



**AFTER POSTSTRUCTURALISM
TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS**

EDITED BY ROSI BRAIDOTTI

THE HISTORY OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

AFTER POSTSTRUCTURALISM

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General Editor: Alan D. Schrift

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**VOLUME 7
THE HISTORY OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

General Editor: Alan D. Schrift

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 2010 by Acumen
First published in paperback by Acumen in 2013

Published 2014 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group,
an informa business*

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ISBN: 978-1-84465-615-8 (paperback)
ISBN: 978-1-84465-668-4 (paperback 8-volume set)
ISBN: 978-1-84465-217-4 (hardcover)
ISBN: 978-1-84465-219-8 (hardcover 8-volume set)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in Minion Pro.

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SERIES PREFACE

“Continental philosophy” is itself a contested concept. For some, it is understood to be any philosophy after 1780 originating on the European continent (Germany, France, Italy, etc.). Such an understanding would make Georg von Wright or Rudolf Carnap – respectively, a Finnish-born philosopher of language and a German-born logician who taught for many years in the US – a “continental philosopher,” an interpretation neither they nor their followers would easily accept. For others, “continental philosophy” refers to a style of philosophizing, one more attentive to the world of experience and less focused on a rigorous analysis of concepts or linguistic usage. In this and the accompanying seven volumes in this series, “continental philosophy” will be understood *historically* as a tradition that has its roots in several different ways of approaching and responding to Immanuel Kant’s critical philosophy, a tradition that takes its definitive form at the beginning of the twentieth century as the phenomenological tradition, with its modern roots in the work of Edmund Husserl. As such, continental philosophy emerges as a tradition distinct from the tradition that has identified itself as “analytic” or “Anglo-American,” and that locates its own origins in the logical analyses and philosophy of language of Gottlob Frege. Whether or not there is in fact a sharp divergence between the work of Husserl and Frege is itself a contested question, but what cannot be contested is that two distinct historical traditions emerged early in the twentieth century from these traditions’ respective interpretations of Husserl (and Heidegger) and Frege (and Russell). The aim of this history of continental philosophy is to trace the developments in one of these traditions from its roots in Kant and his contemporaries through to its most recent manifestations. Together, these volumes present a coherent and comprehensive account of the continental philosophical tradition

that offers readers a unique resource for understanding this tradition's complex and interconnected history.

Because history does not unfold in a perfectly linear fashion, telling the history of continental philosophy cannot simply take the form of a chronologically organized series of "great thinker" essays. And because continental philosophy has not developed in a vacuum, telling its history must attend to the impact of figures and developments outside philosophy (in the sciences, social sciences, mathematics, art, politics, and culture more generally) as well as to the work of some philosophers not usually associated with continental philosophy. Such a series also must attend to significant philosophical movements and schools of thought and to the extended influence of certain philosophers within this history, either because their careers spanned a period during which they engaged with a range of different theorists and theoretical positions or because their work has been appropriated and reinterpreted by subsequent thinkers. For these reasons, the volumes have been organized with an eye toward chronological development but, in so far as the years covered in each volume overlap those covered in the subsequent volume, they have been organized as well with the aim of coordinating certain philosophical developments that intersect in a fashion that is not always strictly chronological.

Volume 1 begins with the origins of continental philosophy in Kant and the earliest responses to his critical philosophy, and presents an overview of German idealism, the major movement in philosophy from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. In addition to Kant, the period covered in the first volume was dominated by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and together their work influenced not just philosophy, but also art, theology, and politics. This volume thus covers Kant's younger contemporary Herder, and his readers Schiller and Schlegel – who shaped much of the subsequent reception of Kant in art, literature, and aesthetics; the "Young Hegelians" – including Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and David Friedrich Strauss – whose writings would influence Engels and Marx; and the tradition of French utopian thinking in such figures as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon. In addition to Kant's early critics – Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon – significant attention is also paid to the later critic of German idealism Arthur Schopenhauer, whose appropriation and criticism of theories of cognition later had a decisive influence on Friedrich Nietzsche.

Volume 2 addresses the second half of the nineteenth century, in part as a response to the dominance of Hegelian philosophy. These years saw revolutionary developments in both European politics and philosophy, and five great critics dominated the European intellectual scene: Feuerbach, Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche. Responding in various ways to Hegelian philosophy and to the shifting political landscape of Europe and

the United States, these thinkers brought to philosophy two guiding orientations – materialism and existentialism – that introduced themes that would continue to play out throughout the twentieth century. The second half of the nineteenth century also saw the emergence of new schools of thought and new disciplinary thinking, including the birth of sociology and the social sciences, the development of French spiritualism, the beginning of American pragmatism, radical developments in science and mathematics, and the development of hermeneutics beyond the domains of theology and philology into an approach to understanding all varieties of human endeavor.

Volume 3 covers the period between the 1890s and 1930s, a period that witnessed revolutions in the arts, science, and society that set the agenda for the twentieth century. In philosophy, these years saw the beginnings of what would grow into two distinct approaches to doing philosophy: analytic and continental. It also saw the emergence of phenomenology as a new rigorous science, the birth of Freudian psychoanalysis, and the maturing of the discipline of sociology. Volume 3 thus examines the most influential work of a remarkable series of thinkers who reviewed, evaluated, and transformed nineteenth-century thought, among them Henri Bergson, Émile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. It also initiated an approach to philosophizing that saw philosophy move from the lecture hall or the private study into an active engagement with the world, an approach that would continue to mark continental philosophy's subsequent history.

The developments and responses to phenomenology after Husserl are the focus of the essays in Volume 4. An ambiguity inherent in phenomenology – between conscious experience and structural conditions – lent itself to a range of interpretations. While some existentialists focused on applying phenomenology to the concrete data of human experience, others developed phenomenology as conscious experience in order to analyze ethics and religion. Still other phenomenologists developed notions of structural conditions to explore questions of science, mathematics, and conceptualization. Volume 4 covers all the major innovators in phenomenology – notably Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and the later Heidegger – as well as its extension into religion, ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and science.

Volume 5 concentrates on philosophical developments in political theory and the social sciences between 1920 and 1968, as European thinkers responded to the difficult and world-transforming events of the time. While some of the significant figures and movements of this period drew on phenomenology, many went back further into the continental tradition, looking to Kant or Hegel, Marx or Nietzsche, for philosophical inspiration. Key figures and movements discussed in this volume include Adorno, Horkheimer, and the Frankfurt School,

Schmitt, Marcuse, Benjamin, Arendt, Bataille, black existentialism, French Marxism, Saussure, and structuralism. These individuals and schools of thought responded to the “crisis of modernity” in different ways, but largely focused on what they perceived to be liberal democracy’s betrayal of its own rationalist ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity. One other point about the period covered in this volume is worthy of note: it is during these years that we see the initial spread of continental philosophy beyond the European continent. This happens largely because of the emigration of European Jewish intellectuals to the US and UK in the 1930s and 1940s, be it the temporary emigration of figures such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Lévi-Strauss, and Jakobson or the permanent emigration of Marcuse, Arendt, and Gurwitsch. As the succeeding volumes will attest, this becomes a central feature of continental philosophy’s subsequent history.

Volume 6 examines the major figures associated with poststructuralism and the second generation of critical theory, the two dominant movements that emerged in the 1960s, which together brought continental philosophy to the forefront of scholarship in a variety of humanities and social science disciplines and set the agenda for philosophical thought on the continent and elsewhere from the 1960s to the present. In addition to essays that discuss the work of such influential thinkers as Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Lyotard, Irigaray, Habermas, Serres, Bourdieu, and Rorty, Volume 6 also includes thematic essays on issues including the Nietzschean legacy, the linguistic turn in continental thinking, the phenomenological inheritance of Gadamer and Ricoeur, the influence of psychoanalysis, the emergence of feminist thought and a philosophy of sexual difference, and the importation of continental philosophy into literary theory.

Before turning to Volume 7, a few words on the *institutional* history of continental philosophy in the United States are in order, in part because the developments addressed in Volumes 6–8 cannot be fully appreciated without recognizing some of the events that conditioned their North American and anglophone reception. As has been mentioned, phenomenologists such as Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, and other European continental philosophers such as Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt, began relocating to the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Many of these philosophers began their work in the United States at the University in Exile, established in 1933 as a graduate division of the New School for Social Research for displaced European intellectuals. While some continental philosophy was taught elsewhere around the United States (at Harvard University, Yale University, the University at Buffalo, and elsewhere), and while the journal *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* began publishing in 1939, continental philosophy first truly began to become an institutional presence in the United States in the 1960s. In 1961, John Wild (1902–72) left Harvard to become Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University. With a commitment from the provost of the university

and the Northwestern University Press to enable him to launch the Northwestern Series in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Wild joined William Earle and James Edie, thus making Northwestern a center for the study of continental philosophy. Wild set up an organizational committee including himself, Earle, Edie, George Schrader of Yale, and Calvin Schrag (a former student of Wild's at Harvard, who was teaching at Northwestern and had recently accepted an appointment at Purdue University), to establish a professional society devoted to the examination of recent continental philosophy. That organization, the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP), held its first meeting at Northwestern in 1962, with Wild and Gurwitsch as the dominant figures arguing for an existential phenomenology or a more strictly Husserlian phenomenology, respectively. Others attending the small meeting included Erwin Straus, as well as Northwestern graduate students Edward Casey and Robert Scharff, and today SPEP has grown into the second largest society of philosophers in the United States. Since those early days, many smaller societies (Heidegger Circle, Husserl Circle, Nietzsche Society, etc.) have formed and many journals and graduate programs devoted to continental philosophy have appeared. In addition, many of the important continental philosophers who first became known in the 1960s – including Gadamer, Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, and Habermas – came to hold continuing appointments at major American universities (although, it must be mentioned, not always housed in departments of philosophy) and, since the 1960s, much of the transmission of continental philosophy has come directly through teaching as well as through publications.

The transatlantic migration of continental philosophy plays a central role in Volume 7, which looks at developments in continental philosophy between 1980 and 1995, a time of great upheaval and profound social change that saw the fruits of the continental works of the 1960s beginning to shift the center of gravity of continental philosophizing from the European continent to the anglo-phone philosophical world and, in particular, to North America. During these years, the pace of translation into English of French and German philosophical works from the early twentieth century as well as the very recent past increased tremendously, and it was not uncommon to find essays or lectures from significant European philosophers appearing first in English and then subsequently being published in French or German. In addition, the period covered in this volume also saw the spread of continental philosophy beyond the confines of philosophy departments, as students and faculty in centers of humanities and departments of comparative literature, communication studies, rhetoric, and other interdisciplinary fields increasingly drew on the work of recent continental philosophers. Volume 7 ranges across several developments during these years – the birth of postmodernism, the differing philosophical traditions of France, Germany, and Italy, the third generation of critical theory, and the so-called

“ethical turn” – while also examining the extension of philosophy into questions of radical democracy, postcolonial theory, feminism, religion, and the rise of performativity and post-analytic philosophy. Fueled by an intense ethical and political desire to reflect changing social and political conditions, the philosophical work of this period reveals how continental thinkers responded to the changing world and to the key issues of the time, notably globalization, technology, and ethnicity.

The eighth and final volume in this series attempts to chart the most recent trends in continental philosophy, which has now developed into an approach to thinking that is present throughout the world and engaged with classical philosophical problems as well as current concerns. The essays in this volume focus more on thematic developments than individual figures as they explore how contemporary philosophers are drawing on the resources of the traditions surveyed in the preceding seven volumes to address issues relating to gender, race, politics, art, the environment, science, citizenship, and globalization. While by no means claiming to have the last word, this volume makes clear the dynamic and engaged quality of continental philosophy as it confronts some of the most pressing issues of the contemporary world.

As a designation, “continental philosophy” can be traced back at least as far as John Stuart Mill’s *On Bentham and Coleridge* (1840), where he uses it to distinguish the British empiricism of Bentham from a tradition on the continent in which he sees the influence of Kant. Since that time, and especially since the early twentieth century, the term has been used to designate philosophies from a particular geographical region, or with a particular style (poetic or dialectical, rather than logical or scientific). For some, it has been appropriated as an honorific, while for others it has been used more pejoratively or dismissively. Rather than enter into these polemics, what the volumes in this series have sought to do is make clear that one way to understand “continental philosophy” is as an approach to philosophy that is deeply engaged in reflecting on its own history, and that, as a consequence, it is important to understand the *history* of continental philosophy.

While each of the volumes in this series was organized by its respective editor as a volume that could stand alone, the eight volumes have been coordinated in order to highlight various points of contact, influence, or debate across the historical period that they collectively survey. To facilitate these connections across the eight volumes, cross-referencing footnotes have been added to many of the essays by the General Editor. To distinguish these footnotes from those of the authors, they are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Alan D. Schrift, General Editor

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INTRODUCTION

Rosi Braidotti

I. AFTER THE WALL

If there ever was an age of historical and philosophical transition, it would have to be the 1980–95 period that is addressed in this volume. Let us play with a few significant dates to illustrate the point: In 1979, the high priest of the radical libertarian Left Herbert Marcuse dies, followed in 1980 by the cofounder of existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, and by Jacques Lacan in 1981. With the death of General Tito, also in 1980, many start mourning the crisis of Western European Marxism, while a greater portion of the world youth is far more affected by the assassination of John Lennon, in New York, which also took place in the year of (dis)grace 1980. “Lennon, not Lenin!” had been a cry of revolutionary youth throughout the previous decade and it acquires a more poignant meaning at the dawn of the 1980s, as the fallout from the previous radical decades comes to a new and sharper focus.

In her seminal text *The Summer of 1980*, the French writer Marguerite Duras, who was also a member of the communist anti-Nazi resistance in her youth, comments extensively on the political events taking place in the Gdansk shipyard in Poland. Under the leadership of Lech Walesa (future Nobel Peace Prize winner) and the trade union Solidarity, Soviet hegemony is being challenged to the core. It is the beginning of the end for Soviet-style communism, announces Duras with barely contained joy. Paris had provided the world forum for progressive and even left-wing critiques of Soviet communism since the 1970s, and for the elaboration of alternative forms of political radicalism. This positions French philosophy as a particularly important factor in the philosophical landscape of the period under review in this volume. Two examples: Nobel Peace

Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, written in secrecy in the USSR as the definitive account of Stalin's death camps, was published in three volumes in Paris between 1973 and 1978. It provides the background for many of the poststructuralist philosophers' critiques of the failed social experiments of Soviet socialism, as well as extra ammunition for the conservatives' opposition to Marxism. The second significant event: Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader and political inspiration behind the Iranian Islamist revolution of 1979 was in exile in Paris in the years preceding the fall of the Shah. The 1980s is in many ways a decade dominated by the cultural and political energies emanating from Paris.

Then comes the landmark year 1989, which signals the fall of the Berlin Wall, the events of Tiananmen Square, and the opening of a new geopolitical era under the aegis of American domination. The philosophical implications of the historical defeat of communism are enormous: both theoretically and politically, the end of the Cold War marks the official rejection of Marxism as a platform for thinking and political organizing. Nineteen eighty-nine also marks the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the buildup of Islamist opposition that will consolidate Osama Bin Laden's power base in the region. An era of perpetual warfare seems to open after 1989, both in the Balkans and in the Gulf area.

For an era that proudly announced itself as marking the "end of ideology," the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a series of conservative ideological onslaughts, starting with the election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in the UK in 1979 and of Ronald Reagan as president in the US in 1980. The Christian-driven American Right celebrates both the end of history (Fukuyama) and the triumph of advanced capitalism as the highest point of human evolution. This conservative political ontology centered on American hegemony is unquestionably one of the offshoots of the end of the Cold War, and although it meets with robust opposition, especially in France after the election of François Mitterrand as president in 1981, it sets the tone for the fast-growing globalization project. Alain Touraine describes it as "one-way thought," that is to say, a unilateral approach to geopolitical affairs and a monological idea of social progress. In this regard, 1989 marks simultaneously the end of communism and the birth of neo-Marxist resistance: both the resurgence of neoliberal economics and its betrayal by neoconservative Christian and, later, Muslim fundamentalists. How and to what extent these in turn result in the renegotiation of the groundings of philosophical practice in this period is a crucial point for discussion.

It is striking, as one looks back over this period, to what extent issues of cultural identity and ideological belonging, of imperial and postcolonial legacies, and of new modes of resistance come to the fore. The Berlin Wall, in fact, fell on both sides, which means that this event challenges binary identity definitions in the former West as well as in the former East, and that it restructures

discursive power relations accordingly. Post-Cold War scholarship can now begin, as Gayatri Spivak announces in *Death of a Discipline*: the “postcommunist” era in the East is matched by a global “postcolonial” era in the West, that is to say, a dual displacement of the core of formerly unitary and oppositional identities. Continental philosophy cannot avoid confrontation with these shifting relations and terms. Historical events unfold alongside each other and shift the axis of philosophical reflection across the board: the election of Benazir Bhutto as the first woman leader of an Islamic nation takes place in 1988; the liberation of Nobel Peace Prize-winning Nelson Mandela in 1990; the Maastricht Treaty is signed in 1992, the same year as the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), while the World Trade Organization (WTO) is set up in 1995.

This speed of events introduces new levels of complexity into the discussion of what counts as the basic unit of continental philosophy: Is it Europe? Which idea of Europe would that entail? And what might be its conceptual, ethnic, and territorial border? What is the legacy of the colonial and fascist past in the present discursive relations engendered by the practice of this discipline? The self-perception of the former West shifts towards a more acute awareness of its colonial and postcolonial legacy. The impetus for this revision does not originate in philosophy, but the discipline cannot fail to be affected by it. The dislocation of eurocentrism becomes a central concern and is especially important to the discussions about the new cosmopolitanism and non-Western humanism. In this volume we dedicate a chapter to the rise of cultural and ethnic studies and their impact on philosophy. This chapter should be approached as a marker of the philosophical relevance and the lasting legacy of anticolonial philosophies and postcolonial theories. These concerns are also featured elsewhere in *The History of Continental Philosophy* and should therefore be approached as transversal and recurrent concerns.

These developments affect also the world-historical and political project that is the European Union (EU). The construction of the EU, through the enlargement process, is made both possible and necessary by the postcommunist/postcolonial conjunction. This issue unfortunately still remains largely unexamined in philosophy, but *The History of Continental Philosophy* does recognize the emergence of the EU as a philosophical question and addresses it accordingly (in Volume 8). For this volume, we try to come to terms with it by devoting special attention to what one could define as philosophical area studies: we have specific chapters on German, Italian, and Czech philosophies, which try to assess whether the changing political context in continental Europe actually affects the practice and the agenda of continental philosophy.

In other words, our understanding of “continental philosophy” has broadened since philosophy extricated itself from the Cold War in 1989, in that

philosophy needs to be redefined in a transnational manner in the context of globalization, postcommunism, and postcolonialism. As a result, continental philosophy is caught, more than ever, in a dialogue with and excursions into its multiple “outsides,” both geopolitically and conceptually. This means that the contributors to this volume resist any attempt to flatten out the diversity of political traditions and histories within former Central and Eastern but also former Western Europe. We neither assume nor support any common metanarrative of postcommunist philosophy or any consensus about a post-1989 neoliberal world order, let alone the place and role of philosophy within it.

Because the contributors to this volume come from a great diversity of geopolitical locations, and because of the large number of Europe-based authors we have been able to gather, more reflection is needed in order to account for this diversity of locations. The specificity of our respective location, in the sense of a sociocultural history as well as a geopolitical position, needs to be taken into account as a factor that shapes post-1989 continental philosophy and leads to the contemporary developments that will be mapped out in this and also the last volume of *The History of Continental Philosophy*.

II. THAT POSTMODERNISM WHICH WAS NOT ONE

In other disciplines, notably cultural and film studies and comparative literature, the 1980s may count as the era of “high” postmodernism. Jean-François Lyotard’s seminal text *The Postmodern Condition* appears in 1979, Fredric Jameson’s equally influential *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* appears in 1991. In this period, the discipline of philosophy experiences a great deal of interdisciplinary expansion, as Judith Butler and I argue in this volume. This interdisciplinary drift – which is likely to horrify the philosophical purists – is philosophy’s way of coping with the staggering technological and cultural developments of this era.

Again, let us look at some dates: 1980 is the year that Cable News Network (CNN) begins to provide twenty-four-hour television news coverage, while the watershed debut of MTV occurs in 1981. Madonna’s first agenda-setting album is released in 1981, while Michael Jackson’s legendary *Thriller* comes out in 1982. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* debuts in 1986, while the World Wide Web becomes publicly available on the internet in 1991.

The convergence between advanced technologies in the field of communication and information on the one hand, and the bioscientific domain on the other, contributes to accelerate the social and intellectual changes. Nineteen eighty-four fails to live up to the apocalyptic, proto-totalitarian scenario dreamed up by George Orwell in the throes of the Cold War. “Big Brother” will soon become

the title of a globally successful reality television program and 1984 goes down in history as the year of publication of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, the book that launches a thousand links and provides the imaginary to code the emerging phenomenon that is the internet. Michel Foucault's death is mourned by many that year, but the masses are more concerned about the disastrous outcome of the miners' strike in the UK, which will mark a resolute political victory for the neoliberal forces that back Thatcher. The rise of digital culture and the demise of the old Left stand side by side as landmarks of the era and mirror images of each other. As Donna Haraway publishes her paradigm-shifting text "A Cyborg Manifesto" in 1985, J. G. Ballard's *Crash* – first published as a novel in 1973, but issued as a film in 1996 – casts a more pensive but also more decadent shadow over the ongoing cybernetic revolution. The process of biogenetical recoding of reproduction, which opens in 1978 with the birth of the first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, culminates in 1996 with the cloning of Dolly the sheep, while the Human Genome Project is officially launched in 1990.

The posthuman element of the postmodern condition comes to the fore with increasing insistence throughout the period covered in this volume, making it redundant to wonder whether we are or ever were postmodern. This age of transition is so intense and speedy as to question the very status of what counts as human. Reflections of humanism, posthumanism and antihumanism, Western and non-Western humanism, increase within philosophy, contributing to the so-called "ethical turn," but also overcoming it in the direction of transnational and postcolonial perspectives. Philosophy's unresolved relationship to technology proves quite an obstacle in the discipline's attempt to stay relevant in a technologically mediated and globalized world.

The fact that most of the material in this volume is very contemporary and concerns philosophers who are still alive and writing has also a number of important methodological implications. The first is that by virtue of the ongoing nature of many movements of thought outlined in this volume, the contributors honored their commitment to the social relevance of philosophy by working hard to engage productively with the contradictions, paradoxes, and injustices of their historical context. Furthermore, given that so much of the contemporary context has to do with complex transformations, social mutations, and technological change, they encourage philosophy to think about processes rather than concepts. This is neither a simple nor a particularly welcome task in the theoretical language and disciplinary conventions that have become the norm in philosophical practice. The fact that theoretical reason is concept-bound and fastened on essential notions makes it difficult to find adequate representations for processes, fluid in-between flows of data, experience, and information. They tend to get frozen in spatial, metaphorical modes of representation that itemize them as "problems." As Gilles Deleuze puts it, the task of philosophy in our

times is not to know who we are, but rather what, at last, we are in the process of becoming. Methodologically speaking, transitions require cartographies that are closer to weather maps than to strict synoptic tables. The contributors to this volume had the unenviable task of trying to capture processes, not single events, and detect collectively enforced movements, not just the rise of proper-noun celebrities. This calls for inventiveness as well as rigor.

This takes us to the second methodological implication: the criteria for the selection of the main texts and authors out of the ongoing processes this volume attempts to account for. Our hope is that decisions about what texts to include from the recent past do not claim to, nor do they objectively have the power to, actually create a canon. The selection therefore reflects something other than the lasting philosophical importance of the works cited. It is rather the case that the works that are mentioned are there to help historically contextualize the overall narrative about the 1980–95 period, more than to acknowledge the appearance of canonical works. The chronology that appears at the end of the volume serves essentially the purpose to align chronologically cultural, historical, and philosophical events so that they can resonate with each other. It is an event-based timeline for the period under scrutiny, which aims at emphasizing processes of change.

Another side effect of this methodological choice is that in this volume chronological linearity is replaced by a more complex kind of temporality. There are two main reasons for this added historico-temporal complexity; first, it reflects the main hypothesis of this volume, namely, that in the 1980–95 period philosophy “explodes” outwards in a number of interdisciplinary thematic and theoretical developments that ignore the canonical periodization of the institutional practice. Second, it fulfills a genealogical purpose that, given the new interdisciplinary orientation, forces many of the authors to cover a broader temporal frame that often begins long before 1980. For instance, the essay on French and Italian Spinozism has to look back to the earlier parts of the twentieth century in order to set the context for what emerges in the 1980s. Similarly, the chapter on postcolonial theory has to extend the time frame of this volume in order to account for philosophical events that are central to it, but took root much earlier. And the essays that explore philosophical developments in the national contexts of France, Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic must also examine the genealogy of these developments in the intellectual influences and formations of the philosophers discussed.

A third methodological implication of the contemporaneity of the topics discussed here is that the speed of the social and political transformations of the period covered in this volume is itself an important factor. By the start of the third millennium, the social context has changed considerably since the days when the poststructuralist philosophers discussed in Volume 6 of *The History*

of Continental Philosophy first put “difference” on the theoretical and political agenda. The return of biological essentialism, under the cover of genetics, molecular biology, evolutionary theories, and the despotic authority of DNA has caused both inflation and a reification of the notion of “difference.” As the US celebrates its first black president, in Europe today contemporary racism celebrates rather than denies differences. In this reactionary discourse, however, cultural and ethnic differences are essentialized and attached to firm beliefs about national, regional, provincial, or even town-based parameters. In this context, however, difference is a term indexed on a hierarchy of values that it governs by exclusions through binary oppositions.

This political context makes it all the more important to return the post-poststructuralist and other philosophies of difference to their original progressive and even radical potential. After thirty years of postmodernist debates for, against, or undecided on the issue of the “nonunitary,” split, in-process, knotted, rhizomatic, transitional, nomadic subjects, issues of fragmentation, complexity, and multiplicity have become part of philosophical terminology and practice. The relative popularity of these notions, however, and the radical-chic appeal of the terminology, does not make for consensus about the issues at stake. It is therefore urgent to assess the implications for contemporary culture and politics of the critiques of the subject that have been developed throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Much disagreement and cross-purpose arguments have been voiced as to the ethical and political issues that the question of the subject raises in contemporary culture and politics. In other words, the “so what?” part of the discussion on philosophical subjectivity is more open than ever, while the contradictions and the paradoxes of our historical condition pile up around us. This volume accordingly gives ample space to the ethical turn, to issues of epistemology, and to the redefinition of the political. These mark major shifts of the categorical distinctions among different branches of philosophy and return to the basic questions about the values, norms, and criteria that philosophy can offer to a fast-changing world.

The volume has been organized according to a rhythmic sequence that groups the chapters in significant clusters. We open with Simon Malpas and the keynote concept of postmodernism, which is contextualized in the political context of advanced capitalism, marked by both fast social change and high levels of cultural anxiety. The unprecedented rate and type of technological developments led by advanced technologies results in critical questioning of the Enlightenment notions of the self-regulating and intrinsically liberating powers of scientific rationality, for instance in the work of Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, and Jean-François Lyotard. As advanced societies slide toward a culture of digital simulation and virtual reality, the social nexus that held together the Enlightenment project of European modernity slackens off. This requires new critical interventions on the part of philosophers.

There follows a cluster of essays that aim to outline relevant philosophical developments in the field in a number of different national contexts. In “German Philosophy after 1980: Themes Out of School,” Dieter Thomä argues that a dissolution of boundaries takes place in this period not only between continental and analytic philosophy, but also within them. He points to the alliance between Habermas and Derrida, or to Honneth reading Levinas, as clear indication that the labels of the old philosophical “schools” lose much of their relevance in the period under scrutiny in this volume and require more creativity on our part. Writing from France about the lasting legacy of that generation, Patrice Maniglier addresses “The Structuralist Legacy.” He emphasizes the importance of the theory of subjectivity that sustains the epistemological core of structuralism. By analyzing the agenda-setting journal *Cahiers pour l’analyse* and stressing the structuralists’ interest in the ontological nature of the dynamic unity of subjectivity, Maniglier draws illuminating connections between Althusser, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss and contemporary developments by Badiou, Balibar, and Lecourt. “Italian Philosophy Between 1980 and 1995,” by Silvia Benso and Brian Schroeder, explores a historical context marked by the rigid separation of three cultural domains: the Catholic area, the secularist, and the Marxist thinkers. These domains affect and frame the reception and local developments of wider movements of thought, resulting in three main strands: the crisis of reason and subjectivity, modernity and postmodernity, and hermeneutics and “weak thought.” In his chapter on “Continental Philosophy in the Czech Republic,” Josef Fulka, Jr. adds a much needed note from the eastern side of the former Berlin Wall. By focusing on political and theoretical development in the Czech Republic and especially the thought of Jan Patočka, Fulka traces also the intense and often informal networks of philosophical exchanges that connected East to West during the Cold War. He also highlights the important role played by French philosophy as a harbinger of democracy and freedom.

It is evident that the range of essays included in this section is not exhaustive but is at best a selective choice necessitated by the limitations of size and scope of the volume. The selection could have been expanded to include similar developments both within the European Union and elsewhere in the world. The case of Spain and of Spanish philosophy comes to mind as a particularly relevant one, considering the wealth and continuity of philosophical tradition it offers in the works of, for example, Eugenio Triás Sagnier (1942– ; considered by many the most important Spanish philosopher since Ortega y Gasset), ethical philosopher Fernando Fernández-Savater Martín (1947– ; who follows in the tradition of Nietzsche and Emil Cioran), and critical and postcolonial theorist Eduardo Subirats (1947–). Philosophical thought in Asia, notably the adaptation of phenomenology to traditions of thought in China, Korea, and, in particular, Japan should also have received more attention than we could grant

them here.¹ However regrettable, such omissions are inevitable in a volume that aims not at exhaustiveness but rather at tracking the developments of the main traditions of continental German and French philosophies not only in their home countries but more especially in the diasporic mode that is central to the period covered in this volume. The central hypothesis that sustains the selection made here in fact is that continental philosophy after poststructuralism explodes outside the established institutional and disciplinary framework and goes nomadic. Tracking this diasporic move fully would require more space and resources than we could mobilize here. It might be more fitting therefore to read these essays on different national contexts as fulfilling an exemplary function. This is particularly true of the only essay that explicitly examines continental philosophical developments in Eastern Europe: the chapter on the Czech Republic should be approached as representative of the vitality of philosophy behind the Iron Curtain and of its expansion after 1989, rather than as a compre-

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1. Nishida Kitaro (1870–1945), widely considered modern Japan’s first original philosopher, introduced Husserl’s work to Japan, thus beginning a long tradition of Japanese phenomenological and postphenomenological philosophy. Taking its point of departure from the thinking of Nishida, the “Kyoto School” – whose name was coined by Tosaka Jun (1900–1945) in 1932 – came into its own via Nishida’s younger colleagues and successors Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962) and Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990), who, through their original contributions, helped shape and solidify the school’s early identity by their association with contemporary European thinking of the day. Both Tanabe and Nishitani studied in Germany during the years between the First and Second World Wars (Tanabe in 1922–24, Nishitani in 1936–39). Tanabe, whose formation in Western philosophy was grounded in Kant and German idealism, had gone to Germany to explore the relation between Kant’s transcendental logic, Bergson’s vitalism, and Husserl’s phenomenology, but encountered the work of the young Heidegger, who impressed him with his “phenomenology of life.” On his return to Japan, Tanabe wrote the first article in the world on Heidegger’s thought. Nishitani, who wrote a dissertation on Schelling and Bergson, returned from Germany to Japan where he became perhaps the most influential proponent of Heideggerian philosophy and an even stronger proponent of Nietzsche, with whose thought Heidegger was actively engaged at the time. Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941) also traveled to Germany, where he studied with Husserl, Heidegger, and Rickert before traveling to Paris in 1928, where he hired, as a French tutor, a young Jean-Paul Sartre, and it has been claimed that it was Kuki who first interested Sartre in Heidegger’s philosophy (see Graham Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Philosophy* [Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1990], 158). Kuki wrote the first book-length study of Heidegger (*The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 1933). Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*, published in 1927, appeared in Japanese translation in 1939, while an English translation did not appear until 1962 and a complete French translation not until 1985. More recently, continental philosophical themes have appeared in the work of Kojin Karatani (1941– ; *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx* [2001], Sabu Kohso [trans.] [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003]), Akira Asada (1957–), and Kuniichi Uno (1948–). For a critical exploration of the relation between the Kyoto School and continental philosophers, see Bret W. Davis *et al.* (eds), *Japanese and Continental Philosophy: Conversations with the Kyoto School* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2010).

hensive or definitive survey of the importation of continental philosophy into Eastern Europe after 1980.

The next cluster of essays addresses more directly issues in political philosophy. Amy Allen, in "Third Generation Critical Theory: Benhabib, Fraser, and Honneth," examines the work of Habermas's three most prolific students as they critically engage his reorientation of critical theory toward normative justifications, the pragmatics of language, and the discourse theory of morality, law, and politics. "French and Italian Spinozism," by Simon Duffy, on the other hand, traces the development of an alternative ethics inspired by French philosophers' innovative take on Spinoza. Spinozist materialism as the antidote to Hegelian idealism becomes one of the driving forces in poststructuralist innovations in thinking the political in the work of Étienne Balibar, Pierre Macherey, Gilles Deleuze, and Antonio Negri. This line is pursued and expanded by Lasse Thomassen in "Radical Democracy," which is presented as an antifoundationalist approach to democratic politics. Focusing on thinkers such as William E. Connolly, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Slavoj Žižek, Thomassen explores the longer-term political implications of poststructuralism.

A cluster on new normative approaches to philosophy opens with "Cultural and Postcolonial Studies" by Iain Chambers. He highlights the innovative force of the interdisciplinary field of race and postcolonial theory, mostly in the work of Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and Gayatri Spivak. The innovation is both political and conceptual in that it highlights the critique of racialized power relations while rejecting black essentialism or any kind of essentialism. Chambers also bring out the wealth of philosophical texts generated by anticolonial politics and pleads for a reappraisal of their importance for a contemporary history of philosophical thought. "The 'Ethical Turn' in Continental Philosophy in the 1980s," by Robert Eaglestone, takes the influential figure of Levinas as the lead in sketching the phenomenon of a return to issues of norms and values in the period covered by this volume. Both in reaction to the structural injustices of globalization, and as the effect of poststructuralist critiques, ethics emerges as the main forum for debates about contemporary subjectivity. In my own essay "Feminist Philosophy: Coming of Age," I explore the explosion of scholarly work in this field after poststructuralism. I argue that an interdisciplinary impetus as well as radical politics drive the "intermediate" generation's work in developing the insights of "high" poststructuralism toward new understandings of what is the matter with materialism and the materiality of the sign. Bruce Ellis Benson's contribution, "Continental Philosophy of Religion," analyzes the theological turn, mostly in French philosophy, with special emphasis on Jean-Louis Chrétien, Jacques Derrida, Michel Henry, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Luc Marion, and Paul Ricoeur. The chapter traces its definition and development, as well as the ways in which theological and religious concerns affect not only

philosophical discourse but also phenomenology's very structure as a theologically neutral discourse. "The Performative Turn and the Emergence of Post-Analytic Philosophy," by José Medina, follows the lead of the linguistic turn as a thread that runs through both analytic and continental philosophy. This achieves a double result: it develops new perspectives at the intersection of the great schools, but it also challenges the categorical distinctions between them. Again interdisciplinary in approach, post-analytic thought addresses issues of identity, knowledge, and values that reach well beyond the confines of academic philosophy.

This is precisely the theme addressed by the essay that closes this volume: "Out of Bounds: Philosophy in an Age of Transition," by Judith Butler and myself. The chapter documents the interdisciplinary explosion of the discipline in the 1980–95 period and the extent to which this extracurricular vitality challenges the traditional disciplinary constraints. The nonacademic energy of philosophy in this period is sustained by an intense political desire to reflect the changing historical and social conditions of a world that is rapidly becoming globally linked, technologically mediated, and ethnically mixed. That challenge continues and grows in quantity and quality in the following decades, decades that are addressed in the eighth and closing volume of *The History of Continental Philosophy*.

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POSTMODERNISM

Simon Malpas

Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives. ... To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal.

(Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*)¹

Although by no means the first instance of the term “postmodern,” this is probably one of the most immediately recognizable. The publication in 1979 of Jean-François Lyotard’s *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* – an investigation into “the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies”² commissioned by the Council of Universities of the Provincial Government of Quebec – provides a useful moment at which to locate the beginning of a very rapid spread of postmodernism as a subject of theoretical and philosophical discussion throughout a wide range of academic disciplines and, beyond them, across the media and culture of the developed world. The worldview presented in Lyotard’s book encapsulates the sense of change that was in the air at the beginning of the period covered in this volume of *The History of Continental Philosophy*, and anticipates what would become for people across the globe some of the defining experiences of the final decades of the twentieth

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (trans.) (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

2. *Ibid.*, xxiii.

century. At the beginning of the 1980s, with the elections that brought Ronald Reagan's and Margaret Thatcher's new breeds of monetarist economics, market deregulation, and ideologies of aggressively anti-welfare-state individualism to the US and UK, Lyotard's invocation of the transformation of knowledge from an end in its own right into just one more product to be bought and sold in an international marketplace seemed to many to capture the spirit of the time. The "great goals" of Enlightenment philosophy – truth and emancipation – appeared to be replaced by new, less apparently noble objectives as knowledge became the quintessential commodity for a postmodern consumer society: "Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold," Lyotard declared, "it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange."³ In this sense, postmodernism located knowledge within the newly deregulated markets that came quickly to define the experience of economic life in the 1980s.

Alongside this commodification of knowledge, the period also saw radical innovations in communications media with the rapid development of the internet, the spread of digital telephony, and the ever-increasing numbers of radio and television channels catering to more specialized tastes, all of which created a sense of more and more complex and fragmented modes of production, interaction, and exchange. The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union led some in the West to declare not just victory in the Cold War but, as the title of Francis Fukuyama's 1992 book put it, the "end of history" itself with the triumph of a US form of "free-market democracy" and what President George Bush (senior) was to call a "New World Order." It appeared for a time that economically, politically, socially, and culturally the global order was changing, and for many commentators the theories and arguments of those philosophies grouped beneath the banner of postmodernism best captured the opportunities and threats this new world might have to offer. Even if Lyotard's particular responses to this change have frequently been questioned and challenged, the general sense that the world was in the process of undergoing a profound transformation rapidly developed into a key topic for debate, and the term "postmodern" became increasingly ubiquitous as the designation of this new "condition."

There were moments in the 1980s and 1990s where it seemed that every new innovation, idea, and artifact had to be hailed or dismissed as "postmodern," where discussions of culture were obliged to invoke the term to identify anything even remotely contemporary, and its deployment by journalists, commentators, critics, and students was practically mandatory. For better or worse, by 1995 it had become clear to many that, although the meaning of the term was

3. *Ibid.*, 4.

anything but certain, Western culture and society had incontrovertibly become “postmodern.” One consequence of this, and a key difficulty for any attempt to delineate precisely what the term designates, is that precise analytical definitions of the postmodern in such works as Lyotard’s quickly became difficult to discern among the myriad mass-media and popular-cultural invocations. Some thinkers, faced with such confusion, explicitly renounced the term’s association with their work: for example, both Derrida and Foucault reject the application of postmodernism as a label for their work, with Foucault going so far as to claim that he has no idea what it might mean.⁴ Separating out a rigorously philosophical postmodernism from the significantly wider phenomenon that shaped many aspects of the cultural climate of Europe and North America during the 1980s and 1990s is no easy task.

This, though, is the aim here: to isolate and identify some of the key philosophical problems and arguments associated with postmodernism. Rather than attempting to encompass the countless different definitions provided by commentators from the whole range of humanities and social science disciplines, the objective is to explore postmodernism’s engagement with some of the problems and ideas it inherits from the continental philosophical tradition. For the purposes of this essay, then, the focus will fall predominantly on the work of the three most central and influential postmodern philosophers of the period: Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, and Lyotard.⁵ The aim is to outline the key tenets of their definitions of the postmodern, to produce a brief account of the philosophical contexts in which their work might be located, and to explore their influence on the broader thought and culture of the period.

Beginning with Jameson, the chapter will outline his arguments about the disruption of modern identity through the pastiche and schizophrenia generated in contemporary consumer society, and explore his critique of the idea of a loss of critical distance in postmodernist culture. The chapter will then introduce some of Baudrillard’s attempts to reorient philosophy, including the moves from a representational to a simulation-focused epistemology, from a Marxist production-orientated analysis of society to one driven by a thinking of consumption, from ethics to seduction and – in what is perhaps his most controversial work on such topics as the Gulf War and international terrorism – from

4. See Jacques Derrida, “Some Statements and Truisms about Neologisms, Newisms, Postisms, Parasitisms, and Other Small Seismisms,” in *The States of “Theory”: History, Art, and Critical Discourse*, David Carroll (ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), and Michel Foucault, “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” Jeremy Harding (trans.), in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.) (New York: Routledge, 1988), 34.

*5. For a discussion of Lyotard’s philosophy more generally, see the essay by James Williams in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 6*.

oppositional critique to the ironic detachment of “skeptical intelligence.” Moving on to Lyotard’s more robustly pro-postmodern formulations, it will then discuss his analyses of the breakdown of modernity’s master narratives, his rethinking of Kantian reflective judgment, and his transformation of the category of the sublime, in order to facilitate explorations of the unrepresentable, the differend, and the event.

I. THE DEATH OF THE SUBJECT IN LATE CAPITALISM

According to Jameson,⁶ a key aspect of postmodernism is “the ‘death’ of the subject itself – the end of the bourgeois monad or ego or individual.”⁷ The Cartesian subject, the keystone of modern philosophy, politics, and social science, loses its purchase in a postmodern world, and with it go modernist conceptions of aesthetic form, representation, critique, and collective politics. For Jameson, the disruption of such categories is the most profound and troubling aspect of the move to postmodernism. The causes and consequences of the death of the subject are central to his influential definition of postmodernism as “the cultural logic of late capitalism” in his important essay “Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” first published in the journal *New Left Review* in 1984, and expanded into a book with the same title in 1991. In these texts, Jameson develops an analysis of postmodernism that presents it as the cultural consequence of a transformation of capitalist economics in the second half of the twentieth century and seeks a means by which radical political critique might be able to continue in the contemporary world. He defines “late capitalism” as a “world capitalist system fundamentally distinct from the older imperialism”⁸ in which the globalization of stock-market speculation, the movement of industrial production to developing countries by multinational business, increasing automation and computerization, and the disruption and dispersal of the proletariat of classical Marxism give rise to new forms of identity, experience, and culture that can be called “postmodern.” The result of this,

6. Fredric Jameson (April 14, 1934– ; born in Cleveland, Ohio) received a BA from Haverford College (1954), and MA and PhD from Yale University (1956, 1959). His influences include Freud, Hegel, Lacan, Lukács, Mandel, Marx, and Sartre. He has held appointments at Harvard University (1961–67), in French and comparative literature at the University of California, San Diego (1967–76), in French at Yale University (1976–83), in literature and history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz (1983–85), and in comparative literature at Duke University (1986–).

7. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 15.

8. *Ibid.*, 3.

according to Jameson, is that “every position on postmodernism in culture ... is also at one and the same time, and *necessarily*, an implicitly or explicitly political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today.”⁹ This is crucial: for Jameson, the innovation and experimentation of contemporary artistic and cultural production can be grasped only as an expression of the transformed conditions of modern society, politics, and economics.

On the basis of this account of postmodernism as the superstructural expression of the development of global capitalism, Jameson presents a historically materialist-inflected analysis of contemporary culture in terms of the commodification of aesthetic experience:

Aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to aeroplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation.¹⁰

This focus on the aesthetics of production and the consumption of aesthetic affect is crucial to his analysis of contemporary experience, identity, and politics. In a series of discussions of art, poetry, architecture, cinema, and television, Jameson traces the movement from what he identifies as the modernist idea of cultural practice as a vehicle that contests and parodically undermines bourgeois assumptions about the world to what he sees as the significantly less challenging postmodern notion of cultural production as having become just another aspect of commodity exchange and thereby lacking a critical edge. Modernist parody, he argues, has degenerated into little more than “blank pastiche” as art mixes and matches elements and fragments of everyday life without any sense of critical engagement or challenge, and in doing so has lost touch with the materiality of existence and community.

More generally, what is at stake in the commodification of aesthetic production is what Jameson sees as an increasing aestheticization of day-to-day identity: the key focus of production and consumption in late capitalism is the generation and marketing of images, lifestyles, and modes of being. The Western consumer purchases identities in the shape of everything from fashionable brands whose advertisements hold out the promise of spontaneous personal fulfillment as one joins the “smart set” to empty signifiers of identity such as trendy ringtones for mobile telephones that are designed less to inform

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 4–5.

us that we have a call than to tell those around us how cool we are and which cultural clique we have bought our way into. “Postmodernism,” Jameson asserts, “is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process.”¹¹ Commodities are no longer simply objects; they are brands, identities, ways of forging personalities and communities in a world that, he claims, has lost touch with traditional senses of being in common.

Jameson illustrates this process by contrasting two works of art: Vincent Van Gogh’s *A Pair of Boots* – which also formed the focus of Martin Heidegger’s seminal essay “The Origin of the Work of Art”¹² and from which Jameson draws ideas – with Andy Warhol’s *Diamond Dust Shoes*. Unlike the former, which presents “the whole object world of agricultural misery,” the latter, he argues, “no longer speaks to us with any of the immediacy of Van Gogh” nor even provides “a minimal place for the viewer” in a work that simply embraces the “commodity fetishism” rather than offering any form of critique.¹³ Shorn of context and history, Warhol’s shoes are presented immediately as a random collection of desirable commodities without the depth of community or history.

This postmodern consumption of images has, in its turn, a profound effect on identity. Commodified and aestheticized by the ubiquitous and all-encompassing fashion and marketing industries, the world “comes before the subject with heightened intensity, bearing a mysterious charge of affect, here described in the negative terms of anxiety and loss of reality, but which one could just as well imagine in the positive terms of euphoria, a high, and intoxicatory or hallucinogenic intensity,”¹⁴ which Jameson identifies with schizophrenia. Caught up in the infinite transformation and interchangeability of fashions and commodities, which are all the postmodern subject has to ground her or his sense of identity, the rapid alternations between anxiety and euphoria disable any potential for objective analysis or understanding of self or world. The consequences of contemporary culture’s schizophrenic intensity are a destruction of subjective identity, a loss of a sense of history, and a disruption of the ability to engage with the real:

Cultural production is thereby driven back inside a mental space which is no longer that of the old monadic subject but rather that of some degraded collective “objective spirit”: it can no longer gaze directly on some putative real world, at some reconstruction of a

11. *Ibid.*, x.

*12. For a discussion of Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Work of Art,” see the essay by Galen A. Johnson in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 4*.

13. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 9.

14. *Ibid.*, 27–8.

past history which was once present; rather, as in Plato's cave, it must trace our mental images of that past upon its confining walls.¹⁵

Enclosed in the illusory world of the postmodern commodity, in the degraded objectivity of infinite financial exchange, the subject loses all sense of a real, all access to history and any ability to form or maintain firm distinctions between self, other, and world.

The loss of critical distance in the schizophrenic depthlessness of postmodern culture, Jameson argues, appears to disable modern forms of political critique and collective action. If an artistic or philosophical challenge to late capitalism is to be mounted and modern forms of political resistance and organization are to be re-enabled in the contemporary world, radical critique must begin with the rediscovery of the forms of identity and agency that stood at the core of the modern subject: "the practical reconquest of a sense of place and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual can map and remap along the moments of mobile alternative trajectories."¹⁶ In other words, Jameson calls for a process of critique that allows the subject to reorient herself or himself through a process of "cognitive mapping" that generates a "situational representation" from the mass of images and commodities that make up the experience of everyday life in order to make apparent the "vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole."¹⁷ A coherent political response to the postmodern superstructure of our late-capitalist world must, according to Jameson, begin with a reorientation of experience in order to ground the subject in a manner that allows the revivification of modern political categories. Whether postmodern culture is able to provide the resources for this, he argues, remains an open question.

II. SIMULATION, HYPERREALITY, AND THE "END OF HISTORY"

Just as it does for Jameson, the problem of a loss of critical distance plays a crucial role in the work of Baudrillard:¹⁸ it is "the perfect crime" of postmodern

15. *Ibid.*, 25.

16. *Ibid.*, 51.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Jean Baudrillard (July 29, 1929–March 6, 2007; born in Rheims, France; died in Paris) received a PhD in sociology, and the habilitation, from the University of Paris X–Nanterre (1966, 1972). His influences include Bataille, Debord, Freud, Lefebvre, Marx, Mauss, McLuhan, and Nietzsche, and he held appointments at the University of Paris X–Nanterre (1966–86), and

culture, “the murder of reality.”¹⁹ If the former’s analysis of the postmodern superstructure of late capitalism focuses on the problematic of subjective orientation, Baudrillard’s diagnosis of the challenges of the postmodern world presents contemporary culture as a perverse “hyperreal” literalization of G. W. F. Hegel’s assertion about the relation between the real and the rational in the Preface to *The Philosophy of Right* (1820):

There is no longer any critical and speculative distance between the real and the rational. There is no longer really even any projection of models in the real ... but an in-the-field, here-and-now transfiguration of the real into model. A fantastic short-circuit: the real is hyperrealized. Neither realized nor idealized: but hyperrealized. The hyperreal is the abolition of the real not by violent distinction, but by its assumption, elevation to the strength of the model.²⁰

For Baudrillard, postmodernism marks the point at which the real has been entirely replaced and “transfigured” by rationalized models with the result that any possibility of a “critical and speculative distance” between them has collapsed. If, as Hegel argues, the movement of history can be understood in terms of a progressive transformation of rationality’s grasp of reality by means of ideas, practices, and institutions that develop dialectically to overcome particular forms of impasse thrown up by the contradictions inherent in this movement, Baudrillard presents the postmodern as a moment at which this process has been bypassed in a “fantastic short-circuit” generated by the immediacy of a technological hyperreality in which the rational/actual “distinction” of modernity is simply abolished “by its assumption,” “elevation,” and “transfiguration” into the postmodern “model.” Modern history, on this reading, has run its course, and the orientation it once offered to speculative dialectical philosophy has disappeared. The consequences of Baudrillard’s discussion of the “end of history,” however, are quite different from those presented in the readings of Hegel that see his work as aimed at the realization of universal freedom as well as from the so-called “good news” about the final triumph of North American free-market democracy over its various political alternatives that is announced in Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*. Instead, according to Baudrillard, this postmodern end of history marks the absolute annihilation of critical distance and the disruption rather than completion of modern political

at the Institut de Recherche et d’Information Socio-Économique (IRIS) at the University of Paris IX–Dauphine (1986–90).

19. Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, Chris Turner (trans.) (London: Verso, 1996), 1.

20. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, Paul Foss et al. (trans.) (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), 83–4.

thought: we can no longer use reason to map the real because, owing to the precision, complexity, and ubiquity of contemporary modelling systems, any resistance or difference that allowed the latter to remain distinct has vanished. What Baudrillard means by this is that with the advent of new sciences and technologies, the models that can be produced to understand the world have become more real, more sophisticated, and more accurate than reality itself. He depicts this process by evoking a telling inversion of the image of the “perfect” map from Jorge Luis Borges’s short story “On Exactitude in Science”:²¹

The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory ... it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. ...
*The desert of the real itself.*²²

The breaking down of the distinction between rationality and actuality, and the insistence that in contemporary culture the map precedes the territory, marks a move Baudrillard makes from a philosophy founded on questions of representation to one that focuses on the concept of simulation. Simulation, which Baudrillard presents as the quintessence of postmodern culture, refuses to raise those questions of originality and referentiality that are central to representationalist philosophies. For him, images and objects function only as placeholders in a structural system in which all values are exchangeable: the postmodern subject exists within the framework of an “infinite code” to which no one has the key. Baudrillard develops this idea of the infinite code of images from a reading of the work of the Situationist theorist Guy Debord, who argued in his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle* that the “whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. All that was once lived has become mere representation” so that spectacle “epitomizes the prevailing model of social life,” the “very heart of society’s real unreality.”²³ Working through the logic of Debord’s arguments, Baudrillard removes from them any vestiges of representationalist philosophy to focus rigorously on postmodern simulation. Contemporary culture, he asserts, is not the producer of simulations, but their product: in postmodern simulation, meaning “implodes” as any last instance of a distinction between rational and

21. See Jorge Luis Borges, “On Exactitude in Science,” in *Collected Fictions*, Andrew Hurley (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998).

22. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 1.

23. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Donald Nicholson-Smith (trans.) (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 12–13.

actual is abolished and the world moves from the critical distance inherent in representational reality to the immediacy of the hyperreal.

“Hyperreality” is not, of course, simply “unreality.” Baudrillard uses the term to identify a culture in which the fantastical creations of media, film, and computer technologies are more real, and interact more fundamentally with experience and desire, than the hitherto dominant “realities” of nature or spiritual life. The real, he argues in *Simulations*, is now “produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere.”²⁴ In an often-cited passage about Disneyland, Baudrillard produces a clear example of how simulation operates to generate hyperreality:

Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the “real” country, all of the “real” America, which *is* Disneyland Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real . . .²⁵

Disneyland is not a fantastic space that makes the mundane reality of everyday American life more bearable, but is rather a means of masking the fantastical nature of that day-to-day existence: it is, he claims, “a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real.”²⁶ The function of Disneyland is to appear fantastical so as to conceal the loss of everyday reality in postmodern simulation, to prevent the American public from recognizing the “fact that the real is no longer real.”

As well as disguising the disconnection of representation and reality, Disneyland is a useful illustration of a key economic and political aspect of Baudrillard’s postmodernism: the “deterrence”-effect of the seductive power of consumer culture. Like Jameson, Baudrillard’s discussions of the postmodern focus explicitly on the structures of global capitalism. In *The Mirror of Production*, Baudrillard asserts that, today, “capitalism crosses the entire network of natural, social, sexual and cultural forces, all languages and codes.”²⁷ It is ubiquitous, he argues, not simply present in the circulation of money and commodities in the financial marketplaces, but everywhere, infecting every aspect of experience:

24. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 3.

25. *Ibid.*, 25.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, Mark Poster (trans.) (St. Louis, MO: Telos, 1975), 138.

The circulation, purchase, sale, appropriation of differentiated goods and signs/objects today constitute our language, our code, the code by which the entire society *communicates* and converses. Such is the structure of consumption, its language, by comparison with which individual needs and pleasures are merely speech effects.²⁸

In *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard equates the commodity with the sign and argues that as they collapse into one another, they generate the language or code that shapes postmodern identity. The postmodern consumer, he argues, “sets in place a whole array of sham objects, of characteristic signs of happiness, and then waits ... for happiness to alight.”²⁹ This passivity is the result of the “seduction” of the commodity: the unfulfillable desire to find happiness among the “array of sham objects” that make up modern life is produced by contemporary capitalism as the organizing force of experience and leads to the most central aspect of Baudrillard’s postmodernity – the ubiquity of the messages produced by advertising in the communications media and the subsequent annihilation of reality, agency, and the possibility of critique.

The postmodern mass media present a “*dizzying whirl of reality*” that is not a reflection or representation of actuality, but rather the production of a simulated world in which “we live, sheltered by signs, in the denial of the real.”³⁰ It is in terms of this account of the seductive apathy generated in a media-produced world of hyperreal simulation that Baudrillard’s work has become most notorious. In a series of articles published in 1991, he argued that the Gulf War “will not,” “is not,” and “did not” take place. The central thrust of these polemical pieces is the argument that in an age of mass-media simulation and the commodification of the image, any coverage of the war is readable only in terms of promotion: “The media promote the war, the war promotes the media, and advertising competes with the war It allows us to turn the world and the violence of the world into a consumable substance.”³¹ In the ubiquity, immediacy, and self-referentiality of the blanket media coverage of the twenty-four-hour news channels, access to any “real war” behind the self-promotion, speculation, and manufactured dissension of the “fake and presumptive warriors, generals, experts and television presenters” that fill the screens is impossible. In the face of this infinite spiral of promotion, Baudrillard argues, the Western subject as a consumer of media images becomes incapable of making rational judgments about what is “really taking place”: “uncertainty

28. Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, Chris Turner (trans.) (London: Sage, 1998), 79–80.

29. *Ibid.*, 31.

30. *Ibid.*, 34.

31. Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Paul Patton (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 31.