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THE QUESTION OF THE MORAL SUBJECT IN FOUCAULT'S ANALYTICS OF POWER

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The essence of truth is freedom.
Martin Heidegger

The question of ethics has preoccupied Michel Foucault throughout the different stages of his thought. Ethics and politics are for him inseparable. In his early major work, *The Order of Things*, he asserted that "[the] knowledge of man, unlike the sciences of nature, is always linked, even its vaguest form, to ethics or politics."[1] In his 1983 interview in Berkeley he reiterated his interest in "politics as an ethics."[2]

There is one phrase that marks the distinguishing characteristic of Foucault's thought: the ubiquity of power. "A society without power relations," he declares, "can only be an abstraction."[3] In Foucault's thought, power may be said to be the kingpin of all social relations in connecting everything to everything else. It is embedded in all human events and institutions, not just in what has traditionally been called "government," the "state," or political institutions. From beginning to end, the thematics of power have been the *leimotif* of Foucault's investigation of differing topics. By its ubiquity, power attains an ontological status, as it were, in Foucault's thought. It is everywhere and comes from everywhere: it is "always already" here and there. The most seminal insight of Foucault is the idea that power exists *as relations*, and this relational mode of investigating power is called by him the *analytics of power*. For power is regarded not as a static substance (*res*) in the Cartesian tradition, but as an ensemble of dynamic relations. Foucault writes:

> Power in the substantive sense, "*le*" *pouvoir*, doesn't exist. What I mean is this. The idea that there is either located at — or emanating from —

> a given point something which is a "power" seems to me to be based on a misguided analysis, one which at all events fails to account for a considerable number of phenomena. In reality power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations.[4]

In confluence with the French structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, and Louis Althusser, Foucault rejected the notion of the subject. While in *The Savage Mind*,[5] which is a polemic against Jean-Paul Sartre, Lévi-Strauss enunciated the "dissolution of man," Foucault wrote the following requiem in the concluding sentence of *The Order of Things*: "man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."[6] It is in his introductory remarks to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that we find the sharpest reaction to subjectivity which could be construed narrowly as phenomenological or broadly as post-Cartesian or post-phenomenological:

> If the history of thought could remain the locus of uninterrupted continuities, if it could endlessly forge connexions that no analysis could undo without abstraction, if it could weave, around everything that men say and do, obscure synthesis that anticipate for him, prepare him, and lead him endlessly towards his future, it would provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness. Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject — in the form of historical consciousness — will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalization and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness.[7]

It seems that what is crucial in the context of our discussion on the moral subject of power is not the question of whether Foucault is a philosopher of continuity or discontinuity but of how the idea of continuity or discontinuity funds the movement of the historical subject.[8] Here Foucault's argument concerning the *necessary* and *sufficient* connection between the sovereignty of consciousness and historical continuity falters and is short-circuited in several ways.

First of all, a critique of phenomenological subjectivity requires the consideration of phenomenology as the constitution of meaning — including, of course, the constitution of internal-time consciousness in terms of "retension" and "protension" — by the transcendental *ego* to attain the apodicticity of knowledge. In short, it needs a critique of phenomenology as a "metaphysics of presence."

Second, Foucault fails to take into account Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological idea of the "instituting subject," so as to avoid the "egological" predicament of the "constituting subject." To quote fully Merleau-Ponty's own words:

> If the subject were taken not as a constituting but an instituting subject, it might be understood that the subject does not exist instantaneously and that the other person does not exist simply as a negative of myself. What I have begun at certain decisive moments would exist neither far off in the past as an objective memory nor be present like a memory revived, but really between the two as the field of my becoming during that period. Likewise my relation to another person would not be reducible to a disjunction: an instituting subject could coexist with another because the one instituted is not the immediate reflection of the activity of the former and can be regained by himself or by others without involving anything like a total recreation. Thus the instituted subject exists between others and myself, between me and myself, like a hinge, the consequence and the guarantee of our belonging to a common world.[9]

In addition to overcoming the impasse of conceptualizing intersubjectivity or coexistence as the relation between the self and the other, the advantage of this ontological hinge is at least threefold. (1) It overcomes both the overdetermination and the underdetermination of the self over the other or, ethically speaking, the polarization of total power and total freedom, or total submission and absolute freedom. (2) It offers a judicious balance between innovation and tradition as sedimented meanings. And (3), it gives us the conception of human plurality as a dialectical complicity of distinction and equality. Here we are turning to the language of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, where human plurality as the basic condition of both speech and action is conceived of as having the twofold character of equality and distinction. If men were not equal, she explains, there would be no common ground for communicating or acting; if men were not distinct, on the other hand, there would again be no need to communicate or act. Distinction — individual differences — thickens the density of human plurality.[10] Similarly, Emmanuel Levinas maintains that pluralism is not a multiplicity of numbers, it is predicated upon "a radical alterity of the other."[11]

Third and last, if history is viewed as more or less continuous, Foucault must by *logical* necessity recognize some form of subjectivity as sovereign; that is, he harbors or shelters the privileged status of consciousness. If, on the other hand, history is viewed as discontinuous, he is compelled to abandon the sovereignty of consciousness. Contrary to Foucault's own argument, moreover, the sovereignty of consciousness becomes the *precondition* for the thesis that history is discontinuous because history changes, that is, becomes discontinuous only by virtue of the sovereign *agency* of consciousness itself. In the end, the question of whether history is continuous or discontinuous would be dissolved by itself if we entertain the idea of historical transformation as "transgression," in Georges Bataille's sense, or "destruction," in Heidegger's sense. Then and only then, continuity and discontinuity are the two sides of the same historical process. For transgression is not only the overstepping of what is prohibited but it is also delineated by what is prohibited by tradition. Similarly, by "destruction" Heidegger means "a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn."[12]

In Foucault's later writings, the retrieval of the subject or the habilitation of a "new subject" makes his legacy with phenomenology tenuous, perhaps more enhancing, and all the more ambivalent. We would be remiss if we failed to notice his 1982 discussion of "The Subject of Power" that attempts to go "beyond structuralism" — the structuralism that dissolves 'man' as subject. He now attemps to habilitate subjectivity in his analytics of power, which is linked at the same time to freedom. As he declares:

> . . . [the] political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries. When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men — in the broadest sense of the term — one includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains.[13]

From the perspective of phenomenology, Foucault must not go unchallenged and unanswered. Our primary contention against him is that

his *architectonic* of power is built on the shaky grounding of social ontology whose pillars in different sizes and shapes are free, individual subjects. We are reminded here of Henrik Ibsen's play *The Master Builder*, whose main plot is the story of a man who, having dreamt of building a church tower that "points straight up in the free air — with the vane at a dizzy height" and "a real castle-in-the-air" on a firm foundation, plunges in the end into a ghastly death because he has built too tall a house on too shallow a foundation.[14] The phobia of the subject in Foucault's analytics of power is, unfortunately, like teaching how to swim by continously teaching aqua-phobia.[15] Yet worse, his late addendum — "free subjects" and "new forms of subjectivity" — is like urging someone to swim on dry land! There is, however, a way of constructing social ontology which has a place for the subject but is not subjective, i.e., the conception of *the subject as relational.*

Merleau-Ponty contended that "In Sartre there is a plurality of subjects but no intersubjectivity . . . The world and history are no longer a system with several points of entry but a sheaf of irreconcilable perspectives which never coexist and which are held together only by the hopeless heroism of the I."[16] To reject the "heroism of the I" is for Merleau-Ponty to decenter the subject toward the affirmation of intersubjectivity. In the analysis of language, the *act* of speaking (*parole*) and the *structure* of language (*langue*) are mutually dependent. For him, therefore, "language makes thought, as much as it is made by thought."[17] According to the linguist Emile Benveniste, "language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse."[18] Paul Ricoeur, whose hermeneutical phenomenology has been influenced by the linguistic theory of Benveniste, forces the issue against the structuralist, subjectless theory of language by formulating concisely the "habitation of the word" as "a trader between the system and the event" and by asserting that the speaking being of man and the spoken being of the world are two interdependent categories.[19] By the same token, all interpretation is the dialectical movement of transmission and renewal. The structure without the event is useless, while the event without the structure is powerless. In the end, the subject who is capable of asserting *I* is never absolutely sovereign and completely isolated: he/she is always already social or intersubjective.

To confirm the desubstantialized, rational analysis of power without subject-phobia and without sacrificing the idea of novelty and "free subjects," we should resort to auditory metaphors and models against visual ones, whose chronotopical unity is arranged in terms of the primacy of time over space or the "utopia" (*ou/topos*) of time.[20] In the first place, the auditory "tympanizes" social ontology because the ear is, as Jacques Derrida puts it, "the distinct, differentiated, articulated organ that produces the effect of proximity."[21] In the second place, it enables us to *displace* and *conceptualize*

power as polyphonic. Yet the *conception* of power as polyphonic relations preserves the "otonomy"[22] of the self which arrests hermetically sealed independence at one extreme and totalistic subjugation at the other. Musically speaking, mood as *dis/position* is the *attunement* of an individual existence to the world as a being-in-the-world. As Heidegger observes: "Mood is never merely a way of being determined in our inner being for ourselves. It is above all a way of being attuned, and letting ourselves be attuned in this or that way in mood. Mood is precisely the basic way in which we are *outside* ourselves. But that is the way we are essentially and constantly."[23]

There is, moreover, a further analogy to be drawn between the ubiquity of power and that of sound. There is a qualitative difference in human experience between the visual and the acoustic. Color does not separate itself from the object, whereas sound separates itself from its source (e.g., voice or the sound of a musical instrument). In other words, color is a dependent attribute of an object, sound is not. While the color we see is the property of a thing itself and we confront color in space, the tone we hear is not the property of anything and we encounter it out of or from space. Color is locatable and localizable in one single position with the object, whereas sound, once separated from its source, has no definite topological property or determination although its source is locatable. Most importantly, sound travels in no one particular direction, it travels in all directions. Musical tones have no locatable places: they are *everywhere* or *ubiquitous*.[24] The ubiquity of sound does not imply, however, that the language, message or meaning of music as the organized movement of sound in time is inexact and imprecise. Its meaning or message is played out, just as speech is uttered or enunciated.

Ethics or the ethics of power must be grounded firmly in social ontology — the ontology of social relations.[25] To be specific, by the basic model of social relations we mean the "neighborhood" or "gathering" in multiple forms of the I (ipseity) and the other (alterity) as equiprimordial in the shared field of time and space. We shall designate as *proximity* this chronotopically shared field of the self and the other as equiprimordial in which the sense of "otonomy" is preserved. By proximity, therefore, we refer to what the social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz calls the consociational relationship (*Umwelt*) or we-relationship (*Wirbeziehung*) in which two (or more) persons share together or simultaneously both a section of time and a sector of space, that is, chronotopical immediacy. It may be called the "paramount" relationship because it is the basic modus by which all other types of social relationship are determined and understood.[26]

Foucault's ethics of power, however, lack an ethics of proximity or, as it were, an ethics with a human face.[27] To put it more forcefully, there *cannot be any* ethics of proximity in it. It cannot be otherwise because his thought

is allergic to the subject, while the basic condition of proximity demands the *confirmation* of the self and the other as two *interdependent subjects*. In order to avoid both extremes of individualizing and totalizing tendencies, we need a third term which has primacy over both ipseity and alterity but does not exclude them as the conditions of its existence: dialogue, conversation, communication, or community — that is, the *we* as the union of ipseity and alterity governed by the sense of mutual participation and attunement. It works as the maieutic between the atomization of the individual and the depersonalization of institution.

The literary theorist Denis Donoghue defines conversation as the best form of verbal and responsive communication in a circle of proximity. It resembles a theatrical performance before a small friendly audience — a sonorous space in which the voice resonates the epitome of human presence. Ideally, conversation is more than communication: it is "communion" because what really matters in it is the presence of the desire to be with others and to share each other's experience — the processual rite of giving and receiving rather than what is said, and the encoding and decoding of its message. Conversation as communion is compensated for its open-endedness and incompletion: "The validity of the words in a conversation is their continuous participation in communication. In a conversation, the two voices are making a music of desire, varying its cadences, tones, intensities."[28]

The ethics of proximity is an embodied phenomenon which Foucault's "bio-power," too, presupposes. While the Cartesian body as "substance" is the body-object, the ethics of proximity is grounded in the body-subject. The incarcerated body as the object of the Panopticon depicted so forcefully by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* exemplifies the body-object.[29] It is the *object* of discipline and punishment. In contrast, the body-subject is an active, living agent of communication with the world of others (*Mitwelt*): "the body answers the world by authoring it."[30] Although the body seems distinctively characteristic of Foucault's new subjectivity, particularly in his historical analysis of human sexuality, he seems nonetheless unaware of, if he does not reject, the body as subject. At any rate, he fails to deal with it systematically. Thus, unfortunately, Foucault's analytics of power can offer no ethics of proximity. It was indeed a "defacement" or an "effacement" of the body-subject when he spoke poetically of the erasure of man as "a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."

The ethics of proximity as an embodied phenomenon is characteristic uniquely of Emmanuel Levinas's phenomenology of the face (*visage*) which is an ethics of the I who is capable of *facing* the other as "you." The face to face with the other may be called — following Levinas himself — an "interface."[31] To insert the name of Levinas into a phenomenological critique of Foucault's ethics of power is no accident. For Levinas is the social

ontologist (or "meontologist") and ethicist *par excellence*, in whose thought "Being" and "value" are chiasmic twins. We can go even further: the primacy of the ethical constitutes a common tie between Levinas and Foucault. For Levinas, the idea of "totality" is purely theoretical, while "infinity" is an ethical category.[32] Foucault's analytics of power or power/knowledge intertwinement, with an accent on the formation of discursive practices, may be regarded as a consolidation in form, as it were, of Levinas's "theoretical" and "ethical" concerns subsumed under the category of infinity without totality.

In Levinas's social ontology, which accentuates the primacy of the ethical, subjectivity is affirmed never for itself (i.e., never monologic or egocentric) but for another (*pour l'autre*) (i.e., dialogic or heterocentric). Subjectivity comes into being as "heteronomic": "It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I'."[33] Thus the notion of responsibility or answerability that coincides with the ethical or the ethics of proximity is, first and foremost, the confirmation of the I which is what Levinas calls the "meontological version of subjectivity," based on the face as its most basic modus. He writes, therefore, that responsibility is:

> the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity. For I describe subjectivity in ethical terms. Ethics, here, does not supplement a preceding existential base; the very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility.[34]

Martin Buber, too, propounded the ethics of responsibility. According to him, there are two primary words: the "I-Thou" and the "I-It." The subject *I* must be the I of either "I-Thou" or "I-It," or else it is nothing at all: "There is no *I* taken in itself, but only the *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* and the *I* of the primary word *I-It*."[35] In either case, the I is always already *relational* or *dialogical* through and through; where there is reality, there is sociality. In responsibility lies the *we* as the midterm between the isolated *I* and the *No-body* (*das Man* or the "anonymous Other," to use Heidegger's word).[36] Only in reference to the *we* does responsibility constitute the *ethical* condition of language itself. The question of "*who* is speaking" is never entirely subjective. Nor is language totally a subjectless structure for the simple reason that, as Edith Wyschogrod puts it tersely, it "does not float emptily in social space."[37]

Now, for Levinas, the face epitomizes the ethics of proximity. It not only establishes the direct and immediate *contact* with the other but also is solicited by and gravitated to the other. The face to face is, Levinas tells us, "the primordial production of being on which all the possible collocations of the terms are found."[38] The face *is* indeed an ethic, a human ethic: "the

epiphany of the face is ethical."[39] As the face speaks (in silence), speaks uniquely from and for each individual, it is an ethical discourse. By the same token, its *look* is not and cannot be determined by the objective color of an eye. In the final analysis, the face is an ethical hermeneutic of the body or the human as embodied.

What is the ultimate *telos* of human plurality or intersubjectivity as polyphonic? For Levinas, it is peace (or harmony). With the idea of peace the question of the ethical merges with that of the political (*res publica*). In the tradition of phenomenology — including of course the ethical phenomenology of Levinas, Hannah Arendt[40] has developed a *public philosophy* with a focus on the *specificity of power* as political. Despite their differences, some of which separate them radically, there are parallels and intersections between Arendt's and Foucault's thought.[41]

Power is defined most generally by Foucault as "the multiplicity of force relations,"[42] which is omnipresent in and all-pervasive to every level and dimension of human relationship. This view, however, produces a mixed result because it *both* dismantles *and* obfuscates the established notion of power as specifically political. On the one hand, power is regarded as not an exclusively political concept. Rather, it — like Foucault's definition of "government" — is extended to encompass a variety of nonpolitical human relationships including knowledge-claims and such institutions as the clinic, the asylum, the prison, the school, the church, and the family. As power is "decentered," everything we do is political or contains an element of politextuality. On the other hand, Foucault's view obfuscates the *specificity* of power as political, although the conceptual configuration of power as such denies no specificity.

The question of the subject is what puts Foucault and Arendt a world apart. Arendt offers an answer to Foucault's enigmatic question on the subject of power: the primary subject of power *is* the human, moral subject. Her definition of action and power based on the conception of human plurality provides us with the midworld which avoids the Scylla of individualizing and the Chrybdis of totalizing tendencies without abandoning the human, moral subject. For Arendt, the faculty of action alone — not the faculties of labor and work — makes man a political animal. Human plurality is the existential and ethical condition of both power and action. Above all, it is an association (*koinonia*) of equals as humans who are all capable of acting. Foremost, however, it is an association of subjects — that is, in Arendt's language, "distinct and unique persons." Human plurality defined as such polyphonically defies the "antipolitical" thought of uniting many into one (*homonoia*).

However, her defense of the human, moral subject in the context of human plurality and politics as polyphonic is not a subjectivist one. For action and isolation are antithetical or mutually exclusive terms. For

Arendt, power is human potential "to act in concert" (for the common good) and as such it is impossible in isolation. Thus power is not something in the possession of an individual, a group of individuals, or an organization. True to the existential and phenomenological tradition, on the other hand, Arendt's unwavering defense of the human, moral subject, as is linked to the civility of power, is directed against the undesirable political consequences of the anonymous, faceless One (*das Man*), of "ochlocracy" — to use her own phrase.[43] The exemplar of this "anonymous One" is Adolf Eichmann — the paragon of "thoughtlessness" who appeared to be "terrifyingly normal." It is important to note that Arendt does not argue for the death penalty for Eichmann on the basis of the presence or absence of his *intention to kill*. Her argument against the "banality of evil" rests on the "desubjectivized" ethics of consequences, i.e., on the ethics of responsibility, rather than on the ethics of pure intentions. As Arendt argues, politics is not the nursery, because in it obedience and support are one and the same; and where *all* are deemed or held guilty, *nobody* is. For her, in brief, political ethics make sense only when there is the human subject, the specific individual, who must be held responsible for the consequences of his "thoughtless," yet violent crimes. It was in the name of the moral solidarity of human plurality that she concluded in the last paragraph of her own "verdict" on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem: "... just as you supported and carried out a policy of not wanting to share the earth with the Jewish people and the people of a number of other nations — as though you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world — we find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the earth with you. This is the reason, and the only reason, you must hang."[44]

Arendt's "consensualist" conception of power (and action) as human potentiality to act in concert for the common good includes the existential, Nietzschean idea of *initium* (the initiative) or, to use the phrase of Merleau-Ponty, the "instituting subject" who embarks on something new at his/her birth. Being political is metaphorically conceived of as "a second birth." I say "metaphorically" because birth, as the initial insertion of the self into the world, is always already a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, political act. To be born and to act politically are two steps in the same act. What is so interesting about Arendt's discussion is the linkage between natality and (political) action. She writes that "Philosophically speaking, to act is the human answer to the condition of natality. Since we all come into the world by virtue of birth, as newcomers and beginnings, we are able to start something new; without the fact of birth we would not even know what novelty is, all 'action' would be either mere behavior or preservation."[45] For Arendt, natality, freedom, and action are the inalienable *birthrights* of men and women as human. Natality is the sacrosanct occasion for a distinct subject

— each in his or her own unique way — to embark on something new or novel. By virtue of it, human existence is *invested as freedom* (to use the expression of Levinas who implicitly refutes Sartre's conception of human existence as condemned to freedom). For that matter, a *nation*, which is the modern designation of the ultimate political unit, is, etymologically speaking, the "birthplace" of a people and as such it symbolizes a common system of institutions. The investiture of human existence as freedom, however, can never be absolute: there is no unconditional freedom insofar as we, the individuals, inhabit and share the same political arena or universe. "Political theory," writes Levinas, "derives justice from the undiscussed value of spontaneity; its problem is to ensure, by way of knowledge of the world, the most complete exercise of spontaneity by reconciling my freedom with the freedom of the other."[46] Nor is politics a zero-sum game between power and freedom. The dialectical complicity of power and freedom tells us that freedom is not the "end of power," and power is not the "end of freedom."

Most significantly, we should not lose sight of *initium* as the human gift in consortium with others to transform rather than just to preserve. The direction of transformation, however, is not predetermined or pre-ordained. In other words, the future course of human action is unpredictable or — as Arendt put it — "incalculable." The reverse side of unpredictability is irreversibility. In terms of the human faculty, they are called the capacity of "promising" and "forgiving," respectively, which marks off human existence from animal life. Arendt goes out of her way to emphasize the "unequaled clarity" of Nietzsche on "the connection between human sovereignty and the faculty of making promises," whose relation to Nietzsche's "will to power," according to her, is often overlooked by Nietzsche scholars.[47] Be that as it may, Arendt shows the indeterminacy of power as political action in terms of its etymological derivation from Greek, Latin, and German: *dynamis*, *potentia*, and *Macht* — the "potential" character in parcitular of *Macht* being rooted in *mögen* and *möglich*.[48] The following passage from *The Human Condition* sums up the qualities and attributes of power as the essence of political action: "Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities."[49]

What is sadly missing from Foucault's account of power is the idea of *initium* as freedom to transform old realities and create new ones by each subject in concert with others. Being "compatriotic" to power, Foucault's formulation of resistance is ironically — I say "ironically" because his analytics of power in form and tone is agonistic — too undialectical to function effectively as the agent of historical and social change.[50] To use the

existentialist language of Simone de Beauvoir, Foucault's formulation allows no genuine "ethics of ambiguity,"[51] that is, the *ambi/guity* particularly between power and resistance.

By way of conclusion it should be emphasized that the primary subject of power is the human, moral subject who is capable of activating — and activating anew — meaning and value in words and deeds for both himself and others. As human interexistence is the existential and axiological condition of power, so is social ontology the presupposed ground for the analytics of power. There is the dialogical way of thinking human intersubjectivity which neither overdetermines nor underdetermines the power of the subject. Since we are concerned primarily with the *intelligibility* of power in history and society, there is no easy escape from the notion of subjectivity. Human subjects are called "self-interpreting animals," by virtue of which, as Foucault himself readily acknowledges, the sciences of man are differentiated from those of nature.[52] To paraphrase the phenomenological thought of Merleau-Ponty: to be reflective, to be self-interpreting, philosophy must interrogate the set of questions wherein he who questions is himself implicated by the question. Not only would history remain unintelligible and intransigent, but also historical change would be, at best, enigmatic without the subject who triggers it. Defaced man at the edge of history and politics is condemned to nihilism.[53] Once power is left to itself without the subject, the moral subject, it subverts or even destroys the very ground and rationale of what defines power as an ensemble of multiple relations.[54] In the end, Foucault's analytics of power is fractured and scarred by the radical discontinuity between the end and the nascence of the (new) subject. In other words, his idea of new subjectivity is left ungrafted to the analytics of power. And yet to give credence to the idea of historical continuity is to harbor or shelter the sovereignty of consciousness. To translate the same issue into the problematical context of literary theory today: in Foucault's thought, the author dies, without the birth of the reader who is capable of fusing the horizons of the past and the future or mediating the continuity and discontinuity of the world and history as text or intertext.[55] This, I submit, is the ultimate, unresolved dilemma, if not blackhole, of Foucault's analysis of knowledge, politics, and history. Yet as long as there are traces and tracks of knowledge, politics, and history, it is premature to renounce, abandon, or write a requiem for the moral subject.

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Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 328.
2. Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 375.
3. Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 222-23.
4. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon and trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 198.
5. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfeld (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).
6. *The Order of Things*, p. 387.
7. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 12.
8. Many, if not all, commentators on Foucault have come to view the idea of discontinuity as one of the most radical features of his thought. Foucault himself addresses the question of continuity and discontinuity in one of his interviews: "Power and Truth" (1977). See *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 111-13. According to Paul Rabinow, Foucault is a philosopher of both continuity and discontinuity. Rabinow comments that "Indeed, Foucault has often mistakenly been seen as a philosopher of discontinuity. The fault is partially his own; works such as *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things* certainly do emphasize abrupt changes in the structures of discourse of the human sciences. But Foucault has also stressed, in other contexts, the longer-range continuities in cultural practices. The sharp lines of discursive discontinuity in the human sciences and the longer lines of continuity in non-discursive practices provide Foucault with a powerful and flexible grid of interpretation with which to approach relations of knowledge and power. It should be underlined, however, that this is not a philosophy of history which for some mysterious reason glorifies discontinuity" ("Introduction," in *The Foucault Reader*, p. 9).
9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952-1960*, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 40.
10. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 175-76.
11. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), *passim.*
12. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 23. This critical interchange of continuity and discontinuity is best worked out by Hans-Georg Gadamer in his philosophical hermeneutics, in his notions of historically effective consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*), and the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*). Gadamer insists that "obedience" to tradition is "neither blind nor slavish." *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 34. Whatever unbridgeable differences there may exist between Jürgen Habermas and Gadamer, Habermas, who is critical of Gadamer's idea of tradition in particular and his hermeneutics in general as too conservative, also allows room for an interchange between continuity and discontinuity in language as well as communication when he asserts that language is "inwardly as well as outwardly porous." See Jürgen Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*," in *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, ed. Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p. 340.
13. "Afterword: The Subject and Power," pp. 216 and 212. Interestingly, Sartre's taped dialogue with Pierre Victor would be titled *Power and Freedom* — a treatise on morality which is, according

to Sartre, the fulfillment of his promise in *Being and Nothingness*. See "Translator's Introduction," in Francis Jeanson, *Sartre and the Problem of Morality*, trans. Robert V. Stone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. xxv.

14. See *Six Plays by Henrik Ibsen*, trans. Eva Le Gallienne (New York: Modern Library, 1957), pp. 458 and 498. Ibsen's play is also alluded to in Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 48.

15. See Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 17.

16. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures of the Dialectic*, trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 205.

17. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*, trans. Hugh J. Silverman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 102.

18. Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 225.

19. Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 92 and 261.

20. Cf. Alfred Schutz, "Making Music Together," *Collected Papers*, II: *Studies in Social Theory*, ed. Arvid Brodersen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 159-60: "a study of the social relationships connected with the musical process may lead to some insights valid for many other forms of social intercourse, perhaps even to illumination of a certain aspect of the structure of social interaction as such that has not so far attracted from social scientists the attention it deserves."

    This cardinal insight of Schutz has still not been tapped fully by the human sciences. Arguing against classical mechanics cloaked and masked in visual and spatial models, Milic Capek proposes that auditory models are better suited to explain the dynamics of contemporary quantum physics. He writes: "In the musical experience of melody or polyphony, the situation is considerably different. The quality of a new tone, in spite of its irreducible individuality, is tinged by the whole antecedent musical context which, in turn, is retroactively changed by the emergence of a new musical quality. The individual tones are not externally related units of which the melody is additively built; neither is their individuality absorbed or dissolved in the undifferentiated unity of the musical whole. The musical phrase is a *successive differentiated whole* which remains a whole in spite of its dynamic wholeness. Like every dynamic whole it exhibits a synthesis of unity and multiplicity, of continuity and discontinuity; but it is not the unity of an undifferentiated simultaneous whole nor is it the plurality of juxtaposed units; it is neither continuity in the mathematical sense of infinite divisibility nor is it the discontinuity of rigid atomic blocs." *Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961), pp. 371-72.

    In this context, at the risk of going beyond his own intended formulation, let me extrapolate and speculate on the seminal insight of Foucault's analytics of power as a cluster or an ensemble of dynamic relations. For it transforms political thinking from the age of classical mechanics to that of quantum physics, from the closed, static world to the infinite, dynamic universe of power. Foucault's is the quantum field of power whose dynamic quality derives from the temporalization (dynamization) of matter and motion, while classical mechanics was obsessed with "timeless" spatialization. Power associated with "free subjects" may be said to be a relational field of quanta governed by the principle of indeterminacy.

21. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. xvii.

22. The neologism *otonomy* is patterned after Jacques Derrida's discussion of Nietzsche under the playful title "otobiographies" (oto/biographies) in place of "autobiographies." By "otonomy," I wish to preserve the double meaning of "autonomy" without being subjective and the

sensibility of the "associative ear" rather than the "collecting eye" — to use Eric Havelock's phrases. See Jacques Derrida, "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," trans. Avital Ronell, in *The Ear of the Other*, ed. Christie V. McDonald (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), pp. 1-38. Of course, we cannot afford to ignore the (musical) aestheticism of Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967). Music is for Nietzsche one way to make the aesthetic intelligible and grasp it directly: "Quite generally, only music, placed beside the world, can give us an idea of what is meant by the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon" (*ibid.*, p. 141). Social and political philosophy has yet to come to terms with the radical, immensely important implications of Nietzsche's transgression of Platonism, part of which is the opposition of *aesthesis* to *theoria*.

23. Martin Heidegger, *Neitzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will To Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 99. In *Poetic Thinking: An Approach to Heidegger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), David Halliburton describes the encompassing circle of a musical performance that captures Heidegger's sense of mood, attunement, and proximity: "In the performance of a symphony, for example, responsibility may be seen in the interconnecting indebtedness of each constituent: the musicians, as users of equipment (instruments, chairs, music stands, and the like), together with their skills; the artisans responsible for the preparation of the equipment; the members of the audience, together with their capacity to hear and to sustain attention; the score, a being with a thingly character that allies it with equipment even as it carries an already constituted inclination (the totality of the composer's notations); the composer, as one who brings forth within the same order as the artisan; that artisan who is the printer of the score; the manner (in the sense of melody, timbre, tone) of the score as performed; the space of time in which that manner emerges through the concerted composure of performance; the space of time of the tradition without which the music could not move into its own articulation — without which, as the temporal structure that preserves the reciprocal responsibility of all the constituents, it would not be music; and finally, the space of time which is the world play's manner of moving, through all that is thus indebted, to its own disclosure" (p. 217).

24. For a detailed discussion of the nature of music as the organized movement of sound in time, see Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956). Cf. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Message* (New York: Bantam, 1967), p. 111: "The ear favors no particular 'point of view.' We are *enveloped* by sound. It forms a seamless web around us. We say, 'Music shall fill the air.' We never say, 'Music shall fill a particular segment of the air.' We hear sounds from everywhere, without having to focus. Sounds come from 'above,' from 'below,' from in 'front' of us, from 'behind' us, from our 'right,' from our 'left.' We can't shut out sound automatically. We simply are not equipped with earlids. Whereas a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniformed connected kind, the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships."

25. For a critical, extensive account of social ontology in the phenomenological movement, see Michael Theunissen, *The Other*, trans. Christopher Macann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).

26. See Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967). For the social ontology of Schutz, see Helmut R. Wagner, "Toward an Anthropology of the Life-World: Alfred Schutz's Quest for the Ontological Justification of the Phenomenological Undertaking," *Human Studies*, 6 (1983): 239-46; and "The Limitations of Phenomenology: Alfred Schutz's Critical Dialogue with Edmund Husserl," *Husserl Studies*, 1 (1984): 157-78. Incidentally, no one has thus far examined seriously the philosophical consequences of Schutz's proposal in his 1945 article on multiple realities: the idea of what he calls the *epoche* of the natural attitude which, unlike transcendental reduction which suspends our belief in the reality of the world, suspends doubt itself in the existence of the external world. In the *epoche* of the natural attitude, therefore, what we put in brackets is the doubt that the world and its objects might be otherwise that it appears to us." See Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, I: *The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 229.

27. On the issue of proximity in recent French intellectual thought, see Joseph Libertson, *Proximity: Levinas, Blanchot, Bataille and Communication* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982). In the tradition of phenomenology, there are four philosophies of proximity: (1) cosmic, (2) linguistic, (3) ethical, and (4) political. Each has been worked out by, and is characteristic of, Heidegger, Gadamer, Levinas, and Arendt, respectively, although there is definitely some overlapping of each over the others. Heidegger's cosmic proximity is typified in his discussion of the fourfold unity (*das Geviert*) of earth, sky, gods, and mortals. See particularly *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971). Hans-Georg Gadamer's linguistic proximity is found in, for example, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1972) and *Dialogue and Dialectic*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). For Levinas's ethical proximity, see *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969); and *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981). And for Arendt's political proximity, see *The Human Condition*.

28. Denis Donoghue, *Ferocious Alphabets* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981), p. 45.

29. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

30. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 175. Here I cannot resist quoting this passage which describes the role of the lived body in Bakhtin's dialogical philosophy. For Bakhtin, dialogism is to monologism what Copernican heliocentrism is to Ptolemaic geocentrism. His sensitivity to the lived body, which is not unlike Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh, is rooted deeply in Russian Orthodoxy's belief in the corporeality of Christ and kenosis or the potential holiness of matter. The implications of Bakhtin's dialogism for social, political, and moral philosophy is enormous since it, according to Clark and Holquist, "is not intended to be merely another theory of literature or even another philosophy of language, but is an account of relations between people and between persons and things that cuts across religious, political, and aesthetic boundaries" (*Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 348).

31. See Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986). p. 20.

32. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 83. This work of Levinas as a treatise on political philosophy is yet to be explored.

33. "Dialogue with Levinas," p. 27.

34. Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1982), p. 95.

35. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, 2nd ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 4. It should be noted here that Levinas contends that Buber's "I-Thou" is the relation of "a symmetrical copresence" (Levinas and Kearney, "Dialogue with Levinas," p. 31). Levinas's contention should be clarified and may be called into question.

36. The German etymology clearly shows a familial circle of "word" (*Wort*), "answer" (*Antwort*), "to answer" (*antworten*), and "to be responsible for" (*verantworten*). See Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 206, n. 2. For the phenomenological ethics of speaking as dialogical, see Georges Gusdorf, *Speaking*, trans. Paul T. Brockelman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965). One of the most thoroughgoing dialogisms has been developed by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). See particularly, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) and two works published under the name V. N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, trans. I. R. Titunik (New York: Academic Press, 1976) and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) focuses on the implications of Bakhtin's dialogism on the philosophy of the human sciences.

37. Edith Wyschogrod, *Spirit in Ashes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) p. 207.

38. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 395.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

40. The subtitle of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's intellectual biography of Arendt — "Love of the World" — sums up, I think, Arendt's political ethics of proximity. See *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

41. For example, the triological thematics of Foucault's *The Order of Things* by way of life, labor, and language and Arendt's *The Human Condition* in the forms of labor, work, and action go beyond the casual matchings of their keywords. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966) pay attention to the totalitarian framework of power and the political evils of Western society particularly by means of the "instrumentalization" of the world and humanity.

42. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 92.

43. Soren Kierkegaard's *The Present Age*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), set the tone for the existentialist concern for modern anonymity. The work in the same vein which is most familiar to political scientists is José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: Norton, 1932), whose central thesis, I might add, has quite often been misunderstood.

44. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 279.

45. Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 179. Hans Jonas emphasizes the importance of Arendt's notion of natality because she introduced a new category into the philosophical doctrine of man. See "Acting, Knowing, Thinking: Gleanings from Hannah Arendt's Philosophical Work," *Social Research*, 44 (Spring 1977): 30.

46. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 83.

47. *The Human Condition*, p. 245, n. 83.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Cf. Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 188: "Perhaps his interest in rules is part of the reason why Foucault is unable to deal with, or provide an account of, historical change."

51. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Citadel Press, 1962) is a rare and classical treatise in the development of existentialist ethics. By ambiguity, she means the existential condition of choice. She contends that "the existentialist doctrine permits the elaboration of an ethics, but it even appears to us as the only philosophy in which an ethics has its place. For, in a metaphysics of transcendence in the classical sense of the term, evil is reduced to error; and in humanistic philosophies it is impossible to account for it, man being defined as complete in a complete world . . . Nothing is decided in advance, and it is because man has something to lose and because he can lose that he can also win" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

    In the context of Schelling's philosophy, Heidegger discusses the notion of freedom as the capacity of both good and evil: as he writes, "Rather, freedom is freedom for good *and* evil. The 'and,' the possibility of this ambiguity and everything hidden in it is what is decisive. That means that the whole concept of freedom must change" (*Schelling's Treatise*, p. 97).

52. See Charles Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals," *Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), vol. 2: *Human Agency and Language*, pp. 45-76. Taylor writes that "Human beings are self-interpreting animals. This is a widely echoing theme of

contemporary philosophy. It is central to a thesis about the sciences of man, and what differentiates them from the sciences of nature, which passes through Dilthey and is very strong in the late twentieth century. It is one of the basic ideas of Heidegger's philosophy, early and late. Partly through his influence, it has been made the starting point for a new skein of connected conceptions of man, self-understanding and history, of which the most prominent protagonist has been Gadamer. At the same time, this conception of man as self-interpreting has been incorporated into the work of Habermas, the most important successor of the post-Marxist line of thought known somewhat strangely as critical theory" (*ibid.*, p. 45).

53. Cf. Maurice Merlean-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, trans. John Wild and James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), pp. 52-53: "History has no meaning, if this meaning is understood as that of a river which, under the influence of all-powerful causes, flows towards an ocean in which it disappears. Every appeal to universal history cuts off the meaning of the specific event, renders effective history insignificant, and is a nihilism in disguise."

54. Cf. Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 54: "... once structures were freed from any subject at all, delivered over totally to their own play, they would lose what *defines* them as structures — that is, any objective coordinates of organization at all ... Structure therewith capsizes into its antithesis, and post-structuralism proper is born, or what can be defined as a subjectivism without a subject." In *Towards Deep Subjectivity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), Roger Poole, too, contends, albeit in a different context, that "Positivism in fact weakens the case of objectivity by refusing to consider the hidden structures of subjectivity" (p. 75). In *Foucault, Marxism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), Mark Poster raises some important questions concerning Foucault's notion of the subject. For a general discussion of the subject in reference to literary theory, see David Carroll, *The Subject in Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

55. It may be said that everything — everything scholarly at any rate — becomes the matter of reading. What I have in mind is the phenomenology of reading or *Rezeptionsästhetik* which has been exemplified particularly in the following works: Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) and *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) and *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). For a classical text on the subject in American literary theory today, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). Cf. the author's "The Edification of Oral Hermeneutics and the Ecology of the Text," in *Proceedings of the Xth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, vol. 2: *Comparative Poetics*, ed. Claudio Guillen and Peggy Escher (New York: Garland, 1986), pp. 539-50; and Mary Louise Pratt, "Interpretive Strategies/Strategic Interpretations: On Anglo-American Reader-Response Criticism," in *Postmodernism and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Arac (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 26-54.