

HABERMAS CONFRONTS THE DECONSTRUCTIONIST CHALLENGE: ON *THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE OF MODERNITY*

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Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Translated by Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987, pp. 430.

Among critical circles in North American universities during the 1970's, the work of the Frankfurt School was an essential point of reference. But in the last decade, this centrality has been displaced by the texts that are lumped together under the term "postmodernism." The shift from the "immanent critique" of the Frankfurt School to the "discourses" of postmodernism is a fundamental change in the content and style of "critical theory." A genuinely radical critical theory must continually renew the questions "What is critical?" and "Of what are we critical?"

In this context, it is both a rare and an important event when Jurgen Habermas, the most prominent contemporary representative of the Frankfurt School, publishes a book critical of the main postmodernist thinkers. As Habermas clearly documents, the work of Nietzsche is the entry into postmodernity. Consequently, he must reject the formulations of the earlier generation of Frankfurt critics, especially Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where the influence of Nietzsche is decisive. Whereas they moved from immanent critique of the contradictions of capitalism to a totalizing critique of Western civilization,

Habermas is concerned to recover the lost possibility of modernity—a philosophy of communicative praxis that incorporates specific scientific (i.e. validity-oriented) critiques into discursive (i.e. intersubjectively-oriented) reflexion and thereby extends the possibilities of reducing domination in practical contexts.

In a key passage in the introduction to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno expressed the transition that their work had undergone. "Even though we had known for many years that the great discoveries of applied science are paid for with an increasing diminution of theoretical awareness, we still thought that in regard to scientific activity our contribution could be restricted to the criticism or extension of specialist axioms."¹ Previously, in being limited to criticizing or extending specialized knowledges with regard to their impact on the whole socio-historical lifeworld, Critical Theory assumed the framework of this lifeworld as given. While specialized knowledges might function either to mystify or to enlighten, the integrity of the wider categories within which the alternative of "ideology or enlightenment" could be formulated was not in question. Thus, in the fashion of Marx, one could speak of the internal "contradictions of capitalism" (or "modernity") and of "progress," however delayed or muted, in anticipating their overcoming.

This turning in Critical Theory was motivated by the "insight" that, not only was the expected progress not forthcoming, but that new forms of domination were issuing from exactly those productive forces that were expected to provide its motor. In particular, they had in mind automation and other advances in industrial production, the psychology of management and public relations, and the mass deception practiced by the new media of communication. One might reply, of course, that it is no surprise that these progressive forces are "distorted" under capitalist relations of production. But the point is that to speak of distortion is to assume that the forces of production are themselves progressive, or perhaps "neutral," and that their use for destructive ends is an extrinsic factor. However, in the death camps, for example, traditional anti-Semitism takes on a new genocidal potential precisely because of improvements in means of transportation and organization. Thus, the object of critical thought was broadened from contemporary contradictions to the process of Western civilization as a whole, with a special interest in the contemporary conditions that exacerbate generic forms of domination. Subjective reason, which enables the domination of nature, asserts itself through subjugating an alien "Other." Internal nature is subdued through psychic repression and external nature through science and technology. The present epoch is characterized by "revolts of nature"² which intensify the tensions inherent in the civilizing process and force critical thought to turn from contradictions within the given lifeworld to the critique of civilization, from Marx to Nietzsche.

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In his early work, Habermas was concerned to criticize and extend the concept of the public sphere from early bourgeois society by distinguishing instrumental action from communicative interaction. Thus, there emerged a layered intellectual project involving epistemological self-reflection on the interests incorporated into the research programs of the human sciences, a theory of discursive practice, and incorporation of specific scientific researches into public reflection aimed at enlightenment. In order to pursue this project Habermas must defend a limited concept of critique that remains tied to modernity even while developing its unrealized possibility—a philosophy of intersubjective reason.

Habermas discerns a “performative contradiction” in totalizing critique in which critique “loses its orientation” (p. 127). Subjective reason advances through the critique of myth, and ends by asserting a pure instrumentality which itself becomes mythical by repressing any concept of a meaningful relation to an Other aside from domination. Thus, the critique of civilization indicts reason as the perpetrator of domination, but does so with the tools of reason. The rational critique of myth, because of its consequences, is turned against reason itself. But this totalizing critique, at least in Horkheimer and Adorno, is still meant to contribute to enlightenment. This it cannot do, Habermas claims, because it “tears down the barrier between validity and power” (p. 119). By criticizing reason as culpable in social domination the critique of civilization removes the Archimedean point outside domination from which a denunciation can proceed. While ideology critique relies on immanent critique of the unrealized potential of bourgeois culture, totalizing critique would have to generate its own normative justification—which, according to Habermas, it cannot do.

This performative contradiction leads to two consequences which are central for Habermas’s evaluation of postmodern writers: Totalizing critique undervalues the central aspect of demythologization as “differentiation of basic concepts” (p. 114). As against the totalizing power of myth to integrate all phenomena into a pattern of consistent concepts, modernity involves an internal differentiation of the spheres of science, art, religion, politics, and so forth. Also, in a correlative manner, totalizing critique elevates one of these spheres to exemplary status—the aesthetic avant-garde with its focus on the world-disclosing aspect of language—to the neglect of learning processes in the lifeworld, even though the notion of a “purely aesthetic experience” is formed through the process of differentiation (p. 307, 339).

Hegel attempted to “sublate” [aufheben] the differentiation of modern society in a concrete totality by fusing the actuality of contemporary history with the essential relations of concepts. The subsequent division between right and left Hegelians centred on the failure of this synthesis such that “the Young Hegelians deliver themselves over to historical thinking in an unphilosophical way” (p. 54), whereas the right Hegelians

(beginning with the old Hegel) progressively retreat from history into purely conceptual relations. Thus, Habermas judges that we are still contemporaries of the Young Hegelians because our task is still to integrate real history with conceptual totalization. He attempts to solve the problems of the philosophy of the subject by recuperating and developing systematically an intersubjective conception of reason.

But the growth in reflexivity, in universalism, and in individuation undergone by the structural core of the lifeworld in the course of its differentiation now no longer fits the description of an intensification within the dimensions of the subject's relation-to-self. And only under this description—that is, from the perspective of the philosophy of the subject—could societal rationalization, the unfolding of the rational potential of social practice, be represented as the self-reflection of a societal macrosubject. The theory of communication can do without this figure of thought (p. 345).

It is from this perspective, developed in more detail in other works, that Habermas unloads his polemic against the postmodernists. He documents their performative contradictions, de-differentiation of social spheres and experiences, and elevation of world-disclosing language in order to argue that critical thought goes astray when it is totalized. Since critique cannot generate normative and rational criteria from itself alone, it must proceed immanently, against the background of a lifeworld that it must conceptualize but cannot master critically.

Stemming from Nietzsche, Habermas discerns two branches of post-modern philosophy. One, based on the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, comes through Heidegger to Derrida. The second, beginning from Nietzsche's genealogy of power and desire, comes through Bataille to Foucault. It is clear that Habermas has a lot more sympathy with the latter. While he considers its critique of modernity one-sided—failing to consider the real gains in enlightenment alongside its disciplinary aspects—it has nevertheless produced important empirical analyses of modern power. The problem is solely with its self-understanding. In a penetrating account of the development of Foucault's work, he argues that the later theory of power enfolds a duality concealed by its genesis: on the one hand, it is an empirical analysis of power formations, on the other, it is a concealed theory of constitution, a transcendental analysis of the conditions under which empirical power formations originate, develop, and decay. Only because of this concealed duality do Foucault's historical analyses take on their emblematic character as critiques of modernity—because these conditions are not specific to psychiatry, criminology or sexuality but constitutive of the epoch of modernity itself.

Later, Habermas returns to the "doubles" that Foucault diagnosed in *The Archeology of Knowledge* as produced by the human sciences in the contradictory attempt at self-knowledge characteristic of modernity:

transcendental/empirical, conscious/unconscious, and creative actor/alienated from origin. He argues that these unresolvable doubles between which theory oscillates are produced by the exhaustion of the philosophy of the subject and disappear when communicative praxis is taken as the starting point.³ Whereas empirical and transcendental cannot be "mediated," a participant can subsequently reflect on his action from the perspective of the other. Similarly, the conscious/unconscious opposition (which leads to the concept of the heroic modern subject rendering the opacity of the in-itself into a fully conscious for-itself) can be reformulated as the relationship between the horizon of an intuitively given, unproblematic background of the lifeworld and the reproduction of the lifeworld through communicative interaction. Critical reflection on objectivistic illusions, or reifications, is directed toward the reproduction of the lifeworld through communicative practice. Thus, in a certain sense the intersubjective community is *responsible* for these illusions, even though they have not (necessarily) been deliberately engendered. Such reflection is directed toward single illusions; it "cannot make transparent the *totality* of a course of life in the process of individuation or of a collective way of life" (p. 300). Thus, it can neither recapture a pure origin nor be absolutely alienated from it.

The other branch of postmodernism fares less well. Nothing positive is said about either Heidegger or Derrida. In discussing the "turning" in Heidegger's work after *Being and Time*, Habermas argues that he recreates the problems of the philosophy of the subject rather than overcoming them. While in a first step Heidegger overturns the priority of propositional truth, nevertheless, in a second, he views world-disclosure as an *event* prior to the intersubjective understanding of meaning. Habermas asserts the contrary: "[T]he horizon of the understanding of meaning is not prior to, but subordinate to, the question of truth" (p. 154). Thus, Heidegger returns to a "temporalized philosophy of origins" in which the disclosive event reigns over all subsequent occurrences, and is thereby raised above any critical investigation.⁴ Derrida accepts Heidegger's critique of metaphysics but rejects the mythology of origins and turns to writing as the world-disclosing event without either subject or origin. He "renews the mystical concept of tradition as an ever delayed event of revelation" (p. 183). While Habermas acknowledges the affinity of this thought, which "returns to the historical locale where mysticism turns into enlightenment" (p. 184), to that of Scholem, Adorno and Benjamin, he denies it any enlightening role. Adorno acknowledged the paradoxes of totalizing critique and devised a strategy of indirect communication from the performative contradiction it entailed. His negative dialectics drew from the aesthetic avant-garde for an access to the object that was undistorted by subjective reason. In this respect, Derrida and Adorno are on the same ground—they are concerned to decipher the normal case from the point of view of the extremes. However, whereas Adorno utilized the performative contradiction in order to liberate the utopian

thematic within philosophy, Derrida wants to clear away the metaphysical differentiation into genres.

Habermas identifies three propositions on which Derrida's rhetorical criticism is built. 1) Literary criticism is not "scientific," but as rhetorical as "literature." 2) Philosophical texts are accessible in their fundamental content by literary criticism. 3) Rhetorical criticism applies to the whole context of texts, in which genre distinctions are dissolved. It also follows, from the concept of "general literature" implied here, that literary texts are accessible to the critique of metaphysics. In short, Derrida's deconstructionist standpoint is based upon a reversal of the subordination of rhetoric to philosophy that elaborates a new rhetoric in which both the critique of metaphysics (that defines "philosophy") and world-disclosing language (that defines "literature") merge into a concept of writing that implies delay of meaning, absence of closure, and proliferation of discursive interventions.

There are two main points in Habermas's rejoinder to Derrida. Taken together, they attempt to sustain the subordination of the world-horizon to the problem of truth. First, he argues that "normal" and "limit" uses of language (we could also say "literal" and "metaphorical" language, or "serious" and "playful" use) cannot be levelled and treated in the same manner as the deconstructionists suggest. They argue, or often simply assume, that because any statement can be quoted (recontextualized), and since meaning changes with context (and there is an inexhaustible plurality of contexts), that any text is open to an uncontrollable multiplicity of interpretations. Thus, it seems that any normal usage depends simply upon a temporary stabilization of limit usages and that one can not begin from an "in principle" separation between normality and abnormality. Habermas responds that normal usage occurs relative to the "shared background knowledge that is constitutive of the lifeworld of a linguistic community" (p. 197). Thus, when background knowledge does become problematic, the social actors engage in discussion which appeals to "idealizing suppositions" oriented to repairing intersubjective agreement. Consequently, the plurality of interpretations of a text is not simply open; it is constrained by this orientation toward ideal consensus. From this ideal consensus, a distinction between normal and limit cases can be sustained and the proliferation of meaning is held within determinable bounds. Habermas states it this way,

It is not habitual linguistic practice that determines just what meaning is attributed to a text or an utterance. Rather, language games only work because they presuppose idealizations that transcend any particular language game; as a necessary condition of possibly reaching understanding, these idealizations give rise to the perspective of an agreement that is open to criticism on the basis of validity claims (p. 199).

Thus, communicative action contains a universal moment throughout a plurality of contexts.

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Communicative action draws upon the resources of the lifeworld to reproduce the components of culture, society and person. Insofar as these processes of reproduction are less and less guaranteed by tradition, they tend toward legitimation through consensus between those involved in the communicative processes themselves. Habermas admits that this is an idealized projection, but argues that it is well-founded. Rationalization of the lifeworld implies both differentiation of spheres and a "thickening" of the relations between differentiated spheres and the lifeworld as a whole. The continuity of meaning is re-established throughout differentiation by critique. Abstract procedures of discursive will formation operate, not in the isolated spheres, but in their relation to the whole lifeworld. Thus, "abstract, universalistic procedures for discursive will formation even strengthen solidarity in life contexts that are no longer legitimated by tradition" (p. 347). In short, formal and abstract discursive procedures function in concrete contexts to extend uncoerced consensus among participants.⁵ According to Habermas, fundamental social conflicts occur neither within specific differentiated systems nor in an undifferentiated lifeworld, but in the boundaries between the two. While differentiation, and the consequent self-referential closure of systems, rules out direct intervention in functional systems (such as economics and politics), there is an increased capacity for restricted critique of systems in their relation to the lifeworld.

Habermas's attempted renewal of modern philosophy through inter-subjectively-oriented critique confers a central significance on the concept of the "lifeworld" that he adopts from phenomenology. However, this concept is used in two different ways: On one hand it is understood, consistent with its use in the phenomenological tradition, as "the implicit, the prepredicative, the not focally present background" (p. 300). On the other, in continuity with the Weberian concerns of Critical Theory, he speaks of the "differentiated" (p. 345) and "rationalized lifeworld" (p. 346).⁶ But the lifeworld in the first sense, as implicit, cannot be rationalized. Indeed, the lifeworld can be "populated," to an increasing extent, by rationalized systems, but they exist "within" the unthematic background of the lifeworld. This is not a mere terminological slip.

Habermas substituted a phenomenological concept of totality for a Hegelian one because the latter is implicated in the illusory thematization of the totality of all conditioned spheres characteristic of the philosophy of the subject. But totality, when understood as the horizon of everyday involvements, can never be thematized as such and, therefore, can never itself be rationalized. It is the horizon of the plurality (not "totality") of rationalized systems. But, in this case, it is misleading to speak of restricted critique as mediating differentiated systems and lifeworld since only two thematized elements can be "mediated." Either critique simply dissolves a systemic blindspot into its background or it is directed toward the totality as horizon. In the first case, it is a particular intervention that

illustrates the failure of a given attempt at systemic closure but cannot thematize the significance of this for the form of life as a whole. In the second case, critique is directed toward the horizontal totality but needs precisely the tools of totalizing critique that Habermas has ruled out of order. By slipping back into a Hegelian conception of totality as the aggregate of relations of thematized systems in this way Habermas obscures the fundamental redirection of Critical Theory that a phenomenological conception of totality requires.

This confusion of two senses of the lifeworld undermines the notion of universality in Habermas's first point in response to Derrida. He argued that a distinction between normal and limit cases can be sustained because language games "presuppose idealizations that transcend any particular language game" (quoted above). But what is the character of this transcendence? Either it is within a meta-language game, of which the paramount case is Hegel's unification of differentiated spheres, or it is related to the plurality of systems belonging together within a common horizon. In the latter case, the horizon itself cannot provide a universality that would function as regulative within a specific language game. Indeed, we must understand the thematizations that give rise to rationalized systems as implicating the lifeworld as a whole, but must determine the manner of this implication more precisely. The plurality of systems exist "within" an unthematized totality. This horizon defines the plurality of systems as belonging together "in principle," that is to say, as not external to one another. But the actual relations between systems—and it is these relations that characterize the lifeworld as a whole—are a product of social practice. That is to say, the "in principle" relations of systems are indefinitely plural; their actual relations are established by social practices specific to the given state of a socio-historical lifeworld. However, the relation between the plurality of systems—which is established by the social practices of "translation" between systems—is not well characterized as a "transcendence," but is rather an *emergent universality* produced by the interaction between particular language games. Thus, Habermas's restricted criticism cannot appeal to criteria of truth that transcend a discourse; the concept of truth emerges from translation and, contrary to Habermas, occurs within the world-horizon.

The second point in Habermas's rejoinder to Derrida pertains to the specific characteristics of literary discourse. While narratives in everyday life and in literary works have a similar structure, the literary work confers an "exemplary elaboration that takes the case out of its context and makes it the occasion for an innovative, world-disclosive, and eye-opening representation in which the rhetorical means of representation depart from communicative routines and take on a life of their own" (p. 203). More generally, in specialized languages the rhetorical elements of language are enlisted for the purposes of problem-solving (p. 209). Thus, Derrida obscures the characteristics of everyday, intramundane linguistic practice and confuses it with artistic world-disclosive language by ig-

noring the process of the differentiation of art from everyday practice that has allowed the autonomization of the world-disclosing function. Habermas concludes that, correlative to the increasing autonomy of art, literary criticism has taken on the task of mediating between art and the everyday world. Similarly, philosophy directs itself to the foundation of the various autonomous spheres—such as science, morality and law—and connects them to the totality of the lifeworld. Both literary criticism and philosophy utilize rhetorical language, but they begin from differentiated spheres and therefore subordinate rhetoric to “a distinct form of argumentation” (p. 210).

As has been pointed out above, the lifeworld consists of a plurality of language games, or “discourses” (some of which are sufficiently differentiated to be called “systems”), belonging together within a common horizon and in a continuous process of translation such that the universal moment does not hover above them but emerges from their interaction. Consequently, the distinction between normal and limit usage can be made, but it is relative to a given discourse, not to the totality of the lifeworld as Habermas suggests. Differentiation of rationalized systems implies that intervention in these systems must struggle with normal usage and rules established within the system. In this sense, Habermas is correct to say that such intervention cannot be “direct” (p. 365). But the situation is different with respect to genres of criticism which attempt to “mediate” systems and lifeworld. Since the lifeworld is only accessible through the plurality of discourses, this so-called mediation is actually a process of translation that constitutes the specific character of a given lifeworld. As such, these “genres,” especially rhetoric and philosophy, are not really genres at all, but strategies occurring at the point of translation that aim to rescue world-disclosure from its forgetting within the sedimented practices of established discourses—though there are important differences between strategies.

At this point we can differentiate Adorno’s style from Derrida’s. Adorno utilizes genre distinctions in order to operate within philosophy (and also within literary criticism, music criticism and sociology) even though the motive for negative dialectics seems to come from avant-garde art alone. The motive is comparable in Derrida but is utilized to undercut genre distinctions and reveal them as rhetorical ploys. To begin from distinctions in order to lead out of them toward the lifeworld is different from intervention in the plurality of discourses constituting the lifeworld designed to undercut the validity-claims of a given discourse. Habermas does not formulate this difference precisely and his lecture format allows him to avoid a systematic comparison of Adorno and Derrida. Adorno’s procedure resembles ideology critique even though it can no longer rely on the lifeworld context that would tie specific critiques to general enlightenment. Derrida’s interventions, however, tie the conditions for a specific discourse to the world-horizon within which they emerge. While Adorno can only destroy totalizing claims while re-

jecting any theorization of the whole as a Hegelian totalitarianism, Derrida's deconstruction of specific totalizations points toward the world-horizon by engaging in all the translations (especially the "impossible" ones) that disclose the formation of the historical epoch.

In his last lecture, Habermas summarizes his three main objections to the postmodernist writers. One, they cannot account for their own position, and are "discourses without a place" (p. 337). Two, they are guided by normative intuitions which reject subjectivity undialectically. Three, there is no systematic place envisaged for everyday practice. As we have suggested above, Habermas is right to maintain a universal component—and thus a normal/limit distinction—in the face of the plurality of contexts championed by postmodernists, but he locates it wrongly, in classical fashion, as a meta-discourse rather than in the activity of translation between contexts. He oscillates between a Hegelian and a Husserlian concept of totality and thereby attempts to maintain a differentiation of genres that rejects the continuous translation between discourses constitutive of the new rhetoric of the postmodern condition. Normal discourse occurs within differentiated genres, but these are constituted in reference to their limits in the world-horizon.

Orientation to the horizon of the lifeworld does not entail a rejection of the importance of the everyday as Habermas claims, but rather a recognition that the "everydayness" of the everyday is constituted with reference to its limits. Thus, the theory and practice of totalized critique is necessary to uncover the horizon that circumscribes the socio-historical lifeworld. While the procedure of totalizing critique cannot be legitimated with reference to criteria solely within the given lifeworld itself, this does not imply, as Habermas insists, that it thereby becomes simply arbitrary. In the phenomenological tradition such reflection is legitimated by the transcendental reduction, which allows the systematic explication of the horizons within which experiential contents are given. Habermas rejects the transcendentalism of phenomenology out of hand (p. 297, 358), and here he is at one with the dominant trend of postmodernism. Nietzsche, as is clear from the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, was well aware of his own reflexive paradox—that he must utilize the concept of truth in order to criticize it, that he is still pious. Following this, and against Habermas's estimation (p. 121), Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, were committed to a reason that is still not yet rational enough. Their text "is intended to prepare the way for a positive notion of enlightenment which will release it from entanglement in blind domination."⁷ Beyond the tradition, yet aware that it is the tradition that has opened this beyond, postmodern criticism operates in a paradoxical moment, but this is not necessarily a performative contradiction. (Which is perhaps why the popularized versions of postmodernism attempt to simply abandon the problematic of self-justification and grounds.) Nevertheless, Habermas gives both the

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transcendental and the paradoxical reflective self-justifications short shrift and, at this point, fails to encounter his object of criticism.

Habermas discovers in both branches of postmodern totalizing critique a performative contradiction such that they cannot account for their own standpoint due to a false equation of truth and power. From this follows a one-sided characterization of modernity as only a closed metaphysics and/or disciplinary apparatus. He reminds us that modernity has also made significant inroads in recognizing individual rights, reducing scarcity, limiting arbitrary power, and so forth. Out of this more nuanced evaluation, Habermas argues that the project of modernity—which means differentiation of autonomous spheres and the translation of specialized knowledges into the lifeworld—can be rescued and extended. To put it more concretely, socialism is a radicalization of liberalism, and forgets this fact only at the price of a dangerous flirtation with unjustifiable power.⁸ Thus, our task is the connection of empirical history with conceptual critique, and we are the contemporaries of the Young Hegelians.

There are indeed two forms of critique, but Habermas's argument does not justify an abandonment of totalizing critique. However, it does stand as a thorough defence of the still relevant resources of restricted critique within the normality settled by the historical epoch. We are left with the task of thinking the relation between what we may call social and epochal criticism. The orientation to communicative interaction suffices to reveal forms of domination embedded in practices within industrial society. It is based on the distinction between labour (nature-directed) and intersubjectivity (consensus-oriented) fundamental to Habermas's revision of Critical Theory, which is a reworking of the Kantian distinction between nature and history that is characteristic of modern thought. In this form, critical theory regains its capacity of determinate negation of specific social injustices by retreating from the universalization of critique toward the horizons of historical epochs. It can once again speak of "contradictions," but at the price of ceasing to speak of a "whole form of life." But, to the extent that new social movements call into question the viability of industrial society, this distinction must itself be criticized.⁹ Epochal criticism seeks in embodied praxis both the origin of the separation of interactive capacities from "nature" and glimpses of other possibilities. In this sense, previously silent "nature" is brought into discourse and discourse recognizes its own materiality. This new rhetoric is characteristic of the postmodern condition, which is a turning point not only with respect to modern capitalism but also Western civilization itself. At such a turning, we cannot simply eliminate the doubles produced by the human sciences, as both Foucault and Habermas attempt. Rather, we must think through the intensification of the doubling that the two forms of critique bring forward. We are in a moment in which the turning between epochs allows the institution of epochs to become visible. For better or worse, we are contemporaries of Nietzsche, not of the Young

Hegelians: Our task is not to connect reason and history, but to comprehend the horizon within which reason and history are always already connected. This task must necessarily be a "discourse without a place." The mixing of modes can only be justified by the light it sheds on the fixing of places by the epochal horizon.

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Notes

1. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, p. xi.
2. The differences among those of the first generation of the Frankfurt School in evaluating the progressive and regressive aspects of these revolts of nature have been documented in Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, pp. 147-77.
3. Since Habermas only discusses Husserl directly in the context of the development of Derrida's work, he does not seem aware that, in returning to Foucault's *The Archeology of Knowledge* for the elaboration of his own theory, he return to the point reached by Husserl in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Foucault's early work does not philosophically advance Husserl's problematic, but simply extends it into the domain of the human sciences.
4. Habermas argues that the turning in Heidegger's thought to the "event of appropriation" is inexplicable as an internal development from *Being and Time* and derives from the experience of adherence to, and then disappointment with, National Socialism. Without minimizing this historical experience as an influence in Heidegger's thought, the priority of "event" is already present in the earlier work and the experience of fascism as world-historical is shared also by the first generation of the Frankfurt School. The priority of the event in the experience of truth (in these general terms) is characteristic of phenomenology as such. Habermas seems, at this point, to be caught at the level of anti-Heidegger polemic of the first generation of Critical Theory.
5. Thus, Habermas sets aside the critique of formalism that characterizes both the first generation of Critical Theorists and phenomenology. This convergence on "instrumental reason" is key for the integration of these two traditions. See Ian H. Angus, *Technique and Enlightenment: Limits of Instrumental Reason*. Washington: Centre for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1984.
6. In addition, he suggests that critique of tradition, in orienting toward social reproduction through consensus, yields "the abstraction of *universal* lifeworld structures from the particular configurations of totalities of forms of life that arise only as plural" (p. 344). This may be construed as a contribution to phenomenology insofar as the dual aspect of the lifeworld as universal and as socio-historically particular was recognized by Husserl, but there was not a correlative account of the historical conditions under which the distinction between the two could be made.
7. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, op. cit., p. xvi. Horkheimer and Adorno quote Nietzsche's reflexive account of his own piety on p. 115.
8. In this connection the different trajectories of C. B. Macpherson and George Grant in recovering the humanist basis of politics are pertinent to the argument here. While Macpherson was concerned to retrieve and extend the liberal tradition, Grant broke

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with socialism because of its incorporation of liberal assumptions. I have addressed this comparison in *George Grant's Platonic Rejoinder to Heidegger*. Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987, chapter IV. In this case, as in many others, the dual sides of sublation as "preservation" and "transcendence" have been impossible to hold in harmony.

9. It has been suggested that, due to this distinction, Habermas cannot properly address what is at issue in the environmental, feminist, and anti-nuclear movements. See, for example, Joel Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas" in *Telos*, No. 40, Summer 1979; Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical About Critical Theory: The Case of Habermas and Gender" in *New German Critique*, Number 35, Spring/Summer 1985; Ian H. Angus and Peter G. Cook, "Nuclear Technology as Ideology" in *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. XI, No. 1-2, 1987.