

TUIJA PULKKINEN

The POST- MODERN AND POLITI- CAL AGENCY

"Tuija Pulkkinen's *The Postmodern and Political Agency* is a dextrous writing performance. Ranging from nineteenth century treatments of civil society to postmodern constructions of 'the political,' her analyses are philosophically deep, politically astute, and consistently critically focused. Political philosophers and feminist theorists will be challenged, and the general reader will be immensely edified."

MICHAEL J. SHAPIRO, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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TUIJA PULKKINEN

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PREFACE

When I first began to sketch the outline of this book in the late 1980's I had no idea that my unfashionable interest in the 19th century nationalist political thought and linking it to issues of gender would soon turn out to be a common topic. Today the construction of gender and nation is at the focus of a lively discussion. Little did I know that the performative theory of gender and Judith Butler's work would attract such a phenomenal following. I discovered Butler's texts after hearing her talk in Santa Cruz in 1991 and hastened to introduce her work into Finland through my articles which then became part of this book. I had not read anybody else's analysis of her work when writing mine. I considered her theorizing postmodern and as such not likely to be widely welcomed. However, I soon realized that it was not only my subjective conviction that her writings are indicative of a turning of tables in the discourse of philosophy, politics and gender. Including Butler in a treatise on political theory along with Foucault and Lyotard does not appear so peculiar today as it did ten years ago. Indeed, after the first printing of this book in 1996 such a large part of its topics and themes have gained in rather than lost their current interest that its reprinting seems at place. Particularly as these ever so urgent topics include the book's central question, political agency and judgement under the anxiety over cultural relativism raised by postmodern respect for differences and rejection of one truth.

The first edition of this book appeared in the series of The Department of Philosophy at University of Helsinki. It was soon sold out and a Finnish translation, published by Gaudeamus, followed in 1999. For this second English edition I have altered very little, mainly the language has been edited by Elizabeth Moulton whose contribution I greatly appreciate.

Much of the intellectual background of this book dates back to the critical theory discussions in the 1970's and 1980's Finland. Many fellow scholars and students at the University of Helsinki and especially the circle around the journal *Tiede ja Edistys* have nourished my interest in political theory. I am particularly indebted to such scholars of history of political thought as

Ilkka Patoluoto, Matti Viikari, Hannu Sivenius and Kari Palonen, as well as to a myriad of individuals who contributed to inspiring discussions in various study groups.

I did most of the writing for this book during the years 1991-1994 while I was as a visiting scholar at the University of California Santa Cruz which tremendously shaped the outcome. I wish to thank many people involved in the Feminist Studies Focused Research Activity and History of Consciousness Program, above all Wendy Brown, Jocelyn and David Hoy and Hayden White for their comments upon chapters of the book. The finishing touches were made back in Helsinki where philosophers as well as the feminist studies and queer studies community took an active interest in my work which stimulated me at the last stages of the undertaking. I wish to thank Finnish Cultural Foundation for enabling me to start my project. Since then the Academy of Finland has generously sponsored my work for which I am very grateful.

Tuija Pulkkinen

INTRODUCTION

In this book I confront the transcendental subject-assumptions of modern political theory in both its liberal and Hegelian-Marxian form. The liberal ontology assumes a transcendentially singular individual agent, the Hegelian-Marxian ontology a transcendental communal will. I argue that both traditions are bound by subject-philosophy, which postmodern thought must question in order to both fight modern universalism and address difference.

I defend a non-foundational understanding of the political agent as constructed and situated. I claim that an individual, moral-political judging self should be understood genealogically, without a core. I also argue that politics should be understood agonistically, both without the horizon of the unity of will and without the horizon of agreement between wills.

Simultaneously, I defend a strong notion of individual agency as the subject of judgements within politics. I also defend the meaning of identity-based political agency, claiming that the constructedness of agency does not make it any less of an agency.

Two distinctions are central to the structure of this book: modern/postmodern and liberal/Hegelian. I define the modern and the postmodern as modes of thought or thinking attitudes, not as periods of history, societal formations, aesthetic styles, or cultural phenomena.

The modern mode of thinking, as I define it, constantly contests foundations in the hope of revealing the final basis or core. The postmodern refuses the repetitive movement of stripping and instead pays attention to the layers. This occurs under the contention that there is no basic core in phenomena, only new layers behind others. In this sense the postmodern is anti-foundational. I will specify my approach in the chapter devoted to the discussion on the modern and the postmodern.

The distinction between liberal and Hegelian refers to two ideal types, the first based on the Anglo-American and the second on the German tradition of political thought. In my analysis I approach them as two distinct ways of theoretically constructing political space. The logical order of elements is different in each of the two political ontologies.

The Anglo-American liberal political universe is constructed out of basic

elements which I refer to as “transcendentally singular individual agents.” They are transcendental because they are not actual individuals but theoretical entities, stripped of their individual characteristics and left only with the indispensable ones. The two basic characteristics of transcendental individuals are that they have individual interest, and that they have the capacity to choose.

Everything else that is theorized in the liberal framework is built out of the elements of transcendental individuals as interest-invested agents. Concepts of community, society, politics, state, civil society etc. are logically secondary to the concept of the individual.

The Hegelian-Marxian political ontology differs quite distinctly from liberal ontology. In the Hegelian-Marxian ontology, the basic element is not a transcendental individual subject, but instead a community, which is understood as a cultural-social-political entity. The most remarkable characteristic of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology is that community is conceived of as a subject within its framework. More specifically, it is conceived of as an autonomous self-reflective and self-controlling Kantian type of subject.

The idea of community as a reflecting and acting subject is present in Rousseau’s *volonté générale*, which presents community as a will. It is more fully present as a self-reflective agent in Hegel’s state, which is a consciousness in search of self-consciousness. It is also present in the Marxian ideal of the total self-governance or self-control by the social subject of itself.

In this ontology the social subject is logically prior to any other conceptualization in the construction of political space, including individual agents, who are conceivable as agents only when the social is already assumed.

Each of the two modern political ontologies have their own specific consequences and effects with regard to how public space and issues connected with it, such as democracy, are conceptualized. One of my interests in this study is to identify these conceptualizations and some of their respective effects and limitations in contemporary thought. I claim, for example, that the feminist discussion carries distinctive traits descending from both of the two traditions, and that the same holds true for the discussion on identity-politics, of which I present the example of lesbian identity.

The liberal and Hegelian-based political ontologies both rely on a notion of agency in the form of a single closed subject or self. As my interest lies in questioning both the transcendental subjectivity of the liberal theory and the self-reflective subjectivity of the Hegelian theory, and simultaneously thematizing political agency and judgement, the three theoreticians I find most interesting in terms of providing material for this postmodern endeavor are Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Judith Butler.

I consider the Foucauldian principle of genealogy and power as crucial for the postmodern critique of the liberal conception of agency. I view Lyotard’s

critique of the ideal of societal control through knowledge as crucial to the critique of the Hegelian-Marxian concept of communal will. Judith Butler's work on genealogy and performativity in connection to sex and gender provides further material on the postmodern perspective.

The postmodern has been criticized for losing all possibility of ethics and politics with "the death of the subject." The loss of moral autonomy, its critics claim, occurs with the adoption of the view of the social constructedness of subjectivity. Marxist theoreticians have accused the postmodern perspective of lacking political involvement, of inherent relativism, aestheticism, and an incapacity to resist power. The feminist critique has asked why postmodern thinking is so eager to abandon the notion of agency just at the point when women have finally begun to reach the status of a political agent. In this book, I will defend the view of the postmodern as an extremely political way of thinking. I will also defend the view that it is possible simultaneously to conceive of human agency as constructed and as an agency. Ultimately, I seek to problematize the autonomy/determinism distinction, which I view as lying at the heart of the dispute.

The book is comprised of three parts. In Part One, I introduce my concept of the postmodern and discuss modern political thought in its two ideal types, liberal thought and Hegelian thought. In Part Two, I discuss Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard as providing postmodern themes in connection to the concepts of power and community. In Part Three, I take up agency. The first two chapters deal with identity as a political category. In the first one I discuss the idea of women as a nation, and in the second one I focus on lesbian identity. In the third chapter I discuss the moral-political capacity to judge and how it is to be combined with the idea of the constructedness of the individual self.

Each one of the chapters includes buffer texts by contemporary writers, against whom I argue at various points in order to make my point. I disagree with each of them to varying degrees.

In Part One, my purpose is to display the modern/postmodern and liberal/Hegelian distinctions. In the first chapter I discuss Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato's concept of civil society. I show that their concept of civil society is attached to both forms of modern political ontology and succeeds only in combining them, not in contesting them.

In the third chapter I analyze Jürgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, Jean Baudrillard and Jean-François Lyotard on democracy. I show that Habermas adheres to both forms of modern political ontology and shows no postmodern concern, and that Baudrillard adheres to the Hegelian-Marxian ontology and does not question it from a postmodern perspective. Rorty shows a clear postmodern concern in general, but fails to question the liberal ontology. I

claim that Lyotard, whose starting point is the Hegelian-Marxian ontological assumption, lies at the edge of the postmodern.

In Part Two, in which I discuss Foucault and Lyotard, I show in the first chapter how I disagree with Martin Kusch about how exactly to interpret Foucault's texts on power. Kusch presents a thorough and accurate analysis of Foucault's concept of power, which I mostly agree with, but which, as I show, nevertheless reverts to liberal ontology in its specifics.

In the second chapter I argue against Seyla Benhabib's understanding of Lyotard's agonistic view of politics. Benhabib, I claim, fails to take into consideration that Lyotard functions within the Hegelian-Marxian ontology and the Kantian moral frame when she accuses him of advocating interest pluralism. In this chapter I also compare Jean-Luc Nancy's Heideggerian approach to community to Lyotard's, and argue that Nancy's approach is foundationalist in comparison to the Lyotardian view.

In Part Three, the buffer text I use in the first chapter is by Carole Pateman, who offers a successful feminist critique of liberal theory, but, I claim, is unsuccessful in her criticism of Hegel, because she fails to take into consideration the ontological difference. In the same chapter I illustrate how Benedict Anderson, in his analysis of the notion of nation, neglects to consider the Hegelian roots of nationalist thinking, and assumes the hegemony of liberal ontology.

In the second chapter, in which I focus on lesbian identity, I discuss foundations. I take up the thinking of Donna Haraway, who successfully explores the constructed nature of scientific truth, but who nevertheless, I argue, assumes a horizon of unconstructed nature in a way which must be questioned in the postmodern. I also argue that Teresa de Lauretis, who successfully theorizes on the specificity of lesbian desire, nevertheless makes a value statement in which she prioritizes the real over the imitated in an inherently non-postmodern way.

In the third chapter I discuss Bonnie Honig's interpretation of Hannah Arendt. Honig ingeniously explores the Nietzschean debt in Arendt's thinking, treats Arendt's action as intrinsic and performative, and interestingly illustrates the agonistic aspect of Arendtian thought. However, it is my contention that she over-interprets Arendt's position as a strongly antifoundationalist thinker regarding the question of self.

The various discussions contained in this book are indicative of my specific position. I am very critical not only of the liberal and Marxian approaches, but also of the discourse ethical and communitarian approaches in political theory. In my view, the postmodern perspective in political theory, the direction in favor of which I programmatically argue in this book, is more rewarding than any of the other perspectives in terms of my own judgement in the here and now: the respect for difference.

PART ONE

Chapter 1

THE LIBERAL/THE HEGELIAN

A common conception juxtaposes the Hegelian-Marxian tradition and the liberal Anglo-American tradition by their approach to private initiative and governmental control. The Hegelian-Marxian tradition is in favor of state control, and the liberal tradition against it. In this context, the concept of “civil society,” is habitually used to signify the sphere of political freedom, free association, and civil initiative, which is defined as the opposite of state power. Moreover, “civil society” has become a concept which signifies the ideal of an active participatory democracy. As such, “civil society” is associated with liberal thought and contrasted with the Hegelian tradition.

“Civil society,” however, is also a Hegelian concept. It appears as one of the three major societal spheres in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, in contrast to “the state” and “the family.”¹ The Hegelian-Marxian political tradition also strongly expresses the ideal of active participation in political life, sometimes even more demandingly than the liberal theory.

In the contemporary discussion on political theory, in the aftermath of state-socialism and in the context of the debates on the market-driven economy, the welfare state, rights-liberalism and communitarianism, a new defense of participatory activism has come forward in connection with the concept of civil society. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato’s book, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, offers an elaborate example of this project.² In their analysis of various aspects of civil society Cohen and Arato do not confine themselves to the liberal conception, but also include considerations on the impact of Hegelian-Marxian theory on the contemporary ideals of participatory democracy. Their redefinition of “civil society” is put forward as a new tool for critical theory. Since my interest lies in detecting whether contemporary political theory continues to operate within the confines of the two types of modern political ontology Cohen’s and Arato’s proposal presents itself as an interesting object of investigation.

In the beginning of this chapter, I will engage in a critical discussion of Cohen and Arato's project. In my view, Cohen and Arato remain attached to the modern political ontology in both of its forms. They present their redefinition as radical political theory, yet I will contrast it with what I consider a more radical effort: to refuse the presuppositions of the liberal and Hegelian-Marxian theories.

However, in this chapter, my main purpose is to explore the structure and effects of the liberal and Hegelian traditions as modern forms of political thought. The accent will be on the difference between how the two traditions approach their respective ideals of democratic political community and public participation, based on how each of them constructs the concepts "civil society" and "the state", "liberty" and "freedom". I would claim that an investigation into the political ontology of modern political theory is a precondition for a profound post-Marxist and post-liberal critical approach.

Public Political Space

The opening of public political space was the central issue in the political life of Europe in the last century.³ In Germany, this was increasingly so in the period immediately following the French Revolution and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is essentially a post-revolutionary treatise.⁴

Anglo-American academic writing on political theory has long remained extremely controversial in its relation to the Hegelian-Marxian tradition. Karl Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies* is the best known example of this hostility.⁵ Hegel was presented as a totalitarian philosopher and an enemy of all civic liberty. From the 1970's on several remarkable scholars such as Charles Taylor, Shlomo Avineri, Zigniew Pelczynski and Allen Wood have provided and established a much more historically accurate view of Hegel within the Anglo-American context.⁶ Since then Hegel has been presented as a theorist of the modern state, someone for whom the ideal of public participation in politics and the free formation of opinion was of great value and importance and whose thoughts were closely connected to the ideals of the French revolution. A similar new view of Hegel had already been present in the German Hegel-research by Joachim Ritter, Manfred Riedel and Karl-Heinz Ilting, and was later developed by Henning Ottman, Ludwig Siep, Adriaan Peperzak, Udo Rameil and Andreas Wildt.⁷ This research has shown that Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right* opposed the unrestricted monarchy with its rights of censorship, and argued in favor of a constitutionally restricted monarchy and the ideal of public participation in politics.

The idea of public space, the formation of public opinion and general participation in the political process, was a common theme for both of the main traditions of political thought in the last century. In addition, the practical goals in politics, such as freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of the press, were common to both traditions.⁸

While there is an oppositional character between the two traditions, I claim that it lies not so much in the issues of public space and participation, but rather in the profound difference in the way in which these issues are conceptualized. The two traditions do not speak the same language. They apply the central vocabulary of political theory in varying, sometimes opposing, meanings in comparison to each other.

The mutual strangeness of the vocabularies is visible and pronounced in the confusion which results when each of the conceptual frameworks is translated from the original English and German into a third language in a country in which both of the traditions are present, like Finland. The Finnish *kansalaisyhteiskunta* and the Swedish *medborgerliga samhället* stand for both the English “civil society” and the Hegelian *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (civil society). The Finnish *vapaus* and Swedish *frihet* stand for both the English “liberty” and the German *Freiheit* (freedom). Still, the Hegelian “civil society” (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) and the liberal “civil society” are completely different concepts and have completely different usage in respect to the concepts of “state” or “government”, and to the concepts of “liberty” and “freedom”. In some cases the key concepts are defined in a diametrically opposed way. For example, in the liberal tradition, the term “civil society” is connected to “liberty” and necessity is connected to the “state”, and in the Hegelian tradition, the *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (civil society) is connected with necessity and the “state” is associated with freedom.⁹

In my view, this contradiction is not merely a contradiction of conceptions, but also implies a very profound difference in concepts - and in conceptual networks. The Hegelian *Staat* (state), *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (civil society) and *Freiheit* (freedom) are simply just not translatable into their English counterparts – or at least not without extensive explanations of how they actually define what they seem to merely name. This explanation comprises the content of studies such as this one.

I am interested in this vocabulary based difference, which I find to be of extreme significance, to the point of referring to it as a difference in political ontology. My contention is that the differentiation between the two modern political ontologies has continuous relevance in the discussion of political theory.

Civil Society in Cohen and Arato

What is the content of the concept of civil society which Cohen and Arato propose as the proper tool for contemporary political theory? First of all, for them, civil society is a practical concept in connection with present day politics. They contend that the revival of the concept of civil society first occurred in the “struggles of the democratic oppositions in Eastern Europe against authoritarian socialist party-states.”¹⁰

Second, Cohen and Arato distinguish civil society from both political society (the society of parties, political organization and political publics) and from economic society. They understand “civil society” as a “sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), social movements and forms of public communication.”¹¹ The notion that “modern civil society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization” is of utmost importance to them.¹²

When it comes to their relationship with the Hegelian definition of civil society to which they devote a significant amount of consideration, they first note that: “No one could seriously contest Hegel’s position as the most important nineteenth-century predecessor of and inspiration to twentieth-century analyses of civil society.”¹³ In their view Hegelian theory is crucial to the idea of civil society, because Hegel reconstructs civil society in terms of levels of legality, plurality, association and publicity, and because Hegel links civil society and the state in terms of mediation.¹⁴ But they also criticize both Hegel’s way of constructing the concept of civil society and his conception of the relationship of civil society and the state, which they call “statist”. In particular, they contest Hegel’s inclusion of economy as a level of civil society which they see as the reason for his favoring state over civil society.¹⁵

In order to return to Cohen’s and Arato’s proposal for the use of the concept “civil society” and evaluate it, I will now more closely examine the two separate political ontologies, which, I propose, rule as ideal type constructions within modern political thought. Let us examine how the liberal tradition and the Hegelian tradition differ in their construction of political space, by embarking on a brief excursion into the conceptual realm of some classics of political thought.

“Liberty” in the Anglo-American Tradition

Thomas Hobbes’s favorite metaphor in *Leviathan* (1651) is Galileo Galilei’s physics of motion, which he viewed as a genuinely philosophical notion. Galilei challenged the Aristotelian way of asking questions about the initiator

of a motion. Instead of asking “What caused this body to move?”, that is, instead of trying to explain motion, he stated that the motion of bodies need not be explained at all. The movement of heavenly bodies can be characterized as the initial state of affairs. All bodies are in perpetual motion, and if nothing gets in their way, if they are not obstructed, they continue on their course of movement. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes turned this Galilean notion of free physical motion into a concept of initial human freedom. In his metaphor, free bodily motion corresponds to free human action conducted in accordance with the individual’s own will. If not obstructed an individual will continue to act according to his own. Hobbes writes in *Leviathan*:

Liberty, or Freedom, signifieth (properly) the absence of Opposition; (by Opposition, I mean external Impediments of motion;) and may be applied no less to Irrationall, and Inanimate creatures, than to Rationall. For whatsoever is so tyed, or environed, as it cannot move, but within a certain space, which space is determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it hath not Liberty to go further... And according to this proper, and generally received meaning of the world, A Free-Man, is he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindred to doe what he has a will to.¹⁶

By defining liberty and its connection to will in this way, Hobbes initiated a very strong tradition of political thought. This conception of liberty has been an inherent presupposition in an immense amount of political writing during the past three centuries and through the present day. Liberty is basically understood as the freedom to act in accordance with one’s own will without encountering obstruction. In this conceptual frame other people, and the social community , are necessarily obstacles of free individual motion.

The utilitarian thinkers Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and John Stuart Mill build their work on the Hobbesian notion of liberty as acting without being obstructed according to one’s own will and interest.¹⁷ In connection to public space, John Stuart Mill’s book *On Liberty* (1859) is probably the best known monument of the Anglo-American conception of liberty. His work connects liberty with the fight against censorship and other legal obstacles of freedom of speech, printing, and public debate.

The German “Freedom”

Immanuel Kant’s concept of moral autonomy plays a central role in German idealism: it was continued by Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, and it provides the basis for Hegel’s political philosophy.

In his moral philosophy, Kant takes as a starting point the observation that there exists a group of human actions that are not carried out for selfish reasons. Something extraordinary takes place in these actions. Kant contends that as a being of nature, a human being acts according to his natural drives and desires, that is, according to the laws of nature. However, this is not the only way that humans act. They are also capable of acting outside the sphere of natural motives, and this, according to Kant, is distinctly human. This second mode of action that is not based on nature is what we call morality. Kant takes it as his task to analyse what actually occurs when humans act morally (as opposed to naturally). What is the structure of moral action, he asks. He refers to this inquiry as “The Metaphysics of Morals.”

According to Kant, man has a dual citizenship. On the one hand, he is a natural creature who follows the laws of nature just as other bodies do. On the other hand, through his capacity to act out of moral reasons, he is also a creature of another sphere. Kant refers to this sphere as “the empire of freedom.” Kant’s aim in moral philosophy is to describe the laws which rule within the empire of freedom just as the laws of nature rule within the “empire of necessity.”¹⁸

The main law governing the empire of freedom is revealed to be the categorical imperative which states that one must “Act according to a maxim that can at the same time be valid as a universal law.”¹⁹ This is Kant’s description of moral activity, and its basic message is that moral action is self-reflective and that intention is decisive in the context of a moral act.

The term “empire of freedom” tells us that in Kant’s thinking freedom is fundamentally connected to morality. Freedom is in a close connection to the notion of being in possession of moral capacity and surpassing mere existence as a natural being or creature, that is, acting in accordance with one’s own interests, desires and inclinations.

The Kantian concept of “freedom”, unlike the “liberty” of the liberal tradition, has nothing to do with the metaphor of movement. “Freedom” is not the ability to act according to one’s will and interest without being intervened, but rather is almost exactly the opposite – it is the placing of natural desires and interests in a position in which they are governed by moral judgments. This is an entirely different way of applying the notion of “freedom” than what is customary in the Anglo-American tradition.

Freedom as autonomy in the tradition of German idealism does not only carry the negative connotation of freedom from nature. It also has another, more precise and positive meaning – namely, freedom to govern oneself, to determine the laws of one’s own action. The “law” of the empire of freedom (which governs moral action as laws of nature govern bodies) states that one must “act according to a maxim that can at the same time be valid as a universal

law.” This law does not specify any particular content for a moral act but states that the agent of any deed that is moral reflects upon her or his act.²⁰ An agent performing a moral deed weighs her/his action and decides whether the action s/he commits could, in a generalized form, be a universal law applied to all. Moral action is reflectively legislative. In a Kantian moral action, the will of a person is directed toward itself, and it legislates for itself.²¹

In the tradition of German idealism, the term “freedom” is connected, more than anything else, with the notion of an autonomous agent who reflectively governs itself. In other words, freedom refers to the moral capacity of a rational creature, also referred to as “autonomy”; a human being is free, and freedom takes the form of moral law. The basic figure of freedom is a self-legislating agent. In the history of German idealism, the notion of autonomy takes several forms, the most interesting of which in the context of this work being Hegel’s concept of the state.

Hegel assigns the concept of state the characteristics form of an agent (subject, agency, self): the state as a community is a subject which legislates and regulates itself. This is why the Hegelian concept of state is connected with morality and why its essential attribute is “freedom.” This is also the basis for Hegel’s conception of public political space. I will return to this facet of Hegel’s thought later. First we must examine Hegel’s concept of civil society, which – as complicated as it may sound – is based on the English doctrine of economic liberalism.

Economic Liberalism

The foundational book of economic liberalism, Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, begins with an illustrative example of how “the right division and combination of things” results in improved production. Smith describes the example of the manufacturing of pins. If one person were to single-handedly do all of the phases of production he might, under favorable conditions, get one pin done each day. However, the work may be broken into parts so that one person draws the metal string, the second one cuts it, the third straightens it, the fourth sharpens it, the fifth smoothens the end for the point and several people divide among themselves the task of making the point and attaching it, with still others bleaching the pins and attaching them to the papers for sale. According to Smith, the manufacturing of a single pin may be broken down in this way into approximately 18 separate tasks, and even if only ten workers were to accomplish the job in parts, as in a manufacturer’s shop known to Smith, the result would be 48000 pins a day, which means 4800 pins for each person. If

they were to each work by themselves, they could hardly produce 1/4800 of the production achieved by 10 workers. This, according to Smith, is a “result of right division and combination of their separate actions.”²²

The presentation of the example of the manufacture of pins is a metaphor for the concept of community. According to Smith, any given community also produces a larger overall wealth if each one of its members concentrates on his of her own task and has the possibility to specialize in production beyond her/his own needs. The social exchange process, in other words commerce, is the mechanism which operates as the combining factor of all the parts. According to Smith’s theory, the greatest amount of wealth is achieved when everyone concentrates on gaining his or her own profit, and when the level of state interference in the mechanism created by the market is as low as possible.

The crux of the doctrine is that, according to Smith, an individual need not intend to generate common good in order to actually do so. The result of the market mechanism is something which no individual has consciously intended. The way in which Smith views the mechanism of division and combination as producing common good has been named “the invisible hand” although Smith himself mentions this metaphor only in passing.

The thought of a market mechanism steered by an invisible hand, in which private interests metamorphosize into the common good, was a totally new element of political thought and it was closely connected to the new social situation of the era of its birth, the acceleration of industrial production. Smith does not refer to the society he describes as “civil society”, but rather he uses the term “civilized society”. For him, the advanced division of labor is a characteristic of a civilized society. In a savage community, each and every individual is a soldier, hunter, etc, and no-one specializes in anything. In a civilized community, however, the level of specialization increases, which in turn increases the general wealth.

This new way of viewing society as organized by labor and exchange that was introduced by Smith and other political economists was inspirational for one of their contemporaries, Hegel. It prompted him to apply a new vocabulary. Hegel applied the term “civil society” (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) in a totally innovative way, connected with Smith’s concept of “civilized society.”

Civil Society

The profound change that Hegel initiated regarding the use of the term “civil society” in comparison to its earlier uses in classical European political thought has been described by Manfred Riedel. According to his account, the Greek *koinonia politike* (a political union or association), used by Aristotle, was

normally translated into latin as *societas civilis*, and together with its synonyms *civitas* and *res publica* became a common term used when referring to the state. Thomas of Aquinas, Bodin, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Kant used the words “political” and “civil” (*bürgerlich*) in a more or less synonymous sense. Hegel changed this usage. The change he initiated corresponded, according to Riedel, to the societal change in which the central point had shifted from the prince’s state to the economy, which resulted in “political economy.”²³

The Anglo-American tradition of political thought was never affected by a similar change. “Civil society” retained its political meaning as connected with citizenship and politics. Since the time of John Locke, its opposite terms have been “the state of nature” on the one hand, and “the state” or “government” on the other.²⁴

For Locke, in contrast to the state of nature, “civil society” is a state of justice created by a contract among equals – it is not a contract between the rulers and the ruled.²⁵ Its aim is to preserve the life, liberty and property to which all people are entitled in accordance with the natural rights. The goal of this is to ensure the interests of all individuals.

Persons who seek to attain absolute power place themselves in a state of war against other people. The system of absolute monarchy is impossible to reconcile with the thought of civil society. The right to rebel is essential for Locke, and is derived from the political experiences of his own era.²⁶ If the government, which has been granted the power to dictate both laws and whether there is war or peace, shows any indication of tyranny, it has essentially placed itself in a state of war against its citizens, and the citizens, as civil society, have the right to rebel, to overthrow the government and replace it with a new one.

There is a clear and distinct conceptual division between civil society and the government or state in the Anglo-American tradition. Civil society means freedom and equality, and the state implies authority, which is always on the verge of turning into a tyranny. The state power must constantly be watched and held under suspicion, and should be rebelled against and overthrown in the name of civil society if it gets too powerful.²⁷

In the Anglo-American tradition, the liberties connected with political publicity which are discussed in J.S. Mill’s *On Liberty*, the liberties of thought, speech, meeting and of printing, are connected with life in civil society. For Mill, individuals’ freedom of expression guarantees the best possible outcome in any given discussion. The correct opinion will be reached by means of free argumentation.²⁸

Smith’s economic liberalism led Hegel to apply the term “civil society” quite differently from that of the Lockean kind of civil society. Hegel was familiar with the way in which society had been viewed since the 18th cen-

tury in terms of labor, commodities, money and exchange by thinkers such as Turgot, Steward, Smith, Ricardo, Say, and Sismondi, society had been viewed in the terms of labor, commodities, money and exchange.²⁹ This was a new approach to the social bond: society was not held together by the juridical system, as was the assumption in the classical writings on politics, but rather by the bonds created by the satisfaction of material needs.

In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel describes the civil society as a system of economic relations, in which individual pursues his own interest, and nothing else is of any importance to him. However, without others an individual cannot achieve his goals. Thus, civil society is a system of total interdependence although other individuals appear merely as a means by which a person achieves his own goals.³⁰

Hegel refers to civil society as “the external state.”³¹ He describes it as fulfilling one’s needs through one’s own work, and indirectly, through everyone else’s work and satisfaction. The establishment of the social bond does not involve the intention on the part of any individual to create a community or to care about others. Also, because all differences and particular matters of chance in heritage and luck rule freely in a civil society, it presents the stage for both extravagance and poverty, as well as the “physical and ethical degeneration common to both.”³² According to Hegel, the interdependency achieved in civil society is not freedom but necessity. It is merely the form of the system that transforms here particular interest to joint communal well-being.

As I have described above, in the tradition of German idealism, freedom is connected with morality and morality is connected with the intentions of the agent. It is not surprising, then, that Hegel views civil society as not being free. After all, its production of the social bond is totally devoid of the intention of the agent. The uniting bond is produced without anybody really willing it. The doctrine of political economy, as understood by Hegel, involves no moral activity, only selfish motives. The common good is achieved by other than moral means, by the logic of the very system itself. That is why, according to Hegel, its communal character is merely an outer surface and it is also why he views civil society as a system of necessity and coercion. The “sphere of freedom,” which equals morally motivated political action Hegel discusses through the concept of state. This provides another perspective on the social bond.

Hegel’s State

According to Hegel, the state is a “will.”³³ Here “will” refers to a consciousness, a subject, and includes a reference to the Kantian notion of a self-reflective individual agency. The state, in abstract terms, is an agent which focuses its

will toward itself – in other words, autonomously rules itself.³⁴

The Hegelian concept of state is more comprehensive than the one generally used today. In addition to institutions and laws, it covers the current morality in a community as well as the common cognitive beliefs. In sociological terms, we could say that Hegel's "state" is very much like a "community," a "society," or even a "culture" that shares a common set of "beliefs" and "norms." Hegel uses the word *Geist* (spirit) of cultural community. The norms are formally expressed in agreed laws and regulation, although they basically inhabit the currently valid shared conceptions within a community. The formal structures of the state are thus mere extensions of the "state" in its entirety, as the state of the consciousness of the community.³⁵

Moreover, according to Hegel any individual, as a consciousness and as an agent, is intelligible only as part of a given community. Humans are communal beings and their consciousness coincides with one culture or another. The concept of an individual is logically subsequent to the concept of community. There is no primary transcendental individual within the Hegelian political ontology.

Hegel describes the state as an "ethical mind qua the substantial will", and writes that "The state exists immediately in custom, mediately in individual self-consciousness, knowledge, and activity,"³⁶ The communal mind surfaces in the consciousness and action of individuals. There is no other way of actually identifying the will of the community, its national spirit, than through individual consciousness. An individual may also attempt to be conscious of the general will and approximate it in action and in his individual will. This is what political action is all about. Political action is not action led by one's own interest, but action guided by the approximation of the general will and its progress.³⁷

An essential part of the Hegelian concept of state is an individual's conscious political action. The highest goal an individual can hope to attain is to lead public life. This is true freedom for an individual, because as a product of a certain culture of norms, she or he, through political action, is reflecting back on something which is dominant in his or her own consciousness, and consciously legislating and changing it.³⁸ Political action is a way in which an individual can gain control over what controls him. This can be characterized as self-conscious action and freedom in the sense of German idealism.

According to Hegel, the great advantage of the modern European state is that it simultaneously allows for extreme personal particularity and realizes the subject-nature of the community.³⁹ For Hegel, self-reflection is the distinctive feature of the modern individual, who not only reflects in his private moral behavior but also as a communal being. The Hegelian modern state is a concept which includes the notion that the structure of a modern state

allows each individual to become a politically active part of it.

The self-consciousness of an individual is reflected in the “political attitude” (*politische Gesinnung*), which Hegel refers to as “patriotism.” By patriotism Hegel does not mean self-sacrifice or exceptional behavior, but only an attitude which under ordinary circumstance takes the general well-being of the community as its aim.⁴⁰ What is crucial here is that political action is intentional: it is moral action in the Kantian sense, aiming at the good of the community and not conducted out of self-interest.

The Hegelian concept of state refers mainly to the community of norms and the action of an individual within it as a moral agent (in the Kantian sense.) Since moral action in the German tradition is connected to freedom, it follows that Hegel discusses the state as an area of freedom. Simultaneously, civil society, in which the unity is achieved without any deliberation of moral nature, is seen by Hegel as the area of coercion and necessity.

Cohen and Arato

We can now return to Cohen and Arato’s concept of civil society and attempt to judge its relation to the Hegelian-Marxian and liberal concepts. The classical liberal civil society refers to action by free individuals, separate from and in opposition to governmental power. The classical Hegelian civil society is the area of private life which includes inherently selfish motives, whereas the concept of state refers to morally oriented, that is, political action, connected with the idea of self-regulating communal agency. Where do Cohen and Arato stand with their concept of civil society?

Cohen and Arato criticize Hegel for including economy as one of the levels of civil society and see this as the reason for his favorable attitude toward state over civil society. For me, this indicates more than anything the failure on their part to recognize the specificity in Hegel’s way of defining the concepts of civil society and state. A crucial aspect of Hegel’s concept of civil society is that it is based on the economic model of society, as its historical inspiration lies in political economy. Even more importantly, however, the effect of political economy on Hegel’s concept of civil society is that it enables him to differentiate between civil society and the state by paying attention to the intention of action.

Civil society as a system based on the mechanism studied by political economy, presents a community and interdependence which is achieved without intention on anyone’s part to do something for others. Action in civil society is based upon individual interest as opposed to moral-political inten-

tion. The Kantian juxtaposition of non-moral and moral action characterizes the Hegelian difference of social action into the categories of civil society and state. The concept of civil society is connected to individual action without moral content, and the state comprises moral-political action in which individuals intentionally build the social bond.

Cohen and Arato present Hegel's favoring of the state over civil society as a consequence of his inclusion of economy in civil society, although even the exclusion of economy from civil society would not change the fact that Hegel views the state as a more valuable sphere than civil society. The difference in the moral intention of action, which is the significant factor in the Hegelian conception, may be considered independently from the inclusion of economy into the concept of civil society. Interestingly enough, the Finnish Hegelian philosopher J.V. Snellman revised Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* exactly in this direction. He omitted economy from civil society and emphasized the fact that the division between the state and civil society is made on the basis of the moral-political nature of the action concerned.⁴¹

An important consequence of Hegel's conceptual distinction of action into two separate types is that in the Hegelian framework, the concept of civil society is clearly not connected with political activism. Any individual intentional action aimed at political change is by definition part of the concept of state. Cohen and Arato, however, seem to be invested in the liberal idea of civil society as the area of political initiative, and the notion of the freedom of civil society as threatened by the state. Contrary to their proclamation, they fail to consider the Hegelian conceptual universe in this connection.

In addition to distinguishing economic society, Cohen and Arato also separate political society (state, government, parties) from civil society. However, the definition of the concept of civil society as devoid of political content clearly does not appear to be their aim. On the contrary, they include social movements in their civil society, and actually claim that the sphere of civil society assumes a kind of avant-garde role in political change.

Granting civil society the status of an initiator in the political process and viewing the government, state and political system as a potential threat to it emphasizes the fact that here, Cohen and Arato join the liberal definition of concepts. However, Cohen and Arato do not simply present a Lockean civil society. Their civil society is not primarily composed of individual agents, but rather of "social movements," "families," and "communication". They neither characterize civil society as the free play of individual interests nor as a state of natural rights, but as "a self-regulating process of community." If we ask the question "To what does the political society pose a threat?, we must answer: "To the self-regulation of a community."

This brings us back to the initial assumptions of the Hegelian-Marxian theory and suggests that Cohen and Arato may not adhere to the liberal political ontology after all but in fact belong to the Hegelian-Marxian one.

Any Marxist position is marked with the ambivalence which is inherent in the Marxian heritage of the concept of state. Marx accused Hegel of idealizing the state, which he connected with Hegel's general idealism.⁴² Marx purported to deal with the "real" state, the administrative apparatus which was a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, Marx preserved the Hegelian idea of state with its self-reflective communal subject, merely transferring its characteristics to "society" (*Gesellschaft*) as a whole. The role of the bourgeois state is that of an oppressor of the self-regulating movement of society.⁴³

The subsequent Marxist heritage is marked by the doctrine and the experience of the "real-existing" socialist states of Eastern Europe, in which the state was officially seen as mediating self-regulation, and moreover, as on its way to total extinction, thus giving way to the transparent self-regulation of society. The ideal of a self-reflective community remains at the heart of the doctrine all the way through. It is based on the ontology which conceives of political space in the form of a single subject. Politics is conceived of the subject gaining control over itself.

Cohen and Arato begin their book by writing that: "Modern civil society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization"⁴⁴, and their thesis is that "the concept of civil society indicates a terrain in the West that is endangered by the logic of administrative and economic mechanisms."⁴⁵ In this conception, it seems to me that social movements (civil society) get to play the role which is expressed in Hegelian theory by the concept of state, or by society in the Marxian doctrine – namely, the self-reflective and self-regulating inner core of community in which its dynamics resides. In other words, it is the real "self" of a community, which is in search of total self-consciousness and self-control.

The self-control of the real communal self, which here is the primary ontological presumption, is endangered by the administrative mechanisms of the state and the economic mechanisms of the market. This constellation reflects the Marxian mistrust of the bourgeois state and market, despite the fact that civil society is not a Marxian concept, and it simultaneously conforms to the liberal distrust of the state which is traditionally expressed by the concept of civil society. In this sense, Cohen and Arato manage to combine the two traditions with their concept of civil society.

The authors operate within the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology with the underlying assumption of society as a self-regulating communal subject.

But they also share the liberal idea that there is a “free” area, a spontaneous non-regulated activity, which has not been produced by any kind of politics or power but rather resides in pure individuality, and which has the possibility of remaining untouched by politics and power, instead generating pure impulses. It is also indicative of Cohen’s and Arato’s liberal overtones that they place “the intimate sphere of family” in this powerfree area.⁴⁶

In their mode of presentation, Cohen and Arato also continue their affiliation with the modern political ontology in its Hegelian-Marxian form. They express the desire to know the society and to be able to articulate its “logic.” The desire to first analyze the “state of society” and then with this knowledge “objectively” judge its course of change is characteristically Hegelian-Marxian and Cohen and Arato take part in this project with their style.⁴⁷ I will return to this problematic in Part Two when I consider Lyotard’s postmodern critique of the passage from knowledge to judgement.

In their last two chapters on civil disobedience, Cohen and Arato take up the “utopian dimension of radical politics” and present the utopian motivation for political action as one of the cornerstones of their approach.⁴⁸ What does utopia consist of? For me it appears that a utopian perspective is always a perspective of the final truth, the endpoint and the state of affairs in which problems are solved. Utopia is strongly connected to the modern in political thought. That is why, for me, it represents a major point of connection to the modern within political theory. What else could a utopia be than either the liberal utopia of freedom as complete liberty, total absence of power-relations, or the Hegelian-Marxian utopia of total self-control?

In terms of viewing the utopian perspective the major source of political activism, I would raise following questions upon which I will continue to focus throughout the rest of this book. Namely, does the notion of the liberation of power not, as Michel Foucault points out, create denial of power? And, does the utopia of total self-control, as Jean-François Lyotard points out, not create terror? Why should we see radical movements as necessarily based upon utopias? Why should we not see them from a postmodern perspective, as fighting injustices in the here and now, without commitment to a utopia or final solution of any kind?

Cohen and Arato’s attempt to revive the concept of civil society as a tool of critical radical social theory actually displays a strong commitment to both the liberal and the Hegelian-Marxian political theories. As such, it fails to provide the proper tools for transcending the Hegelian-Marxian and the liberal conceptions that the postmodern is constantly in search of.

Democratic Participation

I would like to further consider the thought in the background of the theorization of participation in a democratic process. Public space, free debate and participation in the democratic process are important initial values in both of the two traditions of political thought, but are they not arranged in very different orders in each one? Does political participation really play the same role in liberal theory as it does in Hegelian-Marxian theory?

Democracy is commonly defined as the self-rule of the people. Still, the concept of “people” is a specifically Hegelian-Marxian concept, and does not belong to the liberal vocabulary. As a principle of representation its aim is to convey the idea that the represented must be in a position to choose their representatives, not that their interests merely be taken care of by the representatives. However, participation, whether direct or via representation, is conceptualized quite distinctly within the respective traditions.

Stanley Benn, who wrote the entry “Democracy” for *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, distinguishes clearly two views. He calls one of the common conceptions of democracy “popular-sovereignty” theory and the other one “the view closer to the tradition of liberal individualism.”⁴⁹

The popular-sovereignty theory, he writes, is the common European conception of democracy as “popular self-government” or “government by the people”. Government is chosen by the people for the people, it represents the people and there should be no other rulers set above the people. I would add that the popular-sovereignty conception is connected with the theory of communal subjectivity in Hegelian-Marxian theory and is also related to the notion of the nation as a unity of self-rule.⁵⁰ It presupposes the thought of a people acting as one single subject, and is also conditioned by the idea of freedom as self-command.

In his article, Benn also presents a second view of democracy which differs from that of the popular sovereignty theory, and which he claims, is closer to the tradition of liberal individualism. Here democracy, is seen as a way of safeguarding and reconciling both individual and group interests. For James Madison, the virtue of the new constitution of the United States was that it “permitted no faction, not even a majority, to deprive minorities of their natural rights, since it demanded the concurrence in action of independent authorities.” The constitution was designed to balance diverse interests against one another, so that none might ever become a dominant and entrenched majority. According to Benn, pluralist accounts of democracy, for example, what R.A. Dahl refers to as “polyarchy”, while more sophisticated, follow a similar approach.⁵¹

I think Benn manages here to present a more consistently liberal account of democracy than most of the standard expositions, which normally repeat the phrase “the self-rule of the people” without considering the strangeness of the vocabulary of “people” or “self-rule” in the liberal political universe.⁵²

The consistent liberal view of democracy is concerned with guaranteeing everyone’s liberty. Democracy is defined within the liberal political ontology: there are individuals who are initially free to move, but whose liberty is threatened by institutions of power. Democracy is a device, in considering how government should be organized, by which to ensure as much as possible of that initial freedom. Government is considered to be a necessary evil, and democracy as the best possible device to curb its harmful influence.⁵³

The popular sovereignty view of democracy starts from the other political ontology: it presupposes the concept of “people” and defines community as a communal will (*volonté général*). Democracy is the principle which dictates that there are no outside rulers of the people, that the will of the people is sovereign. The “people” controls the “people.” This self-reflexive relationship within the communal subject constitutes its freedom.

How is participation in the political process viewed in the two conceptions of democracy?

Volonté général, or “the spirit of the nation”, is an abstraction and allows for any interpretation of how it is actually identified. This also makes it dangerous as an actual political device, because there are always individuals who do not hesitate to declare themselves as possessors of the correct knowledge of this will.

In the original Hegelian model the proper representative system by which to reach the *Geist* of the community differs greatly from the various nationalist versions of the last century, the Soviet Marxist or Chinese communist ideals and practices. Still, the common factor, and the most important denominator for all of them, is the belief in the real mind of the nation, which may be more or less consciously represented both in the state and in an individual consciousness. The most important principle in terms of democracy is that a greater amount of consciousness is always better than a lower amount. This applies to the state as well as to an individual member of society.

This is why there is an urge, in the conception of democracy based on the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology, to increase the participation and political activity of individuals. Participation is a value in itself, which is why there is a push for each and every person in a community to be a “public person”, that is, to be a part of the conscious process of politics. The conviction is that everybody is always already a part of the public process, and that one can only be it either more or less consciously. Because participation is a value in itself in the “self-rule of the people” view, it is not content with a situation in

which politics is an arena of experts while most of the people mind their own private business.

I find this emphasis on the participatory aspect of democracy to be the most valuable contribution to political thought of the Hegelian-Marxian ontology.⁵⁴ The leftist parties have been mass-movement parties, and participation has been valued, even if the failure in terms of the liberal emphasis of critique and checks of power have diminished the democratic results of this principle.

In the liberal-individualistic model of democracy active participation is not a value in itself. The important fact is whether the constitution guarantees settlement and negotiation between various interests, whether the possibility exists for an individual to intervene in the political process when necessary, and whether the execution of political power is placed under surveillance, a task especially allotted to the free press.

Because participation is not a value in itself as it is in the Hegelian-Marxian conception, the degree of general participation is not a criteria for a functioning democracy. A situation in which political specialists take care of public affairs and the majority of people can go on with their private lives is totally acceptable, as long as there is an awareness of the possibility to change these experts, and as long as nobody feels that her/his interests are violated.⁵⁵ In the liberal conception, a demand for active participation may even be viewed as a violation of privacy and an individual's right to mind her or his own business, as long as they are not disturbing anybody else.⁵⁶ The two views, the value of participation in itself, and the liberal value of the right to remain unattached to politics, are frequently encountered conflicting attitudes toward politics.

Consequently, the role of political judgement varies in the two views. In the Hegelian-Marxian conception the burden of consciousness and political judging is undetachable from the individual. The power to judge politically can never, in theory, be relinquished to the experts of politics. Even in the worst dictatorial practices of communist regimes, the ideological pretense of everything happening with the participation of everyone remains. The division into the categories of government and citizens is not permitted to be conceptualized as meaningful. Rather, it is one single acting communal whole with individuals playing different roles within it.

This conception is a two-edged sword. One aspect of it is that it contains an emphasized ideal of the unity of the political community. Because there is only one will of the people, each political problem, transcendently, has one correct solution. Politics is not conceived of as a decision-making process but rather a process in which the correct will of the people is uncovered. Once the correct opinion, that is, the will of the people, is known, all other

opinions are simply false. The enforcement of the “valid” opinion over the minorities becomes justified in this conception. In the socialist states, the unitary communal subject worked as a principle in the justification of the curbing of critique in the political process. The idea that there ultimately is a correct representation of the will of the people makes the communist opinion-controlling and dissident politics intelligible as a thorough exercise of the will of the people.⁵⁷

The same problematic conception of a single will is discernable in leftist parties, especially communist parties, and in all those social movements which harbor the idea of representing the original, as opposed to the politically corrupted will of the people. This also concerns groups which claim to represent the spirit of the age, or any political activity based on a communal subject, be it women, a particular ethnic group or some other politically relevant community. At some point they all tend to end up in fierce fights over the correct representation of the communal will.

The postmodern critique of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition is targeted at the notion of communal subjectivity. It opposes the very idea of the nation as a single unitary self. The assumption that a culture, a nation, or any politically operative unit is a monadic whole is rejected in the postmodern at the ontological level. A community is not thought of as one in its relation to the outside world, nor is it seen as lacking internal differences.

On the other hand, in the leftist movements, the same principle of the people’s will has promoted political participation and upheld the view that the capacity to judge and political activity are neither restricted to the specialists of politics nor to a special area reserved for politicians. The power to judge politically is ideally not relinquished to the experts, rather, it remains in the hands and minds of each and every individual, imposing upon them the constant presence of political judging. I will return to this valuable aspect of this tradition, which is acknowledged in postmodern theorizing, in the last chapter in which I focus on political judgement.⁵⁸

The liberal conception of democracy lays the emphasis in the democratic process on the critique of political power and on the possibility to replace those in political power in order to preserve the liberty and interests of all individuals. As the liberal conception presupposes the division between those in power and those not in power, its negative effect may be considered to be that the citizens easily feel detached, as well as experience a justifiable lack of any responsibility for the political process. At its worst, this conception results in the praise of a “blind” vote against those in power, without concern to who those in power are and for what they stand. Little or no interest in political topics and a persistent anti-government attitude is often, indeed, visible in the political life in the United States.⁵⁹ Although this is certainly

explainable by several factors, part of the background of this phenomena lies in the prevalence of liberal thought in politics.⁶⁰

Instead of assuming that everybody constantly exercises political judgement and has political power in their own hands, this view tends to think that power is delegated in elections and resumed only at the precise moment of casting one's vote. The political process is essentially thought of as consisting of the control over and election of the politicians.

A model in which a political upper class handles politics and ordinary people remain silent but content would not contradict the liberal principle of democracy because no emphasis is put on participation per se. The liberal view also does not contest class differentiation within a society, nor does it take into account cultural differences within a given unit of democratic system.

The positive effects of the liberal democratic thinking are well known and ironically they reside in the same feature as the negative ones. The mistrust and watchful attitude toward power creates the cultivation of public critical space, the fair system of election⁶¹, and the emphasis on the critical role of the press, in other words, a system of checks and balances, the lack of which is clearly evident when missing from a political system.

Notes

¹ Hegel constructs his philosophical system as a succession of concepts inside a consciousness. The philosophy of right is part of the philosophy of mind in contrast to the philosophy of nature. In the philosophy of mind it is a part of the objective mind, in contrast to the subjective mind (psychology) and the absolute mind (art, religion, philosophy). *The Philosophy of Right* is divided into three parts: "The Right," "The Morality," and "*Die Sittlichkeit*." "*Die Sittlichkeit*" is translated by T.M. Knox into English as "Ethical life", but the translation does not fully carry over the social connotation of the term. The German word derives from "*Sitten*", which means customs, habits or mores. *Sittlichkeit* includes three parts: "Family," "Civil Society," and "The State." G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke 1-20* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopaedie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse I-III* in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke 8-10*; G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* (tr) Michael J. Petry (New York: Humanities Press, 1970) G.W.F. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* (tr) William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse* in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke 7*; Hegel, G.W.F. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (tr) T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

- ² Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).
- ³ Jürgen Habermas analyzes this phenomena in his classic *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989) Orig. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied: Herman Luchterhand, 1962).
- ⁴ On Hegel and the French Revolution see Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Bernard Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought* (New York: St Martin Press, 1979); Karl-Heinz Ilting, "Einleitung" in K.H. Ilting (ed) G.W.F. Hegel *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818-1831* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1974); Henning Ottman, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft bei Hegel. Band 1: Hegel im Spiegel der Interpretationen* (Berlin: deGruyter, 1977); Manfred Riedel, *Between Tradition and Revolution: The Hegelian Transformation of Political Philosophy* (tr) Walter Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Joachim Ritter *Hegel und die französische Revolution* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1964); Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
- ⁵ Karl Popper, *Open Society and its Enemies* (London: Routledge, 1945).
- ⁶ Shlomo Avineri: *Hegel's Theory of Modern State*; Bernard Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought*; Z.A. Pelczynski (ed) *Hegel's Political Philosophy. Problems and Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Z.A. Pelczynski (ed) *The State and Civil Society. Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*; Allen Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- ⁷ Joachim Ritter, *Hegel und die französische Revolution*; Manfred Riedel, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat bei Hegel* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1970); Manfred Riedel, *Studien zu Hegel's Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1969), Manfred Riedel, *System und Geschichte. Studien zum historischen Standort von Hegel's Philosophie* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1969), M. Riedel (ed) *Materialien zu Hegel's Rechtsphilosophie* Band 2 (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1975); Karl-Heinz Ilting *The Structure of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* in Z.A. Pelczynski (ed) *Hegel's Political Philosophy*; K.-H. Ilting "Einleitung" in K.-H. Ilting (ed) G.W.F.Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818-1831*.

Because Hegel was traditionally criticized for placing too much emphasis on the state and community and too little on the individual, much of the discussion during and after the 1970's has been on the relationship between an individual and a community and on the role of morality in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. See Joachim Ritter, "Moralität und Sittlichkeit. Zu Hegel's Auseinandersetzung mit der Kantischen Ethik" in Manfred Riedel (ed) *Materialien zu Hegel's Rechtsphilosophie* Band 2 pp. 217-244. Henning Ottman, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft bei Hegel*, Band. 1: *Hegel im Spiegel der Interpretationen*; Udo Rameil,

“Sittlicher Sein und Subjektivität. Zur Genesis des Begriffs der Sittlichkeit in Hegel’s Rechtsphilosophie” *Hegel-Studien* Band 16 (1981); Ludwig Siep, “Was heisst ‘Aufhebung der Moralität in Sittlichkeit’ in Hegel’s Rechtsphilosophie?” in *Hegel-Studien* Band 17 (1982); Adriaan Peperzak, “Hegel’s Pflichten- und Tugendlehre” *Hegel-Studien* Band 17 (1982); Andreas Wildt, *Autonomie und Anerkennung. Hegel’s Moralitätskritik im Lichte seiner Fichte-Rezeption* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982); Ludwig Siep, *Praktische Philosophie im Deutschen Idealismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992).

⁸ The long history of the discussion on whether or not Hegel was a proponent of the Prussian reaction and an opponent of freedom is recorded comprehensively in Henning Ottman, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft bei Hegel*.

⁹ This was evident in Finland’s political discussions during the last century. Both parties, the Hegelian fenco-nationalists and the Sweden-oriented liberals, spoke Swedish, which was used by the educated class, while Finnish was spoken only by the peasants. The content of the same concepts used by both of the traditions was different. The subsequent political vocabulary in Finnish retained this difference. I have studied the difference between political traditions in Finland in Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio ja vapaus* [State and Freedom/Liberty] (Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 1989).

¹⁰ Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* p. 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed) Michel Oakeshott (New York: Macmillan, 1962) p. 159.

¹⁷ Mill defends what he refers to as the simple principle that: “The sole end for which mankind are warranted individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection.” John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (ed) Gertrude Himmelfarb (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976) p. 68.

Mill’s *On Liberty* does not, however, describe liberty purely as a lack of constraint. It entails both negative and positive conceptions of liberty.

According to Mill, liberty consists of, first of all, a liberty of the inner world of consciousness. This is why we should have the liberty of conscience, thought, sentiment and opinion. In order to realize these liberties we should also possess the liberty of expression and publishing. Second, we should have liberty in the matters of taste and striving, and the liberty of planning our lives according to our characters. Third, from these liberties concerning the individual there follows the liberty to form groups of individuals. “A liberty to gather together for whatever purpose which is not harmful for others.” pp. 107-108.

The arguments that Mill presents for the demand of liberties of thought and expression are for the most part utilitarian. Mill's first argument for the liberty of thought and expression is that it is useful not to suppress opinions because when everyone has the possibility to join in a discussion it is more likely that false conceptions will be avoided and the right one's will prevail. pp. 77-96. The third argument in the second chapter of the book is also utilitarian. Mill writes that in the conquest of the truth it is useful to provide "a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth." p. 111.

But the second of Mill's arguments does not comply with the interest investment of utilitarianism. Instead it concurs with the view of a human being as a rational being, who is happier when s/he makes use of her/his rational capacity than when s/he does not use the capacity. pp. 96-108.

The same theme is present in the third chapter of Mill's book, which deals with individuality. Here, he concurs with Wilhelm von Humboldt's view of a human being, and quotes him as saying that: "The end of man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal or immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desire, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole." p. 121.

Mill defines liberty in this chapter in positive terms: an individual has the liberty to develop her/his capacities in all possible directions. Mill's reading of Humboldt and the deployment of his vocabulary is a sidestep from the classic English tradition of defining liberty negatively and visit in the German tradition. In the fourth chapter, he returns to the English theme of the free space of an individual in which the community is not allowed to interfere, and he once again defines liberty negatively as a lack of coercion.

¹⁸ Kant states this at the very beginning of the Preface of *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, in which he divides philosophy into three sciences physics, ethics, and logic. He writes: "Formal philosophy is called *logic*; while material philosophy, which has to do with determinate objects and with the laws to which they are subject, is in turn divided into two, since the laws in question are laws either of *nature* or of *freedom*. The science of the first is called *physics*, that of the second *ethics*. The former is also called natural philosophy, the latter moral philosophy." Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals* (tr) H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) p. 55. [*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1965) p. 3].

I would emphasize that Kant approaches morality as a sphere with laws that govern it analogous to the way in which the laws of physics govern nature.

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice* (tr) John Ladd (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) p. 26 and 27. [*Metaphysik der Sitten* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1974) p. 28 and 29].

The categorical imperative makes a strong statement that the only thing that makes an action good is a good intention. Self-reflection is a device used in detecting and mastering the intention.

- ²⁰ Robert Paul Wolff, in *The Autonomy of Reason. A Commentary on Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), stresses this interpretation of the content of Kant's categorical imperative.
- ²¹ Kant writes: "What else then can freedom of will be but autonomy – that is, the property which will has of being a law to itself? The proposition 'Will is in all its actions a law to itself' expresses, however, only the principle of acting on no maxim other than one which can have for its object itself as at the same time a universal law. This is precisely the formula of the categorical imperative and the principle of morality. Thus a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same." *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals* p. 114. [*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* p. 72.]
- ²² Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (ed) R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1974) Orig. 1776. p. 14-15.
- ²³ Manfred Riedel, "Hegels Begriff der 'bürgerlichen Gesellschaft' und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs" in M. Riedel (ed) *Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie Band II* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1969) pp. 247-273. See also Manfred Riedel, "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche" in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhard Koselleck (ed) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 2*. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982) pp. 719-800.
- ²⁴ The ambivalence in Locke's distinction between civil society and government is a matter discussed in literature. See, for example, Ruth W. Grant, *John Locke's Liberalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 101-110. The distinction becomes more pronounced in the subsequent liberal thought. Thomas Paine, for example, writes: "Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness *positively* by uniting our affections, the latter *negatively* by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher." Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776) in Thomas Paine, *Political Writings* (ed) Bruce Kuklick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p. 3.
- ²⁵ John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government* (ed) J.W Gough (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976) pp. 43-45.
- ²⁶ Locke's view is, of course, conditioned by his political environment, and it does not make him an enemy of political authority in general, as John Dunn's presentation of Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* clearly states. John Dunn, *John Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) pp. 28-59. Still, as Dunn writes, "As we have it today, the *Two Treatises* is a work principally designed to assert a right of resistance to unjust authority, a right, in the last resort, of revolution." *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- ²⁷ Thomas Paine writes in *Common Sense* (1776): "Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one ..." in Thomas Paine, *Political Writings* p. 3.

- ²⁸ This is Mill's view, which springs from his commitment to the Enlightenment thought. It is not, however, a necessary corollary of liberal thought per se. It is possible to think of the principle of free speech without committing oneself to the eschatological thought that the result of a free conversation would ultimately be a true opinion. I will return to this notion in my discussion on Habermas and Rorty in Chapter 3.
- ²⁹ Hegel explicitly discusses political economy in paragraph 189 of *Philosophy of Right* p. 126.
- ³⁰ Hegel states these two points in the first paragraph of the section "Civil Society" in *Philosophy of Right*. The "first principle" in civil society is "the concrete person," who Hegel describes as self-interested ("is himself the object of his particular aims") and not very flattering so (as a totality of wants and a mixture of caprice and physical necessity). The "second principle" is that "the particular person is essentially so related to other particular persons that each establishes himself and finds satisfaction by means of the others" – and Hegel continues the sentence by specifying the invisible hand phenomena with the word "form" – "and at the same time purely and simply by means of the form of universality..." G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* p. 122 (182). See also the next paragraph, 183. Both of these points underscore the lack of consciousness and will on the part of individuals in creating the bond which is civil society.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123 (183).
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 123 (185).
- ³³ In the beginning of the first paragraph of the section "State" in *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes: "The state is the actuality of the ethical (*Sittlich*) Idea. It is ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it." p. 155 (257).
- ³⁴ In Hegel's work, a state is autonomous, which corresponds with the idea that a state is sovereign. Hannah Arendt, who, as I note later in the last chapter of this book, makes an effort to dispose of the German tradition's idea of autonomy as self-control, also consistently opposes the idea of sovereignty as important in politics. She writes in *On Revolution* that: "In this respect, the great and, in the long run perhaps the greatest American innovation in politics as such was the consistent abolition of sovereignty within the body politic of the republic, the insight that in the realm of human affairs sovereignty and tyranny are the same." Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963) p. 152.
- Reinhard Koselleck analyzes that the history of the concept of the state (*Staat*) in German creates the figure of an hourglass. The narrow part at the conceptual dispersion occurs at the time of the French Revolution, when the idea of the state as sovereign is created. Before and after that point the term *Staat* could be used in a wide variety of ways. The idea of the state as a sovereign *Handlungssubjekt* was not, however, at all present before this time. Reinhard Koselleck, "Staat und Souveränität" in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhard

Koselleck (ed) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 6* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990) pp. 1-4 and Reinhard Koselleck, "Staat im Zeitalter' revolutionären Bewegung". *Ibid.*, pp. 25-64.

³⁵ My reading emphasizes the very first paragraph in the section "State" in the *Philosophy of Right*. The third sentence written by Hegel is: "The state exists immediately in custom, mediately in individual self-consciousness, knowledge, and activity ...".

The latter part of the sentence states the idea that the individual is both the product of her/his culture, and changes it by her/his activity: "activity, while self-consciousness in virtue of its sentiment towards the state finds in the state, as its essence and the end and product of its activity, its substantive freedom."

The word "sentiment" in German is *Gesinnung*, and Hegel refers with this word to an attitude which is connected to political activity, in which the intention is not self-interest but the common good. Sometimes he uses the word "patriotism" for the same attitude.

"Freedom" consists of the self-regulating pattern of taking as one's object something that is the essence of oneself. That is the culture which has produced one's consciousness as knowing and willing.

I have presented this interpretation of the main aspects of the concept of state in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio and vapaus* and in Tuija Pulkkinen, "Hegelin oikeusfilosofia" [Hegel's Philosophy of Right] in Kaarlo Tuori and Jaana Matikainen (ed) *Oikeuden rajat. Yhteiskuntasopimuksesta yhteisöön*. [Borders of Right. From the Social Contract to Community] (Helsinki: 1995).

³⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* p. 155 (257).

³⁷ There is also a strong notion of progress embedded in the Hegelian framework. Not only is the national spirit assumed to be one at each moment, it is also thought of as having a specific direction. It is moving progressively so that the later stages, by force of the logic of thought, follow the former ones. This allows a strong notion of "avant-garde" in politics, and facilitates the conceptualization of the existence of various degrees of consciousness of the national spirit, as well as knowledge about where it is going. The Marxian notion of progress is related to the Hegelian idea, as is the notion of "progressives" in politics, which is very common even where explicit Marxian heritage is not acknowledged, as in some communities in United States in which "the progressives" are one of the parties in local politics.

³⁸ For Hegel, it is a "he" and not a "she" that takes part in the self-reflection process of a self-commanding community. I take up the gendering nature of Hegel's thought in Chapter 6.

³⁹ He writes in paragraph 260: "The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and

yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself.” G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* p. 161.

⁴⁰ I have studied the Hegelian concept of patriotism as the political attitude in “Tavallinen elämä, valtio ja isänmaallisuus J.V. Snellmanin ajattelussa” [Ordinary Life, the State, and Patriotism in J.V. Snellman's Thought] in Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio ja vapaus* pp. 24-48.

On the history of the concept “patriotism” see, for example, Rudolf Vierhaus, “‘Patriotismus’ – Begriff und Realität einer moralisch-politischen Haltung” in Rudolf Vierhaus (ed) *Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*. (München: Krauss, 1980).

⁴¹ For Snellman, action in civil society is “law-abiding” action, and action in the state is “law-creating” action. The difference is crucial. In the type of action which he expresses with the concept of civil society, the attitude of the agent is passive, whereas in the state it is active. Action in civil society reproduces existing norms, action in the state produces or changes these existing norms. It is not according to the area, but the mode of action that the distinction into civil society and state is made here: a civil servant may, for example, act in the mode of civil society action and merely reproduce the existing legislation, or he or she may act in the mode of state action and take initiative to produce changes in the current norms. Economical action may be carried out either in a change producing or non change producing form. A state mode of action may even occur within a family. This happens when, for example, new ways of educating children within the family are developed in order to produce a change in societal norms. Typical of Snellman was his conception of a woman's work in the family as merely reproductive of existing system, so that new creative child-rearing ideas could only originate from fathers. I will take this part of Hegelian thought up again in Chapter 6. My analysis of Snellman's concepts of the state and civil society is presented in Tuija Pulkkinen, “J.V. Snellmanin valtio-oppi” [J.V. Snellman's Political Philosophy] and “J.V. Snellmanin valtio-käsitys” [J.V. Snellman's Concept of State] in Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio ja vapaus* pp. 5-23 and 49-75.

⁴² Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA) Erste Abteilung, Band 2* (Berlin: Dietz, 1982) pp. 3-137.

⁴³ Marx acquired the German expression “*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*” (civil society / bourgeois society) with its negative connotation (necessity, one's own interest, exploitation, poverty, etc.) from Hegel. However, for Marx, the bourgeois state was not a solution to the problems of bourgeois society. The state for him was just a continuation of the structure of bourgeois society, merely a vehicle in the hands of the bourgeoisie reinforcing its exploitative function. Thus, for Marx, the state had no independent function (or logic), and this is what the current post-Marxian discourse on civil society and state recognizes as the inherent

problem of Marxist theory. It concludes, as do Cohen and Arato, that the modern state “has its own logic” which has to be taken into account. Simultaneously, Cohen and Arato are revising the Marxian doctrine by changing the meaning of “civil society” into something positive. The bourgeois state has its own logic, although here it also retains its old Marxian function as an oppressor.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. ix.

⁴⁵ The rest of the sentence runs “... but is also the primary locus for the potential expansion of democracy under ‘really existing’ liberal-democratic regimes.” Ibid., p. viii.

⁴⁶ The issue of the separation of the private (or the intimate) and the public is taken up in feminist discourse. I consider the feminist critique on the issue of the distinction between the private and the public as having had a profound effect on the universalization of the assumptions of modern political theory. I return to this issue when discussing Hannah Arendt’s concept of self in Chapter 8.

⁴⁷ I would target the same critique at Jürgen Habermas and to lesser degree at the discourse ethics of Seyla Benhabib.

⁴⁸ Seyla Benhabib also shares the view that the utopian element is crucial in Critical Theory, as the title of her book *Critique, Norm and Utopia. A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) indicates. Also in the more recent *Situating the Self*, Benhabib concedes that utopian thinking is “a practical-moral imperative.” “Without such a regulative principle of hope, not only morality but also radical transformation is unthinkable”, she writes. p. 229. She separates “rationalist visions of social engineering” from “longing for the ‘wholly other’, and explicitly argues against Lyotard’s critique of utopias.

⁴⁹ Stanley Benn, “Democracy” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Volume two. (New York: Macmillan, 1967) pp. 338-341.

⁵⁰ I will take this up in more detail in Chapter 6.

⁵¹ Benn, “Democracy” p. 340.

⁵² Even Sir Isaiah Berlin’s accusation in his *Two Concepts of Liberty*, that the principle of self-rule leads to dictatorship, fails to locate any definition of democracy other than self-rule. Sir Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the University of Oxford on 31 October 1953* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

⁵³ In this sense, anarchy, which sounds radical and non-liberal, has a definite relationship to liberal thought. Anarchy is just a very consistent form of liberalism’s anti-government attitude, as Robert Nozick also observes. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974). If the worst possible scenario in the Hegelian-Marxian framework is the terror of totalitarian regimes, then the liberal anti-government thought’s is one in which anti-government ultra liberals blow up government buildings.

- ⁵⁴ I think that the contemporary heirs of the Critical School, such as Cohen, Arato and Seyla Benhabib, are correct in emphasizing this aspect of democracy. See Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Thought* pp. 4-8, and Seyla Benhabib *Situating the Self* pp. 124-125.
- ⁵⁵ This view is expressed, for example, by Peter Steinberger, who argues that political judgement requires specific skills and concludes that we must rely “on those individuals, perhaps many, perhaps only a few, who are peculiarly well suited, through nature and circumstance, to cast upon the dim, disorienting landscape of the public realm the cold light of critical reason. As skilled practitioners of political judgement, such individuals are at once our scourge and our only hope.” Peter Steinberger, *The Concept of Political Judgement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993) p. 304.
- ⁵⁶ David Held, for example, sees this freedom from politics as an essential part of the contemporary democratic heritage. David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987) p. 284. Held also refers to Hannah Arendt as a remarkable defender of this freedom. I view Arendt’s contribution here in connection to her deep knowledge of and opposition to the Hegelian-Marxian tradition, which I will more specifically discuss in the last chapter of this book.
- ⁵⁷ This is why the Eastern European states also referred to themselves not as “communist”, but as “peoples democracies”, a term which never found much popularity in the West as a result of the very different sense in which the term democracy was used.
- ⁵⁸ Discourse ethics advocates, such as Benhabib, Cohen and Arato, are very active in pointing out the importance of the participatory aspect, and this places them at odds with a consistently liberal view.
- ⁵⁹ Many individuals in the United States who call themselves “radical anarchists” might also be surprised to recognize their affinity to extreme liberalism.
- ⁶⁰ It goes without saying that the term “liberal” used here does not refer to what is considered liberal in the political vocabulary of the United States, but rather is related to the thought which is common to both Republican and Democratic parties in the country, as opposed to small alternative groups which usually call themselves “progressive.”
- ⁶¹ In a political system based on Hegelian-Marxian credentials, neither the election process itself nor the press are conceived of as necessarily outside the sphere of government control, because, after all, the *real* political will is one and is present through out the entire political process. The government, the parliament and the press are all included in the concept of a one-minded political self.

Chapter 2

MODERN/POSTMODERN

In the current discussion the usage of the concepts “modern” and “postmodern” demands justification and explanation: why do I choose to use the distinction and in what meaning do I employ the concepts? In the context of the enormous amount of literature that has accumulated since the late 1970s on the various meanings and conceptions of the postmodern, postmodernism, and postmodernity, I must comment on the ones that are relevant to my definition.

My basic reason for using the two concepts is that they economically express something significant. In other words, I consider the contemporary discussion of the modern and the postmodern meaningful to my topic. However, my usage of the distinction is specific and self-defined, and it is in a distinct relationship to the various other ways of theorizing this particular issue. I acknowledge that there are others who use the same distinction in very different way than I do, and which also have a meaningful connection to the contemporary discussion.

This means that I claim that my way of defining the two concepts is significantly related to that which has otherwise been going on around them, although simultaneously I do not try to “catch the meaning” of the general discussion on postmodernity. I do not approach the concepts referentially, that is, I do not claim to offer an answer to the question: “What is ‘the modern’ and what is ‘the postmodern?’” as if these terms had referents, either in the realm of theory or in material culture. Instead I take responsibility for defining what for me is the significant meaning of these concepts and in which way I find it useful to employ them.

This choice of semantics is itself not arbitrary or independent of the modern/postmodern distinction. It touches on one of the central crisis areas between modern and postmodern thought, namely referentiality. The rejection of the centrality of the idea of a referent in semantics and epistemology has been connected with the postmodern moment in thought, whether linked to

the undercurrent of Saussurian linguistics in poststructuralism or to the linguistic turn in the Anglo-American philosophy.¹

Instead of looking for the referent, I rather assume that the meaning of the terms derive from the distinction and its usage. I understand the terms “modern” and “postmodern” as concepts that have gained meaning in critical theoretical discourse since the late 1970’s.

I do not aspire to provide a complete description of how this meaning production has happened and what it has produced, either. To do so would be another form of assuming a referent for the terms, and would constitute an attempt to close their meaning. Rather, I choose to outline a few features which characterize the distinction, and use these concepts as tools, refraining from any closure in this area.

To begin with, when using the terms “modern” and “postmodern” I am not referring to historical periods, forms of society, or -isms of art history. This is why I consciously avoid the terms “postmodernity,” “postmodern society” and “postmodernism,” and instead apply “the postmodern.”²

The modern and the postmodern, for me, are modes of thought or cultural attitudes. Most generally the postmodern attitude is defined as anti-foundational.³ The modern attitude, which becomes discernible only with the emergence of the postmodern, is in search of foundation: it presents a purifying motion focused on a basic core. This search is conducted so that the accent is not on the establishment of foundations, but on their constant contestation in order to locate a more basic core. The postmodern consists of the recognition of the repetitious gesture of the modern, and of the refusal of its continuation.

To paraphrase, the modern strips off layers in order to reveal or expose a core or naked truth, whereas in the postmodern, the interest lies in the layers themselves. In the postmodern there is a clear consciousness of the fact that there is no core or naked basis that could be exposed underneath the layers.⁴

As I mentioned, I do not necessarily tie the two modes of thought or ways of thinking to any specific period of time. This is why, even if the present coining of the terms and the actuality of the distinction is a recent Western cultural phenomena, I would not engage in a discussion of the correct timing of the end of the modern and the beginning of the postmodern. Nor would I assume that the postmodern is currently a hegemonic way of thinking, or even that the modern used to be. I think, in fact, that there are very few clearly postmodern thinkers, and, moreover, that the distinctly and consistently modern way of thinking is and has been fairly uncommon.

I emphasize that I do not consider the two terms as referring to certain historical periods, “the modern era,” which at some point ends and gives way to the postmodern, so that the modern way of thinking would at some

point in time end its hegemonic power and give way to the postmodern.⁵

To give more definition to the concepts “modern” and “postmodern” I would add that the modern is invested in the distinctions of the foundation/facade type, a trait which the postmodern contests. A great number of distinctions in the form of deep/shallow, profound/superficial, inside/outside, distinctions which introduce a valorization, a heavy emphasis, or a relation of explanation, or causality between the two, are typical of the modern mode of thought. The postmodern identifies this investment and refuses it. Similar distinctions are real/made, authentic/artificial, natural/unnatural, original/copied, pure/masked, visible/veiled, truth/appearance, true/fabricated, basis/superstructure, body/clothes, inborn/constructed, reference/meaning, reality/interpretation, being/performing.

The postmodern contests the emphasis which the modern gives to this type of distinctions. It focuses a critical eye on the valorization of basis over surface, so typical of the modern, as well as the explanation of the surface phenomena with its basis, or the offering of an inside foundation as a reason for the outside appearance. It questions the thinking in terms of these distinctions.⁶

It is very important to note that this does not mean that the modern gives more value to the basis of phenomena, and the postmodern more to the surface and the shallow, which is a common misconception. The point is that the postmodern opposes the modern emphasis on making these special kinds of distinctions. It displaces the emphasis that the modern gives to dichotomies of the deep/shallow kind. One could say that it does not give the slash in between these dichotomous pairs the weight given to it by the modern.

It is also significant to note that the postmodern does not oppose dichotomies in general, which is also a common misunderstanding. It merely questions certain kinds of dichotomies, those of foundation/facade kind, and it problematizes only thinking with them in terms of explanation and valorization. The postmodern does oppose the inside/outside dichotomy, but not because it is a dichotomy, but rather because it establishes a relation of valorization in which the outside is considered explainable from the inside, and because it claims that any phenomena can be distinguished into an inside and outside, in which the inside is more profound and the outside more superficial. Perhaps “oppose” is not the right word, but if nothing else the postmodern points to the fact that the modern tends to construct these kinds of dichotomies. The recognition of this fact leads to the posing of questions in a different way.

As I said, the postmodern pays attention to the fact that the modern makes foundation/facade distinctions very emphatically, and by pointing out these

specific instances it achieves shifts in thinking. This may sound insignificant, but the difference is quite notable in various spheres of thought and practice.

In philosophy, for example, the postmodern has been connected with the linguistic turn which shifts the belief in the project of modern logic, which is central to the philosophy of this century. The project of the modern logic has been to strip off the extra layers of the natural languages to reveal a more basic layer of language in its formal structure. The enterprise is conducted with the faith in the presence of such a basis, although part of the modern project is simultaneously to never proclaim it as being reached, but to always contest it. The philosophy of this century with regard to logic, especially its beginning phases in the Vienna circle, was interwoven with the thought of a serious renovation of philosophy. The idea was to solve or to throw away the old philosophical problems when the confusion caused by natural languages, as an unnecessary surface phenomena, could be cleared. The linguistic turn, in relation to the dream of the philosophical project of logic, has been to end the movement of stripping off the natural languages and to give up the faith that the basis of clarity could be found in the core of language. Instead, the philosopher may shift focus to the layers of language, taking them to be an essential part of philosophy.⁷ This produces a shift in emphasis, which does not mean the end of interest in the development of modern logic, but which contests the thought that makes logic into the central and ruling interest for philosophy. When the focus of philosophizing shifts from the project of making the language transparent to the language itself as part of the philosophizing, the thought of a division into the basis and surface of the language loses its weight. Here, we see the occurrence of a serious re-evaluation of what philosophy actually is.

The same type of big shift in thinking has been happening in the sphere of art in terms of the concept of the postmodern. The project of modern art was to strip off the extra decorative layers of all previous art forms and search for the nucleus of art, whether it be in the pure form (triangle, circle etc.), basic colors, in the pure function or pure sound etc., and to incessantly contest this basis by questioning the limits of art.⁸ Modernity has thought of itself as distinct from all other periods in history in being much closer to the truth, because it refuses decoration, artificiality and style as unnecessary. The postmodern sees modern art as just another style as opposed to progress toward the ultimate truth. The postmodern mode of thought means an end to the repetitive serious movement of looking for a basis and then contesting it. The value of the postmodern in art is to recognize the form of the modern, refuse the quest for foundation and devalue the emphasis placed on the slash between the deep/shallow distinction.⁹

In architecture, the postmodern has meant an end to the great modern notion of stripping off the unnecessary decorations of “style” in previous historical forms and attempting to attain the pure function of a building.¹⁰ In literature the modern aim was to strip off the unnecessary from writing, to see writing not as a means of telling a story or of mediating a meaning, but in itself, as writing, so that the materiality of sign itself came into focus.¹¹

Another feature that I list here as significant to the modern/postmodern distinction is the idea of history as progress. Eschatology is a significant factor in modern thinking, and has its background in the Enlightenment. In the area of knowledge, progress is supposed to be happen over time through the sorting out of obscurities and in coming closer to the true conception of reality. In moral and political thinking there functions a horizon of true humanity and a belief in progress towards more humane modes of civilization. This belief is also conceived of as a precondition for making moral and political judgements.¹²

The critique of the philosophy of history is part of the postmodern turn. This critique was introduced by Foucault's presentation of the breaks in the history of knowledge, and as a critique of Marxist eschatology in political thought. Lyotard's notion of the refusal to believe in “the grand narratives” is a sign of this impulse. It connects the critique of the Marxist faith in the progress in history, the critique of the faith in the progress of science in the philosophy of science, and the critique of any religious faith in ultimate salvation. Lyotard calls his thinking “pagan”. His refusal of the notion of meta-language is connected with the critique of the eschatological horizon of truth and privileged access to it by God, History, or Science. It means an affirmation of perspectivism, radical cultural pluralism, and also resolute secularism.

In its type of secularism the postmodern differs significantly from such earlier modern departures from Christian eschatology as existentialism. In Sartre's thinking, the idea is that the human being is thrown into the world and is left without God and an ultimate criterion of judgement, and that is why human existence is plagued with *Angst*, anxiety. The postmodern turn also starts from the idea that there is no God to rely on in judgements, but the real difference in comparison to existentialism is in the attitude. For the postmodern, no angst is produced by the fact that judgements ultimately rely on humans themselves. The lost God is there no more. The attitude is affirmative and light, positive, and willing to accept the responsibility of judgement.

The other aspect is that the very subject of judgement, the individual autonomous being as the bearer of existentialist *Angst*, which Sartre, for example, strips of all characteristics except the capacity to act, judge and, ultimately, to feel *Angst*, is problematized in the postmodern. The individual is

problematized in both its abstractly universal human and in its abstractly singular individual form. The radical constructivism included in the Foucauldian conception of genealogy questions and denies the notion of the original core self and simultaneously preserves agency and the capacity to judge.¹³ I will return to this topic in the final chapters of this book.

To define the postmodern antifoundational attitude, I concentrate here on the three aforementioned features: the refusal to look for foundation, the attention paid to the facade/foundation type of dichotomies, and the incredulity toward eschatologies as foundations of moral and political decisions.

There have been several good books written with the aspiration of covering all the various areas of culture in which the modern has been challenged by the postmodern in the last two decades, such as Steven Connor's *Postmodernist Culture*, or Steven Best's and Douglas Kellner's *Postmodern Theory*.¹⁴ There has also been much critical discussion which summarizes and generalizes the phenomena of the postmodern. Various forms of academic Marxism, which more or less ruled the critical scene in the universities prior to the interest in the postmodern, have responded critically to the challenge. One of the responses typical to Marxist influenced thinkers has been to cover and explain away the postmodern way of thinking as a symptom of something occurring at a more basic or foundational level of reality. Fredric Jameson's voluminous writing on the subject has covered or "mapped" and totally appropriated various expressions of postmodern culture with admirable coverage, and then "explained" it all into a "superstructure" for changes in the form of society.¹⁵ This kind of basis/superstructure form of an explanation should, I think, be exposed to postmodern criticism as representing in a precise manner the second of my list of features that are typical of modern thought. Mark Poster has conducted a similar operation of explanation with his notion of "mode of information," which serves as the basic explanandum.¹⁶

Jürgen Habermas labels the postmodern interest as "neoconservative," which is logical on the basis of his strong commitment to the project of Enlightenment and the eschatological philosophy of history, in which "development" is clearly defined.¹⁷ Habermas's critique is extremely committed to modern values, and as such is of little productive interest for those who are concerned with elaborating on the postmodern.

The second response on the part of those who are engaged in progressive (a term itself strongly committed in philosophy of history) thought has been an enraged accusation of nihilism, lack of politics, and the very impossibility, or end, of morality that allegedly follows from postmodern thought. This discussion has been very emotionally animated partly because it is based on the conviction of the necessity of the horizon of truth, progress, and belief in

eschatology as a necessary precondition for political judging.¹⁸ The postmodern impulse, of course, is directed precisely against the validity of such a belief.

There are also some writers who have analyzed the postmodern as a mode of thought, or cultural change of tone, such as Wolfgang Iser, or Best and Kellner. My definition of the postmodern finds an ally in these texts. But for me, the postmodern as a mode of thought is more like a direction in which to go than anything resembling a theory. In this sense I depart from Best and Kellner, who talk about “postmodern theory”.

The postmodern as a mode of thought in the form that I have presented here has not been exemplified by any one writer. The three authors, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Judith Butler, who are in special focus in this book all have their distinct relationships to the terms “modern” and “postmodern.” Not one of them uses the terms in the way in which I do here. Nor is the distinction between the modern and the postmodern central to any of them in the way in which it is for me. I will briefly reflect on their relation to the terms and to the thoughts which I have brought up here.

Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, makes use of a concept of “modern” and, in the end of the book, makes prophecies of the modern time as nearing its end. Thus, without using the word, he hints at the post-“modern.” How does my usage of “the modern” correlate to his?

First, it has to be noted that Foucault’s book deals with a specific subject, that of the three branches of knowledge: knowledge about living beings (now biology), language (now linguistics), and economical facts (now economics). It makes claims about the profound change that occurred in these forms of knowledge during the period from the 17th to the 18th century. Even if Foucault is not claiming to present the *Geist* of the era, or a total analysis of the time, he still claims to have revealed a major simultaneous shift in the field of knowledges, which he explores in the philosophical discourse contemporary to them at the end of the 18th century. This marks the end of the era which he refers to as “classical” and the beginning of the “modern age.” The change occurs in the arrangement of knowledge, as he says, at the “archeological” level or at “the positive unconscious,” a level that “eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific discourse.”¹⁹ He calls this the “episteme” or “a certain modern manner of knowing empirities.”²⁰

Foucault lists several characteristics of the modern episteme in comparison with the classical one.²¹ The most concrete change in his area of study, the sciences of economy, life and language, is the appearance of new elements in the formation of knowledge: labor, organic structure, and the inflectional system, which later evolve into elements of labor, life, and language.

What fascinates me, and is significant to my concept of the modern, is how Foucault characterizes the function of these new elements. In the modern age, in comparison to the ordering arrangements of knowledge in the classical period, he claims that representations lose their power to provide a foundation for the links. Each of the new elements, in their respective areas of knowledge, provides for a foundation for linking representations “outside representation, beyond its immediate visibility, in a sort of behind-the-scenes world even deeper and more dense than representation itself.”²² The areas of knowledge “define for themselves an internal space which, to our representation, is the exterior.”²³

Foucault states that the appearance of labor, life, and language is in correspondence with the founding of a transcendental philosophy of Kant²⁴, and this, he claims, is the foundation of the triangle constitutive of European thought from the beginning of the nineteenth century: the triangle of criticism, positivism, and metaphysics.²⁵

The modern episteme, for Foucault, thus is characterized by 1) the impossibility of basing synthesis in the space of representations, 2) the opening up the transcendental field of subjectivity, and 3) the constitution of “quasi-transcendentals” of life, labor, and, language.²⁶ Thus, he writes: “European culture is inventing for itself a depth in which what matters is no longer identities, distinctive characters, permanent tables with all their possible paths and routes, but great hidden forces developed on the basis of their primitive and inaccessible nucleus, origin, causality, and history.” “The visible order, with its permanent grid of distinctions, is now only a superficial glitter above an abyss.”²⁷

If Foucault’s analysis of the specific forms of knowledge reveals that there is a certain “invention of depth” occurring in the modern, it is certainly connected to the way in which I define the modern. In this terminology, what I will do in the following is to discuss the “quasi-transcendentals” of the modern political theories and their possible overcoming.

Yet, my project is very distinct from Foucault’s: I am not making historical claims, Foucault does not define the modern merely as a specific “mode of thinking,” and he is definitely not talking about the postmodern, even if he hints at the end of the modern. Thus, I do not back my general definitions of the modern and the postmodern on Foucault’s texts although as is evident on the basis of the discussion above, there are several points of connection and inspiration.

The re-introduction of the Nietzschean notion of genealogy which Foucault develops in several texts, and which I will discuss in more detail later, is his most influential contribution to the thematic of this study. As taken up and further developed by Judith Butler in her work on gender, it has been one of

the most efficient tools for my work on agency in political theory. The genealogical shift is a shift toward radical social constructivism, which enables a denaturalizing gesture of a very efficient kind, and consequently allows theorizing on agency in politics without the assumption of a basic core of a transcendental individual. This Foucauldian theme connects most profoundly with my postmodern thematic.

Jean-François Lyotard's relationship to the concept of postmodern is both clear and problematic from my perspective. Lyotard, on the one hand, is the writer who most explicitly represents the traits that I would compile under this concept, and he uses the term himself. I would, however, see the postmodern content of his thought as most explicitly connected with his term "paganism", and to a lesser degree with the term "postmodern," which, I think he uses in several meanings.

Lyotard's paganism, a term which he begins to use in his two books *Rudiments païens* and *Instructions païennes*, published in 1977, connects the critique of the truth, unity and finality.²⁸ Paganism is strongly perspectivistic and anti-eschatological, and I agree with Wolfgang Iser, who claims that Lyotard, along with Richard Rorty, is the exemplary postmodern thinker of all contemporary writers on the basis of the criteria of non-foundationalism. I will return more specifically to the content of paganism in the following chapters.

Lyotard does not, however, use the term "postmodern" in his two pagan books of 1977. Nor does he mention the term in *Just Gaming* (orig. 1979), except in a note added later to explain the sentence "I believe that modernity is pagan." The note begins with "JFL believes that he can dissipate today (October 1979) some of the confusion that prevails in this conversation on modernity by introducing a distinction between the modern and the postmodern within that which is confused here under the first term." The clarification in the note defines the modern as adhering to the notion of taste in order to evaluate works (with a reference to romanticism) and the postmodern (or pagan) as not having a regulating idea, as experimenting.²⁹ The distinction introduced here is the one that is also encountered later in Lyotard's writings on art. It is a distinction which I find problematic from the point of view of my own modern/postmodern distinction, as I will shortly explain.

In *The Postmodern Condition* (orig. 1979), Lyotard actually adopts the word postmodern, as he says, from American sociologists and critics.³⁰ To simplify, he says that he defines the distinction as referring to a crisis of narratives. He defines the modern as knowledge that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse making appeal to some grand narrative. He defines the postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.³¹ I would say that here,

Lyotard gives the pagan themes of perspectivism and anti-eschatology another form by applying the theme of narrativity.

Lyotard's pagan postmodern is not, however, exactly the same postmodern that I am searching for with my distinction of the modern as repetitive of the search and refutation of foundations, and the postmodern as the refusal of this motion. Lyotard refers to the incredulity toward the grand narratives, in other words, to the refusal of one discourse of truth and of an eschatological philosophy of history. This refusal is an important part of the postmodern mode of thought, but it is not the central aspect of my definition. Lyotard never writes of postmodernity as being the refusal of the modern perpetual quest for foundations in general.

Moreover, much of Lyotard's philosophizing on art in fact places him in the camp of the modern thinkers according to my definition. The note in *Just Gaming* to which I referred above, in which Lyotard names romantic art as "modern" and modernist art as "postmodern," is in accordance with his other views on art in which he defends the project of modernist art and praises its experimenting nature. In the article "An Answer to the Question What is Postmodern" (1982), this defence of modern art against the postmodernists is at its fiercest. Lyotard writes about art that claims that the avant-garde is over and names itself "transavantgardism." He also writes about architects who want to break free of the Bauhaus project. This means that he refers to what elsewhere is known as postmodernism in art! and he firmly denounces it as unphilosophical eclecticism. He defends the continuation of the project of the avant-garde and the modern, which he describes as experimenting, non-figurative, and always testing the limits of presentation.

In the same article, Lyotard distinguishes between two attitudes inside modern art, which enables him to call one of them "postmodern." He denounces the melancholic form of modern art, which facilitates the collective sharing of the nostalgia for the unattainable, and praises art that searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. This distinction, I would note, is clearly made inside the tradition of modern art.³²

In *The Postmodern Explained*, the two themes of the modern/postmodern distinctions, the pagan one of perspectivism and anti-eschatology, and the other one of defending modernism alternate.³³ In one of the essays in this collection, "Note on the Meaning of 'Post'" (1985), Lyotard partly reconsiders his defence of modern art. He acknowledges the new sensibility in architecture connected with repetition and quotation, and recognizes this as one of the legitimate meanings of the postmodern, along with the second theme, which is the critique of the eschatological philosophy of history³⁴. The third theme that he distinguishes as postmodern is, again, the claim that "the great

movement of avant-gardes is over and done with.”³⁵ He now says that he dislikes the term avant-garde with its military connotations, but he still does not agree with the postmodern thesis that this project of Manet, Cézanne, Picasso, Delaunay, Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian, Malevitch, Duchamp, and Barnett Newman is at its end. Nevertheless, he finds a new line of defence here. He now considers modern art a self-reflection and a psychoanalysis of modernity. His view is that if we do not analyze modernity (as modern art does) we are condemned to repeat, without displacement, the West’s “modern neurosis.”³⁶ This means that he no longer defends modernism as an absolute enterprise, but rather as something useful and historically defined.

As my main interest is in Lyotard as a political thinker, I would pay attention to what is evident in several texts, namely, that Lyotard’s attachment to avant-garde modernist art is not without political dimension. It is connected to the ill fate of modernism in the totalitarian regimes of this century, to the fact that the Nazis burned modernist works and that Stalin condemned them. It also relates to the fact that the tradition of critical Marxism, The Frankfurt school especially, has always had a close positive connection to the project of modern art.

It is clear that Lyotard never differentiates between the repetitive motion of breaking the foundations of art in the belief that there is a foundation, although perhaps an unrepresentable one, and the consciousness of there not being such a foundation and the concentration on the layers, that is the consciousness which I would call postmodern. He remains faithful to experimentation and the unrepresentability of the foundation. For me, the theme of unrepresentability paradoxically places Lyotard in the philosophy of art within the modern, and in his ethical and political thought within the postmodern, or at least at the edge of it, as I will argue more specifically later.³⁷

Because my interest in this book is mainly in the postmodern content of Lyotard’s pagan thought, I will not consider Lyotard’s early work or his philosophy of art here, and I leave the notions of “figural,” “libidinal,” or “sublime” and his books *Discourse, Figure*, (1971) and *Des dispositifs pulsionnelles* (1973) or *Économie libidinal* (1974) or *Les Transformateurs, Duchamp* (1977) untouched, even if there is a remarkable continuation of themes in his work through these various phases, as emphasized by both Geoffrey Bennington and Bill Readings, who have written major books on Lyotard.³⁸ My ethical-political interest is in Lyotard’s pagan work in *Rudiments païens* (1977) and *Instructions païennes* (1977), as well as in his work on ethical and political judgement in *Just Gaming* (orig. 1979) and *The Differend* (orig. 1984), and his political writings. I will later discuss more specifically Lyotard’s commitments with the distinction modern/postmodern and my view of Lyotard as on the edge of the postmodern in terms of issues concerning community in Chapter 5, and concerning judgement in Chapter 8.

Judith Butler, I think, is a consistently postmodern anti-foundationalist thinker who nevertheless does not use the word but in passing. As such, I take the responsibility of labeling her work as postmodern. She is very good at pointing out foundation/facade kind of distinctions in discourse, and has offered an original and elaborate contribution with this approach in gender studies. She has not commented specifically on eschatological thinking, or specific issues of moral or political philosophy for which her thinking, nevertheless, provides material for.

The conjunction of the two basic distinctions with which I operate in this book, the liberal/Hegelian and the modern/postmodern is not a simple one. Basically, I treat both liberal and Hegelian traditions as explicating the modern mode of thought in their respective establishments of the quasi-transcendentals “the individual” and “the communal subject,” and I search for ways of overcoming the modern in the realm of political thought. There are also several other issues which come up over the course of the book which connect various aspects of these two distinctions.

It is evident that I discuss the time after the French revolution in political theory, but as I stated earlier, I do not connect my concepts of the modern and the postmodern in themselves with any historical time or periodization. This means that I do not claim that the liberal and the Hegelian political traditions are specifically political traditions of the “modern era” so that their basic assumptions could not appear at any other historical time. In other words, I would not engage in the discussion, for example, on the question of when exactly liberal thought was born. Nor do I claim that the liberal and the Hegelian modes of thought are “the” political patterns of the modern era, in other words that there have not been any other ways of thinking about politics in the modern era. My aims are more humble than total periodizations: I focus on the specific modern content of two ways of thinking about politics.

Notes

¹ In the standard analytical philosophy “semantics” means thoughts about the relationship between language and the world, and it is based on the Fregean conception that a linguistic sign has a referent (the thing the word refers to) and a meaning (the idea it refers to).

In Saussurian linguistics, a linguistic sign is considered to consist of the signifier (the material form of the sign) and the signified (the idea, meaning). In this connection the idea of a referent (a thing referred to) is not in focus.

The linguistic turn in Anglo-American philosophy has increased the interest in nonreferential thinking, and is connected with the interest in contemporary French philosophy.

The linguistic turn in Anglo-American analytic philosophy came about based on several sources, such as the late-Wittgensteinian philosophy of language and the critique of referentiality of scientific terms that was happening within the philosophy of science with Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) and Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method. Outline of an Anarchist Theory of Knowledge*. (London: Verso, 1984) see esp. pp. 55-68, 81-92 and 164-170. Richard Rorty's critique of referential epistemology in *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) continued on the same path of relativizing the referential nature of scientific enterprise and shifted the attention to the linguistic nature of philosophy. Rorty also had a role in coining the term "the linguistic turn." Richard Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn. Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). Simultaneously there was a new interest on the part of literary critics toward the French thinking which is based on the Saussurian linguistics.

²When specifically talking about art I use "modernism" and "postmodernism." I consistently avoid "postmodernity" and "postmodern society", as I see them as indicating either a temporal or a social determination, which I would contest. As general term I find "the postmodern" most satisfactory.

The terminology varies greatly in the literature. Linda Hutcheon, whose analysis I find agreeable, surprisingly applies "postmodernism" in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), as does Steven Connor in *Postmodernist Culture. An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). An early analyst, Andreas Huyssen, also applies "postmodernism" mixed with "the postmodern" in *After the Great Divide. Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). Otherwise, "postmodernism" as a general term referring to the entire cultural phenomena, and not only to the art-movement, is usually applied by those who are hostile to or think of themselves as coming from a metadiscourse which is capable of wrapping up and mastering the postmodern, such as Christopher Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) or Fredric Jameson "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" *New Left Review* no. 146, July-August 1984, pp. 15!92.

Art Berman, in *Preface to Modernism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), specifies "modernism" as an art-movement, and chooses to use "modernity" as a more general term which he identifies as a change in thought. "Postmodernity" is used by various other social and cultural analysts. Hugh Silverman's collection *Questioning Foundations. Truth/Subjectivity/Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1993) carries on its title page the term "postmodernity," whereas his collection of articles on art applies the term "postmodernism." Hugh Silverman (ed) *Postmodernism – Philosophy and the Arts* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Anthony Giddens uses "post-modernity" in *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

“The postmodern society” is in use by social scientists. Best and Kellner in *The Postmodern Theory* also apply “postmodern society”.

³ Foundation is fairly common as the central focus in literature on the postmodern. For example, a collection of articles on postmodern topics edited by Hugh Silverman is entitled “Questioning Foundations.”

The postmodern is anti-foundational in respect to the modern as a specifically foundation oriented mode of thinking. To claim that the postmodern mode of thinking is nonfoundational in an absolute meaning would be a foundationalist project. The idea is not to claim that the postmodern mode of thought is free of establishing foundations – no thought is. The point is that it pays attention to the constructedness of all foundations. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak makes a note of this in her “Foundations and Cultural Studies” in Hugh J. Silverman (ed) *Questioning Foundations* pp. 153-175.

⁴ I first presented the characterization of the postmodern with the idea of the end of the purifying motion and as focusing on layers in the article “Raja” [The Border] (in Finnish) *Tiede & Edistys* 4/1986 pp. 284-293.

⁵ It is common to speak of “modernity,” “early modernity,” and “late modernity,” also in connection to political thought, as for example William Connolly does in *Political Theory & Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). He defines these as epochs, and contrasts epochs with “medieval society,” “ancient world,” and “the future”. When I speak about “modern political theory” I use the modern in this conventionally historical, not very specific sense, which is quite equivalent to that of Connolly. Periodizing, however, is not in my interest.

⁶ Within gender theory there has been a great deal of interest in problematizing the inside/outside valorizations. I will return to issues of sex and gender in Part Three.

⁷ See above note 1. Many writers connect the linguistic turn in some way to the postmodern, even if it is common to connect it only to the new interest in contemporary French philosophy.

⁸ There are two dimensions in the quest for borders in modernist art. There is, on the one hand, the formalist aim toward pure abstraction, and in that sense the essential core of painting, with a culmination point in American post-painterly abstraction and Clement Greenberg’s aesthetic program. See Clement Greenberg “Modernist painting” *Arts Year Book* no. 4 1961 and Clement Greenberg “After Abstract Expressionism” *Art International* 6 no. 8 October 1962. On the other hand, there is the historical avant-garde and its aim toward the breakdown of the border between art and life. See Peter Bürger *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Rosalind Krauss is one of those who have pointed out the discourse of purity and originality as an important part of modernism. Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988) pp. 151-170.

⁹ One consequence of this has been the appearance of art which contests the established high/low art categories, lifts the ban on decorativeness and representation in art, and underscores citation.

¹⁰ Modernism or functionalism in architecture is associated with Bauhaus, and designers and theoreticians such as Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and in Finland Alvar Aalto. Of the ideology of functionalism and its functioning in Finnish dwelling architecture see Kirsi Saarikangas, *Model Houses for Model Families. Gender, Ideology and the Modern Dwelling. The Type-Planned Houses of the 1940's in Finland.* (Helsinki: SHS, 1993) pp. 140!150.

The postmodern is associated with the end of the Bauhaus project and the subsequent International Style. Architecture is generally presented as one of the earliest and most strongly affected areas in terms of the postmodern turn, with a decisive role given to Carl Jenck's book *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1984) Orig. 1977.

¹¹ As well known high modernist writers are usually listed minimally Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Samuel Beckett. New Criticism is connected to high modernism.

¹² Modernist artists did not generally share a belief in the progress of morality, but were generally post-Enlightenment thinkers. My distinction of the modern/ the postmodern more significantly records the themes present in the intellectual discussion of the 1970's and the 1980's, while in ethical and political thought, eschatological Marxism, together with liberal humanism, was the target for the postmodern critique.

Sartre was probably an exception who combined both of these traits. He was a modernist writer exhibiting an interest in stripping off the unnecessary. Simultaneously, he was a strong believer in the eschatological humanist project. This subsequently became the target of criticism for Foucault.

¹³ Foucault's theme of the "death of the man" or the critique of the universal category of "a human" is motivated largely exactly by Sartre's "humanism."

¹⁴ Steven Connor, *Postmodernist Culture. An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1991).

¹⁵ David Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Inquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change.* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), has the same aspiration, as does Alex Callinicos in *Against Postmodernism. A Marxist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

¹⁶ Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information. Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

¹⁷ Habermas relies on Piaget's developmental psychology and makes overt comparisons on the basis of general patterns of development (like abstractness of thought) to the development of cultures. Here the Western white civilization serves as the measure for the "developing" cultures. Jürgen Habermas, *The*

Theory of Communicative Action. Vol 1 Reason and the Rationalization of Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

¹⁸ See Christopher Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism. Critical Theory and the Ends of Philosophy*. Terry Eagleton characterizes postmodernism: "... postmodernism's consumerist hedonism and philistine anti-historicism, its wholesale abandonment of critique and commitment, its cynical erasure of truth, meaning and subjectivity, its bland, reified technologism." Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) p. 373. Seyla Benhabib also states that without a utopia, "as a sense of radical other," there is no morality. Seyla Benhabib *Situating the Self* p. 229.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1974) p. xi.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 245 and 250.

²¹ Such as the new organizing principles analogy and succession, the search for internal relations and organic structures, the move from the idea of Order to the idea of History, and the appearance of "the man".

²² "... representation has lost the power to provide a foundation ... for the links ... to link representation or the elements of a particular representation together. The condition of these links resides henceforth outside representation, beyond its immediate visibility, in a sort of behind-the-scenes world even deeper and more dense than representation itself. In order to find a way back to the point where the visible forms of being are joined – the structure of living beings, the value of wealth, the syntax of words – we must direct our search towards that peak, that necessary but always inaccessible point, which drives down, beyond our gaze, towards the very heart of things." *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 244/245.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 251. Foucault also further analyzes the modern episteme as being characterized by the connection with finitude, the reduplication of the empirical and the transcendental, the perpetual relation of the *cogito* to the unthought, and the retreat and return of the origin, which all define for us man's mode of being. Of specific interest to my way of defining the modern is the last of these. Foucault writes: "A task is thereby set for thought: that of contesting the origin of things, but of contesting it in order to give it a foundation...that origin without origin or beginning, on the basis of which everything is able to come into being." p. 332.

²⁸ Jean-François Lyotard, *Instructions païennes* (Paris: Galilée, 1977) and *Rudiments païens. Genre dissertatif* (Paris: 10/18, 1977).

- ²⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, *Just Gaming* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) p. 16. Lyotard also adds here that the postmodern is not to be understood in a periodizing sense.
- ³⁰ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge* tr Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) p. xxiii.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
- ³² Here, he contrasts German Expressionism to Braque and Picasso, Malevitch to Lissitsky, and Chirico to Duchamp. Jean-François Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" tr Régis Durand, in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* pp. 80-81.
- ³³ In "Apostil on Narratives" (1984), he distances himself from the narrow interpretation of the postmodern as a problem of narratives. "Postmodernity is also the end of the people as sovereign of the stories," he writes. *The Postmodern Explained* tr and ed Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) pp. 17-21, p. 20.
- In "Missive on Universal History" (1984) and in "Memorandum on Legitimation" the theme is anti-eschatology. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-30 and pp. 31-60.
- In "Dispatch concerning the Confusion of reason," the theme is the critique of metalanguage, the decline of metaphysics and metapolitics. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-66.
- ³⁴ "Following Adorno I have used the name "Auschwitz" to signify just how impoverished recent Western history seems from the point of view of the "Modern" project of the emancipation of humanity". *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- ³⁵ Jean-François Lyotard, "An Answer to the Question what is Postmodern" pp. 79-80.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
- ³⁷ Richard Beardsworth emphasizes the theme of the unrepresentable in Lyotard's philosophy as connecting the philosophy of art and ethical and political thinking. His work is elaborate and convincing, but he dismisses the modern/postmodern distinction in the meaning that interests me. He says that in Lyotard's article "Answering the question: What is the postmodern?" "the 'post' of 'postmodernity' doesn't imply temporal succession." He notes that the distinction "could be considered here as a question of *tone* or *style*..." p. 52. I would emphasize exactly this difference in tone or style as relevant to the conceptual difference between the modern and the postmodern, and I think Lyotard is interesting as a theoretician of the postmodern exactly because he has never presented the distinction as temporal. Richard Beardsworth, "On the Critical 'Post': Lyotard's Agitated Judgement" in Andrew Benjamin (ed) *Judging Lyotard* (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 43-80.
- ³⁸ Geoffrey Bennington, *Lyotard. Writing the Event* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) is an elaborate discussion on Lyotard's three major books *Economie libidinal*, *Discourse*, *Figure* and *Le Différend*. Bennington looks for unity and disruption of themes through Lyotard's early occupation with phenom-

ology, his defence of a certain kind of anti-structuralist psychoanalysis, his break with Marx with the notion of libidinal economy, and his turn from libido to language in his later phase. The themes of figure, unrepresentability, event, and narrative heterogeneity are among those where Bennington stresses continuity in Lyotard's work.

Bill Readings, in *Introducing Lyotard. Art and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991) also stresses the continuity of the themes of unrepresentability and figure through Lyotard's work from the philosophy of art to politics.

Chapter 3

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND PERSPECTIVISM

After having introduced my two operative distinctions, I will proceed to illustrate how they work in the analysis of some of the contemporary discussions on political thought. It is interesting to see the particular way in which certain contemporary discussants on democracy and participation allow for the mingling between the concepts and ideas of the liberal and Hegelian civil society and state and the liberal and Hegelian ideals of participation. The clarification of concepts and conceptions helps to discern how and in what ways the writers cling to each of the traditions. I will take up four theoreticians, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, Jean Baudrillard, and Jean-François Lyotard, in my discussion of the topic of democracy and participation, in which I ask how the differing ideas of civil society and public space, state, and democracy are arranged by each. Simultaneously, I will pay attention to how each of them shows interest in the modern/postmodern distinction.

Is democracy conceived of as self-command, with an emphasis on participation, or as a guarantee of individual interests and liberty? How does the liberal idea of civil society as an initially free public space reveal itself in these accounts? Does it consist of transcendental individuals invested with individual interest? Does it connect with the utopian perspective of truth as an effect and end-result of the free exchange of ideas in civil society? Is it theorized in opposition to the government or state, as the oppressor of the liberty of civil society?

Does the Hegelian notion of civil society as a system of necessity figure in the writings by these authors? Do they subscribe to the utopian perspective of the total communal self-control as exemplified in Hegel's state? Does the idea which is present in the Hegelian state, namely, that of individual as a product of a normative system, who gains control over that which controls itself by a reflective act of politics, figure in at all here?

I will examine the extent to which and in what way each of the discussants is committed to each of these conceptions. I am also interested in whether any of them have taken up any postmodern topics, and if so in what respect?

Habermas

In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas describes the emergence of political public space.¹ The political public space remains in his late writings as the ideal of social-political space. In his major work, *The Theory of Communicative Action*,² Habermas aims at theoretically grounding the conversational model of democracy, and he offers the theory of communicative action as a foundation.

Habermas's society consists of both systemic and non-systemic elements. The systemic elements are money (the economic civil society) and power (the power-political state), whereas the counterpart of the system, the lifeworld, consists of knowledge, morality and aesthetics.³ The systemic action is aim-rational and means-oriented. It is connected with the term "the technical cognitive interest," which derives from Habermas's well-known early book, *Knowledge and Human Interests*.⁴ Accordingly, the action within the lifeworld is interaction and aims at agreement. It is guided by an emancipatory and understanding cognitive interest of knowledge.

In modern society, according to Habermas, there is a common tendency for the system to colonize the lifeworld. This, according to Habermas, is not only harmful, but also produces positive results: it creates expertise and diversity in the spheres of knowledge, morality and aesthetics. On the one hand, the communicative action fights colonization, while on the other hand the communicatively functioning lifeworlds are enriched with their rationalization.⁵

If I attempt to translate Habermas's vocabulary to that of my earlier presentation, it appears that for Habermas, the systemic elements incorporate the idea of Hegelian civil society – the system of necessities, which gives birth to the social bond without intentions. Action in the systemic sphere is interest-oriented as opposed to morally oriented, whereas action in the lifeworld is authentic. This is the Hegelian element of Habermasian theory.

In Habermas's work we find the model of theorizing that was already confronted in Cohen and Arato, in which the issue in the discussion on democracy is to defend public space from the power of the state and the market. In Habermas, the free public sphere is connected with the concept of the lifeworld, whereas Cohen and Arato proceed to name it "civil society."

Similarly to Cohen and Arato, who in many ways follow him, Habermas, while making use of the Hegelian notion of civil society, simultaneously concurs with the liberal idea of the state apparatus as oppressing free public space. It is true that the main idea in the work of both Cohen and Arato and Habermas is “mediation,” that is, the theoretical operation which allows the systemic elements a definite and positive place in respect to liberal civil society. Still, I would emphasize that one of the inherent assumptions in their conceptions is that the initial relationship between the state and civil society is that of oppression. The mediation between the state and civil society, or the positive effects of the systemic elements on the lifeworld, are merely an exception to the general rule of animosity between these two spheres.

Within the post-Marxian framework the theme of mediation resolves the Marxian problem of not being able to theorize positively about the state and market, which in Marxist theory have conventionally been seen as mere evils. Simultaneously, the initial setting of the mediation matches that of the liberal theory with regard to the role of the state.

For Habermas, the public space is that of free discussion and it has a definite relationship to the liberal “civil society.” It includes the principles of liberty, speech, opinion, and press, as well as the ideal of equality among individuals.

The idea of public space in the Habermasian sense, which is very similar to that of Mill’s liberal model, also includes a utopian element: the conviction that the truth and transparency are achieved (transcendentally, as an end-product which in reality is never achieved, but is central as an imagined endpoint) by means of rational social conversation and argumentation. The end result of free discussion is the emergence of truth. The truth is ideally (transcendentally) identical to the consensus achieved through discussion.⁶ This is the utopian element in Habermas’s universal pragmatic. The truth, moreover, is considered as one.

According to Habermas’s presentation, we may assume a contrafactually existing power-free communication-situation. Based upon this assumption we are able to formulate validity criteria (*Gültigkeitsansprüche*) in each of the areas of communicative action, that is, in knowledge, morality, and aesthetics. The criteria are reminiscent of those formulated for the validity conditions of elementary sentences in logic and they enable us to make rational judgements about argumentation, that is, provide us with criteria for judging the validity of utterances in a discussion. In the area of knowledge the validity criteria is truthfulness, in the area of morality it is righteousness, and in the area of aesthetics it is authenticity.⁷

The establishment of the transcendental validity criteria of the areas of truth, morality, and aesthetics implies that Habermas believes in transcenden-

tally existing criteria of truth and morality, and even of aesthetics. In this sense he differs radically from the Nietzschean perspectivism that is embraced by Rorty and Lyotard, which I will take up below.

Habermas's formal pragmatics may be criticized in several ways. From my point of view its weakness lies in its conception of meaning production in language. The problematic is connected with one of the foundations of Habermas's theory – namely, its assumption of the transcendently existing power-free state of communication.

In a power-free state of communication, Habermas bases his analysis on what he calls a “standard” speech situation, meaning a situation in which “the speaker means nothing else than the literal meaning of what he says.”⁸ In this situation of transparency, the formal pragmatic declares its aim to be to “clarify what it means to understand an utterance.”⁹

The most influential trait of the theory that follows is that Habermas's formulation of the validity criteria for understanding in a standard speech situation – truthfulness, righteousness, and authenticity – places the main emphasis on the intention of the speaker. When the communication deals with knowledge, an expression is understood when it may be assumed that the person who made the expression aimed at presenting a truthful claim. Accordingly, the validity condition for understanding a moral expression is that the person who expressed it aimed at a rightful judgement. An aesthetic expression needs to be an authentic expression of the person's experience in order to be understood.¹⁰ According to Habermas's analysis of understanding, the meaning of a statement is understood if the conditions of its validity are known.¹¹

In my view, the criticism of Habermas's formal pragmatics should be carried out from the point of view of either the late-Wittgensteinian theory of language or from a structuralist language theory. In both of these theories, the transfer of meaning in the usage of language is not seen as based upon the intentions of the speaker (or on referentiality), but rather on the existence of the conventions and practices of language (the meaning of a phrase is in its use) and the structure of the language (the meaning of a phrase is in its relationship to other phrases in language). An utterance is not understood because of the intentions of a speaker, but rather because there exists a linguistic practice which makes the utterance understandable.¹²

Why does Habermas rely upon the transcendently existing validity criteria of truth, morality and even aesthetics? I would emphasize the political aim of the creation of a transcendental image of an ideal democratic situation as a significant motive in the background of the Habermasian language-theoretical assumptions. Ideal democracy in Habermas is based on the “honest” exchange of beliefs; it is an ideal of liberal civil society.

In addition to the criteria of truth and morality, Habermas also assumes the existence of development and progress in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Habermas's view of history is based on the idea of universal rationalization, which progresses throughout the history of civilization. In line with his belief in the doctrines of developmental psychology and the comparison between "primitive" and "advanced" cultures Habermas clearly believes that such a developmental view accurately describes the world. According to him, the modern periods are more rational and morally advanced than previous ones.¹³

The modern project, as the project of the Enlightenment has been seriously questioned for a long time. When a "highly civilized" society is suddenly capable of barbaric actions, the doubting of unilinear progress must necessarily be considered. One of the icons of this kind of doubt is Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.¹⁴ Postcolonial and ecological thought has further problematized the value and political effect of notions like "progress" and "development."

Why is Habermas so aggressively defensive when it comes to his attacks on poststructuralist theorists – who he refers to as "neo-conservatives"¹⁵ – the view of one truth, one morality, and one progress in the face of multicultural reality? One could claim that Habermas also pays tribute to modern project in order to defend ideal of the public political space and liberal democracy in the context of post World War II Germany.

Where does Habermas stand when it comes to the two modern political theory traditions and their problematization in the postmodern? Despite his explicit commitment to liberal political theory, Habermas, a German theorist, expresses and exhibits an implicit affinity to Hegelian-Marxian theory. This is evident in his conception of "systemic elements", which is derived from the Hegelian idea of civil society. Simultaneously, he explicitly exhibits a strong interest in the liberal ideal of civil society as a free public space.

His theory incorporates the Millian liberal ideal of truth as being conveyed in the process of freedom (free conversation). Similarly to Cohen and Arato, he, in his style of presentation, expresses the fantasy of a thorough self-command of the social sphere, and thus also takes part in the Hegelian-Marxian notion of freedom. In this sense, Habermas, like Cohen and Arato, who follow him in many respects, is strongly committed to both forms of modern political theory, and shows no sign at all of postmodern concern.

Habermas also commits himself to a strong demand of participation in the Hegelian-Marxian mode: the more people take part in public discussion and the more honest the participants in discussion are, the better the result. This view does not recommend a strong differentiation between private citizens and political experts.

Rorty

In his article “The Contingency of Liberal Community”, Rorty applies the expressions “liberal democracy,” “liberal society,” “liberal culture,” “the American democracy,” “the liberal societies of our century,” and “we liberals” in a more or less synonymous sense.¹⁶ He characterizes liberal culture as a fully secularized culture, in which there is no room for the sacred or non-human powers, for which humans would not be responsible. In Rorty’s liberal culture, the project of the Enlightenment has been completed. Humans do not derive the meaning of their lives from anything other than from other finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings.¹⁷

According to Rorty, the awareness and acknowledgement of contingency is essential to a liberal society. Rorty remarks that our century’s societies have produced people who have become aware of the contingency of the vocabularies by which they describe their greatest hopes, the contingency of their consciences, and who yet remain faithful to those consciences. Rorty mentions Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Sigmund Freud, Marcel Proust, and Ludwig Wittgenstein as examples of thinkers for whom freedom signifies a recognition of contingency.¹⁸

The theme of contingency illustrates the degree to which Rorty radically differs from Habermas in denying the existence of a basis, even a transcendently existing one, of truth and morality. In this sense, he represents a clearly postmodern and nonfoundationalist mode of thought.

Rorty’s liberal society is based on the crucial principle of “individual liberty,” which the modern liberal state guarantees to its citizens. A central aspect of the idea of liberal society is that in words, unlike in deeds, everything is permitted.¹⁹ The principle of free speech, freedom of opinion, and free and open controversy in discussion is crucial. According to Rorty, the liberal society has no other ideal than liberty, and no other aim than to see what emerges as a result of the conflict of different views, and to reform accordingly.

Here, Rorty clearly differs from John Stuart Mill, who justifies free discussion by saying that it is likely to lead to a better view, a more correct opinion, than a censored discussion. His view also clearly differs from Habermas, who believes that, even if transcendently, the truth can be found as a result of the free exchange of views. Rorty is a Nietzschean perspectivist in that he does not believe in one truth, not even a transcendental one. This is not his justification for the principle of free speech. Instead, the principle of speech is a value which is an inherent part of democratic culture. As such, it can not be justified, it can only be defended or opposed.

Rorty argues that there is no point of view that is outside our own particular and historically conditioned vocabulary, and that would allow us to judge the rationality of our vocabulary. This is why we must abandon the thought that we could rationally ground new vocabularies in old languages. We should give up the thought that intellectual development is rational, that is, neutral in respect to competing parties. Nor is it, however, irrational. Intellectual change (Rorty would not call it development) can be characterized as applying new vocabularies without an objective reason for their being better than the old ones. Democracy does not, according to Rorty, need a “foundation”, rather, it may need defense, which may be accomplished by describing it again using a better vocabulary. This is what Rorty is attempting with his description.²⁰

It follows from Rorty’s view that there is no frame of reference in which one could ask: “If freedom has no morally privileged position, if it is just one value among others, how can liberalism be defended?” There is no measure for evaluations, because there is no value which would be morally privileged. There is no way of rising above one’s own language, culture, institutions or practices, and considering them as equal to others.²¹ According to Rorty, the choice to defend the liberal culture is done without criteria. It happens the same way in which one chooses a friend – not arbitrarily, but without criteria. Liberal culture needs no foundation, it merely needs to be spoken for.²² Rorty admits that he does not speak from a neutral point of view, but rather that he openly defends liberalism. Rorty’s position is that of a “conscious ethnocentrist.”

It seems to me that Rorty defends the liberal Lockean theory of civil society, and that he does so in an extremely pure manner. He does not presuppose the self-directing communal subjectivity as being hidden in it or evolving out of it, as Cohen and Arato and Habermas do. This means that Rorty’s presentation of liberal civil society includes none of the elements of the Hegelian state, in terms of the idea of the self-command of a community. Rorty’s political thinking does not include any elements of Hegelian civil society in it either. He does not theorize on any of the elements that Habermas refers to as “systemic,” economy or the state administration.

Strangely enough, for a liberal theorist, Rorty’s world also distinctly lacks any trace of the liberal state or government, and instead it seems to consist of a mere civil society. Here it should probably be noticed, though, that Rorty’s writings are not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of political theory, but rather essays on culture with an accent on contingency. Still, they convey an interesting version of a positively accentuated form of liberal political thinking without much of an anti-state ethos.

What is Rorty's view on participation? He hardly touches the issue, although it is easily conceivable that he would associate himself with the view which Bann refers to as "liberal." He does not seem to place any inherent value on participation, while the principle of freedom is much more important to him. His view of democracy would allow the experts to deal with politics.

Rorty's view clearly springs from the liberal tradition and is free of any Hegelian elements. Simultaneously, he creates a shift in the liberal theory, a shift in the postmodern direction. The liberal utopia is gone in his model, and is replaced by Nietzschean perspectivism. Rorty's theory deserves to be called, in this sense, "post-liberal", but just how post-liberal is it? Doesn't his principle of freedom entail the very conventional liberal conception of the initial individual liberty of an individual subject?

The Hegelian concept of state includes the notion of individuals as being cultural beings, and the thought of political action as something which allows an individual gain control over that which has molded him into an individual. This basic constructedness of a political agent is missing from Rorty's presentation. He portrays a very conventional liberal view of transcendental individuality by presupposing the freedom of an individual as an unproblematic basic concept. There is no initial social aspect in his individual, which would enable Rorty to conceive of difference in political agency. He assumes the unit of democracy to be the same in everyone, or at least similar enough for democratic theory. Rorty joins the liberal transcendental individual assumption, in which agency is not constructed. Politics is a free space of similar beings, it does not include constrain, construction, or situation.

I will return to the issues of societal constraints as constructing agency and situatedness in the chapters on power, nation, and identity. The presupposition of transcendental individuality is subjected to closer scrutiny in these chapters. Here, it suffices to point out what a presentation of democracy in its pure liberal form, with no mix of Hegelian-Marxian elements, looks like in its most postmodern version, as Rorty is able to offer with his radical epistemological postmodern agenda.

Baudrillard

Jean Baudrillard interprets the social world as a system of signs from the point of view of a critical semiotician. Baudrillard is known for his claim that signs in the modern social world are no longer signs of something real. The reality to which signs should refer no longer exists. The signs circulate in their own world which is a "hyperreal" world of "universal simulation." Reality

can no longer be distinguished from its own representation. Baudrillard's accent is clearly on the "no longer."²³

Baudrillard presented an earlier counter-strategy for the process of simulation, which he based on a concept borrowed from Marcel Mauss's anthropology, "symbolic exchange," referring to the gift-giving institution. The social system, Baudrillard says, possesses a coercive potency for the non-mutual giving of gifts (the gift of work, information, sociality, life, etc.). The system backs the process of the exchange of goods and signs, but bars the mutual symbolic exchange of gifts. Later, Baudrillard criticized his earlier work for being overly utopian in its view, for even conceiving of the possibility of mutual exchange. The symbolic exchange presupposes a subject, he says, and after coming to the conclusion that in the society of simulation all chance for an agency is lost, he concedes that there are no longer subjects of social exchange.²⁴

Baudrillard makes use of sexually allegorical concepts: subject/object; the desiring/the desired; obscenity/seduction. Obscenity refers to a state of affairs in which everything is displayed, and in which everything is transparent. According to Baudrillard, an obscene pornographic picture does not excite sexually, rather, it is an overused sign, which loses its meaning. Because it exposes everything, it no longer seduces. Seduction involves mystery, which is precisely why a veiled object charms by not revealing everything.²⁵

In a society of simulation, in which only the object is left and in which the subject has lost its possibilities, Baudrillard sees two prevalent tendencies. Using his vocabulary, they are "obscenity" and "seduction." Obscenity is connected with everything becoming political and social.²⁶ He portrays these categories as overused, they progress like cancer, infecting everything in their path, and as such losing their meaning.²⁷

According to Baudrillard, similarly to the right to sexuality, sex becomes obscene, becomes too much. Obscenity lurks behind all demands of rights, to the point of actually losing its meaning. Commenting on the United States political system with all its rights, Baudrillard concedes that the American miracle is a miracle of obscenity. It is so free that freedom has lost its meaning, it is the 'pornography of politics.' In a system such as this, the result quickly becomes indifference. The focus is turned to objects: the large silent masses.

According to Baudrillard, these masses are typically modern. They move in the images of representation, somewhere between passivity and wild spontaneity.²⁸ According to Baudrillard the masses consciously oppose the consciousness constantly offered to them by the self-command theories of democracy. After several revolutions and centuries of political work, the func-

tioning of the public media, trade unions, parties and intellectuals – after all of this energy is used to “mobilize the people,” the people still prefer football.²⁹

Baudrillard, however, turns the tables in terms of power. He ultimately concludes that what is interesting is not the subject, but precisely the passive object, the masses. The indifferent object is one which seduces at the stage of politics, the stage which through obscenity has lost the slightest illusion of subjectivity in the time of transparency. The leading role is played by the seducing veiled object, and the desiring subject is left only to play the role of a statist.³⁰ Baudrillard, who I would say, sees himself somewhat as the cameraman of the scene, compares the masses with the impressive nonchalance of the body of a prostitute, as an object of the insecure glances of the purported subjects.

Along with the notion of the subject, the notion of the people disappears. There is no longer a people, only a mass, with a statistical existence interpreted by polls. This is not representation – the representative practices are not in operation for reflection, but for testing; their function is not representative, but simulating.³¹

Baudrillard’s strategy is to ironically present the self-governing model of democracy, or rather the distance between this model and its reality. He repeatedly points out the conclusion that politics can no longer be interpreted as moral self-command.

What is Baudrillard’s relationship to the Hegelian-Marxian and liberal aspects of the democratic theory distinguished above?

Baudrillard’s irony is clearly moralistic, and is based on a very strong commitment to a conception of what democracy should look like. Moreover, it is quite clear that the model of democracy it presupposes is the model of democracy as the self-command of a people of itself, the model based on the Hegelian-Marxian tradition. Baudrillard’s view is ironic almost to the point of bitterness, for the ideal is obviously unattainable. However, his irony sustains and keeps the ideal alive. Paradoxically, his tone of voice, which is criticized as nihilistic with its “everything is lost” message, harbors a great upgrading of the very same values it declares as lost. It presupposes an initial validity of and respect for the self-command model of democracy in its strictest form: as expecting each and every of the community to be a part of the democratic process.³²

In his reflections on the United States, Baudrillard notes the fact that democracy in the United States was never, not even in the beginning, formed with the “European” ideal of self-command. According to Baudrillard, the practice which now causes lament in Europe as being the downfall of democracy has always been used in the United States. In this way, he recog-

nizes the alternative ideal of democracy – namely, the liberal model, which he does not accept because of its lack of emphasis on everyone’s participation. His concerns are not concerns of this liberal model; his tone remains bitterly ironic.³³ Baudrillard evidently fails to see the postmodern possibility of abandoning the idea of the self-command model of democracy.

Lyotard

Lyotard shares a very similar view on truth, language and issues of foundation with Rorty. Lyotard is a Nietzschean perspectivist, in terms of his relation to knowledge and morality. According to him, there is no criterion for measuring the various moral systems against each other. Lyotard uses the word “paganism” with a similar intent as Rorty discusses “the secularism” of modern society.

In *Rudiments païens*, Lyotard defines paganism as a view that does not accept the notion of one God, one truth or one way of progress, but is in favor of a multiplicity of Gods, truths, and perspectives. He calls for Nietzschean “active nihilism” or “decadence” when addressing the former Marxists, whom he asks to leave the discourse of truth and correct theory.³⁴ The decadence that Lyotard looks toward concerns three categories: truth, unity, and finality. It is a decadence of a certain type of rationality, of a unitary sociocultural space with a central discourse, and of eschatological, finality oriented temporality.³⁵ The result is a condition of impiety.

In the *Instructions païennes*, he specifies that the object of his pagan instructions is “justice in the condition of impiety.”³⁶ This combination of the concern for justice and the consciousness of there being no absolute criteria for it, is a recurrent theme in Lyotard’s work.

Lyotard also connects paganism with minorities, and writes of minorities “as perspectives.”³⁷ In paganism, the most important thing is that there is nothing but minorities.³⁸ Lyotard concretely takes up situations in which nations have been uprooted in the name of an Empire, listing events from 16th century Europe, through native Americans to Czechoslovakia in 1968.³⁹ He simultaneously points out how a “nation” as a notion always claims to be one unitary perspective, and thus must be opposed by the pagan thought.⁴⁰ Exploring the feminist agenda at the end of the book, Lyotard even notes that “men are but one minority in the patchwork.”⁴¹

In *Just Gaming*, Lyotard connects paganism with the notion of heteronomy as non-autonomy. There is no autonomy as self-determination, no-one dictates one’s own laws.⁴² He also notes the idea that we never are totally autonomous with respect to power.⁴³ The social universe is formed by a plural-

ity of games without any one of them being able to claim that it can express all of the others, not even “paganism.” Paganism is an “Idea” in the Kantian sense. It names something undemonstrable and antinomic. If one is pagan, one does not consider that any one game is better than another. For Lyotard, paganism means that rational politics is over, and that it is impossible to gain true knowledge of social and political facts, at least insofar as they imply judgements and decisions.⁴⁴ The pagan situation is one in which an individual judges without criteria.⁴⁵

In the *Postmodern Condition*, the “modern” for Lyotard is the Enlightenment’s “Grand narrative” about how acquiring new knowledge steadily allows humanity to approach the truth. Postmodern paganism does not believe in the grand narrative of one truth and progressing toward it. For Lyotard, democracy, in the meaning of “from the people to the people,” is also one of the “grand narratives” which is no longer believable.

When Lyotard phrases democracy as “from the people to the people,” it is evident that his use of the word “democracy” is not defined in the liberal sense, but rather is attached to the Hegelian-Marxian model of a self-commanding subject. Lyotard, similarly to most of his generation of French thinkers, has a close connection to Marxist thought.⁴⁶

As a post-Marxist thinker, Lyotard does not omit economic structures and the capitalist culture as strong elements of politics. On the contrary, according to him, the systemic elements have become overwhelming, overshadowing the conscious will of the people-subject.

Lyotard, however, believes in politics over the systems of necessities. He raises a moral question: how does one fight the ruling of the “system,” and how does one elevate the decision making process, which is based on morality, above the system. The traditional Marxian model has been to overthrow the old order of the system and establish a true self-command of the people. Lyotard does not believe in this utopia and warns of the inherent dangers of such thought.

Lyotard is most concerned about a process in which the leadership is established in the name of the “planning” of society by a small “good” group. He refers the result metonymically as “terror.” According to Lyotard, the French and Russian Revolutions are the showcases: they illustrate the production of violence by a societal “program.”⁴⁷

Lyotard’s problematic surrounds the question of how to avoid the thought of planning society while simultaneously fighting the system politically, making political judgements, and acting moral-politically for change. Politics for him is opposition, which, however, cannot be referred to as “emancipation.” This opposition is produced by political judgements.

According to Lyotard, we are unable to judge politically with absolute

moral criteria. However, we need to judge and we do judge. According to the view that Lyotard presents in *Just Gaming* and *The Differend*, judging occurs as the result of a feeling of injustice. I will come back to Lyotard's conception of judging in the following chapters.

Lyotard's conception of the political process has been called "agonistics."⁴⁸ This term emphasizes the idea of a non-closed process in which agreement is not on the horizon.

Unlike Baudrillard, Lyotard is able to detect the pattern of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology and question the idea of self-commanding subjectivity that serves as its foundation. He is looking for ways out of the conceptualization of a society as one single will. Decidedly opposed to this thought, he proposes the notion of agonistics. Agonistics presents a society as in a constant state of disagreement without the horizon of a final accord.

As Lyotard determinatively attacks the grounds of Hegelian-Marxian political theory, the very idea of society as a self-commanding subject, as well as its practical consequences in forms of planning and terror, he could be read as a proponent of pluralistic liberal theory. Nevertheless, I consider it of utmost importance to keep in mind that the writing of his critique begins with the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology, and thus he does not use the liberal concepts.

Lyotard's texts do not evidence the liberal concept of "civil society" as a public place and his opposition to the system is not a liberal opposition to the state on behalf of private individuals and their interests. Lyotard's concern (in opposing the systemic elements) remains the Hegelian concern of morality in politics, which Hegel develops with the concept of state. It is a concern for politics, not for an opposition to politics based on the liberal belief of a core liberty that is revealed when the cloaks of politics are removed. But the critique that Lyotard presents positions him as a postmodern critic of the Hegelian tradition. I will return to this idea and evaluate whether and to what degree Lyotard manages to disconnect himself from the Hegelian-Marxian framework of a self-reflective, self-commanding social subject in the center of political theory in Chapter 5, which deals with "Community."

Democracy

Habermas (German), Baudrillard (French), and Lyotard (French) all conceive of democracy initially as the self-governance of the people, and in various ways they all work to clarify their relationships to this ideal and its modern problems. Habermas allows his conception of self-governance merge with the liberal idea of civil society in its utopian form, which includes the notion

of a transcendental consensus. Habermas is also the most defensive of the three regarding the ideal and practicability of democracy, and he is a believer in the possibilities of the Lockean type of civil society in a the social world governed by systems.

Lyotard initially presupposes the self-governance model of democracy. Because this obviously remains unrealized in modern society, Lyotard's tone is slightly tragic. Still, he believes in the possibilities of morality in politics and in political judgement: not the morality of the common good, but rather a morality of judgements on injustices expressed in every here and now. Lyotard recognizes the limitations of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology and works to replace the assumption of a unitary subject of community with a view of perpetual agonistics.

Contrarily, Baudrillard considers political morality as gone. Still, Baudrillard's irony reveals that his original ideal of the social is that of the self-governing subject-like entity. The political is assumed to represent the social, but it "no longer" performs that function. The social is "no longer" what it should be, the self-commanding conscious community, but instead has changed into "the masses." Baudrillard's tragic and nostalgic tone is ultimately related to "the death of the social."

Rorty is the only one of these theoreticians who is not shocked by the contingency and non-morality of the political world. This distinction is based on the fact that Rorty does not share his European colleagues' ideal of a community as a moral agent. Nor does he adopt the liberal civil society in the form which harbors the utopia of the transcendental truth to be found as the result of free conversation, as Habermas does.

Rorty's background is in the liberal model of civil society and in the consistently liberal (American) model of democracy. Rorty consistently resists any attempt to turn this into a teleological project. Rorty's conception does not include the idea of a communal subject, although it very unproblematically assumes the existence of individual agents.

What could the idea of political action and participation be based upon if it is not anchored either in the liberal concept of civil society based on the idea of transcendental (utopian) power-free situation, or the Hegelian concept of state based on the transcendental (utopian), totally controlled state of the social, also called freedom? The Lyotardian concepts of agonistics and judgement, and Rorty's concept of contingency are of help when considering this question. They both refuse the horizon of final agreement, emancipation, liberation, and control as horizons in politics.⁴⁹

Postmodern theorizing insists on understanding of the political as a perpetual state of disagreement, and one in which citizens exercise constant political judgement. This excludes the emphasis on agreement in discussion,

as well as rejects an emphasized division between political experts and “ordinary” citizens.

Public political space, the common theme of the last century’s Hegelian and liberal theory, must be re-addressed in the postmodern. It is not sufficient to unite the themes of both of the traditions, rather it is necessary to realize how the models of transcendental subjectivity on the one hand, and the social subjectivity on the other, frame the conceptions of participatory democracy, and how they may be challenged in the postmodern by refusing the idea of the community as a unified agent, as well as the idea of transcendental free individuality as the basic element of the political.

In order to further elaborate the questioning of transcendental presuppositions, I will discuss Foucault’s concept of genealogy and power, which provides us with tools with which to question the transcendental agency of liberal theory. I am also going to evaluate Lyotard’s discussion on community. This offers material for questioning the Marxian-Hegelian subject-assumption.

Notes

- ¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989).
- ² Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (tr) Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); *Vol. 2 Lifeworld and Systems. A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (tr) Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).
- ³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 2. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* pp. 113-152.
- ⁴ Jürgen Habermas *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972) pp. 308-317.
- ⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 2. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* pp. 113-196.
- ⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol 1. Reason and the Rationalization of Society* pp. 8-42 and pp. 273-338.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-337.
- ⁸ “For this reason, our analysis is limited to speech acts carried out *under standard conditions*. And this is intended to ensure that the speaker means nothing else than the literal meaning of what he says.” *Ibid.*, p. 297.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 309-337.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.
- ¹² The well known debate between Jacques Derrida and John Searle on the role of performativity and iterability in language, on the basis of Austin’s speech-act

- theory, offers an illuminating example of the crucial difference in understanding the function of intention in meaning production. A well written presentation of this dispute is offered by Jonathan Culler in *On Deconstruction. Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge/Kegan Paul, 1983) pp. 110-134. I will give an account of it in Chapter 8. Habermas takes Searle's interpretation of Austin's speech-act theory as one of his points of departure in *Theory of Communicative Action*. pp. 273-337.
- ¹³ Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 Reason and the Rationalization of Society* pp. 43-74.
- ¹⁴ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso 1979).
- ¹⁵ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) and *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
- ¹⁶ Richard Rorty, "The Contingency of Liberal Community", in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp. 44-69. Orig. in *London Review of Books*, 24 July, 1986, pp. 10-15.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ²¹ Rorty cites Davidson: "Speaking a language ... is not a trait a man can loose while retaining the power of thought, so there is no chance that someone can take up a vantage point for comparing conceptual schemes by temporarily shedding his own" and Heidegger: "language speaks man". *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- ²³ "Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality; a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory ..." Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (tr) Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) p. 2.
- ²⁴ See Baudrillard's description of the development of his thought in *The Ecstasy of Communication* (ed) Sylvère Lotringer tr Bernard & Caroline Schutze (New York: Semiotext(e), 1988) pp. 77-95. See also *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) pp. 22-24. He simultaneously theorizes here about "the masses," which function as neither subject nor object p. 30. He writes "The masses are the absolute prototype of the hostage, of the thing taken hostage, that is, annulled in its sovereignty, abolished and non-existent as subject – but take note – radically inexchangeable as object." Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies. Crystal Revenge* (tr) Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski (New York: Semiotext(e)/Pluto, 1990) p. 44.

²⁵ See Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* pp. 54-55 and 64-64 and *The Ecstasy of Communication* pp. 57-75, and *Seduction* (tr) B. Singer (London: Macmillan, 1990).

²⁶ He writes: "We are no longer in the drama of alienation, we are in the ecstasy of communication." Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* p. 67. See also Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication* p. 22.

²⁷ See Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities* pp. 9-14 and *Fatal Strategies* pp. 56-57.

²⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14. See also Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* pp. 94-99.

³⁰ See Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities* pp. 30-41 and *Fatal Strategies* pp. 111-115.

³¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* pp. 121-133 and *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities* pp. 19-40.

³² Although Baudrillard increasingly detaches himself from the utopian perspective in his work, his tone does not lose the emphasis of the "no longer." He writes in *Fatal Strategies*: "This is the very issue of the social: above and beyond, beneath this terrorist and hyperreal sociality, this ubiquitous blackmail of communication, is there some good substance to the social, some ideality of social relationship that can and should be liberated? The answer is obviously no: the equilibrium and harmony of a certain social contract has disappeared over the horizon of history, and we are doomed to this diaphanous obscurity of change." p. 61.

In comparison to what I have described as the postmodern tone, Baudrillard's tone is, in its lament of being "doomed," clearly modern.

³³ Several of Baudrillard's texts testify to the intensity with which he confronts the liberal political and social culture of the United States. Baudrillard recurrently returns to the image of Los Angeles, from which "the social" has disappeared. For Baudrillard, whose ideal background is in communal political values, it is striking to encounter meet a political universe in which the ideal of being a self-conscious, self-commanding community, or at least a coherent conscious "social", does not have much significance and is not of interest. L.A. becomes his icon for this shock. See, for example, *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities* pp. 83-84, *America* pp. 51-74.

³⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, *Rudiments païens. Genre Dissertatif* p. 123.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁶ "Par païen, j'entends impie, pour le moins. Et si nous avons à nous instruire (et non moi vous), c'est que nous voulons pourtant la justice. Voici donc l'objet de mon instructif récit: la justice dans l'impiété." Jean-François Lyotard, *Instructions païennes* p. 11.

³⁷ Jean-François Lyotard, *Rudiments païens*, p. 144.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-51.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 114.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 230.

⁴² “In paganism there is the intuition, the idea that no maker of statements, no utterer, is ever autonomous.” Jean-François Lyotard, *Just Gaming* p. 31.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 16. Paganism also has a connection to the possibility of judgements in the conditions of radical difference and the refusal of the human “we,” as Bill Readings emphasizes in his “Pagans, Perverts or Primitives” in *Judging Lyotard* pp. 168-191, p. 184. Compare my remarks in Chapter 5.

Readings also suggests that “paganism” refers to the refusal to think of freedom as self-domination. p. 184. I think this refusal is present in Lyotard’s thought, although I do not think that it is expressed mainly by his term “pagan.”

⁴⁶ Lyotard used to belong to the Trotskyist group “Socialisme ou barbarie” in the 1950s. In 1973 he published *Dérive à partir de Marx et Freud* (Paris: 10/18, 1973), in which he clearly distances himself from Marxism.

⁴⁷ Lyotard strongly condemns both terror and terrorism as political strategies. See the discussion in Jean-François Lyotard, *Just Gaming* pp. 67-71.

⁴⁸ Lyotard uses this word only rarely. Among those who have used the term to characterize Lyotard’s political thought are Fred Dallmayr, *Margins of Political Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) pp. 149-152 and Seyla Benhabib, “Epistemologies of Postmodernism” in Linda J. Nicholson (ed) *Feminism and Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990) pp. 107-130.

⁴⁹ In the realm of Critical Theory, the sentiment of harboring a utopian vision of revolution as the abolishment of all power and access to the “pure”, non-distorted state of a self-controlled community, and simultaneously a Benjaminian negative, an almost apocalyptic nostalgia for the lost possibility of this utopia’s realization, is not an unlikely combination. Giorgio Agamben comes close to such a combination in *The Coming Community* (tr) Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). Agamben heralds the “simple affirmation of the social in opposition to the State.”

PART TWO

Chapter 4

POWER

It is generally agreed upon that Michel Foucault never offered anything that he himself would have referred to as “theory of power,” yet his texts have perpetually been viewed as challenging the standard liberal and Marxian approaches to power. Judith Butler focuses not on power but on gender and bodies, yet her work, too, has an exceptionally political flavor to it, inviting an altered means of approaching power. The political appeal of both is connected to their Nietzschean undercurrent, which seems to effectively politicize the topics in question. Following Nietzsche, Foucault and Butler use the term genealogy.

Foucault, and this has been difficult for those evaluating his concept of power, is neither interested in who the individuals are that have power, nor in how individuals use power. Instead, as he repeatedly answered when questioned on his conception of power, his interests lies in how power produces us as individuals.

Nietzsche, in *The Genealogy of Morals*¹, did not ask what morality is. Rather, he was interested in how power determines that which we refer to as “morality.” Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality I*,² does not ask what sexuality is, but instead examines how what we know as sexuality is produced by power. In *Gender Trouble*,³ Butler does not ask what a sexed body is, but instead offers the notion that the sexed body is produced by the same power which produces gender.

All these questions are examples of a genealogical approach. What is common to all of them is their consideration of power as generally productive of reality, or to turn it the other way around, reality as an effect of power. Consequently, the genealogical approach dramatically politicizes, or at least adds the dimension of power to things otherwise not necessarily considered as such.

In this chapter I begin by discussing Foucault’s genealogy in connection with my modern/postmodern distinction, as well as in comparison to the

established ways of theorizing power in the traditions of political theory, which I call “Anglo-American” and “Hegelian.”

I claim that the genealogical way of posing questions includes the possibility for a significant shift in political thought, and that this shift is parallel to the shift from the modern to the postmodern mode of thought as I have defined it. I also claim that the altered consciousness of power connected with the postmodern and genealogy produces an approach that is distinctly separate from both the liberal and the Hegelian-Marxian approach to questions regarding power. In the second part of this chapter I will take up Lyotard’s critique of the mastery of politics by knowledge, as well as his concept “differend,” which I see as participating in the shift in the possibilities of conceptualizing power connected with the postmodern.

In order to discuss my topics, I first need to take up the significant features of both the Anglo-American philosophical standard conception of power and the liberal conception of power in politics that is founded on it. After that I will discuss Foucault’s genealogy and his concept of power in detail, and finally, I will focus on Lyotard’s ideas in connection to the ideas of power in the Hegelian-Marxian political theory.

The Anglo-American View of Power

The clear definitions of power offered by Robert Dahl and Steven Lukes may be taken here as representative of the current standard Anglo-American philosophical approach to power. Robert Dahl defines power with the sentence: “A has power over B in that degree as he gets B do something which B would not otherwise do.”⁴ Steven Lukes defines power as: “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests.”⁵ These two definitions serve here as points of departure for identifying the characteristics of the standard Anglo-American philosophical theorization of power.

Both definitions illustrate that power is theorized in terms of relations between persons. In its nuclear form power characterizes the relationship between two persons. This does not exclude the idea of there being power relationships between an individual and a group, or between two groups. In principle, however, they can all be broken down into dyadic power relationships between persons.

Power is defined in the standard Anglo-American philosophical view in terms of action and more specifically by referring to the intentions of agents. The person who possesses power, person A, is able to act in accordance to her/his intentions, whereas the person who does not possess power, person B, is forced to abandon her/his intentions.

There are further specifications for the differentiation of power from other types of force. Generally, part of the definition of power is considered to be that the one who succumbs to power, person B, in principle has the possibility to deliberate as to whether s/he yields to A's will or not. Bare physical coercion is, in this sense, different from the use of power. If, for example, a person is forced to sign an agreement by means of another person gripping her/his hand, s/he is subjected to coercion. If s/he is instead threatened with physical punishment, material loss, exclusion from a group, or in some other way pertaining to her/his future, and as a result of this is persuaded to sign a pact, this represents the usage of power.

In addition to intention, the concept of interest is essential to the Anglo-American philosophical conception of power, as Luke's definition explicates. When there is a power relationship between A and B, A has the capacity to act according to her/his interest, whereas B has to give her/his up.

It is easy to see that these definitions of power are provided in the realm of the basic components of what I earlier referred to as the liberal political universe. Power is defined in terms of transcendental individuals A and B, who are conceived of as having the capacity to choose and an interest inherent at the core of their very being.

The ontological space consists here of transcendental individual beings who act (by making choices) in accordance to their interests. The natural state of things, as Thomas Hobbes's metaphor in the beginning of *Leviathan* indicates, parallels the universe of Newtonian Physics: all things are in perpetual motion unless their movement is blocked. Analogically, all humans are in a state of perpetual free motion, consisting of acts in accordance with their interest, unless their acting is not blocked.

The basic metaphor of power is the intervention of free movement: power is the capacity to block free movement. Free movement, when we consider power-relationships between people, is the ability to act according to one's own intentions and interests, and power is the capacity to block someone from doing so.

Also characteristic of the Anglo-American liberal theory's concept of power is that power is understood possessively. Power is something that an individual or a group has in comparison to other individuals or groups. Power is also an economic concept: you may possess more or less of it. Typical power relationships are, for example, the relationship between an employer and employee, a teacher and student, a doctor and patient, the government and citizens.

When the core of the Anglo-American conception of power is the relationship between two agents, one of whom has to abandon her/his interest, the negative tone of a power relationship is set: basically, a person can either

be free to do what s/he wants or else is under someone else's power. This negativity does not, of course, imply that the theorization on power done with liberal presuppositions would necessarily be connected to a project of the disposal of power. Anglo-American power theorists, such as Steven Lukes and Robert Dahl, analyze what power is and see it rather as a necessary phenomenon of social life. All theorists of power tend to acknowledge the necessity of power to a certain degree.

Still, when it comes to politics as based on the liberal political universe, the most consistent forms deal with the restriction of power, the abolition of power, or liberation from power. This is the logical consequence of the liberal political ontology and its value world: the free state or the most desirable state is one without power, one in which individuals to the greatest extent are able to move freely along their own interests. Only very few liberal radicals take the abolition of power as their political goal, although on the basis of the liberal ontology it would indeed be surprising if there were not always some. Political debate in terms of liberal ontology inevitably revolves around the issues of resisting power, liberating from power, or freeing from power – in short, getting rid of power. This is why the libertarian and Nozickian⁶ views of state power are the most consistent within liberal political theory.

Locke and Mill, the forefathers of present day liberal politics, stabilized the vocabulary of liberty and rights, but above all they stabilized the basic negative relationship between an individual and the political government or the state. The basic conception of the liberal theory: freedom as the liberty of movement, power as intervention, and rights as guarantees of nonintervention against power, reinforces a negative view of power. Power is to be opposed, and there should be guarantees of individual freedom against power. The strong tradition of liberal political activism is built on the negative attitude toward power, especially toward the power of the state.

But this also creates certain problems or limitations regarding the theorization of power, which are occasionally recognized and admitted in the liberal framework. For example, it is well warranted to criticize the paternalist use of power within the liberal framework⁷, but the same framework makes it hard to understand some common features in social life such as child-rearing and education. Upbringing and education entail limitations of freedom for the individual as does the transfer and force of tradition and culture in general. Throughout their lives, people are constantly involved in relationships that include authority and power exercised for example by parents, teachers and other members of society. These relations typically form an individual's identity and fashion them into a specific type of person. Moreover, this working of power upon individuality is never ending, but instead

continuously shapes the subject of choices, so that there is no stable point in the process.

Differences such as becoming and being a member of a certain gender, class, race, nationality, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation involve issues of power which blur and problematize the fixed theoretical boundary between an individual and “the environment” outside the individual. The power involved in the construction of an individual transfers into the innermost characteristics of a person’s individuality.

The aforementioned issues bring up the weak point of the liberal conception of power, which is that it is unable to conceive of power as transformative in relation to the parties concerned. An essential feature of the liberal conception of power is that the parties of a power relationship are conceived of as stable in their relevant identities.

Does genealogy involve a concept of power which would more adequately confront the issues that are left problematic by the liberal concept? Before we are able to ponder this question we must ask whether genealogy in fact involves a concept of power that is any different from that of the liberal theory? And prior to answering that question we need to establish what genealogy actually is and what its connection to power is. Let us first examine Foucault.

Foucault’s Genealogy vs. Archaeology

Writers on Foucault generally separate his writing into two phases, the earlier archeological phase and later genealogical phase, with the shift occurring from the early 1970’s on. The major archaeological works *The Birth of the Clinic* (*Naissance de la clinique. Une archéologie du regard médical*) (1963), *The Order of Things* (*Les mots et les Choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines*) (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L’Archéologie du savoir*) (1969), all include the term archaeology in their very titles, and are accompanied by Foucault’s various comments regarding his method in the books themselves, as well as articles and interviews.

The first book representing the “fully genealogical” approach is considered to be *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison* (1975), and the earlier publication of historical material, the collection *I Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother* (1973) is also considered to be a genealogical work. The essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” published in 1971, is an early instance of Foucault’s coining of the term which he subsequently came to define in numerous ways in various articles and interviews. *The History of Sexuality. Volume I* is probably considered as the most exemplarity of the genealogical works.

Commentators place varying emphasis on the shift from archaeology to genealogy. The idea of a marked methodological break in Foucault's work derives from Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow.⁸ Archaeology, for them, is "the strict analysis of discourse," whereas genealogy "pays more attention to that which conditions, limits, and institutionalizes discursive formations."⁹ In their wake many other writers have considered that Foucault's earlier preoccupation was with ideas, knowledge, and discourses, whereas in his later work he dealt more with the material effects and conditions of knowledge connected with power.¹⁰

Several writers, however, have remarked that the division into two methodologies is difficult to make, because Foucault was in fact already writing on the genealogical issues, that is, on power and the conditions of knowledge in his archaeological phase.¹¹ Foucault's reason for employing the term "genealogy" was probably that he wanted to emphasize his debt to Nietzsche.¹² The break should not, however, be overexaggerated: the Nietzschean themes had been present in Foucault's work already earlier.¹³

Instead of committing myself to the distinction of archeology/genealogy as methodologies, I will rather apply the term genealogy to refer to Foucault's Nietzschean approach and to emphasize the idea of power as productive. In terms of genealogy in this sense, it may be said that Foucault was already a genealogist in his archaeological phase. Attempting to keep in mind this general idea of genealogy, I will proceed to give it more precision in the following chapters.

For me, the most significant trait in the mode of thinking which Foucault connects with the term genealogy is the notion of power as being generally productive of reality. This, I think, is the idea which is most significant to political theory, because it is the frame of thought which enables him to write without a strong commitment to either the liberal or Hegelian-Marxian political ontology.

Origin

In his 1971 article, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" Foucault phrases genealogy as an alternative to conventional history. He writes that genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It does not build the past as a linear development to the present, "as if words had kept their meaning," but instead, aware that speech "has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys," it records "the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality;" is sensitive to singularities and recognizes unrealized possibilities.¹⁴ The most important feature in this article, however, is the

discussion on origins. Foucault defines genealogy as opposing itself to the search for origins.

Closely reading Nietzsche's texts Foucault takes up the opposition of the search for origin (*Ursprung*) on the one hand, and the examining of descent (*Herkunft*) or emergence (*Entstehung*) on the other. He asks: "Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of the origin (*Ursprung*), at least on those occasions when he is truly a genealogist?" And answers:

"because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities, because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. This search is directed to that which was already there, the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature, and it necessitates the removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity. However, if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is something altogether different behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms."¹⁵

Allowing the reader to draw her or his own conclusion regarding the proximity of his own project and those of Nietzsche's, he declares that:

"A genealogy of values, morality, ascetism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their "origins," will never neglect as inaccessible the vicissitudes of history."¹⁶

Instead of searching for origin, genealogy as a form of history examines descent (*Herkunft*), it sorts out the different traits. It looks at the coming into being of the object of research, but, he remarks:

"The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself."¹⁷

Another instance where Foucault is very clear about genealogy is in his 1977 interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino. Here, he describes his genealogical approach in terms of his wanting

"to see how these problems of constitution could be resolved within a historical framework, instead of referring them back to constituent object (madness, criminality or whatever). ... And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a

form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.”¹⁸

The idea that any subject of study may be approached in its constitution without initially assuming the thing which is constituted is exactly what makes Foucault’s genealogy postmodern. This approach refuses to give the distinction original/constructed the status it receives in the modern, and it refuses to search for the basis of the phenomena. In Foucault’s case, instead of asking what madness is, he, already in his so called archeological phase, asked what kind of power produces madness as a possible thought and practice.

Foucault is, however, inconsistent in his genealogical approach. Judith Butler has analyzed Foucault’s non-genealogical “romanticism” in his writing on the ambivalent body in his foreword to *Herculine Barbin. Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphrodite. Introduced by Michel Foucault*.¹⁹ The same ambivalence, as I will argue more specifically later in this chapter, is present in *The History of Sexuality*. In this sense, Foucault is at the edge of the postmodern.

Power

If power is in the genealogical approach conceived of as a kind of general coming into being of things, does it have any effect on political theory? Does it have any connection to that which is conventionally thought of as power in political theory? Foucault’s concept of power has been accused of being vague, metaphysical, empty, or diffuse, and as such as inadequate for social and political analysis. Those who defend the relevance of his writings to political theory usually attempt to prove that this is not the case. David Hoy, for instance, argues that Foucault’s concept of power is not incommensurable with the more traditional usages of the word, and Martin Kusch claims, that Foucault’s concept of power is actually the same as the standard Anglo-American one.

Foucault’s remarks on power, scattered throughout numerous texts over a period of time, offer several aspects in different contexts. In probably the most cited of his articles on power, “The Subject and Power,” written as an afterword to Dreyfus’s and Rabinow’s book on him, Foucault, in fact, very clearly states that his goal has never been to analyze the phenomena of power.²⁰ Despite this fact, numerous authors have, and not without reason, presented

analyses of Foucault's views on power, and have considered him as one of the major theoreticians of power.

According to Martin Kusch's analysis, Foucault shares the same concept of power as standard Anglo-American definitions, such as Lukes's, and differs from them only in his conception on power. This conception of power, according to Kusch, includes stress on mechanisms of power, emphasis upon the relations between social power and scientific knowledge, as well as the idea of power as an omnipresent element of social life.²¹

Kusch bases his analysis on Foucault's concept of power mainly on his 1982 article, "Subject and Power," in which Foucault directly confronts the question "what is power."²² Kusch provides a thirteen part definition of Foucault's concept of power on the basis of this article, starting with the definition:

Between two individuals (or group of individuals), *a* and *b*, there exists a *relation of power* (such that *a* exercises power over *b*) iff between *a* and *b* there exists a relation *R* such that, where the thirteen conditions follow.

This is basically Lukes's definition of power, and the conditions that follow it also for the most part parallel the standard definition of power. In "Subject and Power," Foucault connects power to possibilities of acting, draws the distinction between power and violence, presents the condition that in a power relation the person subjected to power could in principle have acted otherwise, that the victim is involved as an actor and not just as a body, and that *s/he* remains able to choose between either compliance or non-compliance.

The rest of the Foucauldian conditions offered by Kusch have to do with the connection of a power relationship to social and institutionalized differences. These conditions do not normally belong to standard Anglo-American definitions of power, but Kusch does not consider them as being in opposition to it either. The most interesting of these conditions is the last one, number 13: "The identity of *a* and *b* is (at least in part) determined by *R*."²³ This refers, according to Kusch, to Foucault's idea that our identity as individuals cannot be separated from the power relations in which we live and act, and that it is in and through power that human beings become subjects.²⁴

Condition number 13 in Kusch's analysis is further elaborated with the Leibnizian distinction between "external relations" and "internal relations."²⁵ According to Kusch, a power relation as defined by Foucault is an internal relation of interaction, not an external relation of comparison,²⁶ and relations of power are internal-essential rather than external-accidental.²⁷

The two types of relations are differentiated here so that the external, that is, the comparative relation, is a relation like $a < b$, where the identities of the entities compared are not dependent on their relationship with each other, whereas an internal relation, like the relationship between a mother and a daughter, is a relation in which the parties involved are what they are in virtue of each other. (Kusch's examples are "Titus is wiser than Caius" and "Paris loves Helen"²⁸). In an internal relation, the relation is formative of its members. According to Kusch, Foucault sees power as an internal relation, whereas the Anglo-American liberal theory views power as an external relation.

I find Kusch's analysis of the internal relationships to be of central relevance to Foucault's way of discussing power, although simultaneously problematic in connection to the claim of Foucault as sharing the standard Anglo-American definition of power. My basic objection to Kusch's claim is that I cannot see how "condition 13," the view of power relationships as constitutive of identity, could conceivably be compatible with the Anglo-American conception of power which is based on what I refer to as liberal political ontology. If power is constitutive of identity, it can no longer be viewed, elementarily, as a relationship between two transcendental individuals – the two permanent persons, a and b. Power logically precedes them, and power effects their interest and choices. They are not free (choosers) before power, but only power produces them as individuals who have preferences and interests.

Two defenses may be presented. Kusch points out that Foucault does not focus in his conception of a power relationship on who has power over whom, on the permanence of a and b, but rather on the relationship itself, on *how* it forms a and b. This is true, and it is indeed a very important feature of Foucault's texts on power, but it cannot be used to support the view that Foucault's concept of power is essentially the same as Lukes'. On the contrary, precisely because Foucault's focus is on how power constantly constructs, power cannot be viewed as a relationship between fixed entities. Foucault clearly does not subscribe to the ontology of transcendental individuals.

The crucial difference between the Foucauldian conceptualizations of power and any concept of power as a relationship is that Foucault does not operate within the framework of the liberal political ontology. He does not assume the existence of transcendently conceived individuals as logically prior to anything else in political theory. Instead, he constructs his theorization on the assumption that power is logically prior to individuals.²⁹

The other defense is that Foucault himself clearly states in the article "The Subject and Power" that power is a relationship between two agents, a and b. It is impossible to deny this, which is why it is impossible to claim that Kusch or anybody else referring to Foucault's conception of power as being primarily a relation between two transcendental agents, or acts on acts, would

be wrong. However, a genealogical examination of this particular article reveals that it should not be given priority when assessing Foucault's significance for postmodern politics. How did this article come about – as an effect of what kind of powers?

It is no accident that the article “The Subject and Power” has served as the main basis for analysis not only in Kusch's but also in many other writings on Foucault's power. Foucault opens by remarking that he has never taken power as his object of study in his previous work, and then proceeds to confront the question: “what is power?”

How does he come to ask this question? Basically, the question is posed to him. It should not be forgotten that the article in question was written as an afterword in the book written on Foucault by his two Berkeley hosts, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. In the introduction to their book, Dreyfus and Rabinow explain that they have asked Foucault to define his concept of power, which they have found unclear in his earlier work. If we engage in a genealogical inquiry of this article – how did it come about, what were the constraints, the powers, the conditions of its birth – we must remember that it was written for an American audience already engaged in a debate on what kind of “definition of power” Foucault's work involves.

In this article, Foucault seems to take on a new task, not necessarily reflecting on his earlier work, but jumping to new topic upon request. He admits of his previous work: “It is true that I became quite involved with the question of power,”³⁰ and proceeds to partly analyze his own work in terms of the problematics of subjection and pastoral power, while also clearly posing the new question, the one which the Anglo-American audience is used to asking: What is power? I see the urge to meet the demands of his new audience very much in the background of Foucault's article, which is evident in his formation of questions like “What constitutes the specific nature of power?” or “How is one to analyze a power relationship.”³¹ It is almost as if the form of this article would be: “Actually, it never occurred to me earlier to ask what power is, but if that is what interests you, then I might give it a thought. Let's see what is generally said about power in the Anglo-American context.” As a result, Foucault comes to define power in a manner similar to the analytical way of answering the question “What is power?,” which makes it quite possible to compare his “concept of power” to those of, for example, Lukes and Dahl.

In a way, Foucault, the author, is continuously being constructed within a field of powers and constraints, and this history of construction is also an element of his view of power. His interviews particularly illustrate that Foucault was, indeed, a political person. His Berkeley tone was often quite distinguishable from his Paris or Milan tone.³² Exposing the text's history of the construction does not, of course, invalidate it as a Foucauldian text. But

it is up to us to decide which side of Foucault we take as interesting, in what context and for what purposes.

I think we should take seriously what Foucault says in the beginning of his “The Subject and Power” article – namely, that he never took power as his object of study. He has never really been interested in answering the question “what is power?”. His way of asking questions was not “what is x?” but “how did x come about, and as a product of what kind of power?”

As I said earlier, those who attempt to illustrate that Foucault’s concept of power, unlike the Nietzschean general principle of force, has some point of connection or commensurability to traditional theories of power, are usually motivated by the belief that otherwise it would lack any political relevance. My point is the reverse. I think that the political relevance of genealogy resides precisely in the fact that it differs from the traditional views. In other words, I believe genealogy has political effects not in spite of the fact but precisely because the concept of power is not defined in traditional political theory neither in Anglo-American or nor Hegelian theories.

A common accusation is that Foucault’s way of using the word power is too abstract or metaphysical to capture the real phenomena of power. I would say that, on the contrary, his analytics of power is extremely concrete. Foucault just does not primarily pose the conceptual or ontological question: “What is power?,” or the practical question: “How to get rid of power or how to get power?,” but instead he poses the concrete one “How does power operate?” This makes his analysis concrete, “meticulous,” and “positivist,” as he himself says. It opens up ways of concretely seeing what kind of power produces what and how, and allows for the possibility to create shifts in power instead of simply denouncing it.

Because Foucault does not exempt himself from power, which is everywhere, his work as historian is not without distinct political dimension. The topics he selects as the topics of his genealogical analysis are of political relevance in his own context. I will take up this aspect of his work later. Here, I am more concerned about how his viewing power as a productive principle has considerable effects in political theory and practice despite of its asking neither the ontological question about power nor the question about abolishing power.

The view of power as productive and of everything being produced by power politicizes in a general sense. It excludes the liberal project of stripping off power as something basically negative.³³ This view produces a more meaningful practical shift than what appears at first sight. It has consequences not only for the conceptualization of the constitution of identity, but also for notions of liberation, repression, resistance, and political action in general.

The effects of Foucault's thinking on questions of political theory and practice do not proceed from a theory or concept of power, but rather from the genealogical approach. I would specify four effects of genealogy: the concentration on constitution processes, the meticulousness of the analysis of the constitution processes, the refusal of the discourse of repression and liberation, and the general politicizing effect. I will briefly take up each of these four effects here in connection to Foucault's treatment of sexuality, and I will return to matters of power and genealogy in combination with the case of sexuality in more detail in Chapter 7, which deals with identity.

Sexuality as a Product of Power

Foucault's book, *The History of Sexuality, Vol I*, is a remarkable genealogical achievement. It not only confirms the widely accepted view that modes of sexuality are historically and culturally specific, but it also, much more radically, portrays sexuality itself, or rather the idea of sex itself, as produced by specific powers. The common view is that sexuality is a basic human phenomena which assumes different shapes in different periods of time and in different cultures. Foucault not only states that modes of sexuality are dependent upon cultures, but also denies that there is any core basic sexuality of which specific sexualities are variations. He claims that the notion of sexuality is the product of specific powers of a specific time.

Foucault presents the genealogical approach in *The History of Sexuality* by opposing the view which he names "The Repressive Hypothesis." According to the repressive hypothesis, issues surrounding sex were characterized with frankness and openness up until the end of the 17th century in Europe. The repressive hypothesis claims that there was no secrecy surrounding sex, gestures were direct, regulations around obscenity were very loose, there was no shame involved in sex, and nakedness was a non-issue. Even children were well informed in sexual matters. According to the repressive hypothesis, only from the 18th century on did sex become restricted to the sphere of families and limited to parents' bedrooms. Sex was shrouded in silence, and non-reproductive sex was labeled as abnormal. The Victorian puritanism of the 18th and 19th centuries repressed sexuality, according to the repressive hypothesis, but the 20th century has been able to break the powerful links between power, knowledge, and sex in order to liberate Western civilization from sexual repression.³⁴

According to Foucault, the repressive hypothesis is the commonly accepted view, and to claim that the relationship between sex and power is not

a relationship of repression is to go against the grain. However, this is exactly what Foucault does. Foucault pays attention to the fact that since the late 19th century there has been vocal discussion of the silence surrounding sex. Instead of asking why we are repressed he asks why we so passionately and noisily want to voice our repression.

Foucault is interested in researching whether the repression is a historical fact; whether the forms of power connected with sex in this society really are primarily repressive, and whether the discourse of the repression-critique really has blocked the repression, or whether it in fact is part of the same discourse. He discovers that since the 16th century the discourse on sex has not been restrictive of sex. On the contrary, sex has increasingly been the center of interest. The techniques of power focusing on sex have, according to him, not narrowed the scope of sex, but, contrarily, have dispersed sexuality and planted prolifically new modes of sexuality. The will to know and learn about sex has not been curbed by the tabu assigned to it – on the contrary it has intensified and even been transformed into a science of sexuality.

According to Foucault, there has been an increasing tendency in both religious discourse and in literature to demand infinitely more discussion about sex: there has been an increase in both confessions and self-inspection. Since the beginning of the 18th century, the political, economic, and technical powers have provided incentives to increase the level and precision of discussions regarding sex. Sex was no longer merely an object of moral concern, but also a topic of analysis, classification, and administration: a “police” matter connected with the new notion of “population” and considered to be an economic and political problem. At the time of the French Revolution, with the focus on fertility, birth-rates, health, and the sanitary conditions of the population, the prosperity of a nation was for the first time connected to the sex-life of each of its citizens. Sex became a public affair between the state and an individual. Although not talked about as much, also children’s sexuality was increasingly present in the 18th century, which in turn directed the architectural design of schools as well as the rules within them. Teen-age sexuality became a problematic topic for doctors, advisors, directors, and teachers. The pedagogical institutions did not remain silent about the sexuality of children and adolescents, but instead an enormous amount of new discussions proliferated on the topic in the 18th century. Other disciplines taking an increasing interest in sexuality in the 18th and 19th centuries were medicine and criminology, which generated the research on nervous disorders, accompanied by a large array of “sexual perversions.”

The last three centuries have not been a time of concealing, silence, and censorship about sex, but rather a massive amount of regulations and new ways of talking about sex have emerged. Modern societies have, according to

Foucault, dedicated themselves to talking about sex, *ad infinitum*.

Talk, confession, analysis, classification, and the science of sex are powers which Foucault portray as producers of “sexuality.” Only the proliferation of discourse makes it possible to call the truth about sex and its pleasures “sexuality.” The 19th century encountered sex not only as an indefinite subject of discussion, but also as an assignment to formulate a truth about it. This power of production in the discourse on sexuality is the subject of a detailed study in Foucault’s book, or rather the subject of a project which he sketches in it.³⁵

What happens in Foucault’s analysis? Instead of assuming the original sex, which has been repressed by morals, politics, and science, as the repressive hypothesis does, Foucault inverts the image: morals, politics and science, the power which appears as repressive, has actually produced sexuality such as we know it. He writes: “People are going to say that ... I speak of sexuality as if sex did not exist.” They will say: “for you, there remain only groundless effects, ramifications without roots, a sexuality without sex.”³⁶ He answers: “Now, it is the idea of sex *in itself* that we cannot accept without examination. Is ‘sex’ really the anchorage point that supports the manifestations of sexuality, or is it not rather a complex idea that was formed inside the deployment of sexuality?”³⁷

As I remarked earlier, there is an ambivalence in Foucault’s genealogical project that is also present in this book. In the chapter entitled “Scientia Sexualis” he talks about doctors who refuse to see the sex in their patients, and of *Ars Erotica*, in which sex is in relation only to itself.³⁸ “In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself...” p. 57. This, as well as his emphasis on the body and his treatment of sexuality in the book “*Herculine Barbin*,” as Judith Butler has remarked, is evidence that his texts often assume a kind of original sex that is connected with the notion of pleasure³⁹. He offers this as a basis, instead of being a consistent genealogist and rejecting the idea of a core sex.

For Foucault the topic is sex. His claim, although ambivalent, is that there is no sex (pure activity) behind sexuality. Foucault poses the question of whether the power which produces sex is the same as the one which produces sexuality. This is the power which grew around knowledge and practices during the centuries that the repressive hypothesis claims to have silenced sex. He asks whether sex, as opposed to being the core of this proliferation, is actually, as a thought, a result of it.

For Butler the topic is gender: her claim is that there is no sex (pure bodily difference) behind gender. She poses the question of whether the power that

produces gender, the cultural apparatus which has been comprehensively studied in numerous feminist studies on how girls and boys are made, could also be the power which produces the idea of sex as the nucleus of gender.

What happens in a genealogical analysis is that power appears as a force which creates or produces the phenomena in question, and not as something which restricts the original phenomena. Consequently, the focus of these analyses is precisely on the constitution of the phenomena. This change of focus in studies of power is the one which I take up when considering Foucault as offering something significantly new to political theory. This shift of focus includes the consideration that power-relationships are not only power-relationships between fixed entities (here sex-repressive discourse), but that the entities assumed to be fixed parties of the relationships are, as intelligible entities, produced by certain powers. This power may be detected and confronted.

Consider, for example, a situation in which instead of researching how men oppress women, we were to study how exactly men and women and the idea of sexual difference, are produced, and by what kind of powers. Instead of concentrating on how nations are oppressed by imperialist powers, we could instead study exactly how nation is constituted as an entity, by what kind of powers. Instead of studying racist oppression, we could instead study how race as a idea is constituted by power and how racial difference is produced.

Power produces that which we consider to be the real and the normal. It works as a matrix or grid of intelligibility in specific ways. When power is considered in the Foucauldian way, not only as a relationship between fixed entities but also as the force producing the intelligible, the political functions of power analysis gain remarkably new scope.

The concentration in the constitution of what we consider self-evident is connected with the general politicizing effect of the Foucauldian type of power concept. Sexuality is typically a subject which has previously been excluded from power in the realm of nature, but Foucault's *History of Sexuality* shows that it is in the middle of power. The denaturalizing effect is remarkable for political theory.

The strength and most interesting aspects of the Foucauldian way of looking at power in terms of political theory is that anything may become politics.⁴⁰ But Foucault is not only content to remark about the power-ladenness of all phenomena. He is not satisfied with a general remark that power constructs, rather the essential point in his approach is his detailed examination of how.

In his 1977 interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, looking back at his early works, *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault reflects on how he had, without particularly planning to do

so, taken a different approach to power. He was examining how power was exercised, concretely and in detail, specifically focusing on its techniques and tactics, at a time when everybody else, both to the right and left, were content to denounce power.⁴¹

Foucault's approach is, indeed, different from the Hegelian-Marxian utopia and the liberal utopia of getting rid of power. Power is always present. The point is not to eliminate it but to create shifts in it. But it is different also in another respect, as Foucault remarks. The rejection of the utopian perspective merges with the focus on concrete details of power. Marxist studies of politics tend to approach power as a lump that has fallen into the wrong hands, and liberal studies tend to view it as a necessary evil. Both approaches leave little space for an examination of the details of its work. The Foucauldian approach to power inspires a less emotional, detailed study of how exactly any specific phenomena is produced. In the analysis of power, Foucault's "positivism" detaches the strong normativity from it, and encourages a more precise analysis. This "cool" attitude, which is often morally denounced by strong advocates of utopian rage against power at both ends of the political spectrum, does not produce indifference toward power, as these advocates expect it to. On the contrary it makes power approachable. As opposed to denying it, to refusing to see it, to avoiding it, it exposes it for concrete and detailed analysis and enables confronting

Foucault talks about strategies, techniques, programs and tactics of power. With regard to politics, instead of concentrating on the analysis of who possesses power and to what degree, the Foucauldian analysis pays attention to the mechanisms of power.

Another major effect of the Foucauldian approach is the impossibility of exempting oneself from power. Colin Gordon, who edited the first collection of Foucault's interviews in English, *Power/Knowledge*, is correct in observing that "Foucault never locates his theoretical enterprise 'on the side of' resistance by undertaking to formulate a strategy of resistance" and that "he consistently refuses to assume the standpoint of one speaking for and in the name of the oppressed"⁴² and that "... it becomes apparent that the binary division between resistance and non-resistance is an unreal one."⁴³

In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault remarks that the repressive hypothesis, the claim that in this century we are in the process of liberating our sexuality, is appealing because it allows the person who presents it to set her/himself outside of the realm of power, on the side of the future. "When Enlightenment, freedom and pleasure are connected, we have the sermon of the last decades," he says. The idea of the liberation of sex is, of course, impossible for a genealogical thinker: to liberate sex you must assume an original unpolluted core of sex. But Foucault's rejection of the discourse of

liberation also connects to his conviction that it is impossible to step outside of power. Foucault refuses to take part in the discourse of liberation and set himself outside of the realm of power. He rejects the imaginary privileged point of view of an analyzer outside and devoid of power, and shows its ultimate impossibility. Consequently, he encourages one to judge in the here and now, and to take responsibility for his or her political judgements.

An often expressed claim is that by giving power the status of being everywhere and ever-present, Foucault makes criticism toward power impossible or futile. Why should this be so? Why should the fact that power is everywhere and ever-present make the particular critique of specific instances of power impossible? Can the specific exercise of power be criticized only if one accepts the claim that power can, in principle, be totally abolished? It is hard to see the validity of this reasoning. There is no contradiction in presenting a critique of injustices while simultaneously being of the opinion that there will always be power-relations and injustices.

The crucial difference in comparison to the liberal view is that in the Foucauldian conception the resistance does not automatically follow from power in the way as it does in liberal theory. In liberal theory, because of the transcendental horizon of freedom, any power is negative and enough to generate resistance.

If the appearance of power is in itself not sufficient in order to generate resistance, it does not mean that there is no resistance, or should not be any resistance, or that resistance is impossible. It means that the source of resistance is elsewhere. It is in political judgement, which also happens in power and is a product of some power. Foucault chose to engage in genealogies of madness, the penal system, and sexuality. This decision was the result of his own political-ethical judgement in his place and time. These were areas in which he found it worthwhile to try and effect shifts. Lyotard would perhaps say that this judgement happened out of a feeling of injustice.

The goal of political action is not to end the work of power, it is to create shifts in what is produced by power. I claim that with regard to power, the change in attitude from abolition to shifts has significant practical consequences in doing politics, especially radical politics.

I would also claim that Foucault's way of theorizing has an effect, which confronts the issues left problematic or hard to deal with within the liberal framework. These are the ones which have to do with power as constituting identities.

Current political issues, such as postcolonial or national issues, issues of multiculturalism, gender issues, race issues and sexuality issues, are not issues of the power of one agent over another, but questions of the constitution of these positions, and power as being involved in this constitution.

The postmodern genealogical approach denaturalizes. It makes it impossible to found politics on arguments of nature. Race no more than gender or sexual orientation can be approached as a question of natural being but has to be considered in terms of its production through complex powers consisting of regimes of knowledge, as well as other types of power. I will come back to this question in my last three chapters on nations and identities in connection to women, lesbians, and judging selves.

The focus shifts from questions of who has power over whom to questions of how the subjects of power are constituted as such, and what exactly the concrete details of power are. The agents in a political situation are not conceived of as pure actors in opposition to the restrictive power, but are instead viewed as continuously constructed agents in the field of power in which they make situated political judgements. In Foucauldian terms, the issue of power leads to the issue of the constitution of a subject. I will return to this in the chapter on political judgement.

Political Power – Hegelian-Marxian Tradition

In the Hegelian-Marxian political thought there is a link between morality and political power, as I observed in the analysis of the Hegelian concepts of civil society and state in the first chapter. Political power is conceived of as the possibility of morality and justice over necessity, and the random effects of civil society and the market. More specifically, power functions as an instrument in the process in which the social entity gains consciousness and control over itself. In this way power is connected with the thought of freedom as self-command.

The Hegelian notion of a nation-state entails the idea of a self-reflective subjectivity. A state is a single power and a single will. This is why the power connected to the state is not considered as the power of the rulers or even the power of the ruled, which would have been transferred to the state for a period of time. The power of the state, instead, is a medium of the self-relation of the community. It is an instrument of self-control. Similarly, the power in the Marxian ideal of a socialist or a communist self-regulating society is conceived of as an instrument of the self-relation of a community, not as a possession of those in power. This understanding of societal power as being self-referential in nature is probably one of the reasons, if not the only reason for the notorious difficulty of dealing with issues of power and control of power in societies in which Marxism has been the dominant theory.

The idea of power as connected to the self-regulation of a communal subject is not, however, limited to socialist state ideologies. Anti-authoritarian

“autonomous” groups and groups based on communal identity often share the ideal of self-regulation and the denial of internal power relations that easily accompanies this setting.

The thought of political power as a self-regulating power in a community introduces a conception of power which clearly differs from the Anglo-American concept of power. In this concept, power is not a relation between two persons, a and b, but a self-reflective relation of control within one single subject. The interests and natural impulses of a subject are controlled through power by the same subject. This is the “will” of a nation, which self-regulates the political subject.

Connected to the idea of political power as an instrument of justice in the process of the self-control of society, in its most extreme sense, is the utopia of total self-control. Here, political power is thought of as an instrument used in the planning of a totally “good” society.

In the Hegelian-Marxian tradition, the idea of communal self-reflection as the basic pattern of a political ontology includes the horizon of possibility of total self-knowledge, and as its consequence a power-neutral self-command. In an autonomously free community the thorough knowledge of the true state of affairs, shared by all, makes internal power relations unnecessary. The more knowledge a community has about itself, the better it is able to be in moral self-control. The political power is justified by the identity of true knowledge and true justice, and knowledge as a resource of self-control calls forth a political program and political plan.

The extreme faith in a knowledge-based political program and plan for the achievement of a just society, connected with the idea of power as a neutral element of self-command, was present in the revolutionary ideas of, amongst others, the Jacobins during the French Revolution and the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution. The ideal was the self-governance of the people through knowledge and planning. In the non-statist versions of the Marxist tradition, the same idea is expressed by ideals of autonomous movements.

When power is conceived of as a self-relation in a community, everything in that community is included in the plan and everything becomes political. This is a clearly distinct kind of “everything is political” -view from the one which I discussed above as a result of a genealogical approach to power. When “everything is political” is connected to the idea of there being a single *volonté générale* in a community, the controlling power of the political program is extended to everything, and a definitive judgement over good and bad is in principle possible on any issue. The result is the diminishment of the possibility of controversy. In the Foucauldian concept, the notion of “everything is political” makes everything open to controversy, because there is no such notion as a single political will.

Lyotard and Terror

Lyotard, as I observed in the previous chapter, reacts with his paganism against the ideas of truth, unity, and finality as connected with politics. All three are tied to his criticism of Marxism. By criticizing the connection of the right knowledge and right politics he targets the Marxian habit of relying on the right theory in politics. By criticizing the ideal of unity of the social cultural whole he targets the idea of a single social subject. The critique of finality is targeted at the idea of unified progress.

The idea that, in the right hands, power allows correct steering of society in the right direction through a “program” and a “plan,” is Lyotard’s specific concern. He is highly aware of the danger of what he calls the “terror” of a conception that allows a particular group to conceive of themselves as having privileged access to the true consciousness of the community by being in possession of the right theory and correct knowledge. Lyotard’s view is that based on historical experience one is able to say: the less political plans we have, the better.

Lyotard takes this concern regarding terror even further. He not only criticizes the use of knowledge to legitimate terror, he also questions the entire notion that knowledge provides the ultimate authority in questions of justice. This is implied in the pagan conception of a multiplicity of truths. If there is no one truth, the questions of planning society or deciding what is just cannot be resolved on the basis of this truth, rather they must to be judged as questions of a moral-political nature.

In *Just Gaming* and *The Differend*, Lyotard thoroughly discusses the principle of denying the idea of deciding questions of politics on the basis of knowledge. He emphasizes the necessity of keeping the Kantian faculties of knowing and morality separate and forms this opposition in terms of a philosophy of language. Lyotard writes about the separation of language games and genres of discourse and denies the passage from one to the other. He phrases the criticism toward steering society with a cognitively grounded plan in a new way: as a denial of the passage from the game of descriptions to that of prescriptions. Here the principle of Humean guillotine is connected with the critique toward the Hegelian-Marxian tradition and its treatment of knowledge and power as tools of justice. The Lyotardian concern over terror includes a critique of the Hegelian-Marxian conception of power as an internal instrument in the use of self-rule by self-knowledge.

Differend

It is important to note that the Hegelian concept of power as a neutral instrument of the self-rule of a community presupposes cultural unity. Lyotard also attacks this assumption, his point of departure being a multicultural situation. Lyotard repeatedly points out that the assumption of a general discourse, one subject, becomes unjust because the seemingly common discourse actually excludes, or disqualifies those outside the dominant culture, or “language game”, as he calls it.

Lyotard has developed the term “differend” in order to name such situations of radical exclusion or imbalance that result in a wrong which is hard to express in the hegemonic language. A normal case of injustice may be taken to a court and litigated in a situation in which both parties share the same language-game. In the case of a “differend,” however, there is an injustice, yet the victim is unable to verbalize the wrongdoing, because the justice functions within the discourse of the party that has committed the injustice.

Lyotard’s examples refer to the radical imbalance of cultural power. A citizen of a French colony cannot take a case of the injustice done to her/his culture to any court, because they function as part of the French judiciary system. A wage-laborer can take her or his case regarding labor conditions to a court, but it is impossible to present a case involving a wrongdoing of the economic system which forces her/him to sell her/his labor. In these cases, the means of expressing the wrong have been revoked from those to whom it is done. Another example that Lyotard applies is the differend of women in a male-dominated world. An extreme wrong is done, but it is very hard to express in the valid language which is permeated by the same hegemony.

I would note that with the concept of “differend,” Lyotard grasps the nature of injustices and the phenomena of power within structures, which elsewhere are often referred to in terms of such large diffuse concepts as “colonialism,” “capitalism,” and “patriarchy.” The term “differend” indicates power which is extremely difficult to describe in the liberal concept of power and with the vocabulary of liberal theory. But as Lyotard points out, it also indicates the insufficiency of the Hegelian-Marxian view of power as an element of self-rule that is based on self-knowledge. It is impossible to attain a transparent self-knowledge and self-rule of a community if there is no one single subject, that is, no unified culture to rule itself.

Hegel viewed the individual as a product of culture, and autonomy as a cultural self-relation. An autonomous individual should be able to change the culture of which he is a product. Hegel’s conception clearly presupposes a view of culture as a single closed entity and each individual as a product of

precisely one such closed entity. The multicultural understanding of a political situation is different, and even more different is a situation in which the multiple cultures are constantly conceived of as mere passing moments.

Toward the Postmodern View

What do Foucauldian genealogy and the Lyotardian critique mean for the thinking of politics? I claim that they both indicate an altered consciousness of power. Compared to the standard Anglo-American way of viewing power as a relation between fixed entities and as a violation of original liberty, the view that leads to discourses of repression and liberation, the Foucauldian genealogy sees power as being everywhere and approaches it as the principal of the general production of phenomena. More attention is paid to constitution by means of power, less room is given for explanations that rely on nature and necessity, and, generally speaking, the politicization of phenomena. The Lyotardian critique of the Hegelian-Marxian conception of political power as a self-regulating device of a community denies the possibility of total self-control and refuses the assumption of one social subject.

What is postmodern in this? Both Foucault and Lyotard point critically at the transcendental horizon of the disappearance of power which is part of the modern political theory in both of the forms discussed here. The transcendental idea of a power-free state works as a crucial horizon that thrills and charges modern political theory. Being in denial of power is the main achievement of this utopian horizon.

Most political agents cynically accept the existence of power, although according to both liberal and Hegelian-Marxian credentials there should always be a radical fringe which carries on in the name of the original ideals of politics. These ideals involve the abolition of power or total autonomy of a community. These purest ideals, however, are those which, paradoxically, lead to the denial of power, to the phenomena which Lyotard names “terror”, and to the phenomena mocked by Foucault with his analysis of the reasons behind the popularity of the repressive hypothesis. Within the liberal framework one easily assumes that power is held by others, not oneself. Within conceptions that assume a single communal subject, one easily assumes that there is no power inside a group that is transparent to itself and in possession of the right theory. These attitudes are susceptible to growing into a hypocrisy that does not pay attention to the fact that power is everywhere, and that each of us is a product of power and uses power.

A more conscious relationship to power, a power which for so many seems to be thought of as being a vicious, ugly possession of an anonymous “them”,

is a result of a postmodern analysis of power. In the postmodern there is no cynicism involved in the realization that power is everywhere. On the contrary, this realization opens up more space for political action and change.

Utopia is a situation that is either devoid of power or situation in which there is total power. This transcendence marks the modern political theory. The postmodern does not harbor a utopian vision; it is equally antiutopian as it is secular. The conception that there is no morality or no passion for justice without utopia is just as anti-postmodern as the view that there is no passion for truth without God.

Refusing the positive and negative total strategies, the postmodern implies a rejection of the tragic relationship to power and its critique. Instead it encourages receptive, subtle, and alert motion in the field of power, morality and injustices. One should not only avoid and resent power, or collect it in the name of doing good, one should recognize and accept the existence of power and issues of power, and one should be able to both use and relinquish power.

The question for postmodern politics is: can we envision a politics finely tuned in confronting injustices and aware of power to a high and meticulous degree – a politics that does not look for a foundation in the utopia of distinguishing power.

Notes

- ¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (tr) Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).
- ² Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I. An Introduction* (tr) Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
- ³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (New York, Routledge, 1990).
- ⁴ Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power" in R. Bell, D.V. Edwards and R.H. Wagner (eds), *Political Power. A Reader in Theory and Research* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) pp. 79-93.
- ⁵ Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: Macmillan 1974) pp. 26-27.
- ⁶ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974).
- ⁷ On paternalism see Gerald Dworkin "Paternalism" *The Monist* 56, 1972 pp. 64-84; Joel Kleinig, *Paternalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) and Heta Häyry, *Freedom, Autonomy, and the Limits of Medical Paternalism* (Helsinki: Hakapaino, 1990) ja Matti Häyry, *Critical Studies in Philosophical Medical Ethics: Summary* (Helsinki: Hakapaino, 1990).

Paternalism has been defined by Joel Feinberg as follows: "... the liberty-

limiting principle called legal paternalism justifies state coercion to protect individuals from self-inflicted harm, or, in its extreme version, to guide them, whether they like it or not, towards their own good.” Feinberg 1973, p. 45 and by Gerald Dworkin: “By paternalism I understand roughly the interference with a person’s liberty of action justified by reasons referring to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced.” Dworkin 1972, p. 65, and Jeffrie Murphy: “Paternalism is the coercing of people primarily for what is believed to be their own good.” Jeffrie Murphy, “Incompetence and Paternalism” *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie* 60, 1974 p. 465). Cited according to Heta Häyry (1990). Heta Häyry expresses this principle as follows: “... despite the many claims to the contrary, individual liberty and autonomy should always be given priority over welfare calculations, public morality and abstract rationality in matters which solely or primarily concern the individuals themselves.” p. 3.

⁸ Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow divide their book *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1982) into two parts, the first part ending with the chapter entitled “The Methodological Failure of Archaeology” and the second part entitled “The Genealogy of the Modern Individual: The Interpretive Analytics of Power, Truth, and the Body.”

⁹ Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* p. 104.

¹⁰ For example, Barry Smart, in his concise, yet comprehensive presentation of Foucault, describes the shift from archaeology to genealogy as a shift from being primarily concerned with discourse to a conception of power and knowledge relations. Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1985) p. 41.

In most general introductions to Foucault this division into two phases is followed. In *Postmodern Theory*, Best and Kellner write: “In 1970 Foucault began to make the transition from archaeology to genealogy and thereby to a more adequate theorization of material institutions and forms of power.” p. 45.

Even those who do not place such an emphasis on the break in Foucault’s “methodology,” like J.G. Merquior, pay attention to the change beginning with *Surveiller et punir*, in connection to an increased focus on power.

“As already indicated, all this problematic presupposed a recasting of the concept of power. Put in a nutshell, it required a theory of *productive power*. The theory of discursive practices in *The Archeology of Knowledge* and *L’Ordre du discours* remained tied up with too negative a view of power, stressing coercion, prohibition and exclusion. Since *Discipline and Punish* Foucault changed the focus. Now he warned: ‘we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it “excludes”, it “represses”, it “censors”, it abstracts” it “masks”, it “conceals”. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.’” J.G. Merquior, *Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) pp. 108-109, citing

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* p. 194.

Most writers, including Dreyfus and Rabinow, also link the change in Foucault's writing to the events of May 1968 in Paris. The political turmoil supposedly radicalized Foucault and gave more political flavor to his work. This biographical information is confirmed by Foucault biographers. They all testify about how the fairly academic and socially unengaged Foucault got deeply caught in the middle of the radical ideological fight in the Academia and also became personally involved in the prison-movement. Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) pp. 201-280; David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (London: Hutchinson, 1993); pp. 202-231 and 257-322 James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Doubleday, 1993) pp. 165-207.

¹¹ For example, in *Foucault's Strata and Fields. An Investigation into Archaeological and Genealogical Science Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), Martin Kusch writes: "However, all of these interrelations notwithstanding, and despite my reluctance to follow those interpreters who construct something of a "break" between archaeology and genealogy, I have thought it best to discuss the two projects separately." p. xiv. He defines the difference as follows: "In his genealogical writings, Foucault's central interest does no longer lie with developing an apparatus for conceptualizing relations between statements and their indices. This type of series is not rejected as insufficient or unsatisfactory, but the focus is now upon defining a new set of series of entities and processes. These entities and processes are power mechanisms, power networks, interests, systems of exclusions and prohibitions, and coercive institutions. To be sure, the archaeological edifice does not rule out attention for such entities. Indeed, for a precise delimitation of series of objects, already *The Archaeology* calls for an investigation into institutions and social relations." p. 115.

¹² Colin Gordon writes about Foucault's genealogy in his afterword in *Power/Knowledge* collection: "the function of the notion of power/knowledge belongs within a version of the Nietzschean project of genealogy...", "... features of Foucault's genealogy give point to his insistence on the *positive, productive* characteristics of modern apparatuses of power and his contention that their effectivity rests on the installation of what he calls a politics of a regime of truth..." Colin Gordon, "Afterword" in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* (ed) Colin Gordon, (tr) Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

¹³ Foucault formulated both "genealogy" and "archaeology" in contrast to the standard form of an historical approach, not as general methodologies. Archaeology aspires to reveal subconscious levels of knowledge construction in contrast to the study of conscious phenomena in ordinary history. "What I would like to do, however, is to reveal a *positive unconscious* of knowledge: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific discourse..." Foucault, Michael, *The Order of Things*. pp. xi. Genealogy is stated

- to “link historical sense to the historian’s history.” Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews* (ed) Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) p. 157.
- ¹⁴ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” in *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews* pp. 139-140.
- ¹⁵ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” p. 142.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- ¹⁸ Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power” interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* pp. 109-133 p. 117.
- ¹⁹ See my discussion in Chapter 7.
- ²⁰ Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* p. 208.
- ²¹ Martin Kusch, *Foucault’s Strata and Fields* p. 118.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- ²⁵ Kusch credits the idea of applying the Leibnizian distinction to theories of power to Jon Elster, who, according to Kusch, attributes the view that power relations are internal to Marx. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ²⁸ More precisely, this distinction is made according to whether the relation can be reduced to a one-place predicate of the relata. “Titus is wiser than Caius” can be reduced to “Caius is somewhat wise” and “Titus is very wise,” whereas when “Paris loves Helen,” Paris can not be reduced to merely “a lover,” but his feature in this sentence is being “a lover of someone,” which is still a relational property. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-134.
- ²⁹ As Kusch also pays attention to by noting that Foucault’s metaphor can be characterized as Faradayan field of forces. “There might well be insights to be gained from looking upon the social body as a Faradayan field of forces, thereby assuming forces – alias powers – to be primary with respect to physical bodies – alias individuals.” *Ibid.*, p. 129. This creates an illuminating contrast to my earlier discussion of the Hobbesian model as being parallel to the Newtonian physics of freely moving physical bodies.
- Also, as David Hoy remarks, Foucault is consistently nominalistic about power, even willing to say that power does not exist, and that only local exercises of power are real. He resists offering a metaphysics of power. David Couzens Hoy, “Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School” in D. C. Hoy (ed) *Foucault. A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) pp. 123-147, p. 134.
- ³⁰ Michel Foucault, “Afterword. The Subject and Power” in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* p. 209.

³¹ In the preface, the authors give the impression that the original idea for an article on power was theirs and was delivered upon their request: “Clearly the issue of power is central to Foucault’s diagnosis of our current situation. Yet, as we say in the text, it is not one of the areas he has most fully developed. In discussion with him, Foucault agreed that his concept of power remains elusive but important. He has generously agreed to take a step toward remedying this by offering for inclusion in this book a previously unpublished text on power, for which we are extremely grateful.” Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, p. ix.

³² Foucault’s interviews with Italian political activists are closer to revolutionary tradition. He discusses the aspects which he knows are of specific interest to those who ask questions.

I owe much of this notice to the lively conversations I had the privilege of participating in at David Hoy’s seminar on Foucault at the University of Santa Cruz in 1992. In the course of reading Foucault’s texts produced in at various circumstances and in various parts of the world, the seminar group, usually slightly amused and relieved, made the observation that Foucault, just like any other person, is somewhat of a polite chameleon. It is evident that Foucault speaks in a different voice in different circumstances, depending upon what the audience and people involved with his visiting programs are especially interested in and what their specific expectations and problems are.

³³ Foucault does not himself consider the liberal political ontology or liberal political framework. When he discusses power, as in the interview “Truth and Power”, he considers as the standard option on the left the Marxist view, whereas on the right he sees what he refers to as “juridical” conception. He says: “In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread.” Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power” in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* pp. 109-133, p. 119.

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality; Vol 1* pp. 3-35.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-58. “The learned discourse on sex that was pronounced in the nineteenth century was imbued with age-old delusions, but also with systematic blindnesses: a refusal to see and to understand; but further – and this is the crucial point – a refusal concerning the very thing that was brought to light and whose formulation was urgently solicited.” p. 55.

³⁹ Butler extensively quotes Foucault’s discussion on “the happy limbo,” a term which he uses to describe Alexina’s sexual experience, which here appears a

something original. See my discussion in Chapter 7.

⁴⁰ Some theorists see a threat in general politicizing. Held, for example, sites Schumpeter in claiming that making politics potentially co-extensive with all realms of life opens these domains to public regulation and control. Broad concepts of politics may be connected to the diminution of freedom. Held, *Democratic Theory* p. 292.

This view has several drawbacks. First, we could ask in a Foucauldian mode whether all domains are not under regulation and control of some sort anyway. Of course, what Held means here is specifically legal control, not the control by other types of norms. Second, we could ask whether legal control is not always a question of political judgement. In other words, it is always already a question of political judgement to say what is political. Nothing in itself is apolitical. One could ask whether wife-beating is a political or a private question. Feminism has extended the domain of politics into areas that previously were not considered political, such as women, private life in families and environmentalists to treating of animals, trees and wild life. Only a short time ago, these would not have been considered as political questions.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" in Michel Foucault *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977* pp. 109-133. See pp. 115-116.

⁴² Colin Gordon, "Afterword" in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews & other Writings 1972-1977*, p. 256.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Chapter 5

COMMUNITY

In her article “Epistemologies of Postmodernism”, Seyla Benhabib evaluates Jean-François Lyotard’s “challenge to the program of a critical social theory at the present.”¹ Her judgement is that “Lyotard’s agonistic theory of language and paralogistic theory of legitimation cannot serve as a basis for a post-Marxian radical, democratic politics.” Her claim, more specifically, is that Lyotard ends up with “neoliberal interest group pluralism.”² This is an interesting accusation, because, as I would claim and as I attempt to show, it is in fact impossible for Lyotard to end up with interest group pluralism. My claim is that Lyotard operates within a political ontology that differs significantly from the one which allows for interest-group pluralism.

Within the distinction that I make between the two modern European traditions of political ontology: the tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Bentham and Mill, on the one hand, and the tradition of Kant, Hegel, and Marx on the other, I would claim that Lyotard is distinctly intelligible only as part of the latter tradition. While “post-Marxian” in current discussions too often means either a retreat into the liberal vocabulary, or a repetition of the Hegelian-Marxian concepts with the labels changed, Lyotard’s writing, from my perspective, represents one of the rare examples of profound concern for the conceptualization of the political in a way which reaches toward the postmodern. His critique emerges from the continental tradition based on German idealism, but his gaze is turned away from this tradition. He stands on the edge of the postmodern. In this chapter I will discuss Lyotard’s writing as a post-Marxian position which culminates in the conception and presentation of communal subjectivity.

Interest

The meaning and position of the concept of “interest” is very different within the two modern political ontologies. “Interest” in the Anglo-American tradition

is the predicate of the basic element of the theoretical universe, the transcendental individual actor. In the tradition based on German idealism, “interest” is connected to uncontrolled bodily drives, and it is opposed to the political which is connected to self-control.

The basic element of the liberal political ontology and its starting point in the construction of the political space is the transcendental individual agent. Stripped of all specific predicates and revealed in its³ theoretical nakedness, the “individual” is an entity in possession of a specific individual “interest”, as well as an ability to “choose” according to this interest. The interest, and choosing according to the interest, constitute the “free” movement of the transcendental individual. If there is no intervention, the individual’s free movement continues, in this theoretical space, along the course of its interest. Political space is, in the fiction of contract theories, created by the choices made by transcendental individuals. The nature of the political is intervention, it creates obstacles that block free movement.⁴

Hegelian political ontology has its roots in Kant’s ethical writing, and Kant distinguishes two applications of the term “interest”: (I) the pathological interest, which indicates dependency on bodily drives (*Sinnlichkeit*), and (II) dependency of contingent will on the principles of reason. Interest (I) is connected to the senses and interest (II) to reason.⁵ In Kant’s writing, there is no equivalent to the liberal theory’s “interest,” which is a positive predicate of an individual.

In the Kantian framework, in order to be moral the individual has to avoid interest (I) and take interest (II) [*Interesse nehmen*] in moral principles. Interest is either something to avoid or something to take. It is not something that is positively attached to an individual and that requires space.

In Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, interest (I) maintains its negative place: civil society is the bourgeois battlefield of interests, and it requires the domination by morality which is indicated by the concept of state. The political sphere of the state is based on morality, and demands setting aside particular interests (I) and taking interest (II) in the common good.

As mentioned above, in the tradition of German idealism, the basic form of subjectivity is the Kantian moral subject. This subject is self-reflective by nature, and makes moral judgements. It is also the form of the political community. “Community” in Hegel and Marx is by form a will focused on itself. The aim of the community, conceived of as abstract general will, is self-consciousness and self-command. The political is supposed to be above and in command of special interests, as morality is supposed to be above and in command of the sensual.

The liberal Anglo-American tradition does not conceive of the political as a sphere beyond private interests, but, contrarily, sees it as the battlefield of

interests. “Democracy”, in the liberal tradition, is the state of affairs which guarantees the fair play of interests. The state performs the function of settling disputes of interests, and in this way, its existence is in everyone’s best interest. This is the original setting of liberal theory, and it allows interest group pluralism to be a liberal ideal.

Another side of the liberal framework is that when the initial matrix of the political is characterized in terms of interest, any mention of conflict, difference or agonistics is interpreted as a difference and conflict of interests. This is why it is very difficult to express Nietzschean undertones in politics within the Anglo-American theoretical universe. The heteronomous political ontology easily comes to be understood as a battle of power between individual interests. This is also why any commonality based on identity in this environment instantly receives a political translation as an “interest group.” Within the Hegelian tradition, however, a situation of difference and separate identity calls forth the ideas of self-consciousness (of communal subjectivity), or the sovereignty and autonomy of actions (of the communal subject).

Lyotard’s position is on the edge of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology. His writing would not be comprehensible without it, despite the fact that he has clearly turned his back to an essential part of it. Lyotard is in the process of abandoning the idea of a self-commanding communal subjectivity, yet he shares the tradition’s assumption of politics as a sphere of disinterestedness. This is why, I would say, Lyotardian agonistics is very far removed from interest-group pluralism.

Disinterested Judging

The political, in the tradition which Lyotard here joins, is concerned not with interests but with judgement. More precisely, it is concerned with the act of judging disinterestedly. Both in Hegel and Marx, judgement is made in the name of the communal subject. A political actor in the process of making a political judgement is ideally conceived of as approximating identity with the abstract general will and thus being part of the “universal subject.” Lyotard, who stands at the edge of this tradition, abandons the idea of the communal single subject, while he simultaneously retains the question of judgement. His question of focus becomes that of pure judging.

Judging is the issue of Kant. He is not concerned with choosing. Kant’s occupation is not the realization of an interest, but rather an actualization of disinterestedness. Disinterestedness is a term which comes to the foreground in Kant’s work on aesthetic judgement. When Lyotard, in his work on politics and ethics, intensely studies Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, he does so in

order to delve deeply in to the nature of disinterested judgement.⁶ For Lyotard, the preoccupation with aesthetic judgement serves as a continuation of ethical and political discourse, which transforms into the study of judgement as such. In Lyotard's Kantian analysis, judgement is ultimately based on feeling, and he focuses specific attention on the feeling of injustice.

In the work of Hegel and Marx, judging is done in the name of the project. It is aimed at the future of community and done in its name. The problem faced by Lyotard is how to conceptualize the judgement when the notion of the project has been abandoned.

As a result of his adherence to the Kantian approach, Lyotard never doubts judging itself. The Kantian capacity to judge is always present for him. As a pure capacity, without content it does not need grounding nor can it vanish. For Lyotard, there is no need to ground the political in interests and thus to logically infer the political space from choices based on interests. Rather, the political is grounded in the very capacity to judge and is always already present.

When Lyotard refers to "blind" judgement⁷ as a judgement which has no knowledge of its end, he means something quite different from what John Rawls does when he refers to judging behind the veil of ignorance.⁸ Rawls's position is commonly characterized as Kantian, however there is a marked difference between his, I would say liberal, and Lyotard's Kantian approach. The Rawlsian individual, who chooses behind the veil of ignorance, is an individual in the sense of a liberal agent. He does indeed have interests, regardless of the fact that he is uninformed about what exactly is in his interest within the context of the special instance of choosing, which is construed in order to define the character of the concept of judgement. He also possesses the capacity to choose. In Lyotard's attempt to capture the Kantian meaning of pure "blind" judgement, as it presents itself in aesthetic judgement, he reaches for a moment of judging devoid of interest, a "disinterested" judgement. This *sensus*, Lyotard writes, "...has nothing whatsoever to do with an end or purpose. It is finality, purposiveness itself, which has no end, no purpose in front of it and no lack behind it." "It is an animation or an *anima* there on the spot, which is not moving toward anything."⁹

Additionally, when Lyotard refers to agonistics in *The Postmodern Condition*¹⁰ only in this book, and not in his two other major ethical works *Just Gaming*, and *The Differend*, he is not implying a state of affairs, in which a struggle is occurring between interests within a vacuum. For him, there is always already the social bond, just as there is always already the capacity to judge.¹¹ The Lyotardian participants in a struggle share the initial membership of community. This makes the starting point different from that of the liberal tradition, in which the community must always be established, the

capacity to judge must be proven, and in which both must be derived from individual interest-invested agents.

Lyotard's critique is rooted in the political ontology which presupposes a social bond, the capacity to judge and the existence of a communal subject. It does its deconstructive work in it and derives its meaning from it. It shifts and re-inscribes it, while it simultaneously remains bound to it.

Lyotard's agonistics of political space should not, therefore, be confused with interest group pluralism, because it fights on another front and is a continuation of a discourse other than the liberal one. It is formed in contrast to the Hegelian-Marxian tradition's conception of community, and its philosophical stakes lie in this theoretical field. In the way that in which it is used in the term "interest-group pluralism," "interest" is not a valid conceptual currency in this universe.

Community

In *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard presents us with two alternatives of the social bond: the "modern alternative" and "the postmodern perspective." The modern alternative consists of the two basic representational models of society, which, according to him, have been in place at least the last half-century: Either society forms a functional whole, or it is divided in two. He attributes the first conception to the French school of sociology and later functionalism, Parsons' conception of society as a self-regulating system and cybernetics. The dualistic conception is attributed to Marxism. According to Lyotard, the postmodern perspective seeks to avoid the dichotomy of either a functional whole or a division into two.¹²

It is evident here, too, that Lyotard's point of departure shares nothing with the liberal universe of freely moving individual agents invested with interests and rights as basic components of the political. For him, the modern conception of society is that of a whole. Both of his alternatives, modern sociology and Marxism, presuppose an ontology which gives logical priority to community. This is all he has to cling to and is also what troubles him. The liberal universe in which individuals logically precede community is not at all the subject of his concern.

While presenting a critique on Baudrillard he remarks that:

This breaking up of the grand narratives leads to what some authors analyze in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individual atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian motion. Nothing of the kind is happening: this point of view, it

seems to me, is haunted by the paradisiac representation of a lost “organic” society.¹³

For Lyotard, the social bond does not disintegrate. It remains, because it has always and will always be present. The individuals in this kind of political ontology are logically posterior to the fabric of relations. The social bond exists prior to any random aggregate of individuals, and it also precedes any contract between individuals. Hegel’s critique of social contract theories states that it is impossible to conceive of a contract between individuals prior to the existence of a social bond which facilitates the institution of contracts. Lyotard shares this view explicitly in *The Differend*, when he writes:

The discourse, for instance, of the social “contract” is a narrative comparable to a myth. It recounts the birth of the social, but to the extent that it is recounting it, the social is already there as narrator, narratée, narrated, question, and answer to the question. The social is always presupposed because it is presented or copresented within the slightest phrase.¹⁴

It is pointless, he writes, to ask the origin of the social. Just as it is pointless, according to him, to ask the origin of the political. In his recasting of the field of the social and political in terms of phrases, he writes:

The social is implicated in the universe of a phrase and the political is its mode of linking.

Benhabib

In contemporary North-American discourse there is significant interest in community, communal values, and communicability. This, no doubt, derives from the need to conceptualize the evident experience of the social and the political which finds poor expression in the language of individuals, choices, and rights. One of the voices in this discussion has been Seyla Benhabib’s discourse ethics, which is intimately related to Habermas’s and Apel’s projects in Germany. Here, community is based on communication, and this way of thinking, from my perspective, connects at both ends to modern political ontology. On the one hand it seeks to found the political on communication among individuals, which makes it approach the transcendental individualism of liberal theory. On the other hand, it approaches single subject theory with regard to the desired outcome of the conversation, which is an agreement. This implies establishing of the communal will. The ability to think in

postmodern terms requires the loosening of both of the ends. This is what I see as occurring in Lyotard's writing.

Seyla Benhabib has presented a critique of Lyotardian agonistics from the point of view of discourse ethics. Her critique targets the issue of communication. Benhabib is concerned with "the thesis of the radical untranslatability of genres of discourse and phrase regimes" in Lyotard.¹⁵ Untranslatability, in Benhabib's framework, in which communication guarantees the communal and the political, does indeed create a major threat of the dissolution of the community.

Benhabib seems to attempt to twist Lyotard into a philosopher of language, while he is actually making a political point regarding political theory. Lyotard does not introduce the untranslatability of genres as a general linguistic statement, and he is clearly not writing a philosophy of language in order to make a serious contribution to the discussions on Ludwig Wittgenstein, Saul Kripke, G.H. von Wright or Ferdinand Saussure in *The Differend*.¹⁶ Rather, one could say that his selection of the vocabulary of linguistics is merely another instance of his theoretical promiscuity,¹⁷ and that it happens only on a slightly more profound level of philosophical intertextuality than does his quasi-Wittgensteinian numbering of paragraphs in *The Differend*.¹⁸

Lyotard's emphasis on the untranslatability of genres becomes intelligible and interesting when it is seen in its theoretical and political context. In *Just Gaming* and *The Differend*, it seems to be targeted specifically at the political discourse based on the idea of the self-regulating single communal subject. Its main point is to deny the access from descriptive to prescriptive statements, and the passage from knowledge to politics. This is political in the context of Marxist political discourse, in which the concept is to plan society on the basis of knowledge about society. Lyotard's critique is targeted at both the notion of a plan and the thought of a community as defining goals for itself on the basis of its knowledge of itself.

With the Kantian judging subject in mind Lyotard returns repeatedly to the same question concerning community: "What can a *communitas* be that is not bound to itself by a project? ... That has no Idea of what it wants to be and must be? Not having the Idea of its unity even as a horizon?"¹⁹

This is the kind of question that emerges solely from the Hegelian-Marxian single subject tradition, and it does not possess the same urgent significance in liberal discourse. The notion of a community that "has no Idea of what it wants to be and must be," makes sense only in connection with the idea of a community as having a conception of itself and its future, a community which decides its own fate and which acts as a reflective subject. This is the basic assumption which Lyotard here both exposes and questions.

However, simultaneously, he may also be seen as continuing to pose the question of community in the form of a subject. What Lyotard is engaging in here is deconstructive work: he does not necessarily dispose of the idea of community as a subject, but rather reinterprets, displaces and re-inscribes it.

Lyotard arrives at the edge of the single subject theory by asking: what would be a community without end, without reflection. To answer this question in this tradition is to arrive on absurdity, a paradox. Lyotard faces this paradox. He is at the edge, even if the edge is on the inside.

Benhabib's critique of Lyotard in the name of language is unjust considering that Lyotard's demand in within moral and political action is to create expressions. In *Peregrinations* he writes: "At the bottom, the definition of a language is that it can be translated into another." "The very question of communicability concerns those phrases that are not properly speaking sentences but above all feelings."²⁰ Lyotard's imperative lies in witnessing and in giving expression to the feelings of injustice.²¹ In my view, these imperatives of finding expressions and witnessing are not always brought into the foreground as much as they deserve to be when the theme of unrepresentability is emphasized in Lyotard's writing.

Lyotard's Kantian faith in the ethical capacity, the initial ability to judge, is so great that he does not require the safeguard of communication. Judging happens, but his concern is that judgements, which in the end are feelings of injustice, do not find expression. There are systemic, political blockades which prevent giving expression to injustices. This is what he attempts to capture with his term "differend."

The imperative is to fight differends, to find expression. Judging and giving expression to the feelings of injustice form the dynamics of Lyotardian political space. The struggle goes on within the sphere of language. He writes in *The Differend*: "This is what a wrong [*tort*] would be: a damage [*dommage*] accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage." (7) "I would like to call a *differend* [*différend*] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim." "A case of differend between two parties takes place when the 'regulation' of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom." (22) "The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be." "This state is signaled by what one ordinarily calls a feeling: One cannot find the words..." "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them." (23) "In the differend, something 'asks' to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away." (23)

Liotard, I would say, is suspicious about the language and not about the ability to judge, whereas Benhabib trusts the language, and needs it in order to believe in the capacity to judge.

Nancy

The social bond which Lyotard presupposes does not assume any common content of morality, all it does presuppose is the capability to judge. He is not interested in exposing something about the content of the presupposed communal being. It is there, but it is not to be named. I would like to contrast this with yet another type of contemporary theorizing on community, the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, in order to highlight the postmodern aspect in Lyotard.

There is in the Heideggerian posture of Nancy, a certain interest in the essence, a call for the original, or a search for “the real” of community which seems to be contrary to the postmodern “Grundbestimmung” defined as antifoundational. While Lyotard’s imperative is to express injustices, Nancy’s seems to be to express and expose the being in common. There is something very modern in this desire to expose.

In the article “Of Being-in-Common” Nancy talks about the task of thought and politics:

and that task would be to expose the unexposable *in*. To *expose* it ... so that thought itself might risk itself and abandon itself to “community” and “community” to “thought” ... exposing ourselves to the partition and sharing of the *in*, to this distribution of “sense” that first *withdraws* being from sense and sense from being ...²²

Nancy seems to recognize an unconscious subjectivity of the communal,²³ and he offers us an imperative to make this unconsciousness conscious. Lyotard also seems to share the recognition of the unconscious communal, although he makes a specific point of precisely not finding an expression for it, of refusing all possibility of making it conscious.

In the article “*A l’insu* (Unbeknowst)” Lyotard seems to make a slight shift toward Nancy’s position, probably inspired by Nancy’s work. Here, Lyotard refers to “the thing that inhabits the polis unconsciously.” He continues to condemn the political praxis for attempting to catch “it”, however, he can be characterized as more willing to give “it” a description, to talk about the foundation of community, than he was in *Just Gaming* or *The Differend*. In a way he exposes more of the ambivalence which is present in his theme of

unpresentability. His remark on revolutions highlights this ambivalence:

Revolutions, all revolutions, are attempts to approach it, to make the community more faithful to what, unbeknownst to it, inhabits it: at the same time, revolutions attempt to regulate, to suppress, to efface the effects that that thing engenders. There is a fidelity and an infidelity in the fact of revolution.²⁴

For Lyotard, on the one hand, there is something like a will of the people or the nation to be expressed; on the other hand, however, it is never possible to fully express this will. In his “fidelity” and “infidelity”, Lyotard flirts with a nostalgic mood within the communal single subject tradition, although his emphasis remains on the unpresentability of the communal “it.”

There is a strong postmodern moment in this position of leaving the “communal” unnamed, of resisting its formation into a subject. This turn toward a postmodern political ontology is present in Lyotard’s texts, whereas in both discourse ethics and the Heideggerian discourse it is lost.

To further contrast Nancy’s writing with Lyotard’s, it may also be noted that Nancy seems to be more interested in the individual subject than society in his writings on “the communal.” His point is that an individual is always already in-common, in other words he concentrates on the social construction of individuality. Because his interest comes from the direction of the constitution of the *ego sum*, the social and the political appear in his texts more as an endpoint than a beginning point of questioning. He does not question the form of the social or the political, and in this sense his work is easier to read than Lyotard’s for those who come from the liberal universe.

Nancy’s imperative is to express “the in-common” and be aware of it, whereas Lyotard’s imperative is to give expressions to injustices and to judge. This seems to make Lyotard’s thinking more political in nature. Nancy’s critique of Marxism remains at the level of the critique of “the mirror of production,” as does Baudrillard’s, whereas Lyotard addresses the assumptions of communal being and acting. Lyotard’s concern with the single subject is extremely political in its origins. His dissatisfaction with Marxism is connected with his experience in Algeria.²⁵

Algeria

Lyotard’s problematic, based on his experiences of being a Marxist militant in the Algerian struggle for independence from colonial France, emerge on the basis of single subject theory, which paradoxically caters to both international Marxism and nationalism. Lyotard is one of the rare writers who lets the

inherent contradictions in the tradition flourish and faces their consequences. Internationalism is a continuation of the idea of self-commanding communal subjectivity. According to the true international dream, self-governing nations should vanish in order to make way for the global self-governance of humankind. The world becomes one huge nation, turned reflectively toward itself in an act of self command. In Algeria, Lyotard encounters a moment in which his conviction of internationalism and rational global politics is confronted by his feeling that Algerian nationalism is right. It is right because it gives an entire people which has been robbed of self-consciousness the possibility to regain its subjectivity. The Algerian problematic in which both parties, the internationalist Marxism and the nationalists,²⁶ seem to be right, points to the questioning of the very ideal of the community as a subject. In present-day politics, both in the United States with its ethnic differences and issues of identity politics and in a Europe brimming with national problematics, the Lyotardian question remains relevant. How to envision a community without an end, without a plan, without the linkage of knowledge and a program; a community without the national or global dream of total self-command, the full reflectivity of the communal subject, complete knowledge of the ego and care of the communal self? This question moves us toward a postmodern political ontology in which political space is marked by difference.

Notes

¹ Seyla Benhabib, "Epistemologies of Postmodernism" in Linda J. Nicholson, (ed) *Feminism and Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 122.

² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³ The pronoun "it" is used here in order to emphasize the theoretical character of the individual actor. Referring to "he's" and "she's" in connection to the making of a social contract easily leads to naturalistic fantasies, although it may be done in order to emphasize the gender character of contract theories, as Carole Pateman does. Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

⁴ See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 21 "Of the Liberty of Subjects." It should be noted that Hobbes's individual, who knows to guard his self-interest, is a social being. Hobbes acknowledges the social construction of self-interested individuality, as William Connolly points out in *Political Theory & Modernity* pp. 26-30. Crucial from my point of view, however, is that social construction is seen here as producing the sameness, the self-interested individual which then functions as the element in thinking about political space.

Contemporary "Hobbesian" Anglo-American social theory, such as that contained in David Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement* (New York, Clarendon Press,

- 1986), continues to construct political space out of transcendental individuals invested with interest, and does not differ in this respect from “Lockean” theory, such as Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. The same is true of contemporary utilitarian ethics, as well as rational choice theory. Pateman’s feminist critique of contract theory also fails to escape the ontological presupposition of liberal theory. Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*.
- ⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* pp. 81, 99-100, 116-118, 128-129; *Critique of Practical Reason, Metaphysical Elements of Justice* pp. 11-12; *The Doctrine of Virtue* pp. 10-13.
- ⁶ See especially Jean-François Lyotard, “Sensus communis” in Andrew Benjamin (ed) *Judging Lyotard* (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 1-25. Also published as “Sensus communis: The Subject in *statu nascendi*” in Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (eds) *Who Comes After the Subject?* (New York: Routledge, 1991) pp. 217-235.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.
- ⁸ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp. 136-142.
- ⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, “Sensus Communis” p. 220.
- ¹⁰ *The Postmodern Condition* has very much shaped the reception of Lyotard in the United States. The term “agonistics,” for example, is used.
- ¹¹ As he writes: “This idea of an agonistic of language should not make us lose sight of the second principle, which stands as a complement to it and governs our analysis: that the observable social bond is composed of language “moves”.” *The Postmodern Condition*, pp. 10-11.
- ¹² Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Ch. 4 and 5. Here Lyotard chooses language games as his approach and presents the view of “the agonistic aspect of society.”
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- ¹⁴ Jean-François Lyotard *The Differend*, (1993). He also writes “...the ‘social’ is immediately complex” (194) and “... the nature of the social always remains to be judged” (195).
- ¹⁵ Seyla Benhabib, “Lyotard, Democracy and Difference. Reflection on Rationality, Democracy and Postmodernism.” A paper prepared for delivery at the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. The Palmer House Hilton. September 3-6, 1992.
- ¹⁶ With regard to Benhabib’s critique, Michel Shapiro has also pointed out that: “To erect the conversational genre as the context in which to apprehend the postmodernist treatment of discourse is to create a dehistoricized and decontextualized frame that cannot adequately encode the politics of postmodernist analyses.” Michel Shapiro, “Weighing Anchor,” in Stephen K. White (ed) *Life-World and Politics. Between Modernity and Postmodernity. Essays in Honor of Fred R. Dallmayr* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) pp. 139-166.
- ¹⁷ Julian Pefanis describes Lyotard as: “not above fashion, he is a philosopher *dans le vent* ... opportunist, in a way a promiscuous thinker.” *Heterology and the*

Postmodern. Bataille, Baudrillard and Lyotard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) p. 87.

- ¹⁸ Michel Shapiro has also pointed out of Benhabib's critique that "To erect the conversational genre as the context in which to apprehend the postmodernist treatment of discourse is to create a dehistoricized and decontextualized frame that cannot adequately encode the politics of postmodernist analyses." Michel Shapiro, "Weighing Anchor," in Stephen K. White (ed) *Life-World and Politics. Between Modernity and Postmodernity. Essays in Honor of Fred R. Dallmayr* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) pp. 139-166.
- ¹⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, "Sensus Communis" in Andrew Benjamin, (ed) *Judging Lyotard* p. 220. See also the discussion in *Just Gaming*, especially the discussion on the fifth and the seventh day.
- ²⁰ Jean-François Lyotard, *Peregrinations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 43.
- ²¹ See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend. Phrases in Dispute* p. 13. "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them."
- ²² Jean-Luc Nancy, "Of Being-in-Common," in Miami Theory Collective (ed) *Community at Loose Ends* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991) p. 10.
- ²³ Nancy also writes of Marx's thought: "Cette pensée émerge plutôt comme un morceau de l'événement (de l'avènement) du "commun" ... "le "réel" devienne, expressément, le sujet de la pensée, et non son object." "La comparution," in Jean-Luc Nancy and Jean-Christophe Bailly, *La comparution* (Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1991), p. 72.
- Nancy attempts to catch a moment of expressing "the communal," and this creates a shift, because the expression is on the verge of getting a form of will, becoming a subject. The unconscious subjectivity becomes a conscious one.
- ²⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, "A l'insu (Unbeknowst)," in Miami Theory Collective (ed) *Community at Loose Ends* p. 45.
- ²⁵ He writes: "But with what colors should I paint what astonished me, that is, the immensity of the injustice? An entire people, form a great civilization, wronged, humiliated, denied their identity." and "When the group Socialism or Barbarism gave me responsibility for the Algerian section in 1955, Algeria did not name a "question" of revolutionary politics for me, its was also the name of a debt. I owed and I owe my awakening, *tout court*, to Constantine. The differend showed itself with such a sharpness that the consolations then common among my peers (vague reformism, pious Stalinism, futile leftism) were denied to me. This humiliated people, once risen up, would not compromise. But at the same time, they did not have the means of achieving what is called liberty." Jean-François Lyotard, *Political Writings*, (tr) Bill Readings and Kevin Paul Geiman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p. 170.

²⁶ Lyotard clearly acknowledges the national problematics as a conflict between two national units or two cultures. This is different from, for example, the view that Jean Baudrillard expresses on the Algerian war in *Simulations*. Baudrillard sees in the conflict as directed against the original “social.” It is “tribal, communal, pre-capitalist structures, every form of exchange, language and symbolic organization which must be abolished.” p. 69. This reflects Baudrillard’s nostalgia for the communal, that I do not see Lyotard as sharing.

PART THREE

Chapter 6

NATION – WOMEN

The French Revolution as a historical starting point for modernity in politics is commonly conceived of as a revival of classical republican ideals. Instead of the kings and the subjects or the rulers and the ruled, we now have “citizens.” In merging with Anglo-American political theory, the legacy of the French Revolution created the discourse of citizens, equality, and rights. The essential part of this discourse is the founding narrative of the social contract between transcendently conceived individuals.

This particular modern line of thought is, however, not the only post-revolutionary ideological construction. Also the Hegelian-Marxian tradition is founded in revolutionary sentiment. Rather than focusing on the “citizen”, this discourse winds itself around the notion of the “nation.”

This second tradition interprets the French Revolution as a historical event in which, the kings and the subjects or the rulers and the ruled are replaced by the emergence of “a people” that rules itself. By ruling itself a people forms a “nation.” The political space which had previously been divided into two was, according to this discourse, transformed by revolutionary thought and practice into a single subject. *La volonté générale* is the will of a transcendental communal subjectivity and names it into a political agency.

A nation is an agency with regard to other nations, but more importantly, it is an agency with regard to itself. The most distinct feature of a “nation” is that it is self-reflective: it is a subject in control of itself. Here, subjects do not become primarily citizens but rather they together turn into a single nation-subject, which as a consciousness of itself contains both the ruler and the ruled.

Hegel cultivated his concept of a nation from the revolutionary heritage and developed it into the doctrine of the modern state. Certain aspects of it were further passed on to Marxist thought.

Feminist critics have long targeted the liberal tradition. The supposed gender neutrality of the category of the citizen has been revealed as being a mere

disguise for maleness. This has not come as any great surprise for those admirers of the ideals of the great revolution who have always found themselves embarrassed by the third part of the revolutionary slogan *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*. In *The Sexual Contract*, Carole Pateman convincingly discusses the gendered nature of the social contract. According to her, the narratives of the classical social contract theories portray a fraternal contract which is preceded by a sexual contract among the brothers regarding women.¹

While the gender of “citizenship” has been revealed as being male, there has been less concern regarding the gender of the “general will.” The Hegelian tradition of thought has tended largely to be neglected in the context of feminist critique. In this chapter, I will focus my attention on the patterns of thought which grow out of the Hegelian tradition. My desire to do so is not, however, based solely on historical interest. My point is that the Hegelian tradition, along with the liberal one can be found within feminist discourse. It is true that feminist movements have been centered around the goal of fighting for the status of the citizenship of women, as well as about the realization of the depth of the exclusion of women in classical liberal discourse. However, they have also been about building “a nation” of women: raising consciousness around a shared identity and forming a political agency on the basis of that identity. Much of feminist thought has in practice grown out of leftist movements and has, therefore, been shaped by non-liberal modern political ontology. This is why, when feminist theory looks beyond modern patterns of politics into postmodernity, the Hegelian tradition must necessarily be addressed. This will lead us into the problematic of identity, however we must first take a closer look at the respective modern political ontologies.

Communal Subjectivity

Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* may be taken as a starting point in this discussion, because it is the revolutionary text par excellence and because it is a chapter in both of the aforementioned traditions. It is a theory of citizens and a social contract among them, and as such it is included in Pateman’s gallery. At the same time, however, it introduces the idea of the general will, which provides the point of departure for the second of the modern traditions. For Rousseau, “the general will” and “citizen” are both terms which imply the merging of the ruler and the ruled in identity.

Rousseau’s “citizens” are not simply individuals entering into an agreement; rather the mere existence of a citizen presupposes a social order. There is sovereignty and subjecthood in the notion of a citizen and the “general will” is the concept by which Rousseau lets the two collapse into each other.

Geoffrey Bennington phrases this quite intriguingly in his article “Postal Politics and the Institution of the Nation.” He describes “the general will as the sending of a letter (a circular letter) by the citizen as member of the sovereign to that ‘same’ citizen as subject. The citizen does not pre-exist the sending of this letter, but is created by it: ‘sovereign’ and ‘subject’ are Rousseau’s names for the sender and addressee of the legislative letter, and ‘citizen’ the name which implies that the structure of the law allows the identity of sender and addressee to be asserted.”²

Rousseau’s elaborately balanced staging of the newly imagined order opens the possibility for various interpretations. The “Citizen” may be seen as a natural category and Rousseau may be seen as presenting a contract made by transcendental individuals. He may, however, also be conceived of as presenting something about the social which logically precedes the idea of contracting individuals.

While the Anglo-American tradition of contract theories based on Hobbes and Locke easily assimilates Rousseau’s presentation as yet another example of a contract narrative, Hegel took quite seriously Rousseau’s notion of the political community as a will. In his theory of the modern state he stretched it into an abstraction.

Hegel both pays homage to and criticizes Rousseau in his *Philosophy of Right*. He praises him for providing the idea of the state as a will and criticizes him for not developing it to sufficient lengths. In his discussion of the concept of the state in his *Philosophy of Right*, he writes:

The merit of Rousseau’s contribution to the search for this concept is that, by adducing the will as the principle of the state, he is adducing a principle which has thought both for its form and its content, a principle indeed which is thinking itself, not a principle, like gregarious instinct, for instance, or divine authority, which has thought as its form only. Unfortunately, however, as Fichte did later, he takes the will only in a determinate form as the individual will, and he regards the universal will not as the absolutely rational element in the will, but only as a “general” will which proceeds out of this individual will as out of a conscious will. The result is that he reduces the union of individuals in the state to a contract and therefore to something based on their arbitrary wills, their opinion, and their capriciously given express consent.³

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel emerges as a strong critic of contract theories. In criticizing the theoretical founding of the political community on a contract, he criticizes the deduction of the social order from individual decisions. The actual focus of his criticism is the idea of positioning the concept of the individual as logically preceding that of the community.

The logical order of concepts is crucial here because as an idealist philosopher Hegel views the universe as conceptual. All being is for him a gigantic thinking process in the form of a single consciousness. The universe is pure rationality, it is attainable to human rationality and may be presented by philosophy in the form of a conceptual sequence. Hegel proceeds in his texts by creating the world, concept by concept, in a simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive mode. He himself referred to this process as describing his own time in concepts.

In fiercely opposing the theoretical construction of society starting from a concept of an individual will, Hegel puts forward an account which today would be called the social construction of individuality. Hegel's understanding is that it is constitutive to the human condition that a community is always already there.

In other words, "individual" should be understood as a cultural category. The individual will is constructed within a community that, in this Hegelian context, is to be understood as a set of beliefs, values and norms. The community is an epistemic and normative structure of society, which Hegel refers to as people's "knowledge and will." The German word *Geist* designates the Hegelian notion of this conceptually shaped reality in which the individual is born and in which subjectivity is constructed, and it might often be more adequately translated as "culture" than as "spirit" which is commonly used in English.⁴

Hegelian ontology is an ontology of consciousness. Kant's philosophy of pure knowledge, which is directed toward the self-reflective exploration of the form of human consciousness, provides the basis for Hegel's philosophy. Hegel rejects Kant's notion of "thing in itself" as the object of consciousness and instead allows the distinction between the object and subject of knowledge to expire. He metamorphosizes the entire universe into a single mind in search of knowledge of itself.

Hegel's modern world is connected to Protestantism, as a religion which places significant emphasis on an individual's private relationship with God and religious commands. An individual's religious life is seen as self-reflective, as dealing with one's own conscience. Kant's moral philosophy, with the autonomy of the moral subject, echoes the same self-reflective relationship of the self to itself. This form of self-reflective consciousness, a protestant and Kantian autonomous subjectivity, permeates throughout Hegel's texts and for him is representative of the essence of "modernity".

Hegelian political ontology constructs political space in the form of a communal consciousness. The "state" represents the process by which a cultural community becomes conscious of and active within itself.⁵ The cultural community is already present in the customs. The state is the name assigned to

the process in which the community becomes conscious of its specificity and its autonomy as a self-reflective nation.

In logically reversing the theoretical order of community and individuality, in advocating the view of the social construction of individuality, and in portraying the political community as a self-reflective subjectivity based on shared cultural identity, Hegel sets a very different tone for thinking about society than does the tradition of Hobbes, Locke, and Mill.

Identity as the Basis of Politics

Hegelian thought turned the idea of nation into an idea of political community based upon a shared identity which can be raised into the conscious autonomy of the social subjecthood. Nationhood here is more than an aggregation of political agents, it is a political agency based on a shared cultural identity. The difference may be phrased in terms of a distinction between the two types of relationships: external and internal. An example of an external relationship is a contract. When Mary and Jane draft a contract regarding the possession of bicycle, it has nothing to do with their identities. Mary and Jane remain Mary and Jane regardless of the contract. Conversely, an internal relationship is a relationship like that of between a mother and daughter: if the relationship did not exist the mother would not be a mother and the daughter would not be a daughter. An internal relationship constitutes the parties it combines whereas an external relationship does not.

In the discourse of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition, the relationships that constitute a group of people as a nation are not external but internal. This means that the individuals, as parties of social relationships, are inconceivable without the existence of these very relationships. The relationships that constitute a group of people as a nation are, as a culture, an inherent part of the identity of the people themselves.

One example of this line of thought, of which I have intimate knowledge, is the Hegel-inspired Finnish national movement of the last century. Here, the Finnish state, which did not exist as a political entity but only as a cultural one⁶, was thought of as consisting of people who, for historical reasons, speak a language that is distinct from any other language. This distinct language constitutes them as having a certain conceptual framework not shared by others, as well as a certain history of customs which constitutes them as having a specific kind of morality. Their “Finnishness” provides them with a specific means of conceptually building up the world, as well as of morally adhering to a certain set of rules. Their “truth” and their “right” are shared, and serve to constitute each of the individuals of this cultural whole

into their own specific individualities. Because individual subjectivity is an epistemic and moral entity, it is impossible to conceptualize specific individuality without presupposing the truth and the right of the shared.⁷

The nineteenth century saw a series of national “awakenings,” as they are commonly referred to by historians. According to national historical narratives, the people were “awakened” to the consciousness of an identity which had clearly always been present, but which had remained dormant until that point. Post-nationalist historians have paid an increasing amount of attention to the contingency of the construction of national unity and identity. Like the Finnish historian Matti Klinge, they have highlighted the way in which national identity was deliberately constructed, how it could have been constructed in another way and how the “dormant identity” could never have been conceived as such had it not been narrated into one. In a way this Finnishness had always been present in the past, just as anything which is yet to be conceptually grasped can be said to have existed in the past. It was just that nobody ever bothered much about this specificity prior to the introduction of the concept of a nation. The eastern and western Finnish cultures and dialects were distinctly different from each other. The western parts of the country were more connected to the Stockholm area and Swedish culture and the eastern parts to Russian culture. The national distinction lines could have been drawn in several ways. The political acts in Europe following the Napoleonic wars and the pact by Napoleon and the Czar of Russia had accidentally cast this territory and these people into a semi-political unity. It was at this point that Finnishness was narrated into a definable identity. The unity of written language was enforced, the history was written, the folk-sagas, national epics, and literature were promoted, and both the natural beauty of the country and the “race” and “character” of “the people” were marked as national.

The history of the construction of the national culture, as a denaturalizing act, makes us ask what is the identity which is supposed to be “at the bottom” of the national identity. Is there any such thing, or is the idea of there being one a fixation of the modern discourse? Should modern questions regarding the “true” nature of a specific national identity be replaced by post-modern questions about the nature of the constitution of such an identity?

As current United States identities, such as African-American, Latino, Asian-American, Jewish, gay, and lesbian, etc. have increasingly emerged as political categories, similar questions arise. On the one hand, it could be conceived that a certain African-Americanness, Latinoness, Asian-Americanness, Jewishness, gayness, lesbianness, etc. are fixed identities that communities and individuals may more or less consciously embrace, and that provide the basis for political agency. This presents us with the African-American Na-

tion, Queer Nation, etc. as political actors. On the other hand, endless discussion may ensue as to what is the “real” nature of the identity concerned, and which individuals are and are not part of that identity.

Only after an identity is formed as a cultural fact does it become capable of being a matter of consciousness. Even if the “basis” for identity has been there, it does not exist for any consciousness as long as there are no names for it and until it has been worked into a conceptual scheme.⁸

As long as the understanding of identities follows modern lines assuming that there is a hidden, clearly definable, stable “x-ness” lying underneath each political group which is based on identity, the politics of identity will continue to manifest itself as destructive battles of inclusion and exclusion. Conversely, identities as a basis of politics could instead, in the postmodern, be realized as constructed. The consciousness of the constructed history of an identity does not cause it to be any less of an identity. It does, however, change the nature of politics based on the identity by making it more flexible, nuanced, and probably more effective and less self-destructive.

Being a woman, in a feminist sense, is also an identity in the meaning discussed above. In a way women have always been present, but the awakening into a consciousness of the specificity and identity of being a woman has come along with feminism. Feminism is a political movement which has turned the dormant identity of women into a political nationhood.

Consciousness-raising has indeed been one of the most central feminist practices. Teresa de Lauretis discusses the practice of consciousness raising in feminism and notes that “Italian feminists call it ‘autocoscienza,’ self-consciousness, and better still, self consciousness.” She quotes Manuela Fraire stating that “the practice of self consciousness is the way in which women reflect politically on their own condition.”⁹

This view is quite interesting, because it portrays the role played by self-reflection in feminism. De Lauretis contrasts the practice of self-analysis to that of making specific statements regarding the “essence” of femininity. I would like to draw the line here even more sharply. A distinction must be made between, on the one hand, the consciousness-raising practices within the modern tradition of “identity-self-consciousness-nationality”, which presupposes an identity, even if that identity is subject to the constant scrutiny of self-analysis, and, on the other hand, a postmodern view which radically denies any such foundation. If no foundational identity exists, there is also no possibility of total knowledge of the communal self and consequently no possibility of politics in the name of the total knowledge of communal subjectivity. This opens up for feminism the horizon of political agency, which recognizes the idea of identity, but deals with it in a fashion which is highly conscious of its constructed nature.

The Liberal Ontology

While the German tradition appropriated the revolutionary idea of the nation and turned it into a new universe of the social theory of identity-based communal consciousness, the Anglo-American practice and theory remained untouched by the concepts which had provided the basis for nationalism. The industrial revolution was much higher on the English agenda than nationalism. Civil society, contracting, individual rights and interests were the schemes, according to which society was conceptualized.

While liberal ontology starts from individuality it is important to remember that the starting point is not an empirical individual consciousness but transcendental individuality. This is individuality purified of any specificity. It is supposedly non-gendered, non-aged and non-raced, it has none of the specifics of any actual personality. The individual transcendental person, who is the main character of the contract narratives as well as any utilitarian calculation, is nevertheless in possession of its “interest” and has the distinct capability to choose.

This is the modern political ontology which is the object of Carole Pateman’s critique. She provides us with an analysis of how the transcendental individual in various contract narratives is actually not non-gendered, but distinctly male. The classical narratives are told in a way which give the transcendental individual characteristics of a male person already in possession of access to female bodies. The access to female bodies is based on a previously made “sexual contract.”¹⁰

Pateman’s weak point from my perspective is that she does not seem to conceive of the possibility of any other way of constructing political space than through the social contract narrative. Her criticism proceeds entirely on the assumptions of the Anglo-American tradition, and she is locked inside the liberal political ontology. *The Sexual Contract* should, on the basis of the duality of the modern political field, be complemented by an analysis of the Hegelian tradition as a different way of excluding women.

Pateman on Hegel

Pateman includes Hegel in her general critique of contract theories. This happens at the same time that she recognizes Hegel as the most powerful critic of contract theories.

Pateman recognizes Hegel’s rejection of the doctrine of the social contract, however, she claims that despite his criticism of Kant’s marriage contract,

Hegel argues that marriage originates in the entering into a contract. Pateman concludes that “The extensive area of common ground that he (Hegel) shares with contract doctrine, notably the patriarchal construction of civil society, masculinity and femininity” has been overlooked as a result of the absence of the whole story of the original contract. She writes: “Hegel’s arguments are fatally compromised by his acceptance of the sexual contract.”¹¹

What Pateman says is that in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, civil life (the social contract) is dependent upon a sexual contract, which is displaced onto the marriage contract. While according to Hegel, contracting presupposes a non-contractual base of mutual love and trust, Pateman allows us to assume that family and marriage in the Hegelian sense is a necessary precondition of both contracting and civil society. To some extent this is true, although Hegel’s frame is still more complicated. On the one hand, civil society presupposes marriage, but on the other hand, marriage as an institution also presupposes civil society. Hegel’s three spheres of social life, the family, civil society, and the state, all presuppose each other and are simultaneous. It would be highly inaccurate to reduce them to linear order.

But, as Pateman also notes, marriage is also “a contract which is a non-contract” according to Hegel.¹² Hegel, in his own peculiar way, portrays marriage as yet another instance of his all-pervasive form of consciousness or single subjectivity. The family members, according to him, cease to be individual consciousnesses and form instead a new subjecthood. The reigning principle within the family is love, which he conceptualizes as overruling the principle of self interest which is dominant in civil society.

Hegel criticizes Kant’s view of the marriage contract as a contract of mutual sexual use. His point of condemning this as a “low” conception is not one of moral contempt, but rather a point in favor of viewing marriage as an internal relationship which transcends individuality. Hegel insists on the non-contractual basis of marriage, writing that: “... though marriage begins in contract, it is precisely a contract to transcend the standpoint of contract, the standpoint from which persons are regarded in their individuality as self-subsistent units.”¹³

What is interesting is that civil society, which incorporates the liberal principles of owning property, individuality, contracts, and individual interest, is in Hegel’s theory sublated by the concept of “state”, which again adheres to the principle of communal belonging as opposed to individual interests. In the concept of state, the situation of the family, in which individual interest ceases to rule, is again encountered in the concept of “the general will” as a communal subjectivity.

Thus, Hegel portrays interest-based action as merely one level of analysis of the social being. The other levels include the notion of a community based

on internal relationships. They include a communal identity of some kind, either identity as a family member or cultural identity. Pateman's strategy of highlighting the sphere of civil society, reducing marriage to a contract which causes it to fall under the heading of civil society, and bypassing the concept of state allows her to avoid the specificity of the Hegelian way of constructing political space.

Hegel on Women

I would argue that Hegel's way of excluding women is different from that of the contract theorists. As Pateman remarks, Hegel's social order demands a sexually differentiated consciousness. Indeed, whenever the individual point of view is transcended in Hegel's presentation, be it in the concept of the family or in the concept of the state, the resulting new subjecthood, the new moral agency, is male and represented by men.

According to Hegel, this is simply consequent to "physicality" and "nature." Hegel, considering himself as rationally portraying the world around him, writes that "the difference in the physical characteristics of the two sexes has a rational basis and consequently acquires an intellectual and ethical significance."¹⁴ One sex is connected to universality, knowledge, will, power, activity, labor, struggle and state, and the other to concrete individuality, feeling, passivity, subjectivity, family¹⁵, and family piety.¹⁶

What is interesting in the infamous "paragraph 166" in the *Philosophy of Right*, in which all of the this is laid out, is the first thing Hegel mentions about the difference between the sexes. The first one of the sexes is "Das Geistige, als das sich Entzweiende." It is a mind which divides itself into two. Whereas the second one of the sexes, the feminine sex, is "das in der Einigkeit sich erhaltende Geistige." It is a mind which remains in unity, which does not divide itself into two. Put bluntly, what this means is that women are not in possession of consciousness in its modern meaning. Feminine consciousness does not divide itself in two in the act of self-reflection, but stays in unity.

Hegel's universe, which takes the form of a consciousness, is thus a male consciousness, as is the consciousness which constitutes the essence of a social community. Translated into the social sphere, this implies that while Hegel does note that women possess knowledge of the shared cultural identity, he sees them as external to the process of its acquiring consciousness of itself through self-reflection.

Hegel's often cited presentation of Sophocles's *Antigone* as a representation of feminine virtue stresses the same point. Women possess knowledge of

ancient law naturally as opposed to self-consciously. The point in the *Antigone* story is that women sometimes know better than the state, which through its laws should be the conscious display of the same morality.

From the women's tragic and unexplainable lack of self-reflective capacity and non-conscious way of knowing about cultural identity, it follows quite naturally that there is no space for women within the sphere of state, in which cultural unity becomes a self-conscious political nation. Thus, while Hegel conceptualizes the state as the consciousness of a culture and the sphere in which it becomes conscious of itself and consciously directs itself, "natural" women play no part within it.

Hegel's is a view of "his time in concepts." It replicates the social reality of division into highly differentiated gender roles and affords this reality a "rational," or conceptual presentation. However, there is also an inherently critical point in his view, a point which can be described as synchronized with his recurrent theme of modernity as the standpoint of conscious subjectivity. His view of the marriage relationship, which is evidently the only space inhabited by women in this replica of social reality, is of a romantic nature. The marriage that he portrays, is the modern, consensual marriage, that recognizes the conscious will of the woman and man involved and is opposed to a pre-modern arranged marriage. Hegel's family is clearly patriarchal, but it is patriarchal in a different way from that of Aristotle's family. Women's relationships to men are not comparable to slaves' relationship to masters, because of the post-romantic character of Hegel's text. Women supposedly enter into a marriage of their own free will. For Hegel, marriage's "objective source lies in the free consent of persons, especially in their consent to make themselves one person, to renounce their natural and individual personality to this unity of one with the other."¹⁷

In short, while Pateman heaps Hegel onto the same wagon as classical contract theorists heading to be decapitated, I claim that Hegel's way of excluding women is different, and his feminist execution requires a separate procedure that takes into account his different construction of political space.

Why should it be important then to be aware of the other possibility for constructing the political space? Because the two patterns of modern political thought have not only served as instruments which effectively exclude women from "universal" politics, but they have also served as patterns of thought by which the feminist movement has set its own standards. My view is that more interesting than endlessly repeating the fact that women have been excluded from the state and from the theory of state, is analyzing how past exclusions affect us today. Since they affect us not only in the form of exclusion but also in the form of how we do things in politics, it is important to know exactly in which way.

The liberal ontology connected to feminism has resulted in the pursuit of equality and universality of gender standards. The pursuit for the recognition of specificity and difference is related to the Hegelian-Marxian political tradition. Politics on liberal premises conceives women's joint action as a display of shared interests. The Hegelian-Marxian political ontology instead supposes shared identity.

Women have been and are considered in an influential part of feminism to be a group based on identity. The past of women has at certain points been consciously narrated into a "herstory," and there is also conscious women's literature, in addition to icons, symbols, and rituals. Difference has been sought after in consciousness-raising groups. The identity has been formed into the conscious basis of political action. Women have, in this way, formed a "nation." In order to illuminate the workings of this process we must pose the question of how to analyze the political concept of nation.

Nation

The concept of nation, nationality, and national identity has recently become a focus of great interest. The reason behind this is not only the rise of nationalist political concerns, but also the increasing interest in national, ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual difference. The discourses of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality seem to currently be carrying the theme of "the nation" into the Anglo-American theoretical field.

Many recent collections of writings on nationality, for example *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi Bhabha, and *Nationalities and Sexualities*, edited by Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger,¹⁸ show that there is no great abundance of earlier literature on nationalism available in English. This is understandable in the light of the aforementioned division into two political vocabularies.¹⁹ Homi Bhabha talks about "nation" as a structure of "ideological ambivalence within cultural representation on modernity."²⁰ Most of the articles in both these collections seem to take Benedict Anderson's book, *Imagined Communities*, published in 1983, as a point of departure.²¹

Anderson's book is one of a very rare species. As I mentioned earlier, the German vocabulary of nationalism and socialism has traditionally made theorists in the Anglo-American political context uneasy, especially following the Second World War. Liberal thought, backed by Enlightenment ideas, has always praised cosmopolitan and global attitudes²² and revered nationalism, viewing it as a reactionary pattern of thinking. As a theory it has also often disregarded the form of national units as a "matter-of-fact" practice of politics. Marxism, especially Anglo-American Marxism, which has had more

points of convergence with liberal thought and less connection to power politics than the Eastern versions of Marxism, has been committed to internationalism and global vision as opposed to bourgeois nationalism. Still, if anywhere in the Anglo-American academic world the interest in nationalism is expected, it is from the point of view of Marxism, which shares its roots with nationalism in German political thought. This is precisely where Anderson's theme has its point of departure. His encyclopedic knowledge of nationalism in the modern world in this influential presentation is inspired by his concern over the troubled theoretical and practical relationship between Marxism and nationalism.

Anderson begins by recognizing the nation as "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."²³ This is so despite the long history of Marxist internationalism. As opposed to referring to the theory of nationalism as Marxism's historic failure, as some have done, Anderson writes:

It would be more exact to say that nationalism has proved an uncomfortable *anomaly* for Marxist theory and, precisely for that reason, has been largely elided, rather than confronted. How else to explain Marx's own failure to explicate the crucial pronoun in his memorable formulation of 1848: "the proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with *its own bourgeoisie*?" How else to account for the use, for over a century, of the concept "national bourgeoisie" without any serious attempt to justify theoretically the relevance of the adjective? Why is *this* segmentation of the bourgeoisie – a world-class insofar as it is defined in terms of the relations of production – theoretically significant?²⁴

Here Anderson is hinting at the possibility that Marx's own writing, in a serious way, actually presupposes the notion of nationality.²⁵ Anderson does not, however, push this suspicion any further. In his treatise on nationalism, he refrains from touching on the Hegelian undercurrent which is common to so much of both nationalism and socialism.

This is historically troubling, because the connection of Hegelian thought to the emerging nationalist movements of nineteenth century Europe was in several cases very concrete. In the "national awakening" of nineteenth century Finland, Hegelian philosophy provided the sole philosophical basis of the movement. The nation was built on the idea of linguistically based cultural unity.²⁶ The national movement elaborately raised the consciousness of cultural specificity in the decades beginning in the 1820s, during which time the ethnic-linguistic unit acquired its history, literature, and its national heroes and symbols.²⁷ The alliance with Hegelian philosophy has been present also in other national movements, especially in Germany, Russia, and Italy.

Anderson refrains from taking up the connection between the philosophical tradition of communal thought and the nation-building processes. His analysis of the nation-building processes is mainly concentrated on the significant ramifications of the newly emerging printing technology on the conditions of spreading capitalism. According to his presentation, under the conditions of linguistic diversity, printing technology and capitalism merged to create the possibility of the nation as an imagined community.²⁸ Anderson's thoroughly argued analysis is very enlightening as an historical explanation of the nation-building processes. Keeping in mind the missing link with the German postrevolutionary patterns of political thought, I would, however, pay attention to how Anderson himself constructs the political space.

The core point of Anderson's presentation is that nations as political communities are "imagined." This is, he writes:

Because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.²⁹

This is a very interesting argument, because it shows that Anderson very much presupposes liberal political ontology. The standard of the authenticity of a "political community," which, according to him, nations as historical artifacts do not meet, is defined as a level of interaction between individuals. "Individuals" are the logical starting point from which the definition proceeds into the nation as a conglomerate of interacting individuals.

In this sense, the analysis of "nationness" misses the point from the point of view of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition. If the idea of the "nation" is built on the idea of a shared identity, common social construction and the notion of "a general will" based upon these aspects, the political community does not require an encounter of interacting individual wills in order to be characterized as real. The idea of a nation and a general will is indeed created in order to avoid this requirement as a theoretical tool and to provide another analysis of the nature of political space. According to this idea, the political community as a will is founded on a shared cultural identity, a common structure of norms and the social construction of individuality. It is based on internal relationships – not external ones. Thus, the characteristic of "being imagined" in the communities which Anderson describes is, in the Hegelian-Marxian tradition, precisely the key to the concept of the nation as a political community. In other words, it is not something which should make it into less of a political community, as Anderson's presentation silently suggests.

I would argue that the present discussion of cultural difference, and politics connected with the notion of nation, gain depth when Hegelian patterns

of thought, which underlie the notion of nationality, are recognized.

The strong current of feminism which considers women as a nation, as a political community based on identity, has for a some time been internally problematized. There has been ongoing critical discussion surrounding the identity of “women”; who are the “women” of feminism? Following the initial recognition of the very white and very middle-class nature of much of the feminist movement, the “identity” of “womanhood” has become increasingly questioned and dispersed.³⁰

The critical question now is whether this dispersal merely strives to create more closely defined fixed identities while keeping the underlying assumption of fixed identity as a true basis of politics intact, or whether it questions the entire notion of fixed identity as a foundation of nationhood, as one would expect from a postmodern critique.

Is the present discussion able to recognize and target the pattern of a nation and its limits as a modern political theory? Is it able to challenge this pattern by realizing that there may be a political agency of “women” even if there is no definite single identity of “women?” Does it see the difference between politics as based on interest, and that which in turn is based on identity? Is it able to recognize and appreciate the theoretical tradition which provides us with a vocabulary of identity and consciousness, and is it able to critically embrace it this tradition from a postmodern perspective?

There is definitely something wrong with the idea of identity-based politics and nationhood. There is also something wrong about the ideal of the total knowledge possessed by the communal subject of itself. If we are interested in moving beyond modernity in the political, we must be suspicious of both forms of subjectivity: the transcendental and the communal. We must be suspicious of politics both in the name of interests and in the name of identity.

Antiessentialist Identity Discourse

What makes the idea of a nation in its Hegelian mode specifically modern and open to postmodern relative closure? Its first grave problem is the assumption of the singularity of communal subjectivity, the singularity of the general will. This assumption characterizes culture as a monad-like, frictionless epistemico-normative structure. From postmodern perspective it is both evident and of great interest that every culture is already fractured at every moment. The borders and differences which define any culture as distinct are constantly contested and shifting. Postmodern thought has paid attention to the processes of defining identities through otherness, alterity, as well as to the awareness of the inherent contingencies of these processes.

The other problem is the ideal of total self-consciousness. The self-reflexivity of a political community within the communal conception is eventually incorporated as an ideal of the total self-command of a community, the total autonomy of the communal subject. From a postmodern perspective it is clear that the consciousness possessed by a self of itself can never be complete. There is always a residue which is more important than the part in command.

The Hegelian based way of thinking politics in terms of nations based on shared identity and striving for autonomy is outdated. However, a certain aspect of the Hegelian tradition, the conceptual network of identities, self-consciousness and nations, remains theoretically and practically alive today. Identities are not being destructed in the name of postmodernity, they are being deconstructed.

Why is this positive moment of identity in politics necessary? Why are identities relevant? First of all, taking identities instead of interests as a basis of politics makes the conception of the political significantly different. If different groups in society, ethnic groups, women, or sexual minorities, are thought of as interest groups among other prevalent interest groups, such as the gas and oil industry or the elderly, we are presented with a notion of political space as in itself a neutral universe in which each situation begins as a debate between, in principle, equal parties. This model appears to run contrary to the experience of social life, which is very much structured by what has occurred in the past, by the background of political agencies and histories of oppression. As such, political space itself is not neutral, and today it can be characterized as ultra white, ultra male, ultra middle-class and ultra heterosexual. Whatever in various individual situations it is, and whatever the changes in it are, the important realization remains, that political space is never neutral. The point of thinking in terms of identities as being inner relationships formed by shared social constructions is that it forces us to reveal the hidden qualities of supposedly neutral spaces.

Second, identities play a crucial role as moments of a social process, because it is out of injustice that the struggle for identity grows. Identity can be described as a moment of making a difference in a situation in which the universality is suffocating. For the Finnish speaking majority of Finns, the injustice of having the state, jurisdiction, and schooling systems run in Swedish during the last century was not only a practical inconvenience, but also a fact which set the standard of humanness as something for the most part unreachable for them.³¹ "Americanness" in the United States has set a cultural standard of universality in a way which excludes people of color. The building of a cultural identity of African-Americans and other ethnic groups

has grown out of experiences of injustice. Heterosexual “universality” is oppressive, and gay consciousness, a gay identity, and political agencies such as Queer Nation are growing here and now out of this injustice. The dominant, imperialist culture does not strive for identity, rather its features are fused into universality.

An identity, whether it be Finn, African-American, or gay, as a social and political category is a historical construction, and the naturalization or stabilization of such an identity is always hazardous. The processes of differentiation are theoretically endless, but in practice identities as political categories emerge where injustice is felt. They are not accidental, but rather they occur at specific times and in specific places. What is desired, therefore, is a view which does not reject the idea of difference, identity, and nationhood, but which simultaneously continues to deconstruct any such identity in an awareness of its contingency. It would strive to preserve the positive moment of identity but at the same time constantly deconstruct any identity; it would strive for a political agency which is mobile and flexible, alert in the here and now and not in searching to found itself either in a stable deep identity or in a future plan of total control.

In relation to the current context of women and politics, the postmodern moment implies that there is an awareness of the social constitution of “womanness” and of “nationness” on the basis of this shared social identity. At the same time, there is an awareness of the constant shifting and changing of this nonhomogeneous identity and its inner fractions, to the extent to which it becomes, as an identity, completely contingent. In postmodernity, compared to modernity, there is a clear consciousness that there is no hidden factor, no womanness, which lies beneath the shared social identities of “women.”

Politics should not only be reinstating “womanness” and winning it the status of “nation”, as it would be in the modern. The postmodern in women’s politics expands the sphere of politics by asking questions about the very nature of womanness and viewing its constitution as a political question. This has played a central role in disputes over the postmodern in women’s politics.³² An important thing to remember is that being aware of the constructed character of an agency does not cause it to be any less of an agency. “Women” in the politics of postmodernity is a deconstructed identity which serves as the contingent basis of an ever shifting political scene.

Notes

- ¹ Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).
- ² Geoffrey Bennington, "Postal Politics and the Institution of the Nation," in Homi Bhabha (ed) *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 129.
- ³ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, pp. 156-157.
- ⁴ This applies to much of the continental thought. For example, in Ernest Renan's "What is a nation?" in Homi Bhabha (ed) *Nation and Narration* pp. 8-22, the word "spirit" as a translation of the French "Esprit" which is equivalent to the German "Geist", creates confusion.
- ⁵ In the first paragraph of the section "State" in his *Philosophy of Right* he writes "It (the state) is ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it. The state exists immediately in custom, mediately in individual self-consciousness, knowledge, and activity..." G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 155.
- ⁶ An interesting Hegelian trait within the Finnish national movement was that its participants talked about "the state" of Finns at the time when Finland legally was not a state but an autonomous grand-duchy in the Russian Empire. "The state" was defined in cultural terms.
- ⁷ The ideology of the national movement from the late 1830's was shaped by the Hegelian philosopher, J.V. Snellman, who in his person combined the careers of a university teacher, publicist and a politician.
- ⁸ Lillian Faderman's book on the history of lesbian relationships in the United States, offers an insight into a discursive formation of identity in a way which interestingly lets the core of the identity remain relatively unnamed. Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers. A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992).
- ⁹ Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice doesn't. Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) p. 185.
- ¹⁰ Pateman's idea of the sexual contract may be criticized for constructing femininity as an object of sexuality and omitting female sexual agency, but this is another discussion.
- ¹¹ Carole Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, p. 173.
- ¹² "On the contrary, though marriage begins in contract, it is precisely a contract to transcend the standpoint of contract, the standpoint from which persons are regarded in their individuality as self-subsistent units." G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 112.
- ¹³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 112.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- ¹⁵ Hegel constructs women as private and men as public. The public/private division is a topic that I do not go into detail of here. I would like to note that

- “the public sphere,” in the meaning which Jürgen Habermas gives it in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, and which has served as a basis for some feminist writing, f.ex. Joan Landes: *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), is a sphere which is pronouncedly constructed in terms of liberal political ontology.
- ¹⁶ G.W.F Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 114.
- ¹⁷ G.W.F Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 111.
- ¹⁸ Homi Bhabha, (ed) *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (ed) *Nationalisms & Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
- ¹⁹ It is interesting to try to complete a search in the University of California Library system on the word “nation” as a subject. The search results in few entries and most of the recent ones offer articles on “The Queer Nation.” This shows how the vocabulary of German political theory has reached actuality in the Anglo world through radical social movements.
- ²⁰ Homi Bhabha, “Introduction: Narrating the Nation,” in Homi Bhabha ed., *Nation and Narration*, p. 4.
- ²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).
- ²² Kant’s writings on peace and cosmopolitan point of view have been part of the liberal canon, whereas the rest of the German idealist tradition has remained very foreign to it. This illustrates the fact that postrevolutionary German thought represents a break in the vocabulary of the European political tradition.
- ²³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* p. 12.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13. Jean-François Lyotard’s writing may also be seen as processing the same anomaly based on his experience in Algeria. See Jean-François Lyotard, *Political Writings* pp. 165-326.
- ²⁵ This may already be suspected on the basis of the term which supposedly marks the absence of nationalism in the doctrine. This is “inter-national,” between the nations and clearly presupposes “nations.”
- ²⁶ Anderson’s analysis is that nation-building is based on the diversity of human languages and that capitalism, and printing technology created the possibility of imagined community based on language. He agrees with those who consider language as the most important feature in the nation-building process. He also convincingly analyzes the difficult case of Switzerland where four languages are spoken as not a mere exception to the rule of connecting one language with one national unit. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 123-127.
- ²⁷ Most of the literature on Finland’s nation-building and on its Hegelian philosophical roots is not available in English. Matti Klinge, *Ylioppilaskunnan historia 1-2*. (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino 1978); Lolo Krusius-Ahrenberg, *Der Durchbruch des Nationalismus und Liberalismus im politischen Leben Finnlands 1856-1863*. (Helsinki: Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae BXXXIII, 1934), Juha Manninen, “Hegelianismen i Finland på 1800-talet” *Lärdomshistoriska*

- samfundets årsbok*, (1977/78); 87-114, Juha Manninen "... Se voitti itselleen vain sivistyksen voitot... Suomen hegeliläisyyden perusteemoja" *Ajatus* 40 1983: PP. 122-194; Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio ja vapaus* (Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 1989).
- ²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 49.
- ²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 15.
- ³⁰ See e.g. Denise Riley, "Am I that name?". *Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Trinh T. Minh-ha *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
- ³¹ Finland was a part of the Swedish Empire for 700 years, before it after the Napoleonic wars became a part of the Russian Empire. The colonial relationship with the Swedish culture continued in high degree during the Russian period (1809-1917). More than 90 % of the inhabitants of Finland were Finnish speaking peasants who could not use their language in education, law, or administration which was conducted only in Swedish until the fenno-nationalist movement began to achieve results in the 1860's.
- ³² See Linda J. Nicholson (ed), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Marianne Hirsch & Evelyn Fox Keller (ed), *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

Chapter 7

IDENTITY – LESBIAN

As I argued in the previous chapter, the concepts of nation and identity are interconnected. In this chapter, I will discuss identity in relation to the concepts of the modern and the postmodern in order to approach the problematics of agency in the postmodern context. For my purposes, I could have chosen to focus on any of the various political arenas in which the notion of identity is currently central, such as nationality, race, or gender. In place of all of these, I have chosen to focus my attention on yet another identity discourse, that of sexual identity.

There are people who do not consider sexual identity a political matter. I could not disagree more. As is increasingly recognized, and as I already argued in the chapter on power, gender and sex constitute a certain order. They arrange individuals into a limited number of possible sex-gender classes and enforce gender hierarchies. As I will argue later in greater detail, power and order and shifts occurring within them are elements of the gender and sex system. Gender and sexuality are intensely political matters at several levels.

I will consider sexual identity as a political category and discuss the position of identity in lesbian, gay, and trans-identity politics. Furthermore, I will show how the construction of sexual identity itself is a political matter. I will focus specifically on the construction of lesbian identity.

Lesbian identity connects the themes of modernity and postmodernity to the question of the politics of the postmodern. I will begin by arguing that the politicization, deconstructed and denaturalization of identity which occurs in postmodern theorizing is a precondition for the understanding of identity as a category of politics. Judith Butler's work on gender and sex is central to my analysis here. Secondly, I will argue that postmodern deconstructed identity as a political category is distinctly different from that based on either the liberal or the Hegelian type of political ontology. Thirdly, I will argue that identity, in its postmodern form, is a relevant category within postmodern politics. I will begin by examining practical questions of lesbian

and gay identity-politics found in my surroundings, an issue to which I will return at the end of the chapter in the context of the politics of difference and names. My claim is that a sex-political identity, such as a lesbian identity, is constructed, but that its being a constructed entity does not decrease its relevance as a political category.

Gay and Lesbian Politics

It is a fairly common view among gays and lesbians in the Nordic countries, especially since the acceptance of registered couple relationships,¹ that there is little difference between the conditions of life for sexual minorities and those of the majority of citizens the prevalence of this sentiment has resulted in the view that specifically gay and lesbian politics is “no longer” necessary. For many lesbians and gay men any notion of a special lesbian or gay identity, at least politically, is superfluous, unnecessary and slightly old-fashioned.² “Queer” theory is understood in this connection as a liberation from the traditional sexual minorities discourse; gender bending and gender-fuck as declarations that sex does not really matter. There are plenty of genders to bend, and you can freely choose among them (especially in nightclub life.) There is something in this atmosphere of general acceptance and liberal attitude that makes me very suspicious. The same people who “fuck gender” are not necessarily “out” as anything specifically non-heterosexual to their families, at work, or in the culture which continues to assume heterosexuality. There is an inherent shame involved in inhabiting sexually different positions in “real” life. Although those who actually live homosexual lives are afforded certain rights, such as the right to joined communal housing as a couple (although not to adopt children!), and despite the low number of hate crimes, the culture as a whole continues to prepare its young for heterosexual life. In countless ways, it promotes, prioritizes, favors and supports heterosexuality over any other sexuality, or simply makes heterosexuality appear to be the only alternative. Other sexualities remain largely an invisible minority. To me, sexuality appears as an area of intense political struggle. “Queer” as a “nation” term, remains a militant one. To me, it represents a sign of more specific otherness, not an ambiguous one.

The opposition between specifically gay and lesbian politics on the one hand, and liberal attitude on the other, crystallizes in the notion of identity and identity politics. A simple juxtaposition is often presented in the discourse on gay identity. One option is to adopt the sharp homo/hetero distinction, as well as the increasing number of other available identities (minimally: transgendered and bisexual), and engage oneself in a discussion of the

“real” nature of any of these identities: “What does it consist of?” “What is it?” “Where does it come from?” etc. Broadly speaking, the other option is to stand for either social construction or the completely free choice of social preference. In this case, the “real” nature of the identity either does not exist or is not under scrutiny, and usually the entire notion of identity and identity politics is found unappealing.

In the United States, where the aggressive disapproval of homosexuality and other minority sexualities runs parallel to the strong culture of minority sexualities, some gay people have expressed the desire to anchor the gay identity into nature – to claim that there is no choice involved in homosexual identity. Scientific research conducted on the homosexual brain (hypothalamus, twin-research etc.) indicates this wish.³ Identity is rendered unpolitical, not only lying outside the domain of choice but also outside the domain of culture.

I definitely support the social constructionist view in the essentialism/social construction dispute. I do not think that there is an inborn trait in the body or mind of a certain percentage of the population that makes them stray from “normal” sexuality, nor do I believe that this specific bodily or mental difference variation is the reason for their different sexual identity. Yet, I also promote the category of identity in gay and lesbian politics. I think that identity is a relevant political tool, and more than that I think that identity is a non-accidental, deeply meaningful fact in a person’s life, a feature that cannot be detached from the personality.

This view also implies that I do not accept the previously offered choice of options: either a fixed or a freely chosen identity. But not only do I not accept this plate of choices, I also see it as symptomatic within the field of modern political theory. As such, I find it worthy of analysis.

The choices offered are: fixed sexual identity as a basis of politics, or the free choice of identity as a factor in politics. My claim is that the dualism which we encounter here is the one provided to us by the specifically modern political ontologies, namely, the same two which have been the focus of my analysis through this book.

The first option we are presented with is a politically operative fixed identity in the sense of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition. This identity can be characterized as equivalent to the national identity inherent to the Hegelian type of nationalism, or the working-class identity of Marxism. The notion of a fixed identity is connected with the scientific interest of analyzing and revealing the true nature of the identity. Gay politics, which aims at establishing a definitive scientific basis of gay-specificity, builds on this specificity a politics of nation. On the basis of its form it joins the Hegelian mode of modern political ontology.⁴

The second option, that of the chosen identity, assumes an individual chooser who is pre-existent to any specific identity. It thus joins the liberal creation of a transcendently free choosing individual whose relation to any identity is initially external.⁵

Neither of these options of understanding identity satisfies me in my search for a postmodern way of politically conceiving the category of identity. I do not want to create a scientifically based universal set of characteristics of a sexual identity, and to believe that a subject-like political agent springs into existence on the basis of the existence of this identity. Instead of universalizing, I would like to examine how, in a specific space and time, a specific identity has been constructed, and then, how this constructed identity works within temporally and spatially specific politics.

At the same time, I do not want to commit myself to a theoretical assumption of a transcendental choosing individual. Describing identity as a choice is not in accordance with what is happening in the politics of identity today. Power and constraint are involved in identity formation. Identity is not simply an issue of identifying, it is also a matter of a person being constituted in a certain way and making judgements as this specific kind of a person.

I would claim that identity is a politically relevant category in the postmodern, although in order for it to function in a postmodern way it must be comprehended through its deconstruction. Both the Foucauldian reflections on power as well as the concept of genealogy are relevant in this deconstruction. However, prior to embarking on this task I will examine the modern and the postmodern ways of studying sex and gender, and inspect how the division into sex and gender may itself become an issue sensitive to the modern/postmodern distinction.

Basis and Superstructure – the Modern and the Postmodern in Sex and Gender

My thesis in this book is that modern thinking generally operates with the dichotomies surface/basis, shallow/deep, unauthentic/authentic, artificial/real. The modern sets itself the task of exposing and peeling off the artificial, unauthentic layers in the belief that at the basis there is a real and truthful core to be found.

The ideal of stripping, undressing, and revealing accompanies any cultural mission which the postmodern has recognized as modern. The modern maintains an urge toward frontiers, foundation, and core with the conviction that the revelation of the original, pure, and naked results from this process

of undressing. Postmodern theorizing consists of recognizing this urge in the modern, and refusing the quest for foundations.

Modern questions regarding sex, gender and identity are: “What is sex?”; “What is the difference between a man and a woman?”; “What is the difference between a heterosexual and a homosexual?”; “What is the ultimate science which tells the truth about sexuality?”; “What determines sex?”

If the postmodern suspicion is targeted at the quest for a foundation, one should look at the form in which these questions are posed. The postmodern implies focusing an intensely critical eye on any thought that is constructed as a dualistic structure consisting of a phenomenon to be explained and a basis for explaining it.

Science continues to ask modern questions about sex. The direction to follow is from the phenomenal and cultural level of gender toward the basis that is expected to be found in the body and sexuality. If social gender is a garment on the body of real sex, then what is the core of sexual difference? Does the difference between a man and a woman lie in chromosomes, in the brain, in hormones, in the genes, or somewhere even deeper? Science has been expected to supply the answer to the question of exactly where in the body difference is located.

In normative science, the notion of sex is profoundly heterosexual, it is conditioned by the binary logic of heterosexuality. As a rule, it follows the social gender hierarchies and reproduces the existing gender practices. Cultural gender characteristics are, according to the normal scientific approach, a result of some inherent difference, albeit minimal: the biological and sexual division of the human race into two sexes. The modern repetitive quest of contesting frontiers and the change in social gender practices has led scientific research to increasingly question the magnitude of body-based sexual difference.

A typical current day view is expressed in an article entitled *Jako kahteen* (“Division into Two”), by Finnish neurological researcher Markku Hyyppä.⁶ Hyyppä concludes that the social gender has for a long time, in brain research, been projected onto the structure of the brain. In fact the differences between the sexes in brain structure are minimal.

Typical in this view is not only the minimizing of the difference but, what is more important, the insistence that there, anyway, is a difference. The social phenomenal difference, these days smaller than before, needs to be explained by an equally smaller difference in the body.

The discourse of science, of which this popularizing article serves as an example, does not question the fundamental division into a social gender, which is to be explained, and a biological sex which explains. Hyyppä’s article points out that there has been a flaw in the explanation process: the roles

have wrongly been reversed wherein the social practice has influenced the scientific analysis. The implicit assumption of the article is the rule that the body, discovered in its invisible entities by scientific methods, is to serve as the explaining factor. The scientific project does not question the modern dream of exposing the “real” difference between the sexes. A basic assumption in this discourse is both the existence of the difference and the need to reveal its basic nature.

Science also approaches homosexuality and other sexual deviations in a similar manner. There must be a bodily difference, even if a minimal one and not visible, to explain the abnormality of these people, their desires and their culture. The answers in this mode are not only sought by a sexual scientist who innocently desires to know (usually without thinking about the investment in the control connected with knowing), or by concerned relatives who would like to take the responsibility off the family. It is, as I mentioned, also the desire of many gay, lesbian, and transgendered people themselves. The scientific basis is sought after in order to find not only personal comfort but also a basis for identity politics, a basis for the existence of the specific natural nation of queers, and consequently for its right to identity politics.

Questions of scientific explanation are rarely asked any more of other type of nationalities. It is not thought that Finnishness resides within the body, the genes, chromosomes, or in the shape of the skull.⁷ However, questions like “What is homosexuality?” and “Where does it come from?”, are continually posed with the specific intention of finding the answer within the depths of the body, its shape, or preferably even deeper: within the brain, the cells or the invisible cellular entities named by the science of biology.

Lesbian, gay, and transgendered culture is an existing social phenomena, and the question of whether it is merely a culture or whether it is rooted in some inherent biological difference is constantly asked. An identity grounded in nature appears as more profound, or even more real. Philosophically, I view the most interesting question as being: “Why do we ask the question of nature or culture?” “What makes us propose the dichotomy of nature/culture?” “Is it possible to deconstruct this binarism?”

The question of nature or (only) culture, and the tendency to look for explanations of behavior in biology is symptomatically modern. If the idea behind it is that culture is the surface for nature, which is the explaining factor, then the existence of homosexual culture must follow from some, as yet unexplainable, difference in within the realm of nature, just as heterosexual gendered culture is in the last instance thought to follow from certain small yet existing, natural difference between women and men.

The second possibility within the frame of modern thinking is to label homosexuality as a totally “cultural” phenomena without any “natural ba-

sis.” As the view of the social construction of identity becomes increasingly popular, this option of conceptualizing homosexuality is more frequently encountered. However, it should be noted that this judgement is made within the same modern dichotomy and is also dictated by it. From the nature/culture dichotomy it is culture which is chosen here. The dichotomy itself is kept alive.

The power of the modern frame of mind, (nature as a basis being more profound than culture as a surface) reveals itself when we consider the consequences of labeling homosexuality as a cultural phenomena. The move toward culture within the modern frame of thinking implies a significant shift in the status of the “reality” of homosexuality. If difference in sexual orientation is impossible to study through biological means, it is thus not considered a “real” difference. Instead, it is viewed as some kind of game, an obstinate decision, or at best a psychologically explainable misunderstanding – simply a surface based phenomena with no basis.

In postmodern theorizing, in place of these two options, the challenge is to conceptualize about sex and gender through the deconstruction of the nature/culture dichotomy. The hypothalamus, mascara, good eye for ball-games, nipples, and strong will, just to provide few examples, are all, meaningful aspects of gendered identity in the here and now. The modern structure of knowledge causes us to categorize some of these aspects as natural, some as cultural and explain some on the basis of others. Could it be possible to think otherwise? What would it be like to conceptualize sex without the dichotomy of nature/culture? Abandoning the notion of identity as being either based on a “natural fact” or as being a phenomena which must be explained by “natural facts” in order to be rendered “real” allows for the potential to understand identity as a political phenomena.

A Critical Approach to Science and Gender: Donna Haraway

In its recent history, the philosophy of science has made it clear that what is discovered in “reality” or in “nature” is at least influenced by the realm of description, that is: the discourse of science, culture and politics. In this sense politics, or culture, or discourse, is present actually also inside “nature” or at least our conception of it, which is the “nature” for us.⁸ Because science is conceived of as the voice of nature, and because any rational discussion of sexuality acquires its authority from the discourse of science, science imposes the limits of “reality.”

Even the most enlightened science critics and thinkers, who are well aware of the power that science holds in constructing our conception of reality, often hesitate when dealing with a question of “bodily facts.” We often forget that anatomy and physiology are not orders of nature, but rather disciplines with a history of their own.

Zoology and biology offer descriptions of animal nuclear families, sex roles, and typical male or female behavior with which we are all familiar. The closeness to human value systems regarding gender roles and family life is not hard to see and has been pointed out.

Donna Haraway’s remarkable work on primate studies, their history and ideology, is critical in its approach.⁹ In comparison to the standard history of science, one of her points of departure is the awareness of the role of science as a knowledge-power discourse. She writes: “Biology is a historical discourse, not the body itself.”¹⁰

Haraway is exceptional as a historian of science because of her ability to analyze the objects of her studies from various different perspectives, not only with traditional historical methods, but also politically, philosophically, visually and metaphorically. She is keenly aware of both the political-ideological factors of the time, as well as her own position within this time and at the crossroads of present issues. Her studies highlight how the notion of biological sex and its social implications presented in primate studies is connected to both the cultural and social environment of the actual historical process of conducting the studies as well as personalities and their social-economic surroundings. She also takes seriously part in feminist project.

Haraway is acutely aware of how social gender practices influence the conception of biological sex. But what interests me most here is whether she also discerns and questions the modern distinctions which frame the normative scientific study of gender. Is she aware of the modern character of the very distinction of nature/culture or sex/gender, and does she question it?

In the third part of *Primate Visions*, Haraway writes that: “Gender is a concept developed to contest the naturalization of sexual difference in multiple arenas of struggle.” She goes on to say that: “Feminist theory and practice around gender seek to explain and change historical systems of sexual difference, whereby ‘men’ and ‘women’ are socially constituted and positioned in relations of hierarchy and antagonism.” She notes that in this process “The biology of sex helps construct a shared sense of possibility and limitation” and that: “Part of the reconstruction of gender is the remapping of biological sex.”¹¹ From my perspective, the crucial question in judging whether the modern distinction of nature/culture is actually questioned here is: What does Haraway mean by the “remapping” of biological sex?

The term “map”, as I already pointed out in the discussion on the post-

modern in connection to Fredric Jameson, is a metaphor which refers to a description limited by the reality of the mapped surface. Thus, it appears that the inherent message of using this metaphor is that the process of construction in question is free only to a certain degree (there are different kinds of maps) and, as Haraway states, it is essentially limited by the reality that is being mapped. The natural reality provides possibilities, and within the limits of that range of possibilities, the science of biology is free to construct the biological sex.

Thus, to a certain degree, biological sex is a construction for Haraway, but simultaneously it is securely tied to the “fact” of biological sex. What is original and interesting in Haraway’s position is that she is focused exactly on the space which is left between the two, namely, the facts of nature and the contents of biological sex constructed for us by science. Her point is that despite the existence of natural facts, how the mapping process of science describes them is significant. There is an extensive area of possibilities which lies in between real biological sex and the map of biological sex. How biological sex appears is greatly influenced by both the actual gendered historical process of science and by feminism, which struggles to create a new conception of gender. This is why “Part of the reconstruction of gender is the remapping of biological sex.”

In this sense, Haraway is, well aware of the power of construction of biological sex yet, for her, there always remains the reality which is mapped, nature itself, the biological sex which sets the limits to all descriptions of it. While social gender appears as a totally flexible entity, the real biological sex is not that at all (even if the map of it is).

This makes it evident that Haraway does not ultimately question the distinction which I am interested in deconstructing: the distinction between biological sex and social gender. Even if the conception of biological sex is influenced by gender practices, for Haraway, the hierarchy between nature itself and culture (part of which is science which offers us descriptions of it) remains in its normative modern form. Nature is the basis and more permanent, and culture is shallow and ever-changing. Nature sets the limits for culture and, in the sense, it allows for and explains its existence.

Actually Haraway even emphasizes the distinction between nature and culture. Her criticism of the history of primate studies does not actually focus merely on the projection of human gender order on primates, but also on how this projection process unjustifiably uses animals for human purposes. Basically, Haraway objects to the fact that the animals in primate research have been used as material for human social gender roles.

Analogically to Edward Said’s studies on orientalism,¹² she states that in the same way as “The East” has been a material resource for the production

of “The West,” primate studies have been the resource of the production of “the self” from the material of “the other.” According to Haraway, this has been “... the appropriation of nature in the production of culture, the ripening of the human from the soil of the animal, the clarity of white from the obscurity of color, the issue of man from the body of woman, the elaboration of gender from the resource of sex, the emergence of mind by the activation of body.”¹³

Instead of questioning the distinction between nature and culture, Haraway defends nature, animal, body, and biological sex, against colonization by culture, humans, mind and gender. Her critical eye is focused on how sex functions as material for gender and therefore becomes subordinated, as opposed to being focused on the very distinction of sex/gender.

According to the way of thinking that Haraway represents, while nature provides us with limits, we can never truly know exactly what nature consists of, because our only access to it is through science, which in turn is dependent on cultural phenomena. Thus, biological sex is present, although we possess no means of acquiring knowledge about it that are not scientific, and as such gender-dependent. One might conclude that in this kind of thinking the nature itself is not assigned a significant role. I would claim the contrary. The decisive factor is precisely the assumption of nature as a foundation which provides the possibility of basis/superstructure line of thought. Even in Haraway’s case, in which her focus is on the production of biological sex through the discourse of biology, the assumption of the limitations set by nature sets the tone of the entire discussion. This tone is modern: there is always the basic explanandum, the horizon of truth which we may hope to reach some day. If the truth of the cultural phenomena of gender, or of sexual minority cultures, resides, even if in a very mediated way, in the realm of nature, we have no way at our disposal to rid ourselves of the theorization of gender and sex in terms of explaining visible phenomena through invisible ones, in terms of asking why, and hoping to find the answers in the depths of the body. The decisive point in setting this tone is the thought of nature as a foundation.

In comparison to this line of thinking, my claim is that it is possible to theorize about sex and gender without committing to the distinction between underlying basic natural sex and gender as a cultural phenomena. When this distinction ceases to be perpetuated and when the concept of underlying nature is no longer present in theorizing, gender, sex, and sexuality are not approached as phenomena which are either natural or cultural. This is what I think Judith Butler is doing by questioning the very distinction of sex/gender. I will return to this point below, but let us first examine how this distinction is dealt with in various kinds of feminist theory.

Sex/Gender: Feminisms

Over the course of history, the Anglo-American feminist discussion has produced the discussion of sex/gender, which is now commonly in use. “Gender” came into existence with the feminist idea, often connected with the name of Simone de Beauvoir, that we are not born women, but rather socialized into them.¹⁴ We grow up into girls or boys, women or men, in a culture in which there are numerous inherent norms, values and institutions which create and sustain the difference between women and men. Girls and boys are assigned separate games, tasks, occupations, colors, movements, social roles in groups, and a different kind of emotional economy.

The standard approach to sexual difference before the time of “gender” was made in terms of “sex”. “Sex” is defined in the language of biology and medicine, and its application is based on a definite view of the human race, similarly to other species, as being divided into two classes: male and female.

The awareness of the social nature of gender has grown with the feminist movement, which since the last century has practiced conscious manipulation of social gender. The main result of the feminist project has been that women (in the meaning of sex) have actively assumed more men’s gender positions, although men (in the meaning of sex) have also taken on some “feminine” gender designations. Despite all this “gender traffic”, even in the times of daring gender bending in 1980’s and 1990’s popular culture,¹⁵ the distinction between sex and gender has remained clear: in gender-bending you play with your gender, but your biological sex remains what it is (unless you, as a transsexual, go through a medical and legal operation).¹⁶ There is a clear hierarchy between sex as a biological designation and gender as a social designation: sex is basic and permanent, whereas gender is something which is “only” imposed up on us culturally and which therefore is easier to change.

In contrast to normative scientific research, feminism has been fighting against sex and gender research which merely reproduces the gender hierarchies. Feminist inspired sex and gender research has had a practical telos as its framework: it has been subversive in relation to the existing gender hierarchies. The existence of this telos has produced various strategies in feminist research. It is interesting to note, however, that in my view feminist approaches also share the basis/superstructure of the modern enterprises.

There are two seemingly contradictory feminisms when it comes to the question of the difference between women and men. One fights the assumption of the existence of an essential difference between men and women, the other constructs feminism on the basis of this very assumption. I am interested here in the fact that both of them may be recognized as foundationalist. They both actively strip off extra layers in the hope of reaching the core.

Regarding the first approach, I am referring to those feminists who, following Simone de Beauvoir, strive for equality by means of minimizing the cultural ideology which “artificially” constructs the gender difference. According to this line of thought, the reasons behind the existence of gender hierarchies are inherently cultural. The goal of this project is based on the conviction that after stripping the layers of cultural gender, we are left with a basic “human core” that is common to both sexes. The natural equality is, they assume, revealed under the artificial cultural construction of inequality.¹⁷

This feminist approach adheres to the project of humanism and is also present in modernist literature. The projects of humanism and modernism are connected with the idea of androgyny. When the body, sex, in this project, is revealed (beneath culture), it exposes the androgynous, or bisexual, basic human being.¹⁸

The second line of feminism is seemingly the diametrical opposite of the project of minimizing the difference between the sexes. It focuses on the essential difference between woman and man. The interest here is centered on the body, while patriarchal and masculine culture renders the feminine sex invisible, the goal of difference feminism is to highlight the specificity of femininity. The American separatist feminist movement and the lesbian separatist movement, with their specific interest in developing female energy, are based on the idea of basic corporal difference. Although their focus varies both culturally and politically from the American endeavor, Italian and French feminists also emphasize difference.¹⁹ The French theorists Kristeva and Irigaray theorize on difference, and even if their thinking functions in different tradition from the American political feminism, their work contributes to the politics of difference based on the body.²⁰

As important as I consider both of these feminist strategies are to be for the formation of women’s identity and in the fight against gender hierarchies, I also recognize both of them as foundational and stripping projects.

In the first approach, gendered bodily difference disappears in the process of stripping in order to reveal a more basic layer of a human being – namely, androgynous sex. Gendered corporeality is the garment which clothes the basic human core. In the second approach, the sexed body is the core which remains after the cultural garments are stripped away. The difference is located in the body, and it is celebrated. For both of these projects gender is an artificial construction, while the sex underneath is not.

Sex/gender distinction as a distinction between a person’s “real” biological sex and the social institution of genders functions as a typically modern distinction. It is conditioned by the idea that there is surface appearance, a less profound social level of things, as well as a more profound biological level of order which conditions the social phenomena and sets its limits. Gen-

der is seen almost as an extra layer pinned on the sex. Gender is the clothing worn by the naked body of sex, and the modern aim is to peel off these garments in order to expose sex. Simultaneously, the borders of sex are constantly questioned, as the modern project always questions its borders.

If both the non-feminist and feminist interest in sex has been built in terms of modern basis/superstructure thinking, then how might the postmodern approach sex? Postmodern suspicion is targeted primarily at the assumed basis of sexual difference. How is the assumed biological and sexual “basis” of gender difference constructed? Postmodern questioning does not limit itself to merely examining and then doubting the assumed basis, which would be exactly the way in which the modern project would proceed. Instead, it questions the very practice of distinguishing between the surface phenomena of sex and its deeply rooted basis, which in this case is the distinction between sex and gender.

To further thematize the postmodern questioning of basis/superstructure, I would like to return to again the notion of genealogy, which Michel Foucault assumes from Friedrich Nietzsche, and which Judith Butler assumes from Michel Foucault. I claim that the genealogical approach, which Butler applies to gender in her book *Gender Trouble*, produces a postmodern deconstruction for the basis/superstructure distinction of sex and its social appearance, gender.

Genealogy and Sex

Genealogy refuses the order of superstructure and basis in a way which deconstructs the modern way of asking questions. Genealogy rejects the question of origin, instead viewing the phenomenon as effect of power.

In the case of sexuality, a Foucauldian knowledge-power discourse includes biology and medicine as specific types of knowledge, as well as various medical, juridical and clerical practices. The question for Foucault is, how is what we today refer to as sexuality a result of specific historical knowledge-power constellations, of biological, medical, and institutional discourse. Instead of asking “What is sexuality?” he asks “What produces sexuality?”

Judith Butler, whose *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993) have established her position as the most interesting current gender theorist, is also a genealogist. Instead of being interested in the origin, the natural sexuality, Butler asks what is the power that results in the sex and gender as we know them today.

Butler asks whether it could be so that the natural body and its sexuality (biological sex) after all, is not the reason and origin for the differences which

we meet in gender, but rather an effect of the same power which produces the social distinction.²¹

This question produces a remarkable genealogical turn in questions of gender and sex. The “sex” of biological and sexual discourse is denied its status as the origin of practices and is instead presented as their result.

By making the genealogical turn, Butler comes to question the very division into biological sex and social gender. In this analysis, both of them are effects of a specific ordering power. Biological sex is merely a means of the production of gendered reality.

By focusing on the production of both sex and gender without assuming the natural body as an origin, Butler avoids the discussion on sex in terms of the hierarchical distinction into culture and nature.

The discourse of science assumes sex as something that is in existence naturally and that can be reached through correct science. In the Harawayan framework, science constructs sex within the limits imposed by natural sex. In the thought of modernist equality feminists, natural sex is non-gendered, whereas it is heavily gendered in the thought of difference feminists. In contrast to all of these ways of thinking in which natural sex figures as a theoretical starting point, the genealogical way of approaching sex does not begin with the theoretical assumption of natural sex at all. Natural or biological sex is as much an effect of power as gender is.

Once the idea of biological sex as a reality outside power and culture has been abandoned, it becomes possible to proceed in the analysis of what kind of discursive power is present in the construction of sex and sexuality.

Butler’s way of analyzing the gendering order from the Foucauldian perspective of its being a productive power opens the way for the political dimension of sex and sexuality. When “natural sex” and “natural sexuality” are considered to be an effect of power, it also becomes possible to politically doubt the normative division into two sexes, female and male, as well as the division of their respective sexualities: the male desire of females and the female desire of males.

Butler refers to the production of biological-medical-sexual knowledge-power, which is active in the production of normative natural sex and sexuality as “the heterosexual matrix” or the “heterosexual hegemony”²². The heterosexual matrix is a discursive power which produces two kinds of human beings: biologically male bodies with sexual desire towards females and male social role and, second, biologically female bodies with sexual desire towards males and female social role.²³

Herculine Barbin

Butler is very consistent in her genealogical analysis which excludes the possibility of discussing any sexuality in terms of originality. She does not consider minority sexualities as original and oppressed. Main stream or normative sexuality is the product of power, but minority sexualities also are products of the regulative power operative in the construction of hegemonic sexuality. This is emphasized in Butler's discussion on Foucault's book, *Herculine Barbin, a Story of a Hermaphrodite*.²⁴ In this book, Foucault introduces a hermaphrodite, who supposedly lived in 19th century France. The external signs of sex had been evenly distributed on the surface of Herculine Barbin's body, without providing a clear indication of her belonging to either sex. At birth, Herculine/Alexina was medically and clerically defined as a girl, and her childhood and youth were spent in a convent with other girls. However, as a 19-year old she was proclaimed to be a man. This was preceded by a romantic relationship with another girl, which caused a scandal in the convent, led to a medical examination of Alexina which revealed her extraordinary anatomy and consequently caused the new classification of her sex. The story is tragic, as the newly named Abel was never successfully assimilated into his new social role and eventually committed suicide.

The book consists of Herculine's diary, doctors' reports, and a 19th-century novel describing the case. The most interesting part of it for Butler, however, is Foucault's foreword, in which he frames the story into a theory.²⁵ Foucault's writing allows us to assume that Herculine's body and sexuality are ambivalent, but that the classifying power forces her/him into one or the other of the body/desire/role complexes.

Butler critically analyzes Foucault's Herculine, and she contrasts the radical genealogist Foucault of the *History of Sexuality* with the Foucault of *Herculine Barbin*, who, she claims, romanticizes Herculine's "sexual ambivalence." Butler's accusation is that Foucault here himself falls into the trap of idealizing "the original." Foucault assumes that Herculine's sexuality springs up out of her/his happily undefined body, and he fails to pay attention to the ordering structures which Herculine is subjected to while she is growing up.

Butler suggests that the single gender system of the convent, with its prohibitions and pressures, follows the conventions of female homosexuality, which work as a power system that produces the body, sexuality and social role. The recommendation to love "mothers" and "sisters" and the prohibition of letting this love go too far, works, as Herculine is growing up, as a producing power. According to Butler, the productive force behind Herculine's ambivalent sexuality is not her ambivalent body, but rather a regulating

power.²⁶ Here, Butler points out the ambivalence present in Foucault's genealogy and insists upon the development of a more consistent approach.²⁷

The Power of the Heterosexual Matrix

In Finnish, there is no linguistic equivalent for the division of sex/gender. The word for the realm of the body, desire and role-identification for both sex and gender is "*sukupuoli*." "*Suku*" means family or kin, "*puoli*" means half. Linguistically, this concept includes the notions of both reproduction and division into two. "*Sukupuoli*," as a linguistically ordering power in this cultural context lets us assume that there are two of these classes and they produce offspring.

"*Sukupuoli*" incorporates the issue of sexuality directly into the arena of reproduction, biology and medicine. Despite the introduction of the word "*seksi*" into the language in the 1960s, the term, a direct translation of "sex" that is used as a sign of bodily desire and enjoyment without the necessary connection to reproduction, is used interchangeably with the words "*sukupuolielämä*" [*sukupuoli* – life] and "*sukupuoli* – suus" [*sukupuoli* – ity] which leads the inquirer to search for information about sexuality in the reproduction practices of animals and plants.

Similarly to Monique Wittig's term "heterosexual contract" or Adrienne Rich's "compulsive heterosexuality", Judith Butler's "heterosexual matrix" and "heterosexual hegemony" are attempts to conceptually name the power which we encounter here.²⁸ Butler's concept is inherently Foucauldian. The power in question is productive power, which discursively divides bodies into two sexes, attaches to them the desire for the other sex, and unites this biological-sexual complex with a specific social role.

The heterosexual matrix is an ordering power which produces two entities, a man and a woman. Both consist of a the unification of a specific sexual desire, a specific biological body and a specific social role. A desire for a woman, a man's body, and a man's role on the one hand, and a desire for a man, a woman's body, and a woman's role on the other hand, are the two possibilities allowed by the power which produces "normality."

At the present historical moment in Western main stream culture, it is discursively impossible to inhabit a space outside the division of man/woman: each one of us is always classified as one or the other. The power of gendering binary logic over the continuum of the morphology of bodies leaves unproduced and without a name anything external these two possibilities. Different bodies, different desires or different roles remain without legitimate site.

There are, however, sexual-social roles which do not conform to the heterosexual hegemony. These are minority sexualities. These minorities tend to remain closeted within mainstream culture, and the power of the matrix is manifested in the very existence of the closet. The matrix does not allow those identities which do not conform to the man/woman division to be established as socially recognized positions. Instead it has for a long time either criminalized, medicalized, ridiculed or ignored such positions. Sexual orientation is socially and morally controlled, and in most countries is also an object of juridical regulation. From a political perspective, heterosexuality is promoted with full cultural force, while homosexuality is kept secret.²⁹

If the heterosexual matrix is the existing producing power in matters of sexuality, then the world of “other” sexualities is the deviant realm which contests this power, reveals it as a power and produces shifts in it.

Radical sex-politics reveals, questions, and creates shifts in the existing sexual order. The world of different sexualities is the “other,” which settles on the border of the heterosexual order and shows it to be just one order, not the necessary one. Identity is a political category within this process.

Identity as a Non-Heterosexual Position

The division sex/gender allows one assume that sex is the maleness and femaleness which remains even if behavior and clothes (gender) changes. As mentioned earlier, with the fairly radical changes in gender culture the difference between sexes has the scientific discourse been pressed ever smaller and pushed ever further into the invisible inside the body.

As an arbitrary example of the fairly common present day view I would like to focus on an article published by a cultural anthropologist, Paula Ilén in a Finnish magazine for popularizing science, Tiede 2000. Ilén writes that the number of biological differences between males and females is extremely low and would not necessarily even be visible were it not for the cultural exaggeration of biological properties, such as dress and decoration. The article ends with the sentence: “The fact that gender is also a product of culture does not deny the fact that men and women are naturally in a certain degree different.”³⁰

Before reaching this conclusion, Ilén mentions that “sociologist R.W. Connell has taken up, in our cultural sphere, *transsexualism* and *transvestism* as phenomena which he classifies as the “third sex”. According to him, such cases are so common, that they even make us question the biological basis of sexuality” (my emphasis). This remark which is marginal in the article, and which is overridden with the rest of the article, is important. It is interesting because it

manages to achieve within a very limited space two contradictory linguistic operations, both of which exclude the aforementioned sexual cultures by pushing them into the margin of the realm of what is normal and natural.

On the one hand, in connection with transsexuals and transvestites, the “ism” suffix facilitates their presentation as lifestyles and matters of choice.) They are introduced as a kind of ideology or as stubborn projects. Transvestism allows us to assume that what we are dealing with is the questionable desire of an otherwise normal (a woman or a man constructed in the usual desire – biological sex – social gender combination, according to the heterosexual matrix) person to dress in clothes associated with the opposite sex. Transsexualism, allows us to assume that the otherwise normal man or woman possesses a strong desire to be a person of the opposite sex.

On the other hand, the quote refers to “cases,” which medicalizes the phenomena. It is not, after all, a matter of choice but a kind of pathology that we encounter here. The people in question are considered to have a physical illness. The medicalizing power of the term “case” easily expands also to the -ism suffix, which makes transvestitism sound like a pile of symptoms, not unlike “autism.”

I would claim that it is indeed possible to view a transvestite or a transsexual person in a totally different way than in both of these perspectives. When a person who does not conform to the heterosexual matrix is seen by her or his identity as something which is not included in the matrix, the case becomes much more interesting. The person ceases to be a man or a woman who merely dresses or behaves like a person of the opposite sex, instead becoming a person with an identity that differs from that of both a man and a woman.

Sexual “subcultures” offer names for positions in which the heterosexual trinity of desire-body-role is broken, in which the person concerned is neither a man nor a woman. Apart from transgendered positions, there are also different positions within homosexual role-play (for example, butch/femme or daddy/boy). The exclamation made by Monique Wittig that “a lesbian is not a woman”, which shocked her audiences at the feminist conference at which she was speaking, must be understood within this context.³¹ The heterosexual matrix, as an ordering power, does not afford the non-heterosexual positions the stability of a social role or names of their own within mainstream culture.

Sexual identity is dependent upon the existence of a specific sexual culture, it is not a “natural” fact. However, it is not independent of the emotional and sexual history, personality and body of the person concerned. Identity is a bodily identity, and in this sense, the division into the determination of culture and the natural tendency with regard to sexual identity is fundamentally meaningless.

Performance

The specificity of a cross-dressing person is that his or her “inner” sexuality is displayed on the surface through clothes and gestures. A transvestite utilizes gender specific cultural symbolic resources and performs gender. Moreover, transvestites often express culturally based signs of gender more specifically than any “natural” woman or man.

This points to the central role that imitation plays in the construction of gender in general. Marjorie Garber has expressed this quite specifically: “the scandal of transvestitism is that it tells the truth about gender.”³²

Judith Butler’s example in the foreword of *Gender Trouble* is a John Waters film, *Hairspray*, in which the famous drag queen Divine is startlingly real in her artificiality. The persona of Divine, writes Butler, allows us to assume that “gender is a kind of persistent drag, which passes for real.” Butler asks, in a genealogical mode: “Is drag an imitation of gender or is it so, that drag dramatizes the gestures, by which gender in general is produced?”³³

This is yet another successful intellectual turn made by Butler in her discussion of gender. Butler suggests that we should conceive gender not as being but as doing. Gender is reproduced by imitative performance, but more importantly, as Butler points out, gender identity is also constituted performatively with the very same gestures that are usually thought of as its result. According to Butler, gender is doing which constitutes the identity that it claims to be.³⁴

The performative conception of gender is inspired by gay and lesbian culture, which offers explicit performances of gender. This helps us to see more clearly how normative gender and sex are also performances. “By imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – and simultaneously its contingency,”³⁵ writes Butler.

The performative view of sex, to which I will return in the next chapter, is philosophically the most interesting. It takes part in the deconstruction of the metaphysics of substance by refusing the question of being, and as such it achieves an effective genealogical turn. First of all it seriously questions the distinction nature/culture. The body, which should be a “natural” category, always appears as constructed by one discourse or another, whether it be the discourse of science, sexuality or gendered culture, and yet it still does not end being a body.

Butler is often accused of idealism, and it is said that in her analyses the body disappears and everything becomes culture. She may be defended against this accusation by noting that the distinctions materialism/idealism, nature/culture and body/mind are exactly the ones which she most interestingly shows meaningless, unfruitful – and symptomatic – in the analysis of sex.

She does not privilege culture over nature but instead shows how the very distinction culture/nature is part of the modern way of asking the question, and how it may be deconstructed. She does not valorize culture over body, but instead refuses to take part in the competition between culture and body. She does not differentiate culture as non-material or non-bodily and body as non-ideal or non-cultural. Through her performance, the transvestite Divine destabilizes the distinction between natural and artificial, depth and surface, inner and outer, and nature and culture. Butler, as a postmodern philosopher, makes the same move in the text.

As Butler refuses to ground of gender in biological sex, which she instead sees as produced and as a means of producing, and as she holds gender as performatively produced, she profoundly politicizes both sex and gender. Gender is produced both socially and individually at a crossroads of powers. Shifts in this power is the area of gender and sex politics.

If there are no “real” identities anchored in nature and if no individual chooses his or her identity from a position external to any identity, then what we encounter are processes of constant identity construction and shifts within it. In the rest of this chapter I will take up the constructed nature of lesbian identity. I would insist that identity, which I will present here as deconstructed and as conditioned by regulative systems, is politically effective precisely as an identity, because only in this capacity does it serve as a subversive argument in relation to the universalizing heterosexual matrix.

I will discuss three aspects of constructing lesbian identity: the narrative, the performative and the morphological-imaginary. These construction processes are not mutually exclusive, exhaustive or exhaustive of each other. I focus on them here in order to make the idea of the construction of sexual identity concrete and to further discuss various aspects of identity as a political category.

The Narrative Construction of Lesbian Identity

Stories, histories and biographies are all examples of narratives, and as such they have an interesting relationship to truth. A story, in comparison to reality, gets defined as not real or not true. However, when we consider history, which is also a story, this relationship becomes inverted. History creates the reality and truth about the past. As a cultural institution and a discipline, history serves as the means of measuring the real picture of the past.

Biography, the story of someone’s life, and autobiography, the story of one’s own life, are frequently encountered phenomena in lesbian culture. Lesbian identity is often grounded on a story about self. Surprisingly often it

gets a written form, but even more habitual is the telling of life-stories in social interaction among lesbians. Above all, the story of oneself is told to oneself, a process which is usually an important part of the “coming out” process.

This story is one that focuses on what aspects of this particular life are signs of lesbianism. What kind of kid was I, what kind of relationships did I have to other girls, to boys, to my parents? What did I know during each phase, what was the sequence of events; what did I like, what did I want, what did I identify with? The story consists of different events and characteristics, which in this specific life have all been signs of lesbianism, and which lead to the present state. The events in it seem to inevitably follow each other. The same life could probably be told another way too, and the coming out process usually establishes a significantly different story with different highlights and tone than the story told about the same life before it. The coming out process is the event of telling oneself into a lesbian.

Is an identity unreal if its establishment is dependent upon the telling of a story? This is a question which may be asked if we accept the common modern way of thinking that anything constructed cannot be authentic. This way of thinking is usually expressed within the stories themselves, as a typical lesbian story does not present identity as constructed, but rather as something found. It is usually a story about the discovery of the authentic self, the “real me”, which has been there since the beginning but is only now being revealed.

Instead of accepting the premises of this question, I would prefer to present an opposing thesis: I claim that there is always a story involved in the establishment of an identity. Identity is a narrative entity, or even more precisely, identity is the telling of a story. If this is true, one cannot ask whether an individual identity is merely a story or whether it is real. A true identity is a story and an identity based on a story is true.

Identity is the telling of a story, but an individual story cannot be told if identity does not exist socially. A person cannot tell herself into a lesbian if lesbianism is non-existent as a social identity. I further claim that also the socially existing identity is a story, and that its being a story does not decrease its level of reality.

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, national identities, such as Finnish identity, are told by writing their history. Similarly, a sexual identity becomes told into a specific name with its own past. The lesbian, at the border of a named and an unnamed entity, has recently become an increasingly clearly defined historical and political category, especially in the United States. Lillian Faderman’s book *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (1991), which describes the history of the lesbian in the USA, is one of signs of this process.

Faderman begins her history in the 19th century, with the so called “romantic friendships” between women. A romantic friendship with another girl was considered as a socially valuable experience for a young girl. These were passionate friendships or even life-long faithful couplings, which have left emotional correspondence as evidence of their existence. Some of these women married men, others did not. Some enjoyed several romantic friendships during their lives, others only experienced one. In the light of the historical material, it is nearly impossible to say what was going on at each level, the physical, the emotional or the sexual. The complex cultural construction of female sexuality is so veiled that this distant history in Faderman’s book allows its object to almost entirely disappear.

The social institution of romantic friendships was brought to a sudden halt by what can be characterized as probably the most influential turn in the history of lesbian love, the medicalizing discourse at the turn of the century. Medical classification became much more prevalent in homes in the United States than it did anywhere in The Nordic countries, least of which in Finland.

The medicalizing discourse created the lesbian and lesbianism in the meaning in which they have subsequently continued to exist. As a knowledge-power system in the Foucauldian sense, this discourse constructed concepts and made the classifications that were subsequently culturally and individually presented as the basis of lesbian identity. The formative aspects of the medicalizing discourse became visible throughout the development of lesbian culture, which gained the status of a half-public subculture in the United States very soon after the medicalization. The medicalizing discourse provided the name “a lesbian.”

The theory came from Germany. The early sexologists were Karl Westphal, Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis. Westphal’s object of study in the year 1869 was a 50-year old woman who was anxious about her deep love for a young girl. Westphal came to the analytic conclusion that the woman was a man trapped in a woman’s body. As a child the woman had enjoyed playing boy’s games, liked to dress up as a boy, dreamed of being male and had sexual desires for women. The term used to describe woman desiring women was a “sexual invert” someone who was turned inward to like her own kind.³⁶

A lot of attention was paid to active, male identified women whose desires were directed toward other women. The characteristics of such women were classified in various studies as masculine muscular body type, direct gaze, swiftness of movements and even the ability to whistle and smoke. Simultaneously, another class of a lesbian was created, she who was the object of the masculine woman, a feminine woman who, for some unexplainable reason, preferred the companionship of an active woman over that of a man. These

classifications are the basis for what have the subsequently become common concepts in lesbian culture – the concepts of “butch” and “femme.”

Simultaneously to the increase in the number of young girls in the United States (and also in Germany) who were taken to visit psychiatrists because of their excessive masculinity or excessive interest in other girls, lesbianism became a potential cultural identity. The 1920's were golden years in the development of lesbian culture. Lesbianism and sexual adventures were fashionable in big cities. For example there was a wide range of “lesbian chic” night clubs in Harlem which drew partying crowds from all over New York City, and where neatly dressed butches in their tuxedos walked the streets with sexy femmes on their arms.³⁷

The experimentation within the upper classes was quite separate from the influential part of the development of lesbian culture, which went on in the bars inhabited mainly by working class lesbians. These bars, which were the only places for many lesbians to meet and mingle because of poor living conditions and social stigmas, provided the forum for the development of fashion, roles and the rules of socially acceptable and non-acceptable behavior within lesbian culture. The peak of the culture, with its butch-femme roles, was during the 1930's and 1940's.

In the 1950's, during the McCarthy years, the bars were a target of brutal police harassment. Female transvestitism was forbidden by law, and evenings spent in bars often ended in police raids, incarceration, violence, and eventually sentimental memories which have been recorded in the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

The lesbian feminism of the 1970's condemned, in the name of equality, the butch-femme roles which had played such an essential role in the development of lesbian culture. The nature of lesbian culture changed as a result of the leading role it played in feminist praxis when political activity became a major facet of lesbianism. Simultaneously, cultural self-reflection rose to a higher level and the political lesbian movement began to gain ground. Lesbian cultural identity, which Faderman's book in its part is constructing, began to appear in written form. Since the 1980's, lesbian culture has separated itself from general feminism. It has reclaimed its past as a separate culture and has also re-embraced the butch-femme roles, which have made a comeback in the form of performative play in the bar-culture.³⁸

Faderman tells the story of The Lesbian as a social identity. In the similar way individual lesbian identity is told, at least for oneself, and often to others too, as a story. Lesbian literature is full of lesbian life-stories, which are more or less dramatic, clear or obscure, literary or realistic, painful or funny.

A plethora of specifically femme-butch life-story collections have been published over the last few years. The best known of them is *The Persistent*

Desire. A Femme-Butch Reader by Joan Nestle, a specialist in lesbian life-stories and one of the women running the Lesbian Herstory Archives.³⁹ In this book, individual women discuss their identities in their own ways. They are not told only into a homosexual identity which breaks the heterosexual binary logic, but also into two distinct positions, butch and femme. Monique Wittig's words "A lesbian is not a woman" applies to both of these positions. A butch is not a woman, if a woman is a compound of biological sex, desire and social gender. In a butch, the biological sex "woman" is connected to the social gender "man", and to desire which is directed toward women. A femme is not a woman in terms of the heterosexual sex/desire/gender meaning, because in a femme, the biological sex "woman" and the social gender "woman" is also connected with the desire for a woman – or rather, a butch.

Many of the lesbian life-story narrations tell a pure butch or femme story including all of the culturally coded designations. They are stories of people who, depending upon their specific tale, seem to have been born different, or at least to have chosen their sexual-social identity in very early childhood. Rita Mae Brown's Molly Bolt gets into a fight at school about whether or not she will grow up to be a doctor or president, soon after which she gets engaged to her beloved Leota.⁴⁰ Every lesbian who narrates her identity as a butch has her own story to tell of a childhood spent as a tomboy. Childhood pictures depict her holding the hand of the long-haired girl next door, climbing trees, fishing or forced to wear a dress that was too small in the shoulders and appeared to be on the wrong person. These stories do not ask the question "why." Instead, they present the portrait of a specific type of person: a physical, psychological, sexual-social combination. Some of them, like Audre Lorde's *Zami*⁴¹, are very aware of the narrative nature of the identity that they describe. Lorde's book includes chapters entitled "Biomythography" and "A New Spelling of My Name." Its description of the four-year old Audre, dressed in a snowsuit during a magical encounter with a gorgeous little princess in a red velvet coat who was visiting next door, is a consciously literary identity fragment which is acutely aware of its nature as a narration.⁴²

People who narrate themselves into lesbians are more aware of the degree of contingency inherent in identity than heterosexual women, whose stories about themselves as women are less narrative entities. Identity is created through a story. Yet anybody identifying as a lesbian or gay knows that there is something more to this identity, it is not merely an accidental decision. The coming out process usually involves strong feelings of coming home, of reaching the real or basic self.

What then, are a lesbian, a butch and a femme? They are medicalizing categories, as was stated earlier, and they are cultural categories, as is evident in Faderman's story. They are also aesthetic categories and independent signs

of sexual culture which are available for use in social performances. In addition to all of this, I claim that they are also identity categories. They are, in a surprisingly significant way, names for positions which do not fit into the heterosexual matrix.

In a way, lesbianism, emotional and bodily love between women has always existed, but as an identity lesbianism becomes possible only when it has been told into a story and a possible position. I compared sexual identity to woman's identity or national identity. Finnishness is a narrative entity which "came out" as a functioning identity under specific historical circumstances. The birth of an identity is conditioned by a history of submission, and identities of the form "nation" in general are conditioned by restriction and submission. One may claim that "homosexual" sex has always existed, but the emergence of homosexual identity only came about through the prohibitive knowledge-power structures.

In this sense the story of lesbianism is not accidental. Or, in other words, not just anything can be told into an identity at any given time. Parallel to this notion is the idea that individual identity is not accidental either; not just anybody can be told (narrated) into a lesbian at any given time. Identity is constructed, yet its construction occurs within the confines of a specific situation and at the crossroads of other narratives and discourses, other productive powers. In this way, again, the questions whether real or narrated, or whether culture or nature, or whether authentic or made do not make sense. The narrative establishment of an identity implies a political shift in the situation.

Identity as Performance

For Judith Butler, being a woman or a man is not a "natural fact" but rather, the "naturalness" comes into existence through specific performative acts which produce the man and the woman. Homosexual role-play offers inspiration for the theory of the performative nature of gender. Gay and lesbian culture is marked by performances. "The natural" is often thematized in parodic contexts, in a way which points to the performative construction of the original and real sex.

The flirtation between postmodern thinking and homosexual culture is frequently acknowledged, and the connection is not accidental. The refusal of foundationalism, open "artificialness," and the destabilization of the relationship between surface and basis with the help of irony are all phenomena which are part of the homosexual world, and which are simultaneously thematized in the postmodern. In her articles on butch-femme aesthetics,

Sue-Ellen Case notes that camp has always been a part of gay culture. She writes: “camp, gay-identified dressing and articulation of homosexual reality has become part of heterosexual postmodern canon.”⁴³

One of the areas of crises between the modern and postmodern aesthetics is representation. It is not only a question of modern art’s refusal of representation and its reacceptance to some degree by the postmodern, but, more importantly, the destabilization by the postmodern of the dichotomy of representative/non-representative. A performance is a postmodern form of art precisely because performances look for moments in which this distinction is invalid. For its own part, homosexual culture consists of performances in which the performer/real person distinction is not respected, but rather is blurred. Questions such as “what is ‘reality’” and “what is the real self” are simply not the questions we want to ask about these performances.

A transvestite dressed as a woman or a very effeminate male homosexual are well known cultural characters, and much has been published recently on butch-femme roles as performances. An important textual ancestor of this discussion is Joan Riviere’s classical psychoanalytic article “Womanliness as Masquerade”, published in 1929.

According to Riviere, a woman may use very feminine behavior to conceal the fact that she, in her intellectual capacity, possesses her father’s penis. Riviere’s object of analysis is an intellectual woman. The woman gives talks on a podium in academic situations, at these occasions publicly displaying the penis which she has – psychoanalytically – by castration taken from her father. To compensate the nasty fact of castration, which is included in her intellectual capacity, she overdresses femininely and after each performance flirts heavily with the men in the audience in order to gain recognition of her femininity. According to Riviere, masquerade is a reactive gesture within heterosexual culture. She notes that while an openly lesbian woman shows her penis proudly, a woman operating on the heterosexual market reacts by masquerading hers.

In her article on butch-femme aesthetics, Case sites a sentence from Riviere’s classical text: “Reader may now ask how do I define femininity and where do I draw the line in between real femininity and a masquerade: they are the same thing.”⁴⁴ If femininity (and also masculinity) in general is performance, then the crucial question is: who performs what, to whom, and why? Case suggests an interpretation of butch-femme roles and the role-plays of the lesbian bar culture in the light of Riviere’s writings. A femme offers her masquerade to a butch, and a butch shows her penis to a femme. According to Case, this causes us to ask: “penis, penis, who has the penis?” And, when there is no referent in sight, according to Case, fiction about the penis and castration turns into the subject of irony and camp, the essential elements of the bar-culture.⁴⁵

According to Case, in the lesbian bar-culture, these penis-related positions have always been understood as roles, not as biologically given or essential. Theatrically, she views them as character constructions, more active than “reactive.” A femme performs a consciously feminine masquerade instead of reacting compensatorily when under the male gaze. Camp comes along in the exaggeration of femininity, which is part of both the classical femme performance and the classical performance of a drag queen. Case refers to the conceptualizations of both Baudrillard and Riviere in remarking that: “Butch-femme roles offer a hypersimulation of a woman in the forms in which the Freudian system and phallogocentrism, which makes it into the ruling social system, defines a woman.” For Case, a butch-femme couple is a dynamic duo who does not perform theater for the phallic economy, but instead creates theatrical performances about it.

Performance and Reality: Butler vs. de Lauretis

Teresa de Lauretis continues Case’s thought in her article “Film and the Visible,” although she denies that the lesbian bar camp has anything to do with performing a heterosexual situation. She writes: “Butch-femme role-play is not exciting because it performs a heterosexual desire, but because it does not do it.”⁴⁶

According to de Lauretis, what is performed is rather a kind of ghost-effect, the strange distance between desire (performed as heterosexual) and the performance. When the performance does not exactly fit the performers, its content is a strong reference to the phantasy investment of the performers – “the phantasy which can never totally express them or their desire, which stays out of reach of its staging, the phantasy, which again and again gets a form, despite of the fact that it gets deconstructed and destabilized in the *mise en scene*-action of lesbian camp.”⁴⁷

de Lauretis is dissatisfied with the equalization of postmodern heterosexual camp-culture and lesbian culture. For her, there is something irreducible in lesbian sexuality. The distance between the phantasy scenario and the self-critical ironic lesbian gaze creates a state of desire which is simultaneously directed toward to the same and the other, but in both of these to a woman, and because of this desire is different from heterosexual desire, she says.⁴⁸

de Lauretis’s view is very interesting and very appealing, because it clearly creates an identity for a lesbian, a butch, a femme and the act itself, which is not dependent on the heterosexual model. However, I would still ask whether she, by rejecting the notion of homosexual role-play as a “copy” of hetero-

sexuality, places heterosexuality outside the sphere of “performances,” in the realm of the “real”?

de Lauretis's opposition to postmodern performance theorizing seems to be conditioned by the strict division between being and performance and by the valorization of being over performing. Her aim of stabilizing lesbianism as a non-imitative essential mode of sexuality is ultimately achieved only by declaring heterosexuality as a pre-existent essential mode of sexuality.

In comparison, Judith Butler's performative conception of sex and gender is very clearly postmodern. According to Butler, it is wrong to conceptualize gender in general as being. Gender, also in heterosexual context, is according to her, doing. “A man” and “a woman” are constituted by performative acts, and are results of deeds, for which they are usually considered as a reason for.

As gender in general is performative within Butler's frame work, it follows that butch and femme roles cannot be considered as “artificial” performance, an imitation, in comparison to the heterosexual role-play as genuine and non-performative. It is only an alternative performance that we encounter here.

The Bodily Identity

The sexed body is the last instance, where the sexual difference is located such as it is dictated by the binary logic of sexuality. Still everybody knows that women and men are not in their morphologies the pure forms of the sexed stereotypes. Bodies are formed and they form themselves within their sexed life, and the heterosexual matrix often operates as cruel power in this process.⁴⁹

If a different social gender identity is fairly easily conceived as possible to achieve performatively, the bodily sexual identity is usually thought of as anchored in the flesh. A very inspiring piece of writing on the construction of identity – a lesbian identity – at the bodily level is offered by Judith Butler in an article entitled “The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary.”⁵⁰

Psychoanalytic theory has centered maleness and sexuality in one specific part of the body, the same part which has also operated as a strong symbol of culture, the penis. The penis is not only a physical member, it is the phallus: the path to culture. The phallus is representative of power, control, penetration, language and strength, and the one who possesses it is under the constant threat of castration. According to Lacan, the woman is phallus. It is she who must be owned who guarantees the ownership of everything attached to the phallus and who has the power to castrate. The man, in turn, possesses the phallus.

Butler's article brings together the psychoanalytical theory and the actual praxis of lesbian sexuality. In her article, Butler reads the texts of Freud and Lacan. Butler's phallus is the phallus of Freud in "The Interpretation of Dreams" and the one to which Lacan assigns the status of a privileged sign in his article, "The Meaning of the Phallus" (1958).

Butler concedes, on the basis of Freud, that "if the erotogenicity is produced by achieving a bodily function by the means of a specific thought, then the thought and the achievement are phenomenologically simultaneous. It follows from this, that it is not possible to say that the bodily member precedes the thought and causes it, because in fact the thought appears simultaneously with the phenomenologically accessible body and it is exactly this that guarantees its accessibility."⁵¹

Butler claims, that already in Freud's own text the phallus becomes metonymically transferable, and that it is not the name of any particular body part, but rather is fundamentally interchangeable.⁵²

In the light of Butler's Freud reading "it is not possible any more to assume the anatomy as a stable referent, which is valorized and marked by a imaginary schema. Just the opposite, the accessibility of anatomy is itself dependent on this schema and simultaneous with it."⁵³

Lacan's article "The Mirror Stage" (1949) portrays the so called mirror stage of early childhood, which contains the projection of a form for a surface, that is, the conjuring of one own body's shape. According to Butler, "For Lacan the body, or rather, the morphology, is an imaginary formation, but we learn in the second 'Seminar' that this *percipi* or the visual production of the body, keeps its phantasmatic stability only by becoming part of the language, by becoming marked by the sexual difference."⁵⁴

Bodies are formed as wholes by the means of sexually marked names. The name gives the position within the sphere of the symbolic, that is, at the idealized area of kinship relations which have been construed by sanctions and taboos. These relations are ruled by the law of the father, that is, the prohibition of incest. According to Butler's reading, the integrity of the body is not achieved through natural border but rather by the law of the family, which works through names.

Lacan's "The Meaning of the Phallus" (1958) denies that the phallus would be either a bodily member, or an imaginary effect. Instead it is a "privileged sign." Butler remarks, however, that despite this explicit denial, the phallus is in fact related to the penis. The relationship between phallus and penis cannot be characterized in terms of a simple identity, but it is rather that of determinate negation. The phallus must negate the penis in order to function as a symbol and a sign in a privileged way. If the phallus's capacity as a sign is based on its not being a penis, and if the penis is defined as a bodily

member, which the phallus is not, then the phallus is fundamentally dependent upon the penis in order to fulfill its capacity as a sign. If it now looks like phallus would essentially be nothing without the penis, then Butler's questions is: why assume that the phallus needs a specific bodily member in order to signify, why could it not function by symbolizing "other bodily members or body-like things?"⁵⁵

Butler claims that precisely because it is an idealization, something that no body can resemble accurately, the phallus is a transferable phantasm, and its naturalized connection to masculine morphology may be questioned by aggressive reterritorialization, which means the construction of different kinds of bodily egos.⁵⁶

She states explicitly that the owning of the Lacanian phallus may be symbolized by an arm, a tongue, a hand or two, a knee, a thigh, a hipbone or a series of practically designed things resembling bodily members.⁵⁷ With the last one Butler, I would assume, refers to sex-toys popular in sex positive lesbian circles. The advantages of literally transferable and exchangeable, always ready and easy to attach and detach postmodern penises in comparison to the "natural" ones are familiar to many women. One might ask whether the dildo is the final victory of plastic over nature in the area of masculine sexuality in the same way as sperm-banks, artificial insemination and ovarian donation are in the area of reproduction.⁵⁸

Butler remarks that the Lacanian having and being of phallus becomes possible within the scenario of the lesbian phallus in the sense that the phallic lesbian (butch) is under the threat of castration, and the desired woman (femme) has the power to castrate through either the offering of or withholding of the specular guarantee of phallicity. The fact that the stage may change, that the being and having may change places, confuses normative heterosexuality.⁵⁹

According to Butler, the phallus functions as privileged within the present sexual culture. She is aware of the fact that many lesbian theorists consider lesbian sexuality as functioning outside of the phallogocentric economy, but her contention is that lesbian sexuality is construed in the existing sexual order to the same extent as any other sexuality. For her, the phallus cannot be excluded as an element of lesbian sexuality and the crucial question is rather how it functions within it. According to Butler, the phallus constitutes "the place of ambivalent identification and desire, which has been produced historically in the cross-roads of various prohibitions, and normative demands condition its possibility."⁶⁰

In this scene "the lesbian phallus as a possible place of desire does not mean referral to a imaginary identification and/or desire, which may be compared to a real one: just the contrary, it only means encouraging an alterna-

tive imaginary in the place of the hegemonic imaginary and showing how the hegemonic imaginary is constituted by the naturalization of an exclusively heterosexual morphology.”⁶¹

Lesbian phallus means the displacement of the hegemonic sexual difference, and spreading alternative imaginary schemas for places of erotogenic enjoyment. The task is not only to be able to differentiate the phallus from the penis, but also to realize its transferability. As sexual factor, penis-related characteristics, such as penetrating and being penetrated, control and submission etc. are transferrable. According to Butler, the phallus is always already plastic.

An examination of sexual cultures reveals that imagination and fantasy are elements of sexuality which not only have the potential to destabilize social gender hierarchies, but which also work as their constitutive elements. This makes one question the greatest supporter of social gender hierarchies, the thought of the nature which with the power of the truth determines the borders of our existence. The introduction of unnaturalness and artificiality in the realm most intensely connected with nature, in connection with the reproductive glory of the feminine body, is, as a subversive gesture very impressive.

Identity, Politics and Self

The differentiation of nature and culture, of inborn and artificial becomes in all three construction patterns of lesbian identity shifted from its modern position. From a modern frame of mind, one can ask whether an identity which has been told into a story is real or made up, whether a performed identity is authentic or artificial, and whether a bodily identity is true or imagined.

The difference between modern and postmodern thinking in this connection is not that the modern emphasizes the real, authentic and true, while the postmodern highlights the made up, artificial and imagined. The difference is rather that for modern thinking, the distinctions real/made up, authentic/artificial, true/imagined or body/mind are very important, emphasized, and very significant, whereas the postmodern shifts these distinctions from their modern place by blurring the significance of the slash between them as opposed to allowing it its modern decisive status. What is real can be made up, and what is made up can be real, authentic artificial or artificial authentic, etc., and yet the words do not lose their meaning.

Both as a socially existing identity and as an individual identity, lesbian identity is narrated into a story because it is very real, yet it is real precisely in

virtue of this narration. A lesbian artificial performance, is performed because it is authentically felt as to be in place, yet this authenticity could not be attained through anything but the artificial performance. Lesbian identity is embodied because it is located in the mind, and it is located in the mind because it is embodied. All of this is realized in postmodern theory in a way in which modern distinctions become less significant, and their place in thinking is thus shifted.

The shift is necessary in order to comprehend the meaning of the construction of an individual identity. The idea of construction does not revolve around the normal options of either a person being born a certain way or being constructed by the social environment. In order to understand the idea of construction one needs to focus differently: not on the difference between the self and the environment, but on the powers conditioning the construction of the self.

Both of the ways of thinking of identity that I have previously named as modern are excluded by the adoption of the view of identity being constructed and being constructed in a specific space and time. Identity is not conceived of as an inherent property of an individual, as something that would have been her/his property regardless of when or where she or he was born. A fixed identity is not understood as catalyst of consciousness raising or the formation of a political subject, nor as a reason to scientifically research the property in question.

Also excluded is the thought that identities are based on choice, as the second one of the modern approaches assumes. Identities are not chosen happily in a free process of shopping among thousands of possibilities. The formation of identity is a contextual and bound process, which is conditioned by regulatory systems. It happens in a specific space and time.

The liberal assumption of an individual who chooses outside the productive powers is ruled out by the genealogical approach. The characteristics of choosers are always already products of power. The choice process occurs in the midst of power and is conditioned by power, and thus identity is profoundly political.

The Politics of Names

The politics, which confronts the power of the heterosexual matrix is not the politics of liberation. If sexual identities are products of historical and individual contexts, they cannot be liberated from power. Just the contrary, they are products of power.

The inherent danger of the politics of rights in terms of identity is that it may in fact stabilize the same thing that radical sexual politics attempts to destabilize. With regard of different identities, the politics of rights has tendency to naturalize identities and base its strongest arguments on this naturalization.

Still, as I have attempted to argue, the concept of identity is extremely significant in sexual politics. The point is to realize that non-naturalized, contingent, and in its construction history deconstructed identity is still an identity and functions as such in the political situations when it is needed.

What is an identity politics that is not based on the conception of identity as being either inborn or chosen, identity not as a universal characteristics but as something that is relevant here and now, something formed as a political entity against the hegemonic power?

This kind of identity politics is concerned with difference and the right of different persons to live different lives. It is the politics of assigning the different positions names and in this way granting them a socially recognized existence. I refer to this as “the politics of names.”

In the case of lesbian and gay politics, the politics of names opens up the homosexual closet, the closet which Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has described as a performance which is achieved by the speech act of not-speaking. According to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the closeting of homosexuality, keeping it away from the realm of speech, has been the structural element of our epistemic field in the last century. In her book *The Epistemology of the Closet*, she concludes that the homo/heterosexual distinction and its chronic crisis has been a sign for some of the central categories of our culture, such as secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine, majority/minority, innocence/initiation, natural/artificial, urbane/provincial, domestic/foreign, health/illness, same/different, active/passive, in/out, choice/dependence, wholeness/decadence, utopia/apocalypse, voluntariness/addiction etc.⁶²

The closet, as a knowledge-power system, also produces the phenomena which it closes up. This is why it is not surprising that some homosexual people find the closet is useful. In a way the excitement of gay culture is created by the distinction between between it and the ignorant outside world, and some think that it loses some of its essential character when it becomes exposed to the public.

On the other hand, one must also ask whether anybody, young or old, can actually live a happy and healthy life while being completely secretive about his or her emotional life. Homosexuals are classically portrayed as unhappy people. Would it be too much to assume that the unhappiness is the result of a difficult situation, and not that the difficult situation is a result of an unhappy character?.

For me, radical sexual politics is concerned with names and visibility, and deals with the ability of non-heterosexual people to live recognizably different lives. This is the politics which confronts the power of the heterosexual matrix. The matrix perpetuates the constant circulation around the two ideal types, a man and a woman. Radical sexual politics means, above all, the realization that such a matrix exists. With regard to lesbians, this realization already implies a shift within the gender hierarchies. In its way the feminist movement has always been subversive to the gendering power.⁶³

If radical sexual politics means assigning more names to different positions, many people would pose such questions as: “How many identities do we need to recognize?”; “How many are there?”; “Are there not countless identities?”; “What if everybody were to begin to be this political about their identity?”; “Where does this situation end?”; “Does everybody’s identity need to be recognized individually?”; “Is not everybody bisexual after all?”; “Aren’t we all androgynous and doesn’t everybody have the potential to be anything?” In terms of my own definition of identity it is not of interest to ask universalizing questions, such as “What lies in the distant future?”; “What lies in the distant past?”; “What if everybody? “; “Aren’t we all?, “ etc. What is interesting is that at the moment there is a certain hegemonic culture and that there are positions that have evolved into identities which contradict this hegemonic culture. The politics is about the here and now, and the present is its main time dimension.

Although theoretically the number of identities and names in existence is infinite, in practice every queer person currently possesses a specific kind of “not man-not woman” identity, which in most cases endures throughout his or her entire life. These positions, whether momentary or long-lived, each deserve a name, and when they are named they take on a revolutionary character in relation to the heterosexual matrix.

Orlando and Dil: Androgyny vs. the Politics of Names

The contradiction between the postmodern and the modern inquiry into and politics about sex becomes illustrated in two contemporary films, Neil Jordan’s *The Crying Game* and Sally Potter’s *Orlando*.⁶⁴

Virginia Woolf’s modernist text is the basis for *Orlando*, in which men and women change into each other. Androgyny, which is the theme of the text, is conditioned by the categories of “a woman” and “a man,” and the text simultaneously claims that these genders or sexes are the surfaces which can be stripped off. What lies beneath the surface is more real or authentic than the surface itself. *Orlando*, who changes from a man into a woman in seven

nights, looks at herself in the mirror and concedes “The same person, just another sex.”

“The human” or “the person” in this context is a modern concept. The text of *Orlando* writes a modern universal person, who is simultaneously both sexes and neither sex, whoever and whenever. In the last instance, the transcendental individual has no gendered sex and is exposed when gender is stripped off as an extra layer on the core.

Even if *Orlando* seemingly operates outside the quest for the “natural” basis, it in fact poses the question which by its structure is exactly the same as the one which founds itself in nature. “What is the truth about sex?” *Orlando*, in fact, claims that “the man,” “the human,” “the individual” is “by nature” androgynous, or someone else might say, bisexual.

If Orlando’s character is a universal nobody, a whoever, whenever, then The *Crying Game*’s sexually challenging Dil is a person whose identity is specified in the here and now. Dil’s character’s concreteness as a transgendered personality, for whom the script allows this specificity, very calmly requests a name for itself. Dil is neither a man nor a woman, and the script resists the attempt to categorize her/him into either one of these classes. This is evident when Dil’s “natural” exposure as a man, after having been introduced as a woman, is overridden by the moment when Dil is dressed as a man, and the result is not very convincing and even less satisfying to anyone concerned. While the film’s shock value, at least for its heterosexual male audience, lies in the surprising revelation of Dil’s physical body and the exposure of the “real,” the film itself immediately digresses from this point. It ends up with Dil happily keeping her head up with regard to her transgendered identity.

The script does not pose the question about Dil’s “real” sex. Her identity is based upon the elements of “the woman” and “the man” that are available within the existing gender structure, and the script welcomes this creation without expressing the urge to look for the more authentic and genuine “reality” behind it.

The *Crying Game* is postmodern in its portrayal of gender and sex identity in that it does not ask the basis/superstructure form question about sex. Dil’s identity is transgendered identity of its narrative performative, and bodily ego construction and its truthfulness in contrast to other identities is not built on naturalizing or universalizing statements. As such, here and now, it stands for the politics of names. “Dil” implies resistance against the order of gender and sex. It destabilizes the matrix and sets it into motion, whereas the politics of *Orlando* is to find and guarantee the truth. Orlando’s universalizing androgyny-argument as politics makes one pose the question: “When the truth is found, is the change going to end?” The trouble is, that the world is not androgynous, it is gendered and sexed, and the thought of androgyny as

something which combines the elements of a man and a woman is as an ideal conditioned by this gendered reality.

The difference between the two positions lies in whether or not the identity is pinned on something, the self which is taken to be the hard core of the person. The difference between the modern and the postmodern position in questions of identity is possible to phrase in terms of the difference about conception of self, which leads us to the question of agency in postmodern politics.

Notes

¹ The law allowing the registration of homosexual couple relationships was passed in Denmark in 1989, in Norway in 1993 and in Sweden in 1995. It is presently under administrative preparation in Finland. The law offers same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexual marriages have, except for the right to adopt children.

² For example Henning Bech in "The Disappearance of the Modern Homosexual, or Homo-genizing Difference," a paper presented at the Conference on Sexual Cultures in Europe. June 24-26 1992 in Amsterdam writes: "If, however, a higher degree of equality in economic and social opportunities will be realized, modernization will probably bring with it a gradual and rather relaxed homogenization of lifestyles and a concomitant *happy end* of the homosexual ... Therefore, I am also somewhat skeptical about the conceptualizations of same sex love and pleasure in terms of a *radical difference*, of an *ethnicity*, or even of a *nation*. This seems to me to be a conservative approach, in the sense of being tied to and helping to preserve circumstances that we were better off without." p.7. See also Henning Bech, "Report from a Rotten Sate. 'Marriage' and 'Homosexuality' in 'Denmark'" in Ken Plummer (ed) *Modern Homosexualities* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Jan Löfström, "Identiteettipolitiikan loppu. Homo- ja lesbopolitiikka vuoden 2000 kynnyksellä" [The End of the Identity Politics. Gay and Lesbian Politics at the Edge of the Year 2000] *Tiede ja Edistys* 4/93 pp. 284-297.

³ For example Simon LeVay's research on differences in "hypothalamic structure between heterosexual and men" conducted at the Salk Institute, La Jolla, California, which were published in *Science*, August 1991, received world-wide immediate publicity.

⁴ This way of understanding identity creates a thing, the homosexual identity, which may serve as an object of study. It joins the Hegelian realist metaphysics in establishing an independent entity of each "identity." Simultaneously it offers a chance to mentally create a political agent out of an entire population sharing the specific set of characteristics of this identity. This is the communal

agent or community thought of as an acting subject typical to the Hegelian based political thought.

- ⁵ This is a clearly nominalistic position, in which only transcendental individual actors exist. It explicitly denies the existence of non-individual entities like identities. Instead of identities it speaks about identifying individual agents. It does not ask questions about the identity, like “what is an xxx identity like?” but only accepts questions which refer to the individual agent like “how does x identify?” or “does x identify as y?”
- ⁶ Markku Hyyppä, “Jako kahteen” *Yliopisto* 4/93, pp. 5-7.
- ⁷ The question is of different urgency in the discourse of race in the United States, and in the postcolonial discourse. The study of Finns as racially different from the Scandinavians used to be a serious project meant to explain cultural differences “resulting” in the history of political dominance. The political connotations of biological research have not totally disappeared. The Finno-Ugric identity of Finns, which since the last century has been based mainly on linguistic research, has recently been significantly questioned by gene research which shows that Finns, despite their linguistic difference, share a the common gene-pool with West-Europeans. This revelation of Finns having “euro-genes” is timed quite conveniently with Finland’s membership in the European Union.
- ⁸ This is the minimal view, which I think may safely be expressed without going into a detailed discussion on the philosophy of science. It means that I accept the view that there is no other access to “reality” or “nature” than through representations, which in the case of the modern world are mediated through the knowledge-power apparatus of science.
- ⁹ Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions. Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- ¹⁰ Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions* p. 290.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.
- ¹² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
- ¹³ Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions* p. 11.
- ¹⁴ “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (ed) and (tr) H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989) p. 267.
- ¹⁵ Baudrillard, who strongly defends heterosexual difference in his work, writes about Santa Cruz as follows: “The more general problem is one of the absence of difference, bound up with a decline in the display of sexual characteristics. The outer signs of masculinity are tending towards zero, but so are the signs of femininity ... we have seen new idols emerging, idols who take up the challenge of undefinedness and who play at mixing genres/genders. ‘Gender benders’. Neither masculine nor feminine, but not homosexual either. Boy George, Michael Jackson, David Bowie...” Baudrillard laments: “Pushed to its logical conclusions, this would leave neither masculine nor feminine, but a dissemination of individual sexes referring only to themselves, each one managed as

an independent enterprise. The end of seduction, the end of difference, and a slide towards a different system of values.” Jean Baudrillard, *America* p. 47.

¹⁶ Transsexuality appears to be a position which presupposes the idea that sex is different from and more profound than gender. Through a radical medical operation you acquire a body which you have always thought of as corresponding to your real sex. A transsexual position could, however, be interpreted as a strong case for my identity thesis: what is produced, or rather reinforced, by a sex-change operation, is not the opposite sex on the male/female axis, but a new identity, a transsexual FTM or MTF identity.

It is remarkable that from a legal and medical point of view the acknowledgement of transsexualism means that the cultural practices of medicine and law (the medical establishment and the legal establishment) are considered as being able to change a natural designation (of sex).

For most of society, after the medical and legal operations, the person is a member of the other sex. But not for all. The “nature is more profound than culture” -thinking reveals itself in instances such as The Michigan Women’s Music Festival, where the admittance policy clearly states that “women born women are welcome.” On the other hand, this policy also manifests itself as a recognition a MTF transsexual identity does in fact differ from that of a woman.

¹⁷ This line also crystallizes in the thinking of Shulamith Firestone, for example, who took this line of thought to its extreme by demanding the extinguishment of the differences in the reproductive functions of men and women. The thought behind this is that the “human core” is the same in both sexes. However, it is overshadowed in women by their reproductive role and even by their mere potential reproductive role. So, only if the female body is liberated, of its conceiving, birth-giving and nursing potentials through technology does it become equal with the male body – truly human. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex; The Case of Feminist Revolution* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970) p. 238.

¹⁸ Although Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf are the classical feminists who are associated with this view, both of them mostly emphasize the difference between the social opportunities of genders. Woolf’s *Orlando* does not open itself to as straightforward an interpretation as that which I offer later in this chapter on Sally Potter’s film *Orlando*, which is based on it.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that cultures like the French and the Italian, in which the male/female difference is more pronounced in the everyday culture than it is in the Anglo- or Scandinavian cultures, have also produced forms of feminism which emphasize “sexual difference.”

²⁰ For a critical analysis of Julia Kristeva’s “body politics” see Judith Butler *Gender Trouble* pp. 79-91. Butler accuses Kristeva of “imputing a maternal teleology to the female body prior to its emergence into culture.” p. 90.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-34.

- ²² She changes her term “heterosexual matrix” to “heterosexual hegemony” in *Bodies That Matter* because, as she explains: “The heterosexual matrix became a kind of totalizing symbolic, and that’s why I changed the term in *Bodies That Matter* to heterosexual *hegemony*. This opens the possibility that this is a matrix which is open to rearticulation, which has a kind of malleability.” Judith Butler, “Gender as Performance” interview in *Radical Philosophy* 67, Summer 1994 pp. 32-39, p. 36.
- ²³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* pp. 5-7.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-106. Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin. Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphrodite. Introduced by Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
- ²⁵ Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin. Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphrodite. Introduced by Michel Foucault* pp. vii-xvii.
- ²⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* pp. 93-111.
- ²⁷ Butler even hints at one point that Foucault’s “forgetfulness” might be a case of “love that does not dare to say its name.”
- ²⁸ Butler creates the term “Heterosexual matrix” by combining Monique Wittig’s concept “heterosexual contract” and Adrienne Rich’s concept “compulsive heterosexuality,” and she tells that she means by it: “a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.” Butler, *Gender Trouble*, note 6 in chapter 1, p. 151.
- ²⁹ It is quite seldom that the training for heterosexuality becomes an explicit issue. This was the case, however, in a 1993 school conflict in New York City, in which the final argument for refusal to accept as a teaching material in schools the book “*Heather Has Two Mothers*” was that “the state school system should privilege and promote heterosexuality”.
- ³⁰ Paula Ilén, “Nainen & mies. Kulttuurin tuote” [Woman & Man. Products of Culture] *Tiede* 2000 2/93 pp. 18-23.
- ³¹ Monique Wittig, “The Straight Mind” in *Feminist Issues* 1 no 1 p. 32.
- ³² Marjorie Garber, “The Occidental Tourist: *Mr Butterfly* and the Scandal of Transvestism,” in Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Jaeger (ed), *Nationalities and Sexualities* pp. 121-147; p. 143.
- ³³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* p. x.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, *Gender Trouble* p. 25.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- ³⁶ Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* pp. 37-61.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-72.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-308.

- ³⁹ Joan Nestle, *The Persistent Desire. A Femme-Butch Reader* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1992). The Lesbian Herstory Archives operates in New York City.
- ⁴⁰ Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1977).
- ⁴¹ Audre Lorde, *Zami. A New Spelling of My Name. Biomythography* (Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1982).
- ⁴² Audre Lorde, *Zami*, pp. 36-42.
- ⁴³ Sue-Ellen Case, "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic." *Discourse* 11.1 (1988-9), pp. 55-73; p. 288.
- ⁴⁴ Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade" *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 10: 1929 pp. 303-313; p. 306.
- ⁴⁵ Sue-Ellen Case: "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic" p. 64.
- ⁴⁶ Teresa de Lauretis, "Film and the Visible," in Bad Object Choices (ed) *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991).
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 252.
- ⁴⁹ Body hair, muscles or lack of them, breasts, or lack of them, the form of genitals, shoulders, softness or hardness of features, the way of moving oneself, the way of speaking, relationship to hygiene, sports, fragrances, hair-relationship. These are but a few examples of gendered objects of regulation and the continuous battlefield of "too much" and "too little" in the lives of individual persons. Compare Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets. Women and the Politics of Appearance* (Boston: South Ends Press, 1986).
- ⁵⁰ Judith Butler, "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary" in *Bodies That Matter* pp. 57-91.
- ⁵¹ Judith Butler, "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary", p. 135.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- ⁵⁸ Elsewhere in lesbian discourse the same toys are referred to less enthusiastically as "commodified heterosexual fantasy". See Teresa de Lauretis, "The Film and the Visible" p. 240.
- ⁵⁹ Judith Butler, "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary", p. 161.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- ⁶² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) p. 11.
- ⁶³ A hundred years ago it was just as radical for a woman to dress publicly in pants as it is for a man to dress in a skirt today.
- ⁶⁴ Sally Potter *Orlando*; Neil Jordan *Crying Game*.

Chapter 8

JUDGEMENT – SELF

In the previous chapters of this book, several aspects of the postmodern in political theory concerning political action and political judgement have come forward. In the discussion on participation in the first chapter, I claimed that a consistently liberal view allows political power, including the capacity to make political judgements, to be transferred in the political process to those who actively engage in it.¹ The view comes to be viewed critically from the postmodern perspective, which refuses to separate the political as a specific area, instead politicizing any subject at hand. The political is considered to be a process in which everyone exercises her/his faculty of political judgement.

I also argued that in the Hegelian-based modern political theory, any political judgement is compared to the ideal judgement. The belief is that there exists ultimate true political judgement, the one conveying the nation's real (transcendental) will, which any individual political judgement should approximate. This is why the slogan "everything is political" turns into political oppression instead of political opening. This view is also rejected in the postmodern, as the assumption of a communal subjectivity is not accepted. In postmodern politics there is clearly no ideal judgement. Politics is an open-ended process with no right answers. There is also no end point on the horizon, not even in the form of the ideal of consensus in the political process. In this sense, the postmodern view differs from contemporary communitarianism (Charles Taylor, Alisdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer) and discourse ethics (Benhabib, Cohen & Arato).² Cultural unity is not a presupposition, and the universal intersubjective validity of statements is not the aim of the political process. The persistent disagreement within politics is not supposed to vanish. Politics is action in a situation of disagreement.³ This is a situation that Lyotard has referred to as "agonistics". As I argued in Chapter Five, the notion of agonistics is directed more against the ideal of communal subjectivity than in favor of the increased rule of private interests, and it is based on the assumption of a shared

faculty of political judgement. An agonistic situation is not the same as a situation of a conflict of interests. In politics the conflict surrounds different views of what is good or bad for the community, or what is just and unjust. Political action consists of political judgements, and political judgments are constantly made by human beings.

Political judgement occurs in the conditions of power, as I argued in Chapter Four. The Foucauldian conception considers power as being everywhere and as productive. Because the postmodern does not share the liberal ideal of the transcendental powerfree situation, the idea of the total liberation from power and dominance is rejected in the postmodern. Similarly, the notion of the total capture of power, which the Hegelian tradition of the self-command of the communal subject includes, is rejected. Political judgement is not about opposing power, liberation from power or the acquisition of power. It is about judging in the midst of power, and creating a shift in the condition of power through the act of judging. Any judgement causes a change, and no situation remains the same following a judgement.

Judgement happens in the midst of power, but is also made by an agent who is produced by power. In this final chapter I would like to focus on the agent of political action, the one who judges. I will discuss the problematics of agency with the help of Bonnie Honig's interesting presentation of Hannah Arendt's political thought in her book, *Political Theory and The Displacement of Politics*. Honig's Arendt offers the possibility to build a contrast to and highlight the postmodern genealogical understanding of agency. I will also take up Arendt's and Lyotard's theorizing on judgement.

In accomplishing this, I must once again focus upon the genealogical principle which Foucault picks up from Nietzsche, and which Judith Butler successfully applies in *Gender Trouble*. In addition, I will re-examine the idea of performativity, which is another powerful tool of a judging self within post-modern thought.

Genealogy

The idea of genealogy, as Foucault states very clearly in the article *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History* is formulated in contrast to ordinary history.⁴ The task of historical research is to describe what happens over the course of time to the specific phenomenon, creature, being or whatever the focus of study may be; for example, how it becomes modified what kind of powers effect it or how it changes over the course of time. What is crucial here is the notion that the "something" original to which all of this happens is assumed to exist. If the history of morality is the subject of study, it is assumed that there is

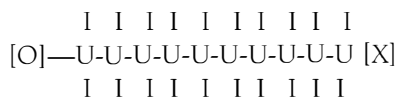
original “morality” to which this history happens. If the object of study is sexuality, the original “sexuality” which then becomes modified and affected by power is assumed to have been present in the beginning of history.

In sharp contrast, the genealogical approach does not assume the existence of an original “something” which then acquires its own history and which is affected by power over the course of history. Instead, it conceives of the phenomena under study entirely as an effect of power, that is, as entirely constructed in its past and present without any starting point or nucleus which becomes modified. In other words, there exists nothing which becomes modified by power. Instead power produces, from the beginning on, the phenomena.

As such, Nietzsche’s morality possesses no history, there is no inherent “morality” that would go on adventures through time and assume various faces. Instead, morality in its various forms is always produced by power and has no essential core. Foucault’s sexuality, and also sex itself, is only produced within the configurations of knowledge-power as a historical phenomenon. It is not something which has been repressed by power or only modified by power, but it is rather a product of power.

The following figures may be used in order to illustrate this difference, the workings of power in time: I=power, [O]=origin, [X]=the phenomenon as we know it now, U U...=modifications, -=the core

HISTORY:



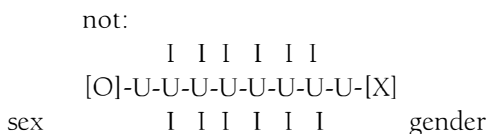
GENEALOGY:



The “History” model includes an origin which remains the core of the history of the phenomena. The “Genealogy” model denies the existence of both the origin and core.

Butler applies the same idea to the concept of gender. Her genealogical claim in *Gender Trouble* may be broken down into three different parts:

First, she claims that (biological) sex is not the origin and core of gender:



Second, she argues that sex as we know it now is a product of power:

I I I I I
U U U U U [X]
I I I I I sex

Third, she claims that the same power produces both sex and gender. She names this gendering power “the heterosexual matrix” or “heterosexual hegemony.”

All this, of course, presupposes the Foucauldian conception of power as being productive. Power simultaneously restricts, constrains and through constraint produces. I suggest a genealogical approach not only to identity as a political category, as in the previous chapter, but also to individual subject, the I, as an agent.

Genealogically a self may be thought of as a product of power without an original form, the core of personal identity.

I I I I I
U U U U U [X]
I I I I I self

This is certainly shocking for those who believe in a personal immortal soul, and it emphasizes the secular nature of postmodern thought. It is also a very difficult way of thinking for most theorists of morality, action, or agency, because it disturbs the conventional opposition of determinism and autonomy. The self is totally “determined,” that is, only possible as an effect of power, and it simultaneously remains a self, an agent, in the conventional philosophical meaning of an autonomous agent.

Most moral and political theorists assume the existence of a core self. Theorists such as Charles Taylor, Alisdair MacIntyre, and Seyla Benhabib consider it as an ineradicable preconsideration for any kind of theory of morality or political action. Most argumentation in moral theory assumes that any discussion on responsibility for actions must necessarily include the notion of individual continuity, and this continuity is impossible to conceive without the assumption of a core-self.

Yet, continuity can be thought of without a core-self. This is evident, for example, in the Wittgensteinian notion of “family-resemblance.” Wittgenstein’s example is a thread which is continuous, but in which the continuity is built of pieces of fibre that are woven together. The rope is continuous regardless of the fact that there is not one single fiber which reaches from beginning to end, thus acting as its core. The strength of the thread lies in the overlapping

of many separate fibers.⁵ Similarly, the sameness and continuity of a self may be recognizable and intelligible without the existence of a core.

The idea of the lack of a core-self tends to generate fears of a discontinuous, fragmented life and with this discontinuity the loss of moral responsibility. These fears appear to me to be exaggerated. In the light of the Wittgensteinian metaphor: we trust that a rope will not break regardless of the fact that there is no core thread.

More important, however, is that the defense of the notion of continuity of a self is not the point in a genealogical analysis. Rather, the point is the denial of the need of continuity. This is based on the denial of the need for the core-self, of which the need for continuity is an extension. The point is not to save moral capacity by saving the continuity of a self, but rather to develop the thought in which moral capacity need not be anchored to the permanent core of a self.

Instead of asking where moral responsibility resides if there is no continuous core-self, we might ask why we pose the question in this way. Why do we assume that moral capacity should be anchored in a core? If we abandon the idea of a soul, which lurks behind the notion of the self as the spring of morality, we might think of moral capacity, for example, as continuously being constructed in the repetitive procedures of culture.

The fears surrounding the loss of moral capacity or the possibility of individual denouncement of moral capacity are raised when morality is thought of as not being founded on anything “more” than culture, which, after all, is changeable. Again, these fears may be exaggerated. Even if moral capacity is not founded in a core self, but is a cultural product, it may not be any less stable than it would be if it was founded on a permanent feature in a human self. The culture, when we are discussing humans, is all-pervasive. As a constituent element of subjecthood, it is impossible for an individual not to assume moral capacity; the cost of not assuming moral capacity would be the loss of status as a subject. In this sense, moral capacity does not differ from sex. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler analyzes the process of assuming sex as a constituent element of subjecthood. A subject is constructed in the process of sex identification, but language fails by making it impossible to talk about the subject, which in the process of “assuming” a sex only becomes constituted as a subject which can assume something.

Butler’s reasoning is connected to the idea of performativity, which along with the idea of genealogy is a postmodern marker in her writing. An excursion into the content of this idea would further the analysis of the problem of the moral capacity of an agent.

The Idea of Performativity

Butler's writing on the performative nature of sex and gender is often confused with simple idea of gender as an individual performance which would allow an easy individual change of the parameters of sex and gender at will. Nothing could be further removed from what she is doing – because through the idea of performativity she underlines that the conditions of any individual gender performance are deeply embedded in the gendering power of culture. The gendering power is the condition of any subject position which makes it impossible to individually ignore or oppose it at will. The shifts in this power are produced when gender is performed slightly differently, and the possibility of the different performances functions as a crucial reminder of the cultural nature of this power, which functions as purportedly natural. Butler does not suggest that these “different” performances are accomplished independently of the general gendering power. On the contrary, her point is to remind us that they are possible only because of its existence.

Butler's view is connected not so much to performance as to the line of thought inspired by the idea of performativity, as understood in speech act theory. To trace back this line of thought I will recall some of the ideas of J.L. Austin's speech act theory in *How to Do Things with Words*, Jacques Derrida's writing on it in “Signature, Event, Context”, and the debate between Derrida and John Searle⁶ on the topic as presented by Jonathan Culler in the chapter entitled “Meaning and Iterability” in his *On Deconstruction*.

In *How to do Things with Words*, Austin introduces “performatives” by paying attention to the fact that linguistic expressions not only describe a state of affairs (“The cat is on a mat”) as “constatives” do, but also actually do something. They create a state of affairs, or, in other words, they “perform.” Performatives are utterances such as “I promise”, which creates a state of promise, or “I pronounce you man and wife”, which creates a marriage. Performatives are successful and achieve their effect under special circumstances. The words “I promise” uttered on a stage by an actor do not achieve a state of promise that they do in the real life.

Culler describes the effect of Austin's thought on the analysis of how meanings in language are produced and understood. He compares Austin to Saussure, for whom a meaning is the product of a linguistic system, the effect of a system of differences. Culler notes that Austin repeats, on another level, the crucial move made by Saussure: “to account for signifying events (parole) one attempts to describe the system that makes them possible.”⁷ Austin refuses to explain meaning in terms of a state of mind and proposes, rather, an analysis of the conventions of discourse.⁸

Austin argues that to mean something through an utterance is not equivalent to performing an inner act of meaning that accompanies the utterance. What makes an utterance a promise, for example, is not the speaker's state of mind at the moment of utterance (promising consciousness), but the conventional rules involving features of the context (there being an institution of promising within the culture).⁹

Derrida's deconstructive reading of Austin's text focuses on the way in which Austin, nevertheless, reintroduces the meaning of a speech act as ultimately determined by or grounded in a consciousness with an intention fully present to itself. Derrida accomplishes this remark through analyzing the word "serious" in Austin's text. According to Derrida, Austin implies that the non-serious use of language is something extra, something added to ordinary language and totally dependent on it.

John Searle argues in his reply to Derrida that this exclusion of the non-serious use of language is of no importance but insignificant and purely provisional. He writes that the existence of the pretended form of the speech act is, of course, logically dependent on the possibility of the nonpretended speech act. For example, promises could not be made by actors in a play without the existence of the possibility of promise making in real life.

However, as Culler points out in his representation of this debate, this is precisely the point to Derrida. We are, indeed, accustomed to thinking that the pretended use of a speech act is logically dependent on its real use although one might in fact argue that the relationship of dependency works both ways. If it was impossible for a character in a play to make a promise, there could be no promises in real life. This is because what makes it possible to promise, as Austin tells us, is the existence of a conventional procedure, the existence of formulas which can be repeated.¹⁰

The emphasis on iterability as a condition of individual meaning does not make the category of intention disappear. As Derrida points out: "It will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance."¹¹

I would emphasize what can be concluded from this discussion is that we are able to understand what an utterance means and what it performs, not because of the intention of the speaker, but because of a known cultural procedure, which is present in the given culture by virtue of its constant repetition. The meaning of an utterance and its performative force derive from the possibility of iterability.

Iterability, repetition, comes up here as the way "the culture" is and gets reproduced. Again, the performative approach, in my terms, achieves a post-modern turn: it replaces the focus on origin with a focus on the layers of

culture, on the reproduction of the convention and the meaning through repetition.

This is the line of thought that Butler applies in her theorizing on gender and sex. If the words “I promise” would not be a promise without the convention of promise in the culture, and if “I declare you a man and wife” would not make a marriage without the institution of marriage in the culture, then it follows that all the performative gestures that we do to be women and men (or their “copies”) would not make us women and men (or other identities) if there were no cultural institution of gender. Gender can only be performed because there exists a cultural procedure of gender that can be repeated. Gender is performative.

The performative nature of sex implies that people do not have a certain sex because it is a feature of the bodies they are born with, but that they have one because there is a gendering procedure within their culture. This power makes it impossible to be an intelligible subject in the world without assuming a sex as part of the process of becoming a subject.

In the same way that the category of intention does not disappear with the notion of meanings as not being based on it, the category of body does not disappear even if it is not conceived of as the source of sex and gender. It merely ceases to rule the scene of sex as its origin.¹²

Circling back to the problematics of moral agency, moral capacity can be analogized to the discussion on sex. This supports the concept that individuals do not possess moral capacity because it is a capacity that is attached to their core-person, but rather because becoming an intelligible subject within a given culture involves the assumption of moral capacity. This is a result of the fact that there exist a cultural procedure of morality. Similarly to gendering power, the power of morality is a strong power, and it functions as constitutive of subjecthood. Language fails here, too: it is not the subject who either assumes or does not assume moral capacity, because being a subject already in itself presupposes having assumed moral capacity.

It is fairly conventional to think that the contents of moral views are, at least to some degree, “socially constructed”. Most moral theorists agree that the content of moral beliefs differs from culture to culture and even from class to class, gender to gender, and age to age. It is also easy to agree with the concept that how agents actually judge is to some extent determined by cultural power. However, in order to guarantee a certain degree of universality in morals, the capacity of morality itself is usually considered as based on something other than culture. The genealogical and performative conception of morality suggest that the moral capacity does not need to be founded in order to function as virtually universal.

The two important consequences of this discussion for my reasoning purposes are as follows. 1) That we are able to simultaneously operate with the concept of (empty) moral capacity and the coreless genealogical conception of a self. The virtually universal, but importantly not core-founded, capacity to judge may be understood performatively. 2) There is no principal line of demarcation between the moral capacity (even when conceived of as empty), and the “influence” of “outside” power.

In practice this means that arguments cannot be put forward regarding “the contents of empty capacity”, the nature of the core self’s necessarily universally shared features. As it is not founded in a core self, the empty capacity actually retains its nature as empty, as being without content. Arguments regarding universally valid moral statements, universally valid because they are based on the moral capacity of the core self without the influence of outside power, cannot be made. When judgements in practice are judged, this means that instead of directing the philosophical and moral-theoretical effort to reveal the universal and the shared, the genealogical view of morality forces the focus on construction and power.

Whereas a conventional view assumes a core person and discusses the individuating predicates of a person, the genealogical performative approach does not consider a person to have any predicates inherently or originally. All of the characteristics which make an individual an individual, moral capacity and the content of moral beliefs included, are effects of power.

The subject, agent, self or I, (or that which at each moment acts as such) is constructed within a process and as an effect of certain powers and this construction is continuous and never completed. In this sense, the power I am referring here is not a power which takes the subject as its object, but rather the power which makes the subject possible as subject.

How does this translate into the issue of the subject of political judgement? With regarding of political judgement I have ruled out the two modern options. A judging subject should not be understood as a communal subject in a way in which individual judgement is taken to approximate a communal subject’s judgement, as in the Hegelian-Marxian theory. Nor should the judging subject be understood as the transcendental core-subject of the liberal theory. Instead, agency should be understood according to the genealogical description as an acting subject which is constantly constructed and performatively produced at the crossroads of powers. Here, the two transcendentals within the realm of judgement, the communal subject’s ideal judgement and the pure individual’s non-determined choice, are rejected. The genealogical description introduces a subject with a site, a situated subject. As the constitution of a subject as a subject in itself includes power and

as the outside influence is not possible to be thought of as “outside” of the subject, this power is always already present as the site of the political judgment of a subject.

Arendt and the Postmodern

In order to more explicitly describe the focus on the problematic of self within the realm of political theory, I will examine Hannah Arendt’s work as presented by Bonnie Honig in her book, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*. Hannah Arendt is interesting as a theoretician of politics in the here and now, because for her politics is neither an approximation of the general will nor a process aiming at a consensus. Arendt focuses on politics as conflictual action. For her, conflictual action by political agents is an end in itself – it is not a means to an end achieved by it.¹³

In Bonnie Honig’s title “the displacement of politics”, the “displacement” refers to what she sees as happening to politics in most of political theory. Politics itself, conflictual action, is transferred from the center of attention. Politics is interpreted as means of achieving an end and as a necessary evil. As such, politics is reduced to administration. Arendt is of interest to Honig precisely because she does not shift the focus away from politics. Unlike most theorists of politics, Arendt focuses on it, and she sees its content as pure action.¹⁴

While Honig brings up Arendt’s specificity as a theoretician of pure politics who considers politics alone, separated and isolated from any other kind of activity, my distinction on modern/postmodern adds another dimension to analysis of Arendt’s work. In my view, Hannah Arendt is a true modernist of political theory.

Arendt’s impulse to extract “pure politics” is characteristically modern. She strips the notion of politics of everything unnecessary to it in order to locate its core, pure politics. Arendt isolates politics in a fashion similar to that of modernist painters who search for the core of painting, modern philosophers who search for the core of language, or modernist writers who search for the core of writing. For Arendt, politics is neither a means to an end nor a representation of something else, it is not a representation of something else, and it is not reducible to dominance and power. Rather, it is something distinctly of its own: it is action, which is also understood existentially as a specific kind of expressive experience.

In this sense Arendt is a modernist, but simultaneously, in comparison to most conventional political theory, Arendt has much in common with those considered to be postmodern theorists. This, more than the modern im-

pulse, is the reason why Honig and many others are currently interested in her.

The primary remarkable similarity between Arendt and the postmodernists is that for both the political space is permanently conflictual and does not include any possibility for a “solution.” This view is very similar to Lyotard’s agonistics, and it effectively excludes the utopian perspective of the Hegelian-Marxian notion of a communal agent, that, which commands itself.

Second, her resistance to the discourse of dominance is parallel to that of the Foucauldian approach to power. Arendt does not consider power in itself as bad and disposable, nor does she see it as something to be liberated from. The perspective of liberation remains entirely absent from her work. For Arendt, as for Foucault, power is everywhere and constantly present, and the ideal is not to get rid of it.

The question is whether Arendt also is postmodern when it comes to political judgement and political agent. Honig seems to indicate that she in fact is, when she takes up the performative aspect of Arendt’s account of action. Honig’s point is that Arendt’s notion of action instantiates the conception of a deed without a doer behind it. This brings Honig’s argumentation to the questions of identity, self and agency in the political. I will now consider Honig’s account of Arendt in terms of highlighting the issue of agency in the postmodern.

Honig on Arendt

According to Honig, Arendt’s central concept is action. An essential aspect of Arendt’s concept of action is that action is *sui generis*, which means that as a phenomenon, action is completely of its own kind, always new and unique, and cannot be reduced to anything other, not even to the agent and her or his intentions. Of special interest to Honig is that Arendt’s concept includes the idea that the identity of an agent is the result of action and not its source. Politics is action which produces identity.

Arendt’s concept of an agent as an effect of action is indeed genealogical in the sense in which I use the word, despite the fact that neither Arendt nor Honig apply the concept in this connection. This concept of a deed without a doer is precisely the notion in Arendt’s work that interests Honig.

However, emphasizing this genealogical point in Arendt’s work poses a serious problem, which Honig discusses at great length. For Arendt, political action is a specific type of activity in *Vita Activa*, and she contrasts it to the passive life of ordinary existence. The thought of a deed without a doer, Arendt’s genealogically based notion, is connected exclusively to politics as a

realm of public action. This type of action remains separate from the type which Arendt refers to as private.

Prior to action, which produces identity for Arendt, there is a private self, a “life-sustaining psychologically determined trivial imitable biological creature” who receives identity only in public. According to Arendt, the private self is never unique. Honig considers Arendt’s private/public distinction as problematic and as negatively impacting interest in Arendt’s work, as many others, especially feminist critics, have also pointed out. Honig remarks that the public/private distinction protects Arendt’s conception of politics by prohibiting the politicization of issues of social justice. “Issues concerning race, gender, ethnicity, and religion are also barred from politics. These are private realm traits, on Arendt’s account natural, essential, and imitable characteristics of all human beings, as such not at all the stuff of virtuosic action”, writes Honig.¹⁵ Honig remarks that there exists a real danger that Arendt’s politics will be depleted of interesting content.

Honig proceeds at the end of her book to present what she refers to as her “radicalization” of Arendt’s account of political action and a “democratization and proliferation of its sites, situations and effects.” She accomplishes this by treating Arendt’s notion of the public realm not as a specific place, but as “a metaphor for a variety of spaces which would allow us to identify and proliferate sites of political action in a much broader array of constations ranging from the self-evident truths of God, nature, technology, capital, labor, and work to those of identity of gender, race, and ethnicity. We might then be in a position to *act* – in the private realm”, she concedes.¹⁶

I question whether this broadening of Arendt’s conception of politics is really possible. Does Arendt’s framework allow for this kind of radicalization?

Some might doubt this on the basis of the inherent elitism of which Arendt has been accused. It is often argued that Arendt’s experience of action is only available to an elite minority, and that both her contempt for labor in comparison to action and her admiration of Ancient Greece cause her to divide people into the categories those fit for politics and those destined to mere material existence.

I do not consider this problematic for the new, broader interpretation offered by Honig of Arendt’s conceptualization of politics and action. Honig is right in arguing, following Hannah Pitkin’s observation, that private and public often seem to represent particular attitudes of mentalities in Arendt’s work, and that the point is actually that the laboring mentality is excluded from political action. Therefore, Arendt does not exclude any determinate class of persons from political action, but rather only excludes a determinate attitude. Consequently Arendt can not be regarded as sharing the liberal theory’s possibility of alienating the capacity of political judgement, either per-

manently or temporarily, from a part of the people, and considering political judgement the task of a few specialists. On the contrary, precisely because she values political action, Arendt remains of interest for postmodern theorizing on political judgement.¹⁷

A more serious concern in the context of broadening Arendt's concept of action to include the private realm is the question of whether it is combinable with her presuppositions on self. Is Arendt's genealogical concept of an acting agent possible without her concept of private self, and is the "private self" outside the genealogical framework? To politicize "the private", that which is Honig's aim, is it necessary to abandon the Arendtian framework of self and replace it with a genealogical account?

For Arendt, the self reveals itself in the public realm, becomes a being in a public space, and through this exposure acquires its identity. But are action, the acquired identity and its exposure possible without the assumption of the core-self, the self which steps on the public stage and which gains identity through action? Is the deed really without the doer in the genealogical sense?

Honig seems to anticipate this question by discussing Arendt's notion of self and by attempting to prove its nature as not that of a core type of individual identical to itself.

She argues that Arendt's private self is "a site of struggles", and that Arendt explicitly criticizes the "implicit monism" of philosophers who claim that "behind the obvious plurality of man's faculties and abilities, there must exist a oneness."¹⁸ Honig continues: "Her dismissal of this view of the self recalls Nietzsche's suggestion in the *Will to Power* that 'the assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary, perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness – in general?... My hypothesis: the subject as multiplicity.'"¹⁹

Honig's presentation implies that Arendt's conception of the self is genealogical: that there is no core behind expressions of the self. In this way Honig attempts to extend the concept of action as a deed without a doer to the level of self, in conjunction with her view of expanding the notion of action to also cover private life.

In the context of present political theory discussions, Honig's presentation may also allow us to assume that Arendt, with her multiple self-conception, would specifically confront the liberal ontology's assumption of the primary oneness of individual agents and thus offer a non-liberal ontology which is neither communitarian nor of Hegelian origin.

I argue that there is a significant difference between Arendt's account of the "multiple self" and a genealogical account of the self without a core. I would also emphasize that Arendt does not react against the liberal political

ontology, but clearly maneuvers within the Kantian framework, sharing parts of it and reacting against others. On the level of political ontology, Arendt clearly rejects the Hegelian-Marxian framework, and this rejection serves as her motive for questioning the basis of the subject-philosophy and the concept of autonomy. However, this construction lends no special tools to critique of liberal ontology.

Honig stresses the multiple character of Arendt's "self", its non-singular nature. However, the only aspect she specifies regarding this multiplicity is that, as Arendt states in the *Life of the Mind*, it consists of three equal yet distinct categories: thinking, willing, and judging, each one of which is reflexive within itself.²⁰

This inner division that she present seems to reproduce the well-known Kantian division of the mind into three faculties. This, I claim, does not make the self any less original or any less whole, but merely distinguishes in it into three different capacities: to know, to judge morally and to judge aesthetically. The multiplicity thus produced does not rule out the assumption of the core-self.

Honig's presentation of Arendt's problematics of self, which she accurately constructs within the context of Kant and Nietzsche is interesting in that she pays attention to the fact that Arendt follows Nietzsche in fighting against the Kantian notion of autonomy as self-mastery. Arendt opposes the idea of the subject as an autonomous, self-regulating whole. Honig links together the idea of a self's inner multiplicity and the issue of self-control through interpreting that the main point for Arendt is that the multiplicity of mind is an ineliminable feature of ourselves and not a weakness to be mastered.

I think Honig is correct in her emphasis of Arendt's opposition to the Kantian notion of autonomy in connection to her political thought. As Honig remarks, "Arendt rejects autonomy as a value. She sees in it a mastery which relies on domination of one's self and rule over others."²¹ This rejection of the notion of a self as a reflective, self-commanding entity is meaningful within the context of political theory.²² As I have noted earlier, the concept of self-command is the central feature of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition. It is evident that Arendt is also aware of the central role played by this idea in the tradition of political theory which she opposed and referred to as "totalitarian."

However, I think Honig is wrong in connecting Arendt's opposition to the Kantian notion of autonomy with the idea of a self's inner multiplicity. Opposing the idea of self-control, of self-mastery, as an essential feature of a subject is an extremely significant and influential aspect of Arendt's political thought. The issue of the core-nature of the self is yet another, more complicated issue within her thinking. Opposition to the notion of self-mastery does not necessarily imply opposition to the idea of an original core self.

What replaces the Kantian self-control in Arendt's thought, which, as Honig points out, follows Nietzsche in critique of Kant? Nietzsche opposes the idea of the self as a site of control, and replaces it with the notion of the non-controlled expression of self. This line of thought is also dominant in Arendt's work; she praises the expressive moment of self-realization in action.²³

However, the expressivist view of a self presupposes a self which expresses itself, not necessarily a controlled self, but a self nonetheless. In Arendt's work, the uniqueness of the self is also evident in the determinacy with which she stresses the thought of a total beginning, the newness in each individual.²⁴ An expression is an expression of something unique, even if in Arendt's thought this individuality comes into existence only in concert with others, in public, where the self steps onto the stage of action.

In other words, I claim that Arendt's "self as a multiplicity" refers more to the idea of not-being-in-control of the self than to the genealogical idea of not-having-a core. Arendt's self, which acquires an identity through action, is not a genealogically comprehended self, but rather an expressively understood non-coherent entity. The self as a multiplicity is not a coreless self, it is simply a self which has no possibility of total control. These two points are quite different from one another.

The concept of a self which expresses itself and is never quite one in its expressions, but only approximates its oneness is a very modern idea. The self is the limit which is never reached, but which remains there as a presupposition for the thought.

It is my contention that Arendt's genealogical account of action presupposes the expressively understood liminal self. Consequently, the broadening of the notion of the coreless agent from the sphere of action to the private realm of self does not occur as easily as Honig seems to think.

I also claim that Arendt's disregard for the "material conditions of private life" is not accidental and does not follow from elitism, but rather is a consequence of a consistent modern expressivist view of the subject. The expression, and by expression the creation, of the uniqueness of the self is at the center of her attention. Her interest is not in the construction of self which would expose the material situatedness of a self.

In political ontology the expressivist view of the self comes close to the liberal theory's transcendental subject. The difference lies in the fact that the self is not a creature in possession of interest and capacity to choose, but instead a non-coherent being with the capacity to express itself in the conditions of publicity, thereby gaining a definite identity. A truly genealogical, post-modern venture would abandon the notion of even a liminal, original self, and proceed instead to the study of the construction of originality.

The Difference in Self

It may appear insignificant whether a liminal and multiple original self is assumed, whether a self is assumed to express in action its originality, or whether it is considered to act as a totally constructed being. It is not a small difference, though. However, the difference is significant because the focus is totally different. The genealogical concept forces the focus on construction and power, whereas the modern expressionist view highlights the abstract agent.

If the subject of expression in political action is considered to be an original self which expresses and creates its own originality, the attributes of the acting subjects, such as race, gender, class, etc. must logically be disregarded as irrelevant in a judgement.

What is the difference between this line of thought and that which I am looking for with regard to the “postmodern” in politics? The difference lies in the aspect of situatedness. For Arendt, there is a non-political original element in a subject and this is the relevant one in terms of action. Conversely, the postmodern in political theory prefers the thought that the process of the constitution of a subject as a subject already includes power and is political. The subject of a judgement is always already situated and consequently always judges and acts from inside and within power.

Gender, race, sexuality, class, and age are typically not merely public positions of political identity, but are also constitutive in the process of subject-construction and heavily marked by power. When an agent judges politically she/he does not solely consciously assume a specific position, for example, the position of being a woman, a Finn, a working-class person, a Jew, a gay man, or some other identity. There is power involved in the constitutive elements of the formation of the subject, and this power is always already present when a subject judges.

The notion of the situatedness of an agent is closely connected with the practical observation which has been developed into a precise principle in the studies on feminism, postcoloniality, sexual orientation and race. It states that there is no neutral subject of judgement – the neutrally assumed subject is eventually revealed to be the hegemonical one: male, western, heterosexual, white and middle-class.

The view of the situatedness of any judgement creates questions in moral theory. There are certainly many philosophers who would be willing to accuse the postmodern position of “sociologism” or “social determinism.” This can be characterized as a view which seeks to explain a person’s behavior, moral judgements included, through social factors. There is, however, a sig-

nificant difference between the postmodern approach and the endeavor to explain moral judgements through environment. The difference lies in the specific aim of the pursuit. Unlike “sociologism”, the postmodern does not primarily seek to explain, that is, it does not privilege the perspective of explaining. Explaining assumes a universal perspective, a non-situated situation which enables one to judge universally, and this is something that the postmodern specifically seeks to point out as ultimately impossible. In terms of knowledge about judgements, the postmodern does not offer explanations (neither of the modern human science type nor the Marxist type). Its focus on construction does not seek to close by means of superior knowledge, but to constantly remind of the impossibility of non-situated judgement. It encourages reflection on the situation of a judgement. The postmodern does not explain away judgements, nor does it forget the fact that it is itself a judgement.

The difference between deconstruction of a judgement and an explanation of a judgement is that by definition the deconstruction never ends and does not give authority to the individual carrying it out. The function of the social background knowledge in judgements is different from its function in explanations. Unlike an explanation, deconstruction does not provide a view from the right perspective or invalidate the judgement because of its situation. The judgement remains in situation in which the one reviewing it is her/himself also situated. Instead of invalidating a judgement it reflects on the situation, and promotes negotiation between positions and respect for other judgements.

There are also many philosophers who think that “anything goes” if a moral judgement is “only” seen as an effect of “outside influences.” The difference in comparison to a view which considers “social influence” on “pure” judgements as problematic is that the genealogical account does not assume the existence of a self either underneath or as an origin of the constituted subject. There is no double structure of the transcendental self and the social subject. The subject, which is simultaneously the self and the subject of a political judgement, is entirely constructed and constrained by its construction when it acts in this moment.

At the same time, a subject, in the sense described by Arendt, constantly re-constructs itself through action. According to the genealogical description, the subject of a political agent is a subject which continuously evolves within a crossroads of power. A political agent not only judges as a subject at any given moment, but simultaneously creates its own subjectivity through judging. The subject is not outside the deed, the judgement, but is also constituted by it.

While the focus is on the construction it simultaneously is on agency, in action, and judgement. What happens in a political judgement? How should an individual moral agent making political judgements be thought of following the adoption of the view that the constitution of a subject may be endlessly deconstructed into productive power and constraints.

We can now return to the issue of the functioning of moral capacity in political judgements by examining Arendt's and Lyotard's theorizations of judgement.

Arendt and Lyotard on Judgement – *Sensus Communis*

Both Arendt's and Lyotard's theorizations on political judgement are inspired by Kant's third critique, "The Critique of Judgement", which they interpret in a way that shifts the focus of argument from aesthetics to morality and politics. Kant's aesthetic judgement is a special type of judgement, in that it is made without criteria. Kant distinguishes what he calls "reflective judgement" based on the fact that unlike a determinate judgement, which presupposes a law or a regulation, there exists no pre-established criteria for judgement in a reflective judgement.

According to Kant, judging is a faculty, and an *a priori* principle governing its operation is the "formal purposiveness of nature." In a judgement without criteria, one judges as if what one judges is purposive, even if one is unable to exhibit the objective validity of the judgement, as in the case of a determinate judgement. That is why Kant thinks that reflective judgement resides in a subject's feeling.

However, by "feeling" Kant does not mean a purely subjective affect. Kant argues that, despite the fact that it cannot be objectively presented, the feeling that accompanies reflective judgement is not subjective in the sense that a sensation or a private opinion is subjective. Rather, it implies a common sense, *sensus communis*, which is a capacity shared by all, a power to judge.

The status of the capacity to judge may be interpreted in Kant's work in a variety of ways, of which both Arendt and Lyotard offer their own interpretations. At least some readers of Arendt see her as interpreting the Kantian appeal to a *sensus communis*, that is, the sense common to all, as a possibility of rational consensus or agreement based on the common element present in each judging subject. Lyotard, for his part, does not consider *sensus communis* as providing a horizon of agreement, but very resolutely rejects the idea of consensus as ideal. Some commentators, like James P. Clarke, find themselves at odds with Lyotard here.²⁵ Instead of being concerned with Lyotard's

hostility towards the horizon of agreement, which I view as his positive effect, I am concerned, as I was in Chapter 5, about whether his theorizing creates the other kind of transcendental subject, the *volonté générale* or will of the nation type of communal subject.

Without judging whether Arendt jeopardizes agonistics in her view of politics with her adaptation of a *sensus communis* as a horizon of agreement based on transcendental subjecthood, or whether Lyotard jeopardizes agonistics through his appeal to the “it” of a community, I would emphasize that both interpretations reveal that *sensus communis* can be interpreted as (empty) capacity of judgement. All that it provides for both Arendt and Lyotard is a horizon, not content. Moreover, they both adopt the Kantian notion of reflective judgement as an indicator of the fact that political and public life does not admit any more certainty than aesthetic life.²⁶

My point is that one should be able to conceptualize the capacity to judge, a *sensus communis*, without founding it either in individual subjectivity or universal or local community. As I have attempted to show, the capacity to judge, which is common to all and which operates without the necessary horizon of agreement, may also be based on construction as opposed to subject-philosophy. The point is that we can theorize about this capacity without founding it.

What guides me in my pursuit of a postmodern understanding of judgement is the notion of simultaneously taking seriously the Kantian element of moral capacity as a capacity to judge and the here and now element of a fully situated constituted agent.

Arendt’s modern impulse is the isolation of “politics” as a specific kind of action. Lyotard’s modern impulse is the isolation of judgement as feeling or imagination.²⁷ A postmodern suggestion would be to attempt to avoid the purifying impulse and instead theorize about situated judgement, a judgement laden with multiple layers of impure sedimentation. The ambition in the postmodern is to capture the density of a situation as opposed to searching for the universality within it. At its best, a postmodern political analysis looks at the particular details of power in the here and now, remains sensitive to the situation, is reflective of its own location in the field of power, and is aware of the power of creating a shift through a judgement.

Foucault makes denaturalizing and politicizing shifts in connection with madness, perverse sexuality and criminality. Butler focuses on massive denaturalizing and politicizing issues surrounding women and sexuality. Both show that things which seem non-politically anchored, such as medical facts or basic philosophical concepts, may be analyzed as specific effects of specific powers and may be confronted.²⁸

The Two Ghosts: Determinism and Relativism

The postmodern has been attacked as “immoral”, “nihilistic” and “unpolitical”, and most of the fears surrounding the loss of morality and in connection with the postmodern are inherently linked to the conception of self.

The accusations can be divided into two categories, those concerned with determinism and those concerned with relativism. The first fear is that moral subjects and moral judgements are impossible to conceive of in the postmodern, because there is no coherent and responsible subject to make moral decisions. This is due to the fact that the subject is determined by its environment, is socially constructed, and therefore cannot be an autonomous moral agent. The second fear is that viewing individuals as products of cultures and accepting and respecting different value systems effectively ruins the possibility for moral judgements. If several value systems are simultaneously considered valid, no moral and political judgements can be made.

The first set of accusations has already been dealt with earlier in several respects. I simply suggest that there is no reason why a person cannot be conceived of as entirely socially constructed and simultaneously as a morally and politically responsible judging person. In contrast, I claim that socially constructed persons precisely by virtue of being socially constructed, function as agents with moral capacity.

The writers who I present in this book as postmodern appear to share this simple sentiment without questioning the “grounds” or “justification” of moral capacity. Paul Veyne has characterized Foucault as postulating that people cannot cease to judge any more that they can stop breathing.²⁹ I tried to show a similar type of basic trust, or empirical observation of human life, with regard to Lyotard in Chapter 4. Foucault, Lyotard and Butler all also exercise their own faculties of judgement throughout their work.

The fear of the loss of an individual’s responsible moral capacity that would occur if it is admitted that a judging human being is an effect of several powers is based on the common view according to which being autonomous and being determined antithetically exclude each other. This juxtaposition, which obviously desperately requires exposure to postmodern scrutiny, a task too daunting for this book, is encountered in various forms throughout philosophical literature. One of the forms which we encounter in terms of political judgement is connected to what I have referred to here as the liberal ontology. The free individual (the freely moving body without obstacles) is considered to base her/his choices on the self, as opposed to being determined externally. The Kantian notion of autonomy as self-control (self-command) by the subject of itself is also often interpreted in Anglo-American

literature in a way in which autonomy is understood as not being externally determined. Despite the variation in the parameters of the self in the German tradition of autonomy, in which self-control is the issue, and in the Anglo-American tradition of personal freedom, this is exactly the point at which they come closest to each other.³⁰

The fear of the loss of responsible morality through the concept of a subject as being determined is connection with the notion that pure individual judgement resides in the core self and is contaminated by anything external to it. Here, the transcendental individual of the liberal theory and the Kantian autonomous subject intersect, and together comprise the notion of a core individual.

What is crucial here is the existence of a genuine personal judgement which can be separated from any externally determined view. If there were no way of distinguishing a genuine from an influenced judgement, everything would be lost in morality. We would be left with a scenario in which anything goes.

But is the thought of being able to distinguish a genuine judgement from one which has been externally influenced convincing? We may take into consideration immediate power conflicts and deliberate about their influence on a judgement, but do we really have any reason to claim that we are able to attain a genuine judgement outside the sphere of influence of any power, even educational power and the power that is present when an individual is brought up? The power actually seems to lie also within the deliberating subject. There are significant dimensional differences in being “influenced”, and the assumption of a possibility to discern an individual’s “true” self is not necessary in order to meaningfully discuss them. We can discuss meaningfully the layers, but I view the core as an unnecessary assumption.

The most obvious cases of the impossibility of discerning a self from its “influences” deal with ethnicity and gender. How do you differentiate “a person” from the “influences” of being raised as a Navajo, a Frenchman, or a woman? In the situation of making a judgement a person may deliberate the situation, but the situation always surpasses the ability to reflect upon It is inexhaustible.

The view is often expressed that if judging is situational and there is no possibility of a universally valid judgement, judging may just as well be abandoned. The validity of this conclusion is dependent upon the acceptance of the determined/undetermined dichotomy. I view the danger as lying elsewhere. I ask whether the thought of being able to provide universal judgements that are equally valid for everyone is not the dangerous and frightening one as a moral point of view? Does it not give the power of the universal into the hands of those in hegemonic power?

Instead of making judging impossible, the realization of the impossibility of a non-determined judgement forces one to focus on the particular condition of a judgement. It encourages the close scrutiny of a situation in which a judgement is made and thereby adds a political dimension to the judgement. It encourages political self-reflection in situations of judgement and facilitates a shift toward an attitude that is more careful, more concerned, less self-indulgent and more sensitive to differences. It does not make judging impossible, it merely focuses on layers as opposed to the core.

The second issue surrounds cultural respect versus universalism. The principle of cultural respect goes against the demand of universalism which is often held to be the characteristic feature of morality. How can one judge if one must also accept a different view as correct? There must be some universally true judgements, the division between right and wrong, good and bad.

Recognizing cultural diversity does not cause judging politically to become impossible or non-existent in the here and now. Individuals make judgements here and now. Being aware of the fact that these judgements are made in the here and now by a specific person and that the judging person is constituted in a special way in special circumstances, which may be elaborately but never exhaustively analyzed, does not make the judgement any less moral or politically honest than if they had been made under the pretense of claiming universal validity and assuming a singular personal autonomous core soul. On the contrary, belief in universality produces a sort of disrespect of difference, and universalizing the culturally specific often provides license to oppress. This is the serious threat inherent in universalism.

The standard example in feminist circles is the practice of the genital mutilation of women in some African regions. It is often said that if one denies the existence of one right morality it follows that we (Western feminists) are not permitted to criticize genital mutilation. It is a custom of another culture and as such we must accept it as being equally as valid as our own conceptions. I cannot accept the validity of this reasoning either. The view that there are no universally valid judgements does not prevent a Western feminist from judging that she disapproves of the practice. The fact that she makes her judgement based on her position as a member of a particular culture during a particular time, aware of her own culture's hegemonic position, neither prevents her from judging nor causes her judgement to be any less of a judgement tai any less valid. It merely prevents her from being unable to universalize her opinion. All women belonging to the culture concerned also must judge their own positions. This does not happen in a vacuum, but at the meeting points of cultures, and it is healthy to remember that this meeting point is not neutrally balanced. All that this view takes away from the judgement of a western feminist is her right to refer to her own culture's

practice the most universally advanced. She still judges on the basis of her feelings of injustice.

The respect and reflection of constitution is an important aspect of judging, and equally important in order to solve the problem of “judging other cultures habits” is to remember that cultures are not closed entities and they do not remain unchanged. In moral philosophy as well as in anthropology and sociology, there is tendency to think that cultures are monad-like entities with walls barricading them from other cultures, with definite descriptions. This is just another version of the concept of an autonomous individual soul.

Cultures are always already internally fragmented and in the process of constant change. Consequently, the concern for difference does not result in the often feared situation referred to as “cultural relativism”. We do not have distinct systems of values, such as “African values” or “Western values”, which are internally coherent are externally exclusive, which have relative permanence and inner logic of change, and which make it possible to judge only inside one particular system of values. Conversely, what we do have are constantly changing value arrangements, several systems in the process of change, and within these systems and also sharing several of them, individual people who alter them by making political judgements. What is crucial to comprehend is that individuals are both determined by value systems and determining value systems through their judgements.

Borders should be seen as productive of difference, not as obstacles of sameness. Borders mean distinctions. Some of the fears and dilemmas of the moral and political reasoning of concerning cultural relativism disappear in the postmodern understanding. This only holds true to an extent, however, because fortunately the real issue of judging at each specific instance, every here and now, remains.

In the view which the postmodern invites, politics is characterized as a state of constant open contestation – not of individual interest, but of individuals inhabiting sedimented sites. In this sense, one could say that the postmodern impulse is a judgement within a situation of welcome cultural diversity. It replaces the concept of a culturally unified nation-state and the ideal of a “human” society, in which differences are denied in the name of sameness, and suggests a multiculturalism in which difference is respected and indeed provoked.

Notes

¹ This view is presented very clearly also by, for example, Peter Steinberger, who in *The Concept of Political Judgement* illustrates a fairly conventional Anglo-American way of philosophically approaching the question of political judgement. Steinberger's conclusion on the dilemmas of political judgement is to rely on special individuals, the "skilled practitioners of political judgement." p. 304.

² Communitarianism is a position which assumes the empirical primacy of community and norms of individuals, but which operates within the liberal political ontology. Logically, individuals are primary in the construction of political space.

Communitarianism, in its various forms, can be criticized for its assumption of a stable coherent culture. Alisdair MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian ethics assumes a unified culture with a shared view of the good life and connects this with the emphasis of a continuous self as moral agency. Charles Taylor's conception echoes the ideas of the Hegelian "*Sittlichkeit*", but within a framework of liberal ontology and also with a strong emphasis on self. The communitarianisms of Michel Sandel and Michael Walzer have been formed against rights-liberalism, and both of them emphasize that good defined in community is primary to the abstract right. Sandel's neo-Kantian self-reflection is different from the Hegelian self-reflection: in the Hegelian model the community is self-reflective of itself. Sandel's model includes the Hegelian notion that the individual self is a product of the communal culture (empirically), but the self-reflective moment happens inside the individual. A communal self is not a logically prior to the self-reflective subject.

Of all forms of communitarianism it can be asked whether the theory is framed for a society which has one single conception of a good life, that is, for a society which is monocultural. It is very different from the Nietzschean and Lyotardian emphasis that there is no criteria for judgement.

Discourse ethics is based on the Habermasian framework, in which community between individuals is the logical starting point in the theoretical construction of politics. Discourse ethics transcendently sets agreement as the necessary horizon for the intelligibility of a community.

³ This need not be emotionally conceived as a negative space. The conception that conflict is a negative state stems from the presupposition that being in agreement is the norm. Rather, a state of non-agreement or disagreement can be conceived of as the normal state.

⁴ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" pp. 139-140.

⁵ In this section of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein discusses the reason for calling "language" all the different things that we call language. He says that there is no need to something which is common to all that we call language.

Languages do not have any one thing in common, but they are related to one another in many different ways. He provides the example of games. All games share certain similarities, although there is not one distinct common aspect between them all. We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing. He concludes “I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, color of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.” Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (tr) G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953) pp. 31-32. He then goes on to provide the example of thread and fibers, which Georg Henrik von Wright picks up as Wittgenstein’s “splendid metaphor” in his *Logikka, filosofia ja kieli [Logic, Philosophy, and Language]* (Helsinki: Otava, 1975) p. 238.

⁶ John Searle, “Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida” *Glyph* 1 (1977), 198-208.

⁷ Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction* p. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁰ For Derrida, the example that highlights the importance of iterability in the building of meaning is the signature. The signature is the most intimate sign of individual intentional validation – my decision is mine if I validate it with my signature. Simultaneously, a signature is a signature precisely because of its iterability. A signature must be identifiable to the point that it can be copied, even made into a stamp. “Signature, Event, Context,” pp. 193-196.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, “Signature, Event Context” *Glyph* 1 (1977) p. 192.

¹² The existence of different bodies is not enough to constitute gender as a social institution. We might compare it to other bodily differences, such as hair or eye color, size, shape, or even differences in temperament between individuals, etc. They do not form as such socially effective clusters of bodily differences as do gendered features or racial features. Gendered and racial features form such clusters within a culture and continuously repeat the significance of those features. Instead of questioning what it is in these bodily differences that makes the gendered and racial imbalance of power effective, as often continues to be done, one should ask how the gendered and racial imbalance causes the accentuated importance of these bodily differences *qua* significant differences to be continuously reproduced.

¹³ Honig calls the theories that “displace conflict, identify politics with administration and treat juridical settlement as the task of politics and political theory” “virtue” theories of politics. The theories which “see politics as disruptive practice that resists the consolidations and closures of administrative and juridical settlement for the sake of the perpetuity of political contest” she calls “virtú” theories of politics. She takes up Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt as representatives of virtú theorists, who celebrate politics as conflict. Arendt,

especially, prizes “virtú” for its unique capacity to found new regimes, generate political power, and set up the institutional conditions for its maintenance and regeneration.” Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and The Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) pp. 1-2.

¹⁴ A contemporary writer who deals with a similar concept of politics is Kari Palonen, who also refers in his studies on politics as an action-concept to a conflict-laden agonistic situation which opens the perspective of possibility. Kari Palonen, *Politik als Handlungsbegriff* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1985) and “From Policy and Polity to Politicking and Politicization,” in Kari Palonen and Tuija Parvikko (eds), *Reading the Political* (Helsinki: Finnish Political Science Association, 1993) pp. 6-16.

¹⁵ Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁷ Seyla Benhabib, for example, seems to focus on Arendt precisely because of her emphasis on participation, which she as a communitarian shares. She argues against Arendt’s agonistic conception of political space and what she sees as a lack of dialogue in politics. She criticizes Arendt for considering political judgement as a monologue with oneself and one’s conscience. Seyla Benhabib, “Judgement and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt’s Work,” in *Situating the Self* pp. 121-144. “Urteilkraft und die moralischen Grundlagen der Politik in Werk Hannah Arendts.” *Zeitschrift für philosophischen Forschung* (1987), pp. 542-543.

¹⁸ Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* p. 83.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-117.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²² Honig insightfully discusses how Arendt displaces the notion of self-mastery as a principle of constituting lasting political communities within the politics through the two performative procedures of promising and forgiveness, and how she follows Nietzsche in a detailed replacement of the Kantian ideal of autonomy. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-117.

²³ Honig also implies this in her presentation: “The possibility of new beginning and rebirth is as important to Arendt as it is to Nietzsche.” p. 76 “Like Nietzsche she worries that the ordering of the self into a moral, well-behaved subject diminishes this propensity of act creatively and spontaneously.” p. 76

“Both respond by ... challenging the popular belief in a rational, freewilling, choosing, intending agent, in charge of itself and its actions in order to reassert a primacy of action over actor.” p. 78

Honig quotes Nietzsche: “Only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes, by a “subject”. ... popular morality also separates strength for expressions of strength as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man which was free to

express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no “being” behind doing, effecting, becoming; “the doer” is merely a fiction added to the deed - the deed is everything.”

And she adds: “Arendt agrees with Nietzsche that there is no essential self, no given unity awaiting discovery a realization. There is no being behind doing.” p. 78

Freedom, for Arendt, is not a subject centered condition. She criticizes the philosophical tradition [which.].. distorted the very idea of freedom ... transformed [it] from a expression of active power to the capacity to control one’s actions. p. 79

Through innovative action and speech, Arendt’s actors manifest freedom and “show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world.” p. 81

²⁴ Adriana Cavarero studies Arendt’s “utterly unusual kind of anthropology uniting in a single concept the experiences of beginning, appearing and existing as a unique being.” She writes: “In fact, since by virtue of birth each human being is a new beginning his peculiar humanity consists in the urge to start something new. As with his birth he appears to the world and, most important, to the other human beings living in the world, his peculiar humanity consists in the urge to show himself, to be revealed to the other. As by being born each human being is unique, that is utterly new and unrepeatable, his peculiar humanity consists in the urge to show his uniqueness, to make it visible and apparent.” Adriana Cavarero, “Space and Time in Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Power”. A paper presented at a conference on Power in Tampere 1994. p. 3.

²⁵ Clarke writes: “For Arendt, consensus does not always mean terror, a point of view that Lyotard in *Just Gaming* is dangerously close to asserting.” Clarke’s sympathies are with Arendt and against Lyotard, whereas I would judge the other way around. James P. Clarke, “A Kantian Theory of political Judgement. Arendt and Lyotard” *Philosophy Today* Summer 1994, pp. 135-148.

²⁶ Here I agree with Clarke: James P. Clarke, “A Kantian Theory of Political Judgement. Arendt and Lyotard” *Philosophy Today* Summer 1994 pp. 135-149.

²⁷ In *Just Gaming*, Thébaud asks Lyotard: “Where does this ability to judge come from?”, and Lyotard answers: “It bears a name in a certain philosophical tradition, namely Nietzsche’s: the will to power. It is obvious that for someone like Kant (the expression “ability to judge” is Kant’s), the ability to judge is left mysteriously hanging. With respect to the moral law, Kant says of the will, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that it is an unfathomable principle. In a way, there is nothing to say about it, that is: in truth. But, without it, there would be no experience of obligation and no problem of justice. Here is the answer then: The ability to judge does not hang upon the observance of criteria. The form that it will take in the last *Critique* is that of the imagination. An imagination that is constitutive. It is not only an ability to judge; it is a power to invent criteria.” p. 17.

- ²⁸ In “Bodies That Matter,” in *Bodies That Matter* pp. 27-55, Butler analyzes the concepts of “materia,” “matter” and “materiality” as an effect of gender power.
- ²⁹ Paul Veyne, “The Final Foucault and His Ethics,” in *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 20 no. 1, Autumn 1993. pp. 1-9.
- ³⁰ Some political theorists are very conscious of this shared moral underpinning. David Held, in his *Democracy Today*, presents the concept of autonomy as the links between liberal and Marxist aspirations. He himself chooses to take up this “basic value” and build his conclusion on it.

CONCLUSIONS

In a postmodern treatise the ambition is not to conclude by closing cases, but to open up closed cases by exploring the possibilities of thinking differently. Here, as opposed to concluding, I will offer resting places for thought by reflecting upon the different structures and types of thought and questioning present and alive in this book.

The first structure consists of the two themes which run through the book, the distinctions modern/postmodern and liberal/Hegelian. These distinctions work here as tools to pry open various issues. I do not present argumentation regarding the validity of making such distinctions, nor do I elaborate on them to a closed precision which would be counterproductive. I purposely allow them to remain open-edged and heuristic. Yet, I do defend the usefulness and handiness of these tools, which I hope is apparent within the other structures of thought and questioning in this book.

The second type of thought is the argumentation contained in the separate chapters on the texts of individual contemporary writers. These arguments offer a critique of particular thoughts by making use of the distinctions liberal/Hegelian or modern/postmodern.

I argue that Cohen and Arato, Habermas, Rorty, and Baudrillard all remain attached to the modern political ontology in specific ways. I also argue that Kusch does not recognize Foucault's genealogical point of refusing the liberal ontology, and that Benhabib does not recognize Lyotard's agonistic point of refusing the Hegelian ontology. I argue that Nancy adheres to a modern foundationalist project, in comparison to Lyotard's postmodern reasoning. Anderson, I argue, attaches himself to liberal ontology in his concept of nation, as does Pateman in her Hegel-analysis. I argue that Haraway operates, to a degree, within a modern framework on issues concerning knowledge and reality, as does de Lauretis, who assumes a modern view of the distinction between reality and performance. Finally, I argue that Honig's suggestion of broadening Arendt's concept of action does not take into consideration the modern nature of Arendt's concept of self.

These specific argumentations of particular issues may be viewed within contemporary political theory as indicators of a more general level of cri-

tique. In some of them (the argumentation about Habermas, Cohen/Arato and Benhabib), I argue against the Habermasian and discourse ethical projects, which attempt to overcome the Hegelian/liberal distinction, but which only succeed in combining them, not in problematizing them. I also criticize them for failing to pay attention to the modern/postmodern distinction and of remaining tightly enclosed within the modern discourse.

Another set of arguments surround theoreticians such as Rorty and Baudrillard, whose thinking is either close to the postmodern, or in some issues is postmodern, but who fail to problematize the liberal or the Hegelian ontology in political theory and thereby lose some of the interesting content of their thought.

In addition, some of the arguments deal with theoreticians such as Anderson and Pateman, and at some points Kusch, whose work revolves around topics which I find interesting from a postmodern point of view, but fails to extract interesting aspects from them because of their commitment to what refer to as liberal ontology.

Yet another set of arguments has to do with theoreticians such as Haraway, de Lauretis and Honig, who successfully engage in enthralling theorizations about postmodern politics, and only at particular instances encounter points of disagreement with my argumentation. None of the aforementioned theorists are either strongly modern foundationalist universalists or strongly attached to liberal or Hegelian political ontology.

The third structure of argumentation targets the work of Foucault, Lyotard and Butler. I deal with their thinking more extensively than I do with others, yet my aim is not to reach conclusions but rather to raise questions. With regard to Lyotard, the question is whether his agonistics is compromised by his flirtation with the foundational concept of the transcendental will of the nation.

The question regarding Foucault, on the other hand, is whether his genealogical project is compromised with his sometimes foundational treatment of the body or the expressionist self. This is a question which has already been posed by Butler in connection with Foucault's treatment of the body and sexuality, and which I reproduce in connection with political judgement.

The fourth structure consists of the progressive conceptualization of the issue of agency: I begin with the analysis of two different quasi-transcendentals in which the primary agency is conceived, at the ontological level, in modern political theory. I refuse the thought of a community as a self-commanding agent and attempt to illustrate its consequences in the conception of democracy in Chapters 1, 4 and 5. In Chapters 1 and 4, I also illustrate the problems created by the liberal ontology and its inability to conceive of difference in agency. The two quasi-transcendentals, the transcendental indi-

vidual and the communal self-commanding subject, are both rejected - as are the expressivist Heideggerian type of self, which I briefly take up as a conception of communal subjectivity in Chapter 5, and the Arendtian self, which I contemplate in Chapter 8. None of these is what the non-foundational postmodern concept is searching for in order to conceive of agency within postmodern political theory.

I utilize the notion of genealogy in the subversion of both types of quasi-transcendentals, and suggest that any identity could be conceived of as deconstructable into its construction in power.

From this point of view I reconsider the status of the concept of nation in Chapter 6, and suggest that nation is to be conceived of as a transient moment in politics combined with the postmodern consciousness of the constructedness of any identity. I defend it as a significant moment of the politics of difference and politics of names against the terror of majority and sameness.

Nevertheless, the political moment of identity should not be conceived of as occurring in the form of consciousness (a single subject), nor should it be perceived ontologically as the agent of political action, as it is in the Hegelian-based theory. Political agency is located within individuals. However, individuals, as the notion of nation also entails, cannot be conceived of as transcendently closed entities.

I proceed to ask how to perceive of the acting individual or the self if not as an autonomous closed self. I suggest, reapplying the thought of Foucault and Butler, a genealogical account of the self in which it is constructed as an effect of various powers and without the existence of a core-self.

The quasi-transcendental agencies of modern political theory are closed selves or subjects which through genealogical treatment become conceptualized as constructed and coreless. The consideration of both subject bases of modern political theory as being constructed leads to recasting the question of agency as a question of a deconstructed self as an agent.

Referring to the Kantian reflection of Lyotard and Arendt, I suggest that political agency is an activity of judging. In the last chapter, I combine this Kantian, Arendtian and Lyotardian view with that of the self as coreless and constructed. My contention is that a view of the constructedness of agency is combinable with the notion of agency as a judging subject. I suggest that this activity be conceptualized in connection to the genealogical description of agency, that it be thought of as a situated judgement.

The question that I pose in place of a conclusion is: Could it be possible to abandon the idea of a transcendental individual agency in all its individual and communal forms, in the forms of self-control, expressivist and the choosing interest-individual, and to conceptualize politics as an agonistic process of judgements by agents conceived of as constructed by power?

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