the lifeworld itself.

Legitimation Crisis

The German title of this work is *Legitimations Probleme im Spätkapitalismus*¹¹, but from here forward I shall abbreviate it as LC. The work precedes *The Theory of Communicative Action* by almost a decade. The work is brief but dense as all the other works of Habermas.

In this book, Habermas begins by elucidating the concept of crisis. He does this by referring how the term has been used first in the medical, and then in the social sciences.

In the medical field the notion of crisis “refers to the phase of an illness in which it is decided whether or not the organism’s self-healing powers are sufficient for recovery” (LC 1). A medical crisis however involves both the observer, e.g.: the physician as well as the patient. The patient is in this case “a subject condemned to passivity and temporarily deprived of the possibility of being a subject in full possession of his powers” (Ibid.). The resolution of the crisis corresponds to “a liberation of the subject caught in it” (Ibid.).

In the social sciences “crises arise when the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary to the continued existence of the system” (LC 2). Crises in social systems are not environmentally (i.e.: externally) produced but are results of inherent structural disturbances. Crises are not simply alterations, i.e.: changes in systems. The very concept of crisis contains the notion that “only subjects can be involved in crises” (LC 3). For this reason, Habermas maintains that “only when members of a society experience structural alterations as critical for

continued existence and feel their social identity threatened can we speak of crises” (Ibid.)

This is not to deny, however, that social systems in se do possess identities they can maintain or lose. History (historiography) gives us ample example how societies change to the point where later generations are unable to recognizing them as part of their tradition.

But who determines that a crisis within a society has occurred? Habermas does not believe that although it is the members of a society that experience a crisis, it is not them who identify it as such: “Crises occurrences owe their objectivity to the fact that they issue from unresolved steering problems” (LC 4). At this point the question is: when do such steering problems arise? (Cfr. 4).

Constituents of social systems

What Habermas attempts to determine next are the “constituents of social systems” in order to answer more clearly the questions raised in the previous discussion. According to him, social systems possess three universal properties:

a. Social systems environment may be apportioned in three parts: *outer nature* (i.e.: the non-human environment), other *social systems* and *inner nature* (the organic substratum of the members of society). “Outer nature is appropriated in production process, inner nature in socialization process” (LC 9). The productive process has for aim “to extract natural resources and transform [them] ...into use value” (Ibid.). Socialization processes shape the members of the system into subjects capable of speaking and acting” (Ibid.).

The function of social systems is to “adapt outer nature to society” (Ibid.) by means of the forces of production. This takes place in their organization and training of labor power; in their development of technologies and strategies through use of “technically utilizable knowledge” (Ibid.). Social systems exert their power over outer nature, according to Habermas, “through the medium of utterances that admit of truth” (Ibid.), e.g.: how work is governed by technical rules.

Social systems maintain themselves vis a vis outer nature ‘through instrumental (i.e.: technical rules); and vis a vis inner nature through communicative actions (i.e.: valid norms)’. Thus ‘objectivity of knowledge and legitimacy of valid norms ensures the community of shared meaning (in German: *Gemeinsamkeit*) that is constitutive for the socio-cultural life world’.

The third component is constituted by inner nature which gives rise to world views ‘that secure identity and are efficacious for social integration; that is, moral systems, etc... (Cfr. LC 12).

b. “inner nature remains, after its integration into the social system, something like an inner environment”; in other words, individuals resist ‘being absorbed without remainder in society’. Inner nature has the peculiar status as being a system environment and a system element.

c. Social evolution is the result of in the “automatic inability not to learn” (LC 15); and here is to be located, according to Habermas, the rationality of man. Humans learn in two dimensions, theoretical and practical. There is non-reflexive learning and reflexive learning. The former takes place when “implicitly raised theoretical and practical validity claims are naively taken for granted and accepted or rejected without discursive

consideration” (LC 15). Reflexive learning takes place when “validity claims that are problematic” are redeemed or discussed on the basis of arguments” (ibid.)

Social principles of organization

What we have next is really Habermas own version of Historical materialism. According to him, it is of significance to distinguish in human history four social formations: the primitive, traditional, capitalist and post-capitalist. Except for primitive societies all are class societies. Characteristics of each social formation and the emergence of crisis in each are then outlined succinctly by Habermas.

1. Primitive Social Formation: Age and sex are its organizational principle. “The institutional core is the kinship system [which is] total institution” (LC 18). Since at this stage there is no motive “for producing goods that are necessary” there is no basis for contradiction. Crisis is exogenous, i.e.: “it is external change that overloads the narrowly limited ...demographic change in connection with ecological factors...interethnic dependency as a result of economic exchange...” (ibid.).

2. Traditional Social Formation: In this social formation class domination is the principle of social organization: “the kinship system is no longer the institutional nucleus of the whole system; it surrenders the central functions of power and control to the State” (LC 19). The emergence of system autonomy, the functional differentiation (power, money, positive law). Crisis arises from internal contradictions: “the contradiction exists between validity claims of systems of norms and justifications that cannot explicitly permit exploitation, and a class structure in which privileged appropriation of socially produced wealth is the rule” (LC 20). Class struggle will eventually ensue, which will

“threaten social integration....overthrow of the political system and new foundation of Legitimation; new group identity” (Ibid.)

3. Liberal-Capitalist Social Formation: “The principle of organization is the relationship of wage labor and capital” (Ibid.) under bourgeois civil law. “Civil society is differentiated out of the political-economic system” (Ibid.); depoliticization of the class relationship; anonymization of class domination. “Economic exchange becomes the dominant steering medium” (Ibid.). The State’s function is limited to a) “protection of bourgeois commerce in accord with civil law” b) “shielding the market mechanism from self-destructive side-effects” (LC 21) c) Fulfilling the pre-requisites of production in the economy (public education, transportation, communication) d) adapting civil law to the capitalist process of accumulation. In the final analysis “the bourgeois constitutional State finds its justification in the legitimate relations of production” (LC 22)

When the economic system becomes uncoupled from the political system in the capitalist mode of production there is going to be a “susceptibility of the social system to crisis” (LC 23). This is what Habermas identifies as system’s crises. How do they occur? “In liberal capitalism, crises appear in the form of unresolved economic steering problems” (LC 24) which are bound to appear as “temporarily unresolved steering problems” endangering social integration. In other words, there is bound to arise class contradiction. But what does contradiction mean? Habermas defines it as follows: “a fundamental contradiction arises when and only when its organizational principle necessitates that individuals and group repeatedly confront one another with claims and intentions that are, in the long run, incompatible” (LC 27). As long as it is unarticulated or remains unrecognized the conflict is only latent. But as soon as it surfaces to

consciousness “conflict becomes manifest, and irreconcilable interests are recognized as antagonistic interests” (Ibid.). If the system is not equipped to alter its predicament, i.e.: capacity to resolve the conflict, an alteration of system structures is required.

In the final analysis “economic crisis is immediately transformed into social crisis” (LC 29). As such the economic crisis is not perceived as a fateful occurrence resolvable ideologically, it instead acquires “the objectivity of inexplicable, contingent, natural events” (LC 30), requiring objective examination. This, in effect, is what Marx provided in his *Critique of Political Economy*.

Crisis Tendencies in Advanced Capitalism

Advanced capitalism, or organized state-regulated capitalism “refers, on the one hand, to the process of economic concentration, i.e.: the rise of the national, then multinational corporations, etc...On the other hand...to the fact that the State intervenes in the market as functional gaps develop” (LC 33). Advanced capitalism differs clearly from liberal capitalism which does not admit of State interventionism. In liberal capitalism economic relations are conducted in nature like manner, i.e.: unplanned.

Fundamental characteristics of advanced capitalist formation

For Habermas the distinctive characteristics of advanced capitalist formation fall under four areas or systems: 1) The economic system 2) The administrative system 3) The legislative system 4) The class structure.

1. The economic system: “private production is market oriented, one subsector still being regulated by competition while the other is determined by the market strategies of

oligopolies that ‘tolerate a competitive fringe’ (LC 34). Investments of great magnitude are made “without regard for the market”, e.g.: the military industrial complex, space programs, etc... The enterprises of these complexes may either be controlled by State apparatus or “private firms living on government contracts” (Ibid.); “Capital intensive industries predominate” (Ibid.); corporations are faced with strong unions.

2. The administrative system: The State assumes the function of regulating the economic cycle, create conditions for the disposal or utilization of excess capital, plan globally, etc...Habermas identifies six administrative functions of the advanced capitalist State aimed at improving “conditions for the realization of capital” (LC 35). These are:

- i. “Strengthening the competitive capability of the nation” through inherent means
- ii. Creating “unproductive government consumption”, such as armaments, space exploration.
- iii. Improving the material infrastructure, i.e.: transportation, education, health, etc...
- iv. Improving the immaterial infrastructure, i.e.: promotion of science, research, etc...
- v. Improving productivity of human labor, i.e.: vocational schools, training, etc...
- vi. “Relieving the social and material costs resulting from private production” (Ibid.), i.e.: unemployment compensation, welfare, etc...

In the final analysis: “the goal is to increase the productivity of labor and thereby the ‘use value’ of capital” (LC 36).

3. The Legitimation system: When the bourgeois ideology of fair exchange collapses, the re-coupling of the economic system to the political system stands in need of Legitimation. The State cannot simply limit its function as the securer of the general conditions of production as in liberal capitalism. The State in advanced capitalism is actively involved in the economy. It, therefore, has to legitimate itself. And to do so it cannot appeal to tradition “that have been undermined and worn out during the development of capitalism” (Ibid.); since advanced capitalism dwells in the realm of democracy, i.e.: with bourgeois ideology of civil rights. Democracy itself will bring to the fore the very contradiction inherent in advanced capitalism: “the contradiction between administratively socialized production and the continued private appropriation and use of surplus value” (Ibid). In order to impede that such contradiction be thematized the administrative system must remain “sufficiently independent of legitimating will-formation” (Ibid.).

4. Class structure: The question here is how to prevent class conflicts by keeping it latent (immunization of conflict). How? Habermas believes that it is done through use of four mechanisms:

- i. Disparate wage developments
- ii. Permanent inflation
- iii. Permanent crisis in government finance
- iv. An inadequate adjustment of disproportional economic developments

The objective appears to be to maintain the system indefinitely by avoiding possible crisis situations.

Problems arising from advanced capitalist growth

The way advanced capitalist system conduct business is not without severe consequences in the areas of the natural environment, human nature and international relation. Habermas describes the problems arising in each area.

1. Ecological balance: “The established mechanisms of growth are forcing an increase in both population and production on a worldwide scale” (LC 41). Such production is met with “two important material limitations”: a) the supply of finite resources, i.e.: land, water, raw materials, etc... b) pollution: nature can only absorb so much of radio-active by-products, etc...

In the final analysis, however, the ultimate limit is posed by “the environment’s ability to absorb heat from energy consumption” (LC 42). Since economic growth is inevitably coupled with consumption of energy, (and increase in production), there is bound to be a rise in global temperature [A fact, I may add, that is amply proven today by environmental scientists]. Thus Habermas concludes: “...exponential growth of population and production – that is the expansion of control over nature – must some day run up against the limits of the biological capacity of the environment. Can capitalism avert this? Habermas appears does not seem to think so; he states: “Capitalist societies cannot follow imperatives of growth limitation without abandoning their principle of organization” (Ibid.); in effect it would simply violate the logic of the system [But what is Green is more profitable as they say today?]

2. The anthropological balance: Can advanced capitalism produce disturbances, conflict within inner nature, i.e.: personality systems? Habermas has a more nuanced approach to this question. He states that: “the integration of inner nature does not run up

against absolute barriers” and “there are no clear declinations of the limits of personality systems” (both LC 43). Where does then alienation fit...?

3. International balance: Possibility of nuclear mutual destruction; the improbability of real disarmament, etc...

Areas of possible crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism

Habermas sees ‘four possible crisis tendencies’ in advanced capitalist systems:

1) Economic crisis tendencies 2) Political crisis tendencies 3) Socio-cultural crisis tendencies 4) Motivation crises.

1. Economic crisis tendencies: Since there are bound to be economic crises that require State intervention: “economic crisis tendencies will also assert itself as social crisis, and lead to political struggles in which class opposition between owners of capital and masses dependent on wages again becomes manifest” (LC 46). The State in advanced capitalism is bound to defend the interest of monopoly capitalists. It cannot simply be an indifferent bystander whose *raison d’ être* is to ensure only the process of the system.

2. Political crisis tendencies: Habermas distinguishes two types of crises here, one of input and one of output: “Input crises have the form of a Legitimation crisis...The Legitimation system does not succeed in maintaining mass loyalty” (Ibid.). This leads to: a disorganization of the State apparatus. In simple terms: the aims of capital realization ‘cannot be taken over into the administratively controlled domain’ “without some type contradiction within the system. This is what Habermas refers to as “orientations alien to the structure”

3. Socio-cultural crisis tendencies: Crises in the other systems are not without repercussions in the socio-cultural system. Indeed crisis in the socio-cultural systems are not endogenous: “there can be no socio-culturally produced input crisis” (LC 48). Crisis in the socio-cultural system manifest itself in: “the withdrawal of Legitimation”.

Theorems of economic crisis

The fundamental feature of advanced capitalist state is its interventionist nature. For this reason as well as being the great stakeholder in the economic system, it is also the primary agent of crisis. Indeed: “...administrative activity must even intensify economic crisis” (LC 51).

But how does the State maintain the [capitalist] market system? Habermas thinks that it does so through the following mechanisms:

1. “The State secures the system of civil law with the core institutions of property and of freedom of contract; it protects the market system from self-destructive side-effects;... it fulfills the prerequisite of production in the economy as a whole;...it promotes the capability of the domestic economy for international competition;...and it reproduces itself through military preservation of national integrity abroad and paramilitary suppression of enemies of the system at home...
2. “...through adaptation of the legal system to new forms of business organization, competition, financing, etc...In doing so the State limits itself to *market-complementing* adaptations to a process whose dynamic it does not influence...
3. “The State compensates for dysfunctional consequences of the accumulation process that have elicited *politically effective* reactions on the part of individual capital groupings, organized labor, or other organized groups....” (LC 53-54)

In advanced capitalistic systems there arise three developments in the mode of production: a) an altered form of the production of surplus value b) a quasi political wage structure c) the growing need for Legitimation of the political system.

- a. The State becomes involved in the capitalist mode of production by providing: “material and immaterial infrastructure...at a saving for private use” (LC 55). It further raises productivity through the organization of the educational system, qualification [standards?]; through scientific research, technical progress, etc...the State “heightens productivity.
- b. The State in advanced capitalism functions as a go between business associations and unions. As such “the mechanism of competition is replaced by the compromises between organizations to which the State has delegated legitimate power” (LC 57). The State’s aims appears to be to try to mitigate and reach compromise “between wage labor and capital” (Ibid.)
- c. There arises a need for Legitimation because according to Habermas: “...the State apparatus must fulfill its tasks in the economic system under the limiting condition that mass loyalty be simultaneously secured within the framework of a formal democracy and in accord with ruling universalistic value systems” (LC 58).

Theorems of rationality crisis

In advanced capitalistic tendency at system maintenance there is bound to arise a competition between, on one side “with contradictory interests of the individual capital groupings” and on the other “with the generalizable interests...of various population groups” (Cfr LC 61). The government will eventually overburden itself “with the common costs of...socialized production...imperialistic market strategies...with costs...for unproductive commodities, i.e.: armaments, space travel, infrastructural costs,

i.e.: transportation, communication, costs of social consumption indirectly related to production, i.e.: housing construction, health care, etc..." (Cfr Ibid.).

The way the government finances these varied and massive economic enterprises is through taxes. Thus the government is faced with a double task: on the one hand it needs to levy "the requisite amount of taxes by skimming off profits and income" as to use the taxes "so rationally that crisis-ridden disturbances of growth can be avoided" (LC 62). On the other hand, and simultaneously, the raising of taxes, their proper use, and the administrative performance must be executed in such a way "that the need for Legitimation can be satisfied as it arises" (Ibid.). "If the State fails in the former tasks, there is a deficit in administrative rationality...If it fails in the latter, a deficit in Legitimation results" (Ibid.).

The advanced capitalist State is thus riddled with an apparent dilemma: expectation of intervention and restraint or renunciation of intervention in the economic system. It also can become "independent of its clients in a way that threatens the system and subordinating itself to their particular interests" (LC 63).

Theorems of Legitimation crisis

How does Legitimation crisis arise? For Habermas: "if governmental crisis management fails, it lags behind programmatic demands that it has placed on itself. The penalty for this failure is withdrawal of Legitimation" (LC 69)

The more the government expands its activity in the economic realm the more the need for Legitimation increases disproportionately (Cfr. LC 71). This in turn has the effect of shifting the boundaries of the cultural system, intruding thus into the

administrative planning area. According to Habermas, we see a clear example of this in educational planning, “especially curriculum planning” (Ibid.). Administrative planning thus requires Legitimation because it crossed its boundaries into a field which possessed: “Its power of self-Legitimation” (Ibid.). Obviously educational planning is not the only example. Similar situations are to be observed in city planning, planning health system, family planning, etc... The conclusion should be obvious: “...advanced capitalist societies fall into Legitimation difficulties” (LC 73).

But how does the capitalist State compensate for its Legitimation deficit? It does this “by rewards conforming to the system” (Ibid.). However, Legitimation crisis cannot rise as fast as rewards. Does that mean there is a state of permanent crisis?

Theorems of motivation crisis

The most important motivation that advanced capitalist societies have contributed “consists of syndromes of civil and familial vocational privatism” (LC 75), i.e.: consumption, leisure, status, competition, etc...

What Habermas intends to show here is that: “the socio-cultural system will not be able, in the long run, to reproduce the privatistic syndrome necessary for the continued existence of the system” (LC 78). He provides four reasons for such assertion:

- a. “...pre-bourgeois traditions....are non-renewably dismantled
- b. “...components of bourgeois ideology...are being undermined by changes in the social structure...
- c. “...denuded normative structures...allow no functional equivalent for the destroyed motivational patterns of privatism...

d. "...structures of bourgeois culture...are...still relevant for motive formation"
(Cfr. 78).

a) Capitalist formation had the effect of dissolving traditional world-views. Why?
For two reasons: One, they were incompatible with the "socio-structural forces of the economic and administrative systems; Two, they were equally incompatible "with the cognitive attitudes proceeding from the system of science" (LC 79).

Today "cultural traditions are losing the character of world views...There is a pluralism of competing beliefs...Practical questions no longer admit truth" (LC 80). "Normal conceptions have been detached from theoretical systems of interpretation", e.g.: bourgeois egoism passes for common sense. Religion is no longer even a personal matter. Philosophy has lost its metaphysical pretensions. Scientism dominates and other constructions have fallen on the sideway.

b) Bourgeois worldview held the conviction that "rewards be distributed on the basis of individual achievement". This was believed to take place on the condition that there be "equal opportunity to participate in a competition that is regulated so as to neutralize external influences" (LC 81). The market was believed to provide such mechanism. However, the market has lost its credibility "as a fair mechanism for the distribution of life opportunities conforming to the system" (Ibid.). Since the market does not provide it, bourgeois ideology has tried to sustain the credibility [for fairness] in educational success provided there is: i) equal opportunity for admission to higher education ii) non-discriminatory evaluation for scholastic performance iii) concurrent development of the educational and occupational systems iv) labor processes that permit evolution according to individually accountable achievements (Cfr. Ibid.).

c) The erosion of pre-bourgeois and bourgeois traditions is unsuited “to reproduce civil and familial-vocational privatism” (LC 84). What predominate today are scientism, post-auratic art, and universalistic morality.

- Scientism is capable of promoting “a positivistic common consciousness that sustain the public realm”; but it also provides standards by which it itself can be “criticized and convicted of residual dogmatism” (Ibid.).
- Post-auratic art. Basically art enjoys a level of independence not seen before. This had the effect of producing a counter culture that has become “hostile to the possessive-individualistic achievement and advantage-oriented lifestyle of the bourgeoisie” (LC 85), i.e.: Bohemianism. In this the art produced is a negation of bourgeois social practice. [It is] Art developed under the sign of “l art pour l’ars” [art for art sake]. We have here “the autonomism of art carried to the extreme” (Ibid.).
- Universalistic morality. It was liberal capitalism which for the first time gave rise to “universalistic value systems”. According to Habermas this happened because “economic exchange had to be universalistically regulated and the exchange of equivalents provided an effective basic ideology to free the State from the traditionalistic mode of justification” (LC 87). However, this crumbled in organized capitalism and new demands for Legitimation arose. It is ethics that in the final analysis that would serve as foundation for Legitimation. The kind of ethics that can guarantee of admissible norms would be communicative ethics. Not formalistic ethics (Cfr. Kant) and much less utilitarian ethics but “only communicative ethics is universal.... [and] guarantees autonomy.

d) Bourgeois cultures are still relevant in the formation of the personality system. This is best seen in adolescent crisis. In such as case the youth is confronted with cultural effects that he has to come to terms with and interpret so as to define his/her identity. For this reason Habermas emphasizes the relevance and motive-forming power of cultural traditions.

The Logic of Legitimation Problems

What Habermas states as his declared intention in the last part of LC is to concentrate on the presupposition “that the values and norms in accordance with which motives are formed have an immanent relation to truth” (LC 95). Habermas asserts this on the belief that the highest moral consciousness has claims to empirical as well as systematic superiority.

But the most pressing question in however is demonstrating the relation of Legitimation to truth (Cfr. LC 97). For such purpose Habermas begins by analyzing the concept of Legitimation in Weber. The question may thus be approached in two ways: either belief in legitimacy may be conceived as not having an immanent relation to truth, having thus only psychological significance as basis. Or it is presumed to have an immanent relation to truth in case of which it contains: “a rational validity claim that can be tested and criticized independently of the psychological effect of these grounds” (Ibid.). In the first case an authority is claimed to have authority if the normative order is established positively and those associated believe in its legality. Here belief in legitimacy becomes belief in legality. In the second case the situation calls for “grounds

for legitimizing force of this formal procedures” (LC 98). Habermas associates the first position with Niklas Luhmann, the second one with Johannes Winckelmann.

Habermas reminds us that it was Weber who sparked “the discussion of the relation of truth of belief to legitimacy” (LC 101) based on his conception of belief in legality. So where does Habermas stand on the issue?

Habermas outlines his tentative response to the question by first establishing “the possibility of justifying normative-validity claims” (Ibid.). Then by discussing “how matters actually stand [in our type of societies] with respect to the claim of legitimacy of existing systems of norms” (LC 101-102).

According to Habermas the possibility of justifying normative validity claims must be done by making recourse “to the conviction that consensus on a recommended norm could be brought about *with reasons*” (LC 105). In simple terms to use Habermas’ own terminology, it is achieved communicatively, i.e.: “participants in a practical discourse test the validity claims of norms”. This process presumes reasons and rightness. The consensus reached discursively is rational because, for Habermas “....a consensus can arise only through appropriately interpreted, generalizable interests...” (LC 108).

The next question tackled by Habermas is “what fulfills the moral-practical task of constituting ego and group identity?” (LC 120). Can’t it be “universalistic linguistic ethics”? (Ibid.). Could it be God? Not conceived as a personal God, but as a God that “becomes the name for a communicative structure” (LC 121). Could it be science? But science cannot “take over the function of worldviews” (Ibid.).

CHAPTER SIX

Jean-François Lyotard

Introduction

In the introduction to his *The Post-Modern Condition* [in French: *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (1979)¹²; from here on simply PC; all reference are to this French edition], Lyotard tells us that the study “has for aim the condition of knowledge (savoir) in the more developed societies” (PC 7). He tells us that the word “postmodern” though rare in France was more current among sociologists and critics in America. It refers to the period beginning in the 19th century “after the transformation that has affected the game rules of science, literature and the arts” (Ibid.).

But what does the word postmodern really mean? According to Lyotard to put it in simple words the term stands to indicate a ‘state of skepticism in regards to the grand narratives [métarécits]’. [These grand narratives can be metaphysical, ideological constructions]. The questions he will be dealing with in this book are succinctly posed in the introduction. They are fundamentally two, one stemming logically from the other: “the Legitimation of social bond, the just society, can these be feasible according to a paradox analogous to the scientific activity”; and “In what would this consist?” (PC 9)

These questions will not be approached from the perspective of the social sciences (i.e.: the expert!), but from the point of view of a philosopher as Lyotard tells us himself. He thus begins his essay with the following working hypothesis: “Knowledge changes status at the same time that societies enter the age so called post-industrial, and cultures

into the age [called] postmodern” (PC 11). According to Lyotard this transition began taking place at least since the end of the ‘50s.

Lyotard puts forward his premise by stating that “scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse” (Ibid.), which has to some extent two functions: research and transmission of knowledge, e.g.: genetics research for the former, and cybernetics for the latter. Because of such dual functions of scientific knowledge it becomes obvious that the “nature of knowledge cannot remain intact” (PC 13). What becomes known must become transmissible: “[knowledge] cannot pass into new channels, and become operational unless it can be translated into a quantum of information” (Ibid.). The consequence of such a premise is obvious: whatever in knowledge [savoir] is untranslatable is abandoned; research would be oriented or guided by the criteria of translatability of eventual results into the language of machines” (Ibid.). Both producers and users of knowledge must possess the “means of translating into [machine] language” (Ibid.). This constitutes in a sense the hegemony of computer (information) science.

The old paradigm that: “knowledge acquisition is indissolubly linked to education [Bildung] of the mind and the person will become obsolete” (PC 14). Producers and users of information will assume the analogous role of producers and users of merchandise. From here on: “knowledge is and will be produced to be sold and is and will be consumed to be valued in a new production, i.e.: to be exchanged...it will cease to be a goal in itself, it will lose its use value” (Ibid.).

On the other hand science will conserve its importance for the productive capacities of nation-states. A fact that will further widen the gap between developing and developed nations.

Because of its vital importance for production, knowledge under the form of “informational commodity” will play a pre-eminent role in world competition for power (Cfr. PC 15). Just as in the past nation-states have fought to conquer new territories to secure larger and larger sources of raw material, Lyotard predicts that “it is possible [foreseeable] that they will battle to master [more] information” (Ibid.). Thus a few areas for industrial and commercial strategies on one hand and military and political strategies on the other are opened. The very measure of survival of nations will be predicted on the condition that “the information that circulates is rich in content and easy to decode” (Ibid.).

Another issue that will arise from such scenario is the one that concerns the relation between the private enterprises of information, State power and civil society. Obviously new boundaries have to be redrawn as to the question who gets what information (PC 17).

The problem of Legitimation

Lyotard wants to be clear about his use of the term Legitimation. He states clearly that he does not intend to use the word in the restrictive sense given to it by contemporary German thinkers [His allusion is clearly to Habermas’ *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus*] who basically deal with the question of authority. For Lyotard, in this essay at least, Legitimation refers to: “the process by which a legislator dealing with scientific discourse is authorized to prescribe the conditions...under which a statement becomes part of this discourse, and thus can be taken into consideration by the scientific community” (PC 20).

Lyotard tells us that this does not constitute a new phenomenon. Plato had clearly dealt with this issue when he had envisioned that 'the Legitimation of science was indissolubly bound to the Legitimation of the legislator' (Cfr. Ibid.). The two have always gone hand in hand; and this is what defines the West for Lyotard!!

Knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin: "who decides what power is, and who knows what is suitable to decide? The question of knowledge in the age of information is more than ever a question of government" (Ibid.).

Method: language games

Basically three are Lyotard's observations as regards language games:

1. Their rules do not derive their legitimacy from within, but from agreement of the players [not that they invent them as such].
2. In the absence of rules there is no game [to play]; even a minimal change in the rules changes the game.
3. "All terms must be considered as 'stroke' made in the game" (PC 23).

Lyotard plans to utilize these observations to analyze the social bond. ["The social bond is made of strokes of language"].

The nature of the social bond: the modern alternative

If we wish to consider the question of knowledge in highly developed contemporary societies we must first deal with the methodological question that stands at their foundation.

There are essentially two theoretical models of societies that have been developed in the preceding half century. Either society is conceived as a functional whole or as divided in two. The Harvard sociologist Parsons is the champion of the former, while the latter is the predominant view of the Marxist schools [since all of them subscribe to the notion of class struggle and dialectics at the core of social unity].

The core of the functionalist view is that the principle of the system is the “stabilization of economies of growth and societies of abundance under the aegis of a moderate welfare state”. For its German version the objective is its “optimization of the global relation of inputs and outputs, and that is its achievements [performativité]...the betterment of the life of the system; otherwise there would be a decline.

In the Marxist view, which is represented by the Frankfurt School [the critical model], class struggle has a regularizing role in the system. It is simply a productive force indispensable for the system.

The nature of the social bond: the postmodern perspective

The postmodern era appears to usher a time in which the functions of regulation and reproduction will be subtracted from administrators and handed over to automated machines (i.e.: robots) (Cfr. PC 30). The crucial point becomes the administration of stored information so that appropriate decisions are made (Ibid. *ad sensum*). Administration of information would fall under the competence of experts in all kinds of fields. The ruling class is and will be those made up of decision makers. In fact it is no longer constituted by the traditional political class, but by a layer of business leaders, top

government bureaucrats, heads and directors of professional organizations, trade unions, etc...

The consequence of such type of situation leads to the emergence of a society which loses its internal cohesion. There occurs a transition from social collectivities to a State of a mass composed of individual atoms. There is, as it were, a return to the self; but a self that has become a point through which information of various nature passes.

In a society where information becomes pre-eminent, it is obvious that language assumes a position of pre-eminence. And it is on this point that Lyotard focuses his attention next.

Pragmatic of narrative power: knowledge and science

Lyotard wants to be clear that knowledge and science are not the same, nor do they have interchangeable meaning. This is something that he has said more than once so far. "Knowledge in general cannot be reduced to science, not even with knowing [connaissance]. Knowing is constituted by a body of statements denoting or describing objects...and open to be declared true or false" (PC 36). "Science would be a sub-type of knowing". A type of knowing open to be judged by experts as relevant or not to the language [of science].

Knowledge (savoir) is a far more inclusive term which includes know-how, know how to live, know how to listen, etc... It lies beyond the criteria of truth and in the domain of [praxis] efficiency, justice, the good-life, beauty, etc... It possesses normativity in addition to having denotative capabilities. Knowledge (savoir) conveys itself narratively: it is aimed at Bildung.

Where does the narrator derive his competence/authority? He/She derives it from the fact that he/she was first the audience/listener. The listening is what gives authority to the narrator. But narration has also another function besides one of enunciation. It also proscribes what needs to be said in order to be listened, what needs to be listened to be heard, what needs to be played to constitute an object of narration. Thus at the foundation of the social bond lies the narration as well as the rules on which it functions. This is the locus where “the relationships of the community with itself and the environment are played out” (Cfr. PC 40).

Narrativity has only effect temporally: “it obeys a rhythm; it is the synthesis of a meter that marks time into regular periods...” (PC 41).

Praxis (pragmatics) of scientific knowledge

Scientific knowledge arises from the interplay of three elements/components: Addresser (speaker/addresser); the addressee (listener); and the referent (object).

The addresser is believed first and foremost to say the truth concerning the referent. What this translates into is that he is capable of providing proofs for his statements and at the same time defend his point against opposing statements.

Secondly, the addressee is considered capable of giving valid consent (or refusal) about what he/she hears. This turns the addressee into a potential addresser with all the consequences that such a position would entail.

Thirdly: and here is the question: “What I say is true because I have proofs; but who determines the truth of my proofs” (PC 44).

This last point is addressed by two rules: one dialectic, and the other metaphysic.

- The dialectical solution: "...in as much as I can prove it, it is permissible to think that reality is as I say it" (Ibid.)
- The metaphysical: "The same referent cannot produce/obtain a plurality of contradictory proofs or inconsistent (proofs)" (Ibid.) [Lyotard adds Cartesianly: "Dieu n'est pas trompeur" (God is not a deceiver)].

These two rules constitute the foundation on which 19th century verification theory and 20th century theory of falsification are based on. The foundation is apparently the same: "All consensus is not as sign of truth; but we [may] suppose that the truth of a statement cannot lack of producing consensus" (Ibid.). Furthermore, "the truth of a statement and the competence of the claimer are submitted to the assent/consent of a collectivity of equals in competence" (PC 45).

Thus didactics also follows the same pattern. The student does not know what the addresser (expert) knows; but he can learn and become an expert himself. Both expert and student will eventually become partners in the research of what they (individually) do not know.

How do narrative knowledge compare with pragmatics of knowledge?

1. "The criterion of acceptability [in scientific knowledge] if a claim is its truth value. Thus we are considered learned/knowledgeable if we can proffer/make true a claim concerning the subject of a referent, and scientific if we can make verifiable or falsifiable claims concerning the subject of referents accessible to experts" (PC 46).
2. This kind of conception and praxis of knowledge is what gives rise in modern societies to institutions. They are grouped around language games; professionals. Thus there is in modern societies a gap between scientific institutions and society (Cfr. Ibid.).

3. “At the heart of research, competence is required only of the position of the addresser. There is no need as in the narrative form to become what the narrative says we are” (Ibid.)

4. All scientific claims are constantly/permanently open for discussion, refutation and argumentation.

5. The addressee of a referent is supposed to have background knowledge on previous claims pertaining to the referent [Cfr bibliography]. The addressee cannot propose a claim on the referent unless he differs from previous claims on the referent.

The narrative function and the Legitimation of knowledge

There is a paradox (although Lyotard may not call it so) that Lyotard points out. In its claim to truth science makes recourse to narration (le récit) which it considers as non-knowledge as its legitimizing element. We see an example of this in Descartes: “Descartes is not able to provide the legitimacy of science without what Valéry calls ‘the history of the mind’ (l’histoire d’un esprit) or again in a kind of Bildungsroman that is *The Discourse on Method*” (PC 51).

But “who decides the conditions of truth?” And that is if the conditions of truth, i.e.: the rules of the scientific game are immanent to science; and that they can be only established within the scientific debate? This is a dilemma of modernity that traces its origin to Humanism and continues through Enlightenment, *Sturm und Drang*, German Idealism, and the French Historical School. Throughout, narrativity functions as a legitimizing force of newer authorities in the West.

The legitimizing effect of narration expresses itself into two modes/directions, “depending on whether it represents the subject of the story as cognitive (knowing) or active/practical. And that is as a hero of knowledge or as a hero of freedom” (*ad sensum* PC 53).

The narratives of the Legitimation of knowledge

Here Lyotard explores two kinds of narratives of Legitimation: one political, the other philosophical. The first “is the one which has for subject humanity as hero of freedom/liberty”. In this narrative the message is that all peoples have a right to science. “if the social issue is not perceived as a scientific issue it is because priests and tyrants have prevented it from being so (Cfr. PC 54). The message is that the right to science must be won back. According to Lyotard this message underlies the educational policies and politics of the Third Republic in France. Thus for Lyotard: “we find recourse to narrative of liberties each time the State takes directly charge of the education of the people in the name of the nation and its orientation in the direction of progress” (PC 55). The foundation of the University of Berlin between 1807 and 1810 was clearly based on such perspective.

Is the university a place of disinterested research or should it have a [national] mission to accomplish? Wilhelm von Humboldt appears to lean towards a compromise. Though he subscribed to the idea of research for its own sake, he also maintained that the university should lend its material (i.e.: science) for “the spiritual and moral education of the nation” (PC 56). But how is it possible to reconcile the two. Humboldt was moved, as Lyotard points out, by the perception of the synthesis of three aspirations responding

simultaneously to the scientific, ethical/social and philosophical ideas. But in the final analysis the legitimizing language remained philosophical.

In Hegelian perspective, on the other hand, the three components of knowledge, society and State are subsumed under the realization of the Life of the Spirit. "In this perspective, knowledge finds at first its legitimacy in itself, and it is it that can say what the State and Society are...but it can only do so by becoming knowledge of knowledge, and that is speculative" (PC 58/9).

Lyotard remarks that the Humboldtian perspective is very much alive and thriving today because "the status of knowledge finds itself off balance and its speculative unity broken" (PC 59). "Knowledge is no longer the subject, it is at the service [of business]; its sole legitimacy...is to permit that morality becomes reality" (PC 60). For example scientists may criticize the government or refuse their cooperation if they deem its actions to be immoral or unjust. But this does not detract from the fact that ultimately the legitimacy of science comes from serving the collectivity.

According to Lyotard the Marxist schools of thought have oscillated between these two narratives of Legitimation of knowledge.

Deligitimation

According to Lyotard it appears that the grand narrative [of Legitimation] has lost its credibility: whether it is speculative or emancipatory. What are the causes for this? It is not easy to point out. Could it be the emergence of technology since World War II "which has removed the emphasis from ends to means of actions? Could it be Capitalism's reversal under Keynesian protectionism...?" (PC 63). Before deciding on

immediate causes, Lyotard wants to trace 'the germs of deligitimation' and nihilism inherent in the grand narratives of the 19th century before they manifested themselves.

For Hegel and in general Idealism "a science which has not found its legitimacy is not a true science" (PC 64); it amounts to ideology or an instrument of power: "A scientific claim is knowledge if and only if it is situated in a universal process of creation [engendrement]" (Ibid.).

The crisis of scientific knowledge which begins to emerge in the late 18 hundreds does not stem from the fortuitous proliferation of the sciences. It instead "originates from the internal erosion of the principle of Legitimation of knowledge" (PC 65). In such a situation, universities lose their speculative legitimizing function. Instead of producing scientists (as in creative minds) they produce professors; i.e.: they are more intent at transmitting established knowledge.

Enlightenment's project was to found legitimacy of science on "the autonomy of dialogants (interlocutors) engaged in ethical, social, and political practice" (PC 66). But this was already on shaky grounds; there is no logical connection between a claim having cognitive value and a claim having prescriptive value. A claim that is true is not necessarily prescriptive. The two obey autonomous rules of divergent competencies.

It is within this frame of reference that the postmodern situation needs to be perceived. Science can only play by its own rules; it can not legitimize the other language games (Cfr. PC 66). It not only eludes the prescriptive function, but it does not even legitimize itself.

Research and its Legitimation through performativity

The relevant questions concerning Legitimation are: “By means of what criteria does the logician define the requisite properties of an axiom? Does a model of a scientific language exist? Is this model unique? Is it verifiable? (PC 70). In other words does science (or scientific knowledge) owe its legitimacy to an internal consistent logical structure? Gödel has clearly shown that within arithmetic there exists: “a proposition which is neither demonstrable nor refutable within the system” (Ibid.). Thus rather than consistency with the system one has to look to consensus among a community of dialogants concerning language games [“consensus entre les experts” (PC 71)].

Thus instead of a universal metalanguage, we are faced with: “a plurality of formal systems capable of arguing denotative claims” (PC 72). The criterion to which today Legitimation anchors itself is efficiency: not the truth, the just or the beautiful... A technique is deemed good by reason of its producing better and more efficiently. This stems directly from the time of the industrial revolution of the late 18th century. Efficiency and performance become the language of science as well as of wealth.

For these reasons institutions are not financed to produce disinterested knowledge but knowledge aimed towards application. In fact institutions become instruments of maximization of efficiency. Truth is not the objective but performativity, i.e.: the best ratio between input and output. Both idealistic and humanistic narratives of Legitimation of science are abandoned for the new one: Power. “One does not buy scientists, technicians and instruments to know the truth but to increase power” (PC 76).

But does power have legitimizing force? Our age appears to think so: “[Power] legitimizes science and law by their efficiency, and efficiency by science and law. It itself

is self-legitimizing...” (PC 77). Thus we observe an inversion of science and technique. Performativity takes precedence over knowledge. Institutions justify their existence by their performativity” (PC 78).

Education and its Legitimation through performativity

The second component of education is its transmission. It is on this issue that Lyotard focuses his attention at this point. He does not hesitate to state that the criterion of performativity is the determinative aspect of this component.

The questions of transmission are several: “Who transmits? What? To Whom? By What support? In what Form? With what effect?” (PC 78). Academic politics is shaped by answers to these questions. When performativity becomes the criterion, Higher Education presents itself quite simply as a subsystem of the social system, and it is subject to its rules. The objective of Higher Education is to provide the means for the optimal performativity of society. Its aim would then be to provide competencies necessary for society. These competencies are of two kinds: the ones destined to face world competition; and here Lyotard lists a whole series of expertise based principally on information science. The idea being that these “experts would accelerate research progress in other fields of knowledge” (PC 79).

The other stems from the idea that Higher Education must continue to provide competencies aimed at ‘maintaining its internal cohesion’. In previous times this was made up by the “construction and expansion of a model of life, which legitimized often the narrative of emancipation” (PC 79). But within the context of deligitimation (i.e.: postmodernism) “universities and institutions of Higher Education are already urged to

provide competencies and not ideas” (Ibid.). This means more physicians, more professors of various disciplines, more engineers, administrators, etc... The transmission of knowledge in se is no longer deemed destined of forming: “an elite capable of guiding the nation towards emancipation” (PC 79/80)

To Whom? The [postmodern] student has substantially changed and will continue to change. Gone are the days where he/she was the beacon of social change and emancipation that came out of the elite schools. Since the democratization (some, but not Lyotard, would say proletarianization) of Higher Education which has opened its doors to all, and has become cheaper, was pushed by the ideal of emancipation. But, paradoxically, it looks very little the performative institution that it was envisaged to be.

Through its function of professionalization Higher Education continues to address two bodies of students and a third one which lacks a definite character. The first one continues to be constituted by the “professional intelligentsia” and the second by the “technical intelligentsia”. A third category of students is constituted by the unemployed, non-assimilated [elements] by the statistics of employment demand. They constitute, despite themselves, as addressee of the transmission of knowledge.

Beyond these functions, the University will become the locus of the “recycling” or “of permanent education”. In other words it will become a place where education will be imparted à la carte to adults already present in the work force. The idea is that it will better their competencies and advancement in the work place; but also to broaden the horizon of their professional lives (Cfr. PC 82).

In all events the principle of performativity has for effect “the subordination of institutions of Higher Education to [political] power”. Since knowledge would no longer

be moved by ideas of emancipation or “realization of the idea” [Cfr. Hegel], it will no longer be under the responsibility of scientists and students. As such, to put the matter bluntly, all the 60’s talk of autonomy of universities becomes empty noise (my interpretation).

What: “The essence of the transmissible is constituted by an organized stock of knowledge” (PC 83). This will not be transmitted, however, in the traditional mode “through the live voice of the professor facing silent students” (Ibid.). But as much as knowledge can be encoded in the language of informatics, teaching will be “entrusted to machines”. What will be taught is likely to be the use of terminals, i.e.: the language of informatics. Thus an elementary education of informatics would have to become obligatory as a Higher Propaedeutic: just as learning a foreign language.

As long as power is the finality of modern societies, classical education loses its relevance. The objective is not whether the knowledge that is imparted or acquired is true or not, but whether it is useful or not. In other words, is it marketable, and in terms of power, is it effective?

The one who will have advantage is the one who knows how to access information; to be able to connect a “series of data kept until then independently”. Thus speed becomes of the essence: “La vitesse en est une propriété” (PC 85).

Since connectivity is fundamental, interdisciplinarity characterizes the future of knowledge. Traditionally “departments” of knowledge were jealously kept apart. In Humboldtian perspective, each science occupied a place in a system crowned by speculation; encroachment between disciplines was seen as confusion; collaboration was only possible at the speculative level, i.e.: “in the heads of philosophers” (PC 86).

Interdisciplinarity belongs to the age of deligitimation. Knowledge does not need a meta-language, a meta-narrative to formulate its purpose or its use.

Another aspect of postmodern knowledge is that it becomes the product of a team: performativity is enhanced by team work.

Conclusion: The postmodern science as research on instabilities

The postmodern science is neither about determined prediction nor about total system control. It does not deal with the known but with the unknown. Legitimacy of knowledge is not based on performance but on difference understood as paralogy (Cfr. 97). The objective is the creation of ideas, not system creation!!

If the era of Legitimation by grand narratives is over, and even though performativity has had the function of legitimizing force in the postmodern world, Lyotard thinks that legitimacy can only be based on paralogy: literally beyond reason [from the Greek *para* (beyond) and *logos* (reason)]. What this translates into is a constant changing of language games and going beyond established norms. What we usually term thinking outside the box. But in effect isn't this the very essence of the history of science?

The Differend. Phrases in Dispute

This is an unusual book not in content but also in form. From its dedication page (aAMma) through the Preface to the end, it is unlike most books. It reminds one of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* both in form and content. This is not entirely coincidental because Lyotard makes frequent references to this latter work as well as to the other works of Wittgenstein.

The problem of summarizing the work come precisely from the form of the book: it is an assemblage of 264 paragraphs (in the English translation) sequentially linked but divided under seven headings: The Differend; The Referent; The Name; Presentation; Result; Obligation; Genre; Norm; the Sign of History. Each of these quasi-chapter headings includes lengthy discussions on classical philosophical paradoxes and problems drawn from the works of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Gertrude Stein, Levinas, etc...which Lyotard calls notices. They are at the heart of each topic (or phrases as he himself call them) discussed in the book.

Since it would be meaningless to summarize each paragraph, I will attempt to capture the essence of the book by discussing its main ideas as contained in the idea of the Differend.

In the Preface, which is itself divided into fourteen parts, Lyotard explains the main intents of the work. First of all the Title: What is a Differend [in French: Differend]. "A Differend...would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment to both arguments: One side's legitimacy does not simply the other's lack of legitimacy" (D. xi). This is not simply a matter of legal litigation as will be clear further in Lyotard's exposition.

What Lyotard wants to show is that “Phrases from heterogeneous regimens cannot be translated from one into the other” (D. xiii). His intention is “to examine cases of Differend, and to find the rules for the heterogeneous genres of discourse that bring about these cases” (D. xiv).

What is a Differend? Lyotard identifies the meaning of this word by distinguishing it from the word “plaintiff”. A “plaintiff” is someone who has incurred damages and who disposes of the means to prove it” (D. 8). In the absence of the means to prove damages incurred one becomes a victim. It is, however, the responsibility of the plaintiff to establish the reality of the facts: “Reality is always the plaintiff’s responsibility” (Ibid.). The defense, on the other hand, needs only “to refute the argumentation and to impugn the proof by a counter example” (D. 9).

The Differend is “the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim” (ibid.). A case of Differend occurs where plaintiff and defense confront each other in opposing idioms. The definition of a Differend rests precisely on the fact that of the inability to prove, i.e.: being reduced to silence.

Lyotard illustrates a case of a Differend with the paradox or fallacy of the gas chamber’s existence by Faurisson (a holocaust denier). The paradox roughly goes like this: no one has seen anyone dying in the gas chamber, no one has experienced the gas chamber to tell its existence, and ergo the gas chamber never existed. [Those who have survived the concentration camps give their testimony only from hearsay, not from experience].

This kind of argument is comparable and in a sense parallels the one Lyotard presents earlier in the text as “Protagoras notice”. Protagoras and his student Euathlus had

agreed that if and when Euathlus wins his first case he should pay Protagoras. Euathlus came back to Protagoras to be told by Protagoras that he needs to pay him since he has won his case (against Protagoras). This in many ways echoes Kafka's *The Trial*.

The Differend is put in a situation of silence. He is silenced. The survivor of the gas chamber remains silent, unable to prove his case. His silence can be interpreted in four different ways:

- i. He or she lacks the competence to address the issue at stake
- ii. The event in question never took place
- iii. Nothing can be stated about it because senseless and inexpressible
- iv. The survivor is unworthy to speak about it; it is not his/her business.

It could also be any combination of the above.

Endnotes

¹ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. 2nd revised edition. London, New York: Continuum, 1989. 2004 reprint.

² Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Reason in the Age of Science*. Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge MA, London: The MIT press, 1981. 10th printing 1998.

³ Ricoeur, Paul. *Fallible Man*. Translated by Charles A. Kelbey. New York: Fordham University Press, 1986. 6th printing 2002.

⁴ Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Translated by Emerson Buchanan. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

⁵ Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969. 11th printing 1995.

⁶ Levinas, Emmanuel. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998. 5th printing 2004.

⁷ Gutting, Gary. *Foucault: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press (USA), 2005.

⁸ Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon, 1972.

⁹ Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. [Translator's name not given]. New York: Vintage Books, 1994

¹⁰ Habermas, Jürgen. *Theory of Communicative Action*. 2 vols. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

¹¹ Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation Crisis*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.

¹² Lyotard, Jean-François. *La Condition Postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979.

¹³ Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Differend. Phrases in Dispute*. Translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

ADDITIONAL READING

The following books and articles have been of great help in understanding the primary literature that I listed in the previous page.

Books:

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1. Kathlyn Wright, "Gadamer, Hans-Georg"
2. Kenneth Baynes, "Habermas, Jürgen"
3. Gary Gutting, "Foucault, Michel"
4. John B. Thomson, "Ricoeur, Paul"
5. Robert Bernasconi, "Levinas, Emmanuel"
6. David Carroll, "Lyotard, Jean-François"