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## On the Anarchy of Poetry and Philosophy

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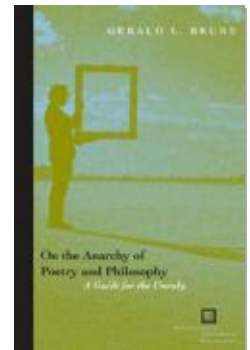
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## Notes

### Chapter One

1. *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1984), p. 8 (*Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson [New York: Harper and Row, 1962], p. 29).

2. See Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), who cites this passage from Heidegger and then proposes that we think of modernism in general in Heidegger's terms, namely "as a moment in which it seemed as though things could not continue as they had been, and fresh foundations had to be sought if they were to continue at all. This would explain why modernism so often took the form of issuing manifestos. All the main movements in philosophy of the twentieth century addressed the question of what philosophy itself was: positivism, pragmatism, and phenomenology each undertook radical critiques of philosophy, and each sought to reconstruct philosophy on firm foundations" (pp. 66–67).

It is now customary to distinguish between "modernism" and "modernity," where modernity is understood as the project of enlightenment, or what Max Weber called "the rationalization of the world." See Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Unfinished Project," first published under the title "Modernity versus Postmodernity" in *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981): 4–13, in which "aesthetic modernity"—an anarchic revolt against "all that is normative"—is opposed to the authentic modernity of the Enlightenment that tried to develop scientific reason, a morality based on universal principles, and the autonomy of the individual, but which remains "incomplete" precisely because of a preoccupation with the aesthetic dimen-

sions of modernity. See Habermas, *Die Moderne: ein unvollendetes Projekt. Philosophische-politische Aufsätze, 1977–1990* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1990), pp. 32–54, esp. 34–38. Some purchase on these semantic problems can be gained by consulting the journal *Modernism/Modernity*; see, for example, Susan Friedman, “Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no.3 (September 2001): 493–513.

3. See Habermas’s critique of Heidegger in *Der philosophischen Diskurs der Moderne: zwölf Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 168 (*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987], esp. p. 141):

The language of *Being and Time* had suggested the decisionism of empty resoluteness; the later philosophy suggests the submissiveness of an equally empty readiness for subjugation. To be sure, the empty formula of “thoughtful remembrance” can also be filled in with a different attitudinal syndrome, for example with the anarchist demand for a subversive stance of refusal, which corresponds more to present moods than does blind submission to something superior. But the arbitrariness with which the same thought-figure can be given contemporary actualization remains irritating.

See also *Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), esp. pp. 16–18 (*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990], esp. pp. 17–20), where Habermas argues that philosophy must retain its traditional role as “the guardian of rationality.” Rudolf Gasché has an excellent discussion of Habermas in the context of a post-Heideggerian (or “postmodern”) critique of subject-centered rationality in “Postmodernism and Rationality,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 10 (1988): 528–38.

4. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Hermeneutics of Suspicion,” in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), esp. pp. 63–64:

Dialectic [the procedure of Greek thinking] does not claim to have a first principle. It is true: Plato as he appeared to Aristotle developed two “principles,” the One and the Dyad. The Dyad was an indeterminate Dyad that meant openness for further determination. . . . These “principles” of Plato were not meant to yield an ultimate determinacy. I think Plato was well aware of this position when he said that philosophy is something for human beings, not for gods. Gods *know*, but we are in this ongoing process of approximation and overcoming error by dialectically moving toward truth. In this sense I could present a partial defense of the idea that the oldest heritage of philosophy is exactly its functionality, its giving an account, and that as such it cannot presume to have first principles. This suggests very well what I would

have in place of “foundation.” I would call it “participation,” because that is what happens in human life.

5. *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations*. 3d ed., German text (verso) with revised English version (recto) by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2001), p. 33e.

6. (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 191–96. “Postmodernism” is not a term I’ve ever found useful, at least not as a period concept. But I find Bauman’s conception of the postmodern congenial. A postmodernist is just a late modernist who thinks about where he or she comes from or is located historically and culturally. A postmodernist has a history but not an identity and finds the absence of foundations (in Gadamer’s sense, cited in note 5, above) to be a condition of freedom. See note 9, below.

7. “An Anthropological Approach to the Contemporary Significance of Rhetoric,” in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, ed. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), p. 433.

8. On singularity, see Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1969), p. 67 (*The Logic of Sense*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990], p. 52): “The singularity belongs to another dimension than that of denotation, manifestation, or signification. It is essentially pre-individual, non-personal, and a-conceptual. It is quite indifferent to the individual and the collective, the personal and the impersonal, the particular and the general—and to their oppositions. Singularity is *neutral*.” For a slightly different view, where the singular is not an isolate and is also a person, see Jean-Luc Nancy, *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1996), pp. 1–131 (*Being Singular Plural* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000], pp. 1–100). The notion of the singular can be traced to Emmanuel Levinas’s conception of ethical alterity, where the other is irreducible to the same, that is, refractory to categories. See *Totalité et infini* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961) (*Totality and Infinity: An Essay in Exteriority* [Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969]). See also Todd May’s useful book, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

9. See Michel Foucault, *Souveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1975) (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Vintage Books, 1977]), and esp. an interview from 1976, “Truth and Power,” in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1994), pp. 111–33.

10. *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), esp. p. 38: “It is [the] straining of the artwork to assimilate and respond to that which is not art that characterizes the Futurist moment.” As such, the futurist moment inau-

gurates the history of modernism, in which the question of what counts as art remains open owing to the openness of the artwork to whatever is not itself. See also Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2002)—a book that links contemporary North American poetry with the work of the early T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Duchamp, and the sound-poetry of the Russian futurist Velimir Khlebnikov. For Perloff, a postmodernist is someone who has appropriated or recuperated—brought to life again—the innovations of early modernism. See also Astradur Eysteinnsson's excellent study, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

11. "Allgemeines und Besonderes," in *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), pp. 296–334, hereafter cited as AT; "Universal and Particular," in *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 199–225, hereafter cited as AeT:

The nominalistic artwork should become an artwork by being organized from below to above, not by having principles of organization foisted on it. But no artwork left blindly to itself possesses the power of organization that would set up binding boundaries for itself. Investing the work with such power would in fact be fetishistic. Unchecked aesthetic nominalism liquidates . . . all forms as a remnant of a spiritual being-in-itself. It terminates in a literal facticity, and this is irreconcilable with art. . . . The artifactual character of the artwork [i.e., that it is a construction] is incompatible with the postulate of pure relinquishment to the material. By being something made, artworks acquire that element of organization, of being something directed, in the dramaturgical sense, that is anathema to the nominalistic sensibility. (AT.327/AeT.220)

Fredric Jameson gives an excellent account of Adorno's critique of nominalism in *Late Marxism: Adorno, or the Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso Books, 1990), pp. 157–64.

12. See Marjorie Perloff, "The Search for 'Prime Words': Pound, Duchamp, and the Nominalist Ethos," in *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), pp. 39–59.

13. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (New York: New Directions, 1963), pp. 261–62.

14. *Imaginations*, ed. Webster Schott (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 70. See also Gerald L. Bruns, "'Accomplishments of Inhabitation': Danto, Cavell, and the Argument of American Poetry," in *Tragic Thoughts at the End of Philosophy: Language, Literature, and Ethical Theory* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), pp. 133–63.

15. Adorno as I read him—*my* Adorno—is at bottom an anarchist. A fragment from *Minima Moralia* reads: "Measured by its concept, the individ-

ual [in the modern world] has indeed become as null and void as Hegel's philosophy anticipated: seen *sub specie individuationis*, however, absolute contingency, permitted to persist as a seemingly abnormal state, is itself the essential. The world is systematized horror, but therefore it is to do the world too much honor to think of it entirely as a system." *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), Band 4: *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben*, p. 126 (*Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, trans. Edmund Jephcott [London: Verso, 1978], p. 113).

16. See Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), who develops this thesis in detail (without, interestingly, mentioning Adorno).

17. *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik. Werke in zwanzig Bänden. Band 13.1* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 25 (*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], p. 1:11).

18. Compare Adorno: "If a work opens itself completely, it reveals itself as a question and demands reflection; then the work vanishes into the distance, only to return to those who thought they understood it, overwhelming them for a second time with the question, 'What is it?'" (AT.184/AeT.121).

19. "The End of Art," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 80–115 (emphasis mine). See also Gianni Vattimo, "The Death or Decline of Art," in *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 51–64; and Giorgio Agamben, "A Self-Annihilating Nothing," in *The Man without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 52–58. Jean-Luc Nancy has an interesting variation on this theme in "Le vestige de art," in *Les Muses* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1994), pp. 135–59 ("The Vestige of Art," in *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996], pp. 81–100). At the end of art, art ceases to be an image or sensible presentation of the Idea (or of anything at all); rather, it is the *vestige*, no longer a thing itself but only a remainder. Being cannot be predicated of the vestige, which is always in passage, passing away, such that "art is each time radically *another art* [not only another form, another style, but another "essence" of "art"] (p. 143/p. 94). In this sense the vestige is the mode of existence of modernism.

20. One could take this sentence as the paradoxical motto of modernist anarchism. The paradox is that, in defiance of tradition, convention, or the powers of official culture, anything goes within the artworld, but not everything is possible at once, owing to the finitude of historical conditions, as when digital technology makes possible an indefinite array of new forms of poetry and music that were not possible even a few years ago. What is possible in any present moment is open and undetermined but, nevertheless, limited to the present. R. M. Berry formulates this paradox very neatly as an intellectual dilemma in "The Avant-Garde and the Question of Literature,"

*Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 88, nos. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2005): 105–27. See esp. 105–6:

My background idea is that the continuation into the new millennium of literary experimentation, despite its widespread neglect, is forceful evidence that modernism was not a response to historically circumscribed conflicts and crises, but, on the contrary, arose from necessities internal to literature itself. I will try here to give concreteness to this idea, to indicate how these necessities arise, what they look like, why they are not generally recognized, while attempting some *rapprochement* with the history I am bracketing. After all, what I have situated as internal to literature, counter to history, is simply the necessity for change, that is, for history. Said another way, it is unclear whether I am looking for the necessity of formal experimentation or perhaps for freedom from necessity altogether. These could be the same thing.

Whatever else an anarchist might want, “freedom from necessity” would be the main thing. Meanwhile, on the restrictions of chance, randomness, or arbitrary decisions in art, see Holger Schulze, “Hand-Luggage: For a Generative Theory of Artifacts,” *Leonardo Music Journal* 13 (2003): 61–65, esp. 62: “the limitations of our work are already established before we set out. These are natural restrictions, from which there is no escape: preferences for certain materials, the organization of workflow and movements, antipathies against certain tools or environments. There is no pure chance.” To which he adds: “Also, there is absolutely no ‘Anything goes!’ Even if we work randomly—or by destructing, disorganizing, decomposing, deconstructing—we cannot possibly transcend these limits. We can only use sources, which are also artifacts in themselves and thus products designed very much on purpose. By choosing certain materials or products we automatically choose their underlying intentions.” But of course, as Duchamp shows with his snow shovel, we also bracket these intentions.

21. See *Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Anne d’Harnoncourt and Kynaston McSchine (Prestel, Germany: The Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989), p. 212.

22. See Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, §211: “How can he know how he is to continue a pattern by himself—whatever instructions you give him?—Well, how do I know?—If that means ‘Have I reasons?’ the answer is: my reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons” (p. 84e). And §217: “‘How am I able to obey a rule?’—if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: ‘This is simply what I do.’” (p. 85e).

23. See Cavell’s discussion (of Wittgenstein’s critique) of criteria in *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Ox-

ford University Press, 1979), pp. 3–48, and esp. p. 45, where the shortfall of criteria is said to “affirm” the thesis of skepticism, namely: “Our relation to the world as a whole, or to others in general, is not one of knowing, where knowing construes itself as being certain.”

24. Already in 1937, in a talk entitled “The Future of Music: Credo,” Cage had said: “Whereas, in the past, the point of disagreement has been between dissonance and consonance, it will be, in the immediate future, between noise and so-called musical sounds. The present methods of writing music, principally those which employ harmony and its reference to particular steps in the field of sound, will be inadequate for the composer, who will be faced with the entire field of sound.” *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 4, hereafter cited as S. Like Duchamp, Cage was anarchic. In a text called “‘45’ for a Speaker” (S.160), Cage wrote:

Very frequently no one knows that  
contemporary music is or could be  
art.  
He simply thinks it was irritating.  
Irritating one way or another  
that is to say  
keeping us from ossifying.  
It may be objected that from this point  
of view anything goes. Actually  
anything *does* go—but only when  
nothing is taken as the basis. In an utter emptiness  
anything can take place.

Anything goes, because nothing can be traced back to (or held back by) a principle or foundation. For Cage, “utter emptiness” is not a void but an open field of possibilities.

25. *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 188–89, hereafter cited as MW.

26. On “living with a concept,” see Cora Diamond, “Losing Your Concepts,” *Ethics* 98, no. 2 (1988): 255–57.

27. Compare John Cage, “Experimental Music” (1957), on the use of magnetic tape “not simply to record performances but to make new music that [is] possible only because of it. . . . But advantage can be taken of these possibilities only if one is willing to change one’s musical habits radically” (S.9).

28. Thus, for example, when it comes to literature, Arthur Danto turns away from Andy Warhol and back into an Aristotelian for whom literature is nothing if not about the world, or at least a possible world. See his essay, “Philosophy / as / and / of Literature,” in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, pp. 135–61.



29. Jameson's essay, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," first appeared in the *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53–92, hereafter cited as PM. See his discussion of a passage from Bob Perelman's poem, "China," pp. 73–75.

30. *A Poetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 93.

31. *Dark City* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994), pp. 9–10.

32. See Bakhtin's "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 270–71.

33. "today's not opposite date," from *With Strings: Poems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 72–73.

34. *Republics of Reality: 1975–1995* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 2000), p. 309. Marjorie Perloff gives a close reading of this passage as social commentary as well as Duchampean wordplay in *21st Century Modernism*, pp. 174–77.

35. On visual poetry, see Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and idem, *Figuring the Word: Essays on Books, Writing, and Visual Poetics* (New York: Granary Books, 1998). See also Craig Dworkin, *Reading the Illegible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003); and Ferdinand Kriwet, "Decomposition of the Literary Unity: Notes on Visually Perceptible Literature," *Triquarterly* 20 (Winter 1971): 209–51; and Marjorie Perloff, "The Invention of Concrete Prose: Haroldo de Campos's *Galaxias* and After," in *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy*, pp. 175–205.

36. See Kenner, "Pound Typing," in *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 37–59.

37. See Gerald L. Bruns, *The Material of Poetry: Sketches toward a Philosophical Poetics* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), pp. 61–62, 66–75.

38. "Parole de fragment," in *L'entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), p. 453, hereafter EI; "The Fragment Word," in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 308, hereafter IC.

39. *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986), 1, p. 226, hereafter GWC; *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, trans. John Felstiner (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 159, hereafter SPP.

40. See Silke-Maria Weineck, "Logos and Pallaksch: The Loss of Madness and the Survival of Poetry in Paul Celan's 'Tübingen, Jänner,'" *Orbis-Litterarum: International Review of Literary Studies* 54, no. 4 (1999): 262–75.

41. See chapter 2. This is the conundrum that Hans-Georg Gadamer takes up in his commentary on "Atemkristall," the first section of Celan's *Atemwende*, "Wer bin Ich und wer bist Du?" See Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986–93), 9:383–451, hereafter cited as GW; *Gadamer on Celan: Who Am I and Who Are You? And Other Essays*,

trans. Richard Heinemann and Bruce Krajewski (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 67–147, hereafter cited as GC. For Gadamer, it is enough to know that the dialogical structure of I-Thou shapes almost all of Celan's lyrics, and is consistent with what Celan himself has to say (in "Der Meridian," for example), namely, that poems are "encounters, paths from a voice to a listening You" (GWC.3:201). Shifters, as the linguists say, can be filled with anyone, and so Celan's pronouns preserve the condition of nonidentity. See "The Meridian," *Paul Celan: Collected Prose*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (River-on-Hudson, NY: Sheep Meadow Press, 1986), p. 53.

42. Quoted by Israel Chalfen, *Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth*, trans. Maximilian Bleyleben (New York: Persea Books, 1991), p. 4.

43. See Joris's introduction to his translation of *Atemwende (Breathturn)* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1995), p. 38. However, perhaps "invented German" is an overstatement. In an unpublished essay, "Speech Scraps, Vision Scraps': Paul Celan's Poetic Practice," Marjorie Perloff, who was born in Vienna, finds Celan's German, for all of the strangeness of his writing, "familiar enough, especially to an Austrian ear like mine": "Celan's German was never that of Berlin or Frankfurt but the German of Vienna, which was the center and magnet of the Austro-Hungarian empire, into which Celan was belatedly born in 1920 two years after its dissolution. For his parents, the 'official' German of Vienna was the necessary language of the educated classes: Paul's mother Fritzi always spoke German to her son and taught him the German classics."

44. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit), p. 48 (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986], p. 26).

45. See *Gilles Deleuze and the Boundaries of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 25–26.

46. See Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1955), p. 221, hereafter cited as EL; *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 163–70, hereafter cited as SL. See esp. 167–68, where the day of the Enlightenment appropriates the night in order to rest from "work at its empire," whereas the *other* night is the one suffered by the beast in Kafka's *The Burrow*, for whom there is no longer any shelter or security, only an endless, indeterminate noise.

47. *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991), 2.1:140–56, hereafter cited as GS; *Selected Writings*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 68–70, hereafter cited as SW.

48. The term "protosemantic" is the poet Steve McCaffery's invention. See his *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

49. See "Langage et proximité," in *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, 2d ed. (Paris: Librairie philosophique, 1967), pp. 217–36 ("Lan-

guage and Proximity,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987], pp. 109–26).

50. “L’instant, Newman,” in *L’inhumain: Causeries sur le temps* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1988), p. 95, hereafter cited as In; “Newman: The Instant,” in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 84, hereafter cited as IR.

51. *Le Différend* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit), “Gertrude Stein Notice,” pp. 104–5, hereafter cited as Di; *The Différend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 67–68, hereafter cited as D.

52. *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 463.

53. Auerbach’s “modernist” is Augustine, whose “paratactic” style in describing his friend Alypius’s experience at the games (*Confessions*, 6.8) is, Auerbach says, “manifestly unclassical.” *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Doubleday, 1953), p. 61.

54. Apropos of *and*: in an essay entitled “Language and ‘Paradise,’” in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), the American poet Lyn Hejinian, commenting on her own poem, *The Guard* (1984), writes:

Meanwhile, in the seventh part of the poem, I was becoming increasingly aware that, wherever there is a fragility of sequence, the particular character of diverse individual things becomes prominent; their heterogeneity increases the palpability of things.

This palpability has both metaphysical and aesthetic force, which is to say that these particulars are not isolated, but to understand their relations under conditions in which sequential logic is in disarray, one must examine other connections. The most basic and resilient is that of the simple conjunction, *and*. It is fundamental to all paratactic presentations, it is the signal component of collage, and it is the first instrument through which children begin to offer accounts of the world. All relations begin with *and*. (pp. 67–68)

55. “The Death of the Novel,” in *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories* (New York: The Dial Press, 1969 [Tallahassee, FL: FC2, 2003]), p. 53.

56. See Bakhtin, “Discourse and the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, p. 282.

57. “The Death of the Novel” is a constant allusion to Samuel Beckett’s famous double bind, in which the writer rejects “the art of the feasible,” preferring instead “the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.” See “Three Dialogues,” in *Dijeca: Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. Ruby

Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), p. 139. This impasse is most fully developed in Beckett's *The Unnamable* in which a disembodied voice speaks under an invisible compulsion, concluding (or not) as follows: "I can't go on. I go on."

58. Ashbery is usually identified with the "New York School" of poets that included Frank O'Hara and Kenneth Koch, and began flourishing in the 1950s; but, Ashbery says, he and his contemporaries identified themselves not as a school or group but simply as poets committed to experimentation. He was one of the first serious readers of Gertrude Stein's work. See his interview with Jack Tranter dating from April 1985 in *Jacket 2* (January 1998); *Jacket 2*, edited by Jack Tranter, is a free online literary magazine available at <http://www.jacketmagazine.com>. See also Ashbery, "The Invisible Avant-Garde" (1968): "Things were very different twenty years ago when I was a student and was beginning to experiment with poetry. At that time it was the art and literature of the Establishment that were traditional. There was in fact almost no experimental poetry being written in this country, unless you counted the rather pale attempts of a handful of poets who were trying to imitate some of the effects of the French Surrealists. The situation was a little different in the other arts." John Ashbery, *Reported Sightings: Art Chronicles, 1957–1987*, ed. David Bergman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 390.

59. *Houseboat Days* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 45, hereafter cited as HD.

60. Interview with Jack Tranter, May 1988, *Jacket 2* (January 1998), available at <http://www.jacketmagazine.com>.

61. Of course, "Lecture on Nothing" is a performance piece in which words are composed as columns of sounds organized into rhythmic structures of different durations, so that the work is simultaneously a lecture, a poem, and a piece of music—what Cage thinks of as "theater": "all the various things / going on at the same time" (S.149).

62. See Fredman's analysis of Ashbery's *Three Poems* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972) in *Poet's Prose: The Crisis in American Verse*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. p. 106 (on "not-understanding" as a "positive experience").

63. See Marjorie Perloff's discussion of Ashbery's "discontinuities," "The Mysteries of Construction': The Dream Songs of John Ashbery," in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 248–87. See also Angus Fletcher, "Ashbery Meditates Complexity," *Annals of Scholarship* 15, nos. 2–3 (2004): 69–80.

## Chapter Two

1. Gadamer goes so far as to say that "however much [the work] is transformed or distorted in being presented, it still remains itself. . . . Every repetition is as original as the work itself" (WM.116/TM.122).

2. In “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” Gadamer writes:

What is it that is so distinctive about form? The answer is that we must trace it out as we see it actively—something required by every composition, graphic or musical, in drama or in reading. There is constant co-operative activity here. And obviously, it is precisely the identity of the work that invites us to this activity. . . . A synthetic act is required in which we must unite and bring together many different aspects. We “read” a picture, as we say, like a text. We start to “decipher” a picture like a text. It was not Cubist painting that first set us this task, though it did so in a drastically radical manner by demanding that we successively superimpose upon one another the various facets or aspects of the same thing, to produce finally on the canvas the thing depicted in all its facets and thus in a new colorful plasticity. (GW.8:117–18/RB.27)

3. See Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), esp. pp. 1–32.

4. *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 84, hereafter cited as MW.

5. See Diane P. Michelfelder, “Gadamer on Heidegger on Art,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1997), pp. 451–52.

6. “Le vestige de l’art,” in *Les Muses* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1994), p. 140 (“The Vestige of Art,” in *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996], p. 85).

7. See Adorno, “Valéry Proust Museum,” where Valéry takes the objectivist view that the work of art, in virtue of its formal integrity, is what it is in itself apart from anyone’s experience of it, in contrast to Proust, for whom “works of art are from the outset something more than their specific aesthetic qualities. They are part of the life of the person who observes them; they become an element of his consciousness. He thus perceives a level in them very different from the formal laws of the work. It is a level set free only by the historical development of the work, a level which has as its premise the death of the living intention of the work.” *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), Band 10.1: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft, I: Prismen*, p. 189 (*Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981], p. 181). Like Adorno, Gadamer seeks an account of the experience of the work that embraces both Valéry’s formalism (“transformation into structure”) and Proust’s aestheticism, which is a mode of performance that one might think of calling “being-with the work.”

8. See Paul Ricoeur, “Appropriation,” *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 182–93.

9. In “A Matter of Meaning It” Stanley Cavell describes his experience of Anthony Caro’s sculptures, which he cannot simply dismiss as absurd,

but which he cannot integrate into his prior experiences of what sculpture (or, indeed, art) is. "The problem is that I am, so to speak, struck with the knowledge that this is sculpture, in the same sense that any object is. The problem is that I no longer know what sculpture is, why I call *any* object, the most central or traditional, a piece of sculpture. How *can* objects made this way elicit the experience I had thought confined to objects made so differently? And that this is a matter of experience is what needs constant attention" (MW.218).

10. See *Truth and Method* (WM.285/TM.301–2):

Consciousness of being affected by history (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*. To acquire awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. We always find ourselves within a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished. This is also true of the hermeneutic situation—i.e., the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to the tradition that we are trying to understand. The illumination of this situation—reflection on effective history—can never be completely achieved; yet the fact that it cannot be completed is not due to a deficiency in reflection but to the essence of the historical being that we are. *To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete.*

11. *Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), pp. 89–108 (*Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], pp. 77–91). See Robert Bernasconi, "The Greatness of the Work of Art," in *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 99–116.

12. *Atemkristall* is a small sheaf of poems first published in a large folio edition that included remarkable artwork by Celan's wife, Gisèle Celan-Lestrange (Paris: Brunidor, 1965) and later included as the first section of *Atemwende* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967). See Celan, *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983), 2:11–31, hereafter cited as GWC.

13. See Szondi, "Lecture de Strette. Essai sur la poésie de Paul Celan," *Critique* 27, no. 288 (1971): 387–420. And Pöggeler, "Mystische Elemente im Denken Heideggers und im Dichten Celans," *Zeitwende* 53 (1982): 65–92; "Mystical Elements in Heidegger's Thought and Celan's Poetry," trans. Henry Pickford, in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan*, ed. Aris Fioretos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 75–109.

14. *Schibboleth pour Paul Celan* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1986), pp. 59–60 ("Schibboleth: For Paul Celan," trans. Joshua Wilner, in *Word Traces*, pp. 34–35).

15. See Blanchot on “Nietzsche et l’écriture fragmentaire,” *L’entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), p. 231, hereafter cited as EI. “Nietzsche and Fragmentary Writing,” in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 154, hereafter cited as IC. In Nietzsche, Blanchot says, one discovers two kinds of speech. There is the speech of the “higher man”—“an integral discourse, the logos that says the whole, the seriousness of philosophic speech . . . : a speech that is discontinuous, without intermittence and without blanks, the speech of logical completion that knows nothing of chance, play, or laughter” (EI.233/IC.155). And then there is “plural speech”:

The plurality of plural speech: a speech that is intermittent, discontinuous; a speech that, without being insignificant, does not speak by reason of its power to represent, or even to signify. What speaks in this speech is not signification, not the possibility of either giving meaning or withdrawing meaning, even a meaning that is multiple. From which we are led to claim, perhaps with too much haste, that this plurality designates itself on the basis of the between [*l’entre-deux*], that it stands as a sort of sentry duty around a site of divergence, a space of dis-location that it seeks to close in on, but that always dis-closes it, separating it from itself and identifying it with this margin or separation, this imperceptible divergence where it always returns to itself: identical, non-identical. (EI.234–35/IC.156)

16. From *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933). See *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 112.

17. Hugo Huppert, “(‘In the Prayer Mill’s Rattling’): A Visit with Paul Celan,” trans. James Phillips, in *Translating Tradition: Paul Celan in France*, ed. Benjamin Hollander, special ed. of *Acts: A Journal of New Writing* 8–9 (1988): 158.

18. Celan, “Edgar Jené und der Traum vom Traume” (1948), (GWC.3:160) (“Edgar Jené and the Dream about the Dream,” in *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop [Riverdale-on-Hudson: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1986], pp. 8–9).

19. See Maurice Blanchot, “L’expérience-limite” (EI.300–22/IC.202–17), where the limit-experience means just what it says: an experience that sets a limit to the possibility of experience itself:

[It] must be understood that possibility is not the sole dimension of our existence, and that it is perhaps given to us to “live” each of the events that is ours by way of a double relation. We live it one time as something we comprehend, grasp, bear, and master (even if we do so painfully and with difficulty) by relating it to some good or to some value, that is to say, finally, by relating it to Unity; we live it another time as something that escapes all employ and all end, and more, as

that which escapes our very capacity to undergo it, but whose trial we cannot escape. (EI.306–7/IC.207)

20. “Celan’s Folds and Veils,” *Textual Practice* 18, no. 2 (2004): 200.

21. “The Saturated Phenomenon,” trans. Thomas Carlson, in Dominique Janicaud, Jean-François Courtine, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion, and Paul Ricoeur, *Phenomenology and the “Theological Turn”: The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp. 196–97.

22. Jean-Luc Marion, “Introduction: What Do We Mean by ‘Mystic’?” in *Mystics: Presence and Aporia*, ed. Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 3–4. See also Kevin Hart, “The Experience of Nonexperience,” in *ibid.*, pp. 188–206.

23. *De surcroît: Études sur les phénomènes saturés* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), p. 84; (*In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud [New York: Fordham University Press, 2002], p. 70).

24. See Lucy Lippard, *The Dematerialization of the Art Object, 1966–1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

25. *La croisée du visible* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), p. 37 (*The Crossing of the Visible and the Invisible*, trans. James. K. A. Smith [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004], p. 17).

26. Ian Fairley provides us with an alternative translation:

The sighted isle’s heartsript moraine  
at midnight, by the little light  
of the ignition key.

There are too many  
powers enthralled of an end  
in even this  
to all appearance starpierced  
ether.

The suspired free mile  
hurtles upon us.

See Paul Celan, *Fathomsuns and Benighted: Fadensonnen e3 Eingedunkelt* (Riv-  
erdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 2001), p. 147.

27. *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press,  
2000), pp. 42–43.

### Chapter Three

1. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), pp. 119–21.

2. On the formal kinship between Wittgenstein and Gertrude Stein, see Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein’s Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).



3. See Artaud, "En finir avec les chefs-d'œuvre," in *Le théâtre et son double* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), p. 128 ("An End to Masterpieces," in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag, trans. Helen Weaver [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976], p. 259): "I propose then a theater in which violent physical images pound and hypnotize the sensibility of the spectator, who is caught by the theater as if in a whirlwind of higher forces. . . . A theater that produces trances."

4. For Heidegger, works that hang in exhibitions or collections are mere art objects, not works—that is, they no longer *work* as events that open up time and history: "Whenever art happens—that is, whenever there is a beginning—a thrust enters history, history either begins or starts over again." A museum is a place where nothing can happen. Heidegger's monumental Greek temple tends to disguise the fact that "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes" is *the* classic work of modernist aesthetic theory. See Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Band V: *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 1977), p. 65 (*Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], p. 77).

5. Heidegger, for example, speaks of "undergoing an experience with language [*mit der Sprache eine Erfahrung zu machen*]" which is not an event that occurs in the speaking of it. See "Der Wesen zur Sprache," *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Gunther Neske, 1959), p. 61. *Erfahrung* entails the sense of undergoing a journey, trial, or transformation. It is not a term of agency but, if anything, one of suffering.

6. See the final chapter of *Folie et déraison*, in which Artaud's madness is characterized as "the *absence* of the work of art," but this absence is not a negation but paradoxically (and obscurely) a kind of reversal or exchange: "Artaud's *œuvre* experiences its own absence in madness, but that experience, the fresh courage of that ordeal, all those words hurled against a fundamental absence of language, all that space of physical suffering and terror which surrounds or rather coincides with the void—that is the work of art itself: the sheer cliff over the abyss of the work's absence" (FD.662/MC.287). See Foucault's "Le 'non' du père" (DE.1:201/AME.17) and "La folie, l'absence d'œuvre" (DE.1:412–20).

7. See Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1955), pp. 48–49, hereafter cited as EL; *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 46, hereafter cited as SL.

8. Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, 2, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976), p. 695, hereafter cited as CE.II. "The Painter of Modern Life," *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. P. E. Charvet (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 403, hereafter cited as SWA.

9. A presumption is that modernist art is an art of the beautiful like any other, but in Baudelaire's analysis this is less clear in fact than it is in principle. Beauty, to be sure, "is always and inevitably compounded of two elements," one "eternal and invariable," the other "circumstantial," but the one

seems effaced by the other in Baudelaire's paradoxical formulation: "Beauty is made up, on the one hand, of an element that is eternal and invariable, though to determine how much of it there is is extremely difficult, and, on the other, of a relative circumstantial element, which we may like to call, successively or at one and the same time, contemporaneity, fashion, morality, passion. Without this second element, which is like the amusing, teasing, appetite-whetting coating of the divine cake, the first element would be indigestible, tasteless, unadapted and inappropriate to human nature" (CE.2:695/SWA.392). As if the eternal dimension of beauty were, in itself, ugly. At any rate there is little attention paid to the eternal and variable in Baudelaire's essay; it is not really a dimension in which he has any interest. The idea is rather to discover in the ephemeral a new source of aesthetic interest.

10. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1.2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 558, hereafter cited as GS. *Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996–2003), pp. 31–32, hereafter cited as SW.

11. *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 281.

12. Recall the opening lines of Foucault's inaugural address: "I would really liked to have slipped imperceptibly into this lecture, as into all the others I shall be delivering, perhaps over the years ahead. I would have preferred to be enveloped in words, borne away beyond all possible beginnings. At the moment of speaking, I would like to have perceived a nameless voice long preceding me, leaving me entirely to enmesh myself in it, taking up its cadence, and to lodge myself, when no one was looking, in its interstices as if it had paused an instant, in suspense, to beckon me" (OD.7/AK.215).

13. See Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, I (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959), p. 259. Leo Bersani provides a very interesting commentary on Mallarmé's account of his experience in *The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

14. *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor et G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), p. 366, hereafter cited as ŒM.

15. See Bruns, "Mallarmé: The Transcendence of Language and the Aesthetics of the Book," in *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language: A Critical and Historical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 101–38.

16. See Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy through the Looking-Glass: Language, Nonsense, Desire* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Press, 1985), p. 80. Lecercle's idea (following Jacques Lacan, but also an assortment of eccentric writers on language like Lewis Carroll, Jacques Brisset, and Louis Wolfson) is that language is a formal system (*la langue*), but it is pervaded by a

remainder or surplus (*lalangue*) that makes possible wordplay, poetry, logophilia or the language of schizophrenics, glossolalia—or speaking in tongues—and other “infelicities” of speech. “The main characteristic of language is *excess*: more meaning creeps into the sentence than the author intended, echoes and involuntary repetitions disturb the careful ordering of linguistic units. Phrases are analysed, and re-analysed, symptoms and word plays proliferate. But to this excess there corresponds a *lack*: the absence of the central all-mastering subject who means what he says and says what he means. . . . The utterance is full of involuntary admissions, echoes of other voices, traces imposed by the structure itself, distortion and displacement which irretrievably conceal the truth.” See also idem, *The Violence of Language* (London: Routledge, 1990).

17. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 334–38 (*Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997], pp. 225–29).

18. See *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*, ed. Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). See also Charles Bernstein’s ars poetica, “Artifice of Absorption,” in *A Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), and Steve McCaffery, “Writing as a General Economy,” in *North of Intention: Critical Writings, 1975–1986* (New York: Roof Books, 1986), pp. 201–21, esp. pp. 214–15: “Sound poetry is a poetry of complete expenditure in which nothing is recoverable and useable as ‘meaning.’ Involved is a decomposition of both an operative subject and the historical constraints of a semantic order.” For a concise history of twentieth-century sound poetry, see McCaffery, “Voice in Extremis,” in *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), pp. 161–86.

19. See Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

20. See Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique: L’avant-garde à la fin du XIX siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974); available in English in an abridged version as *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

21. See Habermas, *Der philosophischen Diskurs der Moderne: zwölf Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Mein, 1985), p. 366 (*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987], p. 314).

22. In an alternative preface to volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault writes: “in *Madness and Civilization* I was trying . . . to describe a locus of experience from the viewpoint of the history of thought, even if my usage of the word ‘experience’ was very floating” (DE.4:581/EWI.202). How the “eighteenth century” experiences madness is continuous with how it constructs it. But experience also means how the mad experience their madness, which Foucault takes up in the final chapter of *Madness and Civilization*, and which, as he says, forms a threshold for future work.

23. See Heidegger, "Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung," *Gesamtausgabe Band V: Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 1977), p. 180 (*Hegel's Concept of Experience* [New York: Harper and Row, 1970], pp. 113–14): "Experience is now no longer the term for a kind of knowledge. . . . Experience designates the subject's subjectness."

24. See Hegel's introduction to the *Phenomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Hans-Friedrich Wessels und Heinrich Clairmont (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1988), 1:62 (*Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977], p. 51).

25. See Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant* (Paris: Éditions de la revue fondatrice, 1947), pp. 80–92 (*Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978], esp. pp. 52–67); and also idem, "Reality and Its Shadow" (1948), in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), esp. pp. 3–4.

26. In "Foucault as I Imagine Him," Maurice Blanchot recalls Roger Callois' allergic reaction to Foucault's early prose: "Foucault's style, in its splendor and precision, perplexed him. He was not sure whether this grand baroque style didn't ultimately ruin the singular knowledge whose multiple facets—philosophical, sociological, and historical—irritated and exalted him. Perhaps he saw in Foucault an alter ego who would have made off with his heritage." *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Zone Books, 1987), p. 64.

27. "Sacrifices" (1933), in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 1:91–92, 94; *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1959*, trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 132, 133–34, hereafter cited as VE.

28. See Bataille, *L'Expérience intérieure* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943), p. 67 (*Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988], p. 39): "The extreme limit of the 'possible' assumes laughter, ecstasy, terrified approach towards death; assumes error, nausea, unceasing agitation of the 'possible' and the impossible and, to conclude . . . the state of supplication, its absorption into despair." The best commentary on Bataille's concept of experience is Blanchot's, "The Limit-Experience," from which the citation above is taken, and which includes the following: "It must be understood that possibility is not the sole dimension of existence, and that it is perhaps given to us to 'live' each of the events that is ours by way of a double relation. We live it one time as something we comprehend, grasp, bear, and master (even if we do so painfully and with difficulty) by relating it to some good or to some value, that is to say, finally, by relating it to a Unity; we live it another time as something that escapes all employ and all end, and more, as that which escapes our very capacity to undergo it, but whose trial we cannot escape." *L'entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), pp. 307–8, hereafter cited as EI. *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 207, hereafter cited as IC.

29. See “La folie, l’absence d’œuvre” (1964): “Hence . . . that strange proximity between madness and literature, which ought not to be taken in the sense of a relation of common psychological parentage now finally exposed. Once uncovered as a language silenced by its superposition upon itself, madness neither manifests nor narrates the birth of a work (or of something which, by genius or by chance, could have become a work); it outlines an empty form from where this work comes, in other words, the place from where it never ceases to be absent, where it will never be found because it had never been located there to begin with. There, in that pale region, in that essential hiding place, the twinlike incompatibility of the work and of madness becomes unveiled; this is the blind spot of the possibility of each to become the other and of their mutual exclusion” (DE.1:419). This English translation by Peter Stastny and Deniz Sengel appears in *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1995): 296–97.

30. *La part maudite, precede de La notion de dépense* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1967), pp. 30–31; VE.120.

31. See “Littérature et la droit à la mort” (1948), *La part du feu* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1949), pp. 312–17 (“Literature and the Right to Death, in *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995], pp. 322–28).

32. The figure, or structure, of parentheses deserves more attention than it has received. It is a kind of pure middle into which additional middles can be endlessly inserted, and so constitutes the basic form of the holotext. An especially interesting use of this form is to be found in Raymond Roussel’s poem, *Nouvelle Impressions d’Africa*, a poem in four cantos, each of which is made of a series of parenthetical interruptions—four or sometimes five parentheses within parenthesis (((((O))))—so that the first lines of each canto are suspended until last lines. To read the poem as a semantic construction one has to work back and forth from end to beginning, until one arrives at a middle made, for example, of lists that theoretically could have been allowed to lengthen indefinitely. See Foucault’s discussion of this poem in *Raymond Roussel* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1963), chap. 3; *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas (New York: Doubleday, 1986), pp. 29–47.

33. See Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 223.

34. Levinas, *Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 198 (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981], p. 124).

#### Chapter Four

1. Werner Jaeger says: “Hesiod is a poet because he is a teacher.” *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1939, 1:74. See also Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 105–6, hereafter cited as PP. In Hesiod we see “the oral poet as priest, prophet, and teacher of his community and . . . oral poetry as an overall source book of history and morality.”

2. “Vox Clamans in Deserto,” in *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 239, hereafter cited as BP.

3. *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: 1974), p. 221 (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971], pp. 141).

4. *Ion*, 533d–34e. It is worth noting that Socrates identifies lyric poets as particularly Dionysian: “So it is with the good lyric poets: as the worshipping Corybantes are not in their senses when they dance, so the lyric poets are not in their senses when they make these lovely lyrics. No, when once they launch into harmony and rhythm, they are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed [*katexomenai*]—as the bacchantes, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers, but not when in their senses” (534a; trans. Lane Cooper). Interestingly, Havelock thinks the ecstatic theory of poetry begins with philosophers (preeminently Plato) “who were intent upon constructing a new type of discourse which we can roughly characterize as conceptual rather than poetic—[and who] were driven to relegate poetic experience to a category which was non-conceptual and therefore non-rational and non-reflective. Thus was invented the notion that poetry must be simply a product of ecstatic possession, for which the Greek animistic term was ‘enthusiasm’” (PP.156). I think there is no doubt that the ecstatic theory of poetry is originally a philosophical construction, but this construction seems already in place with Hesiod, and the interesting question has to do with how this construction is put into play in the history of poetry, where it seems to capture something essential.

5. Maurice Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1955), p. 28 (*The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982], p. 32).

6. Of poets like Demodocos and Phemios in the *Odyssey* George Walsh writes: “The singer is a public figure, a *dēmiōergos* like a seer or a physician, and as such he does not belong to the household for which he sings. He seems always to be an outsider (*xeinos*), less attached to his patrons than even a seer, for the gods are his audience as well as the source of his skill.” *The Varieties of Enchantment: Early Greek Views of the Nature and Function of Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 15. Later poets like Hesiod are wanderers. See also Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the Fifth Century*, trans. A. Thomas Cole (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 155–76, on the poet’s “Intellectual Activity and Socioeconomic Situation.” See, too,

Gregory Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

7. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le partage de voix* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1982), pp. 62–65, hereafter cited as PV; “Sharing Voices,” trans. Gayle Ormiston, in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, ed. Gayle Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 234–35, hereafter cited as SV. See also George Walsh, *The Varieties of Enchantment: Early Greek Views of the Nature and Function of Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 3–36; and especially Eric Havelock, “The Psychology of Poetic Performance,” pp. 145–64.

8. See Maurice Blanchot, *La communauté inavouable* (Paris: Éditions Minuit, 1983), pp. 18–19, hereafter cited as CI); *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1988), p. 7, hereafter cited as UC: “It is striking that Georges Bataille, whose name for so many of his readers signifies the mystique of an ecstasy or the non-religious quest for an ecstatic experience, *excludes* . . . ‘fusional fulfillment in some collective hypostasis’ (Jean-Luc Nancy). It is something he is deeply averse to. One must never forget that what counts for him is less the state of rapture where one forgets everything (oneself included) than the demanding process that realizes itself by bringing into play and carrying outside itself an existence that is insufficient [unto itself], a movement that ruins immanence as well as the usual forms of transcendence.” Blanchot’s text is a response to Nancy’s “La communauté désœuvrée,” *Alea* 4 (1983). Nancy’s *La communauté désœuvrée* (Paris: Christian Bourgois Editeur, 1986), responding to Blanchot, contains a revised and enlarged version of “La communauté désœuvrée” plus two additional essays, “De l’être-en-commun” and “L’histoire finie.” The English translation, *The Inoperative Community*, cited below, adds two more, “L’amour en éclats,” or “Shattered Love,” and “Des lieux divins,” or “Divine Places.” See note 10, below.

9. Maurice Blanchot, “La question la plus profonde,” in *L’entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), p. 28, hereafter cited as EI; “The Most Profound Question,” in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 21, hereafter cited as IC.

10. *La communauté désœuvrée*. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1990), p. 22, hereafter cited as CD; *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 6, hereafter InC.

11. In *The Unavowable Community* Blanchot writes:

May ’68 has shown that without project, without conjuration, in the suddenness of a happy meeting, like a feast that breached the admitted

and expected social norms, *explosive communication* could affirm itself. . . .

“Without project”: that was the characteristic, all at once distressing and fortunate, of an incomparable form of society that remained elusive, that was not meant to survive, to set itself up, not even via the multiple “committees” simulating a disordered order, an imprecise specialization. Contrary to “traditional revolutions,” it was not a question of simply taking power to replace it with some other power. . . . [What] mattered was to let a possibility manifest itself, the possibility—beyond any utilitarian gain—of a *being-together* that gave back to all the right to equality in fraternity through a freedom of speech that elated everyone.” (IC.60/UC.29–30)

12. See also Giorgio Agamben, “The Most Uncanny Thing,” in *The Man Without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 4–5, hereafter MwC:

Plato, and Greek classical antiquity in general, had a very different experience of art [from our modern conception], an experience having little to do with disinterest and aesthetic enjoyment. The power of art over the soul seemed to him so great that he thought it could by itself destroy the very foundations of his city; but nonetheless, while he was forced to banish it, he did so reluctantly, “since we ourselves are very conscious of her spell.” The term he uses when he wants to define the effects of inspired imagination is *θεῖος φόβος*, “divine terror,” a term that we, benevolent spectators, no doubt find inappropriate to define our reactions, but that nevertheless is found with increasing frequency, after a certain time, in the notes in which modern artists attempt to capture their experience of art.

13. *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe*, heraus. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 3.1:57 (*The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Francis Golffing [New York: Anchor Books, 1956], pp. 55–56). See Martin Heidegger, “Der Rausch as ästhetischer Zustand,” in *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 1:109–11 (“Rapture as Aesthetic State,” in *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], 1:92–106).

14. “One-way Street,” in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 4.1:146–47, hereafter cited as GS; *Selected Writings*, ed. Marcus Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996–2003), 1:486–87, hereafter cited as SW.

15. Benjamin, GS.5.1:369; Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 290, hereafter cited as AP.



16. See *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. 4th Auflage. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1975), pp. 119, hereafter cited as WM; *Truth and Method*, 2d rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1989), pp. 125–26, hereafter cited as TM:

The true being of the spectator, who belongs to the play of art, cannot be adequately understood in terms of subjectivity [i.e., as a disengaged cognitive subject], as a way that aesthetic consciousness conducts itself. But this does not mean that the nature of the spectator cannot be described in terms of being present at something. . . . Considered as a subjective accomplishment of human conduct, being present has the character of being outside oneself [*Außersichseins*]. In the *Phaedrus* Plato already described the blunder of those who take the viewpoint of rational reasonableness and tend to misinterpret the ecstatic condition of being outside oneself, seeing it as a mere negation of being composed within oneself and hence as a kind of madness [*Verrücktheit*]. In fact, being outside oneself is the positive possibility of being wholly with something else. This kind of being present is a self-forgetfulness, and to be a spectator consists in giving oneself in self-forgetfulness to what one is watching. Here self-forgetfulness is anything but a privative condition, for it arises from devoting one's full attention to the matter at hand, and this is the spectator's own positive accomplishment.

17. This distancing factor by which an audience is constituted is already conceptualized ironically in the *Ion* when Socrates gets Ion to confess that he (Ion) watches the Dionysian effects that his recital of Homer produces in his audience (535d–e). In Plato, poetry is already integrated into a culture of rhetoric. George Walsh, however, thinks of Odysseus as the first disenchanted spectator (*Varieties of Enchantment*, pp. 16–17). Cf. Havelock, "Psyche or the Separation of the Knower from the Known," pp. 197–214.

18. See Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971), pp. 41–42 ("Discourse on Language," trans. Rupert Sawyer, appended to *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith [New York: Pantheon Books, 1972], pp. 225–26):

A rather different function is filled by "fellowships of discourse," whose function is to preserve or to reproduce discourse, but in order that it should circulate within a closed community, according to strict regulations, without those in possession being dispossessed by this very distribution. An archaic model of this would be those groups of Rhapsodes, possessing knowledge of poems to recite, or, even, upon which to work variations and transformations. But though the ultimate object of this knowledge was ritual recitation, it was protected and preserved within a determinate group by the often extremely

complex exercises of memory implied by such a process. Apprenticeship gained access both to a group and to a secret which recitation made manifest, but did not divulge. The roles of speaking and listening were not interchangeable.

19. Trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 468. See also Max Weber, "The Chinese Literati," in *Sociological Writings*, ed. Wolf Heydebrand (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp. 122–50, esp. pp. 135–36.

20. See the "Gespräche vom Poesie," in *Kritische Schriften* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1956), p. 285, hereafter cited as KS ("Dialogue on Poesy," in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writers*, ed. and trans. Jochen Schulte-Sasse et al. [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997], p. 181). In *The Inoperative Community* Nancy remarks that "the myth of the literary community was outlined for the first time (although in reality it was perhaps not the first time) by the Jena romantics, and it has filtered down to us in various different ways through everything resembling the idea of a 'republic of artists' or, again, the idea of communism (of a certain kind of Maoism, for example) and revolution inherent, *tel quel*, in writing itself" (CD.90/InC.64).

21. KS.37–38, 50–51. *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 31–32, 50–51. Compare Hegel: "The *philosophy* of art is therefore a greater need in our day than it was when art by itself as art yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is." *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 1:25–26 (*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], 1:13).

22. See Charles Bernstein, "Optimism and Critical Excess (Process)," in *A Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 151, hereafter cited as P.

23. See Blanchot, "The Athenaeum" (EI.515–27/IC.351–59), and also his essay on René Char, "The Fragment Word" (EI.439–50/IC.307–13). *Désaveuement* is not an easy term to translate, since it is a word for an event in which something does not take place. "Unworking," "worklessness," "un-eventfulness" are some of the possibilities. For Blanchot *désaveuement* means that writing is not a mode of production but an experience of the interminability of writing: writing without *archē* or *telos*. It belongs to the family of Bataille's *dépense*, or nonproductive expenditure. See note 25, below.

24. The break-out of painting is arguably earlier—perhaps, as Giorgio Agamben suggests, when people begin collecting paintings and hanging them in galleries. See his "The Cabinet of Wonders" (MwC.28–39). Agamben's interest is in that moment when the artist or poet is no longer simply a craftsman working with his material but becomes a unique subjectivity, a

special mode of inwardness in whose work the spectator can no longer see a reflection of himself but rather experiences an alienation, a “being-outside-himself” (MwC.37).

25. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, “L’exigence fragmentaire,” in *L’absolu littéraire: Théorie de la littérature du romantisme allemande* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985), pp. 58–59 (“The Fragmentary Exigency,” in *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. by Phillip Barnard and Cheryl Lester [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988], p. 40).

26. See Georges Bataille, *The College of Sociology*, ed. Dennis Hollier, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), hereafter cited as CS. See also Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (CI.27–30/UC.12–16), on Bataille’s experiments in community during the 1930s, starting with his experience of surrealism as a group project. Later Bataille would write: “The force of conviction animating [André Breton] allowed him to bring together a number of people whose names today are known everywhere—not by external ties of action, but by more intimate ties of passion. It was André Breton who rightly recognized that a poet or painter does not have the power to say what is in his heart, but that an organization or a collective body could. This ‘body’ can speak in different terms from an individual. If painters and poets together took consciousness of what weighed on poetry and painting, anyone who speaks in their name must plead that it is the vehicle of impersonal necessity.” “L’surréalisme et sa différence avec l’existentialisme,” *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1988), 11:73–74, hereafter cited as OC; “Surrealism and How It Differs from Existentialism” (1947), in *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*, trans. Michael Richardson (London: Verso, 1994), p. 60, hereafter cited as AM. See also Bataille’s essay therein, “La sens moral de la sociologie” (“The Moral Meaning of Sociology”):

Until about 1930, the influence of Durkheim’s sociological doctrine had barely gone beyond the university domain. It had no influence in the arena of intellectual fever. Durkheim had been dead for a long time when young writers emerging from surrealism (Caillois, Leiris, Monnerot) began following the lectures of Marcel Mauss, whose remarkable teaching was fully in accord with the founder of the school. It is difficult to define exactly what they sought. . . . There was only a vague orientation, independent of the personal interests which explain it. Detachment from a society that was disintegrating because of individualism and the malaise resulting from the limited possibilities of the individual domain was combined there. Although we cannot assume the same value for every one of them, there was possibly a great attraction to realities which, as they establish social bonds, are considered sacred. These young writers felt more or less clearly that society

had lost the secret of its cohesion, and this was precisely what the obscure, uneasy and sterile efforts of poetic fever sought to address. (OC.11.58/AM.104–5)

27. *The Guilty*, trans. Bruce Boone (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1988).

28. See *La part maudite, précédé de la notion de dépense* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1967), p. 28, hereafter cited as PM; “The Notion of Expenditure,” *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1959*, trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 118, hereafter cited as VE. To be sure, all ecstatic communities have an ambiguous relation to the social order in which they are contained—armies are the most emphatic example. But one should think of armies not so much as disciplined orders in which everything is regulated by command but as packs or bands that a state cannot finally keep under control. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, “1227: Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine,” in *Milles plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1980), pp. 434–527, hereafter cited as MP; *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 351–415, hereafter cited as TP.

29. See Steve McCaffery, “Writing as a General Economy,” in *North of Intention: Critical Writings, 1973–86* (New York: Roof Books, 1986), pp. 201–21.

30. See Georges Bataille, *L'expérience intérieure* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943), p. 147 (*Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988], p. 94).

31. “Projective Verse,” in *The Human Universe*, ed. Donald Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 59, hereafter cited as PV.

32. Compare Louis Zukofsky, “A Statement for Poetry [1950],” in *Prepositions: The Collected Critical Essays* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), p. 23: “The best way to find out about poetry is to read poems. That way the reader becomes something of a poet himself: not because he ‘contributes’ to the poetry, but because he finds himself subject of its energy.”

33. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), Band 10.1: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft, 1: Prismen*, pp. 155–56 (*Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981], p. 152):

Schoenberg’s instinctive mode of reaction is melodic; everything in him is actually “sung,” including the instrumental lines. This endows his music with its articulate character, free-moving and yet structural down to the last tone. The primacy of breathing over the beat of abstract time contrasts Schoenberg to Stravinsky and to all those who, having adjusted better to contemporary existence, fancy themselves more modern than Schoenberg. The reified mind is allergic to the elaboration and fulfilment of melody, for which it substitutes the doc-

ile repetition of mutilated melodic fragments. The ability to follow the breath of the music unafraid had already distinguished Schoenberg from older, post-Wagnerian composers like Strauss and Wolf, in whom the music seems unable to develop its substance according to its intrinsic impulses and requires literary and programmatic support, even in the songs.

34. *Olson's Push: Origin, Black Mountain, and Recent American Poetry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1978), p. 39.

35. Stephen Fredman, *Grounding American Poetry: Charles Olson and the Emersonian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 55:

The Black Mountain poets functioned as a kind of mystery sect, particularly between the years 1950, when Olson and Creeley began corresponding and Cid Corman started *Origin*, and 1970, when Olson died. As the leader, Olson encouraged a host of others to join this community of resistant poets. Thus, a group of writers formed around such centers as Black Mountain College, *Origin*, and *The Black Mountain Review*: Olson, Creeley, Duncan, Corman, Denise Levertov, Edward Dorn, Paul Blackburn, Joel Oppenheimer, Fielding Dawson, Michael Rumaker, Hilda Morley, John Wieners, Larry Eigner, Jonathan Williams, Le Roi Jones, Gilbert Sorrentino, and others. In the course of this twenty-year period, a second wave of projectivist writers appeared and intermingled with the first; of a larger number that could be mentioned, the following writers maintained a more or less strict adherence to the projectivist doctrine during at least some of this time: Robert Kelly, Theodore Enslin, Kenneth Irby, Jerome Rothenberg, Clayton Eshleman, Edward Sanders, David Bromige, Richard Grossinger, Ronald Johnson, and Armand Schwerner.

36. Quoted by RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979), p. 79, hereafter cited as PLA.

37. *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), pp. 344–67, hereafter cited as BM.

38. In *Olson's Push* Sherman Paul writes: "Seen in the context of Black Mountain College, 'Apollonius at Tyana' is a demonstration of the 'Theater Exercises' Olson initiated there in the summer of 1949. Art had always been important in the curriculum of the college, and at this time, as Olson explained in a letter, dance, because of the presence of Katherine Litz and Merce Cunningham, was 'the most forward of the disciplines' and hence the core of the performing arts. Olson himself was acquainted with dance. . . . As a young man he had had some training at the Gloucester School of the Little Theatre and had even danced—motionless—in a Massine production of *Bacchanale* in Boston." *Olson's Push: Origin, Black Mountain, and Recent American Poetry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 88.

39. *The Black Mountain Book: A New Edition* (Rocky Mount, NC: North Carolina Wesleyan Press, 1991), pp. 178–79.

40. See Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 375, hereafter cited as KD: “Something unprecedented in the whole history of art surfaced in the sixties: it had become legitimate to be an artist without being either a painter, or a poet, or a musician, or a sculptor, novelist, architect, choreographer, filmmaker, etc. A new ‘category’ of art appeared—art in general, or art at large—that was no longer absorbed in traditional disciplines.” In “Why Are There Several Arts?” Jean-Luc Nancy seems to contest de Duve. See *Les Muses* (Paris: Éditions Gallilée, 1994), pp. 11–70 (*The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994], pp. 1–39). Cf. Stanley Cavell, “A Matter of Meaning It” (1967), in *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 188–90, on the work of Anthony Caro, whose sculpture is no longer sculptured, thus depriving us of criteria for determining what we are looking at. This is the modernist project, which leaves us in the dilemma of always having to discover anew the conditions that enable us to accept something as a work of art.

41. *Der philosophisches Diskurs der Moderne: zwölf Vorlesungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 243–45 (*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987], pp. 205–7.

42. “Art and Objecthood” (1967), in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 120, hereafter cited as AO.

43. *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 212, hereafter cited as AT; *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 141, hereafter cited as AeT.

44. See Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” in *The New Art*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), pp. 72–73. See also Arthur Danto, “Works of Art and Mere Real Things,” in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 1–32. Thierry de Duve has a good chapter on this matter in *Kant After Duchamp*, “The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas” (KD.199–279).

45. “Experimental Music,” in *Silence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 12, hereafter cited as S.

46. Perhaps not so new. In an important footnote Fried remarks on “the deep affinity between literalists and Surrealist sensibility. . . . This affinity can be summed up by saying that Surrealist sensibility . . . and literalist sensibility are both *theatrical*” (AO.145).

47. See Marjorie Perloff on Fried’s separation of art from theater, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Guerre, Avant-Garde, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 109–11.

48. See Artaud, *Le théâtre et son double* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964): “La mise en scène et la métaphysique,” pp. 49–72, and “En finir avec les

chefs-d'œuvre," pp. 115–30, hereafter cited as TD; *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): "Mise en scène and Metaphysics," pp. 227–39, and "An End to Masterpieces," pp. 252–59, hereafter cited as AA. Interestingly, Fried describes the encounter with the minimalist "object" as if it were a not-altogether-friendly encounter with another person. The minimalist work does not just sit there; it is aggressive. It *confronts* the beholder, who is warned not to come any closer but to stand back or give ground. The experience is "not entirely unlike being distanced, or crowded, by the silent presence of another *person*; the experience of coming upon literalist objects unexpectedly—for example, in somewhat darkened rooms—is disquieting in just this way" (AO.128). As if minimalist art were not just theater but "theater of cruelty."

49. "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . .": "There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected" (MP.318–19 / TP.261).

50. See Arthur Danto, "The End of Art," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 81–115. For Danto, as we saw earlier, art comes to an end, not when it turns into theater, but when it is "transmuted into philosophy," that is, when the work just is the theory that constitutes it (conceptual art): "Now if we look at the art of our recent past . . . what we see is something which depends more and more upon theory for its existence as art, so that theory is not something external to a world it seeks to understand, so that in understanding its object it has to understand itself. But there is another feature exhibited by these late productions which is that the objects approach zero as their theory approaches infinity, so that virtually all there is at the end *is* theory, art having finally become vaporized in a dazzle of pure thought about itself, and remaining, as it were, solely as the object of its own theoretical consciousness" (p. 111).

51. See Henry Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1–34; and Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

52. An indispensable chronicle of New York performance art is to be found in Cynthia Carr's *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), a collection of reviews written mainly for the *Village Voice*.

53. See Chris Burden and Jan Butterfield, "Through the Night Softly," in *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock and Rob-

ert Nickas (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984), pp. 222–39; and Parveen Adams, “Operation Orlan,” in *The Emptiness of the Image* (London: Routledge, 1991), esp. p. 145.

54. The surrealists were always a plurality in which, in Nancy’s words, “different pieces touch each other without fusing” (CD.188 / InC.76). In *The Unavowable Community* Blanchot remarks on the aleatory character of André Breton’s group: “There it is: something had taken place which, for a few moments and due to the misunderstandings peculiar to singular existences, gave permission to recognize the possibility of a community established previously though at the same time already posthumous: nothing of it would remain, which saddened the heart while also exalting it, like the very ordeal of effacement that writing demands” (IC.41 / UC.21).

55. A “war machine” is like a pack, band, or gang: “it seems to be irreducible to the State apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere” (MP.435/TP.352).

56. Robert Creeley, *Was That a Real Poem or Other Essays*, ed. Donald Allen (Bolin, CA: Four Seasons Foundation, 1979), p. 17.

57. “Violence and Precision: The Manifesto as Art Form,” in *The Futurist Moment*, pp. 80–115.

58. *My Futurist Years*, ed. Bengt Jangfeldt, trans. Stephen Rudy (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992), pp. 4–5. Interestingly, Osip Mandelstam gives an account of Jakobson’s poetic scene from the outside. In “An Army of Poets” (1923) (in Osip Mandelstam, *Critical Prose and Letters*, trans. Jane Gary Harris and Constance Link [Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis Publishers, 1979], hereafter CPL), he contrasts poetry writing in France from what is happening in Russia following the Revolution. In France poetry is a school subject in which students learn to compose alexandrines; when they graduate they happily forget all about it. (Perhaps this helps to explain why the history of French poetry in the twentieth century is so thin.) In Russia by contrast poetry is a Dionysian epidemic:

In Russia the writing of poetry among young people is so widespread that it should be treated as a major social phenomenon and should be studied like any mass-scale operation which, although useless, has profound cultural and physiological causes.

Being acquainted, if only superficially, with the circle of those who write poetry, draws one into a sick, pathological world, a world of eccentrics, of people whose central nerve of both will and brain is diseased, of outright failures who are incapable of adapting in the struggle for existence and who frequently suffer not only from intellectual, but also physical cachexia. . . .

In the exceptionally difficult struggle for existence, tens of thousands of Russian youths manage to take time off from their studies and daily work to write poetry which they cannot sell and which wins approval, at best, from only a few acquaintances.



This, of course, is a disease and the disease is not accidental. It is not surprising that it attacks the age group of approximately seventeen to twenty-five. . . .

After our difficult transitional years, the quantity of poets greatly increased. Because of widespread malnutrition there was an increase in the number of people whose intellectual awakening had a sickly character and had no outlet in any healthy activity.

The concurrence of the famine years, rations, and physical deprivations with the highest peak of mass poetry writing is not a coincidence. During those years when cafes such as the Domino, the Coffeehouse of Poets, and the various Stables thrived, the younger generation, especially in the capital cities, was by necessity alienated from normal work and professional knowledge since only a professional education offers a antidote to the disease of poetry, a real and serious disease because it deforms the personality, deprives a youth of a solid foundation, makes him the butt of jokes and poorly concealed disgust, and deprives him of the social respect given others of his own age. (CPL.191–93)

This is a polemic aimed against Majakovskij, who thought that everyone should be a poet. Mandelstam by contrast thinks that poetry is a species of learning. It must be rooted in philology and must resonate with poetic tradition. “Modern Russian poetry did not just fall from the skies; it was foreshadowed by our nation’s entire poetic past” (*Critical Prose and Letters*, p. 165).

59. See Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In *New York Modern: The Arts and the City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), William B. Scott and Peter M. Rutkoff have an interesting chapter on the abstract expressionists who flourished in New York after World War II. The “participants refused to agree that they constituted a school or that they could be grouped under a common name. Instead, they concluded that they belonged to an ‘ideal society’ inherently at odds with the ‘goals that most people accept.’” Nevertheless, “New York abstract expressionists craved artistic community. In the fall of 1949 some twenty painters and sculptors . . . gathered at the studio of Ibram Lassaw on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 12th Street to form the Club. ‘We always wanted a loft, like the Greek and Italian social clubs on Eighth Avenue, instead of sitting in one of those goddamned cafeterias,’ recalled one of the artists. ‘One night we decided to do it—we got up twenty charter members who each gave ten dollars.’ The Club, also called, because of its location at 39 West Eighth Avenue, the Eighth Street Club, served as an artists’ hang-out where members could face each other ‘with curses mixed with affection, smiling and evil eyed each week for years’” (p. 311). See also David Leh-

man's *The Last Avant-Garde: The Making of the New York School of Poets* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), which treats the intersection of Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and John Ashbery with the artworld of the New York expressionists during the 1950s.

60. *What it means to be avant-garde* (New York: New Directions, 1993), pp. 46–47.

61. See Marjorie Perloff, "The Word as Such: L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Poetry in the Eighties," in *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 215–38.

62. Lyn Hejinian, *The Cell* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1992), p. 7.

63. "Strangeness," in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 148–49, hereafter cited as LI. See also Hejinian's "The Rejection of Closure" (LI.40–58). Compare Ron Silliman's description of the "new sentence," which is a sentence that resists the syllogistic movement that would integrate it into larger semantic units (and so made to disappear); on the contrary, the new sentence is characterized by the removal of context that allows each sentence its own integrity. *The New Sentence* (New York: ROOF Books, 1989), pp. 63–93.

64. See Hejinian, "Who is Speaking?," on the formation of the poetic community as a context in which the individual work is not so much a formal object as a public event (LI.31–39).

65. "Introduction" to *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*, ed. Charles Bernstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 24, hereafter cited as CL. See also Ron Silliman, "The Political Economy of Poetry," in *The New Sentence*, pp. 20–31; and Charles Bernstein, "I Don't Take Voice Mail: The Object of Art in the Age of Electronic Technology," in *My Way: Speeches and Poems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 73–80, esp. p. 76.

66. *The Marginalization of Poetry: Language Writing and Literary History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 14.

67. See, for example, Steve McCaffery, "Voice in Extremis," in *Close Listening*, pp. 162–77. See Marjorie Perloff, "No More Margins': John Cage, David Antin, and the Poetry of Performance," in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 288–339; and Stephen Fredman, "The Crisis at Present: Talk Poems and the New Poet's Prose," in *Poet's Prose: The Crisis in American Verse*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 136–49.

68. "On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work" (S.102).

## Chapter Five

1. See John Matthias, "The Stefan Batory Poems" ("Five: the library"), *Crossing* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1979), pp. 81–82. *Crossing* has

this bibliographical note appended to it: “I am indebted, as in *Turns* and *Bucyrus* [Matthias’s earlier volumes], to an odd assortment of books and authors for facts, fancies, passages of verse or of prose, translations, information, scholarship and scandal which I have had occasion in these poems to quote, plagiarize, willfully ignore, tactfully modify, stupidly misconstrue, or intentionally travesty” (p. 121).

2. *Œuvres complètes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, ed. Henri Mondor (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), p. 378.

3. *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 272, hereafter cited as AT. *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 182, hereafter cited as AeT.

4. See Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 84.

5. *Milles plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Éditions le Minuit), pp. 614–25 (*A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], pp. 492–500).

6. See Danto, “The Artworld,” *Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (October 1964): 581. See also idem, “The Art World Revisited: Comedies of Similarity,” in *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-historical Perspective* (New York: Noonday Press, 1992), pp. 33–53, hereafter cited as BBB. See esp. pp. 38–40, where Danto distinguishes his (historical) conception of the artworld from George Dickie’s Institutional Theory of Art, where a thing is art if it is said to be so by experts.

7. Joseph Margolis thinks that Danto “confuses artworks with ordinary material objects,” since the difference between the work and the stuff of which it is made may be imperceptible. Artworks, Margolis says, are not made of materials but of “intentional properties” which attach to artworks as “historied objects.” But it’s hard to see much difference between Margolis’s historicism and Danto’s. For Danto, the perception of anything as a work of art is conceptually mediated, but concepts do not fall from the sky. They emerge culturally in just the way Margolis says they do. See Margolis, *What Is, After All, a Work of Art? Lectures on the Philosophy of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 27. See esp. p. 94: “The truth is, we cannot understand any sentence, thought, or intentional structure [e.g., a work of art] apart from the *lebensformlich* ‘world’ in which it is so discerned.”

8. Joseph Kosuth, “Art after Philosophy,” *Art in Theory, 1900–1990*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), p. 845. Kosuth imagines the artworld as a conceptual realm in which real objects—paintings, shoes—can come and go without altering the logical form of the landscape (“This is art”); but such a realm would still be subject to the constraints that govern Danto’s “artworld,” which is a world in which anything is possible but not at every moment. We need a theory to help us pick a thing out as art, but theory is always historically mediated. Or, to put it

another way, the hermeneutical circle is always historical, and we are always inside of it.

9. "what am i doing here?," *talking at the boundaries* (New York: New Directions, 1976), p. 3, hereafter cited as tb.

10. "the structuralist," *what it means to be avant-garde* (New York: New Directions, 1990), pp. 159–60, hereafter cited as wim.

11. Joseph Margolis would say that this question begs the question about cultural entities. See *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?*, p. 89:

The individuation and identity of artworks are hardly the same as the individuation and identity of the natural and linguistic entities upon which they depend (and which they incorporate). If, for instance, a block of marble, however cut, lacks Intentional properties, whereas a sculpture—say, Michelangelo's *Moses*, which incorporates the marble—intrinsically possesses Intentional properties, then the two *denotata* cannot be numerically the same. So far, so good. It goes some distance toward explaining why so many theorists speak of artworks as a way of *using* natural or physical objects or the like, or of transfiguring them rhetorically, by imputing all sorts of Intentional properties, which, on the argument, these physical objects could not logically possess.

12. See Heidrun Friese, "Literal Letters. On the Materiality of Words," *Paragraph* 21, no. 2 (July 1998): 167–99; Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Art in Theory, 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 809–13; and Antonin Artaud, "Le théâtre de la cruauté (Premier manifeste)," *Le théâtre et son double* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), pp. 137–56 ("The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)," in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976], pp. 248–49). As for paintings made of paint—or, more exactly, of drips of paint ("drips acquired a kind of mystical exaltation of status in the 1950s")—see Arthur Danto, *Transfigurations of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 107–9, hereafter cited as TC. See esp. p. 108: "The drip . . . calls attention insistently to paint as paint."

13. "Erik Satie," in *Silence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 76.

14. Thierry de Duve thinks that Duchamp's Readymades, for example, are neither paintings nor sculptures but works of art in general. "The readymades . . . are 'art' and 'nothing but art'. . . . You call Malevich an artist through the same judgment that makes you call him a painter. Logically, if not chronologically, he is a painter first. With the legitimization of Duchamp's readymades, a very different situation was seemingly made legitimate, a situation about which, I believe, one should never stop wondering and perhaps worrying: you can now be an artist without being either a painter, or

a sculptor, or a composer, or a writer, or an architect—an artist at large.” *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 153, hereafter cited as KD. But, to speak strictly, an “artist at large” would produce works of art that were singular, that is, irreducible to any category (not answerable to any concept, hence nonidentical). Interestingly, de Duve redeems Duchamp by reassembling him to the history of painting (KD.154–72).

15. “On Installation,” in *Complete Writings, 1975–1986* (Eindhoven: van Abbemuseum, 1987), p. 94.

16. Adorno says: “That through which artworks, by becoming appearance (*Erscheinung*), are more than they are: This is their spirit. . . . It makes artworks, things among things, something other than thing” (AT.134/AeT.86).

17. See Adorno, “Rückblickend auf den Surrealismus,” in *Noten zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970), 1:153–60, esp. pp. 158–59 (“Looking Back on Surrealism,” in *Notes to Literature*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], pp. 86–90, esp. pp. 88–89).

18. Interview with Serge Gavronsky, in *Poems & Texts*, trans. Serge Gavronsky (New York: October House, 1969), p. 37.

19. *Le parti pris des choses, suite de Proèmes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948), p. 176, hereafter cited as PP; *The Voice of Things*, trans. Beth Archer (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 79, hereafter cited as VT.

20. See Jean-Paul Sartre’s essay on Ponge, “L’homme et choses,” in *Situations, I* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1947), pp. 226–70, hereafter cited as Si. See esp. pp. 242–43: “It is not a question of *describing* things. . . . [Ponge] talks about a cigarette without saying a word about the white paper in which it is rolled, about a butterfly without hardly a mention of the patterns adorning its wings: he is not concerned with the qualities of things but with *being*.” Perhaps not with *being* as such but with things in their singularity and proximity in which our relation to them is not one of observing, knowing, asserting, describing, or any of the other acts of a cognitive subject.

21. See Stephen Fredman, *Poet’s Prose: The Crisis in American Verse*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). A poem in prose is a poem that has migrated, Antin-like, from its proper formal category to the category of how people ordinarily talk. Gadamer would say that the aesthetic in this event is no longer differentiated.

22. See Emmanuel Levinas, “Langage et proximité,” in *En découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie philosophique, 1967), p. 222, hereafter cited as EDL; “Language and Proximity,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), p. 116, hereafter cited as CPP:

The *ethical* does not designate an inoffensive attenuation of passionate particularisms, which would introduce the human subject into a universal order and unite all rational beings, like ideas, in a kingdom of

ends. It indicates a reversal of the subjectivity which is *open upon* beings and always in some measure represents them to itself, positing them and taking them to be such or such . . . into a subjectivity that enters *into contact* with a singularity, excluding identification in the ideal, excluding thematization and representation—an absolute singularity, as such unrepresentable. This is the original language, the foundation of the other one. The precise point at which this mutation of the intentional into the ethical occurs, and occurs continually, at which the approach *breaks through* consciousness, is the human skin and face. Contact is tenderness and responsibility.

23. See Ponge, *Nouveau Recueil* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1967), p. 143.

24. E. Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 118 (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981], p. 73).

25. Arthur Danto, celebrating Andy Warhol's *Hammer and Sickle* paintings, in which hammers and sickles are, like Duchamp's shovel, hardware items, still retaining their manufacturers' insignia, writes:

Think of someone who drinks the wine and takes the bread on his tongue as a religious act, but not in the spirit so much of transubstantiation as of transfiguration; who ingests these substances as themselves and *self*-symbolizing, in Feuerbach's expression, "in sacramental celebration of their earthly truth"—the bread symbolizing bread, the wine wine, rather than flesh and blood respectively. That would be exactly the spirit of Warhol: his soups are in sacramental celebration of their earthly reality, simply as what one might call one's daily soup, as what one eats day after day, as he said he himself did. If this sacramental return of the thing to itself through art is the energy which drove him as an artist to bring into the center of his work what had never really been celebrated before—what would have been aesthetically despised and rejected, impugned as commercial, in a limbo outside the redemptive reach of art—then it would have been the most ordinary of *vin ordinaire*, the most daily of daily bread, not fine vintages or gourmet loaves baked in special ovens which would be the sacramental stuff of the Feuerbachian ritual. (BBB.136)

26. In "L'homme et choses" Sartre gives a provocative reading of the events of "dehumanization" in Ponge's poetry. These events are not entirely negative but consist in a relocation of subjectivity, as in the attempt to see the world through the eyes of mere things (Si.266). There is a good discussion of Sartre's essay by Natascha Heather Lancaster, "Freedom at Work: Sartre on Ponge," in *Situating Sartre in Twentieth-Century Thought and Culture*, ed. Jean-François Fourny and Charles D. Minahan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 53–70.

27. In his *Arcades Project*, in the section on “The Streets of Paris,” Benjamin cites the following: “Around 1830: ‘The Chaussée d’Antin is the neighborhood of the nouveaux riches of the financial world. All these districts in the western part of town have been discredited: the city planners of the period believed that Paris was going to develop in the direction of the saltpeter works, an opinion that ought to instill prudence in today’s developers. . . . A lot on the Chaussée d’Antin had trouble finding a buyer at 20,000 to 25,000 francs.’ Lucien Dubech and Pierre d’Espezet, *Histoire de Paris* (Paris, 1926), p. 364.” *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 1:648, hereafter cited as GS; *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 520, hereafter cited as AP.

28. “Artifice of Absorption,” in *A Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 87.

29. “Works of Art and Mere Real Things” (TC.1–32). See also p. 46: “Picasso was famous for transfigurations of the commonplace. He had made the head of a chimpanzee out of a child’s toy; a goat’s thorax out of an old wicker basket; a bull’s head out of bicycle parts; a Venus out of a gasjet—and so why not the ultimate transfiguration, an artwork out of a mere thing?”

30. *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 76, hereafter cited as S.

31. GS.2.2:478; *Selected Writings*, ed. Marcus Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996–2003), 3:268, hereafter cited as SW.

32. Pons’s principle secures the work of art against the ostentation of capital by inverting the ratio of price and value: “This old musician applied as axiomatic the claim made by Chenavard, that expert collector of priceless engravings: that a work by Ruysdael, Hobbema, Holbein, Raphael, Murillo, Greuze, Sebastian del Piombo, Giorgione or Albrecht Dürer, is only pleasurable to look at when it has not cost more than fifty francs. Pons ruled out all purchases above the sum of a hundred francs. An object had to be worth three thousand francs before he would pay fifty francs for it. The loveliest thing in the world, if it cost three hundred francs, ceased to exist for him.” *Cousin Pons*, trans. Herbert J. Hunt (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 25–26.

33. *Nadja*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 52.

34. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–60*, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), p. 114, hereafter S JL.

35. In Georges Bataille’s theory of *dépense*, such a thing would no longer inhabit a restricted economy of production and consumption but would belong, along with works of art, to an economy of pure expenditure, or expenditure without return. “La notion de dépense,” in *La part maudite, precede de*

*la notion de dépense* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1967), pp. 28–29 (“The Notion of Expenditure,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1959*, trans. Allan Stoekl [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985], pp. 118–20).

36. *Paroles* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1949), p. 208, hereafter cited as P (Jacques Prévert, *Words for All Seasons*, trans. Teo Savory [Greensboro, NC: Unicorn Press, 1979], p. 15).

37. “Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting” (GS.4.1:389) (*Selected Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999], p. 487).

38. Heidegger writes: “The jug is a thing neither in the sense of the Roman *ens*, nor in the sense of the medieval *ens*, let alone in the modern sense of object. The jug is a thing insofar as it things. The presence of something present such as the jug comes into its own, appropriatively manifests and determines itself, only from the thinging of the thing.” “Das Ding,” in *Vorträge unde Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Günther Neske Pfullingen, 1954), p. 170 (“The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], p. 177).

39. “Modernist Painting,” in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4:89–90.

40. “The End of Art,” in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 84–86. See also idem, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. pp. 83–86.

41. See Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?*, p. 35. Transfiguration is not transformation.

42. *L’Inhuman: Causeries sur le temps* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1988), p. 154, hereafter cited as In; *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 140, hereafter cited as IR.

## Chapter Six

1. See “Discussions, or Phrasing after Auschwitz” (LR.372–73). “I confess” is a phrase, which is not a grammatical unit but one of a number of “language games” or “forms of life” in Wittgenstein’s sense of these terms. Lyotard likes to think of phrases as events: “A wink, a shrugging of the shoulder, a tapping of the foot, a fleeting blush, or an attack of tachycardia can be phrases.—And the wagging of a dog’s tail, the perked ears of a cat?” (Di.108/D.70).

2. Lyotard, “Presentations,” *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 124.

3. Deleuze and Guattari write: “A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes.



Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in other respects altogether: the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic. Even some animals are, in their pack form. Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout. The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other. The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed. Animal and plant, couchgrass is crabgrass [*le chiendent, c'est le crab-grass*].” *Mille plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), p. 13; *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 6–7. Some pages later they write: “We’re tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They’ve made us suffer too much. All of arborescent culture is founded on them, from biology to linguistics. Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes” (MP24/TP15).

4. *Leçons sur l’analytique du sublime* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1991) (*Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* [*Kant’s ‘Critique of Judgment,’* §§ 23–29]), trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. viii.

5. Lyotard repeatedly stresses the etymology of the word “pagan,” *pagus*, meaning “boundary,” “frontier,” or “edge.” A pagan is someone who lives on the outskirts: “I think that the relation between gods and humans is to be thought of in terms of boundaries. And *pagus* always indicates the country, the region. It is the opposite of *Heim*, of ‘home,’ that is, of the village. It is quite a beautiful word since it gave us *pax*, ‘companion,’ etc. It is the place where one *compacts* with something else. (It is the same root. From time to time, let us allow ourselves some parodic etymologies; this one happens to be ‘true’ in any case.) It is a place of boundaries. Boundaries are not borders” (AJ.82/JG.42–43). Augustine would be a pagan in this sense, namely one living (on the coast of Africa) on the open boundary between Roman and Christian cultures.

6. See also Di.14/D.xv: “Reflection requires that you watch out for occurrences, that you don’t already know what’s happening. It leaves open the question: *Is it happening? (Arrive-t-il?)*”

7. Compare Jacques Derrida’s “absolutely undetermined messianic hope”; *Spectres de Marx: l’état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1993), p. 111 (*Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [London: Routledge, 1994], pp. 65–66).

8. *Histoire de la sexualité III: Le souci de soi* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984), esp. pp. 53–94 (*The History of Sexuality, 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley [New York: Vintage Books, 1988], esp. pp. 39–68).

9. *L'Idole et la distance* (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1977), pp. 255–56, hereafter cited as IeD; *The Idol and Distance*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), p. 198, hereafter cited as ID. The idea is that God is outside “ontotheology,” that is, outside of metaphysics, without or beyond being (*sans ou au-delà l'être*), outside the alternatives of presence and absence, and therefore inaccessible (dead) to conceptual representation as such. In other words, in Marion's term of art, *distant*: “Neither a subject of discourse, nor an object of science, distance removes itself from definition by definition. Indeed, it ensures communion only between terms whose separation it provokes. Now, among these terms, one interests us directly, since we ensure it, we who are speaking here. As for the other, we can approach it only within a communion that is traversed by separation all the more in that it is a matter of distance. The definition of distance defines us as one of its terms, and therefore removes us from the other, *at the very moment when it exerts its attraction*. The other, infinitely foreign, disappears in his very apparition, is defined by the indefinite itself” (IeD.256/ID.199).

10. See Jean-Luc Marion, *Dieu sans l'être: Hors-texte* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1982) (*God without Being*, trans. Thomas Carlson [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], p. 46): “Concerning God, let us admit clearly that we can think him only under the figure of the unthinkable, but of an unthinkable that exceeds as much what we cannot think as what we can; for that which I may not think is still the concern of *my* thought, and hence to *me* remains thinkable. On the contrary, the unthinkable taken as such is the concern of God himself, and characterizes him as the *aura* of his advent, the glory of his insistence, the brilliance of his retreat.” So we can speak of God only by crossing him out: GØD. Leaving us with nothing to do but pray.”

11. See Jean-Luc Marion on “The Discourse of Praise” (IeD.227–50/ID.180–95). See also idem, “In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of ‘Negative Theology,’” in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 20–42. Hereafter cited as GG. For Marion, a theology of prayer and praise constitutes a third way between dogmatic and negative theologies—“no longer predicative [this is or is not that] but purely pragmatic. It is no longer a matter of naming or attributing something to something, but of aiming in the direction of . . . , of relating to . . . , of comporting oneself toward . . . , of reckoning with . . . —in short of dealing with. . . . By invoking the unattainable as . . . and inasmuch as . . . , prayer definitively marks the transgression of the predicative, nominative, and therefore metaphysical sense of language” (p. 30). This text is part of an ongoing dialogue with Jacques Derrida—a response to Derrida's essay on negative theology, “Comment ne pas parler: *Dénégations*,” *Psyché: Invention de l'autre* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1987), pp. 535–95 (“How to Avoid Speaking: Denials,” trans. Ken Frieden,

in *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser [New York: Columbia University Press, 1989], pp. 3–70), which in turn is a response to Marion's *God without Being* and *Idol and Distance*, cited above.

12. Lyotard's English translator, Richard Braidworth, cites the Loeb Classical Library translation of Augustine, which dates from 1912 and sounds like it. I've used the translation by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 183, hereafter cited as C.

13. In fact, Augustine confounds the distinction between eros and agape. See Henri de Lubac, "Eros and Agape," *Theological Fragments*, trans. Rebecca Howell Balinski (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), pp. 85–90.

14. One could argue that God's "assault" upon Augustine's senses is not Ovidian but is an instance of what Jean-Luc Marion calls "the saturated phenomenon." In Husserl's phenomenology our intentions, concepts, or significations are either fulfilled or left deficient by intuition, but in certain kinds of experience—that of the lover's face would be one, that of the theophany would be another—there is a surplus or excess of intuition that overwhelms us, but leaves us grasping the air. A "saturated phenomenon" is (i) invisible, (ii) unbearable, (iii) uncontainable within any horizon, and (iv) irreducible to consciousness. God reveals himself, not as a presence (*pour soi*), but as a "saturated phenomenon." The point of such an idea is to salvage the possibility of a philosophy of religion, or at least a phenomenology of religious experience. See Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," trans. Thomas A. Carlson, in Dominique Janicaud, et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp. 176–216. However, whereas Augustine is set afire in his experience, Marion imagines that such an experience would freeze us, as if seeing the Medusa: "Access to the divine phenomenality is not forbidden to man; in contrast, it is precisely when he becomes entirely open to it that man finds himself forbidden from it—frozen, submerged, he is by himself forbidden from advancing and likewise from resting. In the mode of interdiction, terror attests to the insistent and unbearable excess in the intuition of God." See Marion, "In the Name" (GG.41). Augustine's experience is surely ecstasy rather than terror.

15. See Richard Kearney, "Desire of God" (GG.112–30). Kearney agrees that the distinction between *eros* and *agapē* is purely theoretical and loses its application at the level of our experience of God, as we know from the mystics—and, before everyone else, from Augustine. Meanwhile Kearney, following Emmanuel Levinas, makes a distinction between two kinds of desire: an ontotheological desire based on lack (a lack of presence, a lack of conceptual identity, a failure of consciousness to produce what it wants to see), and desire as a movement of one-for-the other, or eschatological desire, where the other is always outside cognition and representation: the unknowable as such. See *Totalité et infini; essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague:

Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p. 57, hereafter cited as TeI; *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 34, hereafter cited as TI.

16. *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 197. In “D’un trait d’union [On a Hyphen]” (1992) Lyotard has an interesting paragraph on the Incarnation:

The incarnation is a mystery. It exceeds the secret meaning, the *soû*, of the letter left by the invisible Voice [of the Hebrew Bible]. It is the voiced Voice, the Voice made flesh, made of another flesh. In the *Miqra* [the Hebrew Bible], the Voice can perform miracles. And miracles are signs. The people picked out by the Lord need signs. But the Incarnation is not a miracle; it is a mystery, a mystery that destroys the regimen of every reading. The mystery offers nothing to be understood or interpreted. With Jesus, the purpose of the covenant is made manifest, for Jesus *is* the covenant made flesh. The Voice is no longer deposited in traces; it no longer marks itself in absence; it is no longer deciphered through signs. The Voice speaks the flesh, it speaks flesh. And the mystery has to do only with this—not with what the Voice says. The whole content of the new covenant is the result of its mode of assertion. That is why Paul can unite the new covenant to the old one with a single trait—with a hyphen. But the new mode breaks with the old. It breaks with it simply because the Voice is vocalized, because it offers itself up to be partitioned out, far from paradise, in the abjection of suffering, abandonment, and death. So that reading is in vain.

Lyotard’s argument (against Paul) is that the relation between Judaism and Christianity cannot be inscribed as Judaeo-Christian because the hyphen is a mark of the *différend*, not one of union, not one of old and new versions of the same. See Lyotard and Eberhard Gruber, *The Hyphen: Between Judaism and Christianity*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Amherst, New York: The Humanity Press, 1999), pp. 22–23.

17. Actually Lyotard thinks that Augustine’s dissertation on time is quite successful and anticipates Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology of internal time: “The past is no longer, the future is not yet, the present passes by, but as things (*opera*). And yet, I am aware of their nothingness, since I can think them in their absence. There is therefore a present of the past, and this present, as long as I think it, does not pass. It is this present that Husserl will call the *Living Present*, oddly. In Augustine, this present, immanent to internal consciousness, this umbilic, from which signs become readable to me, this present, then, is like the echo in temporality of the divine Present, of his eternal today” (CdA.99–100/CA.73–74). But contrast what Lyotard says in *The Différend*: “God is for later, ‘in a moment’; the Living Present is to come.

These only come by not arriving. Which is what Beckett signifies. Time is not what is lacking to consciousness, time makes consciousness lack itself" (Di.118/D.77).

18. *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), pp. 307–8 (*The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993], p. 207).

19. *L'Écriture du désastre* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1980), p. 1 (*The writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986], p. 1): "We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future: it is rather always already past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat, all formulations which would imply the future—that which is yet to come—if the disaster were not that which does not come, that which has put a stop to every arrival."

20. See Marion, "The Discourse of Praise" (IeD.232–39/ID.184–91). Marion makes the interesting point that as a speech act praise is neither (exactly) a proposition, *s* is *p*, nor a performative in which language causes something to exist. Unlike "I now pronounce you man and wife" or "Strike three!," "I praise you" institutes nothing; rather, words are given as gifts: "Praise indeed functions as a performative ('I praise you . . .'), but as a performative that, instead of making things with words, elaborates with words gifts ('I praise you as *y*, *y'*, *y''*,' etc.). Praise plays as a performative all the more in that it more radically sets the statement outside of the one stating. On this condition alone, the statement assumes enough consistency to merit the dignity of a gift—to traverse distance" (IeD.239/ID.190–91).

21. *Entre Nous: Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Editions Grasset and Fasquelle, 1991), p. 17, hereafter cited as En; *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 6, hereafter cited as EN.

22. "Langage et proximité," *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*. 2d ed. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1967), pp. 223–24 ("Language and Proximity," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987], p. 115).

23. See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être; ou, Au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 81, hereafter cited as AE; *Otherwise than Being; or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), p. 48, hereafter cited as OTB.

24. Levinas's conception of mysticism was shaped by his reading of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's theories of primitive mentalities, and accordingly he thinks of mysticism as an experience of participation in an all-enveloping spirit, in contrast to a more theological view of mysticism that emphasizes the experience of *le tout autre* that traverses a relation of incommensurability or an insurmountable gap. In fact Levinas is closer to this second view than he is to the first insofar as he sees our relation to other people and to God as a relation of separation: outside cognition, which is to say outside the

relation of essence, identity, categories, concepts, horizons, and totalities of every sort. See Levinas, "Lévy Bruhl and Contemporary Philosophy" (En.53–68/EN.39–51).

25. Jacques Derrida, *Sauf le nom* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1993), pp. 22–23, hereafter cited as SN; *On the Name*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 38–39, hereafter cited as ON.

26. See "In the Name" (GG.41–42). See also Marion's discussion of the Name of God in *Idol and Distance* (IeD.186–92/ID.141–45).

27. *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986), 1:225.

28. *Poems of Paul Celan*, trans. Michael Hamburger (New York: Persea Books, 1989), pp. 174–75.

29. "Circonfession," in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991) ("Circumfession," in *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993], pp. 55–58). For a discussion of "Circumfession," see John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 281–329.

30. See Levinas, "Transcendence et hauteur," *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 56, no. 3 (1962): 89–101 ("Transcendence and Height," in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996], pp. 16–20); and also *Totality and Infinity*: "Transcendence designates a relation with reality infinitely distant from my own reality, yet without this distance destroying this relation and without this relation destroying this distance, as would happen with relations within the same [or identity: I = I]; this relation . . . is prior to the negative or affirmative proposition; it first institutes language [prayer], where neither the no nor the yes is the first word" (TeI.31–32/TI.41–42).

## Chapter Seven

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948), pp. 19–20, hereafter cited as QL; *What Is Literature? and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 30, hereafter cited as WL.

2. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, heraus. Hans-Friedrich Wessels und Heinrich Clairmont (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1988), p. 264, hereafter cited as PhG; *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 238, hereafter cited as PS.

3. The essay dates from 1941, and is a review of Jean Paulhan's *Les fleurs de Tarbes*, which examines the poetics of the "Terrorists," the name of a hypothetical group of writers who believe that the writer's task is to reject the rules and conventions, the forms and commonplaces, indeed the conditions of language that make literature possible: in other words, *modernists*—whose critique is in fact the formation of an impasse:

It is a fact; literature exists. It continues to exist despite the inherent absurdity that lives in it, divides it, and makes it actually inconceivable. In the heart of every writer there is a demon who pushes him to strike dead all literary forms, to become aware of his dignity as a writer insofar as he breaks with language and with literature; in a word, to call into question in an expressible way what he is and what he does [*il rompt avec le langage et avec la littérature, en un mot, à mettre en question d'une manière indicible ce qu'il est et ce qu'il fait*]. How, in these conditions, can literature exist? How can the writer, the one who distinguishes himself from other men by the single fact that he questions the validity of language, the one whose work should be to prevent the formation of a written work, end up creating a literary work? How is literature possible? (Fp.97/FP.80–81)

Paulhan's book is, Blanchot says, a discovery that the struggle against literary forms can only take place by the very means (that is, language) that engender these forms: "There is in this discovery enough to cause the silence of Rimbaud to fall upon everyone" (Fp.99/FP.82).

4. And not just literature. Much of Blanchot's work is an exploration of the strange ontological condition in which speech becomes an impossible exigency. *L'attente l'oubli* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1962, hereafter cited as AO; *Awaiting Oblivion*, trans. John Gregg (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), hereafter cited as AwO, is a text made up of narrative fragments and pieces of conversation that deal obsessively (not to say tortuously) with this condition:

Express only what cannot be expressed. Leave it unexpressed. (AO.35/AwO.6)

"Yes, speak to me now."—"I cannot."—"Speak without the ability to do so."—"You ask me so calmly to do the impossible." (AO.86/AwO.44)

Wanting to and not being able to speak; not wanting to and not being able to evade speech; thus speaking—not speaking, in an identical movement her interlocutor had the duty to maintain. (AO93/AwO48)

Speaking, not wanting to; wanting to, not being able to. (AO.93/AwO.48)

5. *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1959), pp. 161–62 (*On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter Hertz [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], p. 59).

6. See "L'expérience-limite" (1962), where Blanchot glosses Bataille's idea that "possibility is not the sole dimension of our existence": "It is perhaps given to us to 'live' each of the events that is ours by way of a double relation. We live it one time as something we comprehend, grasp, bear, and

master . . . by relating it to some good or to some value, that is to say, finally, by relating it to Unity; we live it at another time as something that escapes all employment [*emploi*] and all end, and more, as that which escapes our very capacity to undergo it, but whose trial we cannot escape. Yes, as though impossibility, that by which we are no longer able to be able, were waiting for us behind all that we live, think, and say" (EI.307–8/IC.207). It is this division of time into two temporalities that I'm trying to clarify in what follows.

7. See "La mort possible" (1952): "You cannot write unless you remain your own master before death; you must have established with death a relation of sovereign equals. If you lose face before death, if death is the limit of your self-possession, then it slips the words out from under the pen, it cuts in and interrupts" (EL.110/SL.91).

8. *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), p. 645.

9. *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), Band 24: *Der Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, pp. 349–50 (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982], pp. 247–48).

10. *Les imprévus de l'histoire* (Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana, 1994), p. 133, hereafter cited as IH; *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), p. 6, hereafter cited as CPP.

11. *Logique du sens* (Éditions du Minuit, 1969), p. 80 (*The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990], p.63).

12. *Milles plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Éditions du Minuit, 1980), p. 321 (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993], p. 263).

13. On indiscernibility as a philosophical difficulty, see Arthur Danto, "Works of Art and Mere Real Things," in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 1–32.

14. *La dissémination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), p. 221, hereafter cited as Di; *Disseminations*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 194–95, hereafter cited as D.

15. "The Green Box" (1912), in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michael Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 26.

16. A replica, to be precise, makes no effort to reproduce an original or to serve, as in the case of a duplicate, as a replacement. It is frequently smaller and highly mediated. The postcard one buys in the shop of an art museum *replicates* one of its holdings; it is not a copy like the reproduction that the art student on the third floor, sitting with paint and easel before a Picasso, is meticulously imitating.

17. "The Conceptual Poetics of Marcel Duchamp," in Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 86.



18. Adorno has an interesting passage in his *Aesthetic Theory* that bears upon this matter:

The processual character of artworks [their mode of existence as an event, process, or material object] is nothing other than their temporal nucleus. If duration becomes their intention in such fashion that they expel what they deem ephemeral and by their own hand eternalize themselves in pure impregnable forms or, worse, by the ominous claim to the universally human, they cut short their lives and assimilate themselves into the concept that—as the fixed circumference of shifting contents—by its form pursues precisely that temporal stasis against which the drawn tension of the artwork defends itself. Artworks, mortal human objects, pass away all the more rapidly the more doggedly they stave it off. Although permanence cannot be excluded from the concept of their form, it is not their essence. . . . Today it is conceivable and perhaps requisite that artworks immolate themselves through their temporal nucleus, devote their own life to the instant of the appearance of truth, and tracelessly vanish without thereby diminishing themselves in the slightest. . . . The idea of the permanence of works is modeled on the category of property and is thus ephemeral in the bourgeois sense; it was alien to many periods and important productions. . . . Stockhausen's concept of electronic works—which, since they are not notated in the traditional sense but immediately “realized” in their material, could be extinguished along with this material—is a splendid one of an art that makes an emphatic claim yet is prepared to throw itself away. (AT.265/AeT.177–78)

19. Alternatively one could argue that, by conceptualizing the snow shovel as a work of art, Duchamp reconceptualizes the everyday, which is no longer beneath the threshold of recognition but has acquired a visibility it never before possessed.

20. *Autrement qu'être pi au-delà de l'essence* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 170 (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981], p. 108).

21. *L'amitié* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971), pp. 328–29 (*Friendship*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997], pp. 290–91).

22. Fragments of a similar conversation punctuate *Le pas au-delà*: “*We speak, we speak, two immobile men whom immobility maintains facing one another, the only ones to speak, the last to speak*” (PD.127/SNB.91–92).

23. *Le temps et l'autre* (Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana, 1979 [1947]), p. 57, hereafter cited as TA; *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), p. 70, hereafter cited as TO.

24. "Éthique comme philosophie première," in *Justifications de l'éthique* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984), p. 48 ("Ethics as First Philosophy," trans. Seán Hand and Michael Temple, in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand [Oxford: Blackwell, 1989], p. 83).

25. *L'arrêt de mort* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948), p. 99, hereafter cited as AM; *Death Sentence*, trans. Lydia Davis (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1978), p. 52, hereafter cited as DS.

26. Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida, *The Instant of My Death/Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 3, hereafter cited as IM.

## Chapter Eight

1. Readers should consult Jill Robbins, *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), and Steve McCaffery, "The Scandal of Sincerity: Towards a Levinasian Poetics," in *Prior to Meaning: Protosemantics and Poetics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

2. "Connaissance de l'inconnu," *L'entretien infini* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), p. 76, hereafter cited as EI; "Knowledge of the Unknown," in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 53, hereafter cited as IC.

3. The most detailed and authoritative study of antique poetics remains that of Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948), trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), esp. pp. 145–227, 468–86. Curtius remarks that a "history of the theory of poetry" remains to be written (p. 468). The statement is as true today as it was a half-century ago.

4. Athenäum Fragment 238, *Kritische Schriften* (München: Carl Hauser Verlag), pp. 50–51. See Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 50–51.

5. See "Le mystère dans les lettres," *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), pp. 385–87, hereafter cited as OC. See Maurice Blanchot, "La poésie de Mallarmé est-elle obscure?" in *Faux pas* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943), pp. 126–31, esp. p. 129 ("Is Mallarmé's Poetry Obscure?" in *Faux Pas*, trans. Charlotte Mandell [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002], pp. 107–11).

6. "Le mythe de Mallarmé," in *La part du feu* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1949), p. 44, hereafter cited as PF; "The Myth of Mallarmé," in *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 37, hereafter cited as WF.

7. See Michael Holland on Blanchot's reception of Mallarmé, "From Crisis to Critique: Mallarmé for Blanchot," *Meetings with Mallarmé in Contemporary French Culture*, ed. Michael Temple (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), pp. 81–106.

8. *Qu'est-ce que la littérature* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948), p. 7, hereafter cited as QL; "What is Literature?" and *Other Essays*, trans. Steven Ungar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 29, hereafter cited as WL.

9. Sartre's writings on Mallarmé, which stress the idea of poetry as self-annihilating discourse, have been collected in *Mallarmé; or, The Poet of Nothingness*, trans. Ernest Sturm (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988). See Dominic LaCapra's discussion of Sartre's changing conceptions of language and writing, *A Preface to Sartre: A Critical Introduction to Sartre's Literary and Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 63–91.

10. The term "aesthetic differentiation" derives from Hans-Georg Gadamer's discussion (and critique) of idealist aesthetics in *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. 4th Auflage. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1975), pp. 77–96, hereafter cited as WM; *Truth and Method*, 2d rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 81–100, hereafter cited as TM. Gadamer writes: "What we call a work of art . . . aesthetically depends on a process of abstraction. By disregarding everything in which a work of art is rooted (its original context of life, and the religious or secular function that gave it significance), it becomes visible as the 'pure work of art.' In performing this abstraction, aesthetic consciousness performs a task that is positive in itself. It shows what a pure work of art is, and allows it to exist in its own right. I call this 'aesthetic differentiation'" (WM.81/TM.85).

11. See Arthur Danto, "Art and Disturbance," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, pp. 117–33. See also Levinas on "disturbance" (*le dérangement*)—in contrast to rational discourse—in "Enigme et phénomène" (DHH.202–5/ CPP.61–63).

12. Compare Blanchot on fascination and the image in *L'espace littéraire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1955), pp. 28–31 (*The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982], pp. 32–33).

13. In his interviews with Philippe Nemo, Levinas refers to the deposition of the sovereign ego as the mode of escape from the *il y a*, but it is hard to make sense of this statement, since this deposition already occurs in the experience of the work of art, which is to say the experience of materiality, irreality, or the *il y a* itself. See *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), p. 52. The symmetry between the aesthetic and the ethical in this regard has yet to be studied but has been noted by Edith Wyschogrod in "The Art in Ethics: Aesthetics, Objectivity, and Alterity in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature, and Religion*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 138–39.

14. The "exteriority which is not that of a body" perhaps means that in this event one's body is materialized in such a way that one experiences it

from the outside—hence the somewhat incoherent metaphor of the “I-actor” becoming the “I-spectator”; but it is no longer obvious that it makes sense to speak of “experience,” since the “I” is no longer an experiencing subject in the sense of witnessing a spectacle. Indeed, in the next sentence Levinas complains that phenomenology has yet to produce a concept of experience that would do justice to “this fundamental paradox of rhythm and dreams, which describes a sphere situated outside of the conscious and the unconscious” (IH.129/PPP.4). Blanchot’s poetics might be called a phenomenology of this sphere of exteriority.

15. The question is whether there is any important difference between exposure to the world and the exposure to others that constitutes the ethical relation. See Jean-Luc Marion on this question, “A Note Concerning the Ontological Difference,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 20–21 (1998): 25–50, esp. 32–37.

16. Already in *De l’existence à l’existant* Levinas had invoked the figure of the cadaver: “A corpse is horrible; it already bears in itself its own phantom, it presages its return. The haunting spectre, the phantom, constitutes the very element of horror” (DEE.100/EE.61). See Blanchot’s “Les deux versions de l’imaginaire,” in *L’espace littéraire*, pp. 346–49 (“Two Versions of the Imaginary,” in *The Space of Literature*, pp. 256–60).

17. *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), p. 115.

18. See Bertold Brecht, “Modern Theatre is Epic Theatre,” in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 35. Levinas’s conception of *jouissance* in *Totalité et infini* is distinctly culinary—“Nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is in the essence of enjoyment [*jouissance*]” (TeI.113/TI.111). It might be possible, nevertheless, to link Levinas’s conception of “*jouissance esthétique*” to conceptions of *jouissance* that derive from the experience of aesthetic modernity. See Paul-Laurent Assoun, “The Subject and the Other in Levinas and Lacan,” trans. Diana Jackson and Denise Merkle, in *Levinas and Lacan: The Missed Encounter*, ed. Sarah Harasym (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 79–101, esp. pp. 93–97.

19. *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 5: *Holzwege*, p. 31, hereafter cited as G; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), p. 45, hereafter cited as PLT.

20. This point is well made by Jean Greisch in “Ethics and Ontology: Some ‘Hypocritical’ Considerations,” trans. Leonard Lawler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 20–21 (1998): 41–69, esp. 62–64, where Greisch speculates that art can mediate the breach between ethics and ontology.

21. In “Etre juif” (1962) Blanchot writes: “The words exodus and exile indicate a positive relation with exteriority, whose exigency invites us not to be content with what is proper to us (that is, with our power to assimilate

everything, to identify everything, to bring everything back to our 'I' (EI.186/IC.127).

22. Blanchot develops this idea most fully in "Comment découvrir l'obscur?" (1959), where speech (now called "poetry") is no longer the expression of sovereignty, power, or conceptual control but is a mode of responsiveness to what is singular and refractory to consciousness. This essay is reprinted in *L'entretien infini* as the second part of "La grand refus" (EI.57–69/IC.40–48).

23. In defiance of contradiction, Blanchot says, it is possible to characterize impossibility in terms of three traits:

First this one: in impossibility time changes direction, no longer offering itself out of the future as what gathers by going beyond; time, here, is rather the dispersion of a present that, even while being only passage does not pass, never fixes itself in a present, refers to no past and goes toward no future: *the incessant* [or "meanwhile"]. A second trait: in impossibility, the immediate is a present to which one cannot be present, but from which one cannot separate; or, again, it is what escapes by the very fact that there is no escaping it: *the ungraspable that one cannot let go of*. Third trait: what reigns in the experience of impossibility is not the unique's immobile collecting unto itself, but the infinite shifting of dispersal, a non-dialectical movement where contrariety has nothing to do with opposition or with reconciliation, and where the *other* never comes back to the same. (EI.64–65.IC.45–46)

24. Interestingly, in "Réalité et son ombre" the sensible was figured as the shadow of being: "The notion of shadow . . . enables us to situate the economy of resemblance within the general economy of being. Resemblance is not a participation of a being in an idea . . . ; it is the very structure of the sensible as such. The sensible is being insofar as it resembles itself, insofar as, outside of its triumphal work of being, it casts a shadow, emits that obscure and elusive essence, that phantom essence which cannot be identified with the essence revealed in truth" (IH.136/PPP.7–8).

25. Paul Ricoeur calls this dimension Levinas's "hyperbole"—the "systematic practice of *excess* in philosophical argumentation"—which in *Autrement qu'être*, Ricoeur says, is carried to "the point of paroxysm." *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 337. See D. H. Brody, "Emmanuel Levinas: The Logic of Ethical Ambiguity," in *Otherwise than Being or beyond Essence*, *Research in Phenomenology* 25 (1994): 177–203.