

POLITICS OF GRAMMAR: A COMPARISON OF WITTGENSTEIN AND FOUCAULT

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INTRODUCTION

POLITICS OF GRAMMAR

In this dissertation, I establish various connections between Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of grammar and Michel Foucault's concept of power and argue that these connections reveal deeper implications and impacts of their thoughts on political philosophy. I mainly focus on two similar aspects of power in Foucault and grammar in Wittgenstein. First, the authority of grammar in Wittgenstein is constructive in the sense that it maintains and sustains itself by opening up fields of experience and new paths of communication. Similarly, in Foucault power relations proliferate themselves by inventing new ways to speak and act. Second, both power and grammar are decentralized and impersonal and therefore rather than having localizable origins in individuals, social classes, and civil and state institutions, power and grammar are immanent to the field of human experience.

As opposed to the idea of power as a repressive force originating and radiating from a sovereign political agency, Foucault's portrayal of modern power as a historically established grid of strategic relations underlines the productive (i.e. constructive) and impersonal character of these power relations. Foucault is specifically concerned with the ever-increasing hegemony of the discourses of human sciences on this grid of strategic relations. He argues that these historical forms of rationality establish various spaces of subjectivity like madness, sexual perversions, and criminality, and thereby bound the field of human experience in the name of truth and knowledge. Even if disciplinary

institutions such as prisons and psychiatric asylums appear to be the sovereign agencies of modern power that isolate the abnormal from the normal, Foucault claims that the terms and concepts of subjectivity produced by human sciences are pervasive in our practices of self-intelligibility as well. I argue that Foucault's conception of the authority of human sciences and the consequent power effects should be understood as similar to in terms of Wittgenstein's depiction of the authority of grammar in the lives of language users. In Wittgenstein, intricate grammatical agreements among language users are the primary medium in which language users construct and change the world they share. The sophisticated network of these grammatical agreements among language users forces us to give up monolithic philosophical articulations and embrace the multiplicity of language users' linguistic engagements if we wish to make sense of the ways the human experience is bounded and shaped into various forms of life. In this context, Wittgenstein's grammatical inquiries and Foucault's genealogical works reveal a level of limitations and struggles in the field of human experience that are not reducible either to legal constraints or to struggles in institutionalized politics. Since this grammatical level is also the site of the emergence of our categories and concepts of self-intelligibility, the picture of power as imposing itself on language users from without becomes an untenable one. Instead, both Wittgenstein, especially in his remarks on language acquisition, and Foucault, in his genealogies of the emergence of the deviant subjectivities, point to the immanence of power relations in the field of human experience.

Such an understanding of grammar and power steers Wittgenstein and Foucault towards an incessant questioning of the limits and constraints imposed on our lives by grammar and the discursive order. Both specifically seek those moments in our speech

and actions where grammatical and discursive limits and constraints are established and articulated in accordance with some necessities perceived as inevitable. Wittgenstein and Foucault question this sense of necessity that accompanies our speech and actions and claim that most of the time what is given to us as necessary and universal is in fact arbitrary and contingent. In this sense, politics is an ongoing struggle against false necessities that deny us a wide range of possibilities available in our human form of life. I call such a philosophical/political endeavor a politics of grammar because both Wittgenstein and Foucault point to the level of the grammar of our concepts as the site in which these false necessities are formed and sustained. Accordingly, they both suggest that a critique of the grammar of our concepts is a critique of our form of life shaped by the constraints of our grammar. The form of this critique is therapeutic in the sense that it renders them accessible and available for political interventions and negotiations.

Both Wittgenstein and Foucault acknowledge that forms of intelligibility render human speech and action possible by drawing boundaries in symbolic space. In this sense, being bounded by grammatical rules and discursive regulations is the human predicament, and by itself, this inevitable fact in the lives of language users does not necessarily point to the possibilities of a political life. In other words, the *ethos* of freedom does not problematize the existence of grammatical and discursive boundaries as such; on the contrary, it is a form of acknowledgment of them as conditions of possibility of speech and action. What it problematizes is our multifarious and complex relations to the existing boundaries that make possible not only a shared world, i.e. our *ordinary* context in our *present* time, as the necessary background for our language games, but also spaces of subjectivity as available forms of self-intelligibility to inhabit that shared

world. Some of these forms of self-intelligibility create moral and political injuries, when, in the name of a necessity, they suppress the possibilities of articulating the discontents and dissatisfactions they cause.

The sense of knowing as a morally and politically hazardous and risky human practice informs the morality and politics of Foucault's works. I find in the context of Stanley Cavell's thought my philosophical convictions that Wittgenstein's thought is also motivated by similar philosophical interests and concerns with regard to our forms of intelligibility as the sites of our freedom and captivation at once. It is for this reason that the Wittgenstein I discuss in the following pages of this dissertation is Cavell's Wittgenstein. For Cavell, in establishing forms of intelligibility, language users establish forms of joining to each other in a community. Therefore what kinds of forms of intelligibility we historically establish has direct bearings on our presence in the community and the community's presence in our lives. In his philosophical questioning of our forms of intelligibility, Cavell establishes a dialectic of freedom in which we recognize the possibilities of the presence of community in the lives of language users both as an assembly of oppressive and suffocating forces and as a combination of forces that enables them to exercise their freedom to explore and experiment with ways of being in the world which does not have an established place in the construction and projection of a 'we'.

This dialectic of immanent freedom is expressed in the way Cavell describes the emergence of the 'we' in our speech. He questions the authority of the 'we' in our appeals to ordinary language in statements such as 'We say X, when...'. For him, it is not an insignificant detail that the 'we' in such statements occupies its authoritative position

not when our conversation flows in its usual pace, but when it is obstructed by disagreements about the meaning of our words. Our language has rich resources to end such disagreements and restore the usual flow of our conversation. However, some disagreements are unresponsive to such ways of sustaining and maintaining our attunement to each other, and consequently, language users have to face the fact that the ‘we’ they appeal to in their disagreements is simply not a shared ‘we’. This is because:

The philosophical appeal to what we say, and the search for our criteria on the basis of which we say what we say, are claims to community. And the claim to community is always a search for the basis upon which it can or has been established. I have nothing more to go on than my conviction, my sense that I make sense. It may prove to be the case that I am wrong, that my conviction isolates me, from all others, from myself. That will not be the same as a discovery that I am dogmatic or egomaniacal. The wish and search for community, are the wish and search for reason.¹

In such discussions, language users face each other not as isolated individuals who happen to disagree, but as members of different communities voicing and defending different sets of grammatical criteria in the name of a community.

However, it is crucial not to forget that the ‘we’ each language user appeals to is always a projection of what kind of a community the language user ‘wishes and searches for’. It is this projective character of the ‘we’ that defines our language as the site of our political struggles for freedom and justice. For Cavell, ‘the wish and the search for community’ (and reason) are always open-ended, tentative and exploratory, and therefore the ‘we’ is always subject to further questionings and re-articulations. The satisfaction of the wish and the completion of the search for community and reason do not point to perfect conditions of communication but to the lack of it. In the same fashion, when the ‘we’ is definitively and exhaustively articulated, that is, when language users identify

¹ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 20.

themselves fully with the ‘we’, the need to raise claims to community disappears. This is also the end of community and communication. Cavell’s use of the concept of claim in this context signifies not only the unsure and unconfirmed status of our rationality and sociality but also his conviction that the claim form is the primary form of our connections to other language users. In this sense, what keeps our conversations going incessantly is precisely our commitment to call and invite other language users to join us in a shared ‘we’. Other language users are always in a position to repudiate or confirm our claims to community and reason as much as we are able to repudiate or confirm their claims on us. Cavell’s dialectic of freedom points to the fact that the ‘we’ has an inevitable place to give form to and bound what we say, yet this does not mean that our speech is the site of blind conformity. On the contrary, the need to project a ‘we’ as the community we ‘wish and search for’ is what renders our speech as the site of freedom. It is through the projection of such a ‘we’ that we can address the injuries (and subsequent justice claims) caused by the unprojected ‘we’.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

I develop my argument in three chapters. In the first chapter, I focus exclusively on the early works of Wittgenstein and Foucault to reveal a common formalist methodology shared by them in their earlier works. My central argument is that Wittgenstein’s philosophical investment in the concept of totality in the *Tractatus*, and that of Foucault in the idea of a historical outside as it emerges in his archaeological inquiries, are the central critical terms that define their earlier periods. More importantly,

these terms occupy such central critical spaces in their early works at the expense of the suppression of the themes of the ordinary and the present, which sustain and maintain the critical/normative content of their later works. In this sense, what characterize and motivate the transformations of Wittgenstein and Foucault's later thoughts are the insufficiencies and dissatisfactions in the ways the concepts of totality and the historical outside respond to the demands of the ethics of freedom.²

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is a self-destructive philosophical device in the service of seeing 'the world aright' which means in the Tractarian context to see the world and language as a limited totality. For the totality to appear as total, it should be seen from a perspective outside the totality. However, all available perspectives of articulation made possible by logic are, by definition, within the limits of logical space. In this sense, the very structure of logic forbids the articulation of the totality of logical space. Wittgenstein develops his formalist methodology to bypass this logical prohibition on the articulation of totality at the expense of the intelligibility of the entirety of the Tractarian project. The formalist methodology is a (self-destructive) articulation of the conditions of the possibility of meaningful speech to show the limits of language. Wittgenstein thinks that the point of drawing a limit to the world and language is to show the insignificance of what we can meaningfully articulate and state within the boundaries of logical space in contrast to the infinite resistance to our forms of intelligibility of what is significant in our lives. In the *Tractatus*, what is significant is the ethical and aesthetical life of the subject

² By its very subject matter, the argument of the first chapter overlaps with some polemics and discussions about the philosophical impacts and stakes of the periodization of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts. However, the problematic distinctions and contrasts between their earlier works and the later ones are not directly relevant concerns to my argument in this chapter. Rather, my argument is limited to the changing place of the concepts of the ordinary and the present in their works with respect to the normative/critical claims of their thoughts.

that resides at the limit of the world. The subject is the bearer of ethical and aesthetical value, yet she cannot articulate and represent it because the structure of logical space does not allow articulation and representation of anything other than the possible combination of facts in the world. In other words, when everything meaningful gets said, there remains an excess outside the limits of the logical representational order. For the early Wittgenstein, the object of loyalty for critical thought is precisely this ethical and aesthetical excess. Since the existence and significance of the ethical and aesthetical excess can be shown only in reference to its exclusion from the world and logical space, the totality of the world and logical space is the condition of the possibility of the excess to emerge as a central critical term in the *Tractatus*.

Foucault's concept of *episteme* displays significant resemblances to the Tractarian conception of logic. The *episteme* is the unthought in thought in the sense that it cannot be articulated and cannot become a discursive object. More importantly, just like the Tractarian conception of logic, the unrepresentability and inarticulability of the *episteme* are due to the fact that it is the 'historical *a priori*' of our thought. Since it is what makes the discursive articulation possible, the order and concepts of the discourse are unresponsive to the *episteme*. At this point, Foucault faces the same problem Wittgenstein faces in the *Tractatus*: How is it possible to say anything about that which resists articulation and representation? Foucault's answer is in the concept of 'historical discreteness'. As a reaction against certain teleological narrations of the history of thought that stress the unity and continuity of the historical movement of our thought, Foucault the archaeologist underlines the discontinuous and fragmented existence of the structures of intelligibility in historical space. Accordingly, the emergence of new forms

of rationality in historical space should not be understood within the terms of an evolutionary narration in which the old historical forms of rationality give birth to new and better forms of rationality. Instead, as the metaphor of archaeology implies, Foucault the archaeologist takes the historical difference among discourses as a matter of belonging to discrete historical layers. As the claims of the episteme on the forms of intelligibility at a given historical period are effective only within its own historical time, the historical distance between the archaeologist and the past forms of intelligibility enables the archaeologist to delve into the intricacies of these forms of rationality without falling under the spell of their *episteme*. It is, in this sense, the historical discreteness of epistemic structures that allows the archaeologist to articulate the *episteme* of discourses. In this picture, each and every archaeological layer is a historical outsider with respect to every another and the condition of possibility of archaeological knowledge is precisely the standing of the *episteme* of the archaeologist as a historical outsider to that of the discourse under scrutiny. Similar to Wittgenstein's logic, Foucault's *episteme* can only be articulated within a dialectic of the inside and the outside.

Aside from its metaphysical and idealistic implications, the main problem with Wittgenstein's and Foucault's formalism is that even if it enables them to express their critical concerns, the claims of these concerns on us become null and void at the moment they get articulated. In the *Tractatus*, 'logic takes care of itself', and in a certain sense, 'we cannot make any mistakes in logic'. If logic and the ethical and aesthetical life of the subject resist articulation and representation in virtue of their transcendental status, why does the early Wittgenstein have the philosophical urge to draw a limit to representational discourses? And, if the *epistemes* of past forms of intelligibility have no claim on our

existing forms of rationality, the voice of the archaeologist gets stuck in the analyses of these 'exotic' forms of rationality, never being able to address the concerns of the present.

After addressing these problems, I finish chapter 1 with the argument that these insufficiencies of formalist critique lead Wittgenstein and Foucault to give up their ideas of totality and a historical outside in favor of the ordinary in Wittgenstein and the present in Foucault. The appearance of these new themes in their philosophy has methodological and normative implications for the entirety of their later thoughts. Methodologically, both Wittgenstein and Foucault manifestly prefer descriptive philosophical accounts as opposed to explanatory discourses. They both think that the question 'how?', as opposed to the question 'why?', is more in line with our philosophical concerns. This methodological shift is forced by the very structure of the ordinary and the present. Both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that the methodological difficulty of establishing a reflexive relationship with the ordinary and the present is not about their being distant, hidden, and inaccessible to us. On the contrary, the difficulty lies in our embeddedness, and hence the lack of distance to, the structures of the ordinary and the present. The difficulty, in this sense, is not the hiddenness of the ordinary and the present but the fact that their structures, being there in plain view all the time, saturate the horizon of our intelligibility. Minute description of the ordinary and the present, then, is a philosophical device to create a reflexive distance between us and them by constantly reminding ourselves of 'the uncanniness of the ordinary' and the present. Aside from these methodological implications, we can also detect in Wittgenstein's and Foucault's preference for descriptive accounts an acknowledgment of the place of the contingent and

the arbitrary in our lives. The ordinary and the present resist the demands for an abstract and all-inclusive ultimate explanation of the various forms the ordinary and the present take. Since there is no ultimate explanation for the ordinary and the present, they become at once objects of acknowledgement and the sites of political transformations.

My argument in the second chapter makes its point in four steps. One of the common themes in and around the discussions of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's politics is the constructive, productive, or formative character of modern power. Therefore I start developing my argument in the second chapter by a discussion of some social constructionist philosophical positions to prepare the ground for my argument. More specifically, I follow these discussions to demarcate the place of grammatical criteria in the construction of social space.

Social constructionism as a broader philosophical subject does not necessarily point to the political dimensions of collectively making a world. I underline the fact that the issue of grammatical criteria, their applications, and the source of their authority in our practices of making a world come up and stick out insistently in these discussions. I interpret this fact as a road sign pointing to the place of the political in our constructive practices. The issue of grammatical criteria is also an important point where Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts converge. In the second step of my argument I read Foucault's claims about the productive (i.e. constructive and formative) character of modern power in the context of Cavell's discussion of grammatical criteria. Cavell refers to Rousseau's social contract theory in discussing the authority of grammatical criteria. His discussion of the formation of criterial authority points to the dialectic between the impersonal character of criterial authority and our personal authority in accepting,

repudiating, or negotiating grammatical criteria. Foucault's characterization of modern power as a subjectless, i.e. an impersonal, grid of strategical relations, and his criticism that the head of the king is still attached to the king's body in political thought are points of convergence between what Foucault says about power and Cavell's discussion of Wittgensteinian criteria. Accordingly, I draw a picture of Foucault as a grammarian of politics, arguing that his genealogies are grammatical inquiries into the formation of our concepts such as sexuality, crime and punishment, and madness. In this context, I argue that Foucault's claim that "Power produces reality" should be understood in the medium of Wittgenstein's remark that 'Grammar tells what kind of object anything is'.

In the third step, I take this connection between Wittgenstein's criteria and Foucault's power one step further and argue that Cavell's discussion of the moral implications of intelligibility allows us to understand Foucault's concerns with our forms of intelligibility better. In Cavell, knowing ourselves and making ourselves intelligible to others as well as knowing others and demanding intelligibility from them are not purely epistemological matters. On the contrary, our relations of knowing always have moral dimensions because the forms of intelligibility and self-intelligibility are forms through which we become available and accessible to each other. Cavell points out that these forms of availability and accessibility may provide the ground on which speakers engage in a conversation of justice, or they become sources of moral or political injury. In any case, our practices of knowing should be understood and judged in terms of the risks and costs of knowing ourselves and others. Foucault's genealogical engagements with our forms of intelligibility also point to the risks and costs of our knowledge of ourselves. I discuss these issues in relation to Foucault's genealogical analyses of the formation of

subjectivities as forms of intelligibility. The available spaces of subjectivity in a given period are forms in which we make sense of each other's speech and actions. In his genealogies, Foucault focuses on those forms of intelligibility that establish spaces of subjectivity as the sites of domination. That is to say, these forms of subjectivity render the subjects accessible and available to the forces of discipline, normalization, segregation, and exclusion. In each of these practices of power, the authority of grammatical criteria (to distinguish the mad from the sane, the normal from the abnormal, the criminal from the innocent) plays a huge role in defining these sites of subjectivities as requiring the intervention of an institutionalized rational authority. The critical point of Foucault's genealogies is to show that in the history of modern West the institutionalized rational authority of discourses of human sciences claims more and more authority over our forms of self-intelligibility, narrowing down the possibilities of ordinary language users' participations and interventions in the authority of grammar.

In the last step, I establish connections between Foucault's genealogy and Wittgenstein's understanding of the connections among our language games in terms of the concept of 'family resemblance'. Genealogy literally means an inquiry into the junctions and disjunctions of familial histories, and, therefore it already points to the family as the medium in which these junctions and disjunctions come into play. Wittgenstein coins his concept of family resemblance to underline the irreducible multiplicity of language games. The resemblances between our language games should not be taken as a sign for a common essence shared by all these similar language games. Rather, their resemblances, (and their differences as well), should be made intelligible on the basis of the history of familial relations these language games have established among

each other. This also points to a formulation of critical thought as genealogy. What Wittgenstein wants us to recognize and acknowledge in the concept of family resemblance is the contingent historical elements in the ways the families of language games form connections among each other. The point of such a recognition and acknowledgement is to be able to see that the connections and configurations of our language games can be made intelligible without a reference to a common essence shared by all language games. In the same fashion, Foucauldian genealogy takes the emergence and disappearance of discourses as historical singularities which can be made intelligible with respect to the unique specific conditions of their emergence and/or disappearance. At this point, Wittgenstein's understanding of philosophy as therapy coincides with the critical aims of Foucault's genealogies. I refer to David Owen's conception of Wittgenstein's therapy as an undoing of our 'aspectival captivity' (as opposed to ideological captivity) to argue that Foucauldian genealogical critique should be understood as offering a Wittgensteinian philosophical therapy. Like Wittgenstein, Foucault aims at uncovering the contingent elements in the formation of discourses to show that as historical entities they are accessible and available for our political interventions.

In the last chapter, I evaluate and criticize the claims that Wittgenstein and Foucault are conservative thinkers. At the center of such accusations of conservatism is the problem of normativity. Wittgenstein's and Foucault's unique philosophical ways to understand our language and discourses cause suspicions that their portrayals of our practices leave no room for a reasoned criticism of our practices. As our rational terms of criticism are shaped by the same contingent forces that shape the very objects of their

criticism, these rational critical terms cannot establish the necessary critical or reflexive distance between themselves and the objects of our criticisms. Therefore, in Wittgenstein and Foucault's portrayal of language and discourse, the effective range of our critical forms is banished. On this understanding of their works, their political positions are akin to conservatism which also insists on the vanity of rational critique and transgressing of our practices. I take Ernest Gellner's and Jurgen Habermas' respective criticisms of Wittgenstein and Foucault as paradigmatic examples of such criticisms and present a comparative evaluation of their arguments.

To respond to Gellner's and Habermas' criticisms, I refer to Alice Crary's concept of 'inviolability interpretations'. In 'inviolability interpretations', Wittgenstein's remarks about the relations between the uses of concepts and their meanings are taken to be a theory of the meaning of a word as determined exclusively by its uses. Since it is use that determines the meaning, (and the use itself is conditioned by linguistic conventions), a criticism of any meaning claim is possible only from within the perspective of the social conventions. Yet, these conventions themselves are immune to criticisms. Crary criticizes 'inviolability interpretations' for assuming a perspective outside our linguistic context and commit to the oxymoronic idea of 'intelligible nonsense'. For Crary, if a criticism is voiced and it is recognized as a criticism by the relevant parties, then, we have to assume that the critic occupies a place in the symbolic space. Jose Medina's criticism of Alice Crary at this point focuses on the unsustainability of an inside – outside distinction with regard to our linguistic practices. Medina suggests that both 'inviolability interpretations' and Crary commit to a picture of linguistic space divided into a homogenous inside and an indescribable outside. As opposed to this picture, Medina points to rich and

heterogenous geography of linguistic space the intricacies of which demystify the claims of the inside/outside distinction with respect to the problem of normativity.

Having criticized Gellner and Habermas via Crary and Medina, in the last section, I develop an account of critical normativity utilizing Cavell's understanding of the place of the normative in Wittgenstein with respect to rule following capability of language users. For Cavell, our capability to articulate statements of facts is utterly dependent on our ability to exercise our judgment. In other words, in stating a fact (X is the case) or stating an identity (X is Y), our statements necessarily include our judgments. Cavell, of course, does not claim that there are no differences between our factual and normative statements. His point is that a sharp and absolute distinction between factual and normative statements obstructs us from seeing the dependency and co-existence of our factual and normative statements. On this account, then, Foucault's factual statements about prison, asylums, and sexualized subjects contain in them criterial judgments to recognize, say, the criminal as the oppressed party in modern language games of punishment. Cavell's other contribution to the resolution of the normativity problem is his conception of rule following. For Cavell, language use is based on our ability to project concepts in different contexts. Grammatical rules and criteria govern and regulate our conceptual projections. However, no grammatical rule fully determines a concept's range of application and therefore the moment of projection is an indeterminate moment where the language user's attunement with her linguistic community is at stake. Thus, Cavell thinks that whenever we project a concept in a different context, we face with the responsibility to make a leap assuming the responsibilities of making a leap either too short or too long. Foucault shares this vision of our language and discourses where the

language user is not only given possibilities of existential freedom in her speech, but she is also forced to be free by the very structure of our speech.

Chapter 1

Formalism as a Common Methodology

The concept of the ordinary in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and that of the present in Foucault's genealogical studies are enormously important in understanding the political implications of their thoughts. In this chapter, I would like to trace the emergence and transformation of these concepts in their earlier works³ as a preparation to describe parallel political perspectives available in their later thoughts. Even if, the ordinary and the present occupy such critical spaces in their later works, their earlier texts are marked by a lack of critical investment on these concepts. Instead, the idea of totality in the *Tractatus* and the idea of historical outside in Foucault's archaeological works frame the critical claims of these texts. However, the critical perspectives established on the basis of the idea of totality and of a historical outside exclude the ordinary and the present as legitimate philosophical tasks in their own rights. Therefore, I will first focus on the concepts of totality and historical outside to show their critical function in their early works, and then, argue that such a critical investment in

³ Periodization of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thought is a problematic issue. Until recently, Wittgenstein's early period was associated with logical atomism, picture theory of meaning, and correspondence theory of truth. This picture of the early Wittgenstein has been fruitfully challenged by various philosophers who reveal a more complex web of continuities and discontinuities between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. (See *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (Routledge, 2000), and "Between Metaphysics and Nonsense: Elucidation in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 49, no. 197 (October 1999)) The way the early Wittgenstein is portrayed throughout this dissertation is partly informed by these new interpretations of the *Tractatus*. However, fully articulating these new discussions about the early Wittgenstein remains outside the scope of this dissertation the main concern of which is to capture common points between Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts. Furthermore, the argument I develop in this dissertation about his early period is meant to be a very limited one focusing strictly on the contrast between the idea of totality in the *Tractatus* and the open-ended character of our ordinary language games articulated in the *Investigations*. The transitional period of Wittgenstein between the publication of the *Tractatus* and that of the *Investigations* is also excluded based on the same reasoning.

these concepts suppresses the critical potentials of the concepts of ordinary and the present.

Ludwig Wittgenstein ends his first major philosophical text, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, with the following proposition: “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”⁴ In the very first pages of his first major book, *Madness and Civilization*, Michel Foucault writes: “The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence.”⁵ How can we understand these two silences in comparing Wittgenstein and Foucault? It should be first noted that the Tractarian silence and the silence of madness in Foucault have different philosophical implications. The *Tractatus* is a very short text composed of only seven numbered propositions, whereas Foucault describes the reason induced silence of madness in almost 600 pages⁶. Being an openly self-destructive text, the *Tractatus* is short and precise, as if not to disturb the philosophical silence recommended at the end of the text, whereas Foucault is at pains to disturb the silence by showing how the silence of madness is pervasive to each and every moment of reason’s monologue on madness. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the silence in the *Tractatus* is a mystical achievement in a form of recognition of the limits of language and the world beyond which our linguistic articulations cannot reach, while, in Foucault, the silence is a discursive achievement of the psychiatric voice through which the unreason is reduced to

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 7.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Vintage Books, 1988), XI.

⁶ For years, only an abridged version of this early text of Foucault under the title *Madness and Civilization* was available to English speakers. Finally, in 2006, a full English translation by Jonathan Murphy was published under the title *History of Madness* by Routledge. Due to the concerns with consistency, I use the old English translation in my references.

silence. Nonetheless, their separate emphases on, and even privileging of these two different silences give us grounds to connect and compare their earlier thoughts to each other because, despite the differences mentioned above, Wittgenstein and Foucault's separate ways to explore the theme of silence cross each other on some common methodological and normative/critical plains they share in their earlier periods.

The common methodology I refer to above can be defined as a formal delimitative engagement with language and discourse through which the limits of linguistic and discursive space are drawn on the basis of the conditions of possibility of that space. Once the logical limits of language (Wittgenstein) and the conceptual/historical limits of discourse (Foucault) are drawn, the linguistic/discursive space appears as a limited totality on the basis of the a priority of logic (Wittgenstein) and a 'historical a priori' (Foucault). This appearance of linguistic/discursive space as a totality, then, is an effect of formal methodology which does not ask what exists in that space but rather how that space itself is possible.

The notion of totality is also indicative of how the methodology and normative/critical concerns of Wittgenstein and Foucault are internally linked because by conceptualizing linguistic/discursive space as a limited totality, they open up a critical space on the borders of their texts (but not in their discourse) for that which remains outside of that totality. This critical space displays itself not as a positivity but the negative impression of that which is outside the limits of language and discourse. While the formal analysis produces the 'knowledge' of what can exist inside language and discourse, an ontologically different kind of 'knowledge', the 'knowledge' of that which cannot exist inside language and discourse, takes shape offstage. Precisely because the

formal analysis produces the knowledge of the outside by exhausting the possibilities of linguistic/discursive space as a totality, in the early writings of Wittgenstein and Foucault the critical space that arises out of the textual emergence of the outside has to be mute. Thus, we have in both thinkers the silence that remains outside of that totality, testifying to a possibility beyond all the possibilities of the inside, incommunicably demanding a transgressive response. As we will see, both Wittgenstein and Foucault seek such transgressive possibilities in the medium of art, and especially in the medium of plastic arts which privileges showing as a form of expression as opposed to saying and stating.

Alice Crary gives a compact picture of the standard readings of the *Tractatus* in the following passage:

The narrative about the development of Wittgenstein's thought told within standard interpretations, sketched broadly enough to abstract from local disagreements, proceeds as follows. It begins with Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, giving an account of the connection between language and the world. The main tenet of the account is that the form of language and the form of the world reflect each other. The world is made up of simple objects which can combine into facts, and language is made up of names which can combine into propositions. These two types of combination mirror each other, and the fact that they do so is what ensures that propositions have meaning. The meaning of a name, on this allegedly Tractarian theory, is determined by an act which ties it to a particular simple object. Simple objects have logical forms which are their possibilities of combination with other objects, and names have logical forms – or possibilities of combination with other names – derivatively. What a name means determines what can be said with it in the sense that the logical form of a name reflects the logical form of the object it denotes.⁷

The problem with the standard readings of the *Tractatus* is not that they are inaccurate or that they misinterpret this or that specific proposition of the *Tractatus*. The problem is with what I call, for the lack of a better term, the explanatory spirit of these readings which cannot accommodate the ethical/aesthetic dimensions of the *Tractatus*. These interpretations take themselves to be exhaustive of the content of the *Tractatus* when they derive a more or less consistent account of how language works on the basis of the

⁷ Alice Crary, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy in Relation to Political Thought," in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (Routledge, 2000), 2.

logical atomist picture theory of meaning. However, the *Tractatus* is an inexhaustible text in the same sense that the content of an artwork is inexhaustible. We cannot redeem its claims on us by articulating its content on a cognitive level for what it demands is not cognition but recognition.

The very first sentence of the text of the *Tractatus* expresses this demand for recognition.

Perhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has himself already had the thoughts that are expressed in it – or at least similar thoughts. – So it is not a textbook. – Its purpose would be achieved if it gave pleasure to one person who read and understood it.⁸

If the precondition to understand the *Tractatus* is to have had the same thoughts, then, ‘understanding’ in this context means to recognize these thoughts in the forms Wittgenstein expresses them in the *Tractatus*. If so, ‘understanding’ in this context implies that the reader acquires the sense of the text through cognition. ‘Understanding’ a text, in this sense, yields something positive, a new form of an old thought, hence an intellectual surplus. Here ‘pleasure’ is the keyword to understand the riddle of ‘understanding’ in this opening passage of the preface of the *Tractatus*. In the strictest sense of the term of philosophy, a philosophical text does not declare its ultimate purpose to be to give pleasure to the reader. That, ordinarily, is the purpose of an artwork. In this sense, then, the textual pleasure Wittgenstein promises in this passage is an aesthetic pleasure. The aesthetic pleasure Wittgenstein refers to suggests that to understand the *Tractatus* is to recognize something even without, strictly speaking, cognizing it, as, for instance, we mean in a sentence like “I understand your sorrow”.

⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), iii.

Surprisingly, it was Frege who first recognized this aesthetic dimension of the *Tractatus* expressed in the passage above.⁹ In a letter to Wittgenstein, he made the following comment:

The pleasure of reading your book can therefore no longer be aroused by the content which is already known, but only by the peculiar form given to it by the author. The book thereby becomes an artistic rather than a scientific achievement; what is said in it takes second place to the way in which it is said.¹⁰

What Frege argues here should not be understood in terms of the style of Wittgenstein's writing because there is a considerable difference between what an artistic style is and what the form of an artwork is. What style implies is the possibility of the detachment of the form and the content in the sense that the stylistic form is one of the possibilities of the form of expression among many other available ones. In this sense, style is a more or less arbitrary and subjective choice of a form which is not connected to the content of the expression as intimately as the form is. When it is put this way, style is almost opposite of the aesthetic form, for aesthetic expression reflects a necessary relationship between the form and the content. The form and the content of an artwork are constitutive of each other. In other words, the form and the content of the aesthetic expression are non-detachable to such a degree that the form of a specific artwork is the only single possible way to express that specific content. It is for this reason that the genuine artwork is unique, particular, and singular. In short, the content of the artwork can be neither rephrased nor translated through re-formation of its content. In this sense, then, it is not the case that 'what is said in [the *Tractatus*] takes second place to the way in which it is said', but, as Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing indicates, the content, i.e. what is shown, in the *Tractatus* is inherent in the form of it.

⁹ It is surprising because it took the philosophical community half a century to recognize what Frege, who was one of the few to read the *Tractatus* before its publication, recognized at first glance.

¹⁰ Quoted in Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (Penguin Books, 1990), 174.

For Wittgenstein, the aesthetic value lies not in the way things get said, but in the demonstrative capability of the aesthetic form to show that which cannot be said at all.

When we look at a work of art, what we see is:

...life as a work of art created by God, and, as such, it is certainly worth contemplating, as is every life and everything whatever. But only an artist can so represent an individual thing as to make it appear to us like a work of art...A work of art forces us – as one might say – to see it in the right perspective but, in the absence of art, the object is just a fragment of nature like any other.^{11 12}

The aesthetic form frames a piece of reality and makes it distinct and visible by disconnecting it from its surrounding. The artwork is not a continuous element of the fabric of the surrounding reality, hence it interrupts the infinitely seamless fabric of reality. Precisely because thought and reality share the same form, when the artwork interrupts the overall structure of reality it also interrupts thought too. It is in this sense, then, that the artwork overpowers our ordinary perception and ‘forces us to see the world in the right perspective’. The aesthetic form makes the artwork appear as an autonomous totality through aesthetic demarcation of its edges. The hard work of totalizing aesthetic labor is delimitative creation of the aesthetic form because what we call form is the limits of the artwork that enables the content of the artwork to show itself. In the same fashion, what the reader, who has had the same thoughts as the author of the *Tractatus* is supposed to recognize is not this or that particular thought but the limits of the totality of her/his thoughts just where language vanishes. The parallel between Wittgenstein’s formalism and aesthetic formalism lie in the common search for a form that is able to present a

¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4.

¹² This remark and the next one from *Culture and Value* were recorded in 1930. I am aware of the fact that dated as 1930 these remarks belong to Wittgenstein’s transitional period and cannot be used without specification to interpret the *Tractatus*. However, as will be seen below, he ties these views with the problem of presenting the world as *sub specie aeterni* which is the defining problematic of the *Tractatus*. Thus, I believe that these remarks are qualified to be used in interpreting the *Tractatus*.

world in the artist's case and the world in Wittgenstein's case as a totality. Indeed,

Wittgenstein says:

But it seems to me too that there is a way of capturing the world *sub specie aeterni* other than through the work of the artist. Thought has such a way – so I believe – it is as though it flies above the world and leaves it as it is – observing it from above, in flight.¹³

The thought 'in flight' is the *Tractatus*, which has an recognitive claim to force the reader to 'see the world aright', that is *sub specie aeterni*. The limits of that final perception exclude the viewer/reader from that totality and render the Tractarian experience a purely subjective, albeit a pleasuring, one. If understanding the *Tractatus* is the realization of its claims, then, understanding it is the recognition of one's being as a non-extensional subject, or, as Wittgenstein puts it, a 'Godhead', which has nothing to do with the world.

Wittgenstein's remark about the reader's having had the same thoughts as the precondition to understand the *Tractatus* also gives us some clues about the connections between his formalist methodology and his normative concerns. It is not the case that Wittgenstein 'discovers' the issues of aesthetic, ethics, subjectivity, etc. as a result of his formal analyses of language. Rather, his formalism is a specific device Wittgenstein develops to display what the subject as a limit to the world already experiences outside the totality of language and reality. The aim of the *Tractatus*, as Wittgenstein puts it, is 'to draw a limit to thought, or rather – not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).'¹⁴

Wittgenstein feels compelled to qualify what he means by drawing a limit to thought

¹³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 3.

because such an aim is problematic by definition. To draw a limit to thought requires one to think thought as a totality but such a totalizing perspective is only available outside of that totality, in a realm where, by definition, thinking is not possible. In other words, the problematic, or rather the paradox, of the *Tractatus* is to draw a limit to thought by thinking. Formulated in this way, such an aim may seem to be paralyzing, but one of the main achievements of the *Tractatus* is to display this paralyzing condition in its paradoxical, self-destructive structure. This paralysis could have been absolute were we, as speakers, stuck within the limits of language and hence no one, including the writer of the *Tractatus*, could have imagined the limits of language. Yet, we, not as empirical, contingent persons, but as speaking subjects, or rather contingent instances of the metaphysical subject, are located on the limits of language and the world. This is why Wittgenstein stipulates the aim of the book as drawing a limit to the expression of thought, rather than to thought itself.¹⁵ As the subject constitutes a limit to thought and to the world, she already experiences that limit as her/his existential home. In this sense, from an existential perspective the problem of the limits of language and the world is not a problem at all. It is for this reason that the value of the *Tractatus* is that ‘it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved’.¹⁶ These problems arise when the genuine experience of the subject which is the disinterested experience of the world as a totality is reduced to linguistic expressions which by definition cannot express anything other than contingent, and hence valueless, facts of the world. In this sense, then, these

¹⁵ This should be seen yet another paradoxical statements of language. In the foreword Wittgenstein makes a distinction between thought and its expression. As his remarks on solipsism and mysticism show, we seem to be able to think more than we express our thoughts. And in a sense, we can ‘feel the world as a limited whole’ or have thoughts about solipsism. The limits on our thinking, then, seem to be operational only when we express our thoughts. This is also the case in the incommunicability of the meaning of life. In any case, there is much more going on in our mindful lives than only rational, articulated thoughts.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

problems are pseudo problems that cannot be solved but rather must be dissolved. In this sense, Wittgenstein's formalism is not a way to 'discover' a priori conditions of the possibility of language and the world for the sake of producing knowledge of those conditions. It is a methodological device to show the futility and the normative threat of such a 'will to knowledge' from the non-articulable perspective of the subject. In other words, to display the totality of language and the world is significant as much as showing it will lead to feeling the outside of that totality. The 'knowledge', or more appropriately the formal construction, of totality is important because the limits of that totality can function as the condition of the possibility of a reconstruction of an outside.

This is the point where the normative/critical significance of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's early formalist methodologies meet. Foucault's choice to write 'the archaeology of that silence' rather than 'the history of that language' is based on the same concerns that lead Wittgenstein to present the world and language as a totality not for the sake of the significance of the inside of that totality but for the sake of the ethical/aesthetical significance of what remains outside of it. Methodologically, and this is what situates Foucault's work closer to philosophy than history, for while historiography establishes its knowledge and truth claims on the basis of the actual configurations and compositions of historical 'facts', archaeological inquiry makes formal claims about the conditions of the possibility of its objects. In other words, historiography establishes a relational order among discursive facts while archaeology aims at revealing the logic of what can be said in a discourse. In this sense, historiography is oblivious to any sense of limit for its field is filled with facts that obstruct any clear view of a horizon. As opposed to historiography, archaeological

knowledge and truth are formal reconstructions the purpose of which is to make the unrecognized horizon visible and thereby reveal the historical limits of discourses. As archaeological inquiry reveals what is possible to say in a discourse, it also produces a unique knowledge of what cannot exist within the limits of that discourse. That which does not exist as a positive fact is condemned to nonexistence within the confines of historiography because positive facts constitute the whole discursive universe of historiography. Under the conditions of the lack of any sense of limits, the universe of historiography also lacks the possibility of its totality and hence any sense of limitedness and of outside. And by contrast, Foucault's archaeological inquiries have a very sharp focus on the limits of the discourses of human sciences so that we are able to see that what presented to us as universal and objective necessities is, in fact, historically contingent limits placed upon our lives.

In the context of modernity, the voice of madness, which poses an ontological question if not a paradox as deep as silence, cannot be heard in the factual universe of historiography precisely because it can be captured only on the limits of psychiatric discourse where the voice of madness is muted and pushed to the other side of the discursive limits of reason. Archaeological 'knowledge' of madness, then, is a unique 'knowledge' of this limit experience the ambiguous ontological status of which defies the rigid dialectic of reason and unreason. In this sense, Foucault's methodological choice of privileging a formal inquiry into the limits of psychiatric discourse is a significant normative choice because only a formal archaeological scrutiny of the discourse can give us an access to the excess which is constantly produced at the limits of the discourse. In other words, only archaeological methodology can enable us to hear the silence of

madness which is made inaccessible by the discursive tools of historiography designed to capture what is already well articulated, meaningful, and rational.

For the early Wittgenstein, language makes sense by representing the facts. Every meaningful proposition is a picture of a fact. Yet, every picture is also a fact independent of what it represents. Indeed, this is the condition of the possibility of representation, for a picture can represent a fact only from outside of that fact. A picture and a fact share logical form. Logical form determines what is possible in the logical space. The existence of a fact is just one possibility of the combinations of objects. A proposition can depict any possibility in the logical space. When the combination of the objects in a fact corresponds to combination of names in a proposition we call that proposition a true proposition. Yet, since propositions can depict anything possible in the logical space independent of what is really the case, the sense of the proposition and its truth value are independent of each other. In other words, a proposition can be false but meaningful. The truth of any proposition is determined by whether what it depicts is actually the case in the world. What is the case is the contingent configuration of the totality of facts which can be in any configuration logic allows. The truth of any proposition is utterly dependent on whether the configuration of the totality of facts is the same as depicted by the proposition. In this sense, then, there is no a priori or necessary truth which is true regardless of the configuration of facts in the world. Since reality and language share the same logical form the set of what can be said (all the possible meaningful combinations of the names) is at the same time the set of propositions that describe what can exist (all the possible combination of objects). By definition, this set of all possible propositions include the set of all true propositions that describe what actually exists. Hence, from

within this set, it is possible to represent the whole reality exhaustively, that is as a totality.¹⁷ However, from within this set of all possible meaningful propositions, it is not possible to represent the logical form, that is the totality of the world and language, for it requires us to ‘station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world’.¹⁸

In this picture, if the aim of philosophy is to set limits to the expression of thought by representation, then that limit cannot itself be represented. Representation is the condition of possibility of saying anything and hence whenever the philosopher says anything, whatever she says will remain within the limits of representation and infinitely defer the point where language and its outside limit meet each other. What cannot be said cannot be said but can only show itself. To present the point where the limits of language show itself philosophy ‘must set limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought’.¹⁹ “It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said”.²⁰ To do so, philosophy must bypass the content of language and arrive at the form of language which simultaneously makes representation possible and limits it. There are propositions that serve this end, or more correctly pseudo-propositions which behave like genuine propositions even if they are only inevitable by-products of the representational process: tautologies and contradictions. A tautology ‘admit[s] *all* possible situations’ and a contradiction ‘[admits] none’.²¹ Therefore:

Contradiction is that common factor of propositions which *no* proposition has in common with another. Tautology is the common factor of all propositions that have nothing in common with one another.

Contradiction, one might say, vanishes outside all propositions: tautology vanishes inside them.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.12

¹⁸ Ibid., 4.12

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.114

²⁰ Ibid., 4.115

²¹ Ibid., 4.462

Contradiction is the outer limits of propositions: tautology is the unsubstantial point at their centre.²²

Precisely because their inability to carry any content, or to put it more appropriately, their inability to represent anything unlike propositions which ‘show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing’.²³ Completely stripped from any possibility of content, a tautology is pure possibility and a contradiction is pure impossibility. In other words, tautologies and contradictions are pure form. For Wittgenstein, the fact that they show their inability to say anything in their inability to say anything shows something more than that also: that there is a logical form to the world and to language, and that where there is form, there are also limits. Hence, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* thinks that tautologies and contradictions are special logical windows through which it is possible to catch a glimpse of the world as a totality.

Wittgenstein’s interest in logic, as a body of tautological ‘propositions’, is about the demonstrative capabilities of logic to show language as a totality on the formal level. Once the limits of that totality is drawn, a space emerges outside of the borders of that totality and, for the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, that outside space is the condition of possibility of the critique of reason. In his archaeological period, Foucault also thinks that critique of any discourse requires an outside perspective, which, according to the Foucault the archaeologist, is available in the form of a historical distance, absolutized on the basis of the historical discreteness of *epistemes*.

The epistemological field traversed by the human sciences was not laid down in advance: no philosophy, no political or moral option, no empirical science of any kind, no observation of human body, no analysis of sensation, imagination, or the passions, had ever encountered, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, anything like man; for man did not exist (any more than life, or language, or labour); and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include

²² Ibid., 5.143

²³ Ibid., 4.461

man (willy-nilly, and with a greater or lesser degree of success) among the objects of science – among which it has perhaps not been proved even yet that it is absolutely possible to class him; they appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known.²⁴

Or,

Historians want to write the histories of biology in the eighteenth century; but they do not realize that biology did not exist then, and that the pattern of knowledge that has been familiar to us for a hundred and fifty years is not valid for a previous period. And that, if biology was unknown, there was a very simple reason for it: that life itself did not exist. All that existed was living beings, which were viewed through a grid of knowledge constituted by *natural history*.²⁵

Among the other texts that belong to Foucault's archaeological period, *The Order of Things* is distinguished by the fact that in it Foucault develops a full account of historical discreteness, while in his other archaeological works like *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* we have only scattered clues and fragments about it. What we discover in his account of historical discreteness is that there cannot be any account of it, properly speaking, as these epistemic ruptures are events to be analyzed and not patterns in a causal nexus.

What event, what law do they obey, these mutations that suddenly decide that things are no longer perceived, describes [sic], expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way, and that it is no longer wealth, living beings, and discourse that are presented to knowledge in the interstices of words or through their transparency, but beings radically different from them? For an archaeology of knowledge, this profound breach in the expanse of continuities, though it must be analysed [sic], and minutely so, cannot be 'explained' or even summed up in a single word. It is a radical event that is distributed across the entire visible surface of knowledge, and whose signs, shocks, and effects it is possible to follow step by step. Only thought re-apprehending itself as the root of its own history could provide a foundation, entirely free of doubt, for what the solitary truth of this event was in itself.²⁶

Within its own historical boundaries, each episteme constitutes a totality the form of which determines what can be said in that specific epistemic configuration.

Foucault develops his archaeological project against the project of history of ideas which takes these 'ideas' at their face value as truths or falsehoods that are expressed in

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Vintage Books, 1973), 344 – 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 127 – 8

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 217 – 8

discussions, disagreements, and polemics. In other words, the project of history of ideas seeks the truth of these ideas in their content, their capability to produce true knowledge of their epistemic object, or in their errors about that epistemic object. From this perspective, biology follows from natural history, or the analysis of wealth gives rise to political economy as the ongoing dialogue among the ideas forces knowledge claims to assume more effective forms of rationality to capture the truth of their objects of knowledge. The disagreements in a field of knowledge, then, are not only clashes among the agonistic contents of different ideas that are exclusive approaches to the truth of their subject matter, but also developmental engines of rationality that gets infinitesimally closer and closer to truth by infinitely perfecting its form. This is what Foucault rejects.

From the perspective of the history of ideas, labor, for example, is a central concept common in both Adam Smith's political economy and his precursors such as Condillac, Quesnay, and Cantillon. What makes Adam Smith Adam Smith is that he develops the concept of labor through correcting misunderstandings of this concept by his precursors and gives a more rational form to it to capture the essence of human productive activity in a more truthful way. The historian of ideas, then, reads the modifications in the content of the concept of the labor as the signs of the continuity of a singular explanatory rational narration in which human beings not only make their own economic activity an object of knowledge but also recognize their own rational essence as it unfolds and expresses itself in the rationality of productive economic activity. For Foucault, however, what Smith does is not to cleanse the content of the concept of labor from errors and irrationalities. Rather, according to Foucault, Smith 'does displace it: he maintains its function as a means of analyzing exchangeable wealth; but that analysis is

no longer simply a way of expressing exchange in terms of need (and trade in terms of primitive barter); it reveals an irreducible, absolute unit of measurement.’²⁷ In this sense, then, even if the concept of labor in Smith seems to be telling a story continuous with the story told by means of the concept of labor in the texts of his precursors, these two concepts of labor are not the same. Within Foucauldian archaeology, then, the concept of labor starts a new life of its own in Smith’s works.

Labour, life, and language appear as so many ‘transcendentals’ which make possible the objective knowledge of living beings, of the laws of production, and of the forms of language. In their being, they are outside knowledge, but by that very fact they are conditions of knowledge...they totalize phenomena and express the a priori coherence of empirical multiplicities; but they provide them with a foundation in the form of a being whose enigmatic reality constitutes, prior to all knowledge, the order and the connection of what it has to know...²⁸

The concepts of labor in Smith and in the earlier analysts of wealth are even incommensurable concepts because the former is pure form devoid of any content while the latter is defined by its content. Even if the analysis of wealth uses the concept of labor as a unit of measurement of the value of commodities, the concept of labor in the earlier works is not a threshold to the outside of their discourse. One measures the value of the wealth with labor but wealth is still defined in terms of need as an object of desire and not pure material expression of labor. Labor is a phenomenon shaped by the need and desire. In Smith, however, labor designates the epistemic space where analysis vanishes. It makes the knowledge claims of political economy possible, but it cannot be an object of knowledge.

As I have exemplified in terms of the concept of labor, the project of the history of ideas cannot conceive the difference between the truth of ideas and the truth about these ideas. For Foucault however, the truth of ideas, which is what counts as true under

²⁷ Ibid., 223

²⁸ Ibid., 244

an epistemic regime, does not give us access to the truth about these ideas, for that can be conceived only on the level of their historical conditions of possibility. In other words, even if one can reveal the truth of ideas through their content, the truth about these ideas does not lie in their content but must be sought on the level of their form, of the episteme they operate in, which makes the totality of those ideas, including the conflicting ones, possible. This epistemic form is the condition of the possibility of knowledge claims, theories, and rationalities. It is, in Foucault's words, the 'historical a priori' of knowledge. Historical a priori is that which accompanies thought as unthought. It is what we do not think when we think. It is, in Foucault's words, the 'positive unconsciousness' of thought. The truth about thought, then, lies in its unthought. However, this unthought should not be confused with the deep meaning that hermeneutics seeks or the synchronic orders that structuralism analyses. It is, in the same way as Wittgenstein defines logic, the 'scaffolding' of ideas. The reason why it is impossible to articulate it from within is not that it is buried as a deep sedimentary layer of thought or that it is an invisible regulating center covering itself as a blind spot. Rather, its inarticulacy lies in its pervasiveness of every conceivable point in the epistemic space which makes it impossible to capture it as a totality from within a space completely saturated by its presence.

Once put in this way, the 'critical' value of knowledge claims, theories, and thought in general is neutralized. While from within a certain episteme the topology constituted by these ideas looks very alive with conflicts, contrasts, and shifting and drifting differentiations, from an archaeological point of view the topology of the episteme appears a very smooth and homogenous surface invisibly regulated by a 'historical a priori'. A genuine hierarchical or critical differentiation cannot occur among

the ideas of the same episteme because these ideas cannot express anything more than the form of episteme allows them to express. By definition, a single epistemic form constricts all the ideas it makes possible, and hence from within that episteme no idea and no knowledge claim can reveal the constricting epistemic form while it itself is constricted by the same form. This is, of course, what Wittgenstein means by ‘propositions cannot express anything higher’. All are of equal value by virtue of being formed by the same representational economy. If any proposition has any critical claim, this requires that proposition to reveal the limits of other propositions which in return requires that proposition to step out of the representational form. However, being constituted by the representational form, having a critical claim requires that proposition to cease to be a proposition, which is impossible as a proposition is the only possible form in which to say anything.

This common formal operation of Wittgenstein and Foucault interrupts the developmental narration of Enlightenment for that narration defines value as the progressive differentiation of knowledge claims, theories, and ideas. In their earlier periods, what Wittgenstein and Foucault claim, on the basis of epistemic and logical grounds, is that such a differentiation, as a precondition of the criticality of thought, is not possible because knowledge claims, ideas, and theories, in short, all the forms that rationality defines, are caught in their own form. And the pressing demand of critique is to reveal this form that keeps the thought hostage in its self-identity. What is caught in its form, however, is not only the rationalist discourse but the whole modern social texture. “Our civilization is characterized by the word ‘progress’. Progress is its form rather than making progress being one of its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with

building even more complicated structure.”²⁹ As the form of language and discourse restricts what can be said and imposes the reproduction of the sameness of thought without allowing any meaningful differentiation, i.e. value, within the limits of language and discourse, modern society is caught in its own form of progressiveness which does not allow any differentiation, as the word ‘progress’ implies, but imposes the construction of the same structure. Formalism, then, is not a choice but a normative demand of critique.

Some Preliminary Remarks: Modernity, Critique, and Silence

How is it that the notion of silence in Wittgenstein and Foucault can assume a normative/critical role? Neither Wittgenstein nor Foucault try to vocalize that silence or talk in the name of it for the sake of doing justice to that which is missing. Not only the notion of silence, then, but also an actual silence in the form of mute textual gaps seems to be the animating critical spirit of their meticulously designed formal analyses. Wittgenstein wants his readers to listen to the voice of the *Tractatus* only as a prelude to be able to hear and appreciate the silence of the unwritten *Tractatus* which is the indefinable substance of the written *Tractatus*. In his archaeological works, Foucault’s voice always stops short at articulating an audible dialectic between the thought and the unthought in modern discourses, creating a textual space for countless textual possibilities that provoke untold narrations to come outside of his texts. The Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* sees certain potentials of ethical/aesthetical emancipation in silence, and in the same fashion, Foucault criticizes the ‘talking cure’ of psychoanalysis for remaining

²⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 7.

‘a stranger to the sovereign enterprise of unreason’.³⁰ Indeed, the critical function of that which cannot find its voice in language and discourse is important to such a degree that if one’s horizon of reading fails to go beyond the positive content of their early works, one can easily interpret them as a certain kind of positivism, as did the Vienna Circle in its reading of Wittgenstein and Habermas in his reading of Foucault.³¹

At this point, I would like to take a detour to come back to the criticality of their texts. Because Wittgenstein and Foucault’s preoccupation with silence pushes the critical value of their works to the outside of their texts, the normative value of their writings is sustained only on the textual borders. In other words, the critical edge of their earlier texts is established where the word edges into the silence. Hence, one is required to step into their texts from outside.

When one questions the critical place of silence in their earlier texts, she will immediately realize that it is actually a double question. This is because, if silence is critique of thought as it reveals the limits of discursivity and thought, under modern conditions, this critique has to be in the form of re-posing the very question of the criticality of thought itself. As Cavell nicely puts, ‘...philosophy is the criticism a culture produces of itself, and proceeds essentially by criticizing past efforts at this criticism...’³² In this sense, then, the question how silence is critical includes the question silence poses: “How is thought critical?” Our first approximation to the critical function of silence, then, has to be through the question of the self reflexive criticality of modern thought. Even if

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Vintage Books, 1988), 278.

³¹ This is not to say that these interpretations are just a matter of misreading. Rather, these interpretations are good indicatives of the fragility, if not unsustainability, of Wittgenstein’s and Foucault’s earlier critical positions.

³² Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 175.

the Cavell passage puts this in a historically unspecified manner, self-critique of a culture through the self-critique of its thought seems to refer to the historical event we call modernity. Criticality, in this sense, is the grand denominator of the different branches of modern thought – meaning that as a cultural phenomenon and under its own determinations, modern thought cannot help but criticize. Starting from Kant, modern thought constitutes itself as the object of its own critical scrutiny. In Foucault’s words, ‘[i]nterpretation and formalization have become the two great form of analysis of our time – in fact, we know no others.’³³ Either through interpretation of the texts of yesterday or formalization of the patterns and concepts of the thought of today, critical thought defines itself by folding back on itself to find its own rightful voice, the legitimacy of its claims, and its own limits. This is also the movement by which modern thought searches for the grounds of its authority in its own structure and hence claims its autonomy within which reason follows nothing but its own imperatives.

That the self-critique of thought starts having legitimate claims on the socio-historical context in which it stands should not be understood as a self-contained event or a merely an intellectual/academic operation in which the imperatives of reason are gradually translated into the guiding principles of various social transformation programs either by the authority of a universal ‘ought’ or the pressing *telos* of a historical teleology. Instead, this event should be understood in its existential relations with another modern

³³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Vintage Books, 1973), 299.

invention that filled the political space in the 'long 19th century' of Europe from 1789 to 1917: revolution³⁴. As John S. Ransom puts,

Criticism was now able to draw on the emotional attachments to an increasingly secularized millennialism. Critique became associated with the desire for another world... Revolution gave critique the gift of life, of positive existence. Instead of acting as one of life's shadows – always following it around but lacking its own substance – critique could stand in the world and speak to it of its future.³⁵

This 'secularized millennialism' is marked by a displacement. Revolution displaced the idea of religious salvation with the idea of secular liberation. How things ought to be was no longer derived from a contrast between the mundane and insignificant disorderliness of the world and divine order but of a meaningful disorder the decipherment of which would reveal a mundane rational order unfolding and realizing itself beneath mundane disorderliness. Salvation was the promise of a divine, transcendental power which justifies, regulates, and gives an order to the political action. It was, in short, the redemption of the truth of that divine power. The modern secular political concept of liberation replaced the concept of religious salvation together with the terms of the divine logic behind it. Yet, even if the terms of that divine logic lost their political authority, the form of the same logic remained almost intact. Although, as a secular concept, the new order promised by the concept of liberation cannot be seen as the redemption of a divine truth, the promised order of liberation was presented in the same redemptive terms. Hence, liberation is the redemption of the truth of 'humanity' and of a rational order which is inherent in the core of human existence. In other words, liberation is the final rational harmony and the end of the tensions between the rational human essence and the

³⁴ This does not mean that there were no revolutions after 1917. The year 1917, however, marks the end of the revolutionary era in the sense that starting from 1917 revolution had a residence, a formal address. In a sense, post-revolutionary revolutions after 1917 were not historical events defined by their singularity but proliferations, if not repetitions, of a previous original event, of a historical pattern. In short, after 1917, revolution ceased to be revolutionary..

³⁵ John S. Ransom, *Foucault's Discipline: The Politics of Subjectivity* (Duke University Press, 1997), 3.

actual, historical configuration of human existence. Religious salvation neither left a vacuum behind it nor disappeared completely. The secular idea of liberation gradually covered the space of socio-political imagination where, previously, salvation had resided. Salvation, which was to be an apocalyptic public event, receded to the domestic space of bourgeois households in the form of private worship., offering individual comfort, as well as moral significance in the midst of the revolutionary unrest which was moving on the grounds of the promises of liberation.³⁶

Ransom observes that even if revolution initially gave critique a home in the world, it also reduced the value of critique to critique's instrumentality in the process of social transformation, making the existence of critique conditional upon the fate of revolution. Once the era of revolution was over, critique lost its substance and became homeless again. According to Ransom, Foucault's work is a response to this crisis of critique. Foucault wants to elevate the value of critique from the level of instrumentality to the level of a virtue by rendering the critical ends of thought internal to thought itself. In other words, for Foucault the critical task is not to provide a social and political program for those who resist and oppose the existing political order. Rather, the critical task suitable for philosophy is to show the historicity of our forms of thinking and thereby question the necessities imposed on our lives by these forms of thinking. He thinks that offering a programmatic politics to resistance and opposition amounts to imposing new necessities on our lives. In Ransom's reading, by avoiding such a programmatic politics, Foucault reinstates the dignity of thought. Yet Ransom thinks that Foucault is able to restore the dignity of critical thought only through an intellectual regression to pre-

³⁶ This dialectic movement of 'liberation/salvation' couplet finds its separate analytical expressions in the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber which simultaneously oppose and complete each other.

revolutionary times. While it is true that like all other 20th century thinkers, Foucault's work is a response to the crisis of critique, his thought cannot be understood in terms of a regressive romanticism, as Ransom sees it. Rather, Foucault aims at establishing a 'critical ontology of the present' on the very basis of the uniqueness and singularity of the present. In this sense, decoupling critical thought from revolutionary political programs is not a form of intellectual regression, but on the contrary a precondition to avoid the risks of such an intellectual regression.

Ransom's diagnosis that Foucault's work is a response to the post-revolutionary crisis of critique is an accurate diagnosis. Yet, the content of this crisis is not as simple as Ransom envisions. In his reading, revolution left everything as it was. It appeared on the European socio-political scene like lightning, giving critique a short-lived substance, and disappeared suddenly, leaving critique lifeless. It is, of course, an empirico-historical question if revolution disappeared dialectically, i.e. completing itself through paradigmatic and institutional realization of its political program, or simply disappeared, leaving no trace behind it. It is, however, definitely a philosophical question whether revolution's gift of life to critique evaporated at the end of the revolutionary era. If revolution ceased to be revolutionary in its post-revolutionary life, perhaps we can say that critique ceased to be critical in its post-revolutionary life, too. In other words, if we grant a certain plausibility to the idea of parallel fates of revolution and critique, then we can also trace the parallel fates in their afterlife. From the tribal organization of African national independence struggles to the Islamist/socialist hybrid organization of the Iranian revolution, as the claims and forms of revolution became less and less revolutionary, the imperatives of reason generated out of reason's own self-critique

became less and less critical. As revolutions stopped promising transgressing of limits but reaffirmed those limits by demanding a more consolidated place within the given borders of nation-states, the imperatives of reason became more and more affirmative of the limits of social texture.

It is this thought that informs Foucault's thinking, for the context of the crisis of critique is the changing configuration of modernity in general. Modernity started as such a powerful earthquake that 'everything that is solid melted into air'. It transformed the static, rock-solid, and fragmented communal formations of first the European continent and then the whole earth into a dynamic liquid social mass. It changed the very fabric human life is made of. Traditional forms of authority legitimized on the religious grounds and traditional forms of power materialized as tangible means of immediate violence were too solid and hence too local to claim monopoly over the control and management of the working of this liquid mass. In short, this colossal transformation not only dissolved the loci of traditional authority and dislodged the primacy of tangible and immediate means of power but also rendered the social texture a politically workable plastic material. Yet, out of this landscape, which the earthquake of modernity rendered a space of liberatory promises, there emerged 'the iron cage of bureaucracy' which stands for a new, impersonal, and pervasively institutionalized form of authority organized on the grounds and dynamics of the rapid and excessive 'rationalization' of social texture. It is under these conditions, then, the fate of revolution and the fate of critique became entangled.

The crisis of critique to which Foucault's work is a response is not a crisis of defeat but a crisis of unredeemed triumph and this perspective allows us to see the

Tractatus and the archaeological texts of Foucault under the same light. It is exactly the same triumphant thought, a reckless rationalism that Wittgenstein criticizes and resists in the *Tractatus*. Now, we can begin to develop a sense of the critical value of the common notion of silence in Wittgenstein and Foucault. In their earlier works, both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that the discursive/linguistic space is devoid of critical possibilities. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* claims that a proposition can express how things are in the world but it cannot express any ethical and aesthetic values. Similarly, in his archaeological texts, Foucault claims that the thoughts of Marx and Freud, but especially that of Marx, are established on the basis of the same *episteme* that renders human sciences possible. Therefore, as the discourses of Marxism and Freudian thought are blind to their own 'historical a priori', their claims to criticality cannot surpass the horizons of the 19th century humanistic discourses. Both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that the normative/critical emptiness of linguistic/discursive space is due to its closed, that is limited, character. Anything sayable, even before it gets said, is already an actual element of discourse for, in the earlier periods of Foucault and Wittgenstein, linguistic/discursive space is not defined by totality of actual statements but by the totality of all possible statements that the rules of logic (Wittgenstein) or the *episteme* (Foucault) allow. In short, any possible statement is taken to be already an actual statement on the level of formal analysis. The difference between what gets said and what can be said does not have any analytical significance on the formal level. In this sense, then, their analyses exclude the possibility of articulating any normative/critical concern from within the discursive space. Consequently, the normative/critical element resides only in what is unsayable.

By itself, this critical strategy is neither original nor immediately effective. In fact, starting from Kant, modern western philosophy is marked by its obsessive fascination with that which is conceptually inaccessible and non-articulate. Furthermore, both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that that which cannot be expressed in the discursive space manifests itself in the form of aesthetic expressions which are the only possible form of its manifestation. For the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, 'ethics and aesthetics are one and the same'.³⁷ One of the possible understanding of this claim is that our justice claims like our aesthetic expressions are to be shown in artworks instead of being articulated in rational discourses. Similarly, Foucault thinks that it is literature and painting that shows us ways to relate to the world of the unreason without violating or dominating the mad.

At this point, it is necessary to ask the critical value of aesthetic acts to open up various spaces in our lives for that which is not articulate because implying or manifesting the non-articulate does not necessarily have a direct critical effect on the rational order of things and life. What makes their work original and strategically valuable is their subversive, from-within attack on what I tentatively call 'linguistic liberation' the criticism of which starts in their earlier period and gives rise to the critique of the modern socio-political imagination the limits of which are drawn by the idea of 'political liberation'.³⁸ At this point let me call that which cannot reside within the limits of discursive/linguistic space the excess, even if, in the framework of this project, the

³⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 6.421.

³⁸ These two concepts also display the deep Kantian kinship between Hegelian/Marxist historical branch of modern thought and the positivistic branch that pursues Kant's philosophical program of 'analytics of truth'. While the positivist fantasy of a totally transparent language manifests the maximum program of linguistic liberation, the utopian redemption of all that historically matters through revolution shapes the program of political liberation.

excess is more than what is unsayable. Linguistic liberation and its parallel paradigm, political liberation, are either non-cognizant of the excess or they actively pursue theoretico-political programs to reduce it to the status of the knowledge object of various discourses, making it an indistinguishable element of the rationalized fabric of the social space.

I would like to discuss the idea of linguistic liberation in relation to the excess to argue that the philosophical question whether linguistic/discursive space is a transparent and stable medium has direct political bearings in the context of the development of modern western thought. With respect to linguistic liberation and the excess, we can recognize a division in the development of modern western thought.³⁹ On the one hand, there is self-congratulatory rationalism as the voice of ‘triumphant thought’ which not only embraces Enlightenment ideals as the unquestionable basis of human emancipation from the despotism of irrational forces, but also perpetuates and reproduces the developmental narrative of the Enlightenment in which constant categorizations and divisions between the rational and the irrational take place on the basis of the imperatives of reason. In return, these divisions and categorizations are redeemed as power relations in the increasingly rationalized social texture either in the form of assimilation into the rational order or in the form of exclusion from the horizons of that order. On the other hand, there is a variety of dissenting voices that look for ruptures and blind spots in the seamlessly narrated story of the Enlightenment. These ruptures and blind spots tell the stories of new forms of dominations and oppressions in the midst of the liberatory

³⁹ This is, of course, not to say that a binary logic resides in the center of the history of modern thought, regulating and directing its historical movement. Rather, this division should be understood as an initial approximation to modern thought. Or, more appropriately, we should understand this division in terms of Weberian ‘ideal types’ which cannot be found in their pure forms in the actual texts but provide us with a framework to situate various modes of modern thought in the history of modern thought.

narration of the Enlightenment. As I pointed out earlier, criticality of thought is the common denominator of the variety of forms of thinking in the framework of modern thought. In other words, modern thought is defined by its criticality on the both sides of the division above. This division, then, is not a division between critical and uncritical thought. Rather it is the form and the mode of the criticality that render this division meaningful.

In the first case, the criticality of thought is understood as the self-critique of thought that enables thinking to conform better to the imperatives of reason. Self-critique, in this sense, is more or less a mode of the self-correction of reason under the conditions of the post-revolutionary era. Self-critique is for the perfection of reason based on the imperatives of reason but the critical effects of this perfection process is replaced by the effects of increased effectivity of the rational domination relations that are constitutive of the fabric of modern social order. In the second case, criticality is a mode of historical scrutiny and patient questioning of those very imperatives of reason themselves for the story of the historical process of their formation is also the (hi)story of the modern domination relations. In other words, while the former tries to make the Enlightenment narration more seamless, self-contained, and comprehensive, the latter recovers the oppressed (hi)stories under the seemingly solid seamlessness of the narration of the Enlightenment. It does not look for further articulations of the socio-historical elements, but unearths the social costs of already existing articulations of social elements into the dominant narrations through a monolithic, meaning producing signification system.

At this point one might have a concern that this story of modernity is too one sided for it exclusively focuses on the Hegelian/Marxist historicism and ignores the

analytical/positivistic tradition which also claims to be the rightful inheritor of modern thought. This is exactly the concern that linguistic liberation, as an experimental concept, addresses. It is meant to reveal the power effects and hence the moral/political dimensions of the philosophical fantasy of a stable meaning and a transparent language.

No matter how much one is convinced, as positivists are, that she 'does philosophy' for the sake of 'objective truth' away from all moral and political questions, thinking about language and discourse, especially under modern conditions, is necessarily involved with the moral/political questions of life and authority. When rationalist thought makes language and discursive orders its object of study, the telos of its activity (and paradoxically, its suppressed assumption) is a rationally stable and universal order of meaning which shows the conditions under which the submission of the speakers to these rational discursive orders are not only affirming the autonomy and freedom of the speakers but also constitutive of that very autonomy and freedom. In other words, rationalist thought identifies speech and discourse as the sites of emancipation and liberation for it is only in speech and discourse that human beings can align themselves and their social surroundings to the rational order and realize their freedom. Speech frees the speaker, for language as the very embodiment of the rational order reflects the truth about our human identity. Speaking and having a voice are the conditions of possibility of human freedom. Modern political scene is shaped by the multifaceted interactions among truth, liberation, and discourse. Truth resides in the discourse and liberation redeems the truth of the object of the modern politics. National liberation is the promise of an order in which the nation submits itself to the authority of the common will of the nation which is the realization of the truth of the nation. Sexual liberation is the promise of a sexual order

in which one conforms to the imperatives derived from the truth of her/his sexuality freed from the burdens of the social, moral institutions which form obstacles to the liberating rule of the truth of sexuality. Gay liberation is the social, institutional recognition of the truth of the specificity and difference of gay desire. Women's liberation is the redemption of the truth of feminine difference. In this sense, then, despite their irreconcilable differences, historicist and positivist forms of modern western thought converge in their affirmations of stable linguistic/discursive order in which universal forms of rationality appear to be inseparably connected to human freedom and agency. It is in this context that the issue of the transparency and stability of language becomes the philosophical battlefield between defenders and critics of the Enlightenment ideals. The defenders of Enlightenment ideals develop various projects of linguistic liberation in which the rational rules and regulations of speech and discourse, and truth as their operational redemption, are projected as the normative basis of the resistance and struggle against the domination relations. From within the perspective of these projects, there is a perfect isomorphism between the binary opposition of rationality versus irrationality and that of legitimacy versus illegitimacy. Thus, the object of their criticism is defined by its irrationality and hence illegitimacy. Those other social relations that have passed the test of rational legitimacy remain unchecked outside the horizon of the critical vision. Without rejecting the legitimacy versus illegitimacy distinction, the critics of Enlightenment ideals ask what it means to develop critical visions based on a universal rationality under the conditions of the rationalization of the social texture where the domination relations are not only legitimized but also constructed based on the same rationality. The rationalist critical vision blindly affirms the majority of modern

domination relations in which the injustices of pre-modern domination relations do not disappear but take subtler and probably more injurious forms. If the stability of meaning and transparency of speech and discourse as they are conceived in the projects of linguistic liberation are conditions of assertibility of the liberatory narration of Enlightenment, then, it is not surprising that those critics who seek new ways to re-establish the criticality of thought on grounds other than triumphant rationalism also focus on speech and language to reveal essential instabilities of meaning and historical/mythical obscurities of speech and discourse as symptoms of hidden oppression and domination relations.

The fantasy of stable meaning residing in a transparent language is not without material basis. Rationalization of social texture inserts itself through not only bureaucratic institutional establishment of rational social organization but also stabilization of meaning by reducing the universe of possible meanings into a constricted set of meanings regulated by a rational discursive order. In other words, rationalism self-valorizes itself by declaring itself the exhaustive meaning of the world and life. It is in this sense, then, that any instability and friction in the construction of meaning is indicative of resistance against the penetration of rationalization. It is the excess on the expanding borders of rationalization that radiates waves of resistance in different frequencies interrupting the clarity and stability of meaning and creating static in the clear channels of rational discourses.

In their earlier periods, Wittgenstein and Foucault buy into the rationalist fantasy of stable meaning and transparency of linguistic/discursive space. Hence, these frictions and instabilities cannot reside in the center of meaning. For the Wittgenstein of the

Tractatus all the propositions are of equal value, that is, of no value. For Foucault the archaeologist psychoanalytical discourse is just another instance of expanding rationalization. Since the excess cannot reside in the world of language and discourse, it appears in their early works as silence residing in exile in the form of a metaphysical entity, of 'the metaphysical subject' in Wittgenstein and 'the sovereign enterprise of unreason' in Foucault.

Formalism and Critique

If critique is the folding of thought on itself to scrutinize its limits, to dictate to itself the limits of its own authority, and thereby declare its autonomy, this means that critique requires thought to self differentiate itself without causing a schizophrenic split in its unity. In other words, in its critical stage thought faces the difficult task of being both the looker and the looked-at. Wittgenstein's and Foucault's formalism is a response, albeit a fatalist one as we will see, to this demand of critique to 'liberate' thought from its captivity in its own tyrannical form which sustains this state of captivity by generating a developmental narration on the basis of pseudo critical claims. Formalist critique, by virtue of its demonstrative ability to present the linguistic/epistemic space as a totality, fulfills its critical function by revealing the homogenizing form that makes any critical differentiation impossible. In this sense, then, formalist critique does not criticize through introducing alternative and better values to an established normative system. Instead, it

upsets that system by neutralizing its value claims ‘by working outwards through what can be thought’ in that normative system.⁴⁰

As Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* ‘solves’ all the problems of philosophy by formally exhausting what is sayable in language, he warns us in the preface that very little is achieved with the disappearance of all philosophical problems. The author of the *Tractatus* is not being modest in his warning. Rather, Wittgenstein here manifests the critical spirit of the *Tractatus*. When taken as an epistemic project, in Foucault’s sense, that positively teaches the reader how language works, the *Tractatus* is only a collection of self-destructive propositions. . The critical spirit of the *Tractatus* is in what it leaves open after definitively bounding up the realm of language and representation. In the same fashion, when one takes Foucault’s texts, and especially his archaeological texts, in terms of an epistemic project which produces self-valorized knowledge claims, the archaeological project has very little to offer too. The notion of historical discreteness renders archaeological knowledge claims very stylishly yet they remain without any claim on our present. For example, despite their deep intimacy with Foucault’s texts, Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow open the introduction to their book with the following passage:

This is a book about how to study human beings and what one learns from such study. Our thesis is that the most influential modern attempts to achieve to this understanding – phenomenology, structuralism, and hermeneutics – have not lived up to their self-proclaimed expectations. Michel Foucault offers, in our opinion, elements of a coherent and powerful alternative means of understanding. His works, we feel, represent the most important contemporary effort both to develop a method for the study of human beings and to diagnose the current situation of our society.⁴¹

⁴⁰ We should note here as a reference to the continuity of Wittgenstein and Foucault’s thought throughout their career that ‘working outwards’ through language and episteme is the germinal form of their later critical strategy of genealogical subversion of rationalism which is again essentially ‘working outwards’ through language and discourse yet this time not to find epistemologically solid limits but horizons imposed as limits through political solidification.

⁴¹ Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (The University of Chicago Press, 1982), xvii.

As a matter of fact, Foucault never studied human beings. He extensively read, studied, and wrote about a very broad spectrum of texts such as ‘scientific’ studies about human beings, observational reports from hospitals, prisons, and asylums, institutional constitutions, regulations, and regimens, autobiographies, philosophical works, artistic works, works on military strategies, in short, almost any kind and genre one can think of. Yet, one cannot find one single knowledge claim about ‘human beings’ in his texts. On a very general level, excluding his latest writings on the Ancient Greek texts, he studied the studies of human beings as a curious modern invention which put the being of human beings in various discourses, objectified it as an element to know in the world, and subjected it to various rationalities.

Dreyfus and Rabinow’s understanding of Foucault’s texts is not a matter of misreading but of perspective. For them, Foucault takes over where phenomenology, structuralism, and hermeneutics failed to fulfill their common promises to provide a final articulation of human life, a definitive narration of our history, the ultimate truth and meaning of our meaning-producing practices. Seen from this perspective, the interpretative possibility that Foucault is not concerned with the better ways to fulfill these promises but with questioning these very promises themselves is invisible. In this sense, then, in Dreyfus and Rabinow’s reading, Foucault’s relation to these three traditions of modern thought appears not as a critical questioning of these ways of thinking but as complementary to their promises.

Foucault felt, as did many other intellectuals in France at the time, that the understanding of human beings had reached a crucial juncture. It seemed that at last the study of human beings, having taken several promising steps which in the end failed to live up to their own promise, had finally found a program that could be carried out. The structuralist projects of Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Chomsky seemed to have opened up a domain of formal analysis which could be profitably pursued by anyone who could free himself from traditional preconceptions. *The Order of Things*, subtitled *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (and originally entitled *The Archaeology of*

Structuralism) is precisely an attempt to further these structuralist disciplines by determining “the possibilities and rights, the conditions and limitations, of a justified formalization”⁴²

Foucault, of course, did not write in vacuum and his work can be seen as a response to the failures of the dominant philosophical projects of his time. However, an ‘archaeology of structuralism’ in terms of an ‘archaeology of the human sciences’ does not mean the endorsement of the promises of the human sciences and structuralism no matter how much the archaeological formalizations resemble the structuralist formalizations.

At this point, we can see the parallel fates of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and Foucault’s archaeological project. The standard readings of the *Tractatus* assert that Wittgenstein takes over when Frege’s and Russell’s projects to formalize language through logical symbolism fail by providing answers to the questions that remain unanswered in their projects. In this sense, the *Tractatus* is an attempt to realize the promises Frege and Russell previously made. Yet, the *Tractatus* is an attack, albeit a suicidal one, on the fundamental tenets of those projects. If, in the case of the *Tractatus*, showing the limits of language through its logical order does not necessarily mean to endorse the rational order of propositions, but on the contrary a critique of that rational order, then, in the same fashion, Foucault’s archaeological project is not ‘an attempt to further’ structuralism or any other truth seeking rational discourse but a search for an outside through formally defining ‘the possibilities and rights, the conditions and limitations, of a justified formalization’. An example that belongs to Foucault’s later period will clarify the point. In a radio interview, when asked if homosexuality is a natural or a cultural phenomenon, Foucault’s answer was simply that he does not know. The point is that explaining homosexuality as a natural phenomenon or a cultural

⁴² Ibid., 17

phenomenon through knowledge claims is irrelevant to Foucault's archaeological, and also to his genealogical, project for neither of the options as 'explanatory' epistemic constructs gives us automatic oppression or resistance possibilities. What interests Foucault is rather the claim that these explanatory accounts make on us under the conditions of rationalization. To do justice to Dreyfus and Rabinow, in his archaeological period Foucault does not have a clear account of what kind of regulatory, constructive, ethical, or political claims these epistemic constructs have on us. Only in his later period can he present us an account of how these epistemic constructs are also strategic constructs and how one should read these epistemic constructs through their power effects in terms of their strategic use in power relations. Yet, again, the absence of such an account does not mean that Foucault is interested in furthering the epistemic projects of the explanatory accounts such as structuralism.

As we have seen, this outside cannot be an integral part of the *Tractatus* but as formalist analysis reveals the limits of language the outside makes itself felt as that which lies on the other side of the border. Since this negative existence of the outside is a necessary result of formalist methodology, it is not surprising to observe that Foucault's formalism also gives rise to the negative existence of the outside. I would like to refer to an anomaly in the general architecture of *The Order of Things* to exemplify the negative appearance of the outside. This text is regarded as the least critical/political text Foucault wrote during his archaeological period. In *Madness and Civilization*, and *The Birth of the Clinic* Foucault analyses discourses the knowledge claims of which are immediately entangled with an institutional structure in charge of managing, categorizing, and regulating the lives of those under its roof. In a sense the authority of knowledge is so

solidified in the very walls of these institutions that the effects of rationalization is more immediately visible in the texts preceding *The Order of Things*. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, though more abstract and formal than all of his other texts, is the first in which Foucault attempts to develop an account of ‘non-discursive’ practices and discourses as actualities rather than epistemic spaces of possibilities. Furthermore, the analyzed discourses have no immediate institutional affiliations in *The Order of Things* and we do not have any account of how ‘non-discursive’ forces interact with the discursivity. Due to the absence of such accounts, the question why a specific body of knowledge claims in a discourse emerges even if it is just a moment of the actualization of some and not all of possible knowledge claims. In short, *The Order of Things* does give the impression that it is an epistemic project which seeks the truth of its knowledge object without any critical concern. Yet, at the end of the eighth chapter where Foucault analyzes labor, life, and language as formal concepts that signal the emergence of the modern episteme, this outside forces itself into the text. Whereas in the cases of labor and life Foucault does not feel compelled to include the other of political economy and of biology (and we do not know at this point in the text if they exist or not), when the issue at stake is language, Foucault does not think that he can finish the chapter without the other of philology.

Finally, the last of the compensations for the demotion of language, the most important and also the most unexpected, is the appearance of literature, of literature as such – for there has of course existed in the Western world, since Dante, since Homer, a form of language that we now call ‘literature’. But the word is of recent date, as is also, in our culture the isolation of a particular language whose peculiar mode of being is ‘literary’.⁴³

⁴³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Vintage Books, 1973), 299 – 300.

However, the event of the birth of modern literature, ‘the most important and the most unexpected’ event in the configuration of modern linguistic space, does not find any textual place other than a paragraph at the very end of the central chapter of *The Order of Things*. This is because the site Foucault the archaeologist excavates does not include any items that will tell the story of that event.

[A]t a time when language was burying itself within its own density as an object and allowing itself to be traversed, through and through, by knowledge, it was also reconstituting itself elsewhere, in an independent form...Literature is the contestation of philology (of which it is nevertheless the twin figure)...⁴⁴

This ‘elsewhere’ shaped by ‘an independent form’ is in fact that outside for the sake of which Foucault the archaeologist excavates an enormous amount of textual material. Yet, precisely because it is the outside of the site of excavation, it is also the point where the archaeological analysis vanishes. Our critical question here is this: if the archaeological apparatus is designed to reveal the form of knowledge claims and not to recognize that alien ‘independent form’, i.e. the aesthetic form, and to work inside the episteme and not in its outside, how can the archaeological apparatus tell that the formal totality it reveals is not all enclosing and that the limits it draws does not mark the vanishing point of everything that matters but a sign of a significant ‘elsewhere’? The answer is simply that it cannot. This question is the same question we asked earlier about the demonstrative capability of tautologies and contradiction to show the world and language as a limited totality. As with the mysticism of Wittgenstein, the critical/normative content of Foucault’s archaeological works, even if it makes itself felt in the text, resides outside of his texts. (And this is, as we will see, what makes their earlier critical strategies fatalistic.) This does not mean that his texts are devoid of normative content. Rather, as in the case

⁴⁴ Ibid., 300

of the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, Foucault's formal reconstruction of the realm of the episteme as a homogenous totality devoid of any critical potentiality is so strong that he also neutralizes the possibility of vocalizing any normative claim out of his archaeological analyses.

The normative/critical claims of the *Tractatus* are caught in their own gravity and hence the contrast between the existence of their signs and their textual non-existence point to the non-articulable life of the subject in the form of a black hole. In the same fashion, while reading the archaeological texts, the reader might have the impression that following the voice of the archaeologist and reenacting his journey into the deeper layers of the episteme will lead the reader to that outside space as if it is the endpoint of the journey of the archaeologist. Yet, the voice of the archaeologist already comes from outside in the sense that the archaeological project can be written only if the archaeologist has a sense of totality and limitedness of the episteme. This is of course a reformulation of Wittgenstein's warning to his readers in the preface to the *Tractatus* that one can understand the *Tractatus* only if she has already had the thoughts expressed in it. The outside in this sense is not the endpoint of the Tractarian journey but the very beginning of it. What the *Tractatus* does is not to elevate the reader from her ignorance by teaching her something about the world. What it does is to make the reader recognize where she already is by changing her/his perception of the world so that s/he can 'see the world aright'. As Wittgenstein's preface to the *Tractatus* establishes the outside as the beginning of the Tractarian journey, Foucault's preface to *The Order of Things* shows how the possibility of the archaeological project arises in recognition of an impossibility

which is the sign of totality and its outside simultaneously. Let me quote the entire first paragraph of the preface which, I think, is essential to the point I am trying to make.

This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought – *our* thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography – breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a ‘certain Chinese encyclopedia’ in which it is written that ‘animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.’ In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*.⁴⁵

Foucault starts the next paragraph with a question: “But what is it impossible to think, and what kind of impossibility are we faced with here?” The rest of the text, then, is an answer to this question. Foucault’s experience with the Borges passage is not a small biographical detail but indicative of a methodological necessity that the archaeological project can start only with the recognition of the impossibility to think the outside. Yet, paradoxically, such a recognition is possible only with an encounter with the outside. This encounter is in the form of ‘one great leap’ of meaning. Like the *Tractatus*, archaeological thought is also thought ‘in flight’. The leap Foucault mentions above is not a result of a gradual accumulation of thought but a violent disruption of thought in the presence of an alien form which is ‘demonstrated’ ‘by means of the fable’. What is demonstrated in the fable is ‘the stark impossibility of thinking’ what is demonstrated in the fable and precisely because it is impossible to think what is demonstrated, what is demonstrated overpowers thought. This is exactly what Wittgenstein means when he says that ‘a work of art forces our perception to see in the right perspective. Left to itself, thought is capable of reproducing itself in its sameness infinitely without ‘bumping into’

⁴⁵ Ibid., xv

any limits. Thought stops its mindless self-reproduction and starts thinking about itself only when something outside itself overpowers its capability to extend itself infinitely. This is the moment of thought becoming self-reflexive by thinking ‘[b]ut what is it impossible to think, and what kind of impossibility are we faced with here?’⁴⁶

Perhaps the parallel between the Tractarian distinction of saying/showing and the archaeological significance of the demonstrative capabilities of the artwork is most visible in Foucault’s ‘reading’ of *Las Meninas* by Velázquez. If Borges’ text forces modern thought to face the impossibility to go beyond itself, *Las Meninas* by Velázquez attracts thought as an entrance to an archaeological site that has preserved the possibilities and impossibilities and hence the limits of the Classical episteme. As an entrance to the Classical episteme, *Las Meninas* is also an exit from the Classical episteme to the modern episteme. Since it is a junction between modernity and the Classical age, it presents not only what is impossible to say in the Classical episteme, but also what emerges as a possibility out of the space to which the vanishing moment of the Classical episteme points. The impossibility that shows itself is the impossibility to represent the act of representation in the absence of ‘man’ as the subject behind the act of representation.⁴⁷ In the very center of the painting, a mirror, reflects the outside of that representational space. Man as the sovereign subject, which is to say the king, appears there. For Foucault, the

⁴⁶ This is of course not an original question but another moment of the re-expression of the imperative of reason which has been asked by all modern thinkers since Kant. The fact that it has been possible to ask this question endlessly but in original forms each time is the determining factor beneath the proliferation of modern thought which, in return, shows us the insatiability of this demand of reason Kant formulated in the beginning of the modern era.

⁴⁷ As the defining element of the Classical episteme, the impossibility to represent the representation itself should not be confused with the defining problematic of the *Tractatus*. In the Classical era, the space that separates the object and its representative space in the table of things, which is the basic epistemic device of the Classical episteme, did not exist. Representation together with ‘man’ cannot be put in the table of things. Since the eyes of the Classical episteme are blind to anything outside of the table of things, the problematic of representation did not arise as a possible object of thought. As we have seen, in the *Tractatus* the problematic of representation is defined in terms of the metaphysical subject.

painting is able to present and give a positive visual body to what is utterly different because the economy of the visual and the order of language work on different levels according to different regulations.

But the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that when confronted by visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see: what we see never resides in what we say. And it is in vain that we attempt to show, by the use of images, metaphors, or similes, what we are saying; the space where they achieve their splendour is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax.⁴⁸

The saying/showing distinction is not a simple epistemic device deployed when words fail. In this distinction, Foucault the archaeologist recognizes both the locatedness, and hence limitedness, of the self-identical and the space of exile where the other resides. For Wittgenstein too, 'what *can* be shown, *cannot* be said' because what shows itself does not reside within the space of linguistic representation. The fact that propositions cannot say what is shown does not point to a failure of the signification system that can be fixed by finding ways to say it adequately and properly; on the contrary, what shows itself cannot be said precisely because the propositional system works perfectly and adequately. In this sense, propositions that try to say what is shown are not false, incorrect, wrong, or inadequate because these categories imply the possibility for propositions about what is shown can be true, right, correct, and adequate. For Wittgenstein, they are simply nonsense, because 'it is in vain that we say what we see'. Language can try to say what is shown, of course, but the demand that gives rise to the impulse to say what is shown can never be satisfied by what language says about it, and hence, the relation between language and what is shown becomes infinite in the form of the dissatisfaction of that demand.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9

The Outside

At the first sight Wittgenstein's and Foucault's views about the subject seem to be completely incommensurable. For Wittgenstein, the metaphysical subject that resides on the borders of the world and of language is what makes representation possible. It is the source of aesthetic and ethical value. It is the excess Wittgenstein tries to save from the abuses of rationalization. The intellectual climate in which Foucault the archaeologist wrote was dominated by anti-humanist structuralism the main purpose of which was to finalize the project of Western philosophy by getting rid of the idea of a sovereign meaning-giver and foundational subject and filling its space with ahistoric structures beneath history, society, language, and the ego. Even if Foucault always rejected the suggestion that he was a structuralist, it is obvious that his anti-humanist archaeological project is deeply connected to the project of structuralism in terms of its formalism and anti-humanism. In short, for Foucault, the subject is not the point of resistance against the rationalization process but rather a central element in the project of rationalization. As a result, while Wittgenstein sees the expressions of subjectivity in the artwork where the ethical/aesthetical claims of the subject shows themselves, Foucault sees a destructive dispersion of subjectivity in the artwork. Yet, beneath the appearance of this incommensurability, one can see a common objection to the idea of the subject as a sovereign thinking 'I'. This, of course, does not mean that the differences between their views on the issue of the subject are not genuine. What I mean is that despite the differences in their views on the subject, their common search for an outside underlines

their common objection to the idea of the subject as it is conceptualized in rationalist discourses.

In rationalist discourses, the subject appears to be the possessor of thoughts, a positive yet extensionless entity that is the doer behind operations such as believing, deciding, thinking etc. Indeed, ordinary language is full of statements such as “S thinks that...”, “I believe that...”, “S has thoughts about”, all of which seem to point to such an entity. When Wittgenstein analyzes the form of such complex statements he says: “It is clear, however, that ‘A believes that p’, ‘A has the thought p’, and ‘A says p’ are of the form “‘p’ says p’: and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects.”⁴⁹ If representation is the only possible way to say anything meaningful, then ‘A says p’ means that either an object A is in a representational relation with the fact p (which is an impossibility), or A is not an object but a composite. To ascribe the rational actions of believing, thinking, saying etc., then, requires one to assume a composite subject. Hence, the fact that the logical form of the sentences that seem to imply a subject holding thoughts and beliefs is different from their apparent form ‘shows too that there is no such thing as the soul – the subject, etc. – as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day’ because ‘indeed a composite soul would no longer be a soul’.⁵⁰

As the pure outside of language and of the world, the experience of the subject in the *Tractatus* cannot be put into words. “There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas.”⁵¹ The thinking ‘I’ that seems to be a shared topic between ‘superficial psychology of the present day’ and philosophical speculation is both an

⁴⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 5.542.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.5421

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5.631

expression of epistemologically misguided attempts to say what cannot be said and also a moment of the colonization of the realm of aesthetic/ethical value by rationalization. Seen from this perspective, then, the Tractarian subject displaces the thinking 'I' as the subject constituting the deepest layer of rationality, and reconstructs itself as the pure non-articulable experience of hovering over the world and language.

In his article on Blanchot, Foucault also seeks the moments of the displacement of the thinking 'I' in the artwork through which the outside of language shows itself in the dispersion of subjectivity. He starts with a familiar paradox: "I lie". The truth of this statement is immediately self-contradictory for it simultaneously negates the truth it asserts. For Foucault, this paradox was able to threaten the foundations of the Greek truth. What threatens the modern discourse, however, is not this Greek paradox but the statement "I speak" in which the speech becomes its own performative object. Contrary to the Greek paradox, this statement is self-affirmative in the sense that the moment of the utterance of this statement is also the realization of its truth. Yet, for Foucault, one can discern an upsetting problematic in the self-transparent identity of this statement.

"I speak" refers to a supporting discourse that provides it with an object. The discourse, however, is missing; the sovereignty of "I speak" can only reside in the absence of any other language; the discourse about which I speak does not pre-exist the nakedness articulated the moment I say, "I speak"; it disappears the instant I fall silent. Any possibility of language dries up in the transitivity of its execution.⁵²

The sentence "I speak" says nothing more than itself. Even if its object, 'speaking', is a discursive object, the performative, momentary character of "I speak" excludes the discursive order. It is, on the one hand, self-contained, but, on the other hand, under the absence of discursive order, there is nothing that can limit the 'sovereignty' of "I speak". Hence "I speak" fades away in the void opened by the performative character of the

⁵² Michel Foucault & Maurice Blanchot, *Foucault/Blanchot* (Zone Books, 1987), 11.

statement. Therefore, it is the ‘spreading forth of language in its raw state, an unfolding of pure exteriority’.⁵³ For Foucault, “I speak” is the mode of language operational in modern literature. Even if modern literature seems to ‘interiorize’ language by making language its own object, literature is actually ‘a passage to the “outside”’: language escapes the mode of being of discourse – in other words the dynasty of representation – and literary speech develops from itself.’⁵⁴

When language escapes from its discursive form, not only its representational functions but also the illusion of a subject behind the representations disappear. And this is the reason why literature has claims on modern philosophical activity the central problematic of which has been to establish a sovereign subjectivity.

The reason it is now so necessary to think through fiction – while in the past it was a matter of thinking the truth – is that “I speak” runs counter to “I think”. “I think” led to the indubitable certainty of the “I” and its existence; “I speak,” on the other hand, distances, disperses, effaces that existence and lets only its empty emplacement appear. Thought about thought, an entire tradition wider than philosophy, has taught us that thought leads us to the deepest interiority. Speech about speech leads us, by way of literature as well as perhaps by other paths, to the outside in which the speaking subject disappears.⁵⁵

This search for an outside experience as ‘the thought from outside’ is what ties Wittgenstein’s account of language in the *Tractatus* and Foucault’s radical anti-humanism in his archaeological period. One cannot, of course, argue that the differences between their accounts are just nominal, yet one cannot fail either to see the kinship between their search for an outside. Foucault himself recognizes the fact that modern literature’s search for a pure externality is related to mysticism on the one hand and formalization of language on the other. This double kinship is not surprising given that the condition of possibility of replacing the thinking “I” through introducing a radical

⁵³ Ibid., 11

⁵⁴ Ibid., 12

⁵⁵ Ibid., 13

outside, where the genuine experience resides, as the ability to see the language and the world as limited totalities. And, at least in the history of Western thought, this ability takes the form of either formalization or mysticism, or, and this may be also the point of Wittgenstein's genius, a combination of the two.

Foucault alludes to attempts to formalize language as thought which is in the process of excluding the subject from thought. The being of language, which is an 'abyss hitherto invisible', becomes visible with the disappearance of the subject. The access to 'this strange relation' is gained through a form of thought developed 'on the margin of Western culture' where mysticism and formalism reside. In this line of thought, there is a very strong resemblance to the *Tractatus*. First of all, Foucault consciously chooses the language of visibility rather than the language of articulation. The being of language, i.e. the totality of language, becomes visible only when one gains access to the outside of the discourse of representation. Once outside, this totality cannot be articulated because the very possibility of articulation lies within the limits of representational discourse. Hence, modern literature performatively renders the being of language visible. In a similar fashion with the *Tractatus* which is a reading of not what statements tell but what their formal totality shows, for Foucault, the fact that modern literature is a speech about speech and the fact that its truth is in the moment of its performance, i.e. it does not tell anything other than its telling, are also the grounds on which modern literature produces 'thought from outside'.

Both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that this outside is not an extension of language and existence in a different form. The outside does not fit the representational economy of language and the categories of the metaphysics of presence, because 'it is the

silence beyond all language and nothingness beyond all being.’⁵⁶ As we have seen, the reason Wittgenstein wants us to be silent about this outside experience is precisely the radical ‘ontological’ otherness of it. As we will see, there is an ambiguity as to whether to remain silent is an ethical responsibility or an epistemic imperative. At this point, however, it should suffice to note that for Wittgenstein silence is not a mute emptiness. Rather, it is the speech that is empty in its self-identity. Silence is an effect of overpowering the self-identity of speech by what shows itself as the incommensurable other of the speech. This is, of course, not to deny the forceful domination of life by representational language. The demands of our other life, which we have to live silently, cannot even be expressed, let alone satisfied, within the representational economy of language. Thus, this radical otherness of our other life can be felt and shown through ‘thought in flight’ and not through the settled and located language the this-worldliness of which also makes us speaking subjects. This bare fact that life and the world, which are one, exists by itself, in itself, and for itself as a totality on the level of which the local interests of living beings lose their significance shows itself in the medium of the artwork. It is the artwork through which we can ‘feel’ connected inarticulately to this totality from within the representational economy of language and the world of beings in which we are caught.

For Foucault, too, the demands of this outside experience can be expressed only in literature⁵⁷ because in the medium of reflexive thought ‘the demand was being

⁵⁶ Ibid., 16

⁵⁷ Here, however, one difference should be noted. For Wittgenstein, the aesthetic demonstrative capability of artwork is more or less a passive ability to reflect the world as a totality. He does not seem to think that artwork in general and literary text in specific is not constructive of the outside experience. For Foucault, however, the aesthetic labor of the literary artist is not a reflective but a constructive labor. The literary artist constructs the outside experience not to transmit an already existing outside experience which is also

formulated, most imperiously, to interiorize the world, to erase alienation, to move beyond the false moment of the *Enttäusserung*, to humanize nature, to naturalize man, and to recover on earth the treasures that had been spent in heaven'.⁵⁸ Notice that Foucault does not talk about a rejection of the demand of outside experience but an inappropriate formulation of the demand. In this sense then, philosophy, reflexive thought, is an inappropriate response to this experience. The outside experience does not demand to be appropriated by rational means; it does not demand us to find an appropriate place for its singularity, particularity, and uniqueness in our constructions of the universal, the absolute, the general because, by definition, there is no appropriate place in our rational categories to express the claim of the outside. Thus, echoing the Tractarian imperative of silence with an additional caution and hopefulness, Foucault says:

It is extremely difficult to find a language faithful to this [outside] thought. Any purely reflexive discourse runs the risk of leading the experience of the outside back to the dimension of interiority; reflection tends irresistibly to repatriate it to the side of consciousness and to develop it into a description of living that depicts the "outside" as the experience of the body, space, the limits of the will, and the ineffaceable presence of the other.⁵⁹

In this sense, even if philosophy is a recognition of this demand of the outside in an inappropriate form, its inappropriateness is not a corrigible, self-contained mistake. If I am to be allowed to speculate the little bit that seems to be required by this passage, we can see that under the conditions of rationalization the philosophical attempt to respond to the demand of the outside turns into a destructive force. The rationalization process endows reflexive thought with more power than it can handle. That is to say, the context of rationalization puts reflexive thought in a situation in which the power of rationality overpowers the very same critical authority of reason to such a degree that the presumed

outside the literary text too. The outside experience is in the body of the literary text as an effect of the artist's creative play with language.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 17 – 8

⁵⁹ Ibid., 21

autonomy of reason turns into a blindness toward the destructive effects of its own force. The injuries on the social body thus remain unrecognized and unchecked. Whenever philosophy attempts to recognize the outside experience, the recognition attempt turns into a violent submission of that outside to the order of rationalization. If it is plausible to assume that the Foucault passage above is an echo of the Tractarian imperative to remain silent, then we can also recognize the echo of the Wittgensteinian worry behind that imperative. The imperative to remain silent, as it echoes in Foucault's warning of the risks of 'purely reflexive discourse', is an attempt to resist the violent submission of the outside 'back to the dimension of interiority'. This submission has to be violent because, by definition, the outside is 'ontologically' unfit to the dimensions of inside. Thus, one must disfigure the outside to the degree of unrecognizability to make it fit to the categories of the inside.

The Problem with Formalism

Even if I have not introduced *Philosophical Investigations* into the conceptual framework of this chapter, I would like to quote from it because, in the following passage, Wittgenstein seems to diagnose the problem with formalist critique that I would like to address.

To say "This combination of words makes no sense" excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language. But when one draws a boundary it may be for various kinds of reason. If I surround an area with a fence or a line or otherwise, the purpose may be to prevent someone from getting in or out; but it may also be part of a game and the players be supposed, say, to jump over the boundary; or it may shew where the property of one man ends and that of another begins; and so on. So if I draw a boundary line that is not yet to say what I am drawing it for.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 499.

As we have seen, in the *Tractatus* the reason Wittgenstein cannot say why he draws a limit to language is precisely because of the absolute muteness of the other side of language. So the reason of drawing a limit to language, i.e. the content of the Tractarian critique, cannot be put in words. The Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* wants his readers ‘to jump over the boundary’ to a mystic experience. Yet, what the young Wittgenstein did not realize and the mature Wittgenstein points to is that the purpose of fencing could be ‘to prevent someone from getting in or out’. Wittgenstein’s point here is not that the critic should provide a prescription as to what to do with the limits of language and discourse. Rather, the task of the critic is to show that what, on the grounds of epistemology, logic, discourse, or a power structure, seems to be an unsurpassable limit is in fact a specific and contextual construction which can function in irreducibly different ways and for different purposes. This, of course, does not mean that the limits, which shape our ‘form of life’ by simultaneously enabling and disabling us to live our lives in this or that way, are not ‘really real’. Indeed, these limits are real enough that one immediately experiences their solidity when she bumps into them in the form of exclusions, prosecutions, lynching, labeling, criminalization, medicalization, etc. But these limits are not given once and for all; their establishment is an open-ended and incessant process of construction. Since drawing a limit is a social practice that immediately affects the forms our life takes, the task of the critic does not end when these limits are revealed by the formal inquiry. In other words a formal inquiry into what can be said (form) in a bounded linguistic domain, does not tell us what gets said (content). Since the effects, social costs, exclusive and inclusive functions of limits do not lie in the sheer fact that there is a limit but in the way that limit is drawn and functions in our

practices, the task of the critic is to reveal these limits on the level of their actual functioning in our practices.

As is obvious, this is a criticism of the *Tractatus*, in which the transcendental/mystical display of the limits of language is based on the presumption of the unanswerable character of the question ‘why?’. In the same fashion as Wittgenstein, Foucault, in his later period, also thinks that revealing the epistemic limits of discourses by itself does not automatically produce critical effects.

... there are no reforms in themselves.⁶¹ Reforms do not come about in empty space, independently of those who make them...And then, above all, I don’t [sic] think that criticism can be set against transformation, “ideal” criticism against “real” transformation. A critique does not consist in saying that things aren’t [sic] good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based...There is always a little thought occurring even in the most stupid institutions; there is always thought even in silent habits. Criticism consists in uncovering that thought and trying to change it: showing that things are not as obvious as people believe, making it so that what is taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy.⁶²

Archaeological analysis shows how the epistemic value of a statement is limited by the form of the discourse in which the statement occurs. Even if Foucault the archaeologist is aware of the fact that there is a close connection between institutional authority and epistemic authority, the methodological commitment to formalism prevents archaeological analysis from penetrating the deep layers of this connection because this connection can be captured only when we have a vision of the significance of what actually gets said in a discourse. The task of the critic, however, is not limited to revealing how hidden, invisible, and suppressed epistemic elements ground the truth and validity of discursive speech because, as our practices are based on these ‘unexamined

⁶¹ Please note that I altered the paragraph structure of this quotation. Since this passage is from an interview with Foucault, I assume that the paragraph structure is somewhat an arbitrary choice of whoever produces the manuscript out of the recorded interview rather than an integral part of what Foucault means.

⁶² Michel Foucault, “So Is It Important to Think?,” in *Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954 – 1984 v. 3: Power* (The New Press, 2000), 456.

ways of thinking', the epistemic value of any discursive statement is dissociable from its strategic value, and this value expresses itself not in the ahistoric discursive universe of what is possible to say (form) but in the actual genealogical record of what gets said (content). In this sense, while, on the archaeological level, an actual discursive statement, as a contingent realization of a discursive possibility among other equally possible statements, is insignificant, on the genealogical level the actuality of a statement is significant because the actualization or non-actualization of a statement has effects on the configuration of 'accepted practices'.

Here, then, Wittgenstein's and Foucault's criticisms of their earlier ways of criticism converge. What they realize is that revealing the limits of discursive/linguistic space on the grounds of logic or episteme is not only an inefficient critical strategy but also a self-destructive one.⁶³ Let me detail how formalism leads to fatalism and escapism in their earlier periods.

Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* is a strange first book. Even if it is generally classified as an exemplary archaeological work, one can easily recognize the genealogical worm already irritating the limits of the archaeological discourse. This early and premature genealogical approach makes itself visible in two themes. First, Foucault tries to write a unified history of a modern institution together with the emergence of a new discursive truth regime, a new rationality, and a new positive domain of knowledge. As a result we are able to see the first glimpse of the concept of power/knowledge which signifies the power effects of this uniquely modern co-formation of a set of institutionalized practices and knowledge production. Second, while he writes 'an

⁶³ Please note that self-destructiveness is an integral element of the Tractatus while it appears as a deficiency in Foucault's archaeological writings.

archaeology of silence', he also gives us some clues about 'how' resisting voices could be possible in the middle of the hegemonic effects of a certain discursive regime.⁶⁴

Precisely because the genealogical element shows itself as a non-integral part of this archaeological text, we can see the shortcomings of the archaeological critique in the moments of non-integration of the genealogical element within a formalist framework. After claiming that psychoanalysis is not a liberating rupture in the body of the monologue between reason and unreason and that 'it remains a stranger to the sovereign enterprise of unreason', in the last paragraph before the conclusion chapter, Foucault points to another 'discursive' space in which madness shows itself.

Since the end of eighteenth century, the life of unreason no longer manifests itself except in the lightning flash of works such as those of Hölderlin, of Nerval, of Nietzsche, or of Artaud – forever irreducible to those alienations that can be cured, resisting by their own strength that gigantic moral imprisonment which we are in the habit of calling, doubtless by antiphrasis⁶⁵, the liberation of insane by Pinel and Tuke.⁶⁶ (*Madness and Civilization*, p. 278)

If this was the final concluding paragraph of Foucault's work on madness, one could easily deduce from it that unreason resists against the silencing and suffocating discourse of reason in the medium of art which is made possible by the capabilities of aesthetic 'discourse' to externalize and distance itself from the discursive order of reason. In other

⁶⁴ For the purposes of this chapter I will bracket the shortcomings of this book which are also acknowledged by Foucault. In this first book, Foucault ascribes an ontologically privileged status to unreason and experience of madness, and also the relationship between the reason and unreason is monolithically conceptualized in terms of silencing of the latter by the former. Later in his career, Foucault says that in this book all he talks about is power. The reason why the theme of power cannot find its place as an articulated and visible element in this book lies precisely in these two shortcomings. A socio-political experience (madness) is understood to be an ontological presence, hence the power effects in and around this experience emerge as pure negativity inherent in silencing and repression practices. One can even say that Foucault's later genealogy evolves as to overcome these shortcomings by providing an account for politics without ontology, or a politicized ontology, and power relations as historical positivities.

⁶⁵ Note that the word antiphrasis is another moment of the conflicting encounter between immature genealogy and archaeology in which reason's claim to liberate appears not as an integral element of discursive power strategies, but as an unfit externality which can be expressed only at the cost of the 'standard' meaning of liberation.

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Vintage Books, 1988), 278.

words, due to the opposing autonomies of truth and beauty, aesthetic beauty would here seem to give unreason its voice back. However, something is missing in this reading: the archaeological critique itself. If the battle is between truth and beauty, reason and unreason, the psychiatrist and the artist, then, how should one situate the archaeologist in this battle which seems to leave no room for a third party. Moreover, if madness takes care of itself in its encounter with rational discourse by resisting it through its emergence in the work of art, then, the critic either becomes a bad poet or starts a new career as a psychiatrist. This is because the limits that the archaeologist draws already appear as the battle line between reason and unreason. The archaeologist exhausts what is possible to say within the psychiatric discourse and shows that the form of that discourse does not allow the experience of madness to vocalize itself. Yet, the archaeologist has to stop there too, for her/his own voice cannot penetrate the thick silence surrounding the psychiatric discourse. In this sense, when the archaeologist projects the inside of the discourse as a uniform space without any margins for unreason or critique, and the outside as non-articulable silence, the archaeological voice suddenly becomes redundant. Despite its obvious sympathy for the experience of madness, the archaeological voice is not the resisting aesthetic 'voice' of madness. Yet it does not tell the truth of madness either. As in the Wittgenstein passage above, the archaeologist draws a limit yet neither she nor the reader knows what to do with that limit because the transgressive demand can only come from outside, i.e. the realm of silence and aesthetic display. This is of course a threat to the whole of the archaeological project.

Madness and Civilization, however, does not end with the passage quoted above. Instead, as if Foucault sensed the threat to his critique of these 'works...*resisting by their*

own strength', (emphasis is mine) the book takes a strange turn and ends with a separate conclusion which is structured more like a long footnote to the passage above than concluding remarks on the whole body of the text. In the conclusion, Foucault specifies how the connections of madness to the work of art in the classical period were differently established than the connections between them in the modern period. In the classical period,

...there existed a region where madness challenged the work of art, reduced it ironically, made of its iconographic landscape a pathological world of hallucinations; that language which was delirium was not a work of art. And conversely, delirium was robbed of its meager truth as madness if it was called a work of art. But by admitting this very fact, there was no reduction of one by the other, but rather (remembering Montaigne) a discovery of the central incertitude where the work of art is born, at the moment when it stops being born and is truly a work of art.⁶⁷

The work of art and madness were in a limiting, but also reciprocally sustaining, relationship by virtue of which the truth of the artwork becomes visible. In return, this limiting relationship enabled madness to offer the Western world 'the possibility of transcending its reason in violence, and of recovering tragic experience beyond the promises of dialectic'. In the Renaissance period, Erasmus made folly praise herself as the foolish truth of reason. In the classical period, Sade and Goya were able to derive a threatening violence from the non-being of madness which was also the transgressive horizon of reason. In a sense, then, there was a compatibility between reason and unreason in the periods in which reason had not proliferated itself across the exclusive lines of well-defined and isolated discourses of those 'human sciences', such as psychiatry, within which the 'non-being' of unreason was constructed as a scientific phenomenon and a positive domain of knowledge. In short, when reason closed the asylum's doors on the madman, it also closed its discursive doors to the voices manifested in the work of art and only then it could declare itself the only voice to tell the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 285 – 6

truth of madness. It is in this context, then, the modern form of the relationship between the work of art and madness emerged. In the modern period, this relationship takes a fatal form for the artist's 'madness is precisely the *absence of the work of art.*' (emphasis is in the original) Madness does not sustain the work of art anymore. This is not because madness limits the work of art with sharper boundaries than the boundaries drawn between them in the classical period; on the contrary, madness does not limit the work of art at all. It is under the conditions of this limitlessness, and of consequent formlessness and shapelessness, that the work of art dissolves as a result of its crossing of its own boundaries, which are not visibly drawn but inherent in the formal expressive capabilities of aesthetic creation. On the one hand, the work of art, as a positive object in its formal unity, is a survivor of a battle between madness and the artistic creation. However, this battle is not fought by the artist against madness on the side of reason; on the contrary, the intolerability of the effects of pure rationality and truth as well as reason's failure to render the world meaningful produce artistic creation and madness as exclusive options: the artist has to create or s/he will go mad. The work of art, then, is a moment of tolerability in its aesthetic form as against the intolerability of the content. On the other hand, 'by the madness which interrupts it, a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself'.⁶⁸

If presence, meaning, unity, and order are made possible by formal limitations, then, (precisely because artistic creation does not know its limits anymore) the work of art becomes a gate to that very limitlessness and formlessness. Through this artistic gate, the threat of formlessness and limitlessness constantly introduces silence that upsets

⁶⁸ Ibid., 288

speech, void that upsets presence, breach that upsets unity. It is precisely because the orderly unity of the world cannot answer the question posed by the artwork that the world starts questioning itself. In this sense, then, neither the form of the work of art as its condition of possibility nor its appearance in the world as an object, but precisely how art cannot appear as a positivity in this world determines the significance of the work of art in the modern social texture. This significance is nothing other than the insignificance of the work of art through which we have a glimpse of the cost borne by the significant to become significant. While rationality, truth, and meaning embrace what is here, the work of art is a reminder of the injustices induced through presence, truth, and meaning. Beauty, then, in modern times, is an unsatisfiable justice claim which, due to its unsatisfiability, constantly forces the world to justify itself against the claims of what is lost.

Ruse and new triumph of madness: the world that thought to measure and justify madness through psychology must justify itself before madness, since in its struggles and agonies it measures itself by the excess of works like those of Nietzsche, of Van Gogh, of Artaud. And nothing in itself, especially not what it can know of madness, assures the world that it is justified by such works of madness.⁶⁹ (MC, p. 289)

For the purposes of my argument, the most critical point of Foucault's conclusion is that the conclusion leads us back to the beginning of the book where Foucault declares that his aim in this book is to write 'the archaeology of a silence'. In the introduction to the book, Foucault says that this silence is a result of a broken dialogue between reason and unreason, but at the same time it is both the ground and the effect of reason's 'monologue about madness'. In the conclusion, we see that, in the medium of art, this silence becomes a claim on the world and a question awaiting its impossible answer. In any case, the work of art transforms this silence into something that demands a response. Foucault's

⁶⁹ Ibid., 289

archaeological inquiry into this silence, then, is a response to this demand because this silence itself is not silent at all. What the archaeological inquiry shows is that what appears to be an absolute silence of unreason and madness is, in fact, the deafness of reason. Hence, as opposed to the mute silence in the introduction, in the conclusion we encounter a talkative silence audible to the right ears. The criticality of Foucault's text, then, lies in this transformation and specification of silence through archaeological inquiry.

Seen from this perspective, in the last chapter of *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault tries to situate the voice of archaeology which belongs neither to madness nor to reason. The site from which the archeologist speaks is the void opened by modernity between madness and reason. However, Foucault cannot vindicate the threat of the artwork, the rightful medium of madness, in his own archaeological project. The talkativeness of the silence of the 'sovereign enterprise of unreason' bypasses the archaeological project and establishes its line of resistance in the medium of the artwork. Madness as a limit experience already upsets experience within the limits and makes its own claims on the world. From a formal perspective, the inside of the psychiatric discourse is uniform and this uniformity not only excludes any possibility of an internal transformation but also reflects back the claims of madness on the world. Hence, the void the archaeologist tries to situate her/himself in becomes a normative non-place because this place has no claims on either psychiatric discourse or the experience of madness. This ambiguity as to the status of the voice of the critic is due to the radical distinction between reason and unreason which, in the framework of *Madness and Civilization*, corresponds to the distinction between the pure and immediate experience of madness,

and reason's project of mediation of this experience. The suicidal moment of the archaeologist is that she, on one hand, claims that the radical otherness of the ontology of madness is an effect of the epistemological project of reason, and on the other tries to ground her/his critique on the infinite potentials of the resistances that reside in the same otherness. In other words, the archaeologist's search for an outside is based on the rationalist fantasy that the 'outside', where the other resides, is really outside and that the inside is, by definition, stable and uniform. Hence, the inside of the discourse, where truth resides, appears to the archaeologist devoid of any critical possibilities and the archaeological critical strategy turns into escapism to the outside where aesthetic beauty resides.

The fatalism of archaeological critique is a direct result of the characterization of discourses as autonomous, self-sufficient, self-evident, self-referential, and self-enclosed entities. The formalist approach to discourse does not allow any critical voice to emerge from within it. As we have seen, for Foucault the condition of possibility of any critical voice is the existence of an outside which is free from the constricting formal determinations of the inside of the discourse. Such an outside appears either as an aesthetic effect, which is ontologically distancing, or as historical discreteness, which lets historical time neutralize the constricting effects of the form of discourses and allow the historically distanced archaeologist to see discourses from outside as totalities. If critique is meaningful because it is a response to a claim, then the fatalism of the archaeological critique is a sign that it is a response to a missing claim. Historical discreteness makes it impossible for the past to have any claims on the present. The claims of the outside cannot penetrate the inside or be represented. Hence archaeological critique becomes a

negative affirmation of the rationalist fantasy that rationalization of the social texture is the complete satisfaction of the demands of sociality and the full redemption of an irrational past.

The same fatalism is also present in the Tractarian critique. Wittgenstein says, “Logic must look after itself...In a certain sense, we cannot make mistakes in logic”.⁷⁰ Logic, as the transcendental form of language and the world, is independent of the contingent facts of the world and speech. Its authority over language is absolute and unchallengeable. On one hand, it enables the speaker to imagine, think, and speak. On the other, the restrictions and boundaries that logic puts on the speaker’s speech, thinking, and imagination are absolute and unsurpassable. Even if the contingent grammatical form of speech gives a superficial view of richly heterogeneous and plural topography with a lot of room for multiple linguistic maneuvers, deep down the banal binary logical form of language ‘restricts reality to two alternatives: yes or no’.⁷¹ The grammatical form hides the logical form and thereby creates the illusion that language is more than its representational structure and the contingent facts in the world can stand for ethical/aesthetical value. If one strictly follows this line of reasoning, then, she will conclude that the critical task of philosophy is to penetrate the grammatical form to reveal the logical form of language and thereby purify thought of the confusions and misunderstandings created by the everyday dress of our linguistic body. From this perspective, it seems that purifying language and clarifying thought are constitutive of the ethos of critique in the sense that their critical value is self-evident. Logic, in this context, makes a claim on us on behalf of sense to get rid of nonsense from language.

⁷⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 5.473.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.023

However, the critical claim Wittgenstein wants us to feel at the end of the *Tractatus* is not the claim of sense on nonsense, of speech on silence, of science on ethics; rather the claim he wants to make visible is the claim of silence on language. Purification of language and clarification of thought cannot have self-evident value because purified language and clarified thought are determined precisely by their sterility to produce even false value claims. The world is as it is and there is no value in it; language represents the facts in the world as they are and hence no value can be represented in language. Hence the outside of language, silence, gains critical significance as the ethos of critique. Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, wants to mark off that unique part of human existence to which speech, knowledge, and truth cannot penetrate. He wants to create a sobering effect on a victorious and ardent rationalism which claims that its discursive limits are also the limits of experience and. In the same fashion, the psychiatric discourse claims to confine the experience of madness in the truth of madness. Both Wittgenstein and Foucault, in their first works, think that after all which is sayable in the limits of the rational discourse has been said, there remains an excess in the form of a silence. At this point, their critical voices show similar ambiguities with regard to this excess. On the one hand, this excess threatens the rational discourse by its resistance to be articulated in the discursive space. On the other hand, this excess is under the threat of being infinitely marginalized. Its ontological otherness endows the excess with powers of infinite resistance to the rationalization process. In a sense, the excess must take care of itself. However, it is under the constant threat to be marginalized infinitely in accordance with the rationalization process. As it resists by its own

ontological powers, it makes no claim on the critic. However, as it is the target of aggressive rationalization, it generates justice claims.

As a result of the ambiguous place of the excess in the *Tractatus*, the Tractarian critique takes a fatal turn and cancels itself out. If logic takes care of itself and if our speech is already restrained by the logical structure of language, then the other side of language, silence, must also take care of itself. By definition, then, silence does not have any claims on us. Perhaps the last proposition of the *Tractatus* is the crystallized form of the Tractarian critique and hence of its fatalism. “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”⁷² That which we cannot speak about is already unspeakable by virtue of its transcendental nature and of the logical structure of our language – meaning that it will infinitely resist speech and discursivity. The ability of silence to resist language is the same ability that Foucault attributes to madness which ‘resists by its own strength’ in the medium of art. Silence and madness resist language and discursivity because silence and madness are moments of formlessness that cannot fit in the formally restricted inside of language and discourse. Even if the excess in the form of silence is protected from speech (We cannot speak about it!) the ‘must’ (*muß*) that follows expresses an imperative – meaning that the excess demands a response, perhaps from us.

The last proposition, then, is an expression of a demand to produce a response to the excess. There are three possible ways to read the last proposition of the *Tractatus* all of which show that the expression of that demand fails. Or, in the later Wittgenstein’s words, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* fails to convey for what reason he draws a limit to language.

⁷² Ibid., 7

The standard readings of the *Tractatus* tend to read the last proposition as an expression of an epistemic/logical imperative to keep language pure. In this reading, our inability to speak entails that we must be silent. Formulated in this way, this proposition has no moral content. It is similar to any expression of technical necessity, such as “I cannot drive, therefore I must not drive.” Yet, the very spirit of the *Tractatus* dictates that the imperative to be silent is a moral imperative because silence is where language vanishes and the ethical/aesthetic life of the subject begins.

However, when we try to read the last proposition as a direct expression of moral entailment, we immediately lose the moral authority of the ‘must’. As a moral proposition, the last proposition does not convey anything moral. The moment we cannot speak, we are already silent and therefore the ‘must’ is reduced to an expression of identity rather than an imperative. In other words, the moment we cannot speak is not differentiated from our silence. So, there is not a responsive differentiation between the ‘cannot’ and the ‘must’. This problematic, of course, is expressed best in the insight that ‘ought’ implies ‘can’. If we grant a minimum plausibility to this moral insight, then we can see that an incapacity does not give rise to a moral imperative. A moral imperative either inhibits or demands a response toward a situation, and therefore the moral imperative includes the presumption that we are capable of producing that response. If the logical structure of language is behind our inability to speak about the excess, then, this means that the logical structure of language cannot give rise to a moral imperative.

Even if the ‘cannot’ cannot give rise to a moral imperative, it can itself express a moral imperative as in the statement “We cannot speak in the name of others.” In this sense, then, we can read the last proposition as a double imperative. ‘We cannot speak’ is

not the premise of ‘we must be silent’, but it is an imperative itself. If this is the case, then, the last proposition is a repetition of the same imperative. Thus, despite its authoritative voice that sounds strong enough to interrupt the colonization of the excess by language and discourse, the last proposition is where the critic stutters. She is stuck in her own speech. She cannot speak yet she cannot remain silent either. So s/he is compelled to repeat herself forever.

In each of these three possibilities of reading the last proposition, we can see that the transgressive demand of the spirit of the *Tractatus*, which is supposed to ‘liberate’ the reader from the ‘prison of language’, cannot become an integral element of the text of the *Tractatus*. One might argue, at this point, that self-destructiveness is an integral element of the *Tractatus* and that it is no anomaly that the last proposition is also self-destructive. However, as Cora Diamond argues, the preface and the last proposition of the *Tractatus* should not be seen as integral elements of the self-destructive architecture of the Tractarian formalism.⁷³ Rather, according to Diamond, they envelop the self-destructive Tractarian event so that the reader can see the futility of the philosophical project. In other words, according to Diamond’s argument, while the logical analyses of the *Tractatus* are self-destructive and leave nothing beyond them, the preface and the last proposition are ethical positives that are designed to survive the self-destructiveness of the *Tractatus*. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to develop a full counter argument against Diamond. Yet it should suffice to say that as I have been arguing through this chapter, there are vital connections between the formalism of the *Tractatus* and its ethical/aesthetical dimensions. Consequently, reducing the formal logical analyses

⁷³ Cora Diamond, “Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*,” in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (Routledge, 2000), 149 – 73.

of the *Tractatus* to a didactic showcase to teach the reader a lesson about the futility of the philosophical project also means reduction of the criticality of the *Tractatus* into a didactic moral exercise.

However, I agree with Diamond that the preface and the last proposition are not integral elements of the ongoing logical analyses of the *Tractatus*. I prefer to understand their non-integral appearance as an expression of the fatalism of formalist critique, rather than the core of the Tractarian critique. Seen from this perspective, the last proposition is similar to Foucault's conclusion to *Madness and Civilization*. Both Wittgenstein and Foucault, in their earlier periods, think that drawing the limits to language and discourse by itself will be sufficient to reveal the transgressive demands of the other side of reason and language. However Foucault is compelled to write the conclusion to formulate that demand and Wittgenstein, after completing all the necessary logical analyses in six propositions, is compelled to write a seventh proposition. It is not surprising that Foucault's conclusion and the seventh proposition of the *Tractatus* are both outsiders to the texts they are supposed to complete, given that both Wittgenstein and Foucault situate the transgressive demand outside of the borders of language and discourse. Thus, the transgressive demand, the reason they draw a limit to language and discourse, has to come from outside. Yet, precisely because this demand comes from outside, when it reaches us, who are locked up inside language and discourse, 'we' do not hear it as a transgressive demand but the seductive call of Sirens that we want to resist. The power of critique lies in the fact that we are able to comprehend its claims and demands as 'ours', while the threat of seduction, by contrast, is that the demands and the claims of the seducer appear to 'us' as outsiders. Even if madness and silence seduce 'us', the seducer,

the excess, appears to us as a femme fatale whose demands of transformation are demands for destruction in disguise. In 'our' encounter with femme fatale, we immediately recognize the injustices done to her and the pain she has been suffering. Yet, her image presents 'us' two exclusive options: either we have to resist her attraction and turn our backs to her demands and live with 'our' 'non-recognition' of her claims, or we respond to her justice claims at the expense of 'our' own destruction. However, in either case the justice claims of femme fatale remains unsatisfied because the very form in which these justice claims are formulated makes the redemption of those justice claims impossible. In the same fashion, Wittgenstein and Foucault formulate the justice claims of the excess in such a way that the only way to redeem the claims of madness and silence is to become mad or silent, or, to put it more appropriately, a mute mad.

From Formalism to Description: The Ordinary and the Present

In the later works of Wittgenstein and Foucault, a descriptive philosophical account of language and discourse, in contradistinction to explanatory modes, becomes a privileged mode of thinking. Since their earlier works share some philosophical affinities with explanatory modes of thinking, their methodological preferences in favor of a descriptive philosophical account should be understood as a tacit self-criticism of their earlier commitments to explanatory mode of thinking. As we will see, the critical shift from explanation to description is not only a significant methodological change but also a very crucial step toward a re-articulation of their philosophical *ethos*.

Wittgenstein famously says in the *Investigations*: “And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place.”⁷⁴ And, Foucault defines his project as pure description:

Before approaching, with any degree of certainty, a science, or novels, or political speeches, or the *oeuvre* of an author, or even a single book, the material with which one is dealing is, in its raw, neutral state, a population of events in the space of discourse in general. One is led therefore to the project of a *pure description of discursive events* as the horizon for the search for the unities that form within it.⁷⁵

In accordance with their preference for description, Wittgenstein and Foucault do not address the question ‘why?’⁷⁶, and instead pay attention to minute details of the elements of language and discourse to address the question ‘how?’ The reason why they reject explanatory models is not a sign for their commitment to unintelligibility of our practices. On the contrary, they both think that looking for causal and final explanations for human practices amounts to mystification of our practices. For example, as I argue in chapter 2, the idea of a sovereign and disembodied subject is in the center of such mystified projections, for, in such mystified accounts, subjectivity is not only the site of the human agency, but also the terminal point of analysis as the ultimate cause behind our speech and actions.

Against such a philosophical urge, Wittgenstein and Foucault suggest a deliberate suppression of the question ‘why?’ to render the phenomenon in question intelligible: “It often happens that we only become aware of the important facts, if we suppress the

⁷⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 109.

⁷⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & Discourse on Language* (Pantheon Books, 1972), 27.

⁷⁶ Needless to say, they do not entirely exclude the question ‘why?’ from their philosophical inquiries. As it will become clearer in the following pages, they refrain from asking the question ‘why?’ only in philosophical contexts where the question ‘why?’ demands formulation of final and ultimate causes embedded within the framework of grand philosophical narrations. In this sense, piecemeal explanations that locate language games and discursive events in a local causal nexus are integral elements of their philosophical accounts.

question ‘why?’, and then in the course of our investigations these facts lead us to an answer.”⁷⁷ Here, Wittgenstein suggests that the question ‘why?’ shapes our perspective in such a way that we become blind to certain facts. Foucault shares similar concerns with Wittgenstein. “For some people, asking questions about the ‘how’ of power would limit them to describing its effects without ever relating those effects either to causes or to a basic nature.”⁷⁸ However, he thinks that such a criticism itself is based on a peculiar picture of power as a substance. When the question ‘why?’ frames our inquiries, ‘an extremely complex configuration of realities is allowed to escape.’⁷⁹ Prioritizing the question ‘why?’ over the question ‘how’ leads one to search for final causes and origins that are supposed to provide a full explanation and total transparency. At the same time, such a search blocks one’s ability to understand and appreciate the phenomenon in question in its own terms. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein likens those who always ask ‘why?’ to tourists who get stuck in their tour guide brochures and prevented from seeing the building itself.⁸⁰ The focus of Wittgenstein’s and Foucault’s methodological concerns with explanatory models is a certain kind of philosophical blindness. They both think that the horizon of explanatory models exclude some philosophical objects rendering them invisible and hence unintelligible.

I argue that the immediate excluded element in explanatory philosophical accounts is the ordinary in Wittgenstein and the present in Foucault. In this context, they both suggest a descriptive philosophical account to overcome our philosophical blindness toward our ordinary and our present. Furthermore, as the ordinary and the present are the

⁷⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 471.

⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 785.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 786

⁸⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 40.

blind spots in their own earlier works, their later descriptive accounts are self-therapeutic attempts to critically articulate what they both qualify as inarticulable in their earlier works.

The ordinary and the present appear in the early works of Wittgenstein and Foucault as the limits of philosophical inquiry. In the *Tractatus*, ordinary language appears to be too complicated to be accessible immediately. Furthermore, as opposed to logic, which ‘takes care of itself’, everyday language relies on ‘tacit conventions’ about which logical analysis cannot say anything.

Man possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every sense, without having any idea how each word has meaning or what its meaning is – just as people speak without knowing how the individual sounds are produced.

Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.

It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.

Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes.

The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated.⁸¹

As the notion itself implies, these tacit conventions are contingent agreements among the users of language. Partly because of their contingent character and partly because of their enormous complications, ordinary uses of language have an ambiguous place in the *Tractatus*. On the one hand, they show the logical structure of language which is independent from the contingent agreements among the users of everyday language. “In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order.”⁸² On the other hand, ‘language disguises thought’, because these tacit conventions cover what is essential in language like a dress covers the body. In any case,

⁸¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Routledge, 1974), 4.002.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 5.5563

in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein does not think that the ‘tacit conventions’ of the ordinary can be legitimate objects of philosophical questioning.

Similarly, Foucault the archeologist thinks that our present is inaccessible to us. The *episteme*, the reservoir of unthought, is visible only from a historical distance. Therefore,

...it is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak, since it is that which gives to what we can say – and to itself, the object of our discourse – its mode of appearance, its forms of existence and coexistence, its system of accumulation, historicity, and disappearance...It emerges in fragments, regions, and levels more fully, no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it...the greater chronological distance would be necessary to analyze it.⁸³

‘Our own archive’ within which we experience our present is too close to us to articulate our present critically. Thought has to be blind with respect to its present where its conditions of possibility lay hidden. This is not surprising, for Foucault the archaeologist is committed to discreteness of system of thoughts. Foucault’s commitment to discreteness in his earlier writings allows him to reveal what is radically and purely different in successive systems of thought and this is the achievement of his earlier philosophical labor. However, at the same time, his commitment to discreteness also severs the present from its history, rendering it unintelligible. Similar to Wittgenstein’s avoidance of the ordinary, Foucault also brackets the issue of the present because of the methodological difficulties it poses to the archaeological mode of thinking.

To sum up, in Wittgenstein’s and Foucault’s earlier works, the ordinary and the present are inaccessible for thought. They are, so to speak, too thick for critical thought to reveal whatever lies beneath it. In other words, the present and the ordinary, though accessible for all other purposes to all of those who share them, are not accessible for

⁸³ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & Discourse on Language* (Pantheon Books, 1972), 130.

critical analysis. We are too involved in it to direct our gaze at it at a distance. The absence of this required critical distance makes any totalization impossible and hence the present and the ordinary appear to be infinitely complicated. If we keep in mind that the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* and Foucault the archaeologist define their tasks as revealing the limits of thought and language, then the resistance of the everyday and the ordinary to such delimitative critical labor disqualifies them for critical thought. That which cannot be totalized cannot be the object of critical thought, because that which cannot be totalized cannot have clear limits either. In both thinkers, then, a rift separates thought from the ordinary and the present and leaping the rift takes a philosophical rotation toward the infinitely complicated present and the ordinary in a way described by Wittgenstein in the *Investigations*: "...the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need."⁸⁴

In their later works, the ordinary and the present are not only new objects for philosophical inquiry but also a ground for a new philosophical *ethos*. Wittgenstein does not discover in the *Investigations* a hitherto unknown continent called the ordinary, like Freud who, as some people think, discovers the continent of the unconscious. Rather, he reinvents the ordinary as a new task, a new responsibility for thought, just as Freud invents new language games within which our dreaming life becomes a new philosophical task and makes a claim on our thought. In this sense, Wittgenstein's constant appeal to the ordinary in his later works is an expression of a philosophical *ethos*. Philosophy is burdened with the task of making our relations to the ordinary intelligible. This task amounts to creating a large room for the contingent, the particular, and the singular in the discourse of philosophy which has been considered to be a site of

⁸⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 108.

reflection mainly on what is necessary and universal. Wittgenstein, the philosopher of the ordinary, and Foucault, the historian of the present, share this modern philosophical *ethos* which, Foucault thinks, we inherit from Kant's thought. In his essay on Kant's answer to the question 'What is Enlightenment?', Foucault claims that Kant left for us two philosophical tasks: 'an analytics of truth' and 'a critical ontology of the present'.⁸⁵ While the former task directs our attention to what is beyond our actuality, beyond our 'now' and 'here', the latter one requires a philosophical involvement with the present. Foucault thinks that the latter task is more binding for us than the former one. While the 'analytics of truth' is a dimension modern philosophy shares with the other historical forms of philosophizing, the present as a philosophical task is what distinguishes modern philosophy in the history of thought.

The ordinary and the present are the sites to which the philosopher ought to turn her attention and discover there the philosophical significance and relevance of all those minor and banal truths that shape our ordinary linguistic practices. Both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that philosophical discourse must develop sensitivity and conceptual responsiveness to such minor and banal truths. Because the taken-for-granted character of these truths is the basis of our unexamined and uncritical attitudes toward what we tend to take to be normal, natural, and necessary. The philosopher finds such banal truths dispersed in the realm of our ordinary practices and the norms of the present. The fact that we are able to expect and hope for something, and that we are able to read silently, or that we can speak to ourselves silently are such banal truths that Wittgenstein focuses on. The fact that we lock up those people we call criminal or mad, and that we use a concept

⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 – 1984 v. 1: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (The New Press, 1994), 303 – 21.

like sexuality are banal truths of ourselves about which Foucault reminds us. In Wittgenstein's and Foucault's works such minor and banal truths gain a new philosophical significance and burden the philosopher to become responsive to them.

The place of the ordinary in Wittgenstein and that of the present in Foucault have a direct connection to their explicit methodological preference for descriptive accounts. What is to be described is not something hidden, but, on the contrary, the object of their descriptive accounts is what is obvious. The aim of their descriptions is not to reveal what lies behind the surface appearances, but to problematize what is already in plain view. I emphasize the idea of problematization because, although the ordinary and the present are immediately (or, as Cavell would say, intimately) accessible for us as the background of our practices, they are not immediately available to us with respect to our critical concerns. The ordinary and the present, in this sense, pose a philosophical paradox. On the one hand, the knowledge of the ordinary and of the present is an indispensable element of our practices. To allude to Cavell, the knowledge of the ordinary and of the present is 'what in a given period we cannot fail to know, or ways we cannot fail to know in'.⁸⁶ They are the home of our practices, and if we are not sufficiently familiar with them, we simply get paralyzed. The fact that we are acting beings and the fact that we are knowing beings are inseparable from each other. On the other hand, precisely because they are too familiar to us, we are oblivious to the intricacies, subtleties, and sophistications our ordinary and present lay before us. The ordinary and the present cover our scope of visibility so densely that our relation to our ordinary and present is marked by what Wittgenstein calls 'aspect blindness.' "The aspects of things that are most

⁸⁶ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 17.

important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity.”⁸⁷ Wittgenstein’s and Foucault’s descriptive philosophical attitudes get their significance in the context of the tension between our simultaneous embeddedness within and estrangement from the ordinary and the present. Their descriptions defamiliarize the ordinary and the present so that our presence in them and their presence in our lives become recognizable.

⁸⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 129.

Chapter 2

Introduction

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein says that “grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar).”⁸⁸ This statement points to grammar as a source of authority which shapes the ways things become available and accessible to language users as objects. For example, there are meaningful ways to use the concept of tomato in our language games, and these ways are enmeshed with the established ways we use the object of tomato in our practices. Tomatoes are publicly available and accessible to be bought, cut up, and eaten, or thrown at people as a political protest in demonstrations, or as an expression of festivity exemplified in the Spanish tomato festival. In each of these instances of the use of the object in our meaningful practices, we see that the grammar of the concept of tomato tells us what kind of an object a tomato is by indicating what possible spaces the tomato can occupy in our lives. These possible spaces are the forms in which the tomato is known, recognized, and used by language users. In this sense, the grammar of the concept of tomato governs both our uses of the concept and what we do with and to tomatoes. Wittgenstein’s account of language allows us to articulate these spaces of objectivity in historical terms, because, in Wittgenstein, the authority of grammar is nothing but a historically formed community of language users’ collective attachment and commitment to shared forms of life. On the same principle, a genealogical inquiry into the formation of various concepts is the way in which the

⁸⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 373.

authority of grammar can be challenged, criticized, and transformed on the basis of disappointments, dissatisfactions, and discontents a given form of life systematically, i.e. grammatically, produces.

How is it possible that grammar disappoints language users? A Foucauldian answer lies in the ways grammar tells what kind of subjects we are. As I will elaborate more fully, Arnold I. Davidson, in his book, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, addresses Cavell's philosophical elaboration of the concept of object in Wittgenstein, and argues that what Wittgenstein means by the concept of object sheds light on what Foucault means by the concept of sexuality, because, Davidson claims, "sexuality is a Wittgensteinian object".⁸⁹ What Davidson claims about sexuality is valid of most of the 'objects' in Foucault's works, including madness, crime, and punishment, and Wittgenstein's perspective on the relations between objects and grammar is also useful in elucidating the relations between power and subjectivities in Foucault.

Needless to say, a tomato and sexuality are quite different 'objects'. While the grammar of the concept of tomato tells what kind of objects tomatoes are, the grammar of the concept of sexuality tells mostly what kind of subjects we are. The difference between these two objects tells us that whether the authority of grammar has a political character is a matter of historical contingency. Without excluding the possibility that objects can be invested with political aims and visions, we can claim that the authority of grammar tends to contain deeper political dimensions when it tells, not what kind of object a thing is, but what kind of subjects we are. Whether to add pieces of tomato to a certain dish could be a dispute confined within gastronomy, or simply a matter of taste. However, we can

⁸⁹ Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Harvard University Press, 2001), 39.

imagine a society in which eating tomatoes is prohibited according to a certain religious belief. In this case, whether tomatoes are available and accessible as a kind of food can easily turn into a political struggle between the defenders of the religious order and those who refuse to conform to its rules and regulations.

The grammars of subjectivity, similar to that of objectivity, render language users available and accessible in the public realm to each other. The accessibility and availability of objects mean that they are intelligible parts of our world constituting the scene and the stage of our language games. The subject's availability and accessibility, on the other hand, is mostly a matter of her ability and capability to respond to the calls, invitations, requests, and sometimes compulsory orders by other language users to participate in and become a part of our language games. While there is a general consensus about what tomatoes are and what to do with them, concepts like sexuality invite and provoke disputes and disagreements as well as struggles. This is because, as opposed to the accessibility and availability of things as objects, the forms of availability and accessibility of language users as subjects can be forms of dissatisfaction and discontent felt and experienced by the very same subjects. In other words, forms of availability and accessibility of language users can also be asymmetrical power relations in which some subjects are dominated, silenced, and excluded. In this sense, being in a relation of power is to be in a state of a certain form of availability and accessibility to others. The grammar that renders us available and accessible as subjects also contains the grammar of power relations.

How does grammar tell us what kind of subjects we are? What is the force behind the authority of grammar in telling what kind of subjects we are? Can we question,

criticize, and resist what grammar tells us? These are the questions I ask in this chapter and I will develop responses to these questions in the intersection of Wittgenstein and Foucault's thoughts.

I develop my argument in four steps. In the first step, I will closely examine four different, but at the same time overlapping social constructionist philosophical positions informed by Wittgenstein and Foucault. One of the most visible common themes in discussions of politics by Wittgenstein and Foucault scholars is the constructive character of our political actions and therefore these discussions about social constructionism will open a path towards discussing the intricacies of the politics in Wittgenstein and Foucault. Needless to say, the place occupied by Wittgenstein and Foucault in the philosophical discussions about social constructionism is enormous and I do not claim to develop a full blown account of it. Instead, I focus on these social constructionist positions to demarcate the critical role the concepts of grammar and grammatical criteria play in these discussions.

In the second step, I will establish the political significance of the concept of criteria in Cavell's discussion of philosophical skepticism. I argue that we have a better and clearer understanding of Foucault's claims such as the ubiquity of power and mutual relations between power and knowledge, if we understand the concept of power in the context of Cavell's delineation of the authority of grammar and grammatical criteria in our lives.

In the third step, I focus on the politics of intelligibility as it unfolds in Foucault's understanding of the formation of subjectivities and in Cavell's discussions of language acquisition and the idea of private language. Forms of intelligibility have a double

significance for language users. They render language users accessible and available to each other both as moral/political subjects and as objects of domination. On the one hand, forms of intelligibility contain the possibilities of recognizing and acknowledging the moral standing of our fellow language users. On the other hand, it is also through forms of intelligibility that the moral standing of language users is diminished as they are reduced to objects of domination. The dialectic between these two ends informs the politics of intelligibility which reveals the costs and risks of our becoming accessible and available to mechanisms of domination through forms of intelligibility.

In the fourth and final step, I argue that Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance suggests a genealogical mode of philosophical inquiry into historical forms of intelligibility. The critical/political significance of such an endeavor is in its ability to uncover arbitrary and contingent elements that constraint our actions in the name of various metaphysical notions of necessity. I refer to David Owen's concept of aspectual captivity to show how pseudo necessities limit our self-understanding and actions and argue that the critical effects of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thought should be understood in terms of a philosophical therapy to invent new language games and perspectives to transgress the limits imposed on our lives by these pseudo necessities. As this last part of the argument points to some problems of normativity, it is also a transitional section to the next chapter where I discuss the problem of normativity in Wittgenstein and Foucault.

Grammar, Discourse, and the Question of Reality

The fundamental relationship between Foucault's concept of power and the authority of grammar is that power in Foucault, like grammar in Wittgenstein does not point to a form of capability that reaches its objects from without. Rather, both concepts point to the formation of what we count as and take to be the real as the field where the limits between the same and the different are constantly drawn and re-drawn. In this sense, Foucault's claim that power produces reality and Wittgenstein's claim that grammar tells what kind of object anything is point to the same existential level as the locus of our moral and political responsibilities. In short, the politics of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thought comprehends power and authority to be formative and immanent for, as opposed to repressive and anterior to, those under its rule. In this section, I would like to elucidate the formative feature of power and the authority of grammar by discussing them through some thinkers who thematize the construction of the real by language and discourse.

Peter Winch's seminal work *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, is one of the earliest attempts to elucidate the implications of Wittgenstein's account of language for social ontology.⁹⁰ In Winch's understanding, the proper subject of philosophy is philosophical confusion caused by incorrect or inappropriate uses of concepts. Yet, not all misuses of concepts invite philosophical analysis. Philosophical analysis is responsive to those misuses where the intelligibility of reality is at stake. For Winch, the question of the intelligibility of reality is a question about the relationship between thought and reality, which boils down to the relation between language and reality. In the context of social sciences and social philosophy, Winch argues that how one understands the relationship between language and reality has a direct impact on how

⁹⁰ Peter Winch, *The Idea of Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (Routledge Classics, 2008)

one formulates what philosophy can say about society and what kind of knowledge claims social sciences can produce. In one understanding, the most fundamental problems of social philosophy is due to the ‘eccentricities’ of philosophical language to describe society and politics and therefore the philosopher’s task is to reveal the inappropriateness of philosophical language to describe society. From this perspective, political philosophy clears the ground for a social science which, just like any other empirical science, produces accurate descriptions of its object, the social body. According to Winch, such an understanding of the relation between language and reality assumes that they are two separate entities. Reality exists independently from language and language is a neutral means to describe it. This distinction also draws a line between scientific and philosophical tasks of rendering the world intelligible. The philosophical task is to remove linguistic confusions while the scientific task is to produce empirical knowledge about the world. For Winch, such a clear-cut distinction is not available for language users. Because “in discussing language philosophically we are in fact discussing *what counts as belonging to the world* [emphasis in the original]. Our idea of what belongs to the realm of reality is given for us in the language that we use. The concepts we have settle for us the form of the experience we have of the world.”⁹¹ The concepts through which we think and speak about the world are not passive and neutral instruments to make reality intelligible. On the contrary, they actively shape what we take to be reality.

For Winch, the intelligibility of reality is not a matter of representing it in the medium of language, for reality shows itself nowhere but in the medium of language. Our concepts do not get their meaning through a mysterious connection to an extra-linguistic reality. The meaningfulness of our concepts, (and hence the intelligibility of the world) is

⁹¹ Ibid., 14

a function of our ability to follow rules in our uses of concepts. "...the question: What is it for a word to have a meaning? leads on to the question: What is it for someone to follow a rule?"⁹² To understand the meaning of a concept is equivalent to using it meaningfully. In this sense, there is a close connection between the intelligibility of reality and our ability to follow grammatical rules. It is in the context of the intelligibility of our grammatical rules that the question of the intelligibility of reality can emerge. The relevance of Winch's concerns with the rules of grammar in relation to the intelligibility of reality is that he opens a path to a philosophical inquiry into the rules of our grammar in which the intelligibility of reality must include our investments and commitments to the world. In other words, Winch's arguments imply that reality reflects not only how the world is, but also our interests, desires, commitments, dissatisfactions, and discontents. This is because the rules of grammar do not come into being in a vacuum. On the contrary, the historical formation of grammatical rules and conventions point to the fact that our desires, interests, and motivations are integral elements in their formations.

David Bloor takes the relations between grammatical rules and reality one step further. In his book, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions*, he focuses on the relations between what we take to be real and grammatical rules, and builds his arguments on Wittgenstein's remark that a rule is an institution.⁹³ He gives examples of institutions such as money, marriage, and private property and explores the implications of Wittgenstein's remark in these examples. A coin, he says, comes into existence as a direct result of an agreement in a certain community to use certain metal disks for exchange and

⁹² Ibid., 26

⁹³ David Bloor, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions* (Routledge, 1997)

circulation of goods.⁹⁴ In the same fashion, what we call private property exists because a community of language users agrees on the way the concept is used and acts according to the grammar of the concept. Bloor directs our attention to the self-referential and self-creative character of these institutions.

Property has been defined in terms of agreement, but the agreement (i.e. the *content* of the agreement) can itself only be defined by reference to the notion of property. The content and the object of the agreement are defined in terms of one another, and so we are going round in circles. There is no way to rationalize or justify the pattern of behaviour without circularity. This logical circle derives from the fact that the whole discourse, the whole language game of calling something 'property', is a self-referring practice. In virtue of it being a self-referring practice it is also a self-creating practice.⁹⁵

What Bloor argues is that a concept is not a tag that we attach to pre-linguistically existing entities. Our use of a concept, our activities associated with that concept, and the existence of the object categorized under that concept are enmeshed in such a way that isolating them from each other for the sake of intelligibility leads to the utter unintelligibility of all. The agreement among language users that is the basis to use a concept more or less consistently and with a certain degree of stability is not a meta-agreement that can verify our use of the concept by virtue of being independent from our actual uses of the concept. On the contrary, the agreement is formed and transformed in actual uses of the concept. This is the reason why the content of the agreement that makes possible meaningful uses of a concept can be defined only in reference to the use of that very concept.

⁹⁴ At this point Bloor makes a distinction between natural kind of things and social kind of things and limits the application of his argument with the latter. Even if it is outside the scope of this paper to develop a detailed criticism of this distinction, it is still necessary to state that such a distinction is misleading. Bloor compares the existence of a tree with the existence of a coin and argues that a tree exists regardless of our use of the concept tree as opposed to a coin the existence of which is ultimately dependent on the use of the concept of coin and our practices associated with money. In the case of a tree, our naming it does not bring a tree into existence, however our use of the concept of coin brings something into existence. If everyone stops using the concept of coin at once, what is left is just metal disks. One can ask the same question about the fate of the objects that we call the trees, if we stop using the concept of tree at once. The sheer physical existence of these objects would not be very different from metal disks.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31

The agreement is not the explanation of the meaning of a concept. Nor is it a potential rationality of the concept which gets activated in each moment of the use of the concept. The agreement to share words and the world is not prior or anterior to our actual practices of sharing of them. Bloor refers to Austin's concept of 'performative utterances' to sum up what he means by the self-referential and self-creating character of institutions. "[The concept of performative utterances] gives us a simple way to sum up the foregoing analysis of social institutions. We can treat them like giant performative utterances, produced by the social collective."⁹⁶ Performative utterances bring into existence what they state and Bloor thinks that what he calls 'social kind of things' emerge in our world through such performative utterances. Social kinds of things exist on the basis of a net of grammatical rules that compel us to speak and act within certain limitations. However, when we question these limitative rules in terms of their formation we find that what gives them substance, what makes them actual forces in our lives, are the very practices that they limit.

To reformulate Bloor's remarks about circularity: the practices through which we share words and the world are self-sustaining. The normative dimension of our practices of sharing is embodied within those practices – meaning that there is no separate body of norms that govern our practices of sharing from without. To use his own example, our uses of coins as coins constitute the normative grounds on which we recognize and use them as coins. Any normative evaluation of what coins are must refer to our uses of them as coins. Outside the framework of our uses of coins, such a normative evaluation would not be possible simply because the object of the evaluation, coins, would be absent in such a context. Sharing words and the world is a matter of practical activity. It is in the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 32

medium of our sharing that our world comes into existence together with its promises and discontents. The practices of sharing the world are self-sustaining. There is no necessary form to share the 'words and the world' yet there are historically privileged ways to share them. Some of these privileged forms to share the words and the world put some of us in underprivileged social positions and some of them exclude and silence the underprivileged. However, in Bloor's argument, the grammatical surface of the social fabric is smooth and flat as if the shared world were indifferent to our interests. There is room for struggles and conflicts in the way he imagines the social collective but these struggles and conflicts are wrinkles on the smooth surface of a grammatically formed world. For example, one can be a dedicated Marxist and engage in oppositional political activities to erase the institution of private property from the social order. However, even in her opposition to private property, she has to initially conform to the rules of grammar of the concept of private property to define what she opposes. Only after such an initial conformity, can she start claiming that private property is a result of systemic historical inequalities as opposed to bourgeois understanding that it is a God given right of property owners. The Marxist and the bourgeois must share the grammar of the concept of property to encounter each other on the platform of politics. They have to inhabit the same world to oppose each other and the condition to inhabit the same world is the conformity to the same, or at least greatly overlapping, sets of grammatical rules. In other words, in Bloor, politics cannot touch the grammatical authority by which both the Marxist and the bourgeois feel constrained in equal proportions in the way they use the concept of property.

With respect to grammatical authority, Bloor rightly argues that ‘...rules and meanings considered in themselves do not possess any agency; all agency and action associated with them derives from their human users and creators.’⁹⁷ Yet, the feeling that the authority of grammar is an external force is due to the fact that this authority always resides in our historically conditioned relations to the other language users. In this sense, whether a rule enables us to exercise our freedom or obstructs our freedom to act depends on the features of our relation to those others that compel us to speak and act in a certain way. Yet, in Bloor, the agency behind grammatical rules is not historically differentiated. Therefore, in his understanding of rules, the authority of grammar is a manifestation of the force of the social collective. The individual language user, in return, is a part of that social collective and thus she is also the source of the authority which compels her and the other language users as well. “We are only compelled by rules in so far as we, collectively, compel one another.”⁹⁸ Bloor, in this sense, accepts the alienation of the individual language user from her community for she feels that what compels her in her speech and actions is something other than her own will. She uses words that do not belong to her to the extent that the world she lives in does not belong to her, and *vice versa*. Yet, for Bloor this is not a problematic issue because the individual language user is a participant in the authority of grammar due to her place as a member in the linguistic community. He does not make any critical distinctions between different degrees and forms the individual language user participates in the authority of grammar. Therefore the possibility to challenge and transform the oppressive grammatical constraints does not become a distinguishable theme in Bloor.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 22

⁹⁸ Ibid., 22

Bloor assumes an undifferentiated social collective to which everyone equally belongs and by which everyone is equally compelled, and therefore he imagines Wittgenstein's idea of agreement among language users as a kind of social contract. Whether we belong to the social contract as equals is not for him a question Bloor addresses and therefore his understanding of linguistic agreement is confined within a liberal interpretation of social contracts as projections of the idea of a total society. The idea of a total society is a picture of our social conditions in which each individual member is fully integrated in public life by conforming to the norms of the social contract. However, Bloor's understanding of the authority of grammar as a projection of the agency of a social collective goes against the spirit of Wittgenstein's understanding of our language. In a sense, there is no Language for Wittgenstein, and there is no Power for Foucault. In the same fashion, we can say that for Wittgenstein and Foucault there is no Society. They develop a vision of society in which our practices constitute a dense network. There is no singular social collective, as Bloor suggests, hovering over this network, but only conjunctions and disjunctions of practices. It is this vision that allows them to think of our practices without any reference to a larger framework such as a social contract or class struggle. In Wittgenstein, there is no general working of language that manifests itself in the singular instances of linguistic practices. In Foucault, there is no power that expresses itself in various forms of repression. Instead, our practices are singular performances. Even if these performances are, to a certain extent, re-iterable as the condition of possibility of their sociality, each performance is still a unique event. In other words, the vision of a total society makes our practices intelligible at the expense of the intelligibility of the uniqueness of these practices. To underemphasize Wittgenstein's

avoidance to ascribe agency to our linguistic forms is to miss the critical edge of his thought. This is exemplified in the early stages of Bloor's argument where he opens up a path to another politics, and then quickly dismisses it. In his discussion of the notion of following a rule while playing a game, he says, "To make a wrong move is ultimately to make a move that leads the individual along a divergent path. To be wrong is to be a deviant...however, these are only complications in the story, not things challenging its basic principles."⁹⁹ Although Bloor's arguments are very forceful and useful in revealing the grammatical nature of 'normal' institutions such as marriage, money, and private property, he takes deviations as accidents and exceptions, and does not take into account the discontents language users experience in the medium of the distinction between the normal and the deviant ways to speak and act.

Ian Hacking develops an interpretation of Foucault that is in some respects similar to Bloor's interpretation of Wittgenstein. Hacking, however, is able to avoid using a generalizing concept like 'social collective' in showing how forms of rationality bring into existence new 'social kind of things'. Also, Hacking does not take 'deviations' as a marginal linguistic error. He thinks that 'deviations' are produced within linguistic space as systematically as normalcy is. Hacking calls his approach 'dynamic nominalism' the basic argument of which is 'that numerous kinds of human beings and human acts come into being hand in hand with our invention of the ways to name them.'¹⁰⁰ Hacking invokes the ancient polemic between realism and nominalism to clarify his own position. The realist claims that by creating categories and classes we simply recognize features and properties of objects that exist regardless of our naming them. As opposed to the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 16

¹⁰⁰ Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Harvard University Press, 2002), 113.

realist, the nominalist thinks that the relationship between words and things is the other way around. The things that are defined under a concept have nothing in common other than being defined under the same concept. Hacking thinks that such vulgar realism and static nominalism are both misleading because the relationships between words and things are more complex. Drawing on Foucault's arguments, he claims that a concept is not a passive sign of recognition of a natural distinction. Nor is it the case that the thing classified under a concept does not participate in the formation of the concept in any ways. Hacking's dynamic nominalism (which, he says, can be also dubbed 'dialectical realism') boils down to the claim that objects come into being in the medium of interactions between what there is and our concepts. In other words, what there is cannot exist in our world as objects without our conception of it, and, at the same time, concepts are not completely detached from what there is.

What Hacking calls dialectical realism is similar to what Bloor calls the self-referential character of language games. In Bloor, meaning is possible on the basis of the interplay between a concept and the agreement that gives substance to that concept. As I mentioned earlier, the agreement among language users should not be understood as pre-given, but as formed in the actual practices of language users, which Cavell calls mutual attunement of language users. In a similar fashion, Hacking argues that a concept and an object classified under it mutually create each other in a dialectical way such that the question which one has epistemic and ontological priority over the other is not intelligible. Hacking thinks that crude realism and static nominalism make the exact same mistake from opposing directions. Crude realism assumes an ontological realm existing independently from our linguistic conventions while static nominalism assumes a pure

linguistic realm to which no natural distinction can enter. The question is not to choose between two different purities: the purity of the thing and the purity of the concept. Such purities are not only equally unavailable to creatures who use language but also equally misleading. Neither is a concept the manifestation of immanent natural properties of an object, nor is an object a complete stranger to its concept. It is not the case that objects exist and, then, we attach meaning to them. Nor is it the case that our invented meaning claims arbitrarily find their objects. On the one hand, meaning is the form, that is, the condition of possibility, of a thing to emerge in our world as an object. On the other hand, a concept gets its liveliness, that is, its materiality in linguistic circulation and exchange, from the historically shaped space of possibilities an object occupies in our lives.

In Hacking's dynamic nominalism, the emergence of things as objects in our world is fundamentally different from the emergence of human beings as subjects in history. A concept opens up a space of possibility for a thing to be an object in our world. Even if this space of possibility puts contingent historical limits to what we do with that object, the object in question has a life of its own regardless of how we name it. Objects are definitely significant elements in our language games, but they are not participants in our language games in the way language users are. It is needless to say that the limits a concept activates in our interactions with the world and with each other also affect the life of beings in our world that are not language users. However, for language users those limits are internal to their actions and consequently who they are. In Cavell's words, asking how far the distance between our actions and our concepts is like asking how far Paris is from France. There is, so to speak, a different kind of distance between concepts

and objects than the distance between the concepts of subjectivity and our practices constitute us as subjects.

Hacking thinks that both Foucault's early archeological works and his later genealogical texts point to the discursive space where the interactions between concepts and subjectivities occur. Foucault's notorious pair, power/knowledge, basically refers to specific historical forms within which these discursive acts of creation occur. How is it, then, we can understand what concepts do in the formation of subjectivities? For Hacking the answer is in the concept of possibility.

Who we are is not only what we did, do, and will do, but also what we might have done and may do. Making up people changes the space of possibilities for personhood...But our possibilities, although inexhaustible, are also bounded...What could it mean in general to say that possible ways to be a person can from time to time come into being or disappear? Such queries force us to be careful about the idea of possibility itself.¹⁰¹

Human actions make sense because what we do has a name, a description in linguistic space. This does not merely mean that language users are capable of representing what they do to each other and to themselves. What we do must be describable in linguistic space, because otherwise it gets stuck in itself as an empty gesture. Descriptions constitute various media that make possible our engagement with the world and with each other. If what we do is to have content, this content can emerge only in the medium of various forms of relationships with other language users. Language users share more or less a common reservoir of descriptions of actions, and it is on the basis of this common reservoir that they can relate to each other through their actions. In this sense, the appearance or disappearance of the descriptions of actions is also the appearance and disappearance of the possibilities of actions in a given historical period. Descriptions, then, are what open up a space of possibilities for human actions. What is grammatical is

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 107

not only our uses of language, it is our way of being in the world. It is not that there is a specific form of life that we have and we play language games on the basis of it. Playing language games is itself a form of life. To put it differently, it is not that we are related to the world and grammar regulates this relationship. Grammar is our relationship to the world and to each other.

The kinship between Wittgenstein's understanding of grammar and Foucault's analyses of forms of rationality is made explicit by Arnold I. Davidson in his book *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Davidson 2001) Davidson defends Foucault's view that the concept of sexuality is not a new name for an old field of human experience. Against those who would accuse Davidson of talking merely about words and concepts and not things and the world, Davidson uses Cavell's interpretation of Wittgensteinian criteria. As I will elaborate more in the next section, for Cavell, knowing the grammatical criteria of the concept of an object is not only a pre-condition for language users to name and talk about that object but also the condition of possibility of that object to be part of the world of language users. If a community of language users lacks the criteria of an object, that object is not there to be named and talked about. Drawing on Cavell's interpretation, Davidson argues that:

sexuality is a Wittgensteinian object and that no one could know the grammatical criteria of this object before the emergence of the psychiatric style of reasoning, which is to say that before this time there was as yet no object for us to attach the name "sexuality" to.¹⁰²

What Davidson claims is not that there are overlapping points between what we call sexuality and what the Ancient Greeks called *eros*. The concept of sexuality, like

¹⁰² Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Harvard University Press, 2001), 39 – 40.

most of our other concepts, is a re-invention as much as it is an invention. We clearly feel that our concept of sexuality and the Ancient Greek concept of *eros* point in the same direction even if the fields they cover are not identical to each other. Davidson's argument should be understood as pointing to different schematisms these two concepts have. For Cavell, the ability of concepts to make sense relies on their ability to be connected and related to other concepts. The schematism of a concept, in Cavell, is the range of the concept's ability to be combined with other concepts. In this sense, the possibilities of the world are manifested in the schematism of concepts. The absence of the concept of sexuality in Ancient Greece does not mean that their acts of sex were totally alien activities to us. In retrospection, we are likely to subsume what is subsumed under the concept of *eros* under our own concept of sexuality. However, by doing so we would not enrich our understanding of these two concepts. On the contrary, we would reduce the depth of our comprehension of these concepts by rendering invisible so many distinctive aspects of them. The concept of sexuality has a range of use which is determined by its ability to be combined with other concepts and used in different contexts. The absence of it means that the possible connections and relations that we establish through the concept of sexuality are not there as discursive possibilities. For example the difference between the concepts of 'sodomite' and of 'homosexual' lies not in the kind of acts of sex these two 'sexual species' engage in, but the ways these concepts combine with some other possible concepts. While the sodomite was a legal category with some moral connotations, the concept of homosexual was invented as a psychiatric category to designate a form of personality. The absence of the concept of sodomite in our ordinary language now, and the absence of the concept of homosexual

then, show the absence or presence of possible conceptual combinations that we can make using these concepts. The concepts of moral condemnation and of criminal law were the most visible discursive areas the concept of sodomite tended to combine, while the concept of homosexual found its meaningful combinations in the concepts of the disorders of the soul.

Not only sexuality but all other concepts of subjectivity in Foucault can be understood in terms of Wittgenstenian objects, that is, in reference to the schematism of concepts. For example, Foucault claims in the second volume of *The History of Sexuality* that the fact that in Ancient Greece men had sex with each other and with women as well does not make them homosexuals or bisexuals for the simple reason that such ways of becoming sexualized subjects were not within the space of possibilities opened up by Ancient Greek reservoir of descriptions.¹⁰³ While modern discourses of sexuality tend to classify and recognize acts of sex as manifestations of different kind of desires, the Ancient Greek describes acts of sex according to whether someone is the active party or the passive receiver. One might say at this point that homosexuality is a concept that applies to anyone who has sex or wants to have sex with someone of the same sex. However, this implies that the criteria for the application of the concept of homosexuality in different contexts somehow naturally exist in the contexts themselves, rendering the very notion of criteria irrelevant. By reading Foucault's claim from a Wittgensteinian perspective we can say that homosexuality was not an 'object' to be named and talked about in Ancient Greece because the Ancient Greeks lacked the grammatical criteria to open up a space in their lives for homosexuality. It is only at the end of the 19th century

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality v. 2: The Use of Pleasure* (Vintage Books, 1990)

that psychiatric discourse produced homosexuality as an object of knowledge by inventing new language games and new grammatical criteria.

Foucault's epistemological structures are regimes of description that establish grammatical criteria to tell what is what and who is who. They render some ways of being in the world possible and available, while, at the same time, making some forms of experience simply unthinkable and unavailable. Moreover, some subjectivities created by these regimes of descriptions are maintained through relations of domination. In other words, some subjectivities are created as objects of domination. For instance, the social space opened up by the concept of criminal is not just a space bounded by the criteria of obeying or disobeying the law. The criminal as a subject is a product of sophisticated disciplinary mechanisms within prison. The regime of description that creates possible ways to be a criminal establishes criminality as an eternal object of knowledge the truth of which mirrors itself in punishment as a necessary corollary of the crime. In Hacking's terms, what Foucault's genealogy of modern discourses on crime reveals is the process of 'making up' the criminal as a subject which is enmeshed in the process of producing crime as an object of knowledge. These discourses create a new grammar of the concepts of crime and punishment. While this new grammar of crime and punishment is locally materialized as specific disciplinary mechanisms within the walls of prison, outside prison, what language users mean by crime and punishment is shaped by this new grammar as well. It is this new grammar that tells what crime is and what punishment is.

In the very beginning of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes a bloody language game between the criminal and his executioner that happened right before the

emergence of modern practices of punishment.¹⁰⁴ In this language game, the sovereign's power is injured in the act of crime and the sovereign reinstates his power by representative acts of violence on the body of the criminal. Soon after the episode Foucault describes, the practice of public torture almost completely disappeared and disciplinary language games played within the walls of prison started constituting the practices and meaning of the concept of punishment. In this new grammar of crime and punishment, crime is not violation of the rights of sovereign but of the whole society. In the language of the new discourse on crime, the criminal violates the terms of the social contract which is the substance of the individual's membership in society. Consequently, the punishment now is to isolate the criminal from the social body. By violating the social contract, the criminal destroys the very basis of her rights and liberties. The punishments depriving her of these rights and liberties is the direct effect of her criminal acts.

Foucault thinks that this logic behind the practices of punishment is not merely an ideological story that legitimizes the practices of punishment. This is the emergence of modern punitive reason that reshapes the power of the sovereign to punish. The sovereign's object of punishment is the body of the criminal where the sovereign inscribes signs of punishment through bodily injury and destruction. Modern punitive reason, on the other hand, takes the soul of the criminal as the object of punishment. To do so, modern punitive reason does not destroy the body of the criminal but subjects it to various disciplinary mechanisms. The body that is disciplined is the bridge between punishment and the soul of the criminal. In the way the sovereign punishes the crime, there is a one to one correspondence between the acts of crime and the kind of pain and injury the body of the criminal endures. (Damiens' hand, the criminal in the above

¹⁰⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage Books, 1979)

mentioned public torture scene, is cut, because it held the knife in his crime.) Modern punitive reason, on the other hand, invents calculative systems to translate various acts of crime into lengths of incarceration. In this sense, modern punitive reason does not seek justice in concrete similitude between crime and punishment, but in an abstract system of equivalences between crime and the length of incarceration.

By comparing Damien's execution with modern disciplinary practices, Foucault shows how two different regimes of description of crime give rise to different practices of punishment. Modern punitive reason not only changes the relation between the crime and the corresponding punishment, but redraws the limits of what to do to and with the criminal, and hence forms a new space of possibility for the criminal subject. Modern punitive reason claims to have found gentle, less violent, and more humane ways of punishment and Foucault does not necessarily disagree with this claim. His point is rather that these forms of punishment are motivated by a desire to punish more effectively. The promise of modern punitive reason is to punish on the basis of scientific knowledge of the crime and the criminal which is produced by a network of juridico-scientific discourses. For Foucault, what the juridico-discursive complex does is more inventing than discovering. What it invents are new descriptions and criteria to tell what crime is and the corresponding punishment should be. In this sense, the power of the juridico-scientific discourses lies in their ability to effectively shape the grammar of language games that we play using concepts of crime and punishment.

Skepticism, Criteria, and Politics

As we have seen, the discussions about social ontology above revolves around the issues of grammatical rules and criteria that govern the uses of our concepts. In this section, I would like to show the political dimensions of the authority of grammar by following Cavell's thoughts on grammatical criteria. As he establishes his arguments about grammatical criteria in the larger context of philosophical skepticism, I will start with explicating his reformulation of the skeptical problematic.

Skepticism Reformulated:

In his seminal work, *The Claim of Reason*, Cavell takes the question of skepticism, or rather in his own words the threat of skepticism, to be the central theme of modern philosophy, and accordingly he reads the *Investigations* as a collection of responses to various claims of skepticism. The Wittgensteinian object and its relations to the authority of grammar as well as the issues of accessibility and availability are the central axes in Cavell's discussion of skepticism. The skeptic is dissatisfied with the ways objects and subjects are available and accessible in our ordinary practices and interactions. For the skeptic, the forms of availability and accessibility of objects and subjects in our ordinary practices cannot satisfy the standards of epistemic certainty and, therefore both things as objects and the other minds as subjects are, in reality, unavailable and inaccessible. At least in principle, a rigorous epistemic questioning cannot exclusively rule out the possibility that the object we reach out toward and the subject we interact with are mirages of our own making, because the linguistic forms that make our relationships to objects and subjects possible are not sound in terms of our epistemic standards for certainty.

One of the most critical arguments Cavell develops in *The Claim of Reason* is that Wittgenstein's philosophical inquiries into the grammar of ordinary language do not defeat the threat of skepticism. As we know and recognize the world in language and by grammatical criteria, our claims (of knowledge and reason and morality) are infinitely vulnerable to the doubts of the skeptic. Cavell thinks that the undefeatability of the skeptic's claims reveals what he calls 'the truth of skepticism', or 'the moral of skepticism' "namely, that the human creature's basis in the world as a whole, its relation to the world as such, is not that of knowing, anyway not what we think of as knowing."¹⁰⁵ Knowledge of the world, by itself, cannot sustain our relationship to the world. In this sense, Cavell understands the skeptical impulse as an anxious philosophical response to an over-intellectualization of our relations with the world and to each other. In short, when language users' relations to the world are reduced to language users' epistemic capabilities and consequently to structures of knowledge, the skeptical impulse invades the field of thought uncontrollably.

Cavell thinks that the message of the skeptical impulse can be understood in two ways. The skeptical conclusion 'We cannot know that the world exists' can be a premise to two opposing arguments. One can deduce that "we cannot know the world exists, and hence that perhaps there isn't one."¹⁰⁶ This argument is motivated by the historical disappearance of some sources of (mostly traditional and religious) authority that used to establish our mode of relationship to the world. For Cavell, their disappearance and the

¹⁰⁵ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 241.

¹⁰⁶ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays (Updated Edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 324.

empty space they left behind amounts to a feeling of the ‘loss of the presentness’.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, when the epistemic authority fails to stand behind the claim that the world exists, this failure is taken to be the absence of the world itself by those who believe that the epistemic form (the form of the object of knowledge) is the only available and accessible form of existence for human beings. The loss of the presentness projects itself, in empiricist and rationalist strains of skeptical philosophy alike, as the crisis of the knowing subject the certainty of whose perception by the senses is in question. The world starts emerging as something outside, the human connections with which are possible on the grounds of whatever we perceive through the senses. Yet, the ‘shocking’ realization that Kant calls a scandal is that the world that is present to the senses is not the world we ordinarily have and share with each other. This is because “the presentness achieved by certainty of the senses cannot compensate for the presentness which had been elaborated through our old absorption in the world.”¹⁰⁸

Cavell thinks, however, that only when we interpret the message of the skeptical impulse the other way around can its critical content can be revealed. The conclusion of the skeptical argument that we cannot know that the world exists can be a premise of the equally rational conclusion that “[the world’s] presentness to us cannot be a function of knowing.”¹⁰⁹ Reformulated in this manner, what the skeptic expresses is no longer an epistemic crisis in our knowledge claims, but a manifestation of the crisis in the ways we connect to the world and to other language users. In this sense, for Cavell, skepticism is a

¹⁰⁷Romantic texts are one of the many sources that nourish Cavell’s thought. As a result, his language overlaps with the Romantic line of thought as exemplified in the phrase ‘the loss of presentness’. Cavell’s indebtedness and intellectual commitment to Romanticism is outside the scope of this study. However, it should be noted that Cavell believes that there is a ‘truth of Romanticism’ to be recognized just as there is a ‘truth of skepticism’.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 323

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 324

call for philosophy to articulate ways other than knowing in which we relate to the world and to the other language users. Cavell takes Wittgenstein's concept of form of life to be the central therapeutic concept that relates world and mind. "In Wittgenstein's view the gap between mind and the world is closed, or the distortion between them straightened, in the appreciation and acceptance of particular human forms of life, human 'convention'."¹¹⁰ In the same spirit with Wittgenstein's statement that "what has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*"¹¹¹, Cavell says that "the world is to be accepted; as the presentness of other minds is not to be known, but acknowledged."¹¹² One does not accept the existence of the world as such, just for the sake of accepting it. Only by accepting a form of life, can one accept the existence of the world. The world must be given, before it becomes a candidate for our inquiries into its existence or non-existence. This means that only in a certain form of life can the skeptic voice communicable claims about the existence of the world. Thus Cavell urges us to look at the form of life that gives the skeptic a world the existence of which can be refuted based on what we can know about it.

What can be the mode of acceptance of the world that is not offensive to our epistemic capabilities? For Cavell, the mind is stuck in a world the presentness of which in the experience of language users is apparent and cannot be rejected. Yet, the presentness of the world cannot be supported and sustained within the frames of our structures of knowledge. In this context, Cavell refers to Kant's concept of the thing-in-itself to exemplify a philosophical mode of acceptance. In his understanding of Kant, the

¹¹⁰ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 109.

¹¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 192.

¹¹² Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays (Updated Edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 324.

thing-in-itself is not an ontological enigma, but a description of the conditions of saying something about the world.

The reason we cannot say what the thing is in itself is not that there is something we do not in fact know, but that we have deprived ourselves of the conditions for saying anything in particular. There is nothing we cannot say. That doesn't mean that we can say everything; there is no everything to be said. There is nothing we cannot know. That does not mean we can know everything; there is no everything, no totality of facts or things, to be known.¹¹³

Accepting that the world exists means acceptance of a form of life. In this sense, when we accept that the world exists we accept a particular world which is given to us as having a history established in a form of life. The skeptic desires to say something without saying anything particular that would reveal the space- and time-bound context from which she speaks. Cavell's point in referring to Kant is that the limitations that the skeptic takes to be the failure of our knowledge are what make our speech, and hence, knowledge possible. In the same fashion, Cavell thinks that there is a positive message in Kant's insight about the limits of knowledge. The limitations of our epistemic capacity points to the fact that "there are human capacities and responsibilities and desires which reveal the world but which are not exhausted in the capacity of knowing things."¹¹⁴

Cavell describes an encounter between a 'thing' and a philosopher who tries to transcend the appearance of it to capture its existence, She wonders about the thing's solitary existence when she is not there to experience it. She wants to have knowledge of it outside its mode of presentness to her, as if the mode of presentness of the thing (its place in time and space, its shape and color, its name, its size, in short everything that we can say about it) is external to it. She says: "*That* – that thing there – is what it is. It *is*, in

¹¹³ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 239.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54

itself, none of the things we *say* it is. It escapes language in the end.”¹¹⁵ For Cavell, what the philosopher problematizes is not exactly the existence of the thing, but rather its accessibility: “...It is *there*, all right, but inaccessible.”¹¹⁶ The philosopher cannot reach the thing present right before her eyes, not because the distance between the thing and her experience of the thing is impassable, but because whenever she makes an attempt to reach the thing, the distance between her and the thing collapses, making it impossible for the philosopher to distinguish the thing from her experience of it. The philosopher thinks that there is a lack in her experience of the thing, because the thing ‘escapes language in the end.’ However, what lacks in her experience is not the (full) presentness of the thing, but her acceptance of the conditions of its presentness. The presentness of the thing requires not only the sheer physical existence of it but also the interests, desires, and responsibilities of the philosopher. When she withholds her investment in the thing, she cannot maintain its existence in her experience. As we will see below, the lack of acceptance is a manifestation of her distrust to the grammar of her language.

Skepticism and Criteria:

At the heart of Cavell’s discussion of skepticism lies the issue of grammatical criteria that govern applications of our concepts in different contexts. The skeptic questions the validity and correctness of the statements of facts we express in language. She does not question the validity and correctness of any specific claims we make about the world, but the possibility of making any claims about the world as such. She asks on what grounds we could be certain in believing that any stated fact actually exists in the world. In the mind of the skeptic, there is an unbridgeable gap between the world and the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 238

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 239

statements we make about the world. Some Wittgenstein scholars, such as Norman Malcolm and Roger Albritton, argue that Wittgenstein's discussion of criteria satisfy the skeptic's demands for certainty. If someone who appears to be in pain meets our grammatical criteria for cases in which we legitimately apply our concept of pain, then, she is in pain beyond any doubt. In other words, we cannot legitimately play the language game of doubting the existence of something such as the tomato sitting on the table before my eyes or the pain of someone who is wincing, when the relevant context meets the grammatical criteria for the relevant concept. It is perfectly possible that the tomato on the table could be an illusion, and the person who is wincing could be an actor rehearsing for a role. But mistaking the mirage of a tomato for a real one and a rehearsal of pain behavior for the real pain are possible only if there are contexts in which we correctly assert that there is a tomato on the table or someone is in pain. In short, if it is possible to apply the wrong concept in a given context, then, it must be possible to apply the right one. The skeptic might reply that her point is not about the application of the wrong concept in a given context, but the applicability of any concept at all. Yet, questioning the applicability of each and every possible concept is questioning the possibility of any possible speech including the skeptic's own voice. In this sense, the skeptic's arguments against the applicability of all of our concepts are self-defeating, because they undermine the possibility of playing any language game, including that of doubting. If doubting the certainty of our knowledge claims is possible, then certainty must exist as a possibility.

Cavell's Wittgenstein develops voices of acknowledgement as a philosophical response to both the skeptic and the anti-skeptic. He starts with Wittgenstein's statement

that “if language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements.”¹¹⁷ For Cavell, this statement means that “only a creature that *can* judge of value *can* state a fact.”¹¹⁸ The possibility of making a statement of fact depends on our capability of judging, which is, in Cavell, language users’ ability to use criteria in appropriately projecting words to different contexts. In using language, we judge whether the context is within the range of projection that the concept we use can sustain. This, in return, means that the language user’s ability to state a fact requires her to be a member of a normative community. Because the individual language user acquires language by acquiring the grammatical criteria of such a normative community, the grammatical criteria of the normative community precede, both logically and chronologically, the individual language user’s speech acts. However, for Cavell, the normative community is not a static whole, but a historically rooted network of attunements among various language users. Language users, Cavell claims, leap from one context to another by projecting words into different contexts, and whether a language user’s leap is too far or too short is a matter of attunement with the relevant members of the normative community. The force behind the grammatical criteria is the collective attunement among the members of a linguistic community. In this sense, the question of meaningfulness or meaninglessness of a speech act is a question about whether the normative community recognizes and acknowledges its own voice in the speech of the individual language user and whether the individual language user is able to express herself in the voice of her normative community. This is why the individual language user’s meaning claims are claims to be a member of a

¹¹⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 242.

¹¹⁸ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 15.

certain community. In principle, all speech acts are only meaning *claims* pending confirmation or rejection by the relevant language user(s) the speech act is directed to.

Needless to say, this vision of language and its relation to the world does not satisfy the skeptic. On the contrary, it seems to confirm the skeptic's worry that our words do not reach out to the world, and instead, they get stuck circulating in our communicative exchanges. In the skeptic's mind, what we take to be statements that describe how things are in the world express nothing but historically contingent judgments about the world upon which our normative community happens to agree. In this sense, when the skeptic refuses to share our convictions about the identity or the existence of a thing, what she actually refuses is the binding force of our criteria that make our judgment about the identity and the existence of it possible. Notice that the skeptic does not question if we apply the appropriate criteria in our judgment. Her worry is that any set of criteria is appropriate as long as it is shared and agreed upon by all relevant language users. It is possible to repudiate the authority of these criteria, because the binding force of grammatical criteria stem from the contingent (i.e. space and time bound) fact that at a certain moment in history and a certain place in the world, members of a normative community share them.¹¹⁹ What the skeptic is dissatisfied with is the worldly and contingent character of the binding force of grammatical criteria which offers intelligibility only for and to a particular normative community, but not intelligibility of the world independently from what the members of the normative community say about it. As we will see, according to Cavell, by repudiating 'our' criteria,

¹¹⁹For Cavell, the truth of skepticism is also the truth of human finitude. The skeptic's discovery of the time and space bound character of our language and knowledge is also the discovery of human finitude. The skeptic's refusal of grammatical criteria is due to her inability to come to terms with her finitude. In order to render our finitude intelligible, she demands knowledge of it. The Wittgensteinian therapy is to show that the appropriate response to render our finitude intelligible is the acknowledgement of it.

the skeptic avoids language users' collective responsibility to make the world intelligible as well as the language user's responsibility to make herself known and acknowledge other language users' linguistic acts. The skeptic desires intelligibility without having to participate in the responsibilities and costs of intelligibility.

Criteria and the Making of a World:

In Cavell's portrayal of skepticism, grammatical criteria emerge as the central target of skeptical arguments. He claims that our grammatical criteria do not have immunity on rational grounds against the claims of the skeptic. However, for Cavell, the vulnerability of our grammatical criteria is not a defect of our language. On the contrary, what makes our language vulnerable to the claims of the skeptic is precisely what makes it tightly systematic and incredibly flexible at the same time. To elucidate the vulnerability of grammatical criteria in Wittgenstein, Cavell provides random instances of the ordinary uses of the notion of criterion in various contexts such as a diving competition, the policy of admission in a university, a history book, etc. Relying on these instances, he defines what the concept of criterion means:

. . . criteria are specifications a given person or group sets up on the basis of which (by means of, in terms of which) to judge (assess, settle) whether something has a particular status or value. Different formulations bring it closer to other regions of Wittgenstein's surface rhetoric: Certain specifications are what a person or group mean by (what they call, count as) a thing's having a certain status; the specifications define the status; the status consists in satisfying those specifications.¹²⁰

Wittgenstein's use of the concept of criterion is both similar and dissimilar to the uses of the concept in these examples. Cavell asks us to pay attention to the differences between the ordinary uses of the concept of criterion and Wittgenstein's grammatical criteria to elucidate what is at stake in Wittgenstein's discussion.

Cavell identifies three such differences:

¹²⁰ Ibid., 9

1- Most of the time, our ordinary uses of the concept of criterion differ from the concept of standard. Standards determine to what extent the relevant criteria are satisfied. In Wittgenstein's grammatical criteria, there is no "separate stage at which one might, explicitly or implicitly, appeal to the application of standards. To have criteria, in this sense, for something's being so is to know whether, in an individual case, the criteria do or do not apply."¹²¹ In the example of diving competition, judges are obliged to apply some standards to determine how well the diver enters into the water. They express their judgments in the grades they give to each diver. Their grades are expected to differ over how well each diver satisfies the standards of an excellent dive. However, judges cannot differ from each other "over whether excellence of entry into the water is a criterion of the excellence of a dive."¹²²

2- In the ordinary uses of the concept of criteria, the object in question is a known object from the very beginning. In these cases, the point of applying criteria is to evaluate the object and assign status and ranking to it. In Cavell's example of the university admission policy, the criteria provide grounds to evaluate qualities of students on a consistent basis, but they do not give rise to the question what is subsumed under the concept of student. Wittgenstein's grammatical criteria do not provide such evaluative parameters, but they specify conditions under which something is legitimately subsumed under a concept. In this sense, "in using ordinary or official criteria we *start out* with a known kind of object whereas in using Wittgensteinian criteria we *end up* knowing a kind of object."¹²³

3- In the ordinary ways we use the concept of criteria, the authority that establishes and applies the relevant criteria is an easily recognizable specialized agency in the form of an

¹²¹ Ibid., 13

¹²² Ibid., 12

¹²³ Ibid, 16

institution, a group of people, or a knowledgeable person. This also means that the source of authority that is responsible for establishing and application of criteria is also the source of authority that is able to change relevant criteria and their application when, for various reasons, such a change is required or desired. In Wittgenstein's discussions of grammatical criteria, the authority is always the ordinary language user who is authorized by the mere fact that she is a competent speaker. The individual language user neither determines nor applies the criteria by herself, and therefore her authority resides in her linguistic relations to a normative community which sets the grammatical criteria and responds to their applications either affirming or rebuffing. As opposed to ordinary criteria, Wittgenstein's criteria are deeply rooted in the history and organization of the normative community, and therefore changes in them are not a matter of a decision made by a visible and recognizable agency, but basically a matter of historical events and shifts in the organization of the relations within the normative community.

For the purposes of this chapter, the last two features of Wittgenstein's grammatical criteria have critical importance. While the second one points to the constructive/constitutive character of criteria in our lives, the third one problematizes unavoidable political dimensions of living in a grammatically constructed world.

Cavell's discussion of the differences between ordinary uses of the concept of criteria and Wittgenstein's criteria in terms of the former's function of identification and the latter's place in constructing our ordinary world is extended in his comparison between the senses of the object in Austin and Wittgenstein. In Austin's discussions, the object in question is a 'specific object', whereas Wittgenstein mainly points to 'generic objects' in his discussions on grammatical criteria. Accordingly, Cavell identifies the

Austinian criteria as non-grammatical criteria which are mainly marks and features of an object that tells the identity of it. Whereas Wittgenstein's criteria are grammatical criteria which, as opposed to the Austinian criteria, "do not relate a name to an object, but various concepts to the concept of that object."¹²⁴ In this sense, Wittgenstein's criteria are coordinates of a concept within the conceptual space. Austin's criteria are more about what occupies an already given and known conceptual space at a certain moment, whereas Wittgenstein's criteria are what unfold the conceptual space as such. The range of the analysis of Austin's criteria is thus short and limited. The issue of criteria in Wittgenstein, on the other hand, has broader implications for the relations between language and the world. A language user's not being able to tell, say, a goldfinch from a bittern does not pose any serious questions about her competency in using language. She knows that it is a bird yet she cannot tell what type of a bird it is. Her being unable to identify the bird correctly does not put a considerable distance between her and other language users. She is not a stranger to the normative community that establishes and applies criteria to tell whether a bird is a goldfinch or a bittern. We can also imagine, by contrast, a fully competent language user whose language does not share the concept of bird with English. There is no conceptual space in her language that is specifically reserved for what we call birds, and accordingly the language games we play using the concept of bird are not available to the language users of that language. She does not draw a conceptual line as we do between, say, cats and birds. Cats and birds live happily under the same concept, say that of animal in her conceptual universe. But what if we extend this thought experiment and ask: what if her language does not have a concept that we can recognize as our concept of animal? In this case, we certainly feel more distanced

¹²⁴ Ibid., 76

from her conceptual world. We can go one step further and ask what if her language does not allow her to make a distinction between animate and inanimate things? Is it possible to speak a language and not be able to distinguish living beings from inanimate ones? Is it just difficult or simply impossible for us to imagine a language having no such distinction between rocks and birds? There are no definitive answers to these questions in Cavell's Wittgenstein. However, what is interesting in these questions is the difficulty and challenge they pose to our reason and imagination. As Wittgenstein says "...to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life"¹²⁵, and the difficulty/impossibility of imagining a language user who cannot make a distinction between animate and inanimate beings, is the difficulty/impossibility to imagine a life in which living beings and inanimate beings are treated the same.

Wittgenstein's inquiries into grammatical criteria reveal that even the simplest concepts of our language, which are easy to use and require no special training, are sustained by intricate relations among our concepts. Austin takes the network of conceptual relations for granted and therefore not knowing the criteria in Austin means the lack of a piece of information which can be easily learned. However, when "...you do not know the grammatical criteria of Wittgensteinian objects, then you lack, as it were, not only a piece of information or knowledge, but the possibility of acquiring any information about such objects *überhaupt*; you cannot be told the name of that object, because there is as yet no *object* of that kind for you to attach a forthcoming name to: the possibility of finding out what it is officially called is not yet open to you."¹²⁶ For Cavell, the capability to use a concept competently and the capability to recognize an object

¹²⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 19.

¹²⁶ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 77.

under a concept are based on the same capacity to be absorbed in a form of life. The emergence of an object in our lives means putting new marks and limits in our conceptual space. These new marks and limits are made possible by prior marks and limits which are sustained and maintained by a certain form of life. The emergence of a bird as an object in one's life requires one to be a member of a normative community that maintains and sustains a network of distinctions between animate and inanimate beings. This, of course, does not mean that the distinction between animate and inanimate objects is the privileged ground which makes our more mundane distinctions possible. On the contrary, the grammatical relationship between the concept of bird and that of animate is one among many such relations that mutually sustain each other.

Criteria and Politics:

We can summarize the above discussions about the existence of objects by saying that what is social is not only our relationship to the other language users but also the mode in which our objects emerge in our world. The order of objects projects our sociality and vice versa. As our sociality depends on forms of availability and accessibility of the subjects whose mutual responsiveness is based on shared grammatical forms of responsiveness, a shared intelligibility of objects points to their social formation based on shared criteria. Objects emerge in our world only in a shared social space, and the shared social space is made possible by our shared judgments. In other words, our agreement in judging what kind of an object a thing is is the ground on which the object in question has a place in our world. In Cavell's questioning the character of our agreement, the political dimensions of our ordinary world start emerging. He establishes highly original parallelisms between social contract theories and Wittgenstein's idea of

agreement according to which our capability and capacity to use language have indispensable political dimensions. This, in return, means that our capacity and capability to think, imagine, and act politically have fundamental indispensable grammatical dimensions which, as we will see, is the terrain where Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts intersect.

Grammatical criteria are binding to the members of a normative community that establishes them and controls their application in various linguistic contexts. Grammatical criteria order and classify the human surrounding and render it a shared habitable world. At the same time, it is also grammatical criteria that tell what justice is, what equality is, and what beauty is. In this sense, as much as grammatical criteria project our interests, needs, and desires to our surrounding, they also project our struggles, agonies, and discontents. Cavell claims that the spirit of Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy points to 'us', the competent language users, as a normative collective that establishes grammatical criteria and has authority on their applications. "It is for [Wittgenstein], always *we* who 'establish' the criteria under investigation." (CR, p. 18) But who is this 'we' that pervasively exists in the voice of each and every language user? And what does it have to do with politics?

To answer these questions, I start with a passage by Cavell which explains what 'the claim of reason' is.

The philosophical appeal to what we say, and the search for our criteria on the basis of which we say what we say, are claims to community. And the claim to community is always a search for the basis upon which it can or has been established. I have nothing more to go on than my conviction, my sense that I make sense. It may prove to be the case that I am wrong, that my conviction isolates me, from all others, from myself. That will not be the same as a discovery that I am dogmatic or egomaniacal. The wish and search for community, are the wish and search for reason.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Ibid., 20

'The philosophical appeal to what we say' is a trademark of ordinary language philosophy. In a more or less standard understanding of ordinary language philosophy, the emergence of philosophical problems is due to the philosopher's use of our ordinary concepts outside their appropriate contexts, which thereby exceeds the effective range of their application. Because our ordinary concepts fail to reach the aims the philosopher has established, the philosopher tries to compensate by establishing philosophical concepts like 'universal' and 'form.' However, they only bring more philosophical puzzlements in train. Against this movement, the task of ordinary language philosophy is to show that what seems to be the failure of our ordinary concepts is, in fact, the failure of the philosopher to come to terms with our predicament as language users. Ordinary language philosophy, in this standard understanding, shows to the philosopher that her established philosophical aims are phantasmatic expressions of her philosophical frustrations and her philosophical concepts are pointless efforts to avoid facing human finitude.

What distinguishes Cavell's account of ordinary language philosophy is that he finds it problematic, and indeed patronizing, to ask the modern philosopher (who is always the skeptic in Cavell) to come back to the terrain of the ordinary, to recognize, acknowledge, and conform to the authority of the ordinary, as if the terrain of the ordinary and its authority were not the origins of the skeptical questions in the first place. In short, Cavell accepts that the skeptical perspective is a result of a metaphysical exile where the modes of the binding authority of the ordinary cannot respond to our inquiries. Yet, the skeptical demand is not a call to prove and re-prove that the metaphysical exile is not habitable by language users. The skeptic herself would be the first to declare the inhabitability of the metaphysical exile. Rather, the skeptical demand is to reconsider the

habitability of the ordinary. The invitation (the call) to the skeptic to return to the ordinary, as if the ordinary were peacefully free from philosophical questions, does nothing but cause the skeptic to recite her well established arguments that have sent her to her metaphysical exile in the first place. Cavell sides with the skeptic and expresses his protest:

The skeptic does not gleefully and mindlessly forgo the world we share, or thought we shared; he is neither the knave Austin took him to be, nor the fool the pragmatists took him for, nor the simpleton he seems to men of culture and of the world. He forgoes the world for just the reason that the world is important, that it is the scene and stage of connection with the present; he finds that it vanishes exactly with the effort to *make* it present.¹²⁸

For Cavell, the skeptic is the tragic hero because, like the tragic hero's deeds, the skeptic's words cannot be redeemed by her community. As the irredeemability of the tragic deed is not an answer to the tragic question, but its cause, and as it reveals the conditions of redemption that refuse to accommodate the tragic deed, the failure of the ordinary to meet the epistemic demands of the skeptic reveals more about the demands of the ordinary on us than the demands of the skeptic. The skeptic's metaphysical exile is an avoidance of the demands of and consequent responsibilities to the ordinary. Acceptance of the existence of the world (or, at least, a world) is a demand of the ordinary and the skeptic refuses to meet this demand.

In a self-reflexive maneuver, instead of problematizing the voice of the skeptic which questions the legitimacy of the demands of the ordinary, Cavell problematizes the voice of the ordinary language philosopher, his own philosophical persona. The first thing Cavell questions in the voice of the ordinary language philosopher with regard to the 'necessity' to accept the existence of the world is that she has unquestioned, and indeed unquestionable, confidence in her knowledge about how 'we' use our ordinary

¹²⁸ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays (Updated Edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 323.

words in ordinary contexts. What is the source of her confidence? Cavell's point is that her confidence has nothing to do with her philosophical training and skills. The philosopher cannot claim to know more than any other language user knows about her language. All the philosopher can claim is that she looks more closely at, and demands more from, what we say. In other words, the degree of grammatical knowledge which is sufficient to be an ordinary language user is also sufficient to be an ordinary language philosopher. The criteria she voices belong to a normative community, and her confidence lies in her conviction that she can represent her normative community in voicing the criteria of her language. Even if she has never asked for and 'we' have never given her the right to speak for us (in the name of us), she is fully authorized in saying 'we say X, when...'. In this sense, the precondition to speak is to have the ability to speak for a normative community, and each and every competent speaker always speaks claiming to be representing her normative community. In other words, communication between language users is their claims on each other to be representatives of the same normative community.

The individual language user's ability to speak in the name of her normative community relies on her conviction that when she formulates and reveals grammatical criteria she voices the agreement of her normative community. The authority with which she says 'We say X, when...' is the authority of the agreement among the members of her normative community. It is in this sense that Cavell defines philosophical appeal to grammatical criteria as a claim to community, and the skeptical appeal as a disclaim to community. In discovering and formulating grammatical criteria, the ordinary language philosopher makes a claim about the collective agreement about her normative

community. According to Cavell, such grammatical claims *about* community have to be claims *to* community, because what is voiced is not a plain grammatical given, but our investment and commitment to the normative community. In this sense, when the ordinary language philosopher talks about a necessity to accept the existence of the world, it is a necessity to be in community with other language users. This is because the world, the existence of which is at stake in the discussion between the skeptic and the ordinary language philosopher, is a shared world the refusal of which has to mean withdrawal of our commitment to and investment in the sharing parties.

The possibility of the meaningful individual voice relies upon the confirmation of the relevant language users representing the normative community, to which the ordinary language philosopher makes a claim. If another philosopher disagrees with her grammatical claims about criteria, they have no ultimate authority to appeal to other than 'us'. "If two are in disagreement they vie with one another for the same confirmation. The only source of confirmation here is ourselves. And each of us is fully authoritative in this struggle."¹²⁹ For Cavell, disagreement about what we ordinarily mean signifies not only an intellectual quarrel, but the fact that the disagreeing parties do not occupy the same social space. The point is not that language users who share the same social space cannot disagree with each other about the meaning of words, or that such a disagreement cannot be expressed without fracturing the social ground both parties stand on. It is that the social space and our meaning claims are mutually constructive of each other. We cannot keep disagreeing forever without repudiating the social bond. Furthermore, this means that the social space that makes our encounter with each other possible is itself

¹²⁹ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays (Updated Edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 19.

possible on the basis of our acknowledging and recognizing each other's authority in using words. What keeps us together, happily or unhappily, is the fact that we are authorized by the same grammar the criteriality of which is the common ground we stand on. In this sense, Cavell's discussion of criteria is a discussion of sociality as such.

Cavell thinks that our calling grammatical criteria 'our' criteria depends not only on our ability to acknowledge them as such, but also on our ability to repudiate them. "If we could not repudiate them, they would not be ours, in the way we discover them to be, they would not be our responsibility."¹³⁰ In this sense, the skeptic's total repudiation of our criteria and the ordinary language philosopher's total endorsement of them arrive by different paths to the same point of avoidance of the responsibility of 'meaning what we say'. The skeptical and anti-skeptical positions with regard to grammatical criteria fail to accommodate the politics of knowing the world and of knowing each other. The skeptic claims that the presentness of the world is sustained and maintained by the ways we share it, and therefore what becomes intelligible through our acts of knowing is the ways in which we share the world, and not the world itself. The ordinary language philosopher protests that what we call knowledge is a way to share the world by having shared criteria, therefore the skeptic's wish to know the world without sharing it is an impossible wish.

For Cavell, neither party takes our moral/political commitments into the consideration when they appeal to our grammatical criteria as a source of (dis)trust in knowing the world. Cavell, by contrast, evokes the place of the concept of agreement in social contract theories to describe the place of the normative community in our speech

¹³⁰ Stanley Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 5.

acts. At first sight, this is a surprising move because one can easily point to incommensurable elements between social contract theories and Wittgenstein's account of language. For example, as Cavell himself argues, in Wittgenstein, one cannot make a distinction between nature and convention in the forms of life language users have. For language users, the conventional is the natural and vice versa. In other words, our 'state of nature' is to be conventional. It is obvious that 'the state of nature' in social contract theories cannot be easily accommodated within a Wittgensteinian framework. Why does Cavell risk possible and plausible objections, and suggest that the concept of agreement in social contract theories is a good context to understand Wittgenstein's concept of agreement?

Cavell utilizes not so much the answers but the questions of social contract theories to dismantle both the image of the normative community as a barrier to our knowledge claims and its image as a shelter for them. Our appeal to the criteria of our normative community is neither epistemologically void as the skeptic is anxious about, nor epistemologically ensuring as the ordinary language philosopher wishes for. The 'we' that resonates in our speech acts is not Descartes' deceiving devil, nor is it the Platonic realm of forms that substantiate our knowledge claims. The 'we' is a projection of our need to be in community with others. One important aspect of Wittgensteinian criteria is that they are mythic projections which emerge when we need an account of our judgments. We do not appeal to grammatical criteria to form our judgments. On the contrary, we appeal to grammatical criteria when there is a crisis in sharing our judgments. In this sense, criteria are to be discovered in our mythic projections of a 'we' that would rectify our judgments as well as who is included in (and excluded from) the

projected 'we'. In this sense, the normative community is not the guarantor of the unity of our speech and of the validity of our knowledge claims. On the contrary, appeals to the normative community are indicative of how fragile the ways we share the world are and how capable language users are to disunite on their judgments.

In a normative community where the shared judgments among language users are total, and never lead to a crisis situation, the fact that they have shared judgments would be incomprehensible to the members of that normative community. Consequently, the issue of grammatical criteria would not be an intelligible object of philosophical inquiry. In Cavell's view, the working of our language excludes such an option. As mentioned before, Wittgenstein's criteria are inquiries into the possible relations we can establish among several concepts. Language use is projection of concepts into new contexts which is made possible by the capacity of our concepts to be combined with each other in different configurations. To be sure, the systematicity of the intra-conceptual relations is crucial to our use of language. However, a conceptual systematicity that cannot accommodate elasticity, and hence forces us to establish the same relations again and again would result in a stuttering speech that repeats itself forever failing to connect to the context it is directed to. The conditions of total agreement are the conditions of speechlessness. It is the elasticity of our concepts in combining with each other that allows the language user to communicate her own singular point by uttering words that are neither singular nor exclusively hers. The fact that there is always a possibility of rebuff points not only to the fragility of her meaning claim, but the fragility of the language user's relations to her normative community. The fragility of our relationship to our normative community is not an effect of our ability to say something new with old

words. On the contrary, our ability to speak something anew is an effect of the fragility of our relationship with our normative community. For Cavell, the openness of our shared judgments to repudiation is a fragility that enables us to be a part of the normative community as competent speakers whose speech acts are not the empty reproductions of accepted combination of words, but projections the range of which cannot be known *a priori*.

Cavell's philosophical interest in social contract theories, especially Rousseau's, is not due to their explanatory capacity with regard to social facts. Rather, Cavell takes them to be myths expressive of a 'we' to which we appeal to discover 'our' criteria. The concept of agreement in social contract theories is suggested as a philosophical response to a set of questions which are similar to the set of questions Wittgenstein responds to by offering the concept of agreement. The idea of a social contract is a solution to a problem.

How to find a form of association which will defend the person and goods of each member with the collective force of all, and under which each individual, while uniting himself with the others, obeys no one but himself, and remains as free as before. This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract holds the solution.¹³¹

One may interpret this question as pointing to the conditions of a form of politically justifiable 'obedience' which is only possible when a citizen follows the rules of the public realm simply by obeying herself. The conditions under which the social contract requires the citizen to obey must be the same conditions under which she is motivated to obey by her own reasoning. Understood in this way, social contract theories seek rational forms of obedience as the basis of a politics which promises social order as well as autonomy. However, Cavell thinks that the key question is not obeying but the possibility of disobeying: "Given the specific inequalities, and lacks of freedom and absence of

¹³¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Penguin Classics, 1968), 60.

fraternity in the society to which I have consented, do these outweigh the ‘the disadvantages’ of withdrawing my consent? This is the question the theorists of the social contract teach us to ask...”¹³² Reformulated in this way, social contract theories show, on the one hand, how deeply a member of society is united with it. On the other hand, however, social contract theories put the society at a distance where the individual member is able to see it as an ‘artifact’ rendering it open for political interventions. As Wittgenstein’s idea of agreement in searching for shared criteria evokes our responsibility in saying what we say, the idea of agreement on a social contract holds the consent-givers responsible for their consent. It is a myth that allows reformulation of our political responsibility for social interactions which we have found ourselves participating.

The epistemological problem social contract theories provoke is a moral problem, because the question how one can know oneself to have consented to the formation of her society becomes a question of how one can recognize a society as her own without claiming moral responsibility. The contractual relationship is not about political actors having ‘advantages’ by inscribing their own interests in the terms of the contract. Since it is the contract that forms political actors who can, only then, have political interests, guarding of political interests cannot be a motivation to give consent to the agreement.

How is it, then, the contract came into being?

Cavell thinks that Rousseau was the deepest among the social contract theorists because he did not claim to know how the state of nature was or how the leap from the state of nature to the civil life happened, if it ever happened. Rousseau, as opposed to Locke and Hume, is able to find a way to transform the epistemological question into an

¹³² Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 24.

ethical/political question. Cavell argues that all Rousseau claims to know is his own relation to his society. Rousseau's 'philosophical datum' is that the individual members of a society can speak for it and vice versa, and, in this sense, the ordinary language philosopher, in her claim to speak of criteria in the name of her community, shares the same 'philosophical datum' with Rousseau. His philosophical aim is to question how it is possible that the individual and society can mirror each other. In other words, in neither case is the aim to discover new facts about society. The social contract is an inquiry into the character of normative relations between the individual and her society. This is, for Cavell, the discovery of an original mode of knowledge, '...a way to use the self as access to the self's society.'¹³³ Likewise, ordinary language philosophy shows that the language user's authority to speak for herself and her authority to speak for us are indistinguishable from each other. Cavell claims that "the alternative to speaking for yourself politically, is not: speaking for yourself privately...The alternative is having nothing (political) to say."¹³⁴ If I cannot recognize in the voice of the language user the voice of the community which I recognize as my own, she is not available and accessible to me as a competent speaker. By talking to me, she not only makes a claim to a community, but also a claim on me to belong to the community with her.

What Cavell finds intriguing in social contract theories is that each speech act directed to us gives us an opportunity to participate to the normative community in different forms changing the very form of the normative community itself. This is because the normative community appealed to in our speech acts is not predetermined. The form of the normative community comes into being in a piecemeal fashion through

¹³³ Ibid, 26

¹³⁴ Ibid., 27 – 8

our responses. This is why Cavell identifies the appeal to criteria as a 'wish and search for community and reason'. When we engage in a conversation, our responses are indicative not only of what kind of a normative community we belong to, but also what kind of a normative community we wish to belong to. We may be total strangers and you may be just asking for directions to find a coffee shop. Or you may be a guardian repeating the disciplinary orders of the prison and I an inmate. In either case, the community we belong to together is not there until I respond to you. To be sure, neither of us knows who else belongs to that community. Yet, the form of our appeal to the community, (the form of our availability and accessibility to each other as competent speakers, is what shapes the form of community that comes into being in the medium of our mutual responsiveness to each other. The fact that we participate across our differences in the formation of the normative community shows that the binding authority of the normative community that demands us to be available and accessible is not uniform and homogeneous. My unwillingness or failure to respond to a request for directions to the coffee shop could be impolite at worst, while my unwillingness or failure to respond to the disciplinary orders as an inmate may be defined as an act punishable by solitary confinement. I may not be searching for other impolite responders in my unwillingness to respond to your request for the directions to the coffee shop. However, my risking solitary confinement as an inmate by the form of my respond to you, the guardian, in most of the cases, is a form of participation that seeks and wishes for a resisting normative community. And this brings us to the politics of intelligibility.

Politics, Intelligibility, and Subjectivity

In this section, I connect Foucault's understanding of subjectivity with Cavell's reflections on acquisition of language to show that politics of intelligibility is an underlying common dimension in Wittgenstein's and Foucault's works especially in their understanding of the life of the subject. The politics in Foucault's genealogies is a politics of intelligibility in the sense that both his archaeological and genealogical works focus on the risks and costs of making the world and ourselves intelligible. In the same fashion, Cavell thinks that Wittgenstein's philosophy takes the issue of intelligibility as a moral question which manifests itself most explicitly in Wittgenstein's ideas about private language and children's acquisition of language. In Cavell, what is at stake in Wittgenstein's remarks about the idea of a private language is not to show that the working of our language renders it impossible but articulating intelligibility as a moral task to make ourselves intelligible to others and commit to the intelligibility of their speech and actions. In this sense, the private language argument cannot be isolated within the framework of the validity and accuracy of the inner/outer distinction in describing and imagining ourselves. The question is the moral implications of such a way of imagining and describing ourselves centered around this distinction. Cavell focuses on moral implications of describing ourselves as having an inaccessible inside, and Foucault reveals the power effects of such a distinction.

The philosophical question of subjectivity, in this context, is a site in which we can reveal connections between Wittgenstein's and Foucault's moral/political standings with respect to intelligibility. Such a connection between them is most obvious in their refusal to imagine the subject in terms of the binary opposition between a publically

available objective outer realm and an inner realm of the private and inaccessible life of the subject. As opposed to such a picture of the subject residing in its self-contained internal space, both Wittgenstein and Foucault conceptualize forms of subjectivity as historical forms that render language users available and accessible to each other in a shared public realm. Our availability for the other language users and our accessibility by and to them do not have a singular form which could be described once and for all. However, on the most basic level, our availability to each other can be understood as our responsiveness to each other, and, on the same basic level, accessibility of language users is mostly a matter of the intelligibility which is language users' ability to make sense of each other's speech, gestures, and actions. Seen from this perspective, there is an immediate relationship between forms of subjectivity and politics, because to be in a power relationship is to be in a state of availability and accessibility to the practices and demands of power mechanisms. This picture of subjectivity and political life gets more sophisticated in Wittgenstein and Foucault, because the very forms that render the language user available for and accessible to mechanisms of power are also the forms through which the language user recognizes and acknowledges her own being. In this sense, the language user's self-consciousness, self-knowledge, and actions upon herself are sustained by the forms of subjectivity that is also her vulnerability to power mechanisms. Consequently, as identity politics exemplifies, under modern conditions, forms of subjectivities become sites of power and resistance and the questions of who we are and how we define ourselves become more and more politicized.

Augustine the Child and Cavell's Daughter:

Cavell thinks that the condition of possibility of the intelligibility of the world of objects is our attunement to each other as language users. Attunement of language users is what makes possible the language users' experience of the world as the constellation of orderly differentiated beings. This means that the individual language user recognizes the order of beings in her linguistic relations to her linguistic community. Attunement is what makes possible our active use of concepts in a flexible and precise way – flexible enough to project concepts into hitherto unknown contexts and precise enough to express the subtlest differences and relations among the objects. Cavell thinks that our attunement to each other with regard to our fellow language users, the world of subjects, has an irreducible moral character. As the epistemological standing of objects in our world is shaped by our acknowledgement of our mutual attunement, the moral standing of the subject is also a matter of acknowledgement. While practical and instrumental necessities to acknowledge an object as a hammer or as a tomato are pervasive in our talk about things, the moral standing of other language users is not exhaustive of such necessities. The terminal point of the acknowledgement of the moral standing of language users is our sheer responsibility to make ourselves known to the other and acknowledge the other's attempts to make herself intelligible. In other words, our capacity to be responsive and to respond to the invitations, suggestions, orders, and compulsory gestures of other language users to play language games is morally conditioned. In this sense, the intelligibility of other language users is not simply a matter of knowing them. The intelligibility of the other is conditioned by her capacity to play language games, and her capacity to play language games is conditioned by the other language users' capacity to respond to her. The moral dimension of the mutual intelligibility of language users is

inevitable, because it is based on the acknowledgment of the responsibility to participate on the games of intelligibility. In discussing the skepticism about the existence of other minds, Cavell claims that the issue cannot be isolated within the limits of epistemological field, for it necessarily implies a moral dimension. To put more precisely, the traditionally drawn philosophical limits between epistemology and morality becomes a form of injury, a scar, when the issue at stake is intelligibility of the other as a language user.

As I will discuss more fully in the next sections, both Wittgenstein and Foucault destabilize the inner/outer distinction with regard to the issue of subjectivity and Foucault's use of the concepts of objectification and subjectivization in the text discussed above is a clear moment of such destabilization. The issue of availability and accessibility is, in fact, directly connected to the inner/outer distinction. What this distinction implies is that being a subject is to have an inner space available and accessible only to the subject. To use Wittgenstein's example, being a subject is understood as having a beetle in a box to which only the subject has access. Wittgenstein's criticism of the subject as an internal entity finds its clearest expression in his private language argument. Even if he fully develops the private language argument only toward the middle of the *Investigations*, we witness the emergence of the idea of a private language in the very beginning of the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein uses a passage by Augustine as an example of a pervasive and long-standing understanding of language in philosophy. In this short passage, Augustine describes the way he learned language use.

When they (my elders) named some objects, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of the other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or

avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires.¹³⁵

Augustine imagines language to be composed mainly of names which stand for things. There are, on the one hand, things that populate the world, and on the other hand, there is a reservoir of words that constitute the content of communication between language users. Accordingly, meaning is a function of the systemic and stable relations between words and things. In this context, ostensive definitions are the most fundamental tools to teach what words in a language mean. The adult simply points to things, uttering the corresponding words in teaching language. After a sufficient amount of repetition of the same gesture, the meaning, i.e. the connection between the vocal signs and things, becomes apparent to the child.

Wittgenstein thinks that the majority of our philosophical frustrations stem from such a picture of language in which words and things are bounded mysteriously outside the sphere of speakers' interactions. A word, being a name for a thing or a class of things, always refers to the same object in any context and under any conditions. In this picture, the apparent systematicity of language is thought to be possible only if the connections between words and things have a static character. If the being I called a cat yesterday is called a dog today, the very condition of the possibility of language use is undermined. In the same fashion, if the word cat can be used to refer to another being I cannot immediately recognize as a cat, my use of the word becomes, to say the least, problematic. As new things are discovered or made and some old things disappear from our world, new words are added to our vocabulary and old words become obsolete.

¹³⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 1.

Like any other picture, drawn for the purpose of making our life intelligible, such a picture is not necessarily a bad one when it is drawn and used for specific and limited purposes. “What Augustine says (or is remembering about his learning to speak) is not just inappropriate; it is also appropriate, but to something else (something more limited, or more specific) than Augustine realized.”¹³⁶ It really is the case that the language game of naming requires a more or less static application of names. The problem Wittgenstein diagnoses arises when the philosopher uses this picture to measure all of our linguistic activities. When the philosopher’s expectation for a static systematicity is not fulfilled by our actual linguistic practices, out of frustration, she starts assuming metaphysical entities like universals or essences to fill the gap between her expectation and the actual practices of language use. As in psychoanalysis, Wittgenstein thinks that these metaphysical fictions are defense mechanisms developed by the philosopher to deal with her frustration.

In a sense, the whole point of the *Investigations* is to overcome the philosophical frustration by putting this picture of language next to countless other ones to show that meaning is not a function of a relationship between words and things but a relationship between language users. The systematicity and stability of our language are not features of the world or of the structure of language to be discovered and revealed, but parts of our linguistic efforts to be available and accessible to each other. Wittgenstein does not deny the apparent systematicity of our language, but he reformulates it on the basis of ordinary uses of language. The concept of language games does help us to see, however, that the systematicity of language is not uniform and total. Each language game is rule-based in

¹³⁶ Stanley Cavell, “Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of Wittgenstein’s *Investigations*. in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, eds. Hans D. Sluga & David G. Stern (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 268.

its own way, and thus is both regular and flexible. In the same fashion, the concept of family resemblance indicates that the systematicity of language is not mechanical and static but historical.

Notice that in the passage by Augustine, there is no actual engagement between Augustine the child and his elders. His elders address the objects through sounds and bodily gestures but they do not specifically address Augustine the child. He observes adult language users and derives a vocabulary from his observations. Even before his observations on adult language users, Augustine the child must know that things in the world have names. Augustine the child must have been born with some innate intuition and knowledge of language.

And now, I think we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country: that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already think, only not yet speak. And “think” would here mean something like “talk to itself”.¹³⁷

The Augustinian picture of language assumes a peculiar kind of human subject. It is pre-discursive, or, if not, then the discursivity that constitutes it precedes all the forms of publicly shared discursivity. All Augustine the child has to do is to give expressions to his already formed thoughts and desires. Language, then, is an interface that mediates between the world of things and the monadic world of Augustine the child. Language is a mere means to carry the inner content of the mind to the outside world where other minds pick up these words and decipher their meaning. The subject does not need the public language to think. She needs public language to package her thoughts only when she wants to communicate a part of the content of her mind to the others. The subject, in this picture, is a pre-discursive entity in the sense that it is already equipped with fully

¹³⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 32.

articulated thoughts, needs, and desires. Its relations and connections to public discourses are merely instrumental to translate them in a form which is intelligible to the other language users. Accordingly, each and every language user is, in fact, a bilingual subject. She first understands and speaks the language of her thoughts, needs, feelings, and desires, that is, a private language immediately available and accessible only to her inner self. The public language is never able to provide her with the kind of intimacy her own private language is able to provide by presenting her state of being to herself. More importantly, from a political perspective, the language using subject in the Augustinian picture has no room for resistance against language presented to him by his elders. Unlike the other children in the *Investigations*, Augustine the child does not question his elders' linguistic habits.

In contrast to the way Augustine the child learns¹³⁸ language, Cavell presents another picture of a child acquiring language which also contains a Wittgensteinian understanding of subjectivity and human agency substantially different from the Augustinian subject. Cavell thinks that the fact that Wittgenstein starts the *Investigations* with the Augustine passage is philosophically remarkable, because 'Augustine's words

¹³⁸ Cavell has reservations about the use of the concepts of learning and teaching to describe the scenes of language acquisition. He thinks that these concepts are too didactic and portrays the language 'learning' process in an over-intellectualized manner as if it is basically a transmission of fully articulated grammatical knowledge from adults to children. He claims that learning and maturation, especially in the context of a child acquiring knowledge, are inseparable. What he has in mind in criticizing such a picture of language acquisition is twofold. First, what the adult teaches the child and what she learns from the adult is not as determinate as this picture presupposes. Second, language acquisition is not just a matter of acquiring grammatical knowledge about words, but it is a matter of practical changes in how the world presents itself to the child, in the ways she acts on her world, and in who she is in relation to the other language users. While didactic models portray the child as incognizant and the adult as omniscient with respect to language, in Cavell, the linguistic interactions of the adult and the child reveal how incognizant we, as fully competent language users, are with respect to what we mean and what we say. The real problematic Augustine the child and the other children in the *Investigations* force us to face is the fact that the authority of the adult in 'teaching' language is not based on the adult's full linguistic knowledge, which nonetheless is to be presupposed in the scenes of language acquisition.

precisely set the topics' of the *Investigations*. Literally, almost each and every word of the Augustine passage is an explicit theme of the *Investigations*:

...when, my, elders, name, some object, accordingly, move, toward, I, saw, this, grasped, called, sound, uttered, meant, point, intention, shown, bodily movements, natural language of all peoples, expression, face, eyes, voice, state of mind, seeking, having, rejecting, words, repeated, used, proper places, various sentences, learnt, understood, signified, train signs, express my own desires.¹³⁹

Except for the last item (expression of desire), the Augustine passage is, in fact, the thematic index of the *Investigations*. This is to say that Augustine the child is the source of the themes of the *Investigations*, and, moreover, he is not alone in initiating philosophical questioning. The *Investigations* contains voices of other children asking quasi-philosophical questions which never get answered satisfactorily.

For Cavell, the textual function of the voices of children in the *Investigations* is not merely to present easily comprehensible forms of sophisticated philosophical problems, as if children's language use gives us less sophisticated and more transparent modes of language where we get what the sophistication and opaqueness of adult language refuse to give us. On the contrary, the issues related to the children's acquisition of language are philosophically substantial in their own rights, because, "...our idea of what language is is bound up with our ideas of what acquiring language is (and what using language is)."¹⁴⁰ The sheer fact that language is something acquired, bequeathed, inherited, and transmitted has a claim on philosophy. One of the originalities of Wittgenstein's thought is to make this undeniable (yet to the same extent banal and mute) fact of language philosophically relevant. This fact of language is philosophically relevant because what we acquire by acquiring language, what we inherit from the past,

¹³⁹ Stanley Cavell, "Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of Wittgenstein's *Investigations*. in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, eds. Hans D. Sluga & David G. Stern (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 342.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 277

what we bequeath to the future, and what happens to our language in the endlessly ongoing process of its transmission are always open questions demanding philosophical response. In other words, what we inherit from the past is never obvious and transparent but always requires philosophical attention. As we have seen in relation to the idea of family resemblance among language games, the question of inheritance is also a common ground between genealogy and Wittgenstein's thought because genealogy also questions the elusive content of what we inherit from the past.

The multiplicity of ways children acquire language teaches us the multiplicity of ways we use language. To give an account of the connection between the multiplicity of the ways we use language and the multiplicity of ways we learn language, Cavell uses the concept of projection. What is transmitted in children's acquisition of language is inherent in the ways it is transmitted. What is transmitted is the ability to project words into different contexts in attunement with the other language users. According to Cavell, Wittgenstein's statement that 'we learn words in a certain contexts' can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, it means that we do not learn the ways a word can be used in all possible contexts. This is because the set of possible contexts a word can be used legitimately is not a closed, finite set the members of which can be pre-determined. No language user can provide an exhaustive lists of contexts in which a word can be used. On the other hand, Cavell argues, the same statement can be taken to tell us that not every context appropriate for the use of a word can be a context for learning a word. Cavell gives the example of metaphorical uses which are unquestionably an important part of the life of words, but not good candidates for a newcomer to language to acquire skill and mastery of the uses of the word. Understood in either way, Wittgenstein's statement

invokes a very general philosophical question about language. The things of the world words of language address are singular and particular beings, but words are general categories. How is it possible to reconcile the singularity of beings and generality of language? Philosophical answers to this question are formulated around the concept of the essence and of the universals to which our words supposedly refer.

Foucault and Forms of Subjectivity:

Foucault clarifies his understanding of the connections between forms of subjectivity and power relations in one of his last writings. In this text, he rejects the common conception of his work as oriented toward investigating historical forms of power relations and, instead, defines the cumulative objective of his study as ‘to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects’.

¹⁴¹ In this quotation, there are three clues to Foucault’s understanding of power. First, Foucault’s use of a passive verb form indicates that becoming a subject means subjection to certain procedures and processes.¹⁴² Second, the field of subjectivity is differentiated in the sense that the subjective spaces available vary historically. And third, subjectifying practices are time- and space-bound local events that defy any universalist and transcendental principle of intelligibility.

Even if Foucault privileges and prioritizes the theme of subjectivity over that of power, as the title of the text, “The Subject and Power”, indicates, the two themes cannot be questioned in isolation from each other. But still, Foucault does respond to the

¹⁴¹ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow (The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208.

¹⁴² Foucault wrote this text in English as an afterward to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow. Therefore one might argue that his prose should not be taken into consideration in evaluating the content of the text. However, as it will become clear, his choice of the passive form conforms to what he says about subjectifying practices.

common criticism that he understands history as a blind, nihilistic struggle among various power-hungry forces. By putting the theme of subjectivity before the theme of power, Foucault gives, not a *telos* perhaps, but a direction to relations of power. Relations of power gain existential weight, for what is at stake in them is nothing less than possible forms of our existence in the world.

At this juncture, then, it is necessary to ask about the character of the relationship between the subject and power. Foucault's answer is short and precise: "My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects."¹⁴³ As paradoxical as it may sound, Foucault thinks that the power that constitutes individuals and groups of people as subjects through procedures and practices of objectification. The first mode of objectification is the discursive practices of the human sciences. In his archaeological period, Foucault focuses on the subject as the object of knowledge. The discourses of human sciences locate the subject in a nexus of activities such as language use and production. The second mode of objectification consists in what Foucault calls 'dividing practices' that fragment conceptual space as well as social space into cells inhabited by the insane, the criminal, the sick. Needless to say, dividing practices and production of the knowledge of the subject are intertwined for the insane, the criminal, the sick are also objects of knowledge. The third mode is self-objectification for which Foucault gives sexuality as an example. In becoming sexual beings, "...men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of 'sexuality.'"¹⁴⁴

One distinguishing feature of these modes of objectification is that the forms of subjectivity associated with each distinct mode of objectification are also new forms of

¹⁴³ Ibid., 208

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 208

availability and accessibility. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault claims that before the emergence of psychiatric discourses, reason recognized its own limits in madness. In what he later recognized as a romantic move, Foucault sees a strange dialogue between reason and unreason before the discourses of psychiatry started its great monologue with madness. Even if the expressions of the insane cannot be articulated within the field of reason, her expressions contain a different kind of truth originated on the other side of reason. The insane, though fully present in the social space¹⁴⁵, are fundamentally inaccessible and unavailable. The supposed dialogue between reason and unreason reaffirms the limit between them. Therefore, in the Classical age, rather than an attempt being made to render the inaccessible accessible and the unavailable available, the dialogue with the insane is a limit experience where the categories of reason terminate. Madness, at this moment of history, is neither a disease of the soul nor a distorted form of subjectivity. With the emergence of the discourses of psychiatry, the insane person becomes a mental patient, and madness, having gained a medical form, becomes a form of subjectivity. Foucault focuses on the discursive and institutional transformations led by Pinel in France and Tuke in England to show that medicalization of madness in the hand of these two prominent reformers had a very strong moral content. The mental patient was asked to recognize her guilt and responsibility.

...by this guilt, the madman became an object of punishment always vulnerable to himself and the Other; and, from the acknowledgement of his status as object, from the awareness of his guilt, the

¹⁴⁵ The spatial arrangement of madness goes parallel with the discursive space occupied by madness. Before the asylum, the ship of fools and recently emptied leper houses were two prominent spaces designated for the mad. It was the age of colonialism in which the sea was considered to be the main frontier between Europe and the rest of the world. Leper houses were established on the limits of the cities. The liminal status of sea voyage and leper houses correspond to the liminal status of madness at that age. The asylum, by contrast, emerged as a segregated space within city limits. The insane population is surrounded by the sane population. The spatial implications of the emergence of the asylum was a reversal of liminal relations between reason and unreason. As reason, now, contained unreason in confinement, it also constituted the limits of unreason.

madman was to return to his awareness of himself as a free and responsible subject, and consequently to reason. This movement, by which, objectifying himself for the other, the madman thus returned to his liberty...¹⁴⁶

The violence induced on the insane was not an expression of arbitrary cruelty any more. The violence took the form of therapeutic punishment the intensity and frequency of which varied in relation to the degree to which the insane recognized herself as a moral agent. In short, it was demanded that the insane be morally responsive, if not responsible. The point of medical intervention into the life of the insane was to reconstitute her subjectivity. The new medical practices invented by Pinel and Tuke included patient and insistent explanation of the situation and conditions of the insane to the insane by the asylum personnel and forcing the insane to recognize and respond to these explanations. The insane was asked to be available for the reasoned discourse initiated by the asylum personnel, and make her internal motivations accessible to them. At the same time, madness within psychiatric discourse became an enormously sophisticated object of knowledge classified into countless subspecies and described endlessly. While the pre-psychiatric concept of madness signified an undifferentiated human condition with fuzzy limits, the modern psychiatric discourse charted the terrain of madness to create a precise map of it. This conceptual map was used to access the life of unreason as the mental patient was treated and regimented according to where her specific madness is located in this charted terrain of unreason. In other words, psychiatric discourse invented new forms of intelligibility by establishing new categories to classify the insane which are at the same time new forms of subjectivity. In return, these new forms of subjectivity allowed

¹⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Vintage Books, 1988), 247.

the psychiatric discourse to have more and more access to the lives of the insane within the asylum through specific treatments, regiments, and exercises.

What we have seen above in the case of madness is not an isolated case. Foucault's genealogies show the proliferation of the forms of subjectivity under the conditions of modernity. Each new form of intelligibility gives rise to a new form of subjectivity through which we become available and accessible to each other, to the state and its institutions, and to ourselves. As opposed to picturing subjectivity as an inaccessible internal space, Foucault pictures forms of subjectivities as historically constructed discursive spaces in which the individual human beings become responsive to various demands and expectations within various normative frameworks. In his genealogy of criminology and prison, we witness the emergence of the category of the criminal as a new subjective space. In contradistinction from the pre-modern practices of corporeal punishment, the new punitive order takes the soul of the criminal as the object of punishment. While pain was the primordial instrument of punishment, the new device of punishment is constant surveillance through which the criminal becomes incessantly available to the punitive gaze. Criminology opens a gate to the soul of the criminal and hence her motives and reasons become accessible for the rehabilitative program of imprisonment. One can say that the emergence of criminology marks the shift of the crime from the criminal act to the criminal subject. Before the emergence of the discourses of criminology, it was the act that was criminal. Whereas, now, it is the criminal who is the subject and the criminal act is a mere manifestation of the criminal soul. Crime, now, is not a simple matter of transgressing the legal order but a symptom to be deciphered which provides access to the depths of human beings.

In the same manner as with madness and criminality, Foucault focuses on the emergence of the sexualized subject in the nexus of knowledge and power in *History of Sexuality*. The difference modern discourses of sexuality have brought in our lives, Foucault claims, is neither a stricter moral code nor the liberation of libidinal energy. He argues that understanding power relations in terms of repression and liberation leads to a one-dimensional picture of power in which power appears to be a purely negative phenomenon. In this picture, power appears to repress the manifestation of sexual energy, or regulate it strictly on moral, religious, and legal grounds.¹⁴⁷ Instead, Foucault takes power to be positive mechanisms that produce the reality of sex by producing sexualized subjects. Desire has a special place in these discourses. It opens the gates to the deepest truths of human beings. Desire becomes the new discursive center from which various forms of sexualized subjects radiate into the social realm. A clear example is the emergence of the category of homosexual. Foucault compares the sodomite and the homosexual as two different concepts belonging to two different epochs, and argues that the concept of homosexual is not the scientifically revised, corrected, and improved version of the concept of sodomite. The sodomite was defined by the act of sodomy. Sodomy was a legal/moral category that signified a transgressive act against the order of admissible sexual acts, whereas, the discourses of sexuality invented the homosexual as a species. The focus of the concept of homosexual is not the acts of sex between same-sex individuals; rather, what the concept distinguishes is a specific form of desire that manifests itself in various ways, same-sex physical intimacy being only one of them. For

¹⁴⁷ Foucault acknowledges the uniqueness of psychoanalysis on this issue. Psychoanalysis does not take the law and desire as two separate phenomena. Instead the law and desire are constructive to each other. Nonetheless, Foucault argues, even the psychoanalytic model forces us to think power in terms of “juridico-discursive” paradigm.

example, a concept like latent homosexuality that refers to homosexual desire manifesting itself in any form except for physical intimacy with the same-sex individuals is possible and meaningful only within the framework of modern discourses of sexuality. A latent sodomite, by contrast, is an oxymoron, for one becomes sodomitic only by engaging in sodomy. Foucault's claim here is that the power effects with respect to field of sexuality should be sought not in prohibitions and silences, but in the ways forms of subjectivity, like the homosexual, become publicly available as objects of knowledge. It is through such a form of subjectivity that the scientific-legal complex produces power effects in the field of sex.

The Subject at the Intersection of Genealogy and Ordinary Language Philosophy:
Cressida J. Heyes

In her book, *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies*, Cressida J. Heyes points to rich connections between Wittgenstein's private language argument and Foucault's genealogies of the modern subject. She argues that both Wittgenstein and Foucault challenge the dominant philosophical picture of the subject as an inner authentic being. Heyes thinks that two pictures dominate our modern understanding of the self. The first is the picture of an authentic inner self that represents itself in the medium of the flesh. Accordingly, to imagine the subject as an authentic inner being is to imagine 'the self as monarch, residing within the palace of the body, guiding its renovation so that its unique status will be made manifest'.¹⁴⁸ The second picture is of power understood as a substance held by a sovereign who exercises it from without by repressing the self. Heyes sees a complex relationship between these two

¹⁴⁸ Cressida J. Heyes, *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

pictures. The inner/outer distinction ‘plays to the sovereign model’: While there is an external sovereign who holds power over us, each of us is also a sovereign in our bodies. The more we escape the external power, the freer our internal sovereign is. Hence resisting power is a matter of becoming authentic individuals true to our inner selves.

For Heyes, the postulation of such an inner authentic being is not a politically neutral philosophical move because the established binary opposition between a homogenous self-same subjective space, an inside, and an objective differentiated space, an outside, is corollary to the binary opposition between the figure of the sovereign who holds power and the figure of the subject who resists it. In other words, the picture of the inner/outer distinction designates the outside as the site of power and the inside as the site of resistance. Heyes suggests that destabilizing the conception of the subject arrested in the inside/outside distinction will reveal the blind spots of political perspectives that are ‘held captive by a picture’ of power as a substance held by a sovereign. Foucault thinks that a huge network of power practices take place precisely in the blind spot of such political perspectives, and drawing on Foucault, Heyes argues that the ‘picture of the inner/outer distinction masks...the advance of normalizing practices into novel territories – especially corporeal features not previously scrutinized for their deviance, or to behaviors once unremarked that now become indicators of a problematized identity.’¹⁴⁹ The demands of disciplinary mechanisms that seek normalization take the appearance of an inner voice expressing the needs and desires of an inner being, while oppressive power relations are imagined to be external constraints limiting and regulating the outwardly manifestations of the inner self. As a result, normalizing practices that elude such a perspective also escape critical scrutiny and political attention.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 9

Heyes mainly focuses on practices of body modifications such as aesthetic surgery, tattoos, sex reassignment surgeries, and weight-loss programs and observes that the desire to modify the body is perceived as an expression of an inner authentic self. In each case the relationship between the body and the inner self poses a different problem that requires a different kind of intervention. In the case of sex reassignment surgeries, the inner self finds itself in a body of the wrong sex. The gender of the inner self and the sex of the body do not fit. In some cases of aesthetic surgery, the pace of the aging process of the body and of the inner self is out of sync. The body is older than the inner self and therefore it has to be modified to reflect the 'true age' of the self. However differentiated the demands to modify the body, the objective is to render the body more suitable and loyal to the experience of the inner self. Heyes' point is that even if a great degree of agency is ascribed to the inner self in the practices of body modifications, this ascribed agency functions to disguise the lack of agency. Under modern conditions, the body has been more and more subjected to disciplinary mechanisms and normalizing practices that are enmeshed with various specialized discourses. For example, in the case of sex reassignment surgeries, surgical capabilities and psychiatric discourse decide what 'true sex' is for an individual whose sexual experience lies on the limits drawn by heteronormativity.¹⁵⁰ The medical/psychiatric discourse establishes its authority on its capability to decipher the true meaning of what the inner self says through psychiatric signs and bodily symptoms about its 'true' sexual identity. Hence, an authentic inner

¹⁵⁰ It should be noted here that Heyes does not flatly criticize such practices for being the agency of heteronormativity. Like most of the cases involving the body, sex reassignment surgeries present an intrinsic ambiguity both for the agencies of heteronormativity and for those who resist it. On the one hand, these surgeries reinforce the heteronormative order: one should either be a male or a female. On the other hand, these surgeries clearly violate the taken for granted intransitivity of the border between masculinity and femininity. The individual who has gone through a sex reassignment surgery has crossed a border which is not supposed to be transitive.

being ontologically prior to linguistic conventions and discursive formations is a necessary element for the establishment of the authority of medical/psychiatric discourse.

Heyes argues that both Wittgenstein and Foucault, in their own ways, criticize such an understanding of the subject as an inner authentic being, and in the light of their criticisms the practices of body modifications appear to overlap with normalizing practices more than is commonly understood. Instead of assuming an authentic self, expressing itself in the medium of the body, Heyes, following Foucault, sees the subject as embodied through disciplinary practices which aim at normalization of individuals. The self as an authentic inner being, a monarch in the body, is more an agent of disciplinary mechanisms than it is an autonomous entity resisting a repressive power. In the same fashion, Wittgenstein's private language argument undermines the idea of a sovereign subject as the terminal point of our linguistic activities. On the contrary, the language using subject in Wittgenstein emerges gradually in and through various language games. One of the morals of the private language argument is that the subject is not a self-contained entity. The agency of the language user resides in linguistic space in a diffused state.

Heyes also points to convergences between Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thought in terms of their understanding of what philosophy can offer politically. She utilizes David Owen's concept of 'aspectual captivity'¹⁵¹ (Owen 2003) and James Tully's Wittgensteinian criticism of Habermas (Tully 2003) to show where the critical edges of

¹⁵¹ David Owen, "Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation," in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003)

Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thinking converge.¹⁵² Owen contrasts 'aspectival captivity' with 'ideological captivity' and argues that whereas 'ideological captivity' more or less implies a right way and a wrong way to see the world and ourselves in it, 'aspectival captivity' does not give rise to such connections between epistemological accuracy and political positions. A picture by itself is not true or false; it is, rather, the necessary medium for claims to truth to emerge. Tully, in the same fashion, criticizes Habermas' critical model that even our most articulated rational claims are intelligible only on the basis of some such shared pictures. What Owen calls 'aspectival captivity' is our shared commitment to such pictures, while Tully shows that our commitment to such pictures cannot be judged rational or irrational in themselves, for such judgments are meaningful only when they are made against the background of our commitment to certain pictures. Accordingly, the point of criticizing 'aspectival captivity' is not to get rid of these pictures and see the world aright, but to reveal the historical contingency of our commitments to such pictures.

How does a picture hold us captive? Aspectival captivity is aspect blindness in the sense that we are captivated by an aspect when it does not appear to us as an aspect. A very simple, obvious, and immediately recognizable pictorial representation of a rabbit may hide a duck in its two dimensional and totally transparent body, and *vice versa*. The perceptual shifts between the vision of a rabbit and of a duck are marked by what Wittgenstein calls aspect dawning. Similar to our experience of the duck/rabbit figure, the kinds of world the background pictures of our linguistic and discursive practices present

¹⁵² James Tully, "Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy: Understanding Practices of Critical Reflection," in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003)

to us may change radically when we start seeing different aspects of it.¹⁵³ In other words, our relationships to these pictures are not stable. On the contrary, we might be discontent with some pictures or some aspects of them because the ontological implications of these pictures sometimes conflict with our ethical and political concerns. In Heyes' words, 'a disjunction' emerges between our ontological and ethical/political commitments which gives rise to counter discourses. These counter discourses open up new perspectives from which some hitherto unnoticed aspects of our pictures become visible and hence available for critical scrutiny and political intervention.

Both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that our pictures of the subject as a pre-given entity are not responsive to our ethical/political concerns. They both develop counter discourses that point to various different and hitherto unnoticed aspects of our pictures of subjectivity. Neither of them has a theory of subjectivity as such. Rather, they show different modes and states of subjectivity in different fields of experience. Wittgenstein focuses on the most ordinary linguistic practices such as expecting someone, executing a simple mathematical calculation, giving directions, and so on, and in each case, he shows that assuming a self-contained entity in control of these practices is not only superfluous but also presents a very diminished and poor picture of ourselves as language users. In the same fashion, Foucault focuses on different modalities of modern subjectivity and argues that the subject is not the founder of her experience. The

¹⁵³ In fact, Foucault's genealogies of modern experience and narratives of the Enlightenment as emancipation seem to constitute a grand duck/rabbit figure. Depending on which aspects one notices, the history of modern experience can be understood as the flourishing of human freedom or intensification of domination relations. Perhaps, the judicial system is the best example. According to Foucault, in the same historical space, two radically different sets of transformations occur simultaneously. On the one hand, detailed legal procedures with an emphasis on individual rights and freedom replaced the sovereign's right to judge and punish. On the other hand, a new punitive power, quite oblivious to the contractual/legal discourses of rights and freedom, emerged within the walls of prison and spread to other social spaces as well.

history of subjectivity is not the history of the self-same subject moving through historical events. It is, rather, the history of discursive events and practices that give rise to different modes of being in the world.

Genealogy as Critical Therapy

Genealogical Pursuit of Family Resemblances:

Genealogy is a pursuit of the intelligibility of the systems of constraints with a specific emphasis on the facticity and contingency of the formation of these systems. This also suggests a further similarity between Wittgenstein's grammar and Foucault's power. As grammar, for Wittgenstein, is always specific to particular language games, Foucault's power is also always specific to particular relations. What gives consistency and stability to our use of the concept of power is not a common element present in each and every power relation. What makes possible our use of the concept of power then? The best answer seems to be in one of the most central concepts in Wittgenstein's later thought: the concept of family resemblance the very name of which suggests and invites a genealogical approach in rendering our use of language intelligible. Genealogy, in this light, is a *historical* search for a network of familial conjunctions and disjunctions among operations of power.

In his later period, Wittgenstein gives up his earlier search for a model that explains the totality of language in favor of the idea of language games. In fact, we can claim that for Wittgenstein there is no Language but only language games. There is no common logic shared by all language games but only local grammatical rules specific to

each and every language game. However, even if there is no formal unity among language games, it is obvious that our linguistic practices, i.e. our playing language games, are not totally fragmented, segregated, and isolated from each other. The fact that our language games are connected to each other expresses itself in the ways our linguistic practices invite and overlap with each other. A small talk can turn into a fight as well as a fight can give way to another language game, and so on. Wittgenstein uses the concept/metaphor of family resemblance to refer to similarities among language games and how language games are connected to each other. His point in using this concept is, on the one hand, to deny that there is a common form shared by all linguistic activities. On the other hand, he also wants to be able to show that these similarities and connections among language games point not to a singular homogenous plain but to a 'complicated network'.

The concept of family resemblance suggests the singularity and uniqueness of language games as well as the facticity of our language use. The formation of an actual family tree is shaped by arbitrary encounters, births and deaths of offspring, marriages, divorces, and other countless factors. When one looks at the formation of such a family tree, one sees nothing but the facticity of familial events mentioned above and the contingent character of the shape of the family tree which is nothing but the culmination of the traces of a concrete history. In this sense, Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance underlines the facticity and contingency of the formation of language games and this implies that the intelligibility of formation of language games lies in the concrete history of the emergence of these language games. In other words, the concept of family resemblance suggests a historical dimension to our linguistic practices. Wittgenstein

emphasizes this point further in the *Investigations*: “We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal chimera.”¹⁵⁴

It seems plausible to assume, without doing considerable violence to Wittgenstein’s and Foucault’s thoughts, that what Foucault calls a discourse or a form of rationality can be understood as a large extended family of language games. Wittgenstein thinks that language games are discernible and identifiable not because of a shared transcendental logic or an ahistorical form but by virtue of their place in the network of family resemblances that are due to a shared familial history. “We see that what we call “sentence” and “language” has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another.”¹⁵⁵ In the same fashion, Foucault thinks that what brings different statements together in a discourse is neither a set of rational principles nor some supposed pre-discursive features of the objects of discourse. What keeps them together is a grid formed by specific and concrete historical events. The task of genealogy is to ‘record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history...’¹⁵⁶ The genealogist does not assume that the divisions and disjunctions among the discourses of the present and the internal unity of each discourse were already given in the beginning of their formation. The appearance of internal unity within discourses and orderly divisions among them is a result of a misleading retrospective vision. The genealogical perspective allows us to see the present formation of discourses as an

¹⁵⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 108.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 108

¹⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Cornell University Press, 1977), 139.

assemblage of the effects of singular events just as the concept of family resemblance allows us to see our linguistic activities in their singularity and uniqueness as well as their relationality. Wittgenstein makes some remarks about number as an example of a family of language games which would be useful to understand this genealogical vision:

And for instance the kinds of number form a family in the same way. Why do we call something a “number”? Well, perhaps because it has a – direct – relationship with several things that have hitherto been called number; and this may be said to give it an indirect relationship to other things that we call the same name. And we extend our concept of number as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.¹⁵⁷

Here, Wittgenstein imagines the formation of a family of language games as a matter of extension and integration bit by bit. The resulting unity is not beyond or behind the actual ‘overlapping of many fibers’. The task of genealogist is to seek those moments of ‘twists’ where singular events overlap and form ‘what we tend to feel is without history’.

How Necessary the Concept of Necessity?

For years, Wittgenstein’s voice has remained confined within the mainstreams of Anglo-American analytic philosophy. Recently, however, Wittgenstein’s philosophy has become available to a more diverse philosophical audience which utilizes his thought in different philosophical areas including politics. One way to approach politics from a Wittgensteinian perspective is to describe and analyze the grammar of our political concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, struggle, and oppression, and see what kind of language games we play using these concepts. Accordingly, Wittgensteinian political thinking would be a matter of applying his general philosophical remarks to the specific field of politics. Such an instrumentalist approach, however, would not allow us to learn, and learn from, the politics immanent to Wittgenstein’s *Investigations*. More relevant to

¹⁵⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 67.

our purposes, it does not allow us to trace the common lines of thought between Wittgenstein and Foucault with respect to politics.

It is one of Cavell's contributions to Wittgensteinian thinking to reveal the moral/political dimensions in Wittgenstein's account of language. As opposed to commonly held interpretations of Wittgenstein within the circle of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, Cavell argues that Wittgenstein's philosophical aim is not merely to provide a 'correct' and 'accurate' account of how our language works. On the contrary, Wittgenstein's thinking, according to Cavell, is motivated by an urge to respond to historical conditions that Cavell identifies as 'the loss of the ordinary'. In this sense, Wittgenstein's thought can be seen as a critique of modern conditions which privileges the cognitive dimensions of our life at the cost of the disappearance of our intimacy with the world. The skeptical impulse in modern thought is a symptom through which Cavell reads the cost of our becoming knowing subjects. The world is lost in the thought of the skeptic because its existence cannot be sustained in structures of knowledge alone. Cavell thinks that the lost world is not the phantasmatic element in skeptical thought. On the contrary, it is its truth. The phantasmatic element in skepticism is the desire to contain the totality of the world in knowledge. To use Foucault's term, under the reign of the will to know, a world that cannot be sustained in our knowledge is under the risk of disappearance.

By developing such an argument, Cavell emphasizes the critical, as opposed to corrective and didactic, character of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein describes his own understanding of philosophy "as a battle against the bewitchment of our

intelligence by means of our language.”¹⁵⁸ The aim of this battle, in his own words, is “[t]o shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.”¹⁵⁹ In Cavell’s interpretation of Wittgenstein, our bewitchment means that we are under the spell of ‘false necessities’ that trap us in the fly-bottle: “...a vision of human life as distorted by false necessities links *Philosophical Investigations* with opening preoccupations of Plato’s Republic, and Rousseau’s Social Contract, and Thoreau’s Walden, and Marx’s Capital...”¹⁶⁰ (In a sense, the whole aim of this dissertation is to add Foucault’s name to Cavell’s list of thinkers who are linked to Wittgenstein in their efforts to reveal such ‘false necessities’.) In this sense, Wittgenstein’s insistence on the conventionality of our speech and practices is an invitation to reconsider and question the constraints in our lives that are sustained and maintained by what we take to be the necessities of our form of life. In a nutshell, Wittgenstein asks his reader to recognize and respond to these necessities as our own artifacts. Moreover, our failure to recognize our form of life as ours has its own systematicity, that is metaphysics, which an active grammatical engagement with its concepts.

Cavell’s preoccupation with skepticism should be understood within the context of false necessities. He claims that Wittgenstein responds to the modern predicament by responding to ‘the threat of skepticism’ which is “a sort of human compulsion to over-intellectuality (not simply a Faustian desire to know everything but a demonic will to measure every relation against that of knowing).”¹⁶¹ In the modern era, the false

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 109

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 309

¹⁶⁰ Stanley Cavell, *Philosophy the Day After Tomorrow* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 199.

¹⁶¹ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays (Updated Edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), xxvii.

necessities that we have created and imposed upon ourselves have taken the form of knowledge claims. As a response to this threat, Wittgenstein gives us worldly pictures to bring language and reason back from timeless and eternal metaphysical realms to finite and contingent media of history. He shows that what we call knowing connects us to things and other language users more intimately than a purely epistemological understanding of knowledge can reveal. As we have seen, knowing a thing is not simply or exclusively to have knowledge *about* that thing, but making that thing a part of our world and rendering it available and accessible for our practices. Wittgenstein's response to the threat of skepticism reveals what Cavell calls 'the truth of skepticism' which, on the one hand, shows that our relation to the world and to each other is not primarily a relation of knowing, and on the other, what we call knowing is not an isolated relationship to the world and to each other.

The threat of skepticism in Cavell is not a threat to our ability to produce knowledge. On the contrary, it is a manifestation of a crisis in which the epistemic mode of our relations with the world and to each other colonize our moral, political, and aesthetic relations. In this sense, the real threat of skepticism is our unwillingness to acknowledge the costs of our knowledge claims, especially when the object of knowledge is ourselves. Knowledge about ourselves brings varying regions of our lives into the domain of the necessary which, in turn, places more constraints on the possibilities of human experience. Needless to say, as knowledge about ourselves brings constraints in our lives in the name of necessity, it also liberates and brings new possibilities in the domain of our experience. Cavell's point is that as knowing has become the main hegemonic mode of our being in the world under the conditions of modernity, knowledge

has been on the way to becoming the measure of each and every relation we have with the world and to each other. We have deprived ourselves of the means to measure and evaluate the necessities embodied in our knowledge claims about ourselves and, in Cavell, critical thought is a response to this lack of means to critically evaluate our epistemic capabilities. This means that the critical task is not to measure and evaluate our knowledge claims in terms of their truth or falsity. The critical task, rather, is to render the constraints on the possibilities of our experience questionable by removing the cover of necessity on them.

For Cavell, the public character of language in Wittgenstein is also an attack on such false necessities. As Cavell puts it, “The communicative power of language ...requir[es] nothing beyond (behind, beneath) our sharing and maintaining, our forms of life...”¹⁶² What makes language use possible is neither ‘the order of things’ that mirrors itself in the order of our concepts nor a timeless rationality that we are somehow endowed with. Language use is possible on the basis of contingently formed agreement among the members of a linguistic community. The force of our agreements among ourselves is the force of our history over ourselves. Our history is never a dead past because it is alive in the force exerted over us by our agreement on linguistic forms. In this sense, the contingency of linguistic agreement we have in the present is a projection of the contingency of our history. Our capacity to use language and our capacity to live socially contain each other. To put it differently, our capacity to share the world and our capacity to share words are one and the same thing. Wittgenstein’s private language argument teaches us that an unshared language is not language because meaningful language use requires the criterial authority of a community of language users. The fact that language

¹⁶² Ibid., xxii

use requires shared criteria among language users implies that the world of language users is necessarily a shared world.

If language use is possible on the basis of publicly shared rules and criteria that demands varying degrees and forms of conformity from language users, then the constraints that these rules and criteria put on our speech and actions are formative of our meaning claims and our world. The public character of language use, in this sense, points to the fact that the formative constraints that limit, and thereby render possible, our speech and actions are social constraints embodied in our linguistic agreement which is the sedimentation of our history. This means that the necessities imposed on our lives by forms of rationality are not timeless metaphysical forces but the claims of our own history on our present.

The theme of false necessities underlines a convergence point between Wittgenstein's grammatical inquiries and Foucault's genealogical work. Like Wittgenstein, Foucault also thinks that the critical task is to question the perception of constraints as necessities. "But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge must renounce exceeding, it seems to me that the critical question today must be turned back into a positive one: In what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?"¹⁶³ The necessities and constraints are projections of conceptual relations established through the discursive order. In other words, we can only recognize and acknowledge what we take to be necessary within a discursive network of conceptual relations. We are captivated by a network of conceptual relations which subsume some

¹⁶³ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 – 1984 v. 1: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (The New Press, 1994), 315.

features of our lives under the category of necessity. The genealogical analysis of the descent of these conceptual relations sheds light on the historical formation of them and thereby loosens our captivation by them.

Foucault, parallel to Cavell, also thinks that modern structures of knowledge has a privileged place in drawing distinctions between what is necessary and what is not. His genealogies reveal that both the structures of knowledge production and the place of knowledge in our lives started changing dramatically in the era of the Enlightenment. A family of certain forms of rationality in the modern West called ‘human sciences’ has gained significant authority over us. In some cases, moral-religious traditional authority is replaced by the epistemic authority of the discourses of human sciences, while in others, the discourses of human sciences create new fields of power relations.¹⁶⁴ Even if these forms of rationality claim that they operate on an objective domain producing knowledge of phenomena existing prior to their discursive acts, Foucault maintains that the effect of these forms of rationality is more formative than epistemic – meaning that, in the very act of producing knowledge, they in fact produce new discursive spaces in which these new subjectivities come into being. Translated into Wittgenstein’s terms, these forms of rationality are grammatical structures that tell us what kind of subjects the mad, the sick, the criminal, the homosexual are. In telling what kind of subjects they are, these forms of rationality also draw limits to possible social spaces that such subjects can occupy and to possible ways in which members of the linguistic community relate to them. In other

¹⁶⁴ With respect to changing place of epistemic authority in our lives, Foucault’s genealogies are not different in spirit from Weber’s idea of rationalization, or Habermas’ notion of the colonization of the lifeworld by instrumental reason. Foucault, however, thinks that neither a concept like rationalization nor a concept like instrumental reason can give us a satisfactory picture of the proliferation of discourses of human sciences and its effects. In the spirit of Wittgenstein’s concepts of language games and family resemblance, Foucault treats these discourses in their own rights as singular historical forms of rationality, rather than as moments of a larger process of rationalization or colonization of the lifeworld.

words, these forms of rationality, by the authority to draw limits to what we can become, impose necessities on our lives.

The political dimensions of Foucault's genealogies are to be understood at this junction where the discourses of human sciences entwine with the establishment of modern institutions such as hospitals, mental asylums, prisons, and schools. The direct authority of these institutions to put constraints on our lives is inseparable from the epistemic authority of human sciences to produce knowledge claims about us. It is through the network of such knowledge claims that various distinction between what is necessary and what is arbitrary have been constantly established. In this sense, we can claim that for Foucault, the modern West has already started realizing what Cavell calls the epistemic phantasms of the skeptic to contain our experience and world in structures of knowledge. The proliferation of epistemic structures called human sciences in the modern era is entwined with the proliferation of technologies of power to regulate and administer the social body. In this sense, the 'demonic will' Cavell defines above is what Foucault calls the will to knowledge. The more the being of humans become the object of knowledge, the deeper the effects of power penetrates into the social medium. The prisoners' cells in Bentham's panopticon are as much the manifestations of the phantasm of total power as they are materializations of phantasms of total knowledge.

Linguistic Captivity and Genealogy as Therapy:

I would like to elucidate the link between Wittgenstein and Foucault on the theme of 'false necessities' by referring to two Foucault commentators, David Owen and Hubert Dreyfus who, in their own ways, underline the similarity between Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy and Foucault's genealogies.

Owen establishes a parallel between Wittgenstein's concept of perspicuous representation and Foucault's genealogical description of discursive practices. He argues that both Wittgenstein and Foucault aim at liberating us from 'aspectival captivity' which is "a certain class of nonphysical constraints on our capacity for self-government."¹⁶⁵ Owen states that what he means by aspectival captivity is rooted in Wittgenstein's statement: "A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seems to repeat it to us inexorably."¹⁶⁶ Having pictures of the world and of ourselves is not, by itself, a target for critical thought. On the contrary, Owen claims that having pictures is just another way to point to our mindedness. As we are inhabitants of a linguistically constructed world, it is inevitable that we hold various pictures of the world and of ourselves which function as the scene and the stage of our language games, rendering our grammatical judgments possible. Our speech acts are meaningful only against the background of such pictures. Most of the time, during our ordinary linguistic activities, these pictures do not stand out. In this sense, not every picture is an obstacle before our judgments. On the contrary, these pictures are a precondition to exercise our freedom to make judgments and decisions, and act accordingly. Our pictorial captivity begins when there is "a disjuncture...between our ways of making sense of ourselves, on the one hand, and our cares and commitments, on the other."¹⁶⁷

To elucidate the concept of aspectival captivity, Owen makes use of an example Wittgenstein gives in *Culture and Value*. A man in a room cannot get outside, not

¹⁶⁵ David Owen, "Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation," in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003), 82.

¹⁶⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 115.

¹⁶⁷ David Owen, "Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation," in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003), 84)

because the door is locked, but because he pictures the door opening outwards while the door opens inwards.¹⁶⁸ Such a picture leads him to push the door rather than pulling it. His judgment, decision, and action could not serve his desire and commitment to get outside because he does not notice an aspect of the door. In this case, the aspectual captivity is due to his failure to question what is imposed on him by this picture. His unquestioning reliance in his judgments on a picture of doors that only open outwards is not a problem until he encounters a situation where the door opens inwards. The picture that has mediated his desires and his judgments so far fails because the picture fills the man's horizon so completely that there is no room for an alternative picture. The picture of doors gives the man a world where the possibility of a door opening inwards is absent. Such a picture rules out the act of pulling instead of pushing the door as a possible course of action. The point of the little drama of the man who is locked in an unlocked room is that however simple facts are, they do not just pop up in our world. The pictures we have emphasize and render visible some aspects of the world while, at the same time, hiding some other aspects by ruling them out from the realm of the possible.

One might argue that Wittgenstein's example is counter-intuitive. If someone cannot open a door by pushing it, it is reasonable to assume that, at some point, she will surely try pulling it as well. However, the counter-intuitiveness of the example serves Wittgenstein's point. It is reasonable to try pulling the door only against the background of a picture which contains the possibility of a door that can open inwards or outwards. The counter-intuitiveness of the example re-performs the point of the example, namely how hard it is to imagine a picture different than our own. We are committed to a picture where doors open both inwards and outwards, therefore it seems absurd to us that the

¹⁶⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 48.

captivated man just cannot discover the simple fact that the door opens inwards. The distance between us and the man in the room, created by the counter-intuitiveness of the example, is indicative of the force with which our own pictures grip us.

Against our aspectival captivity in which our picture of the world and of each other fails to respond to our concerns, cares, commitments, and desires, Wittgenstein suggests ‘perspicuous representations’ as a way to question, modify, transform, or dismantle our pictures. To connect Owen’s point with Cavell’s, we can note that the critical edge of perspicuous representations is in their capability to reveal the conventional, and therefore modifiable character of our commitment to our pictures. Thus, any necessity that springs from these pictures becomes an object of critical inquiry. How do perspicuous representations create such emancipatory effects? Owen connects the idea of aspectival captivity to intellectual heritage through the views of Quentin Skinner who says that “it is remarkably difficult to avoid falling under the spell of our own intellectual heritage.”¹⁶⁹ Owen detects two lines of thought that aim at dispelling the spell of our inherited forms of thinking: ideology critique¹⁷⁰ as it is understood as a struggle against our captivation by false beliefs which constitute the content of false consciousness, and genealogical critique that focuses on aspectival captivity. As opposed to ideology critique, genealogical critique bypasses the truth or the falsity of our beliefs and focuses on various pictures on the background of which our statements and beliefs become truth candidates. More specifically, genealogical critique targets the universality

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in David Owen, “Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation,” in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003), 86.

¹⁷⁰ It should be noted here that Owen traces ideology critique from Habermas to Plato and includes Marx in this tradition. The Marxist discussions on the issue of ideology, at least since Louis Althusser, show that the idea of false consciousness cannot fully articulate what ideology is. Therefore, I do not agree with Owen that all ideology critique aims at is to reveal what dominant class consciousness conceals. Nonetheless, Owen’s distinction is useful in terms of drawing a distinction between corrective and critical aspects of thought.

and uniformity of our pictures by historicizing them. In a sense, genealogical critique adds history as a third dimension to our two-dimensional pictures, and thereby gives them the depth through which what seems to us universal shows its beginnings (and hence its finitude) and what seems to us seamlessly uniform shows its points of suture where polymorphous events get connected to each other.

Owen refers to Foucault's genealogical critique of 'repressive hypothesis' and of the idea of a sovereign who holds power as examples of loosening our captivity by the pictures of politics that give rise to a peculiar understanding of power. In these pictures, power appears to us as a substance the effects of which are always articulated in negative terms. Hence, they give rise to an idea of power which could be held by someone or some institution to repress those who are under its rule. Foucault's genealogies of power, on the other hand, provides a perspective through which what we call power emerges in a historical depth and shows its relational, as opposed to substantial, character, and its positive and constructive, as opposed to repressive, effects. The critical function of Foucault's genealogy of power is to show that "our captivation by this sovereignty-based picture of political relations facilitates forms of domination based on forms of power not disclosed by this picture."¹⁷¹ In this sense, what Foucault does in his genealogies of various power relations is to provide perspicuous representations of power in which our desires and concerns that cannot be accommodated in a picture of power as a repressive substance can be seen. Through such perspicuous representations, there emerge more comprehensive and sophisticated pictures of politics which allow us to address domination relations invisible in the sovereignty-based pictures of politics. These new pictures of politics redefine the domain of politics and reconfigure political agency.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 94

As opposed to Owen, Dreyfus does not explicitly mention Wittgenstein's name in his evaluation of the critical character of Foucault's thought, but he uses the concept of therapy in defining the critical effects of genealogy.¹⁷² In his foreword to Foucault's earliest work, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, Dreyfus uses the following quotation from Foucault as his closing words where Foucault alludes to Nietzsche's understanding of history: "Historical sense has more in common with medicine than philosophy...Its task is to become a curative science."¹⁷³ This early work by Foucault is crucial for Foucault scholarship because it reveals some fundamental archeological layers of Foucault's thought. He originally wrote it in 1954 and radically revised it in 1962. As Dreyfus reports, in the original 1954 version, Foucault tries to combine Marxist and Heideggerian perspectives to analyze psychology as a science and mental illness as an existential condition. He was dissatisfied with it, and in the 1962 version, he removed all Marxist elements in the text. Instead, he added a section which is a short account of his arguments in *Madness and Civilization*. In the original version, Foucault does not question the discursive emergence of the phenomenon of mental illness as a medical object, and instead seeks its causes in social conditions. In the 1962 version, however, he is much more interested in the discursive transformations in which madness becomes a mental illness, and hence an object of medical knowledge and intervention. "Foucault's task thus changes from situating personal existence in a concrete social situation to studying the historical and discursive practices that define a 'psychology' in which the notion of

¹⁷² Hubert Dreyfus, "Foreword," in Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (University of California Press, 1987)

¹⁷³ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Cornell University Press, 1977), 156.

mental illness becomes thinkable as something that can be the object of scientific study.”¹⁷⁴

Similar to Owen’s distinction between aspectival captivity and ideological captivity, Dreyfus also distinguishes two senses of critique that become visible in Foucault’s shift from social conditions as the cause of mental illness to discursive practices that construct a medical object out of the historical experience of madness. The former approach takes critique to be a matter of revealing the truth of madness by locating it in a causal nexus, whereas the latter approach is guided by the question of how madness becomes a medical object about which we can produce statements that are truth candidates. To put it in Owen’s words, Foucault is much more interested in the picture that emphasizes the medical aspect of madness than he is in the truth or falsity of medical statements about madness. Our aspectival captivity by this picture is hidden from us as an unstated necessity to take madness as a mental illness. This unstated necessity accompanies all our medical statements about madness. In other words, this picture does not allow us to think about madness as anything other than a medical object.

What is the use of a critical discourse on madness that does not even tell us whether what we say about madness is true or false? Dreyfus thinks that the criticality of such a discourse lies in its therapeutic effects. “Historical therapy nonetheless loosens the grip of our current understanding of reality by letting us see how we got where we are and the cost of our current understanding.”¹⁷⁵ Similar to Wittgensteinian therapy, Foucault’s genealogical therapy aims at a change of attitude toward ourselves by recognizing and acknowledging the ordinariness of our present. Instead of picturing

¹⁷⁴ Hubert Dreyfus, “Foreword,” in Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (University of California Press, 1987), xxx.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxix

ourselves in deterministic and necessitarian lines, Foucault's genealogies establish perspectives on our history through which we can recognize our present as contingent. Neither the emergence of past events nor their conjoining to each other manifests a principle of necessity. In this sense, genealogical perspective is a form of recognition and acknowledgement of the past and the present as ours. Genealogical repudiation of any 'law of history' is not a repudiation of the intelligibility of history. On the contrary, genealogy seeks forms of intelligibility of ourselves which do not require any meta-historical explanatory laws and principles. Genealogical perspective enables us to see that making history intelligible is nothing other than making ourselves intelligible and vice versa. The genealogical discovery of the facticity of history is a form of intelligibility through which we come to terms with our own facticity marked by our own finitude. Recognition and acknowledgement of the past and the present as ours is as much a projection of our own contingency into history as it is a form of acceptance of the contingency of our present.

The common point between genealogical therapy and Wittgensteinian therapy is that both aim at loosening the constraints of false necessities on our lives. In Wittgenstein, the idea of the ordinary plays a central role in deflating such necessities. Without excluding other possible philosophical implications, we can say that the idea of the ordinary has two related senses in Wittgenstein. On the one hand, it points to the ordinariness of human existence as such. Recognition and acknowledgment of the fact that we, language users, inhabit this world as an ordinary, that is transient and contingent, fact is one of the meanings Wittgenstein conveys in his constant emphasis on the ordinariness of our existence. On the other hand, the ordinary is the form of our

inhabitation of the world. In this sense, the ordinary is established through our active engagement with the world that maintains and sustains it as a habitat for our forms of life. In the former sense of the concept, Wittgenstein emphasizes the finiteness of human existence both on an anthropological level and on the level of the singularity of life each individual pursues. At both levels, nothing but our shared ways of speaking and doing things shape the ordinary forms of inhabiting the world. Genealogy as therapy, as Dreyfus says, is a philosophical/historical inquiry into 'how we got where we are', and the genealogical stories of 'how we got where we are' shows how ordinary our present is in the sense Wittgenstein uses the term. Genealogy draws a picture in which the ordinariness of our existence is reconstituted. There is no reason and no necessity beyond our present conventions to think that the specific form of life each of us, and at the same time all of us, pursue right now, in the present, has any historical privilege with regard to the past forms or future forms in terms of their 'fate to be overcome'. Our present becomes one present among the countless others. Neither the past (conservatism) nor the future (socialism) can be a measure of the present. Through such a picture of the present as the ordinary, Foucault, like Cavell's Wittgenstein, sees our impulse to ascribe necessity and universality to our present as an avoidance of moral/political responsibilities we have toward our own present. As a therapeutic process, in its standard psychological sense, aims to establish forms of engagement with one's life different from those ways which give rise to the need of therapy in the first place, Wittgenstein's and Foucault's historical/philosophical therapy removes self-imposed obstructions on our vision of ourselves to realign it with our current needs and concerns.

If one of the therapeutic effects of critical thought is to empower us to transform the ways to engage with our forms of intelligibility, then Allan Janik's comments on Wittgenstein are useful to emphasize the availability of resources in our language for such a therapeutic transformation.¹⁷⁶ Janik argues that some of our concepts openly invite contested, competing, and even conflicting applications. In other words, our linguistic agreement on such concepts encourages us to disagree with each other. The concepts of morality, aesthetics, and politics are such concepts which have varying, and most of the time conflicting, ways to be applied in different contexts. In fact, most of the time, the contexts in which these concepts are applicable and the specific ways we apply them are the fundamental meaningful content of these concepts. To go back to my banal example of a tomato, the grammar of the concept of tomato allows and encourage us to converge on a more or less consistent set of practices, whereas the concept of, say, beauty, or justice, has a useful place in our aesthetic or political discourse in as much as it allows us to diverge from each other. This is not to say that these diverging concepts never converge us and put us in community with each other. Rather, my point is that the convergence with others we pursue using these concepts must necessarily lead us to diverge from others. A total agreement on the uses of the concept of tomato does not obstruct our uses of the concept and connected practices. However, total agreement on the uses of the concept of justice would negatively impact the binding force of the concept in our moral/political engagements. Janik does not openly delve into the question why concepts, in varying degrees, open up heterogeneous paths in their application, but we can say, with Janik, that the heterogeneity of paths these concepts open up project the

¹⁷⁶ Allan Janik, "Notes on the Natural History of Politics," in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003 (ed. Cressida J. Heyes)

heterogeneity of the histories of their formation. The disagreements and contestations voiced through these concepts are claims to histories behind these concepts. If the histories of our concepts contain the possibilities to use our concepts differently, then these possibilities of different application of our concepts are the resources that nourish the therapeutic process to learn how to think and live differently.

According to Janik's interpretations of Wittgenstein, informed by William E. Connolly, our relationship with grammatical constraints is what makes us political beings. The introduction of a concept into linguistic circulation as a new element in our language games, or the removal of a concept from our linguistic exchanges, inevitably shifts the terrain of available possibilities for our practices. Language users act by employing concepts and their employment of concepts is acting. In this sense, the formation of concepts and their use cannot be purely epistemic events. Using concepts in Wittgenstein is mastering a technique which requires you to conform and follow the rules of the technique. Therefore, Janik concludes, 'to use language, then, is, in a certain sense, to be ruled in the sense of being disciplined.'¹⁷⁷ However, Janik does not think that this dimension of language use exhausts the political character of our employing concepts. What is political in the use of concepts and the ways we act associated with concepts springs from the fact that employment of concepts and following grammatical rules are not homogenous among language users. Our concepts and, therefore our ways of acting, are always contested by different ways to employ concepts and hence act differently. The contestation and disagreement among language users in employing concepts are as essential and significant as the mutual attunement and agreement among them. The grammar of certain explicitly political concepts such as justice, power, equality, and

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 107

freedom allows significantly different, and frequently conflicting, applications of these concepts. For Janik, what is political is rooted in our ability to apply these concepts in creative and yet opposing ways. The heterogeneity of the ways we apply these concepts is due to our ability to interfere with the agreement that renders possible the circulation of these concepts. This interference with the agreement may take several forms but at the end it relies upon our ability to invent new uses of these concepts, politics being one of the forms of our inventiveness.

Concluding Remarks

What kind of politics is the politics of grammar? If grammar is pervasive in the lives of language users, then the concept of the politics of grammar seems to lose its capacity to distinguish our specifically political concerns. The claim that using language means being constrained seems to deflate the meaning of being constrained. A bounded space of possibility is the condition of possibility of human action in the sense that action is only possible in the medium of certain constraints. A politics that aims at erasing each and every kind of constraint from human life, then, is not only futile but paralyzing. In the same fashion, a politics that emphasizes the ineluctability and absoluteness of constraints in our lives is equally misleading. The sheer existence of constraints is not a matter of politics for language users who have to act always in a bounded space of possibilities. On the contrary, the descriptions that make human actions possible are scattered through the historical sediments of our practices without forming a total system.

Politics, then, is not concerned with constraints as such, but with the specific constraints of this or that set of descriptions.

Janik suggests that the sheer existence of grammatical rules in our speech and actions does not tell anything by itself with regard to politics of grammar. He claims that what necessarily characterizes language users as political is the actual relationships that language users have with actual grammatical rules and criteria. For example, there is a grammar of the concept of justice that makes possible its use in our language games. However, the grammar of justice works precisely because it allows conflicting applications of the concept. In his genealogical inquiries, Foucault shows that the emergence of the systems of constraints attached to our ways to employ certain concept clusters, such as those around madness, sexuality, and crime, is neither a manifestation of any kind of necessity nor the realization of a rational kernel. Thus, Foucault's genealogies invite us to see that even if these concepts seem to have converging uses in our present, the histories of their formation are responsive to diverging, that is political, uses of these concepts. In Foucault, what is political lies in the way we relate to these constraints and the kind of claims they have over our lives. He analyzes those constraints which create the illusion that they are historically final and necessary due to their rational character. Foucault's genealogies aim to uncover the contingent historical formation of these epistemic structures to show that the present constraints that are brought into our lives as necessary and rational share the same fate with all historical forms: to be overcome and replaced. Even Wittgenstein and Foucault's therapeutic mode of thought will share the same fate. As the present to which their thought is responsive becomes our past,

Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts will lose their immediate claims on the ways we think and become part of our archive.

Chapter 3

Introduction

The fact that both Wittgenstein and Foucault have been identified and criticized as conservative thinkers¹⁷⁸ allows us to recognize similarities between their thought in the mirror of these criticisms, and in the similarities of the resources that can be mustered against such criticisms from within their philosophies. Most of the conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein and Foucault are articulated on the basis of what we can call the problem of normativity which points to the alleged lack of any rational norms in their works for a coherent philosophical criticism in the service of fundamental radical transformations of social and political conditions. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the similarities between accusations of conservatism directed against Wittgenstein and Foucault, and show that these similarities, rather than being coincidental, spring from the similarities of the insights, perspectives, and instruments Wittgenstein and Foucault share in their philosophical works. I will first present an overview of the conservative

¹⁷⁸ At this point, it is necessary to clarify that those who qualify Wittgenstein as a conservative thinker do not necessarily criticize him for being so. On the contrary, Wittgenstein's conservatism is mostly considered to be what makes his philosophical thought consistent and self-contained. Those who call Foucault a conservative thinker, on the other hand, consider his conservatism a contradictory and inconsistent element in his work. While Wittgenstein is thought to be a self-consciously committed conservative, Foucault is seen to be a victim of his own thought who has fallen into conservatism in trying to be a defender of politics of radical transformation. The questions 'Why does Wittgenstein's thought allow sympathetic conservative interpretations, not necessarily accompanied by criticisms?' and 'Why does a conservative interpretation of Foucault have to be, at the same time, a criticism of his work?' are interesting questions in their own rights, and pursuing these questions may allow us to understand them further. However, such a task is outside the scope of my arguments with respect to the problem of normativity. Therefore, I bracket this difference to focus on the similar conceptual structures embodying conservative interpretations of their works.

interpretations to demarcate the problem of normativity. Then, I will focus on two paradigmatic examples of the conservative interpretations as embodied in Ernest Gellner's and Jurgen Habermas' respective criticisms of Wittgenstein and Foucault. In the final section of this chapter, I will develop philosophical responses against the charges of conservatism by arguing that the conservative interpretations are based on one-sided and narrow readings of Wittgenstein's and Foucault's works.

An Overview

It is possible to summarily grasp the problem of normativity as the central component of conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein through his example of the standard meter stick in Paris. "There is one thing of which one can say neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard metre in Paris."¹⁷⁹ This example is about the standing of our criteria with respect to our linguistic practices. The standard meter stick has the ultimate authority in saying how long a meter is. What gives it such an indisputable authority is the agreement to accept its length as the definition of a meter. The special place it has in our language games of measurement renders it an unmeasurable object precisely because all of our measurement practices in the metric system refer back to it. From the perspective of conservative interpretations, Wittgenstein's point in emphasizing the unmeasurability of the standard meter stick is that the conventional rules of our grammar in relation to our linguistic practices have the same normative standing as the standard meter stick in our ordinary practices of measurement carried out in the metric system. It follows from this analogy that the

¹⁷⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 50.

conventional grammatical rules have also the property of unmeasurability due to their roles in our language games. As our measurements can be right or wrong only in reference to the standard meter stick, our practices can be evaluated as right or wrong only in reference to existing grammatical criteria. The conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein define the moral of this example as a form of quietism. Philosophy shows how our practices are possible on the basis of socially established criteria, and, on this account, the positive critical role of philosophy is to relieve us from mental cramps by providing a descriptive therapeutic account of these socially established criteria. Yet, it cannot judge and evaluate those criteria. Nor can it propose better ones. Such an attempt would be equivalent to saying that the standard meter stick is not exactly a meter long. The problem with such an attempt to measure the standard meter stick is not that it is inaccurate, but that the very condition of the possibility of our measurement practices excludes the possibility of measuring the standard meter stick as a meaningful option. The therapeutic effect, in this sense, is to prepare the ground on which we acknowledge the constitutive role of grammatical criteria in the ways we speak and act. To sum up, the conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein take the unmeasurability of the standard meter stick as a paradigm example of the uncriticizability of conventional grammatical norms.

As I will argue, Wittgenstein's point in the example of the meter stick is not to suggest quietism. On the contrary, the meter stick example itself is a form of philosophical exercise to demystify our criteria by way of vocalizing and articulating our relationship to grammatical rules. In the context of the Wittgenstein and Foucault connection, the standard meter stick example shows the inadequacy of certain specific

forms of criticism in areas where the discourses of human sciences claim a form of authority over our lives as rigid and pervasive as the standard meter stick in Paris does over our measuring practices. One, perhaps, cannot say how long the standard meter is, but she does not have to commit to a form of quietism based on the unmeasurability of the standard meter stick. Wittgenstein's example motivates us not to be silent, but ask ourselves how the standard meter stick has come to occupy the place it occupies and exercise its authority in our language games of measurements. The critical task, in this sense, is not to ask the meaningless question of how long the standard meter stick is, and thereby reduce the critical philosophical attitude to the question the accuracy of our measurements. The critical task is to demystify the standard meter stick and thereby prevent ourselves from being captivated by it. To comprehend the role of the standard meter stick on the background of its history renders it a transformable object if the need and desire to transform it emerges.

Similar to Wittgenstein's case, the conservative interpretations of Foucault see a normative paradox in Foucault's criticisms of the historical forms of rationality that emerged in the 18th and the 19th centuries as the human sciences. Foucault not only provides minute descriptions of mechanisms of domination entangled with the discourses of human sciences, but also claims that the mainstream critical terms such as rights and legitimacy (liberalism), class struggle and ideology critique (Marxism), and repression (psychoanalysis) are blind to these mechanisms. These normative concepts are too general and totalistic, and therefore they fail to articulate specific mechanisms of power. The charges of conservatism against Foucault claim that even if one takes his genealogical works to be historically accurate and his criticisms against mainstream

normative terms to be plausible, Foucault does not point to any other resources of critical norms that would ground a rational and coherent critique of modern mechanisms of power.¹⁸⁰ From the perspective of conservative interpretations, Foucault draws a picture of our modern life in which neither truth nor knowledge can guide the oppressed to emancipation. In this allegedly Foucauldian view, as opposed to the common rationalist sentiment, truth does not liberate the oppressed, but subjects them to a 'regime of truth'. In the same fashion, the more knowledge we produce about ourselves, the more objectified we get in epistemic structures. Accordingly, in Foucault's genealogical works, reason, truth, and knowledge are so inseparably entangled with mechanisms of domination that it is an illusion, if not a strategy of power, to take them as normative resources for criticizing our practices. Foucault's ardent critic Habermas provides a compact formulation of this criticism: "Foucault contrasts his critique of power with the 'analysis of truth' in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter."¹⁸¹ Thus, Foucault's paradox is that the very concepts and values Foucault's work sets out to undermine are the concepts and values necessary for his work to have any normative content at all. Consequently, either Foucault's paradox cannot be resolved rendering his genealogies inconsistent, or the paradox is resolved if we assume that he has an implicit, and perhaps unwilling, romantic commitment to forms of authority other than the rational ones. In either case,

¹⁸⁰ Aesthetics seems to be the only normative source Foucault manifestly endorses towards the end of his life. However, Foucault's pointing to aesthetics as a source of norms for self-fashioning does not exactly address the criticisms against his work. Even if aesthetics enables our critical practices, it would be a too instrumental understanding of aesthetics to derive norms for a critical discourse from it. Thus, Foucault's emphasis on aesthetics should be evaluated in its own terms rather than in terms of its bearings on critical discourses.

¹⁸¹ Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Blackwell, 1986), 108.

the demands and needs for radical social political transformations cannot be consistently articulated in the medium of Foucauldian genealogy.

The charges of conservatism against Foucault can be deflected in the context of Wittgenstein's standard meter stick example. For Foucault, the knowledge claims and truths generated in the medium of human sciences have gained a form of authority in our lives similar to that of the standard meter stick in Paris, except that while the historical contingency¹⁸² of our agreement to use the standard meter stick as the criterion of our measurements in metric system is self-evident, the discourses of human sciences claim to produce universal and necessary truths and knowledge, systematically suppressing the contingent element in the perspective from which they speak. As Wittgenstein's point is not about the accuracy of the results of our practices of measurements, which can be evaluated and corrected in so many different ways, Foucault is not so much interested in the validity and accuracy of specific truths and knowledge claims of human sciences. Foucault's point is that the discourses of human sciences are historical forms of rationality that render ourselves intelligible to us. As Wittgenstein does not ask how long the standard meter stick is, Foucault does not ask how true and accurate the truth and knowledge claims of the human sciences are. He is rather concerned with the history of how 'scientific' knowledge and 'scientific' truth generated in the discourses of the human sciences have come to occupy the central hegemonic place in our human capacity and ability to make sense of ourselves.¹⁸³ In this sense, similar to Wittgenstein's

¹⁸² It is the contingency of the length of the standard meter that forces us to keep it in Paris as an embodied criterion. The unmeasurability of the standard meter stick also manifests itself in its unrepresentability in forms other than its own singular form, i.e. as itself.

¹⁸³ This, of course, does not mean that Foucault's genealogical interests can be reduced to hermeneutical concerns, because these forms of self-understanding are not only our own making, but, as shown in the

demystification of our grammatical criteria, Foucault's genealogies are historical reminders not to be captivated by the pictures of ourselves drawn by the human sciences so that we are able to intervene in and interrupt the contingent and arbitrary elements in these pictures which, in the name of universality and rational necessity, create discontents and dissatisfactions by forming spaces of subjectivity as the sites of asymmetrical power relations.

The Portrait of Wittgenstein as a Conservative Thinker by Ernest Gellner

The Wittgensteinian Diversion

Gellner thinks of Wittgenstein's philosophy as the beginning point of a larger philosophical movement that we nowadays call the linguistic turn and that Gellner simply names linguistic philosophy.¹⁸⁴ He sees Wittgenstein as the initiator of this philosophical movement but does not necessarily distinguish Wittgenstein's philosophy from that of the other important figures such as G. E. Moore and J. L. Austin. Therefore, Wittgenstein's thought appears in Gellner's criticisms of this movement as a manifestation of the basic tenets of linguistic philosophy. Linguistic philosophy sees traditional ways of philosophical questioning as an 'abuse of ordinary language'. Philosophical questionings about the issues such as knowledge, truth, being, and meaning are simply a sign of confusion or misunderstanding. These concepts are used appropriately in their contexts by competent language users without provoking any philosophical questions. When used

previous chapter, also forms of making ourselves – meaning that they have direct bearings on the ways our lives take shape.

¹⁸⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Words and Things: An Examination of, and an Attack on, Linguistic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2005)

in their proper contexts, these concepts do not raise any unanswerable question as to what they mean. They become a source of confusion when philosophers detach them from the contexts of their uses. In other words, the actual use of a concept is not simply an arbitrary occasion where the meaning of the concept manifests itself. The actual use is constitutive of the meaning of the concept. Philosophers look for clarity, exactness, and determinacy in the meaning of a concept in their philosophical questionings. When the concept in question is irresponsive to these philosophical demands, the questioning results in philosophical anxiety and frustration.

For Gellner, the use theory of meaning is a conservative attack on the philosophical *ethos* to search for truth and knowledge on rational grounds. Wittgenstein thinks that the appropriate form of philosophy is conceptual therapy which shows the philosophers that the source of anxiety and frustration is not the inexactness of our concepts but our very demand for exactness. What seems a deficiency to philosophers is, in fact, the condition of the possibility of a concept to be a functioning element in our linguistic practices. Hence, in Gellner's interpretation, the aim of philosophical questioning according to linguistic philosophers is to acknowledge that the meaning of a concept is shaped by its place in our language games. We play language games by exchanging words. Even if the exchange of words takes place under grammatical rules, the agreement by language users on these rules is both the necessary and the sufficient condition for the rules to be valid and effective. Moreover, this agreement is never in a state of crystalline purity that philosophers crave for. Indeed, it is as impure as it can get. It is contaminated not only by the social and historical conditions but also by the desires, interest, fears, and needs of language users. This means that the medium of language is

never transparent enough for us to see the world as it is. In this sense, it is futile to criticize our concepts and offer new ones because no criteria are available to make a distinction among competing concepts.

Beside these more general observations and criticisms, Gellner specifically addresses what he considers as a problematic philosophical position linguistic philosophy occupies with respect to the tasks of modern thought. He thinks that the main tasks of modern thought are shaped by two specific problems, namely, the problem of validation and the problem of enchantment.¹⁸⁵ The problem of validation has its roots in the development of liberal individualistic societies where the individual must justify what she says and does without recourse to a clerical and/or political authority. However, in a society where political and/or clerical authority is not the terminal point of the chain of justification, reason pursues a final ground of justification which is deferred *ad infinitum*. As beautifully expressed in Lewis Carroll's "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles", each and every premise of a rationally sound argument requires at least one reason for its justification. Yet, each and every reason standing as a justification of a premise becomes a premise in the reasoning process requiring further reasons to be justified. At the heart of the problem of validation, then, lies the problem of infinite regress which points to the impossibility to validate a truth claim outside the framework of its presumptions. Gellner thinks that the problem gets more complicated as the problem of validation equally applies to procedures to disprove and invalidate 'rival' truth claims. Thus, we can neither validate nor invalidate truth claims including the ones that seem to us most obvious and self-evident or absurd and contradictory.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 3

Linguistic philosophy in general, and in Wittgenstein specifically, develops responses to the problem of validation in modern thought, but Gellner claims that these responses do not qualify as an actual and serious philosophical engagement with the challenge the problem poses for modern thought. They are, in fact, ways of avoiding the challenge by some unjustifiable philosophical maneuvers. The tactic Wittgenstein employs to bypass the validation problem is what Gellner calls ‘the meaning ploy’ by which the concept of meaning unjustifiably replaces the concept of truth. The problem of validation paralyzes the philosopher because she can neither put forward any philosophical truth nor criticize other rival philosophical truth claims without getting trapped in the problem of regress. Therefore, instead of employing truthfulness as a criterion in her critical engagement with philosophical problems, she appeals to meaningfulness as the critical term in developing her own philosophical claims or in criticizing the rival philosophical theses. Philosophical discussions on meaning and meaninglessness of statements in the context of linguistic philosophy are substitutes for genuine philosophical deliberations, produced as an expression of philosophical despair before the problem of validation. If you cannot criticize a set of philosophical claims by showing that they are not true, you can show that they are meaningless. Hence, linguistic philosophy replaces truth as the central critical term with that of meaning.

The problem of enchantment, as the term suggests, is a reference to Max Weber’s diagnostic concept of disenchantment as the underlying condition of life in modern times. Modern science, technology, rational organization of mass society, and the like have brought comfort and affluence to our lives in certain areas. However, “these in their turn

destroy warmth, idiosyncrasy, individualism, magic, enchantment.”¹⁸⁶ In his famous speech, now a classic article, “Science as a Vocation”, Weber states that there is a direct connection between disenchantment and the intelligibility of the world within rational forms of scientific knowledge. The world becomes more and more accessible and available for our habitation through the accumulation of scientific knowledge. However, this does not necessarily mean that under the conditions of modernity we have become more and more knowledgeable about the conditions of our lives. Weber gives the example of a streetcar, which we can generalize to any item in our surrounding, and claims that unless one is a specialist, she cannot know how it works. She does not have to know in order to ride in it either. The epistemic condition leading to disenchantment is the pervasiveness of the possibility of calculative knowledge: “...one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted.”¹⁸⁷ Disenchantment, in this sense, is a paradoxical social condition under which the more the world becomes intelligible the more it becomes devoid of meaning. The more we know the world the less it means to us. The closer we look at the world, the further away it stands from us. As the complex production and knowledge structures that make a streetcar possible demystify the world by rendering it accessible and available as an object of knowledge, they simultaneously re-mystify it due to the parallel complexity of the structures of the division of intellectual labor which render these structures of knowledge inaccessible for non-specialists.

According to Gellner, disenchantment has direct bearings on philosophy, because under the conditions of disenchantment, ordinary language becomes more and more

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 15

¹⁸⁷ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (Oxford University Press, 1946), 8.

inadequate to make sense and provide a critical account of our surrounding. If we are to refer back to Weber's example of the streetcar, only a complex web of specialized terminologies and languages can fully render it intelligible, even if it is a common and ordinary object of life. In this sense, our life is surrounded by objects and events our ordinary language fails to render intelligible. Gellner concludes that one feels at home when her 'intuitive conceptualization of the world' seems adequate enough. Since the disenchanted world denies this possibility to its inhabitants, a perpetual homelessness necessarily accompanies us under the conditions of disenchantment. Gellner summarizes the relationship between disenchantment and ordinary language as "the loss of confidence in one's own natural idiom."¹⁸⁸

Gellner criticizes Wittgenstein as blind to the conditions of disenchantment. Wittgenstein, he claims, has overconfidence in the capabilities and abilities of ordinary language to articulate our experience and the conditions under which we live. In this way, Wittgenstein's philosophy functions like an ideological apparatus to render the effects of disenchantment over our lives invisible. Disenchantment is the loss of confidence in one's ordinary speech, and Wittgenstein claims to reinstate the authority of ordinary language without paying any attention to the historical and material conditions which have led to the loss of confidence in ordinary speech in the first place. The historical context in which Wittgenstein writes, and is read, is the least likely one to celebrate ordinary speech and its forms of articulation, precisely because ordinary speech more and more loses its grip on life under the conditions of disenchantment. Therefore the authority of ordinary language Wittgenstein reinstates in his philosophical work is nothing but an

¹⁸⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Words and Things: An Examination of, and an Attack on, Linguistic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2005), 26.

ideological phantasm that conceals rather than reveals the conditions of disenchantment. Understood in these terms, his philosophy is false re-enchantment.

The Four Pillars of Linguistic Philosophy

Gellner identifies four pillars on which Wittgenstein builds his most critical concepts such as language games, family resemblances, and forms of life. These are:

1- *The argument from the paradigm case*: In Gellner's portrait of linguistic philosophy this pillar stands out as the most basic. It points to the linguistic philosopher's conviction that the actual use of any word (including philosophically relevant ones) in ordinary contexts is the only and ultimate source of appeal with respect to its meaning. Accordingly, the linguistic philosopher unquestionably relies on paradigmatic ordinary uses of concepts in dissolving philosophical problems. Philosophical problems arise precisely because philosophers seek a fixed meaning for the concepts like truth, knowledge, meaning, etc. outside the ways these concepts are used in ordinary linguistic practices. It is alarming for Gellner that the use theory of meaning elevates the contingent agreement among language users to the position of the ultimate authority in establishing the standards of rationality. "Linguistic Philosophy is the buttressing up of common sense by an argument based on a theory of meaning namely that 'the meaning of an expression is its use.'"¹⁸⁹ The argument from the paradigm case, aside from being philosophically untenable, has an inevitable conservative ideological dimensions.

Linguistic Philosophy is not merely unacceptable but also inherently inconsistent: in as far as it maintains that no criteria outside the actual use of language can be found for that use, it thereby entails irrationalism as defined: but in as far as this doctrine can also be read as maintaining 'that all propositions are perfectly in order as they are', it can also be shown to entail a conservatism.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 65

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 224

In this sense, philosophy and ideology merge into one another inseparably, and based on this insight, Gellner argues that Wittgenstein's commitment to take ordinary uses of words as the ultimate source of appeal is an expression of romantic and conservative sentiments in Europe that emerged as a reaction to the Enlightenment ideals. Accordingly, Wittgenstein's concepts of 'form of life' and 'language games' allow no rational criticism of the ways lives are lived and language games are played.

2- *Generalized naturalistic fallacy*: In reference to G. E. Moore's concept of naturalistic fallacy, Gellner thinks that the linguistic philosopher commits the fallacy of deriving norms from facts. According to Moore, numerous ethical philosophical accounts attempt to explain what is 'good' in terms of some natural property of actions and things such as useful, pleasurable, etc.¹⁹¹ However Moore thinks that the concept of good is simple and therefore indefinable as opposed to complex concepts which can be defined in terms of the analytical relations between qualities and properties they refer to. He employs what is called the open question argument to make his point. When the concept of good is defined and explained by a property, say usefulness, it is always possible to ask the meaningful question if doing useful things is good. If usefulness is a definition of the good, the answer must have the form of tautology (X is X). However, in the case of usefulness the answer is informative (X is Y), and therefore not tautological. Moore concludes that "If I am asked 'What is good?' my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter."¹⁹² Gellner claims that committing a generalized version of the naturalistic fallacy amounts to a reduction of the task of philosopher to that of

¹⁹¹ G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Prometheus Books, 1988)

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 6

'philologists and lexicographers.'¹⁹³ The philosopher's task cannot merely be to register linguistic facts, because, contrary to the presumption of the linguistic philosopher and as indicated by Moore's naturalistic fallacy, there is no easy and direct access from facts of language to linguistic philosophy.

3- *The contrast theory of meaning*: This presumption of the linguistic philosopher is the mirror image of the argument from the paradigm case. While argument from the paradigm case assumes that in order for a word to have a meaning, there must be paradigm cases in which a fact, a situation, or an abstract function falls under it in an ordinary context, according to the contrast theory of meaning if a word is to have a meaning, there must be at least one paradigm case in which it does not apply. The linguistic philosopher uses these two presumptions in combination to dismantle philosophical concepts by claiming that they are either too general, having application in each and every imaginable relevant case, or too narrow and speculative, having no application in ordinary contexts. Gellner uses the contrast theory of meaning against itself to argue that the linguistic philosopher's vision of language is misleading. The contrast theory of meaning falsifies itself because its range of application covers each and every linguistic practice, leaving no room for a case in contrast to what it means. Hence the contrast theory of meaning cannot satisfy the criterion it formulates with respect to linguistic practices. This self-contradiction is due to the blindness of the linguistic philosopher towards the unifying functions of language in favor of its functions to separate.

¹⁹³ Ernest Gellner, *Words and Things: An Examination of, and an Attack on, Linguistic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2005), 72.

4- *Polymorphism*: The last one of the pillars points to the irreducible and open-ended plurality of uses of words in equally numerous kinds of language games. Therefore, “general assertions about the use of words are impossible.”¹⁹⁴ This pillar, like the previous two, rises on the ground of the argument from the paradigm case, for in her pursuit of paradigm cases, the linguistic philosopher discovers that each paradigm is unique and irreducible. The rich varieties of the forms linguistic practices take are not instances in which a coherent and uniform rationality manifests itself. Notwithstanding the complex relations and overlapping points among families of language games, paradigmatic uses of words are self-contained, having their own unique horizon of meaning. Moreover, the uncertainties, indistinctiveness, and opaqueness polymorphism introduces into the linguistic space are not obstacles to our meaning producing activities, but, on the contrary, necessary conditions for a satisfactory flow of linguistic exchanges among language users. In Gellner’s own formulation, polymorphism is a philosophical commitment to the vision that “[our] concepts, being the verbal activities of complex organism in a complex social and natural environment, are bound to be untidy.”¹⁹⁵ Gellner’s critical employment of the concept of polymorphism is twofold. First, he argues that linguistic philosophy is not an articulated engagement with traditional philosophy but a simple reversal of its basic vision of language and the world, keeping all its problematic aspects in their reversed form. “Past philosophy assumed one language and many or problematic ‘worlds’ or realms. Linguistic Philosophy has many language uses in one unproblematic world.”¹⁹⁶ In this sense, polymorphism is the way by which the linguistic philosopher dislodges the authority of philosophy to problematize the world. Second, the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 62

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 80

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 86

linguistic philosopher's celebratory emphasis on the polymorphous aspects of our language blinds her to cohering and unifying functions of language.

In Gellner's understanding, our capacity and skill to criticize and transform our practices are based on our ability to transcend the socio-historical conditions and see beyond the context within which our linguistic practices arise. Transcending the social conventions is the condition of the possibility of any critical discourse. In Wittgenstein's thought, Gellner argues, there is a hermetically sealed relationship between language games and forms of life. Whenever one thinks beyond a particular form of life, she steps out of the context that makes her speech meaningful. However, the livelihood, that is, the meaningfulness, of any language game is conditioned by the context. No language game can breathe outside the limits of its own form of life. Any attempt to criticize a particular practice is either pseudo-criticism or it is plain nonsense. Critique can make sense only at the cost of undermining its own critical character because its meaning has to be based on its sharing the basic conventions and agreements on the basis of which the criticized practice itself is possible. If critique targets those very conventions and agreements, then, from the perspective of linguistic philosophy, it undermines its own conditions of meaningfulness and becomes nonsense.

In Gellner's view, Wittgenstein's account of language denies thought the possibility to have any degree of autonomy from its social and historical conditions, because in his philosophy, our intellectual abilities and capabilities are 'bound and enslaved' by the normative structures of the ordinary. In suggesting that the appropriate response to philosophical questions is therapy, linguistic philosophy in general and Wittgenstein specifically imply that philosophical form of thinking is a linguistic

pathology. For Gellner, however, “what Linguistic Philosophy considers to be the essence of the pathology of thought – namely, shifts in meaning – is, on the contrary, the essence of genuine thought.” Genuine thinking, intellectual progress, the development of better and more perceptive concepts do not fit in the picture of language emerged on the basis of four pillars, because novelty, creativity, and progress in thought all require serious violations of the principles of linguistic philosophy. Genuinely new ideas are able to articulate what they express by criticizing, i.e. in Gellner’s view stepping outside, the existing language games.

Moreover, as Wittgenstein suggests that the role of philosophy is to describe and not to explain, his philosophy forgoes any normative role with respect to the evaluation of different discourses. For him, a religious fundamentalist discourse is as meaningful and rational as, say, the discourse of evolutionary biology, even if they narrate conflicting stories about how we become who we are. At this point, Wittgenstein’s philosophy endorses quietism, irrationalism, and conservatism in an unstable and inconsistent combination. It is quietist because it does not have anything to say to intervene in social/political disputes and struggles such as the one between fundamentalist religious discourses and the discourses of science. It is irrational with respect to social/political choices, because no such choice can be evaluated and justified independently from the terms of the chosen social/political position. The claims of the evolutionary biologist and the religious fundamentalist are equally justified within the framework of language games they play. Finally, it is politically conservative, precisely because it cannot articulate any political reason to rationally criticize and transform the existing forms of life each of which is rational and meaningful according to its own internal normative structure.

The Portrait of Foucault as a Young Conservative by Jurgen Habermas

I begin this section by reusing the quotation by Habermas I refer to in the beginning of this chapter: “Foucault contrasts his critique of power with the ‘analysis of truth’ in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter.”¹⁹⁷ In criticizing Wittgenstein, Gellner uses the same metaphor of the yardstick to point to the lack of normative resources necessary for a critical discourse in his account of language. “In as far as there is no such logical-linguistic absolute, all other languages are indeed ‘perfect’ – though only in the left handed sense that there is no yardstick in terms of which they could be measured.”¹⁹⁸ It is not possible to equate Gellner’s and Habermas’ respective criticisms of Wittgenstein and Foucault in terms of the depth and rigor of their arguments. Gellner is openly hostile to Wittgenstein’s philosophy, and he considers linguistic philosophy as a whole an alien enterprise to critical creative thought. Even if Habermas’ criticism of Foucault has its own moments of unarticulated and unjustified hostility toward Foucault’s genealogies, in general, he takes their themes and problematics seriously enough that he recognizes the critical/creative potentials of the kind of a philosophical undertaking Foucault initiates. As a result, Gellner’s criticisms of Wittgenstein are hasty and superficial, while Habermas’ are thoughtful and engaging. Nonetheless, the thematic and structural similarities in their criticisms of Wittgenstein and Foucault are striking in that they

¹⁹⁷ Jürgen Habermas, “Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present,” in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Blackwell, 1986), 108.

¹⁹⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Words and Things: An Examination of, and an Attack on, Linguistic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2005), 92.

mutually reveal each other's deeper dimensions enabling us to respond to them in more satisfactory ways.

Just as Gellner accuses Wittgenstein of accepting uncritically the ways we live our lives, Habermas criticizes Foucault for being a conservative in disguise who turns a blind eye to the possibilities of rational scrutiny and evaluation of our practices. Habermas thinks that Foucault's analytics of power presents us a 'crypto-normative' account of modern relations of dominations. Foucault painstakingly describes modern disciplinary practices that are, to say the least, revolting for our modern political sensibilities. Yet, Habermas thinks that Foucault's works are impaired by an internal contradiction. In Foucault's work, what makes our modern political sensibility possible, that is, a humanistic picture of ourselves, is also a collaborator in disciplinary practices. In other words, what makes disciplinary practices appear to be revolting to us is itself an element of those disciplinary practices. The modern political subject endowed with political and legal rights is as much a product of disciplinary technologies as it is a product of contractual legal discourses of modernity. Habermas, in this context, protests that Foucault's unqualified characterization of humanistic values as collaborators in the proliferation of disciplinary mechanisms of power leaves no room for a normative framework necessary for a philosophical/political criticism of these disciplinary mechanisms. He argues that, in the absence of such a normative framework and despite Foucault's own personal political engagements, his work betrays Foucault's own political positioning of himself with those who are dominated within the disciplinary mechanisms of power.

In order to have a grasp of the effective range and implications of these three points in Habermas' criticisms of Foucault, we should have a clear view of his expository narration of Foucault's intellectual journey. According to Habermas' reading, Foucault begins his philosophical journey as an archaeologist of discursive structures called human sciences, and, later, the methodological problems of his early archaeological approach leads him towards developing a genealogical position as a response to these problems. "The turn to a theory of power must, rather, be understood as an internally motivated attack on problems with which Foucault saw himself confronted after he had carried out his unmasking of the human sciences in *The Order of Things* using only the tools of discursive analysis."¹⁹⁹ Accordingly, Habermas thinks that the problems pervasive in Foucault's genealogies have their roots in his early archaeological works.

Habermas considers Foucault's first major work, *Madness and Civilization*, as an attempt to synthesize a structuralist methodology with depth hermeneutics. On the one hand, Foucault, in this work, brackets the contents of knowledge claims produced in the rational/scientific discourses on madness in favor of a quasi-structuralist analysis of the discursive structures that render those knowledge claims possible. He captures the emergence of madness as a medical phenomenon on a formal level, treating the medical/psychiatric concept of madness as a form that draws limits between the realm of reason and that of unreason. On the other hand, in a romantic move, which Foucault recognizes as a mistake later on, he thinks that there is an authentic experience of madness the truth of which should be emancipated from the discourses of psychiatry to be reinstated through a depth hermeneutics. Foucault's attempt to combine in his archaeology a quasi-structuralist methodology with a perspective of depth hermeneutics

¹⁹⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Polity Press, 1994), 57.

proves to be paradoxical. The paradox is twofold. First, some crucial elements of structuralism and depth hermeneutics in *Madness and Civilization* are incommensurable, if not irreconcilable. As a result, we have epistemic structures devoid of meaning (discourses of psychiatry), and, at the same time, an experience, though saturated by meaning, devoid of any structure (the authentic madness). Second, and perhaps more importantly, the structuralist method and the approach of depth hermeneutics prove problematic in their own rights. Foucault quickly realizes the problems of the hermeneutical approach with respect to the kind of critique of reason he would like to do, and gives up any hermeneutical inclination. However, the real problem of *Madness and Civilization* is that the structuralist methodology does not allow Foucault to develop an account of how rational/scientific discourses on madness are related to practices of confinement, exclusion, ordering of the asylum space, individuation of mental patients, etc. In short, as Foucault himself later accepts, the concept of power haunts *Madness and Civilization* precisely because it appears in the text as an unarticulated and undefined implication of the relations between the mad and the institutions of mental health.

According to Habermas, in the 1970's, at the beginning of his genealogical and more Nietzschean period, Foucault starts employing one of his key concepts, the will to truth, to connect practices of exclusion to the inner functioning of discourses. Foucault's critique of reason aims at showing the self-constitution of rational speech in which reason draws its own limits and thereby demarcates itself by excluding unreason from the terrain of reason. Habermas refers to a speech Foucault gives in 1970, "The Discourse on Language,"²⁰⁰ in which he identifies three historical mechanisms in which rational discourses draw their boundaries to sustain and maintain their rational identity. The first,

²⁰⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & Discourse on Language* (Pantheon Books, 1972)

and probably philosophically the least interesting, is open censorship and prohibition through which undesired contents and themes are suppressed and silenced in the name of the purity and uniformity of the bounded territory of rational discourses. The second mechanism of exclusion is based on the division between madness and reason through which the speech of the mad becomes “null and void”. Foucault recognizes that his characterization of rational discourses on madness as a monologue in *Madness and Civilization* is not exactly accurate any more due to the emergence of discourses like psychoanalysis. However, he thinks that reason’s self-identification through the exclusion of madness is an ongoing project in which the boundary between reason and unreason is constantly redrawn. Finally, and most importantly for Foucault, the rules and procedures to exclude the false and the erroneous from the realm of truth are the most effective discursive mechanisms for reason to maintain and sustain its self-integrity.

In Habermas’s words, Foucault thinks that “[t]ruth is an insidious mechanism of exclusion, it only functions on condition that the *will to truth* prevalent within it remains hidden.” (Habermas 1994, p. 56) Foucault’s Nietzschean appeal to the concept of the will to truth is his attempt to fill the gap between discursive formations and coercive and exclusive practices in institutions like mental asylums where these discourses claim exclusive authority through supervisory isolation of the inhabitants of these institutions. Accordingly, the will to truth that plays an inevitable role in the formation of discourses by setting up procedures and rules to distinguish true statements from the false ones is also the will to power to act over the lives of those about whom the discourses establish an accumulative network of true statements. The power effects of the discourses of human sciences need to be unmasked precisely because the will to power effective in the

formation of rules and procedures of truth is invisible to those charmed by truth. The will to power is invisible to us because we commit to the illusion that truth is transparent, hiding nothing behind it. To a certain extent, Habermas is forgiving to the problems of Foucault's archaeology as honest confusions and mistakes. He thinks, however, that Foucault's appeal to the concept of the will to truth as an expression of the will to power is, so to speak, his first sin which will perpetuate itself endlessly in his later genealogical work. With this philosophical move from structuralism to a Nietzschean vision of the omnipresence of power, Foucault steps out from the legitimate project of a reasoned critique of reason to the unjustifiable partisanship of the anti-Enlightenment tradition. This move takes him further away from the possibility of the recognition of the "lack of coercion of the cogent argument by which truth claims, and validity claims in general, prevail."²⁰¹ In a similar fashion to Gellner's criticism of Wittgenstein, Habermas thinks that Foucault avoids the problem of validity, and therefore is blind to the critical possibilities a serious intellectual engagement with it would offer. Gellner criticizes Wittgenstein for removing from the horizon of his thought truth and truthfulness as the philosophical *ethos* by leveling truth and validity to mundane and random elements in our ordinary linguistic practices, denying in the process the potentials of truth to transcend its social context. In a similar vein, Habermas criticizes Foucault for reducing truth to the contingent effects generated by the practices of power, denying its communicative and non-coercive potentials in the context of inter-subjective action. It should be noted here that Habermas' own philosophical project recognizes that the truths of instrumental reason can be entangled with power structures. In this sense, he criticizes Foucault to

²⁰¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Polity Press, 1994), 56.

have a reductionist, and hence, monolithic understanding of truth which is blind to the fundamental differences between truth claims generated in different spheres of reason.

Besides Foucault's identification of the non-coercive authority of truth with contingent coercive power relations, the place of the concept of the will to power in the genealogical historiography creates a serious tension with Foucault's self-proclaimed anti-presentism. While his anti-presentism is based on the rejection of all forms of transcendence, the will to power emerges in Foucault's genealogies as having all the privileges of a historical constant that transcends the present. Presentism is mainly a mode of self-privileging through which modern thought recognizes its distinctiveness as a form of epistemic superiority over the past forms of rationality. Foucault proposes that one should suspend, if not abandon, such judgments in questioning the present:

I think we should have the modesty to say to ourselves that, on the one hand, the time we live in is not *the* unique or fundamental or irruptive point in history where everything is completed and begun again. We must also have the modesty to say, on the other hand, that – even without this solemnity – the time we live in is very interesting; it needs to be analyzed and broken down...With the proviso that we do not allow ourselves the facile, rather theatrical declaration that this moment in which we exist is one of total perdition, in the abyss of darkness, or a triumphant day break, etc. It is a time like any other, or rather, a time which is never quite like any other.²⁰²

Foucault proposes that genealogy is a mode of critical approach that enables one to recognize the radical difference of the present. This difference, however, should not be translated into the terms of historicist progressivism as an improvement. Neither should it be understood in romantic lines as a loss of the intimacy and comfort of a remote past. As different as it is, our present is also identical with the past in terms of its contingency. Just like any other present, our present is also formed and hardened by the events of the past. Yet, the movement from the past to the present is a blind one, not guided by rational

²⁰² Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977 – 1984* (Routledge, 1988), 35 – 6.

principles inherent to history. The intelligibility of the present is in contingent and scattered beginnings in the past which constitute what counts necessary for us in the present. Thus, revealing the contingent beginnings allows us to question and transform what appears to be necessary in our present.

However, Habermas thinks that even if we accept Foucault's criticisms of presentism, the validity of his anti-presentism does not entail the kind of historical view he has. Foucault denies that there are constants of history, such as class struggle, repression of libido, or unfolding of reason. Yet, Habermas thinks, power, or one might say the will to power, is exactly such a constant in his genealogies.

Just as "life" was once elevated by Bergson, Dilthey, and Simmel to the basic transcendental concept of a philosophy (which still formed the background to Heidegger's analytics of Dasein), so Foucault now raises "power" to a basic transcendental-historicist concept of historiography as critique of reason.²⁰³

In Foucault's genealogies, the formation of discourses follows no rules and forms of practice appear and disappear in a disorderly fashion not even leaving a historical sediment behind them. Yet, Foucault the genealogist sees through the dense layers of contingent events to the relentless struggles of power among various forces. Power, then, becomes the singular principle of intelligibility in his genealogies. Therefore, Habermas concludes, Foucault falls back on a transcendental form of historiography that he passionately criticizes in his genealogical works. He does not see in the proliferation of discursive formations reason's development through its self-critical and self-corrective ability. What proliferates is the empty sameness of the will to power in the disguise of the will to truth. Since the space of history, i.e. the space of discursivity, is ultimately

²⁰³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Polity Press, 1994), 62.

unconditioned and unbounded for Foucault, it becomes an empty stage for the comings and goings of power struggles.

Habermas claims that the emergence of the transcendental element in Foucault's genealogies of power relations is due to the fact that his thinking is trapped within the framework of the philosophy of the subject regardless of his overt rejection of the idea of an originary, constitutive, and unified subject. The philosophy of the subject reduces the relations between human actors and the world into two basic categories. The subject either enters into a cognitive relationship with the world through her true judgments about it, or she develops practical relations to the world through her successful actions.²⁰⁴ From the perspective of the philosophy of the subject, the success of the subject's actions is dependent on the truth of her judgments. In this picture, the power the subject holds is truth dependent. Foucault's genealogies, in Habermas' reading, present a mirror image of this picture. Instead of a power relying on the truth of the subject's judgments, we have a truth the validity of which relies on the successful operations of power. As a consequence, the subject is removed from its central and constitutive place only to be substituted by power itself which retains all constitutive and originary metaphysical privileges of the subject. Moreover, Habermas detects a positivistic passion in this strategy of reversal. "Anthropocentric thought is drawn, by the dynamism of boundless self-mastery on the part of a subject become reflective, into the vortex of objectivism, that is, of the objectification of man; the genealogy of knowledge is supposed, by contrast, to rise to true objectivity of knowledge."²⁰⁵ Habermas even thinks that what Foucault has in mind in terms of the epistemic status of his genealogies is exactly the

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 87

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 87

prestige and success the natural sciences have been enjoying since the scientific revolutions. The positivistic element is in Foucault's claim to describe hermeneutically empty disconnected historical events which are explainable in isolation from the meaning and validity claims of the involved actors. In this sense, Habermas takes Foucault's claim to be a "happy positivist" seriously, because the form in which Foucault describes the object of his genealogical studies cannot be distinguished from the way the natural sciences describes theirs. In this context, Habermas says, Foucault's identification of genealogy as an anti-science should be understood to "overcome the pseudo-sciences."²⁰⁶ Foucault's insistence on abstaining from making any normative judgments about the discursive events he describes, then, should be understood as a sign to his commitment to the possibility of a value-free historiography.

At the end of his critical evaluation of Foucault, Habermas writes the following statement concisely summing up what he considers to be the internal flaws in Foucault's genealogical works. "To the extent that it retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a non-participatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power, genealogical historiography emerges from its cocoon as precisely the *presentistic, relativistic, cryptonormative* illusory science that it does not want to be."²⁰⁷ These three problems are immanent to Foucault's genealogical discourse, because they are the direct results of three reductive philosophical presumptions that, to use Gellner's metaphor, function as pillars which support Foucault's genealogical account. Foucault reduces the meaning claims of the participants in discourses into the formal structures of discourses. In the absence of any hermeneutic attempt to decipher the self-understanding of the

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 88

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 88

participants of discourses, the genealogist's own present suppresses the historical voices of the actors of the past, and thereby hermeneutically pressures these discourses to speak the concerns and interests that strictly belong to the present of the genealogist. Foucault also reduces the validity claims to their discursive functions to produce power effects. Therefore the validity of each and every truth claim is relative to its functionality in "self-maintenance of a given totality of discourse. That is to say, the meaning of validity claims consists in the power effects they have."²⁰⁸ Foucault reduces the 'ought' to 'is' because, aside from his personal political engagements as a dissident intellectual, in his genealogical descriptions, his prose stoically abstains from taking any normative stance toward what he describes. In this sense Foucault would like his readers to deduce from his genealogical descriptions of power relations (the 'is') moral/political reasons (the 'ought') to develop and maintain critical attitudes towards the very same power relations.

Presentism:

Habermas' accusation of presentism in Foucault is a mirror image of Gellner's criticism of Wittgenstein's arguments from paradigm cases. While Gellner complains that Wittgenstein excessively relies on the meaning claims of ordinary language users (a form of radical hermeneutics), Habermas accuses Foucault of entirely ignoring the meaning claims and self-understanding of participant actors of the past (a form of radical historicism). According to Habermas, in Foucault's genealogical method, the genealogist "should not try to make comprehensible what actors are doing and thinking out of a context of tradition interwoven with the self-understanding of actors. He should rather explain the horizon within which such utterances can appear to be meaningful at all in

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 91

terms of *underlying* practices.”²⁰⁹ Habermas would like to see an account of ordinary meaning claims as well as the self-intelligibility of actors, but he would like this account to be separate from an account of the ‘horizon of underlying practices’. This is because, similar to Gellner, Habermas thinks that there is an analytically meaningful and philosophically significant difference between meaning claims and practices. Therefore, in Foucault’s descriptions of practices, he sees a void where the meaning of these practices should be.

In this context, the example he gives is very telling. In this example, Habermas imagines Foucault the genealogist inquiring into the prohibition of gladiatorial fights in Rome once the ruling elite of Rome converted to Christianity. In Habermas’ view, the prohibition is intelligible against the background of a hermeneutical shift in which the rulers of Rome no longer conceived the population under their reign as a herd of sheep, but rather children in need of care, guidance, and education. It is this hermeneutical shift that led the rulers of Rome to ban gladiatorial fights which were not appropriate for a population considered to be children.²¹⁰ In Habermas’ mind, Foucault’s genealogy is structurally oblivious to such hermeneutical shifts for what it sees in such historical transformations is just a transition from one form of domination to another one. Thus, carrying out this genealogical task, Foucault “will trace back the prohibition of gladiatorial fights in Late Rome, for example, not to the humanizing influence of Christianity, but to the dissolution of one power formation by its successor.”²¹¹ In this passage, Habermas is the one who is a presentist, precisely because he fails to bracket ascriptions like ‘the humanizing influence of Christianity’ which is, in Foucault’s mind,

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 91

²¹⁰ Ibid., 89

²¹¹ Ibid., 89

an expression of retrospective historiography. For Foucault, historical events are not meaningless, as Habermas imagines him claiming, but saturated with meanings that support and nourish each other as much as they conflict and contradict with each other. The task of the genealogist is not to commit to one meaning claim against another but to point to the multiplicity of perspectives from which a specific historical event was articulated. Genealogy is not general historiography, but one method among others to articulate the emergence of these perspectival spaces within a discursive network. In this sense, Foucault would not turn a blind eye to the claim that prohibition of gladiatorial fights is an expression of “the humanizing influence of Christianity”, but bracket the validity of this claim to reveal the perspective from which the prohibition of gladiatorial fights was articulated.

Habermas still considers such a reply problematic:

The speeches that justify establishing or dismantling gladiatorial fights are regarded [by genealogy] only as objectifications of an unconscious, underlying practice of domination. As the source of all meaning, such practices are themselves meaningless; the historian has to approach them from outside in order to grasp them in their structure.²¹²

Habermas argues in this passage that Foucault’s perspectivalism proves his point. Foucault’s ‘happy positivism’ strips the historical event of its meaning and hence the event itself emerges in his genealogy as an objective constant around which different perspectives emerge and disappear, struggling against each other. In this sense, Foucault’s perspectivalism on historical events is a disguised positivism implying the methodological possibility and the necessity “to approach them from outside”. Historical meaning claims, such as “the humanizing influence of Christianity” in his example, erase the traces of perspective from which they are articulated, and thereby claim the authority

²¹² Ibid., 89

and privileges of an objective and universal truth, indicating at the same time the objective ontological status of the historical event they articulate. Foucault, on the other hand, writes his genealogies with a strict observance and awareness of the principle that the elusive ontological standing of historical reality of the past is established through our historiographical practices the material and medium of which are nothing but historical traces left behind by the disappearance of the perspectives of the past into our present. In this sense, the historical event, the object of genealogy, cannot be grasped outside its articulation through multiple perspectives. Foucault, in this sense, does not reduce meaning claims of the participants of discourses to the formal discursive structures. Neither does he postulate a naked historical reality stripped off of meaning. What he does is to reconstruct a web of relevant perspectives the conjunction and disjunction points of which bound the historical event in question, giving it a recognizable form.

Relativism:

Relativism is another concept Habermas and Gellner share in articulating their criticisms. In his criticism of Wittgenstein, Gellner claims that the self-referentiality of language games entails that using them as criteria for adjudicating validity-claims implies a form of relativism. He imagines Wittgenstein's language games as being tied to specific forms of life in a hermetically sealed fashion. It is language users' shared forms of life that keep language games meaningful, effective, and alive. Since Wittgenstein does not allow any privilege to any particular language game/form of life pair, the language game one engages in, for instance, buying groceries, is no different in terms of the conditions of validation from the language games to establish and validate scientific/objective truth claims. Accordingly, as the effectiveness and meaningfulness of language games

performed in buying groceries can be evaluated according to criteria and standards of the form of life shared by the seller and the buyer, the validity of truth claims cannot transcend the limits of a specific linguistic context shaped by a specific form of life. In this sense, the validity of truth claims is relative to the linguistic context in which language users play truth-producing language games. According to Gellner, such an understanding of truth not only degrades truth claims to a contingent agreement among language users, but also renders Wittgenstein's own philosophy inconsistent. If truth claims are relative to the procedures and conditions of their articulation, then whatever Wittgenstein postulates as a philosophical truth is subject to the same relativistic pressure to size down its range of projection from a philosophically proper generality to the limits of the specific form of life. The form of life which makes it possible for him to put forward his philosophical truth claims is also the ground of his relativistic conceptualization of language games, and therefore the truth of relativism cannot be generalized to language games and forms of life other than that which grounds Wittgenstein's philosophy. Thus, Wittgenstein's version of relativism, like any other form of relativism, is self-defeating.

Habermas accuses Foucault of relativism in a similar fashion to Gellner. As truth claims in Wittgenstein, *pace* Gellner, are confined to the relevant language games, truth claims in Foucault are confined within specific discourses due to the self-referentiality of discursive practices. Moreover, in Foucault, discursive structures are generative sites of power effects. Consequently, not only is the validity of truth claims discourse dependent, but the power effects they have are also relative to the discourse. In this sense, Foucault's genealogical truth claims are also relative to the conditions and procedures of the

genealogical discourse. More importantly, genealogical truth claims emerge in the context of Foucault's relativism as relative to the power effects they produce. Therefore, Habermas claims, "Foucault's theory would exhaust itself in the politics of theory."²¹³

Habermas anticipates that Foucault would respond to his criticisms using his concept of 'subjugated knowledge' and therefore focuses on this concept. The concept of subjugated knowledge in Foucault refers to two interrelated fields. First, subjugated knowledge is "historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization." And, second, it is "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."²¹⁴ Foucault's twofold description of the concept of subjugated knowledge is indicative of its twofold significance for him. First methodologically, subjugated knowledge provides a platform of resistance against "the inhibiting effect of global, *totalitarian theories*".²¹⁵ Instead of portraying power relations and discursive formation in terms of a totality which is supposed to integrate multifarious social relations, subjugated knowledge allows the genealogist to articulate local criticisms "whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought."²¹⁶ Theorizing in terms of a totality has an inherent inclination to claim to articulate and represent the historical experience exhaustively within its rational forms leaving no excess behind. What the genealogical analysis aims at is to uncover fragmented and scattered pieces of historical experience that cannot be articulated within

²¹³ Ibid., 91

²¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972 – 1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (Pantheon Books, 1980), 82.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 80

²¹⁶ Ibid., 81

the rational forms of totalitarian systemic theories. The second political significance of the concept of subjugated knowledge enters the picture at this point. The uniformity and integrity of totalitarian discourses are maintained by a systemic suppression and silencing of these unarticulated experiences such as that of slaves, women, children, homosexuals, and colonized people. The space of signification opened up by totalitarian theories expels the voices of these underprivileged groups to the blind spots of the discursive spaces where they remain invisible and silent. Therefore the genealogist must develop a methodological sensitivity to detect these blind spots which are saturated by unheard voices. The subjugated knowledge, in this sense, is an access to these blind spots of totalitarian discourses.

Habermas is more or less sympathetic Foucault's attempt to ground his genealogy on subjugated knowledge. Yet, he chooses to understand Foucault's politicization of epistemology with reference to György Lukács who in his early period develops a Marxist theory of ideology in which the historical perspective of proletariat is epistemologically superior to that of bourgeoisie because while the bourgeois perspective is conditioned by the particular interests of the bourgeois class, the class perspective of proletariat is shaped by universalizing elements. The universalizing element in the proletarian class perspective is due to its specific place in history to erase all class differences. In this sense, the class consciousness of proletariat has a claim on the totality of society. Habermas argues that Foucault's appeal to subjugated knowledge makes sense only on the condition that the perspectives from which subjugated knowledge claims are produced have a historic/epistemic privilege like the one Lukács claims with respect to the special place of proletariat in the history of class struggle. Since, Habermas

concludes, Foucault's concept of power and his portrayal of the formation of discourses do not allow him to postulate such a historic/epistemic privilege on the side of subjugated knowledge claims, his genealogy still remains in a relativistic *aporia*.

Habermas indicates two reasons to identify Foucault's work as relativistic:

1-The relationship between truth and power is articulated by Foucault in such a way that the validity of truth claims is reduced to their functions to generate power effects.

Habermas' Lukács reference with respect to relativism is indicative of his misperception of the relations between the discursive production of knowledge/truth and power effects. It is no accident that he refers to Lukács to grasp Foucault's concern with subjugated knowledge, because he conceptualizes truth and power in instrumentalist/functionalist lines. If we follow the Lukács example, then we will see that in Lukács, there is an inevitable connection between the historical interests of a social class and knowledge and truth claims produced from the historical perspective of that class. In this sense, within the framework of ideology critique, such knowledge and truth claims are both articulations of the class interest on the one hand, and, on the other, means to further the social/political struggle for those interests. Lukács' point is that the objective historical position of the bourgeoisie forces this class to produce class-specific knowledge and truth, while the proletarian class position forces it to articulate its interests in terms of the totality of society. Foucault does not think that the line between the particular and universal provides us with a political handle as Lukács imagines. Therefore, his point about subjugated knowledge is not to postulate an epistemic privilege of them, and he does not think that genealogical critique is in need of postulating such an

epistemic privileging of subjugated knowledge. On the contrary, he is well aware that subjugated knowledge claims are 'local memories' with a very limited range of projection. However, what makes them valuable and knowledge-worthy for genealogy is precisely their ability to re-signify what is suppressed by epistemically privileged totalitarian discourses. His appeal to subjugated knowledge should be understood in terms of the immanence of power in truth and truth in power. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Foucault's concept of power is mostly about the ability and capability of discourses to construct spaces of subjectivity and restrain human action on a grammatical level by bounding the domain of possibilities. In this context, power-dependency of truth can only be claimed within a functionalist/instrumentalist framework where the relationship between truth and power is confined to the dynamics of a closed circle of means and ends. Foucault's genealogy of the human sciences, however, is precisely a philosophical attempt to articulate a sophisticated co-formation of truth and power outside the closed circle of means and ends dialectic.

2- Foucault's genealogies are caught up in the very same self-referentiality he ascribes to the human sciences.

In Habermas' criticism of Foucault, the concept of self-referentiality is an avoidable philosophical mistake which Foucault nonetheless commits. As the Lukács example reveals, according to Habermas, the way out of the paradoxes of self-referentiality is to commit to a quasi-transcendental philosophical position by postulating a historic/epistemic privilege to certain perspectives. Indeed, in his own theory of communicative rationality, the ideal speech conditions function in such a quasi-transcendental fashion, enabling Habermas to break free of the paradoxical consequences

of self-referentiality. Foucault, on the contrary, embraces the conditions of self-referentiality. Accordingly, if ascribing a historical epistemic privilege to certain perspectives is the only way to critically articulate our experience in the present, without being trapped in the aporia of relativism, then, Foucault would certainly choose to be a relativist. Yet, we must ask if Habermas' demand in this context is a reasonable one. He takes Foucault's perspectivalism for relativism, arguing that he cannot provide an account of the validity of his truth claims. Habermas can articulate this criticism, however, only by suppressing the conditions of self-referentiality that shape his own thought. Michael Kelly, commenting on the Habermas – Foucault discussion, suggests that self-referentiality is a paradigmatic condition under which, not only Foucault's thought, but also all post-metaphysical and post-religious modern thinking, including that of Habermas, takes shape.²¹⁷ Kelly accepts that the self-referentiality of thought may necessarily lead to paradoxical consequences, but it is not therefore to be considered a mistake. In fact, he implies that self-referentiality is constitutive of critical thought in the sense that it burdens thinking with the task of generating its own epistemic and ethical norms. In this sense, Habermas' demand that Foucault break free from the conditions of self-referentiality is not reasonable. Habermas might reply that even if the self-referentiality of thought is a common condition shared by Foucault and himself, Foucault does not provide epistemic and ethical norms for his criticism of modern power relations even in a self-referential fashion. This brings us to his critical term of cryptonormativism.

Cryptonormativism:

²¹⁷ Michael Kelly, "Foucault, Habermas, and Self-Referentiality of Critique," in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (The MIT Press, 1994), 366.

Before going into the details of Habermas' claim, it should be noted that the parallelism between Gellner and Habermas seems to be broken at this point. With respect to providing ethical/political norms, Gellner has the following to say under the heading, "Failure of Normativeness":

The educated reader who has no specialised training and initiation into modern philosophy tends generally to have the following reaction when faced with Linguistic Philosophy: this kind of stuff, apart from being extremely dull, fails to provide any illumination and guidance. What is conspicuous about Linguistic Philosophy is its abdication of any kind of normative role, both in its practice and in its programmatic announcements.²¹⁸

Gellner's point is that Wittgenstein's philosophical analyses of ordinary language, being sterile and apolitical, are of no help to his readers in terms of 'providing illumination and guidance' in the ways they live their lives. Habermas' concern in criticizing Foucault at this point is that even if his genealogical works seem to invite us to a form of ethical/political life in which struggling against relations of domination is valued, he insistently avoids articulating the ethical/political life entailed by such struggle in rational terms. The difference between Gellner's and Habermas' lines of criticisms is obvious. Yet, reading Habermas' criticism against the background of Gellner's allows us to reveal a form of cryptonormativism in Habermas. Habermas is well aware that being critical and being didactic are two extremely different philosophical positions, and, accordingly, he does not openly ask Foucault to provide 'guidance and illumination' to his readers. However, Habermas is blind to the possibility that Foucault's avoidance to formulate rational norms for political struggles and resistance is itself a normative stand against the philosophical temptation to provide his readers with 'illumination and guidance'. At this point, Wittgenstein and Foucault have a common disillusioned view of the limits of the power of philosophical thinking. They both reject that philosophy provides rational

²¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Words and Things: An Examination of, and an Attack on, Linguistic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2005), 267.

grounds for the ways human beings struggle to live their lives. What Habermas considers to be cryptonormativism, and Gellner as quietism, is a philosophical *ethos* of humility that refuses to intervene in life in the name of reason. They both think that such attempts instrumentalize thought in general, and philosophy specifically, in an over-intellectualization of life which they diagnose as the central pathology of modern life.

Habermas' criticism of Foucault in terms of cryptonormativism boils down to the question "but why fight at all?"²¹⁹ He thinks that Foucault cannot even begin asking this question, because in his portrayal of power relations there is no normative space for the question if and how some forms of power relations could be more or less legitimate than other forms of power relations. Foucault thinks, however, that the old liberal question of the legitimacy and illegitimacy of power relations masks, rather than reveals, the forms of power relations that bypass the legal limits through disciplinary mechanisms on the individual bodies and biopolitics on the whole of the population. He also rejects the normative frameworks of political struggles established in Marxist ideology critique and psychoanalysis because of their humanistic assumptions. Habermas, then, considers Foucault's genealogies as tactical weapons, in the service of counter-power forces, used against an all-pervasive power. However, even this portrayal of political struggles as anarchistic guerilla fights for the subversion and interruption of the normalizing effects of power cannot answer the question "but why fight at all?". In reference to Nancy Fraser's criticism of Foucault, Habermas thinks that Foucault's genealogies are burdened with telling his reader what is wrong with modern power relations.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Polity Press, 1994), 96.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 96

For Foucault, the question “but why fight at all?” can be answered from a variety of different perspectives from which those who fight speak. Accordingly, in Habermas’ own words Foucault gives constant references to “the asymmetric relationship between powerholders and those subject to power, as well as the reifying effects of technologies of power, which violate the moral and bodily integrity of subjects capable of speech and action.”²²¹ Why is it that Habermas finds these normative qualifications of modern power relations unsatisfactory? For Habermas, these normative qualifications of our modern agonistic relations do not pass a threshold of moral/political rationality because Foucault stops short of articulating these normative qualifications into a coherent moral/political vocabulary. Yet, for Foucault, as there is no one singular structure shared by all modern power relations, there is no singular normative structure that enables the voices of resistance. James Tully argues, in favor of Foucault, that Habermas’ demand is a moment of philosophical temptation when evaluated in the context of Wittgenstein’s thought. Tully approaches Habermas’ and Charles Taylor’s theories from a Wittgensteinian perspective, and elaborates on the meaning and significance of asking such a question about our political positions. He argues that, it is a “mistaken convention...that our way of political life is free and rational only if it is founded on some form or other of critical reflection.”²²² For Tully, while appeals to critical reflection are supposed to emancipate us from conforming blindly to social conventions, such appeals themselves become a convention in turn. He thinks that Habermas holds “the mistaken view that identifies

²²¹ Ibid., 96

²²² James Tully, “Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy: Understanding Practices of Critical Reflection,” in *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida J. Heyes (Cornell University Press, 2003), 17.

‘reasonable’ with providing reasons ‘in the end’.”²²³ Tully argues that such an insistent demand, like the one Habermas thinks Foucault should meet, would block our ability to communicate our political concerns to each other. Because, as Wittgenstein says, our giving reasons comes to an end quickly. Tully criticizes Habermas for taking a form of juridical thinking as an ultimate boundary for our critical activities. Against Habermas’ narrow understanding of critical activity, Tully proposes that Foucault’s thinking, in line with Wittgenstein’s sense of criticality, widens our critical perspectives.

In our complex language-games of freedom, we provisionally follow the conventional boundaries in trying to reach understanding/agreement on some issue and we also play Foucault’s game of calling into question one conventional boundary at a time (by means of a genealogy of its historical role as a boundary) and of seeking to go beyond it.²²⁴

Habermas might still wish to demand normative reasons at this point. Tully’s point is that such a demand would be equivalent to asking Habermas what is good about mutual understanding that he formulates as the *telos* of communicative rationality.

Echoing Tully’s argument, in his very short essay, “Useless to Revolt?”, Foucault expresses his thoughts on revolt which would be a good response to Habermas’ question “but why fight at all?”. In this short essay, Foucault characterizes the moment of revolt as a limit case in which the revolting forces momentarily steps outside the order of history. “The impulse by which a single individual, a group, a minority or an entire people says ‘I will no longer obey’ and throws the risk of their life in the face of an authority they consider unjust seems to me to be something irreducible.”²²⁵ For him there is always an inexplicable and indeterminate moment in disobedience. No rational form of explanation can fully articulate the actual moment of revolt. For Foucault, the resistance of the

²²³ Ibid., 24

²²⁴ Ibid., 32

²²⁵ Michel Foucault, “Useless to Revolt?” in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 – 1984 v. 3: Power*, ed. Paul Rabinow (The New Press, 1994), 449.

moment of revolt to exhaustive articulation in rational forms is indicative of the fact that “no authority is capable of making it utterly impossible.”²²⁶ In this context, he emphasizes the place of the concept of revolution in political philosophy and historiography of the West, and argues that the discursive space of the modern concept of revolution is a manifestation of “a gigantic effort to domesticate revolts within a rational and controllable history.”²²⁷ Through these rational forms, a revolt appears to be a reiterable historical experience which happens in a causal nexus of objective conditions. Regardless of the revolutionary or reactionary political intentions behind them, what theories of revolution suppress is exactly the singularity of the moment of revolt which is what makes a revolt irreducible and inexplicable. In this sense, Foucault detects in these theories of revolution a will to render historical experience controllable and manageable. Foucault’s claims should not be understood as implying the unintelligibility of revolts. His point is rather that the forms of intelligibility of our political lives should be accommodating for the indeterminacy inherent even in the strictest and harshest power relations. Habermas’ question “but why fight at all?”, demands reasons not to obey. Foucault’s answer is that one can provide several answers to this question using the concepts such as rights, legitimacy, equality, and justice. Foucault would have no objections to these kinds of questions and answers, but Habermas’ framing of this question implies that people revolt justly against power because power violates some rational principle, or that the intolerability of a power relation can turn into a just revolt only when it is articulated in a rational form. According to Foucault, *pace* Tully, people are perfectly capable of articulating various reasons to obey authority as much as they are

²²⁶ Ibid., 449

²²⁷ Ibid., 450

capable of articulating reasons to disobey. The language games of reason giving is an important element in power relations as much as in resisting these power relations, yet, as Wittgenstein says, reason giving comes to an end at some point. Foucault's point is that the question if and when a set of reason giving language games terminates in obedience or disobedience does not have the kind of rational ground Habermas would find satisfactory. Indeed, what the critic should be concerned with is not that the question of disobedience does not have an all-embracing response. Because if it was possible to provide such an answer, the beneficiary of such a knowledge would be first and foremost the agents of power, and not necessarily those who revolt.

Inviolability Interpretations

It is a curious and somewhat confusing phenomenon that Wittgenstein's and Foucault's works, as understood by Gellner and Habermas, are taken to be in line with conservative thought, because their works are also appropriated by the strain of political thought which explicitly seeks ways to articulate and reveal possibilities for social/political transformations through political action. There must be a specific perspective from which Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts appear to support a conservative understanding of their works. Alice Crary's concept of 'inviolability interpretations' is illuminating in defining such a perspective which would be also helpful to develop further responses to Gellner and Habermas. For Crary, those who read Wittgenstein along the lines of conservative thought commit to what she calls 'inviolability interpretations', a peculiar interpretation of Wittgenstein's account of

meaning which limits, if not prohibits, reasoned criticisms of our form of life.²²⁸ Even though Crary develops her concept in evaluating political readings of Wittgenstein's philosophy, including Gellner's critical account, what she says about conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein also applies to a great extent to Habermas's picture of Foucault as a conservative thinker.

As exemplified in Gellner's arguments, 'inviolability interpretations' are based on a use theory of meaning according to which the use of a concept determines its meaning. Crary argues that if meaning is fixed by its use, then, no one can tell if one case of using a concept is more appropriate than another one. If we detect a significant difference between two cases of the employment of the same concept, we can only claim that these two cases produce different meaning claims. Those who employ the same concept in significantly different ways are not right or wrong with respect to each other, but they simply talk about different things. This is because "the game we play with a particular bit of language is not distinguishable from and thus not answerable to what we are talking about."²²⁹

There are, of course, available ways within language games in which language users can engage in meaningful disputes about the meaning of a concept and convince one another that one way of employing a concept is better or more appropriate than another way. However, what allows us to convince each other through reasonable disputes about the meaning of terms is the shared form of life on the basis of which we also share forms of reasoning. In a sense, both the possibility of a reasonable dispute and the possibility of coming to an agreement through it are enabled by the social conventions

²²⁸ Alice Crary, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy in Relation to Political Thought," in *The New Wittgenstein*, eds. Alice Crary & Rupert Read (Routledge, 2000)

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 119

that render our speech possible in the first place. Crary calls this form of exchange among language users ‘internal form of criticism’ which is permissible by the standards of the use theory of meaning.

Such a fully conventionalist vision of our language sees our concepts and terms that express logical necessity also as a part of our shared linguistic conventions. Thus, even the logical standards do not allow us to assess a particular linguistic practice independently from its place, significance, meaning, and value that commonly shared social conventions assign to it. Any attempt to reassess a particular language game beyond the range of social conventions is prohibited by the structure of our language. Crary calls such attempts ‘external criticisms’ that seek significance and value of a particular language game outside the sphere in which social conventions locate it. Such a critical engagement is in vain because “it would require us to undermine whatever critical or normative concepts we want to use in assessing it by bringing into question the practices within which they function and are intelligible.”²³⁰ ‘Inviolability interpretations’ that fix meaning in terms of use entail a kind of political relativism from the perspective of which a form of life appears to be immune, and thus irresponsible, to criticisms. The differences among various ways of speaking and doing do not have any political bearings on each other, and in this sense the distance between different forms of life is unbridgeable.

The conservative commentators place external criticism in a position akin to the place of the inexpressible in the standard readings of the *Tractatus*. In the *Tractatus*, the structure of language prohibits us to assign meaning to propositions about logic, ethics, and aesthetics. Language is capable of expressing any logically possible combination of

²³⁰ Ibid., 120

things (states of affairs) and nothing else. Propositions, including the ones about logic, ethics, and aesthetics, that try to express something which is not a possible combination of things violate the logic of language and fail to communicate anything meaningful. Thus, in such a reading of the *Tractatus*, the limits of sense are determined *a priori* by the logical structure of language.²³¹ In the same fashion, ‘inviolability interpretations’ imply that external criticism is a futile attempt to express what the structure of language renders inexpressible.

Crary thinks that the way ‘inviolability interpretations’ present Wittgenstein’s account of the limits of sense leads us to oxymoronic concepts like ‘coherent nonsense’ or ‘intelligible nonsense’. The paradox of the perspective of ‘inviolability interpretations’, expressed by these oxymorons, is that one can simultaneously recognize the form and know the content of what the external critic says, and cannot recognize the form and know the content of what she says. Here, it is critical to notice that language users within a linguistic community cannot falsify what the external critic says, because what she says is not even a candidate for verification or falsification. A statement like “The death penalty is unjust, because nothing justifies killing someone in the name of justice” is a meaningful statement only in a linguistic community where the grammar of punishment has overlapping areas with that of the grammar of the concept of justice. We can imagine a linguistic community in which the family of language games played using the concept of punishment has no recognizable kinship relations with the family of language games played using the concept of justice. (A twin of Foucault’s carceral

²³¹ This is a more or less standard understanding of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*. This understanding has been challenged in favor of more refined and nuanced readings according to which the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* share the same critical *ethos*. Here, my reference to the standard reading of the *Tractatus* is not intended to endorse it but to illuminate Crary’s point better by drawing parallels between standard interpretations of the *Tractatus* and ‘inviolability interpretations’.

society with no hypocritical proclivity may be a good picture of such a community.) In such a society, subjecting the practices of punishment to the standards of justice is not going to be a meaningful speech act.²³² Such a statement would be equivalent to asking ‘What color is today?’ in a society like ours where the days of the week are called by their proper names and not by their presumed colors. If what the critic says is nonsense, we should not be able to recognize the nonsensical content of her speech as critical. And, if we recognize what she says as critical, we cannot say that what she says is nonsensical.

Crary shows that ‘inviolability interpretations’ are inconsistent because they assume a vantage point outside the linguistic space and, paradoxically, assign meaning to statements to show the meaninglessness of the very same statements. This is because what they present as Wittgenstein’s view is a mirror image of what he criticizes. In order to reject the patent metaphysical view that how things are in the world fixes the meanings of concepts we use, ‘inviolability interpretations’ assume that how we use concepts fixes their meaning. In the former case, the inherent order of things in the world sets the limits of intelligibility independently from our linguistic conventions. In the latter case, historically established linguistic conventions limit what is articulable in a given moment in history. ‘Inviolability interpretations’ put us in a position where “we must choose between, on the one hand, having the world and forfeiting responsibility and, on the other, having responsibility and losing the world.”²³³ Crary thinks that such an idea of limits of intelligibility goes against Wittgenstein’s idea of the limits of sense. For

²³² Political imagination is exactly the capacity to establish and act on such connections between various families of language games. Feminists have invented language games within which our vocabulary of gender comes into contact with our political vocabulary exposing the limits and inadequacies of our political terms. However, one should not forget that racism has also been creative enough to connect political vocabulary with the vocabulary of biology. In the same way, one can also talk about dead family ties. For example, whether one eats moderately or not is basically a health issue for us, whereas it was a subject of moral discourse in the Ancient Greece.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 141

Wittgenstein, the limits of sense are not invisible, imperceptible, and undetectable barriers that prevent us from saying certain things. It is not as if we have something to say but there is no language game available to express it. In Wittgenstein's words, 'when a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless.' In an important sense, there are no homeless thoughts, as there can be no formless contents. In the way Cray formulates the limits of language, any conceivable idea, by definition, must have a home, that is, a place in our linguistic practices.

The concept of the limits of sense in Wittgenstein refers to those cases in which we utter a statement and "we have no notion what (if anything) will count as the fulfillment of the words we are uttering."²³⁴ The limits of sense do not point to inexpressible contents – contents that have not found their appropriate forms yet. What appear to be formless contents are, in fact, forms without contents. In Wittgenstein's own words, an utterance to which we have failed, or do not know how, to assign a meaning is 'a wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism.' The limits of sense do not mark the predetermined endpoints of the linguistic space lying on the horizon, waiting to be discovered. They are linguistic occurrences that fail to engage with the neighboring statements in linguistic space. The limits of sense, then, are symptoms of the absence of connections required by an utterance to be a part of the working of language. In this sense, there is nothing mystical or metaphysical about the limits of sense in Wittgenstein. Just like what appears to be an idle wheel may be connected to the rest of the mechanism to enrich and modify its functions in combination with the movements of the other wheels, an idle statement can

²³⁴ Ibid., 139

be made to mean something when it is connected to and aligned with the other statements.

What exactly is Crary's solution to the problem of normativity with respect to the politics of Wittgenstein's thought? The answer lies in another piece of her writing where she employs the term 'inviolability interpretations' in criticizing feminist critics who develop a perspectival line of feminist criticism as opposed to 'objectivist' feminist criticisms.²³⁵ She argues that perspectivist feminists dismiss the notion of objectivity too quickly by equating it with the voice of patriarchy under the guise of 'a voice from nowhere'. These feminists commit to the view that the structure of language makes any objective standpoint unavailable, and therefore a voice that speaks in the name of objectivity basically masks its own privileged situatedness. Against such criticisms of the notion of objectivity, Crary argues that a wider conception of objectivity is available in Wittgenstein's account of language. Such a wider conception of objectivity allows feminists to articulate feminist concerns without sacrificing objective norms to reveal the suffering and subjugation of women.

We have good reason to follow feminist objectivists in insisting that we can remain committed to the kinds of perspectival investigations that have historically played an important role in uncovering sexist (and other forms of) bias without losing our politically empowering understanding of ourselves as committed to developing modes of thought and conduct that are truly – objectively – more just and consistent.²³⁶

Her siding with objectivity in criticism, no matter how she stipulates the concept, is not going to provide a satisfactory response to our problem of normativity, because our problem of normativity arises partly on the grounds of our dissatisfaction of the claims of objectivity in criticism. Even if her diagnosis of conservative understanding of

²³⁵ Alice Crary, "What Do Feminists Want in an Epistemology?," in *Feminist Interpretations of Ludwig Wittgenstein*, eds. Naomi Scheman & Peg O'Connor (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 113 – 4.

Wittgenstein is to the point, the picture of language Crary draws shares common grounds with ‘inviolability interpretations’. Now, instead of shared linguistic conventions, objectivity appears to be the inviolable limit Crary erects against some feminists’ claim that appeals to objectivity can be a form of injustice.

Josè Medina criticizes Crary for reproducing the inside/outside dichotomy which, she assumes, is a logical conclusion of ‘inviolability interpretations’.²³⁷ Crary diagnoses that conservative interpretations of Wittgenstein absolutize the limits of intelligibility and thereby create a false dichotomy between the inside and the outside of language. In order to reject the idea that the structure of language imposes some absolute limits on our speech and actions, she trivializes the concept of the limits of sense in Wittgenstein, and reduces it to an insignificant linguistic event that hardly has any political bearings. Crary’s understanding of the limits of intelligibility implies that feeling discontent and dissatisfied about the possibilities of expression we have within linguistic space is a metaphysical urge to assume positions outside the linguistic space. For Crary, there is no outside of language.

Medina claims that the vocabulary that springs from the inside/outside dichotomy should be completely dismantled if we are to reveal the radical political possibilities in Wittgenstein’s account of language. “The problem is not simply that there is no ‘outside’ for our language games. For, in an important sense, there is no ‘inside’ either: there is no such thing as a symbolic perspective common to all language users.”²³⁸ Instead of assuming a homogenous linguistic space in which all possible language users uniformly participate, Medina introduces the concept of polyphony to underline the irreducible

²³⁷ Josè Medina, “The Meanings of Silence: Wittgensteinian Contextualism and Polyphony,” *Inquiry* 47, no: 6 (December 2004): 562 – 79.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 568

heterogeneity of the linguistic context. In Crary, the linguistic context is a frictionless, self-identical space which contains more or less similar language users. The condition of the possibility of these language users to play language games is the shared space they occupy as language users. Medina thinks that this is a misleading image of the linguistic context. As opposed to a smooth and homogenous surface, our linguistic context is like a real geographical terrain with its high and low points, rifts and abysses, plains and mountains. Moreover, this terrain is not a flat and uniform space where, by virtue of the rules of mechanistic determinism, the location of the speaking subject can be codified into a binary system, 'either here or not here', 'either inside or outside'.

In accordance with this image of differentiated linguistic terrain, our moves in the language games we play have a hermeneutic depth. In Crary's linguistic universe, language users either articulate or fail to articulate their expressions, and consequently, there is either a meaning claim totally transparent to the entirety of the linguistic community, or there is obvious nonsense recognized by all the members of the linguistic community as such. In such a linguistic universe, there is no suppressed meanings, no subtexts, no degrees of articulation, and no possibility of subverted linguistic practices. Medina thinks that the problem of the normativity of critical thought becomes a problem only when we imagine our linguistic practices in such a sterile context. The linguistic terrain is rich enough in terms of its normative sources to support subversive and critical activity. He gives the example of heterosexist normativity. On the one hand, heterosexism is the predominant normative source which sometimes excludes and silences and sometimes assimilates and distorts the voices of those whose experiences do not fit in the heterosexist code of meaning and action. On the other hand, the dissent from

heterosexism has always been able to establish its own normative sources and subverts the heterosexist language.

To go back to Crary's concept of 'intelligible nonsense', or 'radical silence', the language of heterosexist desire assigns the articulation and expression of non-heterosexual love, in its all forms, to the linguistic space of deviation where the meaningful sexual experience of some language users cannot be articulated and become nonsense. However, this is intelligible nonsense because what is denied the means of expression in the heterosexist language can be expressed in other linguistic terrains using other normative sources. The heterosexist linguistic domain is bounded and rebounded by linguistic practices and these boundaries exclude and silence some language users, in the sense that there is no available perspective within the bounded heterosexist space that can assign meaning to the experience of these language users. Medina's point is that the exclusion and silencing of these language users do not mean that their experience 'disappears in a vacuum'. Thus, intelligible nonsense is not a metaphysical fiction, but a form of meaning claim that leaks to the terrain of a normative order which is unable to acknowledge it. In this sense, it is indicative of the irreducible heterogeneity of the symbolic space as the site of conflicting meaning claims.

Both Crary's concept of 'inviolability interpretations' and Medina's criticisms against Crary are useful perspectives in the context of charges against Foucault. For Crary, conservative interpretations are entailed by a misleading understanding of Wittgenstein. Medina is not necessarily against this dimension of Crary's argument. His point is rather that the normativity problem can be solved only by dismantling the vocabulary that gives rise to it and not by taking one of the available positions created by

that vocabulary. Habermas' criticisms against Foucault are based on a reading parallel with 'inviolability interpretations'. He also formulates his criticisms in terms of an absolutized sense of the inside/outside distinction with respect to discursive practices. In this sense Medina's arguments cuts against Gellner and Habermas as well who, in their respective critical accounts of Wittgenstein and Foucault, portray the background of linguistic practices and power relations in such a narrow way that one single normative system single handedly rules and regulates our speech and actions. Gellner, for example, complains that Wittgenstein's account of language allows no genuine novel linguistic practice, because the grand grammatical order makes it impossible to conceive even the possibility of radically different language games. Similarly, Habermas criticizes Foucault for not leaving any room for alternative critical normative systems in his portrayal of power relations. In formulating his criticism, Habermas systematically ignores and suppresses Foucault's emphasis on the indeterminacy and heterogeneity of the sites of our practices which, in Foucault, are irreducibly sophisticated to such a degree that neither the reifying norms of the human sciences, nor a single resisting normative system, like Habermas' communicative rationality, can establish an absolute hegemony. In this sense, Wittgenstein and Foucault abstain from formulating norms of resistance not because they are absent, but because they resist the philosophical temptation to formulate them in *a priori* terms like 'ideal speech conditions', or 'communicative rationality'.

Cavell and Normativity

I would like to finish this chapter by pointing to two points in Cavell's interpretation of Wittgenstein that are relevant to the problematic of normativity in Wittgenstein and Foucault.

1-As we have seen, among other things, Habermas accuses Foucault of being a positivist due to Foucault's preference for purely descriptive accounts as opposed to explanatory models. In Michael Kelly's words, Habermas' basic question is the following: "Are Foucault's studies of the modern subject and forms of rationality intended to be descriptive or critical?"²³⁹ Obviously, for Habermas, there is a line that demarcates the descriptive and the normative. The reason why Habermas would ask this question is because he is, in fact, sympathetic to Foucault's genealogical descriptions of disciplinary mechanisms. He is not as much dismissive to Foucault as he is to other 'young conservatives'. His basic problem is with Foucault's stoic voice in describing disciplinary mechanisms. In fact, the way Habermas formulates the normativity problem in Foucault is based on his idea that in order for a critical discourse to communicate its critical content, it must have a separate source of normativity like communicative rationality in his own theory. In Habermas' criticism, Foucault, in committing to a descriptive methodology, in fact claims to register fragments of historical experience as they happened. In this sense, a positivist spirit envious of natural sciences pervades Foucault's thought. In a similar fashion, Gellner also thinks that Wittgenstein's understanding of philosophy as a descriptive articulation of ordinary linguistic practices is, at best, a trivial activity, avoiding the task of serious explanatory thinking.

²³⁹ Michael Kelly, "Foucault, Habermas, and Self-Referentiality of Critique," in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (The MIT Press, 1994), 372.

Cavell's insight about the distinction between the normative and descriptive is a good reply to both Gellner and Habermas: "...both statements of fact and judgments of value rest upon the same capacities of human nature; that, so to speak, only a creature that can judge of value can state a fact."²⁴⁰ What Cavell means by this statement is that facts and values or descriptions and normative statements do not belong to such different regions of our language. Needless to say, the grammars of the statement "A murders B" and "Murder is wrong" are different. That is to say, these two statements belong to different language games. However, our ability to recognize an event as murder is in itself a normative act. "We do not first know the object to which, by means of criteria, we assign a value; on the contrary, criteria are the means by which we learn what our concepts are, and hence 'what kind of object anything is'"²⁴¹ Only after getting familiar enough with the criteria of a linguistic community can we state a fact like "A murders B" or pass a judgment like "Murder is wrong". As Cavell argues with respect to Wittgenstein, describing our linguistic practices as language games and their connections to one another as family resemblances is not simply a way of accurately describing our lives. It also reformulates our moral and political standing as language users. In the same fashion, Foucault's descriptions of modern punitive practices as disciplinary mechanisms are based on criteria that tell what disciplining is. The normative content of Foucault's work is in its textual force to enable us to recognize these punitive practices as disciplinary mechanisms. His genealogical descriptions have a claim on us to question and reformulate our political/moral standing with respect to these mechanisms of power. In the same fashion, his genealogies of the discourses of sexuality are liberating in that

²⁴⁰ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Reason* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 14 – 15.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16

his descriptive account of what he calls 'biopolitics' enables and motivates us to notice an aspect of our erotic lives which would have otherwise remained unnoticed in the shadows of 'the repressive hypothesis'. If, as Habermas thinks, the only form of being normative/critical is to tell the audience of philosophy what is wrong with certain practices, then, Foucault's thought is not critical. However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter in reference to David Owen's concept of aspectival captivity, the varieties of the ways our concepts, our forms of thinking, captivate us pressure critical thought to be inventive. Genealogical descriptions, like Wittgenstein's are critical in their ability and capability to allow us to see the plurality of constraints in what we take to be normal and ordinary.

2-According to Habermas, Foucault's transition from his archaeological period to his genealogical works is marked by the difficulty he faces within archaeological methodology to connect practices to formal rules of discourses. Foucault develops his concept of power partly as a response to this difficulty. Accordingly, power is the missing link between discourses and practices. Yet, in Habermas' criticisms, while the concept of power seems to offer a way to solve the problem of the relations between discourses and practices, it creates a larger set of problems than it solves, normativity being the most significant one. As formulated in Foucault's genealogical account, the authority of the forms of rationality over our lives appears to be despotic due to their unresponsiveness to rational criticisms. The way Habermas describes the emergence of the concept of power together with its cryptonormative aspects in Foucault reveals common features between his reading of Foucault and above mentioned 'inviolability interpretations' of Wittgenstein. According to Habermas, what leads Foucault from his more or less sterile

formal inquiries of discourses to the genealogy of historically specific junctions—where technologies of power and epistemic structures are entwined with each other—is a conceptual difficulty that springs from his archaeological methodology. Foucault’s archaeology seeks to reveal, as he puts it, ‘the historical a priori’ and ‘a positive unconscious of knowledge’ of human sciences that are implicit rules governing the formation of statements in a given discourse. However,

...these rules can make a discourse comprehensible only as regards its conditions of possibility; they do not suffice to explain the discourse practice in its actual functioning – for there are no rules that could govern their own application. A rule-governed discourse cannot itself govern the context in which it is implicated.²⁴²

The problem of the gap between discursive rules and discursive practices in Foucault’s archaeology, as formulated by Habermas, is in the same vein with the way Wittgenstein describes the rule following paradox:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if any action can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.²⁴³

The formulation of a rule is stationary and stable by definition in the sense that it does not change from context to context. If it does, it simply becomes another rule. Yet the number of contexts in which the rule can be applied is infinite in principle. Hence, a rule seems to require an interpretation in each context that functions as a rule (a super rule, a meta-rule) governing the application of the original rule in a specific context. The same applies to the super rule itself as well, and therefore we need a superior super rule that governs the application of the super rule. As a result, we have an infinite series of rules that postpones the act of following a rule *ad infinitum*. Thus, a rule, by itself, cannot

²⁴² Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Polity Press, 1994), 268.

²⁴³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 201.

respond to the question whether an action is correct according to criteria set by the rule in question, because such a questioning triggers an infinite regress.

Wittgenstein thinks that this is a false paradox for it is based on the assumption that rule following is a purely abstract mental (in)activity which incessantly demands rule-governance. However, rule following is a practice the terminal point of which is in actuality doing certain things in an established way. How can we be certain that the action is really conducted in the established way, if the governing set of rules is not responsive to our inquiries? Wittgenstein thinks that we can be certain for most of the cases, where certainty is understood as knowing how to go on.²⁴⁴ However, the certainty is available only from within the perspectives of the participants of the language game who are trained to gain mastery in conducting the action in question. For Wittgenstein, then, the question of the gap between grammatical rules and their application should be addressed in such a way that the actual practices associated with the rules should have analytic priority over the abstract formulations of the rules. In short, Wittgenstein points to the actual practices as the site of the possible (dis)solutions to the problem of rule following. As we have seen, Wittgenstein's philosophical move to point to the practices is interpreted as endangering the rationality of our actions because it seems that the only normative standpoint is from within the agreement of the participants of language games.

²⁴⁴ At this point, one should make a distinction between uncertainty and disagreement. In most of the cases, uncertainties are excluded from the sphere of our linguistic practices. There are of course occasions of local cases of uncertainties about whether a certain use of a concept is appropriate or whether an action meets our criteria to be what it is called it publicly. In these cases, our language has normative resources rich enough to restore the usual flow of our linguistic practices. According to Cavell, in some regions of our language, disagreements are inevitable elements in the usual flow of our linguistic lives. Politics and morality are the most visible ones among such linguistic practices that get flourished by disagreements rather than being obstructed by them. In these regions of our language, disputes about, say, abortion, death penalty, social justice, etc. do not refer to our incognizance of or uncertainty about these concepts. These disputes and disagreements are forms of our moral and political knowledge.

In a similar fashion, Foucault also points to the practices as the site of the intelligibility of the discursive rules and discursive practices. In the spirit of the ‘inviolability interpretations’ of Wittgenstein, Habermas argues that Foucault’s shift from inherent rules of discursive formations to discursive practices leaves no room for a critical perspective. In Habermas’ language, in order to avoid the methodological problem of the archaeological mode of inquiry, Foucault seeks the ‘foundations of the forms of knowledge’ in the technologies of power. By doing so, he reduces the binding authority of reason to the effects of disciplinary technologies. Consequently, in Foucault’s work critique of reason is equated with the genealogy of these technologies of power. For Habermas, in this fatal move, the very criticality of Foucault’s genealogy is at stake. Attacking the autonomy of truth and discourses of science as coercive power relations, Foucault, in fact, attacks the ground that renders his own genealogical voice possible. The claim that there is no distance between power and reason is only possible on the basis of a distance the very existence of which is denied by the same claim.

This way of depicting Foucault’s work amounts to arguing that the Foucauldian world is a frictionless monolithic space where disciplinary mechanisms and accompanying discursive formations leave no room for human agency. A subject’s speech and action, even before she speaks and acts, are, in fact, moments of subjugation to a discursive authority, because the place of subjectivity she speaks from is constructed by this or that discourse. Discourses provide norms and terms of our speech and action and therefore when one speaks what we hear is the voice of the discourse rather than the expression of the speaking subject. In this line of criticism, if we replace the word ‘discourses’ with the words ‘social conventions’, what we get is the criticism against

Wittgenstein's account of language. 'Inviolability interpretations' also assume that however oppositional and resisting the contents of one's speech seem to be, speaking and acting are ultimately forms of submitting and conforming to the shared social conventions.

In this context, Cavell's account of the relationships between language users and grammatical rules is helpful to develop a response to Habermas' criticisms of Foucault. Grammar, for Wittgenstein, is simply language users' knowledge and skill to apply a limited vocabulary in various, and indeed potentially an unlimited number of, contexts. Grammar, however, is not just a linguistic know-how in the technical sense of the term, because, in Wittgenstein's account, meaning something, i.e. using a word meaningfully, is not a transfer of the part of the contents of one's mind to the other minds but mainly a practical engagement with the world and with other language users. In Cavell's account of language, what grammar does is to enable the language user to project the concept in different contexts. Projection of a concept is not a matter of imposing a pre-given meaning on a new context, but a matter of practical engagement with the context. In this sense, the rules of grammar are the rules of engagement with the world and with the other language users. These rules are as enabling as they are constraining. They are constraining because the grammar of a word excludes some of its uses from the existing circulation of words. This exclusion is based on an implicit yet very deep agreement among a community of language users whose standards and criteria constitute the limit, or rather, the threshold of meaningful use of language.

From this perspective the authority of grammar looks despotic and non-negotiable. However, in Wittgenstein, these rules are enabling to such a degree that far

from being a mechanical repetitive process of following rules, using language always has a creative dimension in varying degrees. Grammar does not determine the meaning, i.e., the use of a concept:

Here I should first of all like to say: your idea was that that act of meaning the order had in its own way already traversed all those steps: that when you meant it your mind as it were flew ahead and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one.

Thus you were inclined to use such expressions as: “The steps are *really* already taken, even before I take them in writing or orally or in thought.” And it seemed as if they were in some unique way predetermined, anticipated – as only the act of meaning can anticipate reality.²⁴⁵

The steps we take are never taken before. It is needless to say that our language use is reiterative. However, this does not mean that reiteration is empty repetition. In fact, for our reiterating the use of a concept to be meaningful, it has to be singular and unique to the context. (A rule that children and non-native speakers of a language tend to violate often.) Even if the rules of the application of words in different contexts can be taught and transferred to new generations of language users, or to non-native speakers, that is, even if the rules of grammar can be completely and perfectly represented and described, the actual practice of following a grammatical rule and applying words to the world defies any attempt to fully and exhaustively explain how language users use language. The actual practice of using language, in this sense, is the terminal point of any analysis of language. This is the facticity of language use in Wittgenstein’s account of language which overrides the despotic picture of grammatical rules above and depicts language as the site of freedom and indeterminacy.

According to Wittgenstein’s account of rule following, questioning, criticizing, resisting, and transforming what we say and what we do is always available in varying degrees in different regions of our language and practices. This is precisely because the

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 188

agreement that keeps us within certain boundaries is as fragile and fluctuating as it is solid enough to 'hold us captive'. As Cavell shows in *The Claim of Reason*, skepticism is not only a threat that the values and the world that we hold dear may appear as empty illusions under critical scrutiny because our language is not fully responsive to demands for rational justifications. In fact, skepticism is also a bearer of a truth that rational forms are not exhaustive of our experience. Skepticism points to a gap between the forms of rationality and our experience of being in the world and that is the reason why Cavell thinks that each and every speech act is in fact a 'leap'. This leap can be threatening, but it is also the site in which we question and transform our speech and practices, because in each and every engagement with the world and with other language users there is a moment of indeterminacy with respect to the way we apply rules and criteria of our grammar.

In Cavell's understanding of Wittgenstein, which also sheds light on the power effects of discursive formations, grammar and forms of rationality limit our speech and actions but the appropriate visual metaphor for that limit is not a stone wall we bump into each time we attempt to transgress what is given in a certain form of life. The appropriate visual metaphor is an abyss, or an uncharted region into which we must leap. Wittgenstein's comment that we follow the rules blindly can be read to point to our uncritical and unquestioning attitude toward our ordinary employment of concepts. However, if we are to follow Cavell's reading, Wittgenstein's comment can also be read as pointing to human predicament to leap blindly, never being able to see where our leap will take us. And, the necessity of leaping in our speech and actions is the very possibility of our freedom.

Foucault's description of his project as a 'critical ontology of ourselves' also emphasizes the critical task of articulating the possibilities of freedom through genealogical inquiries into the historical limits of our practices. For him, such a 'critical ontology of ourselves' should not be defined as theories, doctrines, and bodies of knowledge. Rather it should be understood as 'an attitude, an *ethos*' and most importantly, as 'an experiment with the possibility of going beyond' the formative limits of what we do and who we are. The immediate objective of such a critical ontology is to chart the limits of our present so that we can unmake ourselves to exercise our freedom to leap into who we will become. One might argue that unmaking ourselves without a rational projection of who we will become defies the logic of political transformations that seek better forms of life. The unmaking of ourselves as a critical task should not be understood as such a mindless destructive attack on our forms of subjectivity. Genealogical inquiries into our present inform our quest for better forms of life with a specific emphasis on the ethos of freedom that calls for an acknowledgement of the responsibilities and risks of human predicament 'leap blindly' at the end.

Afterword

Wittgenstein's and Foucault's thoughts show us how deep our existence is rooted in the micro structures of the ordinary and the present which constitute the horizon of our speech and actions. These structures affect our lives in two related ways. On the one hand, they are the sources of identity in reference to which we define ourselves. On the other hand, they bound our field of action by drawing limits between the meaningful and the absurd, acceptable and unacceptable, and normal and abnormal. In this sense, what is at stake in our complex relations to the ordinary and the present is nothing less than our freedom, and therefore the structures of the ordinary and freedom are the immediate objects of inquiry for the politics of Wittgenstein and Foucault.

However, it is extremely difficult to philosophically engage with the ordinary and the present for two reasons. First, we are so immersed in the ordinary and the present that it is enormously difficult to establish a reflexive distance between ourselves and our ordinary and the present. Second, the systematicity, orderliness, and determinations of the structures of the ordinary and the present and their contingency, disorderliness, and indeterminations coincide and entangle with each other in such a way that it is possible to picture them either as sites of absolute freedom and sites of absolute bondage. With respect to the first difficulty, both Wittgenstein and Foucault think that a descriptive account attentive to the minute details of our ordinary and our present can remind us how uncanny our daily lives are. Wittgenstein's and Foucault's descriptions are not meant to be all inclusive on a general level but they are designed to capture specific aspects of our lives by focusing on the unique elements of the local fields of our ordinary and the

present. With respect to the second difficulty, they both welcome the thought that the systematicity and indeterminacy can exist simultaneously in our lives. Especially Wittgenstein's remarks about grammatical rules and their application point to the fact that the systematicity of grammatical rules and regulations render the moment of speech and action indeterminate, enabling the language user to make her move in the language game she plays. It should be noted here that in addressing these difficulties of engaging with the ordinary and the present, neither Wittgenstein nor Foucault claim that their ways to handle these difficulties are the only available ways. In this sense, they do not provide models of thought applicable to all philosophical problems.

Another political lesson we learn from Wittgenstein and Foucault is that we cannot express our political concerns and act upon them if we try fitting all of them in one all-inclusive global political discourse. As our ordinary and the present captivate us not in one global system but in a series of 'criss-crossing and overlapping' structures, the forms of our resistance to the captivating effects of these structures have to have the same level of multiplicity and sophistication. Enriching our forms of resistance definitely requires us to produce rational analyses and knowledge of the political field. But Wittgenstein and Foucault also remind us that creativity in politics together with a reasoned suspicion about the effectiveness of our existing forms of resistance are required by the very conditions of modern politics.

Lastly, and probably most importantly, Wittgenstein's and Foucault's works urge us to widen the projection range of our political concepts while keeping a reflexive distance to our own definitions of politics and political action. The projection range of the concept of politics cannot be determined *a priori*. The meaning of the concept of politics

is an immediate object of our political struggles, therefore the indeterminacies in its meaning is an essential element in our political language games. Wittgenstein and Foucault enable us to articulate the micro structures of the ordinary and the present in political terms. In their efforts to problematize the ordinary and the present, they define new contexts to which we can project our political concepts. In this sense, they widen the projection range of our political concepts to articulate more justice claims.

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