Knowledge, Spirit, Law, Book 1: Radical Scholarship

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Published by Punctum Books

Keeney, Gavin.
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The project *Knowledge, Spirit, Law*—as an experiment in “scholarship as work of art”—utilizes a form of “nineteenth-century,” Continental (almost-Germanic) capitalization for proper names and key terms that seeks to both qualify cultural phenomenon as authorized or semi-authoritarian and/or to de-familiarize the same, whereas such lexical maneuvers disappear in second-order, adjectival formations. Thus the following mini-glossary to initially orient the reader, with a full topological glossary to appear in Book Two:

High German Romanticism (early nineteenth century); High Marxism (revolutionary-ideological versus literary-critical Marxism); High Modernism (generally post-World War II or mid-century modernist ideology, but prior to 1930 in the case of avant-garde artistic movements); High Post-structuralism (the “literature of despair” of the 1970s and 1980s, as defined in the negative by Michel Houellebecq); High Romanticism (as defined by M.H. Abrams); High Scholasticism (fourteenth-century medieval philosophy and theology); High Structuralism (for example, as practiced by Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Lacan); Late Modernity (the late-twentieth century, inclusive of Post-modernity); Modernity (from the Italian Renaissance forward).
Additionally, unorthodox hyphenation is deployed as a means to distance terms from their present-day usage, pushing them backward toward their origin as hybrid or compound terms, and a proleptic slippage in verbs and grammar occurs here and there to de-stabilize the time-senses of orthodox historiography and normative scholarly conventions. While slightly disorienting at times, these semantic and/or syntactical diversions help serve to re-introduce universalizing traits in both textual and artistic endeavors.

The scholarly apparatus (footnotes and references)—while apparently excessive in extent, density, and detail—further seeks to build upon the experimental model and de-stabilize normative discursive exegesis, while the modified open-access form of the edition is consistent with the critique of publication platforms inherent to the overall intentions of the project.

These measures, while in part performative in the context of this project, all support the hypothesis that to escape the circularity and claustrophobia of the Arts and Letters today it is necessary to privilege both archaic or out-moded modalities of discursive and non-discursive expression in combination with dynamic principles borrowed from parallel disciplines and practices—“dynamic” in the sense that such principles are common to the Arts and Humanities as age-old humanistic concerns.

Therefore, the resemblance here to the “attenuated chaos” of High Post-structuralism is misleading. Knowledge, Spirit, Law seeks as subtending chord the re-universalization of knowledge through the conflation of both effects and means utilized. The resulting complexity is simply the outcome of the developmental model.

December 7, 2015