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## HERMENEUTICS

### *The World as Conversation*

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*Tempora mutatur, nos et mutamur in illis.*

[The times are changing, and we are changing with them]

The idea that things depend on the standpoint of the observer, and cannot be counted on according to the 'objective' rules of Newtonian physics, rocked people's sense of certainty.

—Joseph Kerman<sup>1</sup>

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

—T. S. Eliot, Choruses from "*The Rock*"<sup>2</sup>

The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible.<sup>3</sup>

—Albert Einstein

### PROLEGOMENA: DICTION AND PREDICTION

At the outset, it is necessary to define the word *diction* especially as it relates to prediction. Herein the word *diction* is used to identify human action and meaning. To dictate is to proclaim a reality or guiding principle as in the "dictates

of reason”—to order by the power of speech and gesture, to issue commands, to prescribe, to call into being. The word *diction* both articulates what is said and how it is said, the idea and the embodiment of it, be it ritualistic, legalistic, religious, scientific, and so on.

In this sense, diction is idologically incantatory. It manifests the fundamental magical dimension of communication to call things into being, to exert power intent in aspiration, to aspirate and breathe life into or to make things, and to make things happen through sheer manifest announcement or statement, such as naming an amount due (e.g., the bottom line of a financial statement), pronouncing a couple “man and wife,” oath taking, or a measurement that determines a winner in a competition. Insofar as knowledge is power, if you cannot say what a thing or event is (including, but not exclusive to, reducing it to a sum of measures), you do not know it. For these reasons, the simplest way to predict the future is to dictate it.

Diction (along with expression) is used by this author to articulate what is meant by the magic dimension of all communication prior to any notions of ego or separate intent versus external reception (such as misunderstanding). The word *diction* is used herein because it helps to articulate a mode of being that is not dominated by the referential metaphysics of body/mind dualism or the speech/gesture duo. The word magic is derived from the ancient Persian *mag(h)*, and it shares this root with an entire family of modern words, including make, mechanism, macho, and might. Magic is a deed. All speech has a magic dimension; to express is an exercise of power and an effort at suasive influence.

Words are deeds. Diction is self-evident, which means prior to the metaphysical (dissociating) question, “Is that what you really meant?” can be asked. Because magic does not involve any metaphysical dualism, it does not partake in referential epistemology, and therefore it cannot be wrong or inaccurate. Diction is, period. The split between literal and figural communication and the rise of rhetorical studies that focus on conflicts in interpretation occur only after the emergence of mythic, symbolic communication. A spell or curse need not be understood or even heard by its intended target, to be.

The only sense of validity existing for diction is whether it, the magic, the suasive or locutionary force, makes a difference—“works.” Hence, the powerful aspect of all messages, including forms such as mathematics, is that they are said to be objective, which is to say devoid of persuasive dimension or aspiration/intent. Statistics, for instance, can be and often are quite persuasive, meaning that they have an impact on what is to be called real and on future actions. To be suave means being tactful, diplomatic, able to gain an end, to make a difference. Similarly, diction avoids the intent/behavior and virtual language/actual speech dichotomies that mark structural modernity.

In this sense, the argument put forth in this chapter lies within the tradition of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s (1889–1951) and J. L. Austin’s (1911–1960) speech act approach to communication. Indeed this author appreciates their deconstruction of the false barrier between mere words and actual deeds.

Locution indicates a style of saying or expressing. By contrast, diction has to do more with expression insofar as it is meaningful or intelligible to an audience, as it initiates action. Diction always has style, but it is also more than style. It manifests the originating impulse of imperative. Hence, we have the meanings of “to dictate,” “dictation,” and “dictator.” Diction is thus the origination of action. The locutionary force of diction is evident in the conflict of diction/contradiction. However, because diction has to do with the intelligibility of a message to an audience, it articulates the integral dimension of communication. Thus, diction includes the audience not as a passive target to which things are done, but as an active participant in what a message means, and this fact raises the morphological nature of meaning and therefore of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is born with storytelling. Magic idolic communication resists interpretation as incantation and amuletics tend to be devoid of narrative, whereas mythic symbolic communication demands it.

Both diction and locution have hermeneutic implications, but diction goes more directly to the issue of understanding. Locution tends to focus on the sender of the message, whereas diction, insofar as it calls into being the issue of the intelligibility of a message to an audience, circumscribes the entire process of communication (the “sender,” “channel,” and “receiver” if we reiterate the received Aristotelian model) as a dynamic and integral process of semantization. Thus, diction avoids the dualism of virtual intent versus actual message. As such, an interdiction is an authoritative prohibition that is both a decree and an act. Dictum indicates a proclamation that is originary and authoritative—one that calls into being or authors a reality, which is an order of things perhaps best exemplified by the institution of the dictionary. To claim that there is such a thing as misunderstanding presupposes such an authoritative, intentional, privileged position.<sup>4</sup>

### Semantic Petrification

Harold Innis (1894–1952), Walter Ong (1912–2003), and Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980) suggest that the emergence of the printing press helped to standardize transregional versions of languages, making them official and of central importance for the execution of governing power, including official documentation. In the process, regional dialects were thus marginalized. A consequence has been the establishment of modern nation-states. We see this most clearly during the consolidation of nation-states in Europe and the formation of national identities within their colonial holdings. The imposition of a colonial language as the officially recognized language for government and business exemplifies metadiction. Along with it comes bureaucratic reason.

With the invention of the keyboard and the categorical imperative that the filing cabinet constitutes, power is organized around a single code (such as Dewey’s decimal system), enabling institutional memory, which is the essence of

modern institutionalization. Also a signed document presentiates a contractual imperative and manifests the basis of modern authoritative rule governance based on linear time, not speech as Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) claims.<sup>5</sup> Initially, typeset documentation was pursued under the belief that it renders documents difficult to change and/or forge.

The contractual attitude is central to the modern desire for permanence of relationships, of predictable order. Also, privileged priority is given to the current possessor of documents—that person who can produce them when need be, especially those texts that exhibit a discernable signature. In fact, so-called postmodern readings, reversals, puns, and re-orderings presuppose the institution of the modern text as available to memory, imagination, and/or the senses.

Although dictionaries are authoritative in their function to establish limits to conceptualization and thought, enable formal bureaucratic functioning and identities, and enforce a common language, they are also always out-of-date; the boundaries of meaning are living and originate in natural speech acts and therefore are in constant flux. Yet the more complete systems of formal education become, the more dictionaries function to slow linguistic invention and innovations (difference).

The originary source of vital meaning is not to be found in conservative institutions. Quite the contrary, dictionaries constitute the graveyards of semantic innovation. By contrast, the originary source is found in living semantic fields, which such institutions as dictionaries and filing systems seek to control, standardize, and authorize. The goal of mass education is discipline and standardization. We are told that in the “best” schools, children wear uniforms and have common hairstyles and book bags. As they mature, even styles of learned expression are corralled by standard stylebooks like that issued by the American Psychological Association. Using the wrong format is grounds for having one’s ideas dismissed before they are read. This is taken to extremes in the case of computer files and incompatible formats. Communication is thus restricted, and this process is seen as efficient, which is to say “good.” Under these cultural conditions, good means the form of communication that is unobstructed and focused—narrow and, therefore, predictable in perspective.

Thus, we have what we might call wild natural language that wanders outside the lines of perspective, versus the transcendental effort to domesticate and press it into the service of uniformity for the sake of efficiency in the execution of streamlined rule governing (hegemonic) power interest. This is the essence of modern utilitarian pragmatics. Commands are given, and efficiency means the followers understand and execute without hesitation. The scope of alternatives is clearly and narrowly structured. If you enter the wrong command, the program will not function. Human qualities of intellect such as surmising, suppositional conjecturing, theoretical inferring, and skipping logical and empirical steps are eliminated. Computers are inflexible. Either a computer recognizes a command you enter or it does not. Computers cannot make educated guesses. Yet they also cannot offer an opinion about the commands. Thus,

we find computers to be the best model minorities, and we also find Friedrich Nietzsche’s (1844–1900) assessment of language to be more true than ever.<sup>6</sup> As he says, “I may now proceed to the surmise that consciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for communication; that from the start it was needed and useful only between human beings (particularly between those who command and those who obey).”<sup>7</sup>

Ironically, Nietzsche also deconstructs the status of language as being obedient to some external reality in a referential relationship, stating that consciousness is “a net of communication.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, language is not merely a slave to intentions or to attempted validity in terms of the referential theory of truth. Rather, it may speak us, the “human” into being, as Michel Foucault (1926–1984) argues, not the other way around.<sup>9</sup> The most human of qualities—the ability to create—occurs precisely when we escape the predestined outcomes of being programmed.

## LANGUAGE AS REPRESENTATION

Representative status leads to the delimitation of the field represented. But because the semantic field is in flux and resists institutionalized standardization, authority is a contingent, even precarious state. For that reason, those institutions that claim to be representative, from politics to science to dictionaries, are highly reactionary and defensive. In mundane terms, children get punished for *improper* spelling and *bad* grammar. Authorities thus deploy methods of control, including sanctions and punishments to maintain the order they desire, and by which their authoritative status is assured. This is why the word *dictionary* is defined within dictionaries as a reference book.

The referential nature indicates that a dictionary is self-definitive, meaning that it posits itself as the most accurate and real presentation of true meaning—the correct source of proper understanding. But dictionaries are not the moment of origination as source, not the invisible out of which the visible emerges. Instead source here comes to mean the end, not the beginning; the presumptive final word in disputes over linguistic meaning and usage. As a source book, a dictionary presumes to be the final arbiter of correct usage. Thus, the notion of source is reversed in modernity, as the modern obsession with fixation renders the subjectively contingent, spontaneously creative usage of language to be wrong. A good example of the resistance of unpredictable language-use to institutionalization (which makes art interesting) is poetry, including rap-music lyrics.

According to the culture of modern learning, what a knower must first learn is the official code that dictates how to name and how to read names. For instance, during the 18th century in Western Europe, we find a drive toward hierarchical ordination and the concept of reason being equated with

hierarchy. Later, in the mid-18th century, the Swedish botanist and taxonomist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) introduced a binomial nomenclature establishing the rules of rank order coding of biological specimens according to the generalizability of taxonomic characteristics.<sup>10</sup> Manifesting the general positivistic obsession of his time with fixing structure and systematization, Linnaeus saw the source of knowledge as being a sort of disciplined bookkeeping, a standardized mode of classification. His binomial nomenclature has been expanded into the familiar: animal kingdom, phylum, genus, species, family, order, and such infraspecific ranks for plants as subspecies, variety, subvariety, forma, and subforma. More recently, international governing bodies have established semi-Linnaean structures such as the “tree thinking” naming procedure for phylogenetics, and so forth.

The point is that with Linnaeus (and the encyclopedists<sup>11</sup> in general), not just a new way of naming is instituted, but a new ideology emerges, constituting a new appropriate way of seeing the universe and thinking about it according to a set of principles that promote categorization, order, and organization. The new way of seeing and knowing was to be in the form of categories based on preestablished judgments, or what hermeneuts call *prejudgments*. The referential validity of this procedural perception presumes that reality manifests a concordant and inherent hierarchical pattern of resemblances (within the biological universe, indeed within all the universe), which is seen as rational, meaningful, and predictable. Hence, we can discern not just an anthropomorphic, but a strong cultural bias built into the Linnaean code, and all modified versions of it. That bias is more specifically a Western European version of anthropomorphism.

The point of the example of Linnaean nomenclature is to demonstrate the close relationship between the idolic power of language in naming and what we call knowing. Conception and perception are intimately related, if not mutually effecting. This relationship constitutes the core of culture. To know what a thing is is not just to know its name, but to name it according to its inherent characteristics. Thus, the name is logical, which is to say that it logically follows from the characteristics that constitute the nature of the thing. Herein lays the referential validity presumed in the indicative name and the credibility of the name-sayer as a knower. Thus, the dictionary has the status of not only dictating, but of being a primary or basic reference—a source to be cited as an authority. The question “What is it?” is answered when the phenomenon is “found in the encyclopedic reference.” If it cannot be so referenced, one cannot say that one knows what it is. It is a “new species,” one “never before seen,” except for the indigenous people with their unscientific name for it, which does not count.

Thus, naming has a magical dimension even, and perhaps especially, in science. Some magic proves to be more powerful than other kinds, a fact born out by the current mass extinction of other cultures, worlds and languages. Naming is authoring in the manner of appellation. To know is to know the rank-ordered place of a thing within the kingdom.

In the dictionary and encyclopedia, we find the institutions of recorded fact (things already done), repositories of language, and culture construed as tradition in the antiquarian sense, not as lifeworld. The museum emerged about the same time as these specifically cultural institutions (the dictionary and encyclopedia), and it shares the same essential notion of knowledge as categorical ordination/definition. Order comes to be equated with reason and knowledge. This style of naming—clumps of taxonomic characteristics as nomenclature or code, presumes reality to be comprised of levels based on the process of perceiving and grouping similarities among morphological variance: rational organization. It has proved to be a culture-specific style of knowing or procedure of seeing (homological convergence), indeed a sub-cultural style based in Western, more specifically Aristotelian stylistics. This style has great influence via appellation on those who categorize, name, and describe.

## THE POWER OF DEFINITION

The word *reference* refers to the privilege of defining the referential truth of language. This power construct presumes language to not be referential, but rather the foundation of thinking and communicating. Thus, Edward Sapir (1884–1939), Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941), Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Derrida, and other proponents of the famed *linguistic turn* in hermeneutic studies, what amounts to a form of reductionism that has been called *lingualism* by Eric Kramer,<sup>12</sup> presume a ground even while denying it. The most conservative of thought politics is actually embraced by the notion of *Dasein*, for the ideology of lingualism presumes to claim that no reality can exist beyond language. This is why Fredric Jameson (1934–) correctly calls language as so conceived a “prison-house.”<sup>13</sup> For *Dasein*, there is no escaping the dictatorship of the encyclopedia. The linguistic perspectivism of the language one is born into becomes not enabling, but strictly blinding. The dictionary constitutes and institutes not only the proper form of the correct language *sui generis*, but the proper status of language as normative conceptualization without reflection; that is as a *causa sui* of thought. No play is possible. According to lingualism, there is no conceivable thought outside language. Innovation is also inconceivable because even purely accidental linguistic anomalies are rendered completely valueless and incomprehensible. Of course this theory of lingualism is demonstrably false as one traces the birth of new languages from mere variance of accent to fragmented dialects, to full-blown daughter languages. But it is just such play, such uncertainty and openness to accident and innovation, that bastions of truth seek to eliminate. For absolutists, the truth, including the truth of intent and meaning, cannot be merely contingent.

Official language thus becomes more than mere *status quo* in some mundane political sense. Rather, it becomes the possibility of thinking and communicating in the most privileged sense of metaphysical primacy. Metaphysics becomes the basis of reality, for whoever defines what is real defines the limits to human experience, including what is knowable. According to Heidegger, Isocrates was correct: Proper language use becomes equal to proper thinking. Language is the origin of the possibility of thought, what cognitivists call *mental programming*. But where does such programming originate? Isocrates and many others in the school of social constructivism would argue socialization. But Noam Chomsky (1928–), in his biological reductionism of language, claims that linguistic structures are nothing less than innate (an irony is that, in his political writings, Chomsky is also a radical champion of free will without apparently seeing this contradiction).<sup>14</sup> The prison house of language is thus not merely deterministic, but predetermined as it is constructed of genetic building blocks! If this were so, not only would new languages be impossible, but the metalinguistic ability to switch languages at will would be impossible, and, furthermore, propaganda could never be tested in a nonlinguistic (*qua* materialistic) fashion. Jürgen Habermas (1929–) makes a similar point in his critique of the neo-Heideggerian prison house.<sup>15</sup>

As a magic book, a dictionary is not merely referential, but idolic. If one accepts the ideology of the linguistic turn, then the dictionary defines the limits to correct thinking and reality. This is why dictionaries have the status of being the authority to which one turns when seeking the one correct, true way of expressing and intending. The act of turning to, to submitting to the authority of the dictionary, is enforced by powers who claim that one cannot communicate well unless one conforms. The act of turning to is also submissive. Those who do not submit, who do not surrender their voices and minds, and who do so not out of ignorance or accident, but out of open resistance (such as hip-hop artists, poets, and philosophers), are seen as dangerous. They are often feared and hated. “Why can’t you just speak English?” is the retort of those who fear nonconformists. Because they talk differently, as naives, ignoramuses, or rebellious artists, their message may be rejected out of hand and as out of hand. As such, the dictionary is the final reference, and as the standard, it sits in judgment of merely contingent (actual) speech (*la parole*) that exists within time and history. But this is precisely where art lives, because art always seeks to be original. Art is therefore not a myth-like claim to apodictic, absolute positivism. Art does not presume to have no history, but instead seeks to make it. Styles change. This is why Edmund Husserl’s (1859–1938) critique of scientism is so radical, because he refers to modern science as merely the “Galilean style” of epistemological expression.<sup>16</sup> This is the reason fascists take a deep unliking of Jewish scholars like Einstein (1879–1955) and Husserl (and later Derrida), because they all happen to be Jewish and they dare to toy if not with relativism, then certainly with pluralism.

Transcendental, dictatorial judgment involves nothing less than the right to speak, to be published, to be taken seriously as worthy of being attended to as a mind, an intellect. Those who do not conform are dismissed not only as deviant, but because they are different. In highly restrictive societies, being different is the same as being dangerous. This is not the case in all societies, as we see in many primitive societies, where uncanny and strange behavior such as schizophrenics may display can lead to great status.<sup>17</sup> But within modernity, such deviation is defined as diseased because it causes dis-ease among the mainstream, and therefore its status is entirely negative. Handbooks and manuals are all about the proper patterns of operation, of manipulation, including the operation of thought. If one does not “think right,” one is deemed retarded in development or insane. In the modern mental-rational world, such a judgment constitutes the exercise of a profound power. It also presumes a transcendental entitlement.

Thus, the Enlightenment philosophers, who saw themselves as dramatically radical in their assault on irrational religious power, are shown to have merely displaced one intolerant hierarchy of knowledge/power with another. Their revolution did not change the form of the pyramidal structure of power, but instead it has amounted to a displacement of one elite class by another. Their revolution was one for dominance, not for the restructuring of the dominance/subordinance structure. This is clearly demonstrated by the explicit intentions expressed by August Comte (1798–1857) and Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) to create a new positive religion ruled by a priestly class of social engineers who have the knowledge to create the ideal utopian order.<sup>18</sup> Francois Lyotard (1924–1998) critiqued such a class and its power in terms of its self-appraisal as the definitive foundation of “expert knowledge.”<sup>19</sup>

The new positive religion uncritically adopts the Church of Rome’s social structure, and it also presumes the Church’s notion that one can be absolutely positive about what is true and what is false, and that such positive knowledge should dictate all. Only their methods differ. The privileges that follow from each pyramid of power are practically identical in form. This comparison exposes the radicality of the Enlightenment to be something of a sham because, within most religious milieu, miraculous experience is not dictated by socioeconomic privilege. Quite the contrary, most often it is the lowliest of the low in socioeconomic status (SES) that purport to have exceptional spiritual powers and experiences—experiences that are penultimately religious in tenor. In contrast, higher education, including access to the hallowed halls of the academy and commerce, is much predicated on family position and wealth, which is to say, extracurricular powers.

The encyclopedia and dictionary are the new Bibles. These tomes are, within the modern field of knowledge, upheld as more positively true than the original, which has been downgraded to the status of myth. In fact, the dictionary tropes all writing, including religious texts, for they are all written in language, and the interpretation/translation of such texts is authoritative only to the extent that it accords with the dictates of dictionaries. The authoritative

translation of the *Vedas* or *Old Testament*, or the *I Ching*, is in the hands of linguistic experts. The force of language is sometimes so powerful that exponents of a faith may claim that it is impossible to translate a sacred text, as is the case with the *Koran*. The conservative nature of not letting go the sacred tongue is demonstrated by many religious communities that insist on teaching their young ancient ("dead") languages such as Hebrew and Latin.

Dictionaries are the transcendental authority. Those who can read the original text are held as the authoritative experts, be it the language of ancient Greek, Sanskrit, or mathematics. The intent cannot be separated from the language of original expression. Scientists often claim that their ideas defy translation from mathematics into some other language. Going well beyond the hackneyed phrase "the medium is the message," such textual purists insist that the language of the message is the message so that the linguistic turn is most strongly upheld, ironically so, by mathematical science. Thus, the dictionary does not point beyond itself toward something real or proper, but rather presents itself as the final authority, as the very ground of being. Its paternalistic power requires one to turn to it for instruction and assurances concerning proper meaning, spelling, translation, and usage of words. Accordingly, the dictionary, which is derived from diction, presumes to purvey clarity as in clear enunciation of meaning. This father authority clarifies ambiguities by means of fixing distinctions and enhancing permanence in the one and only way.

Another irony emerges. The irony here is that, insofar as Habermas insists that some prejudices grounded in language and tradition can be overcome, he is actually defending a traditional notion of positive objectivity that is historically situated within the Enlightenment movement, the same movement that initiated the attempt to record truth in dictionaries and encyclopedic discourse, the same movement that attempted to institute a scientific worldview as an insurmountable record with its own highly restrictive locution (nomenclature).

## THE IRONY OF PERMANENCE-EXPOSING FLUX

Dictionaries and encyclopedias not only emerged during the great blossoming of positivism, but they are essential expressions of the positivistic desire to eliminate uncertainty. However, the dictionary contains within itself its own undoing. As a break against contingency, dictionaries and encyclopedias find themselves perpetually, permanently out-of-date. The cultural practice of, indeed obsession with, recording truths has enabled the West to do hermeneutics in the form of textual comparison. What is revealed is relativism, a constant change across the same texts that promised to fix truth once and for all. For instance, a 40-year-old encyclopedia or natural science textbook is fascinating not so much for its truths, but for how it exposes the progress of science. Science must confront the *aporia* that truth is constantly getting truer. Of all

the fields of learning, the natural sciences are at once the most positively true harbingers of being, the most definitive revealers of "nature's secrets," and at the same time advancing faster than all other fields of human inquiry. The positive notion of progress undermines the positive notion of epistemology. But this revelation is made possible only because of recording—because of the advent of institutional memory that enables a person to survey change over long periods of time.

What is revealed, according to Thomas Kuhn (1922–1996), are paradigmatic revolutions.<sup>20</sup> Flux is thus recognizable only within a field of semipermanent traces. Kuhn's work has proved somewhat disturbing to the positive sciences as he demonstrates that their own writings reveal dramatic changes in conception and perception, and that their sense of the real is a product of time and community. One consequence has been that positivism had to reinterpret itself and assume a new identity, which some now call *postpositivism*.

This is why those who insist on the existence of time as a constant deferral, such as postmodernists, are perceived to be nothing less than dangerous for they suggest that the clear ground of truth and established meaning is a quagmire, and that this is demonstrated by the most positivistic of discourses available—natural science. The most ahistorical of all things, nature, proves elusive, mysterious, seductive, and a source of endless inspiration. There is always something more to learn, and each new truth forces the reinterpretation of all previous truths. Newtonian mechanics, for instance, once regarded as universal, has since been reinterpreted as a scalar frame. Its entire status has shifted. The institutions that seek firm ground turn out to be only momentary patches maintained through social sanction within a larger field of change. While their conventional authority lasts, such textual institutions enable the privileging of those who conform to them most. But to the postmodernist, privilege is reversed so that the hierarchy of language over speech by scientific linguists who strive to establish the transcending knowledge of the structures of languages, dictionaries, end up tracing changes more than permanent meanings. This is called the irony of the postmodern condition.

Given the referential relationship the reference book claims to have to some other reality such as the field of natural language (as Derrida might say), authority is a process of continual tracing and attempting to fixate small domains of life in order to establish, defend, and conserve convention. But as convention, no natural language need be referenced. The dictionary becomes the truth of language not as a referential or mimetic replica, but as the source itself. Such power of establishment, such credibility, must be defended. Defense of convention constitutes the conservative values of *status quo* in the interest of those who are privileged by the current order, and in a less sinister sense, in the interest of the efficiency of communally shared understanding. In other words, dictionaries serve within modernity to authorize membership in and to maintain conceptual community, but at the same time we can trace the meanings of words through editions and establish change.

Another irony emerges. Writing gives us history of a particularly interesting sort. In its goal to fix facts, writing ends up expressing change—not as a single text, but as a survey of texts, as a shifting discourse. Within the integral implicate field, the meaning of each text changes as new ones appear. Thus, books and ideas once perceived as being *avant-garde* soon become dated. This becomes the unintended consequence of recording, for what ends up being recorded becomes unintentional history, the history of science and of language and, as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) notes, the history of the idea of history itself.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the attempt of conservative impulses to enforce intention and interest ends up deconstructing itself.

Dictionaries constitute hermeneutic technology invented to enhance, consolidate, and stabilize fields of common sense, common reality, and common meaning, which form linguistic community. They are a typical expression of the modern obsession with positive epistemology and structuration. There can be dictionaries and manuals of gestures, etiquette, language, ritual, cuisine, warfare, and so on. Dictionaries formalize socialization and enculturation. Formal education is thus very much an interaction with standardized and standardizing texts produced to assure and massify a common outlook, if not experience. Formal education is disciplined inculcation of various lexicons that demarcate the horizon of known reality conceptualized as enduring system. What was once vocal and therefore changeable, as in vocabulary, becomes recorded, forming a more rigid institutional mentality that includes sanctions to promote and maintain firm ground.

Even the search for knowledge is preordained—pre-understood to be, by necessity, a logical progression often referred to as a research agenda. Ironically, discovery is thus controlled and organized. We even have the contradiction of controlled experimentation. Exploratory research is now guided by a version of knowledge that is expected to progress in an orderly style, in the conceptual format of prediction: hypothesis testing usually in the interest of commercial and/or military application. What we have is, as Habermas points out, not so much discovery, but planned research and development guided by certain ideological agendas, so that the realm of reality/knowledge has contours that manifest preestablished and narrow perspectives.<sup>22</sup> For example, the obsession with grant writing, which has become essential to maintaining a career in the sciences and puts monetary interests in charge of the direction knowledge shall take, is a prime example of how knowledge production is dictated by extra-scientific desires, specifically instrumental rather than practical or emancipatory forms of reason.

It is no mere coincidence that the word *interest* also indicates the compounding of money in the act of rapacious usury. Although discovery has an element of serendipity to it, interest indicates the expectation of a return on investment. Development is highly structured and incremental whereas discovery happens outside the box and, as such, is emancipatory. *Emancipation* here means not only political liberation, but, at a more fundamental level, liberation from one's

initial perspective or horizon. One consequence of such a shift in horizons is that new possibilities come into view. This is the difference between exploration and research and development. Development and progress both presume a final goal. Discovery may have hypotheses and hunches that are validated, but there is also always a dimension of uncertainty, of the invisible out of which genuinely new knowledge emerges quite unexpectedly. Exploration makes no preconceived judgments. Development is merely the extension of the same with slight innovation. In research and development, a problem is posited *a priori*, which then guides all inquiry. For most, profitability preordains the direction of inquiry.

Hypothetical thinking prestructures all discovery. The farther one wanders from the confines of the laboratory environment, as in doing what some social scientists call *naturalistic* observation, the less reliable the knowledge generated is said to be. But that is precisely because every day is unique. If the lifeworld were to fall under the conditions of control preferred in the laboratory setting, it would be a form of fascism beyond imagination. But for positive social engineers who seek to institute a utopia that for them would be a world without uncertainty (or anxiety), this is precisely the goal. The new developmental lifestyle embodies a cultural bias that defines change in quantitative, rather than qualitative, ways, and as such, change that is pre-predicative because it is premised on a belief in an infinite line of identical values (numerical atomism) held together by causation. As such, it manifests what Nietzsche meant when he talked about the myth of sameness articulated by numbers and that supports the cultural values of regularity, uniformity, and standardization—values that form the core of modern methodical research and development, including reliably redundant experience.

What is exposed is the myth of sameness when ironically, “in fact,” no two things are “the same.” Nietzsche puts it this way:

The invention of the laws of numbers was made on the basis of the error, dominant even from the earliest times, that there are identical things (but in fact nothing is identical with anything else); at least that there are things (but there is no “thing”).<sup>23</sup>

Elsewhere he argues in anticipation of, and quite possibly as inspiration for, what physicist David Bohm calls the “implicate order,”<sup>24</sup> but without the metaphysics of a myth of unity; instead observing the flux of reality which both supports the variant inconsistency that atomism clumsily represents, but in a consistently streaming, dissipative manner. In a passage pregnant with insights from the relationship of free will to inconsistency to stating the “linguistic turn” in no uncertain terms (even grasping the essence of modernity as linguistic fragmentation leading to quantification in a more sophisticated sense than Innis, McLuhan, or Ong would later call *typographic man*), here we find Nietzsche again insisting that the sameness of identical things is nothing more than a myth of language and ultimately a threat to free will.

Our usual imprecise mode of observation takes a group of phenomena as one and calls it a fact: between this fact and another fact it imagines in addition an empty space, it *isolates* every fact. In reality, however, all our doing and knowing is not a succession of facts and empty spaces but a continuous flux. Now, belief in freedom of will is incompatible precisely with the idea of a continuous, homogeneous, undivided, indivisible flowing: it presupposes that *every individual action is isolate and indivisible*; it is an *atomism* in the domain of willing and knowing.—Just as we understand characters only imprecisely, so do we also facts: we speak of identical characters, identical facts: *neither exists*. Now, we praise and censure, however, only under this false presupposition that there are *identical* facts, that there exists a graduated order of *classes* of facts which corresponds to a graduated world-order: thus we *isolate*, not only the individual fact, but also again groups of supposedly identical facts (good, evil, sympathetic, envious actions, etc.)—in both cases erroneously.—The word and the concept are the most manifest ground for our belief in this isolation of groups of actions: we do not only *designate* things with them, we think originally that through them we grasp the *true* in things. Through words and concepts we are still continually misled into imagining things as simpler than they are, separate from one another, indivisible, each existing in and for itself. A philosophical mythology lies concealed in *language*. . . . Belief in freedom of will—that is to say in *identical* facts and in *isolated* facts—has in language its constant evangelist and advocate.<sup>25</sup>

The faith that there are identical things, born of the value of truth as good and uncertainty or untruth as bad, truth beheld as the act of designation in the form of signs, this faith also grounds the so-called grounded necessity of logic for,

*Logic* too depends on presuppositions that do not correspond to anything in the real world, for example on the presupposition that there are identical things, that the same thing is identical at different points of time; but this science came into existence through the opposite belief (that such conditions do obtain in the real world). It is the same with *mathematics*, which would certainly not have come into existence if one had known from the beginning that there was in nature no exactly straight line, no real circle, no absolute measure.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, in the manner of David Hume's (1711–1776) deconstruction of causation, one could argue that there are no lines at all, straight, or curved, in the real (*qua* material) world. The dream of Pythagoras is religious in nature. To call language the *putative science*, refers to the arrogance of the human over all other animals and the human confidence that in and only in language one possesses knowledge of the world. The modern Saussurean argument that language is not magically outside time, that concepts and names of things as in the sense of *aeternae veritates*, as something transcendently constant, is not rooted through time, is not true, but that, ironically, what is true about language is its conven-

tionality thus strikes terror in the hearts of firm believers and, more important, believers in the firmness of stated facts. For the transience of conventionalism dissolves the ground. Behind the apparent indifference of logic is the fear and defensive exploitation of power in an effort to defend discourse/reality. Thus, the young are taught that a real dissertation can appear in only one medium and more precisely only in a certain acceptable vocabulary. This is a form of corruption for Nietzsche. This is why he warns, "The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently."<sup>27</sup> Consequent to the notion of a world that is conventional interpretation is the displacement of truth with power, or, as in Aristotle and Bacon, nothing less than their *identity*, because as, "All things are subject to interpretation whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth."<sup>28</sup>

What is meant by the meaningfulness of being or of something being meaningful is that it is truthful. But this is the truth of perspectivism because there is no meaning without interpretation and there is no interpretation without a perspective. Thus, there is no knowledge without a perspective. The signform of any expression is a perspective—interpretation. Insofar as knowledge requires consciousness, it must be perspectival because consciousness is a perspective.

## THE IRONY OF THE STUBBORN FACT OF RELATIVISM

There have been modernistic attempts to create methods of interpretation that can aid in the positivistic dream to methodically prove the existence of only one world, one interpretation that is legitimate, real, and true and to devalue all others as false, even insane. The effort is to render, once and for all, the one correct—meaning valid and reliable—version of any text. Various methods have been tried, including Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) Biblical exegesis (*Allgemeine Hermeneutik*), Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833–1911) historical analytics (*Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften*), and Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) psychoanalyses of texts and authors, tracing the formal structures of binary oppositions within a narrative, and surveying audience responses. Some of the most celebrated attempts to create a positive method for interpretation are those of Emilio Betti (1890–1968) and his "scientific hermeneutics," the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss' (1908–) "scientific interpretation," the pentad of Kenneth Burke (1897–1993), and the literary criticism of E. D. Hirsch (1928–).

Due to the incredible hegemonic grip positivism has on modern societies, which stresses that uncertainty is nothing other than unprofitable and anxiety causing, scholars are under irrational peer pressure to present reliable observations, which means that they can be systematically mechanically replicated. To fail to conform to this ideal of conformity is to fail to be scholarly. Thus, the

idea of method is an attempt to institute a programmatic way of observing and recording that any trained person can repeat. The training in methodology constitutes the socialization of convention. Being of independent mind has thus been eliminated from the culture of scholarship. Just as certain political movements seek to narrow and identify themselves as the true meaning of patriotism, so too conservative positivism has usurped the notion of scholarship and thinking. But as Heidegger argued, mechanical replication or automatic reckoning is quite the opposite of contemplation.<sup>29</sup> Rendering reliable and methodical results presumes trained, reliable repetition, rather than creativity. The goal of positivism is standardized uniformity. This pragmatic value is the major reason that engineering has displaced fundamental science within modernity. If it cannot be applied for some sort of positive happiness or profit, knowledge is deemed useless if not suspect. An irony is that those who invent methods do not do so methodically, but instead experimentally. The origin of geometry was not given geometrically. The same is true of all systems of thinking. Science is not a scientific product, but instead an invention of philosophical reflection.

Two famous efforts at defeating psychologistic and historicistic relativism in literary studies is the school of New Criticism that became the predominant approach among British and U.S. academics during the mid-20th century and the Geneva School in Europe. Although both schools of criticism are positivistic, they are very different. The Geneva School, which predates the New Critics, postulates a form of criticism that believes that an author's mind is coherent and fixed within the texts she or he makes and that through "intimate study" of such texts good criticism can be done. Good criticism for the Geneva School means to think, feel, and imagine just the same as the author. In the classic style of referential, which is to say modern spatialized realism, both the Geneva School Critics and the New Critics believe that good understanding is that which comes *closest* to the autonomous "real" mind of the author or "real" autonomous text.

Both the New Critics and the Geneva School are inspired by the early Husserl's archpositivism. Each school takes its impetus and confidence to expound with authority *the* transcending sovereign meaning of texts independent of the reader's response or the author's consciousness in the case of the New Criticism, or the author's consciousness in the case of the Geneva School. Each discounts the views of others, including each other, as ignorant, lazy, and/or stupid. The Geneva School differed from the New Critics largely in terms of the target reality they claim to be able to methodically replicate. For the New Critics the target of analysis is the text alone. For the Geneva School it is the author's mind articulated in the fixed forms of repeated patterns discovered within texts by means of rigorous reading and biographical research.<sup>30</sup> Both manifest a firm positivistic faith in a fixed and autonomous target of analysis and in their abilities to accurately reiterate it in the spirit of fidelity. Positivism is a faith in fidelity, which means to be true to the autonomous Other when representing her or it.

The New Critics rejected the author's biography as offering any insight as to the meaning of the text, and instead postulated "close reading" of "the text

itself," a phrase inspired by the Husserlian battle cry, "to the things themselves,"<sup>31</sup> a phrase that expresses the conviction that a thing can be grasped as it appears without the prejudice or distortion of representation, from a mediating observer or language; that somehow, methodically, mediation (perspective) could be bracketed or disengaged, leading to what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), evoking Nietzsche, calls "immaculate perception."<sup>32</sup> Husserl claims to know before he knows, to *approach* the world before knowledge of it, especially scientific knowledge of it. The positive faith in a pre-perspectival ground remains unwavering, and in this case it is the transcendental ego, the essential necessity, that makes appearances (perspectives) possible, but yet that needs methodical help in the form of "bracketing" or suspending metaphysical judgments about the reality of a phenomenon. The phenomenon is surely there, but it is in need of being revealed, uncovered, restored to prominence, allowed to show itself without prejudice, and so on. The attempt is to *approach* and become intimate with the *transcendental ground*, the consciousness that has somehow become *distanciated* via metaphysical prejudice such as mathematizing abstraction and various reductionisms. The spatial metaphysics is self-evident. The entire method is based on intimacy and fidelity, or loyal faith to the phenomenon. The method is to become the slave to the master object of awareness. It is a curious attempt to methodically eliminate the effects of method via the phenomenological *epoché*. Merleau-Ponty describes it thus; "To return to things themselves is to return to that world which proceeds knowledge, of which knowledge speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematisation is an abstract and derivative sign-language."<sup>33</sup> Yet if knowledge exists only as a form of expression, then this dualism of things known and knowledge is senseless metaphysics. This is the delusional dream of positivism to know a thing without knowing it or prior to categorization, which is of course a linguistic activity.

The linguistic turn in hermeneutics insists instead that consciousness is a product of a linguistic manifold. The New Critics accept the dream of knowing without naming. Yet they ironically argue that "close reading" (reading referring of course to patterns in codes) is the best, if not the only method of criticism that will yield the truth inherent in autonomous texts. The Geneva School argues for a rigorous reading that will yield an "intimate knowledge" of the author's coherent mind exposed by repeated patterns of themes and topics that appear in the texts that constitute the entire corpus of the author's labors, patterns that manifest the author's obsessions.

In opposition to this approach, the New Critics argue that any factors taken into account other than the formal structures presented in the "text itself" are fallacious forms of reading. New Critics argue that psychologistic reading of the Geneva School variety is merely subjective, which is to say arbitrarily impressionistic. Three of the most famous sources of New Criticism are John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*, Cleanth Brooks' 1947 *The Well-Wrought Urn*, and William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's 1954 *The Verbal Icon*. The New Critics claim to expose a series of fallacies that psychologistic

and historicistic critics, like the Geneva School, suffer from and which the New Critics correct. Two of the most prominent fallacies are: (a) the intentionalist fallacy, which is the mistake of attempting to understand the author's intentions when interpreting a text; this fallacy is said to violate the sacred autonomy of the work, and (b) the affective fallacy, which is the mistake of equating a work with its emotional effects on an audience. New Critics, such as Cleanth Brooks, believe that a text should not have to be understood relative to the responses of its readers because its true meaning is inherent in the text and can be exposed through rigorous method. It is not until we get to the poststructuralists that reading, as a productive, collaborative, and complex process that takes into account the reader as an active agent in the process of semantization, is taken seriously (a turn also seen in mass media studies with the emergence of the uses and gratification theory of TV consumption).

## Two Faiths

While the Geneva School and the New Critics battle each other, each school promotes a faith in the critic's ability to approach, become intimate with, and referentially describe a positively existing independent object of analysis, be it the text or the author's mind. Such efforts exhibit two faiths. First, that a text purveys a single meaning, independent of what different readers think, and second, that a method can be invented that will positively identify that one meaning, be it of the text or the author's mind. Any other untrained (some would say uninitiated) reading remains at best prosaic and arbitrary because it is not tightly bound by the form of the referent.

Another example of this academic effort is found in the method of content analysis, which purports to generate reliable findings, but only after coders have been trained and disciplined to see the "same" thing the "same" way. Content analytic technique also involves training coders on how to find agreement among themselves even when they disagree, a process of forced compliance or convergence. Why? Because the text is seen as a positive object that has only one real, true meaning, even if readers or viewers do not agree on what that is. The basis of the content analyst's faith is rooted in an unquestioned presumption of materialistic metaphysics. The faith is actually irrational given the stated claim of content analysts to accurately reveal the contents of a text because they often ignore the actual conflicts that commonly arise among coders and the need to teach them how to negotiate away such initial conflicts.

Content analysts ignore or attempt to negotiate the truth of conflicting interpretations away for rather spurious reasons. They do so because they have an unquestioned faith that there must be unanimity about the final findings. Content analytics renders fictional but singular results. Such unanimity is called for by their positivistic bias, which is presumed in their method. Because they presume that there exists independent of the reader or viewer a single content

of a text, conflicts of interpretation that occur in the very procedures of doing the method are denied. Thus, the actual meaning of texts for the coders is not exactly ignored, but negotiated away. A similar strategy is followed in statistics when actual outliers are ignored (systematically removed from the mean calculation) for the sake of gaining a "truer" picture of the mean, a singular mean that is presumed prior to the existence of the actual outliers.

## Pure Knowledge or Impure Fiction

The positivistic assumption of the content analytic method, as well as that of the Geneva School and New School criticisms, is that only one answer is allowable, indeed sensical, because there is presumably only one meaning per the author's intent, the text, or the audience's singular mean score. Positivism says to those who embody it, the fault, dear coder, lies not in the text, but in you. Shakespeare did not say "the problem," which could be anonymous. Rather he said "the fault," which implies personal culpability; subjectivism. The larger problem here is that direct, empirical observation is intimate, which is to say personal. Thus, as noted earlier, the true dream of the positivist is to eliminate the knower so that knowledge can be untouched by perspectival distortion, so that it, like the highest level of mathematics, can be pure. Of course this is absurd because there can never be a known without a knower.

So the positivistic dream is to eliminate all subjective, perspectival influence on perception. This question arises: Can perception exist without a perspective? But even omnipotence is a specific perspective that is different from nonomnipotent perception. The rightful and true object of analysis, their version of "the text," is rendered by the New Critics as not a product of a particular human consciousness or intent or as audience reactions. Indeed, even the critic must methodically eliminate herself—her unique talents, skills, and knowledge—so that the truth of "the text" can emerge unencumbered by author, reader, or analyst. Thus, we have no reader or author read, but instead just pure truth. Knowledge is thus sterilized of a known *and* a knower. Objectivity claims to render an aperspectival vision, which is to say a vision without an eye (I). But yet this is an analytical perspective that presents a traditional positivistic perspective as an unquestioned faith and *right*. But according to Nietzsche, this self-entitled perspective would mean the elimination of knowledge as we actually know it. As he says, "Insofar as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable: but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings 'Perspectivism.'"<sup>34</sup>

Despite the eminently "rational"—that is to say, *instrumental*—efforts of content analysts, formalists, structuralists, and others who share the positivistic faith in a single real meaning resident within any given text or mind, none of these attempts has yielded a generation of scholars who agree about what any specific text, even a famous and widely available text like the Bible, means.

This is even the case for a mundane and “simple” STOP sign as some read it to mean literally stop, others to slow, and for others an object to be stolen and put in their apartment or bedroom as a sign of rebellious decoration, proof of juvenile daring do, folk art. The ironic fact of relativism has been stubborn not only in its persistence, but also its resistance to methodical resolution. Relativism persists even despite all manner of extracurricular threats to careers. If there is a positive fact here, it is the fact of this failure of positive methods to render the one true meaning of anything.

## NIETZSCHE DISCOUNTS COUNTING AND OTHER ABSOLUTES

It seems to be true that there are as many psychologies as there are psychologists, as many sociologies as there are sociologists, as many interpretations as there are observers/readers/viewers. The stubborn nature of experience to resist absolute and simple singularity of meaning has forced a shift in the field of hermeneutics beginning with Nietzsche.

Many modern Platonists and “English psychologists” who have reduced morality to physiology and value to the “utility of organs” are left with a mechanistic universe so that they have nothing but the “coursework” of causal memorization to “get through.” Thinking is irrelevant in a nihilistic universe where only reactionary adaptation to previous causes is available. This “positivistic” flight from freedom is manifested in the search for eternal, predictable order. This is based on the salvation of the metaphysical faith in a singular correct meaning to any text or function within a system. But to “immoralists” like Nietzsche, that failure to find the one and only truth is not a dire misfortune. To Nietzsche and his followers, this is actually fortunate because the continual shifting of meanings keeps human experience interesting and livable, and they contend that the entire effort of art is to remain original. After the artistic, creative, “form-giving” impulse, which is quite the opposite of passive adaptation and mimicry to “facts” or “what already is the case,” there is nothing. According to Harold Bloom (1930-), anxiety does not come from continual flux or uncertainty, but from the overbearing influence of past (enduring) versions of reality.<sup>35</sup> Such influence can take a dictatorial form so that terror is used to force compliance to and convergence with a standard, authoritative truth. A good bit of postmodern hermeneutic literature deals with the fact that interpretations vary and the act of interpretation is fundamental to human understanding.

## ENDNOTES

1. Kerman, J. *Listen* (3rd ed., New York: Worth, 1996), 290.
2. Eliot, T.S. *The Rock: A Pageant Play written for Performance at Sadler's* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934).
3. Einstein, A. *Albert Einstein: Out of My Later Years* (New York: Random House/Gramercy, 1995).
4. A tremendous amount has been written about the issues of the understanding and misunderstanding of reading and misreading from ancient Talmudic scholars to current so-called postmodern and postpostmodern criticism. See, for instance, the works of Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, and Harold Bloom, to name only a few writers working on such issues.
5. Derrida, J. *De la Grammatologie (Of Grammatology)* (G. C. Spivak, Trans., Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967 Fr./1976 Eng.).
6. On the meaning of *model minority* as best applied to computers and robots, see Kramer, E. *The Emerging Monoculture: Assimilation and the "Model Minority"* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), and Kramer, E. “Cultural Fusion and the Defense of Difference.” In M. K. Asante & J. E. Min, eds., *Socio-Cultural Conflict Between African and Korean Americans* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 182–223.
7. Nietzsche, F. *Die Frohliche Wissenschaft (The Gay Science)* (W. Kaufmann, Trans., New York: Vintage Books, 1882 Ger./1974 Eng.), Book Five, Section 354, 298.
8. *Ibid.*, 298.
9. See Foucault, M. *L'Archéologie du Savoir (The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language)* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans., 1969 Fr./1972 Eng.), especially pages 215–37. *Lordre du discours* was Foucault's inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, where he was appointed in 1970. It was published in French in 1971 (Editions Gallimard). It appears as an appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in English.
10. In *Systema naturae* (1735), he presented his classification of plants, animals, and minerals; and in *Genera plantarum* (1737), he explained his system for classifying plants largely on the basis of the number of stamens and pistils in the flower. Despite the artificiality of some of his premises, the Linnaean system remains the basis of modern taxonomy.
11. The famous 18th-century group of French philosophers and men of letters who collaborated in the production of the famous *Encyclopédie* are known as the “Encyclopedists.” However, it was not a strictly French phenomenon. In the prospectus, Denis Diderot, who wrote over 900 articles for the final project himself, acknowledged the inspiration of Francis Bacon, writing: “If we succeed in this vast enterprise our principal debt will be to Chancellor Bacon who sketched the plan of a universal dictionary of sciences and arts at a time when there were, so to say, neither sciences nor arts.” The mathematician Jean Le Rond d'Alembert acknowledged the same indebtedness. In 1745, a French translation of Robert Chambers's *Cyclopædia* of English literature, which was largely a polemic against David Hume, and prepared by John Mills with the assistance of Gottfried Sellius, was to be published in Paris by the king's printer, Le Breton. However, despite gaining the necessary royal privilege, conflicts between Mills and Le Breton postponed the product. In frustration, Mills returned to England, and Le Breton asked Jean-Paul de Gua, professor in the Collège de France, to

- assume the editorship and revise the manuscripts. However, more conflicts and misunderstandings led to the resignation of de Gua. Finally, Diderot was called on to complete the preparation of the manuscripts. But at his suggestion, it was decided to undertake a more original and comprehensive work that became the 35 folio volumes (17 vols. of text [Paris, 1751–1765]; 11 vols. of plates [Paris, 1762–1772]; 5 vols. of supplement, i.e., 4 of text and 1 of plates [Amsterdam and Paris, 1776–1777]; 2 vols. of analytical index prepared by Pierre Mouchon). Thus, British influence was considerable in shaping the doctrine of the *Encyclopédie*. The French group included most notably Diderot, who planned the *Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts, et des metiers* (Encyclopedia, or a Descriptive Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Trades) 1751–1772, which was to provide a complete alphabetical treatment of the whole field of human knowledge, and on equal terms, d'Alembert. Furthermore, a significant portion of the work was done by the Chevalier de Jaucourt, a man of great learning. Others who contributed included Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Paul-Henri-Dietrich d'Holbach, Claude Adrien Helvetius, Albrecht Von Haller, Marquis Antoine Nicholas Condorcet, and Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu.
12. Kramer, E. *Modern/Postmodern: Off the Beaten Path of Antimodernism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).
  13. Jameson, F. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton Essays in European and Contemporary Literature. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press/London: Oxford University Press, 1972).
  14. Chomsky, N. 1965. *Cartesian Linguistics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); *Language and Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1972); *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).
  15. Habermas, J. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* in two volumes (*The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (T. McCarthy, Trans., Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1981 Ger./1984 Eng.); *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: The Critique of Functionalist Reason* (T. McCarthy, Trans., Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1987).
  16. Husserl, E. *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* (*The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenology*) (W. Biemel, Ed.; D. Carr, Trans., Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1936 Ger./1970 Eng.).
  17. Countless examples can be offered from anthropological research and others such as the case of Black Elk, the Sioux shaman that Joseph Campbell discusses in his 1991 book, *The Power of Myth* (with B. Moyers; New York: Anchor); and more recently, the case discussed in Fadiman, A. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998).
  18. Their most influential works are *Du système industriel*, which appeared in 1821, and *Catéchisme des industriels* (1823–1824).
  19. Lyotard, J. F. *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*) (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans., Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1979 Fr./1984 Eng.).

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23. Nietzsche, F. Eng. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches; Ein Buch für freie Geister. Dem Andenken Voltaires geweiht zur Gedächtnisfeier seines Todestages, den 30. Mai 1778* (*Human, All Too Human; a Book for Free Spirits. Dedicated to the Memory of Voltaire on the Commemoration of the Day of his Death, 30 May 1778*). (R. J. Hollingdale, Trans., Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1878 Ger./1986 Eng.).
24. Bohm, D. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
25. Nietzsche, F. *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten (The Wanderer and His Shadow)* appears as *Zweiter und letzter Nachtrag*, second and final sequel of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches (Human, All-Too-Human)* (R. J. Hollingdale, Trans., Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1879 Ger./1986 Eng.). Section 11.
26. Nietzsche, F. *Human All Too Human*. This is an E. Kramer translation with allusion to Helen Zimmer's 1909–1913 translation, as well as reference to Walter Kaufmann's and R. J. Hollingdale's versions, Section 11.
27. Nietzsche, F. *Die Morgenröte (The Dawn or Daybreak)* (W. Kaufmann, Trans., New York: Viking Press, 1881 Ger./1954 Eng.). Section 297, p. 91 in *The Portable Nietzsche*.
28. Nietzsche, F. 1886–1887. Concordance between *The Will to Power* and *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. Book II. Notes, KSA 12, 315, End 1886–Spring 1887, 7 [60].
29. Heidegger, M. *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans., San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1927 Ger./1962 Eng.).
30. The school of New Criticism, which included John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks was inspired by the criticism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and also by the positivism promised by Husserl's phenomenology. In Europe we have a similar but different positivistic faith, but in the case of the Geneva School the faith is in the fixed thoughts, feelings, and imaginings of the author within the text; a mind in the text that the critic can approach, become intimate with, and represent in critical writings. The Geneva School holds that the critic should not engage in judgments about stylistics, but instead the school's proponents have promoted the faith that the critic could re-feel, re-think, and re-imagine the author's thoughts and feelings from "the inside." The Geneva School includes, most notably, Marcel Raymond, Albert Beguin, Georges Poulet, Jean-Pierre Richard, Jean Starobinski, Jean Rousset, and J. Hillis Miller.
31. "Zu den Sachen Selbst" or "Zurück zu den Sachen," meaning back to the things themselves. The former is a phrase found in Husserl, E. *Logische Untersuchungen* 6 Vols (*Logical Investigations*, 6 Vols, 1900–01 Ger./1970 Eng) (J. N. Findlay, Trans., London: Routledge). A new edition translated by Michael Dummet and Durmot Moran, along with Findlay, appeared in 2001 from Routledge.
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33. *Ibid.*, ix.

34. Nietzsche, F. (1886–1887). Op. Cit., Concordance between *The Will to Power and Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. Book II. Notes, KSA 12, 315, End 1886-Spring 1887, 7 [60].
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## 2

# SEGMENTED ORGANISMS

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Justice is such an elusive thing to get any kind of concrete idea of. In fact it seems to be a notion marginally invoked, almost never at the center of any discussion. One first talks about how a system works, a particular kind of market economy, the assignment of values to abstract things like intellectual property, the kinds and availability of education and health care, access to and manipulation of the organs of information and the expression of opinion, the different migrations of peoples into a region, and the different economic niches the various ethnic groups have come to occupy. Justice seems to be both marginal and for tomorrow; something to keep in mind somehow, as the present economic and technological situation works itself out or evolves. And then, one day, you see justice, it materializes in front of your eyes.

The day before I was released from the hospital in Rio de Janeiro, I got up just before sunrise and decided to go out for a little walk down the Promenade of Avenida Atlantica in Copacabana where I was staying. I took my wallet, thinking I would treat myself to a good breakfast at the Meridien Hotel three blocks up. I was shuffling along, bent over due to the sutures. "Señor, que horas sao?" I heard. I looked up, and an adolescent kid was pointing to his wrist and asking the time. I looked at my watch; it was 6. Then suddenly I knew what was going to happen. Five or six of them closed in; I thought to protect my sutured abdomen and sunk to the sidewalk, trying to close my body on itself. One of them held a knife to my throat. I really did not feel

## Critical Bodies

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# PHILOSOPHY, METHOD AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

edited by

**CHARLTON McILWAIN**

*New York University*



HAMPTON PRESS, INC.  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Philosophy, method, and cultural criticism / edited by Charlton McIlwain,  
New York University.

pages cm. — (Critical bodies)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61289-126-2 (hardbound) — ISBN 978-1-61289-127-9 (paperbound)

1. Methodology. 2. Hermeneutics. 3. Phenomenology. 4. Communication—  
Methodology. 5. Culture—Methodology. I. McIlwain, Charlton D., 1971–  
BD241.P446 2013  
101—dc23

2013019681

Hampton Press, Inc.  
307 Seventh Ave.  
New York, NY 10001

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