Politics, Pedagogy, and the Decentred Subject:
An Inquiry into the Ethical Dimensions of Political and Educational Thought

by

Stella Gaon

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Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
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POLITICS, PEDAGOGY, AND THE DECENTRED SUBJECT: AN INQUIRY INTO THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

Stella Gaon
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Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Abstract

This study investigates the link between ethics and epistemology that the modern educational project came to embody when it was first conceived as a project of Enlightenment. For Kant, education stood as a singular point of intersection between the political possibility of a good or just society, and the philosophical ideal of pure or transcendental reason. The thesis investigates the question of what happens to this normative project -- to the ethical grounds for critical educational theory -- when the epistemological tenets of Enlightenment thought are read from a deconstructive point of view.

I argue that a "decentring" of the transcendental subject inevitably ensues. It follows, however, from a rigorous adherence to the Enlightenment protocols of critique themselves, not from their rejection. In this sense, deconstructive practices of reading reflect neither an abandonment to political nihilism or relativism, nor a celebratory call to uphold difference, otherness, or radical heterogeneity. Insofar as the epistemological crisis of postmodernity issues directly from the philosophical tenets of modernity that are now under dispute, moreover, deconstruction can be seen instead as a radicalization of reason as self-critique.
This claim is brought to bear on moral and educational theories that cross
the philosophical spectrum. Specifically, the study reveals normative assumptions
about the human being and the just society that inform emancipatory educational
theories of three philosophical types. In each case, I show that the normative
assumptions are both politically necessary and yet impossible to ground
epistemologically. Consequently, critical political and educational theories aimed
at a determinate good are either exclusionary in nature, or they are theoretically
flawed.

The study concludes with the argument that the refusal to collapse
différance into another kind of "difference" allows us to understand political
"critique" better as a quasi-responsible mode of interrogation than as a method
for determining what is good. This reformulation of "critique" preserves the force
that is unique to a deconstructive mode of analysis -- a force that is, in a certain
way, the ethical dimension of political and educational thought.
"But then . . ." I ventured to remark, "you are still far from the solution. . . ."
"I am very close to one," William said, "but I don't know which."
"Therefore you don't have a single answer to your questions?"
"Adso, if I did I would teach theology in Paris."
"In Paris do they always have the true answer?"
"Never," William said, "but they are very sure of their errors."

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*
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1. INTRODUCTION

de Man, Derrida, and the Modernism-Postmodernism Debate

That deconstruction could contribute something to the question of justice, possible or impossible, is taken as either self-evident or met with outrage these days (and hence in both cases remains unthought). ...Deconstruction's ethico-political pertinence is either (1) taken for granted (often but by no means always presumed to be "progressive") with an appeal to its thematic or referential considerations of issues (democracy, torture, "race," feminism, the university and teaching, apartheid) or to its formal homologies with political interventions (the deconstruction of authority as emancipatory or as ideology-critique), or (2) condemned (as nefariously antipolitical or paralyzing) because it appears to ruin the categories on which political discourse has tried to found itself for as long as anyone can remember: subjectivity and agency, and the reliable knowledge (meaning, whether positively, theologically, or hermeneutically determined) that "allows" it to act. Thomas Keenan, "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice" (1995, 263).

Education has long been considered to be one of the most fundamental cornerstones of liberal, democratic society. Indeed, modern Western European ideals of education are imbued with the Enlightenment belief that human reason is the ultimate faculty through which human beings (qua "Man") can achieve not only epistemological truth, but moral goodness and social reform. For as I will show, when Immanuel Kant first formulated the "categorical imperative" -- when, that is to say, he made the strong argument that moral values can be logically determined in rational, universal terms on the basis of the pure use of (practical) reason -- he clearly linked ethics to that same logic, or "true" knowledge, on which modern epistemology depends. For theorists and philosophers of education this link has been decisive: both the traditional (modernist) project of education of the people and, alternatively, various critical and progressive projects of education for the people, have founded emancipation from "natural want and social injustice" (Misgeld 1992.
125) upon the acquisition of knowledge and the enhancement of critical reason.¹
Within this tradition, moreover, criticism, knowledge and justice ("the good") are sharply opposed to ideology, opinion and injustice (the unethical). This opposition between justice and ideology continues to underline characterizations of the school as one of the founding sites of liberal and/or radical democracy.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the epistemological "crisis" of postmodernity -- the so-called "postmetaphysical" or post-enlightenment position that there is no universal subject whose "truth" can be determined absolutely -- has thrown the educational ideal into radical question. In other words, the argument that representations of almost any kind of "truth" are contingent in a variety of ways (historically, culturally, racially, in respect of gender or class, etc.) -- and, hence, are to some extent implicated in ideology, opinion, and injustice -- has led some intellectuals to the conclusion that if rational truth is contestable, then the moral values which have been founded upon it are only relative.

This apprehension -- and it is one shared not only by many theorists of education, but by numerous theorists within the field of political philosophy at large -- stems. I shall argue, from an unfortunate, though unfortunately common, belief about the implications of so-called "postmodernism"² for the field of educational

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² Although the terms "postmodern" and "postmodernism" famously popularized by Jean-François Lyotard (1984) occur regularly in contemporary social, political, and educational thought, my own practice in what follows will be to specify the work of the theorist under discussion whenever possible. To be sure, continental philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida (whom I treat, in particular, extensively here) can be characterized as
theory. It is the belief that theorists who have "decentred" the modern (universal) subject and thereby relativized the truth, such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan or Jean-François Lyotard, have effectively annihilated the very basis of a modernist ethico-political sensibility. Such theorists are charged, in effect, with endangering the social reform (the democracy) promised by traditional and progressive educational or political projects alike. And it is this charge -- or, more accurately, the ethico-political assumptions that underline it -- that the present inquiry into the ethical dimensions of political and educational thought is intended to address. In so doing, I hope to bring out the normative implications of deconstruction for critical political and educational theory as well.

Political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, for example, mobilized just the assumptions I wish to contest and to reformulate when he first accused Jacques Derrida of "levelling the genre distinction between philosophy and literature." and

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intervening in, or even as radicalizing, a structuralist problematic and, to this extent, might fairly be grouped as "post-structuralists." For example, while Derrida claims that he has personally "never used this word," he does acknowledge that, "[deconstruction] is a questioning of a certain structuralism that presupposes a closed structural system, which brings about its effects without opening itself up (in Rötzer, ed. 1986, 45; cf. Derrida 1988a, 2-3). In contrast to the structuralist-poststructuralist relationship, however, it is by no means clear how each of the theorists included in the common appellation post-modernist should actually be situated vis-à-vis the broader "discourses of modernity" (Habermas 1987). On the contrary, the issue of Derrida's own relation to Enlightenment discourses, and to the ethico-political ethos that informs them, is a central concern of the present study. It is fair to ask, therefore, to what end the characterization "postmodernism" is so regularly deployed. Judith Butler has persuasively suggested, for instance, that this "assemblage" variously called "postmodernism" and/or "poststructuralism" - the conflation of significantly different theoretical approaches, such as "French feminism, deconstruction, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Foucaultian analysis, Rorty's conversationalism and cultural studies" - may reflect an "effort to colonize and domesticate these theories under the sign of the same, to group them synthetically and masterfully under a single rubric"; it may, in fact, signal "a simple refusal to grant the specificity of these positions, an excuse not read, and not to read closely" (Butler 1992, 5). In light of this tendency, as well as the plethora of views concerning what either of the terms "post" or "modern" properly signifies, "postmodernism" is enclosed in quotation marks throughout.

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with thus, 'robbing' "philosophical thinking" of its "seriousness" and its "substance" (Habermas 1987, 185, 210). Indeed, the specific accusation that Derrida and other poststructuralists\(^3\) have made philosophy into, merely, a kind of literature -- into, that is to say, an aesthetic object that is infinitely open to interpretation and, hence, without any determinate ethical or political warrant -- has become such a standard rebuttal to Derrida and other contemporary French philosophers that its mere citation is often accepted as an adequate conclusion to any substantive discussion.

Consider, for instance, Axel Honneth's claim that the "theoretical framework of interpretation" of the "postmodern conception" may be "a Nietzschean tinged concept of aesthetic freedom" (Honneth 1992, 164), or Christopher Norris's belief that it is the "desire to make reality over into an aesthetic phenomenon -- to collapse the whole range of ontological distinctions between life and art, fact and fiction, history and poetry, truth and appearance -- which typifies the current postmodernist drive against the Enlightenment and all its works" (Norris 1993, 63, 253; my emphasis). By the same token. Seyla Benhabib has asserted that "contextualism and post-modernism. . . reject that criticism of validity and legitimacy can be formulated, and transform philosophy into literary criticism, aphorism, or poetry. . ." (Benhabib 1986, 15) and Amy Gutmann more recently went so far as to characterize what she calls "deconstructionism" as, a "dangerous," "anti-intellectual, politicizing threat" to academies of higher learning -- those bastions of "knowledge, understanding.

\(^3\) Habermas (1987) identifies Paul de Man, Jonathan Culler and Geoffrey Hartman, among others, with this designation.
intellectual dialogue and the pursuit of reasoned argument" (Gutmann, ed., 1994. 19, 20).

As these examples illustrate, it would seem there is wide agreement that "postmodernism" in general and deconstruction in particular "relativizes" or "aestheticizes" those truths on which democratic political projects must be based. Gutmann's comments are particularly clear on this point: she finds deconstruction single-handedly responsible for turning all claims to political validity that were previously considered legitimate into unmitigated bullying or posturing. In fact, Gutmann argues, the deconstructionist view even "deconstructs" itself, for "the less powerful cannot possibly hope to have their standards win out, especially if their academic spokespersons publicize the view that intellectual standards are nothing more than assertions or reflections of the will to power" (1994, 19). Thus Gutmann provides a more precise specification of Habermas's concern for the traditional "seriousness" and "substance" of philosophical thinking: for Gutmann, what is at stake in the advent of "deconstructionism" in the university is the loss of the training in reasoned argument that schools provide and, concomitantly, the evisceration of the promise of a justice that transcends politics. "Deconstructionism," in short, threatens the very lifeblood of a democratic society (Gutmann 1994, 23-24).

One response to such dire predictions, to be sure, would be to take issue with each one of these charges on a case-by-case basis. For just as Benhabib's and Habermas's assertions that Derrida is engaged in a purely literary levelling of philosophical reflection can certainly be countered on the basis of a careful reading of Derrida's work, so Honneth would be hard-pressed to demonstrate, rather than
merely to assert, that all critics of the Enlightenment necessarily follow Nietzsche.

Similarly, it could well be argued that Gutmann's characterization of any and all critics of the liberal arts canon as "deconstructionists" will not hold up to scrutiny, while Christopher Norris, for his part, might find it as difficult to defend the absolute purity and autonomous status of his classical, "ontological distinctions," as he would to substantiate his generalization that there is currently a "postmodernist drive" to "collapse" them.

While the formulation and substantiation of counter-arguments is undoubtedly important, however, and while I shall certainly be engaged in what follows at least with the general thrust of these accusations, I do not propose to treat each of these debates in all of their particulars here. For what I want to underline is that, taken together, such ethico-political fears about deconstruction and/or "postmodernism" evidence a profound misunderstanding of what relevance specific critiques of reason - - and especially those undertaken by Derrida -- might have for political philosophy in general, and for critical educational theory in particular. This misunderstanding is most clearly articulated by Christopher Norris, who writes,

postmodernism can do nothing to challenge...forms of injustice and oppression since it offers no arguments, no critical resources or validating grounds for perceiving them as inherently injustice and oppressive. In the end, all this rhetoric of 'plurality' and 'difference' comes down to just another, more radical-sounding version of Rorty's neopragmatist message, that is to say, his advice that we should cultivate the private virtues...and cease the vain effort to square those virtues with a sense of our larger (public, social, ethical or political) responsibilities. Postmodernism cannot do other than promote this view insofar as it rejects the principle advanced by critical-enlightenment thinkers from Kant to Habermas... (Norris 1993, 287).
But if, as I shall argue below, this misunderstanding of Derrida’s work still persists -- more than thirty years, for example, after the publication of Of Grammatology (Derrida 1974) -- this may be because, as already suggested, references to the "aestheticizing" and hence "apolitical" nature of deconstructive writing are often accepted as an adequate end to the dispute. This itself should stand out as a point of interest. For the most remarkable thing about these accusations is not that one group of scholars disagrees so vehemently with another (which of course is a common occurrence, particularly when the stakes are so high), but rather that the very nature of the charge is such that it is taken to speak for itself.

Among the critics cited here, for example, Honneth relies on only a few scant references to Jean-François Lyotard’s The Postmodern Condition and Jean Baudrillard’s. Die Agonie des Realen to support the claim that a Nietzschean, "aesthetic model of human freedom is what underlies, in one way or another, all versions of a theory of the 'postmodern'" (1992. 167, emphasis mine), Gutmann (1994) neglects to cite a single theorist in support of her claims, and Habermas’s treatment of Derrida is largely given over to a discussion of literary critics Jonathan Culler, Hillis Miller and Geoffrey Hartman -- on the basis, he says, that Derrida "does not belong to those philosophers who like to argue" and that the discussion between Derrida and John Searle is "somewhat impenetrable" (Habermas 1987. 193, 194).

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4 Unlike the other critics cited here, Norris himself does not include Derrida’s work in this characterization, but he certainly does mean to include deconstruction in general, as I note below.

5 The original French text, De la Grammatologie, was published in France in 1967.

6 In fact, with one exception, all of the citations in this piece are from secondary, predominantly literary critical, French and American readers of Derrida; the only reference to Derrida’s own work is to the debate between Derrida and John Searle that Habermas professes
If Christopher Norris -- who has in fact investigated Derrida's thought quite comprehensively (Norris 1987 and 1988) -- is a notable exception to this group, it is not because he has taken care to treat the question of the relation between the discourses of the European Enlightenment and the discourses of the (so-called) "postmodern" more thoroughly. Rather it is because, in contrast to his colleagues, Norris places Derrida squarely on the side of modernity. Norris has taken issue, for instance, with the Habermasian charge that Derrida eschews argumentation in favour of literary 'tricks', arguing that such a criticism "involves the kind of typecast binary thinking that refuses to see how a 'literary' text -- or one which exploits a wide range of stylistic resources -- might yet possess sufficient argumentative force to unsettle such deep-laid assumptions" (Norris 1992, 190, emphasis his; and 1993, 89). To the extent that Derrida's strategies of reading reflect, on Norris's view, "a distinctly Kantian form of argument." Norris is confidently able to declare that "Derrida has distanced his own thinking from a generalized 'post-modern' or post-structuralist discourse," and that "deconstruction, properly understood, belongs within that same 'philosophical discourse of modernity' that Habermas sets out to defend against its present-day detractors" (1992, 190, 169, 170; cf. Norris 1993, 300-301). For Norris no less than the others, therefore, it can be taken as read that the line between the

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not to understand (1987, 194, 407, n.7). For the full text of this exchange in one volume (excluding Searle's rebuttal), see Limited Inc (Derrida 1988b). For an interesting and careful discussion of why Derrida's work should not be collapsed into that of the "Yale School" of deconstruction treated by Habermas, see S.P. Mohanty's "Radical Teaching, Radical Theory: The Ambiguous Politics of Meaning" (1986). It should be noted, however, that Habermas's larger chapter ("Beyond a Temporalized Philosophy of Origins: Jacques Derrida's Critique of Phonocentrism") to which his "Excursus on Levelling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature" is attached, does reference the Derridean corpus more directly, if only, in the end to announce that "all denials notwithstanding, [Derrida] remains close to Jewish mysticism" (1987, 182, 184). I address this last charge directly below.
modern and the "postmodern" can be clearly delineated; if Derrida were to be guilty of that "aestheticizing" tendency characteristic of the "postmodern" in general, the French philosopher might be as easily dismissed.7

How is it, then, that one need only cite one of a series of charges (of formulas, in effect) which distinguish 'good' from 'bad' philosophy? How is it that such a general dismissiveness as that evidenced here -- general, that is to say, because it takes the form of a widespread response rather than a few isolated cases -- can overcome scholarly debate? The answer, one can only surmise, is that there is at work a powerful and deeply-held set of assumptions behind these claims. The question at hand, therefore, is what kind of assumption or, rather, what set of assumptions, might serve to render the scholarly requirements of textual substantiation, argumentative rigour and careful attention to content and form moot in these responses to a particular body of scholarship?

One such assumption, to be sure, is the Enlightenment belief that ethical and political 'goods' can be established in rational, and hence universal terms. Indeed, as I have already indicated, the "postmodern" postulation that what counts as "truth" may be determined on grounds that are contingent rather than universal in nature (on the grounds, for example, of the racial, gender-related, class-based, historical, cultural and/or religious interests of particular agents), has profoundly challenged this

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7 Norris elsewhere implies as much when he writes that one can add "post-structuralism, postmodernism, Foucauldian 'genealogy' (or discourse-theory), and at least one variety of deconstruction as practised by (mainly American) literary critics," to a "catalogue" of thinkers for whom, "it is a high point of doctrine that 'truth' is nothing more than what counts as such according to the codes, cultural conventions, power/knowledge interests, 'intertextual' relationships and so forth which make up the conditions of intelligibility within this or that field of 'signifying practice'" (1993, 102-103). On the collapse of such radically different theories under a single, disparaged designation, see note 2, above.
belief. This challenge, I have proposed, has in turn resulted in widespread fears concerning the political perils of "postmodern" theorizing. Yet these assumptions should and can be made more precise in light of a significant clue provided in Habermas’s reading of Derrida. For Habermas specifies that what is more narrowly at issue in deconstruction -- and, presumably, in any form of "postmodern" theorizing that shares its ostensible "aestheticizing" tendency -- is that "Derrida is particularly interested in standing the primacy of logic over rhetoric, canonized since Aristotle, on its head" (Habermas 1987, 187). Thus, the Kantian link between ethics and epistemology (via logic) that the dominant response to "postmodernism" reflects is itself antecedced by a prior philosophical conviction: viz, that logic has a traditional and justifiable standing over rhetoric, and that this status cannot be overturned.

It is the illegitimate nature of the deconstructive reversal, then -- or, more accurately, the bald assumption that Derrida and other French philosophers have undertaken it -- that apparently authorizes the critics cited above to engage in what can otherwise only appear as a decidedly dismissive approach. For, as I now want to show, the "primacy of the logical over the rhetorical" pre-dates and grounds that very link which "postmodernism" is taken to threaten: the link between a critical epistemological and educational ideal of reason freed from ideology and injustice, on the one hand, and a modern political ideal of progressive, social reform -- which is to say, an ethico-political ideal of the 'good' -- on the other. Precisely because it is so well established in the history of Western philosophy, in other words, the priority of logic over rhetoric preempts, and is regularly taken to have the authority to preempt, the modernism-postmodernism debate.
The questions that must be addressed first, therefore, are how the priority of the logical over the rhetorical -- or, in Habermas's formulation, the primacy of the "problem-solving" capacity of philosophy over the "world-disclosing" capacity of fiction or the literary -- ensures the a priori legitimacy of the modernist position, and whether that primacy is in fact as secure as supposed. I will then undertake to show that it is not only the primacy of logic over rhetoric, but in fact the very autonomy of these categories to begin with, that is crucially at stake in the modernism-postmodernism debate. For, once both the primacy and the autonomy of logic vis-a-vis rhetoric is challenged, I argue, the traditional conception of education as an emancipatory political project must be rethought as well.

It is significant that in an essay that predates Habermas's "Excursus" on deconstruction by some five years, Paul de Man goes a substantial way toward answering the first set of questions. He writes, "The most misleading representation of literariness, and also the most recurrent objection to contemporary literary theory, considers it as pure verbalism, as a denial of the reality principle in the name of absolute fictions, and for reasons that are said to be ethically and politically shameful" (de Man 1982, 11). Here de Man is especially concerned with the question of what it is "about literary theory that is so threatening that it provokes such strong resistances and attacks" (1982, 11). What this resistance to the 'literary' is, he asserts, "is a resistance to the use of language about language. It is therefore a resistance to language itself" -- which is to say, "to the possibility that language contains factors or functions that cannot be reduced to intuition" (1982, 13). For de Man, in fact, "literariness" is just this possibility: as he employs it, the term refers to "the use of
language that foregrounds the rhetorical over the grammatical and the logical function" (1982, 14).

Such a possibility, it emerges -- the excess of language beyond determinate meaning, so to speak -- will always persist. Indeed, the term "language" itself -- the very term we use to denote the possibility of denotation -- brings us to the heart of the difficulty in Habermas's assumption that philosophy's logical mode of discourse must, for ethical and political reasons, be privileged over the rhetorical or the 'literary'. For, even if we begin with "the most familiar and general" of all models of language, the classical Greek trivium, we will soon encounter difficulties which no logical analysis can resolve (1982, 13). The trivium, it will be recalled, is the tripartite division of the sciences of language into grammar, rhetoric and logic. First formulated by Boethius in sixth century Greece, these "sciences of language," together with the sciences of number, or the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), comprised the seven liberal arts, or artes liberales (Carr 1997, 317, and de Man 1982, 13).

As de Man's analysis makes clear, the significance of the trivium as a linguistic model goes far beyond the fact that it is the classical (if skeletal) basis of the contemporary university curriculum (Carr 1997, 318). For de Man shows that the hierarchical arrangement of the three "sciences" of language -- and particularly the

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6 This poses chronic difficulties for the practice of literary theory, in particular, since it is aimed at precisely that dimension of language which the theoretical enterprise as a whole resists. Thus, de Man proposes, the form taken by these difficulties in the present scene, and the contemporary resistance to them "is only one more particular version of a question that cannot be reduced to a specific historical situation and called modern, post-modern, post-classical or romantic (not even in Hegel's sense of the term). . ." (de Man 1982, 12).
standing of logic over rhetoric -- establishes the original possibility of "scientific and humanistic knowledge" (1982. 15) -- the very possibility, that is to say, that "postmodernism" in general, and Derrida in particular, are taken to threaten.

Specifically, de Man argues that the condition of moving freely between these two divisions -- between the sciences of language and the sciences of nature or the phenomenal world (1982. 14) -- is the subjugation of rhetoric to logic within the trivium. And this is because it is first and foremost logic which links up the two domains that the trivium and the quadrivium represent.

In the history of philosophy, this link is traditionally, as well as substantially, accomplished by way of logic, the area where the rigor of the linguistic discourse about itself matches up with the rigor of the mathematical discourse about the world. Seventeenth-century epistemology, for instance, at the moment when the relationship between philosophy and mathematics is particularly close, holds up the language of what it calls geometry (mos geometricus), and which in fact includes the homogeneous concatenation between space, time and number, as the sole model of coherence and economy. . . .This is a clear instance of the interconnection between a science of the phenomenal world and a science of language conceived as definitional logic, the pre-condition for a correct axiomatic-deductive, synthetic reasoning. . . .[T]his articulation of the sciences of language with the mathematical sciences represents a particularly compelling version of a continuity between a theory of language, as logic, and the knowledge of the phenomenal world to which mathematics gives access (1982. 13-14).

Yet, de Man continues, even if we grant for argument's sake that a theory of language as logic can indeed guarantee the link to the phenomenal world of the natural sciences (and de Man finds this conclusion debatable), the relationship between grammar, logic and rhetoric "within the confines of the trivium itself" is by no means securely established (1982. 14).

One can, to be sure, maintain a relatively close and relatively comfortable connection between grammar and logic, de Man agrees (citing A.J. Greimas), since
grammar, like logic, must be virtually universal in its application, or else it does not satisfy the essential demand that it account for a potentially all-inclusive number of texts. Therefore, for an entire tradition of linguistic theorists, de Man asserts, "the grammatical and the logical function of language are co-extensive. Grammar is an isotope of logic" (1982, 14).

With regard to the relation between grammar and rhetoric, however, the case is not nearly so clear. On the contrary, de Man maintains, the uncertainty of this relationship is apparent "in the uncertain status of figures of speech or tropes, a component of language that straddles the borderlines between the two areas" (1982, 15). If semiologists have attempted to master and to clarify meaning by extending grammar to include the "para-figural dimensions" of a text, for example -- if they have thereby aimed to replace rhetorical with grammatical terminology -- this strategy will nonetheless leave "a residue of indetermination that has to be, but cannot be, resolved by grammatical means, however extensively conceived" (1982, 15, 16).

As an example of just such undecidability, de Man considers the figure, or "trope," that forms the title of Keats's epic poem, "The Fall of Hyperion." This trope, it emerges, can be read in any one of a number of ways, none of which can be conclusively shown to be correct on the basis of a grammatical or a logical analysis. Thus, for instance, we can read "The Fall of Hyperion" as variously referring to "Hyperion's fall" -- the defeat of Hyperion by Apollo -- or as "Hyperion falling." which is to say as the "more disquieting evocation of an actual process of falling, regardless of its beginning, its end or the identity to whom it befalls to be falling." Thus de Man asks.
Does the title tell us that Hyperion is fallen and that Apollo stands, or does it tell us that Hyperion and Apollo (and Keats, whom it is hard to distinguish, at times, from Apollo) are interchangeable in that all of them are necessarily and constantly falling? Both readings are grammatically correct, but it is impossible to decide from the context (the ensuing narrative) which version is the right one (1982, 16).

Moreover, de Man continues, we might also offer an 'intertextual' reading of the figure, whereby we refer this poem to an earlier one by Keats, also unfinished, called "Hyperion." In this case, one can read title differently again, this time as,

telling the story [either] of the failure of the first text [or] as the success of the second, the Fall of Hyperion as the Triumph of The Fall of Hyperion. . . . The undecidability involves the figural or literal status of the proper name Hyperion as well as the verb falling, and is thus a matter of figuration and not of grammar (1982, 16).

"Faced with the ineluctable necessity to come to a decision." he therefore maintains, no grammatical or logical analysis can help us out (1982, 16).

de Man's conclusion is that the tropological dimension of language, the effects of "rhetoric" on grammar and logic that is clearly in evidence here "can be revealed in any verbal event when it is read textually" (1982, 17: emphasis mine). Thus, far from being contained, or being (even in principle) containable, within the dictates of grammar and logic, rhetoric 'undoes' the possibility of theory -- which is to say, it undoes the possibility of logic as a "universal system of philosophy" (1982, 8). The resistance to "theory," therefore, is a resistance to that reading which focuses on the 'literary', because the 'literary', rhetorical or "tropological" dimension of language "undoes the claims of the trivium" and thus "disturbs the stable cognitive field that extends from grammar to logic to a general science of man and of the phenomenal world" (1982, 17). The problem with the "literariness" of literature, in short -- and indeed of any "verbal event" -- is that literariness undermines the a priori claim that
language functions according to the same (logical) principles as the phenomenal world. "It is therefore not a priori certain," de Man continues, "that literature is a reliable source of information about anything but its own language" (1982, 11).

In terms of the present argument, the most interesting aspect of de Man's analysis is that it reveals two irreconcilably different, and yet inextricably bound, notions of the term "theory." Rhetoric as literary theory, he says, undoes the possibility of theory. On one hand, then, there is the classical understanding of theory as a universal knowledge system (theory1), based on the trivium. Theory1 presumes an immediate, referential function of language -- that is, an unproblematic correspondence between the name and the thing -- which is in turn based upon intuition, and which "implies perception, consciousness, and all its correlatives" (1982, 8, 10). The most important of these correlatives, of course, is the possibility of a logical relation between language and the phenomenal world, for this relationship is understood as the very basis of scientific and humanistic knowledge, expressed as a universal system of philosophy.

Significantly, rhetorical readings are themselves theory1 in this sense, de Man asserts, insofar as they can be taught -- which is to say, insofar as they are "generalizable and highly responsive to systematization" (1982, 20). But they are both theory and not theory at the same time. For, as the systematic disruption of systematicity, "literary" readings (theory2) also undo just this possibility of universalizable or systematizable knowledge. A theory2 of rhetorical reading, in other words, is always to some degree both teachable and unteachable, for it is the "methodical undoing of the grammatical construct and, in its systematic disarticulation.
of the trivium. will be theoretically[1] sound as well as effective" (1982, 20; my emphasis). Just as theory₁ will therefore necessarily "resist" the advent of literary theory₂, therefore, it follows that theories of reading rhetorically which are teachable (and hence, share the qualities of theory₁) will also resist the very reading they advocate. Theory₁, de Man concludes, is thus none other than this resistance (1982, 20), because it embodies the methodological assumption of the possibility of a stable and universal field of knowledge "that extends." as we have seen, "from grammar to logic to a general science of man and of the phenomenal world" (1982, 12, 17).

Theory₂, on the other hand. is the inevitable disruption -- what I will hereafter call the "deconstruction" -- that destabilizes this knowledge in a negative way due to the uncontainable nature of language's tropological effects.

If I have elaborated this discussion at some length, it is because it is necessary to clarify the tension within the concept of "theory" that de Man elucidates in order to treat the objections to the purported "aestheticizing" tendency of deconstruction with which I began. Specifically, de Man's mobilization of a distinction between what I am calling theory₁ and theory₂ points toward a parallel tension within the concept of the aesthetic itself. And it is this tension within the aesthetic, not the aesthetic per se, that deconstructive practices of reading philosophy threaten to reveal. Thus, it is an equivocality within the concept of the aesthetic, I will suggest, that the common objection to deconstruction aims to cover over or to conceal.

The aesthetic, as de Man has noted, has occupied a "prominent though never dominant place" (1982, 8) within theory₁, because the aesthetic concerns precisely the phenomenology of meaning (the meaning of the "beautiful" for us, based on its
effects upon the senses, or intuition) in terms of the understanding. In other words, aesthetics -- at least since Kant -- is a part of, rather than extraneous to, a universal system of philosophy, because it assumes the same relation between theory and phenomenality that is expressed, as we have seen, by the system as a whole. Thus de Man writes, "in such a system the place of aesthetics is preordained, and by no means alien, provided the priority of logic, in the model of the trivium, is not being questioned" (1982, 14).

Yet a questioning or destabilization of the primacy of logic within the trivium is precisely what theory, does. When effective, therefore, rhetorical readings "void" rather than affirm the categories of the aesthetic, because they undo or disarticulate that system in which such categories form a well-established part. This is perhaps exactly what de Man has in mind when he suggests that "the assumption that there can be a science of language [i.e., semiology, or structural linguistics] which is not necessarily a logic leads to the development of a terminology which is not necessarily aesthetic" (1982, 8). Indeed, in the classical model of language, rhetoric itself was presumed to serve a merely "aesthetic" or "ornamental" role within the trivium -- precisely, that is, insofar as it was possible to "ignore its epistemological thrust" and to keep it subjugated as a lesser value within the semantic function (1982, 15). The "literariness" which rhetorical (or deconstructive) readings uncover are thus properly speaking neither aesthetic nor mimetic, from de Man's point of view, but strictly linguistic.

Once it can be argued that the aesthetic is part and parcel of a system of philosophy premised upon the primacy of logic within the trivium, it is no longer
plausible to claim that the problem with deconstructive or rhetorical readings of
textual undecidability is that they express an "anti-intellectualism" (Gutmann), or that
they simply "aestheticize" political philosophy (Honneth, Norris). For the concept of
the "aesthetic" itself already presupposes that same priority of logic required to link
the sciences of language to the sciences of number (i.e., to link the *trivium* to the *quadrivium*), and thus in no way threatens classical epistemology. On the contrary,
the aesthetic so understood is already contained within the very philosophical system
that Habermas, Honneth, Norris, Benhabib and Gutmann have tried to defend.

If it is not the rhetorical *qua aesthetic* that deconstruction threatens to elevate
illegitimately, therefore, it is all the more interesting that this is precisely the heading
under which deconstruction is so regularly dismissed. In revealing exactly that aspect
of writing that *cannot* be expressed with traditional aesthetic terminology, its
"literariness" or its 'rhetoricity', deconstruction is hung on the charge of
"aestheticizing." It is in this sense that de Man's distinction between theory as
universal knowledge (theory₁) on the one hand, and a literary theory of rhetorical
reading which undoes it from within, on the other (theory₂) -- points to a tension, or
rather a split, within the category of the aesthetic as well.

This split becomes evident once it is noticed that deconstruction both does
and does not achieve an "aestheticizing" end because rhetoric properly understood
both is and is not an aesthetic effect. Deconstruction *does* aestheticize philosophy.
that is to say, insofar as the primacy of logic within the *trivium* is given, for on this
view deconstruction is seen to elevate illegitimately the rhetorical function --
traditionally understood as mere "ornament" -- above the functions of grammar and

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logic. Yet it is equally possible to argue that deconstruction does not aestheticize philosophy. insofar as the inclusion of aesthetics within the entire philosophical system depends upon the subordination of rhetoric within the *trivium*, and this subordination, in turn, can shown to be unstable. The rhetorical aspect of writing, when revealed, thus reflects that "aesthetic" 'something’ that remains "aesthetic" only insofar as its effects are properly subdued; once brought to light, rhetoric threatens to upset the system as a whole.

In responding to this analysis, Christopher Norris has argued that the threat posed by rhetoric to the *trivium* -- and by extension to the place of the aesthetic within a stable and universal system of knowledge -- is falsely premised upon an erroneous and vastly overstated reading of the Kantian sublime in the *Critique of Judgment* (Kant 1987). Specifically, Norris argues that postmodernists in general, and post-structuralists such as Paul de Man and Hillis Miller in particular, can only 'blithely decouple' the terms of logic, grammar and rhetoric "to the point where 'textuality' (or 'unlimited semiosis') takes over from the old repressive regime of reality, truth and reference," if they assume that 'reality' is merely a "figment" -- an imaginary, fictional or artistic construct -- of a wholly arbitrary linguistic system (1993, 198, 227). This premise, however -- according to Norris -- is falsely authorized by a wilful misreading of the Kantian text. Indeed, he asserts, antifoundationalist, postmodern philosophers.

...go far beyond anything warranted by the Kantian text when they relegate the beautiful (the realm of enlightened consensus-judgment) to a distinctly subordinate role, and promote the sublime -- the figure of disjunction, radical alterity, 'gulfs', 'chasms' etc. -- to an eminent position where it works to disarticulate the entire doctrine of the faculties" (Norris 1993, 253).
Sceptics -- including "postmodernists, deconstructionists, [and] counter-enlightenment ideologues of various colours" -- thus "[lean] over into a strain of downright contempt for the truth claims of enlightened ethical reason" (1993, 230, 203).

If this characterization is somewhat overdrawn, as I will show, Norris is not wrong to insist on the necessity of stabilizing the place of the sublime in the Kantian Critique. For the relationship between the beautiful and the sublime can be shown to re-entrench exactly that relationship between rhetoric and grammar expressed in the trivium, and it can be shown to do so. I will argue, precisely in order to contain that threat that rhetoric first posed, namely, the epistemological challenge to logic that rhetoric, with its potential to disrupt a universal system of philosophy, is said to entail.

For example, whether or not one wishes to make the kinds of radical claims that (for instance) Lyotard makes with regard to the sublime's disruptive potential within the Critique of Judgment,9 it remains that the sublime clearly occupies a crucial and yet remarkably indeterminate place within the Kantian treatment of reflective judgment. Specifically, the discussion of the sublime is bracketed as an "Appendix" within the first Division of the text (i.e., within the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment"); within this Division, moreover, the Appendix is positioned between the "Analytic of the Beautiful" (which alone provides the principle of the "pure" aesthetic judgment), and the "Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments." If the discussion of the sublime is

9 "What the sublime gives us to reflect upon, in Lyotard's account," Norris explains, "is the absolute 'heterogeneity' of phrase-regimes, the gulf (or 'differend') that exists between judgments in the cognitive or epistemic mode and judgments of an ethical, political or evaluative nature" (Norris 1993, 15 passim; note omitted, and 219).
thus not strictly included within the argument concerning pure judgments of taste. However, its positioning prior to the second division of the text (i.e., the "Critique of Teleological Judgment") indicates that it is not thought to be a teleological judgment at all. Yet notwithstanding this equivocality -- in fact, because of it, the analysis of the sublime plays an integral role within the argument of the third Critique.

In an important sense, 'bracketing' is exactly the treatment the sublime demands. For on one hand, it must be recalled, the effect of the sublime is not said to lead to a pure aesthetic judgment of taste, but rather to a judgment concerning the primacy of practical reason among the faculties of the noumenal subject. The sublime is thus not strictly a part of the critique of aesthetic judgment, since only the beautiful results in a 'purely' aesthetic, "disinterested," judgmental end. On the other hand, however, the sublime is an indispensable "supplement" to the analytic of the beautiful, because it serves the crucial role of marking the limits of imaginative, aesthetic engagement. The judgment of the sublime, in effect, is the judgment that the imagination has failed, and this failure in turn allows us to know what beauty is not. Both as a condition of the meaning of the beautiful, therefore, and as a

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10 On this term, see in particular the section called "...That Dangerous Supplement..." in Of Grammatology, wherein Derrida analyzes Rousseau's treatment of the relationship between speech and writing in order to show that for Rousseau writing has the character of a "supplement": i.e., it is a necessary and yet unassimilable 'something' without which a given system (in this case, Rousseau's systematic understanding of language) cannot function, but with which the system cannot be logically reconciled (1976, 141-164). As Robert Bernasconi further explains, not only is "the supplement both addition and substitute," but "what is added to take the place of a lack or default is itself a lack" (1992, 145). In the case at hand, what beauty 'lacks' is the possibility of determining the limits of the imagination. Insofar as the imagination is shown to be limited precisely to the extent that it cannot, that it fails, to encompass the sublime, the sublime can be said to 'add' to (to supplement) our knowledge of the beautiful, but only negatively so, or in terms of a lack.
phenomenal effect, the judgment of sublimity can no more be utterly divorced from the critique of pure aesthetic taste than it can be contained within it.

The unstable positioning of the sublime within the *Critique of Judgment* can be seen not only in relation to the pure aesthetic judgment of taste, but in relation to the principle of teleological judgment as well. For if we look to what the third *Critique* is intended to accomplish as a whole within the Kantian system rather than merely to the first division concerning the pure judgment of "beauty," it can be seen that it is the judgment of the sublime, and not the judgment of the beautiful, that furnishes the link between the first and the second division of the text (between aesthetic and teleological judgments) that is necessary to connect the "domains" of nature and freedom (i.e., the "domains" of theoretical and practical reason). This connection between nature and freedom is required, Kant says, in order to solve the problem that while neither the principle of nature nor the principle of freedom can legislate in the other's domain, the purposes governed by the law of freedom *must* be realizable in nature.\(^\text{11}\) And while the beautiful is said to "prefigure," this possibility, it does not fully establish it.\(^\text{12}\) The discussion of the sublime thus provides an

\(^{11}\) As Kant says, "the concept of freedom is to actualize in the world of sense the purpose enjoined by its laws" (Kant 1987, 15; emphasis his).

\(^{12}\) Norris is careful not to make any stronger claim than this with regard to the systemic import of the judgment of the beautiful, even though he wants to argue that Kant's reflections on the beautiful bring to the fore "ideas of an enlightened community of judgment," in which "rational subjects are enabled to agree upon mutually-acceptable standards of taste" (1993, 246, 245). It is unfortunate, therefore, that Norris does not explore the consequence of this weakness with regard to the relation between pure and practical - what he calls "knowledge-constitutive interests and those of practical (ethico-political) - reason (1993, 243); i.e., the consequences of the problem that a judgment of pure taste merely 'prefigures' but does not actually confirm a link between the moral and the beautiful. For this means that the "gulf" between the two cognitive domains (theoretical and practical reason) that Kant explicitly sets out to bridge, still remains.
important key to the Kantian system as a whole, because the experience of the sublime is said to provide the sensible moment of reason's supremacy over the imagination and the presentational powers in general (see esp. Kant 1987. 99, 129). The judgment of this sensation thus entails a transition between the two cognitive faculties by virtue of the fact that it is said to provide a sensible experience (i.e., it mobilizes the relation between imagination and the understanding that is in effect in theoretical modes of judgment) of 'our' supersensible (moral) vocation (which is to say, it also mobilizes the relation between the imagination and reason, which is in effect in practical modes of judgment). The feeling of sublimity can be contrasted with the feeling of the beautiful, therefore, which makes the link between nature (theory) and freedom (practice) only by analogy, and which further requires a "predisposition" for the morally good in order to do so (Kant 1987. §§42 and 59).

It is important to note, however, that although the sublime thus anticipates the critique of teleology and provides, as I have suggested, a crucial key to the way in which Kant's critique of teleological judgment articulates the critical system as a whole, the experience of the sublime can be no better described as a teleological judgment per se than it can be seen as a pure, aesthetic judgment of taste. For Kant, the experience of the sublime is simply the experience of what the imagination cannot present. As that which is judged to be "contrapurposive" by the faculty of judgment, the sublime is that aesthetic (i.e. sensible, or available to intuition) 'something' that establishes in a negative way the limits of the merely cognitive, or theoretical faculty of reason.
It is certainly arguable, therefore, that just as rhetoric cannot be contained within or finally subjugated to the ostensible primacy of logic or grammar within the *trivium*, and just as what de Man calls "literariness" can neither be circumvented by, nor assimilated to, a theory, of language, so the experience of the sublime can be neither included in nor excluded from the critique of aesthetic judgment. In other words, the judgment of the sublime is neither an aesthetic nor a teleological judgment *per se*, but rather a structural condition -- a condition of possibility -- for both of those particular, judgmental modes. This condition, it emerges, is that experience whereby the imagination fails, rather than succeeds, to determine (reflectively) any *thing*. In this sense, the sublime can be said to signal precisely that equivocality within the concept of the "aesthetic" that rhetoric, when understood as de Man suggests, provokes within the concept of "theory."

If the sublime is thus said to undermine the supremacy of the beautiful within the aesthetic and thereby to threaten the disarticulation of the Kantian 'architectonic' (Norris 1993, 253), however -- just as rhetoric is said to undo the cognitive field promised by the traditional configuration of the *trivium* -- this is not to say that the sublime can any more be elevated to the place of total primacy within the Kantian text than can rhetoric within the *trivium*. This is where both proponents and critics of "postmodernism" (such as Lyotard and Norris and Habermas, respectively) go astray.

With regard to the ostensible primacy of the rhetorical brought about by deconstruction, for instance, both Norris and Habermas fail to notice that -- at least in the piece I have been reading here and to which Norris also refers, "The Resistance to Theory" -- de Man's aim is not to *reverse* the relationship between
rhetoric and logic, but rather to show that the logical priority cannot necessarily or automatically be sustained. Yet one need by no means jump from this to the conclusion that linguistic reference is therefore a fiction, or that theory *qua* knowledge is impossible, simply because its status is not absolute. In making this leap, critics such as Norris fail to remark that it is theory's *resistance* to a literary theory of the tropological dimensions of language -- and not the impossibility of theory altogether (the impossibility of systematic "truth") -- that de Man has explicitly set out to explore.

In fact, as the closing paragraph of the essay clearly states, de Man does *not* conclude that knowledge or truth are themselves impossible, merely because their status has been destabilized. On the contrary, he claims, because theory is the destabilization of knowledge, it cannot and will not ever come to take the place of theory. At the same time, if theory is to be a *knowledge* of knowledge's impossible conditions, and if it is a *systematic* undertaking of this attempt, then theory is, paradoxically, among theory's own 'loftiest aims' (1982, 20). Moreover, "*nothing* can overcome the resistance to theory," because "theory is itself this resistance" (de Man 1982, 20; first emphasis mine). In other words, since it remains that any *theory* of reading rhetorically -- any theory which aims to understand *with* logic the rhetorical challenge *to* logic -- will partake in that resistance as well (that is, will speak *as* that resistance), the possibility that rhetoric will take the place of philosophy is ruled out of court.13

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13 See S.P. Mohanty, however, for an alternate reading of de Man's analysis. Mohanty argues that de Man bases his argument concerning 'literariness' on a "fallacy of simple referential determination," which allows de Man to *hypostatize* rhetoric and to define "all" language as

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A similar argument could be made with respect to the Kantian sublime. That is, insofar as the sublime -- the experience of the "contrapurposeivity of the presentational powers" -- is required to mark the limits of the beautiful so that the latter may in turn be judged as "purposive" (for us), the sublime undoubtedly does destabilize the possibility of a pure universal judgment of taste. In this sense, moreover, an overemphasis on the sublime does in turn threaten to disrupt from within that "community" postulated by Kant that shares a universal "common sense" (sensus communis) -- a sense that aesthetic "pleasure" ostensibly evokes. On the other hand, however, it is a leap to conclude from this that the sublime qua "ultimate heterogeneity" (Norris 1993, 21, citing Lyotard) takes the place of the beautiful as an alternate aesthetic -- which is to say, as a variant phenomenal meaning. For the sublime could not be said to be a properly (anti-)aesthetic judgment without partaking in that very thing which necessarily keeps it at bay: namely, a system in which it is already preordained that the aesthetic qua meaningful phenomenon requires the bracketing of, or the resistance to, the unimaginable qua sublime.¹⁴

¹⁴ Theorists who attempt this kind of a straightforward reversal, consequently, are rightly charged with accusation that they are involved in a kind of "performatice contradiction." For example, Christopher Norris has made just this charge against Michel Foucault, noting the "odd disjunction between Foucault's highly effective practices as a critical intellectual and the way he persistently (not to say perversely) deploys every means, in his more speculative writings, to render such a practice untenable. For those writings could be seen to undermine the very ground -- the very conditions of possibility for critical discourse -- on which he nonetheless and necessarily claimed to stand when pursuing his other (historically and politically oriented) lines of research" (1993, 70). Nicholas Burbules makes much the same claim; he notes that as soon as one "offers something that looks like counterarguments" to explain why they have rejected "modernist conceptions of language, science, ethics, reason, and justice" outright, "he or she is promptly caught up in a contradiction, for these are precisely the things that are being denied" (Burbules 1996, 41).
The crucial question at stake is therefore not whether the rhetorical or the sublime in fact displaces the logical or the aesthetic -- the question is not what happens when the rhetorical (sublime) takes precedence -- as critics and certain proponents of "postmodernism" tend to presume. This state of affairs, I have argued, is impossible in principle. The question, rather, is what is accomplished by the insistence on keeping these troublesome possibilities (i.e., rhetoric and the sublime) in their subordinate and customary place. And what is accomplished, I argue, is precisely the a priori legitimacy of the modernist assumption that a reason free of ideology is the sine qua non of any legitimate, ethico-political notion of the good.

For what the critique of aesthetic judgment achieves -- provided it can contain the tension between the beautiful and the sublime -- is precisely that universal system of knowledge promised by the trivium. Unlike classical conceptions of knowledge, however, the Kantian system also includes moral reason within the concept of knowledge as a systematic science. That is to say, for Kant morally (as opposed to merely technically) "practical" reason differs from reason called "theoretical" when -- and only when -- it can be logically distinguished from the latter; when the logical principle that legislatcs over determinative moral judgments is the supersensible principle of freedom rather than the sensibly-conditioned principle of nature, which legislatcs over theoretical judgments of the understanding. For Kant, therefore, practical reason is based on a different logical principle than is theoretical reason, but it is by no means a different kind of judgment altogether (eg. Kant 1987, 12).

Importantly, however, the priority of logic entailed by theoretical and practical judgment alike is maintained only insofar as the disruptive potential of rhetoric and
(or as) the sublime -- the internal disruption or deconstruction of the system -- is contained. In other words, the positioning and containment of the sublime as the "interior-exterior" of the third Critique (as its "constitutive 'outside'"), and the primacy of the logical mode of judgment that is thereby confirmed, is a necessary (though perhaps not a sufficient) requirement of the Kantian analysis. For it is by controlling a potentially destabilizing force within the concept of the aesthetic -- for example, by bracketing the sublime between the "aesthetic" and the "teleological" divisions of the text -- that Kant can posit the autonomy of the pure judgment of taste. This judgment must remain pure, for it alone can provide the logical principle of reflective judgment in general -- the principle of "subjective purposiveness" (purposive for us) -- which, in turn, is what is said to be mobilized when we make a reflective teleological judgment that nature is designed "as though" in accordance with a supersensible will "like" our own (i.e., as "objectively purposive"). The teleological, reflective judgment can thereby establish the link between the determinate spheres of nature and freedom (theory and practice) that Kant had been aiming at all along, but it can do so only on the basis of a principle first discovered in the critique of pure, aesthetic judgments of taste.

Significantly, even if we ignore the role of the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" in the architectonic as a whole and focus exclusively on the first division of the Critique, the autonomy of pure judgments of taste can still be seen as a necessary condition for universal, ethico-political judgments that are rational in kind. For example, political philosopher Hannah Arendt (1982) and, more recently, Ronald Beiner (see Arendt 1982) and Onara O’Neill (see Norris 1993, 182-256, 318 n.2) have
capitalized on Kant's suggestion that the pure aesthetic judgment of taste, in particular, evokes a universal, communal sense (i.e., sensus communis). These theorists again suspend Kant's analysis of the sublime, in other words, precisely in order to argue that aesthetic judgments evoke a common public sphere and, in this way, provide a principled basis for the universality on which legitimate ethico-political judgments are seen to depend. With or without accounting for the critique of teleological judgment, therefore, the priority of logic over rhetoric can be said to have been transferred from the classical trivium to the modern, Kantian architectonic with one decisive difference: what modern philosophy adds to the classical formulation is the scientific possibility that ethico-political values can be determined in rational, universal terms.  

This move -- whereby ethics and not merely theoretical cognition is systematized as a logic -- should be seen as nothing less than pivotal for theorists and philosophers of education, as I have claimed. For in linking the supersensible domain of practical (ethico-political) reason to the sensible domain of pure (theoretical) reason by way of the aesthetic, Kant substantiates a notion of reason as critical -- which is to say, as normative, and not merely as axiomatic or deductive -- in nature. Indeed, as Dieter Misgeld has rightly noted, the Kantian "ideal of critical reason and the notion of critical inquiry" that was first formulated in "What is Enlightenment,"

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15 By "scientific" Kant specifies "systematic." His usage is thus in keeping with the notion of theory, - a universal system of knowledge - described above. Compare the Critique of Pure Reason, in which Kant writes, "As systematic unity is what first raises ordinary knowledge to the rank of science, that is, makes a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge, architectonic is the doctrine of the scientific in our knowledge, and therefore necessarily forms part of the doctrine of method" (Kant 1929, 653; my emphasis). I return to this discussion in Chapter Two.
"displays the interconnectedness of ideas of emancipation, reason, and education" (Misgeld 1985, 81). For this reason, the term Enlightenment can clearly be understood as referring to both "the historical process of the generation of scientific rationality and [the] universal principles of practical judgment." Misgeld continues,

Kant's formulation indicates that emancipation is also a political act and not just cognition. The removal of conditions of force and repressiveness, standing in the way of the use of one's own reason, is not merely a matter of using one's will intelligently; it is also a matter of using one's will... The Enlightenment's confidence in cognitive learning, in both the theoretical disciplines and practical-moral ones, is the normative basis of social and political emancipation (Misgeld 1985, 81: emphases mine. Cf. Peukert 1993, 166-167).

The significance of the Kantian connection between an ethical and a theoretical mode of judgment via the third Critique (and, more specifically, via the bracketing of the experience of the sublime), in short, is that it establishes the very ground of the modern educational project as an ethico-political enterprise aimed at emancipation.

For educational and political philosophers alike, therefore, the primacy of logic first instantiated in the classical trivium and later re-entrenched in the Kantian architectonic serves to ground and thus to legitimize the modernist position within the modernism-postmodernism debate. This is why, I want to propose, logic's priority over rhetoric can be taken by Habermas to be both self-evident in, and indispensable to, the discourses of modernity. And it is why "postmodernism" is seen as such a threat by so many philosophers and theorists of education, just as it is by political philosophers in general. In allegedly challenging the supremacy of logic over rhetoric, "postmodern" philosophers -- if they are not ruled to have gone beyond the boundaries of reasonable discussion altogether -- are deemed to spell the end of any kind of normative or critical political engagement.
These, then, are the stakes of the "modernism-postmodernism" debate. As I suggested earlier, however, the pre-emptive charge that deconstruction "aestheticizes" philosophy is premised on a profound misunderstanding of the nature of deconstruction, and therefore misconstrues its relevance for both critical political philosophy in general and for critical educational theory in particular. I would like to return to this now.

Specifically, I have indicated that the assumption that deconstruction and other forms of post-structuralism represent a straightforwardly "anti-Enlightenment" discourse is based on the erroneous belief, whether explicit or not, that the aim of a deconstructive analysis is simply to reverse the classical subjugation of rhetoric -- to elevate the "poetic function" over the "normal" function of language by engaging exclusively in a "critique of style" (Habermas 1987, 202-203, 189). Such a reversal is strictly speaking impossible, I have argued, since both knowledge (in the case of a theory of literature) and phenomenal meaning (in the case of the aesthetic) are always already constituted, so to speak, on the basis of the subjugation of the rhetorical and the sublime (respectively). Rhetoric and (or as) the sublime are not utterly extrinsic to the logical and the aesthetic, in other words, but rather occur as that inevitable possibility which provokes a certain "resistance" de Man calls "theory." They are in this sense terms expressing a condition of possibility for theory, rather than its mere antithesis. If this provocative force were ever to take the place of knowledge or aesthetic meaning, it would cease being the force of theoretical 'undoing' that it is. Deconstruction therefore cannot be said to "aestheticize"
philosophy -- not even in the more narrow sense of over-valuing the sublime -- because such an undertaking is strictly incoherent.

Yet if this difficulty has escaped the notice of deconstruction's critics, this is largely because it is not only the question of the primacy of logic that is begged. More importantly, the charge that deconstruction "aestheticizes" political philosophy also begs the question of logic's autonomy or purity with regard to language's tropological effects. The accusation that the categories can simply be reversed, in short, already suggests they are distinct.

It is this second (though logically prior) presupposition I now want to consider. For the issue is not merely the premature rejection of a large and arguably important body of work. The issue is that the frequent dismissal of all radical critiques of reason -- based on the arguably misguided assumption that "postmodernism" replaces logic with rhetoric, enlightened judgment with imaginative 'free-play', and philosophy with fiction -- preempts the possibility that analyses such as Derrida's may reflect a substantive, ethico-political critique of reason.16

It is exactly this possibility that the following study investigates. I argue that it is specifically by virtue of its unwavering acknowledgement of, and its strict accounting for, the way in which rational modes of discourse cannot be divorced from the tropological or figural dimensions of language, that Derrida's work embodies a version of reason as self-critique. In other words, in what I will provisionally characterize here as a "radicalization" of critical reason, Derrida reveals the ethical

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16 Interestingly, Rudi Visker has tried to make a similar argument on behalf of Michel Foucault -- arguing, in effect, that genealogy is a critique of that very "reason" which, traditionally, has authorized the critical enterprise. See Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique (Visker 1995).
and political interests served by Enlightenment formulations of reason as "pure."

More specifically, he exposes the contingency of the particular cultural, historical, national, racial, sexual and class-related (inter alia) interests that are conveyed -- carried, communicated, and delivered -- by the figures or tropes supporting a (universal) philosophical argument, but that are never acknowledged, as such, within it. The interests that those tropes convey, therefore, are precisely what are covered over by virtue of the insistence that the rhetorical elements of speech are "tamed" by the problem-solving, logical function of "illocutionary" speech acts (Habermas 1987, 209).17

In undertaking this "critical" work, I argue, Derrida's writings can be fairly characterized as "responsible"; moreover, it is an ethico-political form of "responsibility" that can be instructively contrasted with the understanding of responsibility shared by critics of "postmodernism." For, as Thomas Keenan explains, the Enlightenment understanding of this term is one whereby,

Grounding and subjectivity figure each other, thanks to the essential assumption of the subject's capacity to "master its discourse," to "author its acts or ideas" -- in other words, its capacity to be an author by virtue of the articulation of ideas with acts, the coordination of cognition with performance in a subject. The signature (of an "author") marks the connection of knowing with doing, the mastery of the linguistic field (discourse) in which they can come together, and the ability to sign is what is called responsibility (Keenan 1997, 135).

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17 Habermas's own choice of words is particularly revealing in this context, evoking as it does a politically contestable, gender-loaded split between culture (as that which "tames") and nature (as that which is "tamed"). This metaphor is itself endemic to a discourse of modernity. For example, the project of Enlightenment has been characterized in terms of a narrative in which, "becoming human is a learning process whereby knowledge 'tames' natural instincts and replaces them with reason" (see Usher and Edwards 1994, 125). Derrida analyzes this culture-nature dualism effectively in Of Grammatology (1976).
Paradoxically, I shall argue, the normative or ethico-political dimension of Derrida’s work consists in its very interrogation of this ideal. However, this normative dimension cannot be recognized as such if we leave unchallenged the modernist presupposition regarding the autonomy of language’s logical function. In other words, by contesting the belief that the responsible agent is the ‘master of the linguistic field’ -- or, that the rational mode of discourse is pure/free of language’s tropological effects -- it becomes possible to outline much more precisely what are and are not the normative consequences of “postmodernism” (of Derrida’s approach to modern reason) vis-à-vis the modernist discourse of Enlightenment as critique.

It is necessary to demonstrate, therefore, why language in its logical mode (as philosophy or science, for example) cannot be understood as Habermas suggests: as autonomous or separable from language in its rhetorical mode. And for this purpose there is perhaps no better text than Derrida’s "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy" (1983a). For in contrast to the piece by de Man considered above, which was concerned only with the specific field of literary theory, Derrida’s essay concerns the field of philosophy itself.

It is interesting that Habermas himself did not discuss this text, given that it treats precisely that conflict within philosophy that seems to have the defenders of modernity so vexed; namely, the conflict between an enlightened discourse of reasoned philosophical persuasion, on the one hand, and a mystical or rhetorical, and

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15 As Norris rightly observes (1992, 187).
ultimately unintelligible discourse of apocalypse and catastrophe on the other.\textsuperscript{19}

What Habermas might have observed -- what Norris does observe (1992) -- is that Derrida had already composed a carefully stated response to the charge of turning philosophy into literature, since it is exactly that charge that the essay addresses, only this time as it is made by Kant against those who adopt an "overlordly tone in philosophy" (Derrida 1983a, 6). Unlike those "postmodernists" characterized by Norris, however, Derrida's clearly stated purpose is "not to take sides or come to a decision -- I shall do no such thing -- between metaphor and concept, literary mystagogy and true philosophy, but for a start to recognize the old solidarity of these antagonists or protagonists" (Derrida 1983, 16). In this sense, Derrida goes one better than both Kant and his 'mystagogical' interlocutors; he offers a reading which challenges the very ground of their dispute. In so doing, I will argue, he challenges the basis of Habermas's critique as well.

To be sure, the essay begins with an acknowledgement of just where Kant and his interlocutors differ: with a discussion of the distinction between the philosophical ideal of tonal neutrality, on the one hand, and the "overlordly" tone adopted by those "mystagogues" who deign to take on airs (who behave in an "overlordly" fashion), by presuming to announce the end of philosophy, on the other. As quickly becomes clear, however, it is not for Kant the mere fact that there is tonal marking at all that

\textsuperscript{19} The English translation cited here first appeared in \textit{The Oxford Literary Review} in 1983, following the publication of a second edition of the French text by Editions Galilée that same year. The first French edition of this text appeared in the published proceedings of the 1980 conference at which the lecture was given; these appeared under the title \textit{Les Fins de l'homme} [The Ends of Man] (Galilée, 1981). Derrida's essay on the relation between philosophical and rhetorical discourse was thus available in both French and in English a number of years before the 1985, German publication of \textit{The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity} (1987).
spells the "death of all philosophy" (1983a. 7). In the first place, Kant's own essay is marked by "polemical or satiric verve" and, in the second place, the "tonal loftiness" with which Kant takes issue is a "metaphoric loftiness." rather than a literal one. What Kant objects to, then, is not that there is some tone rather than none, but that those who would say certain things about philosophy -- that it is in danger or that it is coming to an end -- display a kind of inappropriate presumptuousness (1983a. 7).

Those mystagogues who presume to announce the end of philosophy -- and who do so, moreover, by mimicking the tone of the overlord (thereby "usurping signs of social membership" [1983a. 10]) -- exalt themselves as among the privileged few who are "above their colleagues or fellows (Zunftgenossen)" (1983a. 10-11).20

This, then, is the "mystagogic," or "apocalyptic" tone that provides the focus for this essay. Yet as readers familiar with Habermas's own indictment of deconstruction will undoubtedly observe, Kant's satirical polemic bears some remarkably contemporary resonances. For example, what is so unacceptable to Kant about those who pronounce the death of philosophy is that they presume to be in "immediate and intuitive relation with the mystery." As Derrida paraphrases,

[T]hey wish to attract, seduce, lead toward the mystery and by the mystery. Mystagogein is indeed this: to lead, initiate into the mystery; that is the mystagogue's or the initiatory priest's function. This agoge function of the leader of men, of dux, of Führer, of leder places him above the crowd he manipulates through the intermediary of a small number of followers gathered into a sect with a crypted language, a band, a clique or a small party with its ritualized practices. The mystagogues claim to possess as if in private the privilege of a mysterious secret... (1983a, 9).

20 All italics, translations, and textual insertions within quotations in what follows are Derrida's or his translator's, unless otherwise noted.

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In this context, it is interesting to return to the Habermasian charge noted above:
"that, Derrida, all denials notwithstanding, remains close to Jewish mysticism" (1987, 182). More fully, Habermas says this:

Derrida's grammatologically circumscribed concept of an archewriting whose traces call forth all the more interpretations the more unfamiliar [i.e., "secret" - SG] they become, renews the mystical concept of a tradition as an ever delayed event of revelation. Religious authority only maintains its force as long as it conceals its true face and thereby incites the frenzy of deciphering interpreters. Earnestly pursued deconstruction is the paradoxical labour of continuing a tradition in which the saving energy is only renewed by expenditure: The labour of deconstruction lets the refuse heap of interpretations, which it wants to clear away in order to get at the buried foundations, mount ever higher (1987, 183).21

Similarly, as Derrida explains, for Kant the voice of reason "speaks to each without equivocation (deutlich)" and "gives access to scientific knowledge" whereas, in contrast.

the voice of an oracle (die Stimme eines Orakels) always lends itself to all kinds of interpretations (Auslegungen). The priest-mystagogues are also interpreters: the element of their agogic power is the hermeneutic or hermetic seduction. . . . The overlordly tone dominates and is dominated by the oracular voice that covers over the voice of reason, rather parasitises it, causes it to derail or become delirious" (Derrida, 1983a, 12, 11; my emphasis).

As these citations begin to indicate, the "oracular" voice portrayed by Kant is virtually a precise match for the "labour of deconstruction" Habermas describes. Both deconstruction and the oracular or "mystagogical" voice in philosophy not only presume an esoteric and privileged access to knowledge, but both further eschew scholarly argumentation (Derrida 1983a, 9; Habermas 1987, 193, 194) in lieu of what

21 This passage is cited from Habermas's longer and more focused engagement with Derrida's own work; i.e., from the chapter called, "Beyond a Temporalized Philosophy of Origins: Jacques Derrida's Critique of Phonocentrism" (1987, 161-184).
Derrida calls a "cryptopoetics" (Derrida 1983a, 14). Furthermore, both replace "evidences and proofs with 'analogies' and 'versimilitudes'" (Kant, cited in Derrida 1983a, at 15: Habermas 1897, 189). and both thereby 'rob philosophical thinking of its seriousness and its substance' (Habermas 185, 210) threatening, in effect, to 'emasculate' it (Kant uses the word Entmannung; cited in Derrida 1983a, at 16).

In the first place, it is important to note that if both the deconstructionists targeted by Habermas and the Romantics with whom Kant took issue are called mystagogues because they refute the ideal of a universal truth based on reason and available to all, putting in its place (ostensibly) a privileged notion of truth that is based on revelation and is available, consequently, only to the very few, then there is nothing particularly "Jewish" about Derrida's "mysticism" in particular. Kant's own commentary would seem to indicate, rather, that this purported reversal is as possible for the Christian philosopher as it is for the Jewish one. Notwithstanding Habermas's discussion of the importance of such Jewish philosophers as Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin and Gershom Sholem for Derrida's work, therefore, it remains that Habermas has not fully substantiated this case.

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22 The citation to which I refer here is as follows: "Derrida does not proceed analytically, in the sense of identifying hidden presuppositions or implications," but instead, "proceeds by a critique of style, in that he finds something like indirect communications, by which the text itself denies its manifest content, in the rhetorical surplus of meaning inherent in the literary strata of texts that present themselves as nonliterary" (1987, 189).

23 Norris has remarked on this parallel as well. He says, "when Derrida offers his own free paraphrase of Kant's case against the mystagogues it could easily be taken for a passage from one of Habermas's chapters on Derrida in PDM [Habermas 1987]" (1982, 188).

24 In fact, Habermas himself variously relates Derrida's thought to "Jewish mysticism" (1987, 182), to experiences recounted in both the Jewish and the Christian traditions (183), and to the "mysticism of a New Paganism" (184).
In the second place, however, and more importantly for my argument here, what Derrida goes on to demonstrate is that the "apocalyptic" tone is not merely an errant and unfortunate possibility that philosophy has faced, according to Kant, ever since it lost its "primitive signification" as, "literally, a wisdom of life regulating itself according to knowledge or science (wissenschaftlichen Lebensweisheit)" (cited in Derrida 1983a, 8). Rather, Derrida shows, the tone described by Kant is actually intrinsic to the philosophical endeavour as such. Indeed, as I now want to explain, it is for this reason that Derrida himself speaks "of/in" (both "of" and "in") 'an apocalyptic tone in philosophy' (1983a, 3, 5).

Derrida's initial analysis of the term "apocalypse" already points toward the inscription of the apocalyptic within the philosophical. For in Derrida's parodic reiteration of Kant, it must be recalled, the term "apocalyptic" was used to designate that tone which Kant calls "overlordly": namely, the tone which mimics loftiness, presuming as it does to speak of the "end" of philosophy. This tone which warns of imminent ends is, on Derrida's reading of Kant, an "apocalyptic tone."

Now, the "apocalyptic" first meant disclosure, not catastrophe, as it has come to connote: apokalupsis is an ancient translator's choice of a Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word "gala", or "unveiling." As a more recent translator of John's Apocalypse writes, "YHWH can be the agent of this disclosure." In this sense, "the Apocalypse is essentially a contemplation (hazôn) or an inspiration [neboua] at the sight, the uncovering or disclosure of YHWH and, here, of Yeshoua the Messiah." Thus, it emerges, the term "apocalypse" occurs regularly in the Hebrew Bible to signify, specifically, the unveiling or disclosure of God the messiah (André Chouraqui, cited
in Derrida 1983a, 4). The word "apocalyptic" itself, therefore, is an early signifier of philosophical contemplation (i.e., contemplation of the truth).

But here again, if Derrida proceeds to play on this word "gala" -- whereby "gala" becomes "galactic," "milky ways" and later, "galactic ostentation" (1983a. 5, 30) -- he is not merely offering "literary" and hence an "aesthetic" (or "rhetorical") reading of philosophy. On the contrary, in addressing the questions of translation and of the linguistic deviation it presupposes -- the question, in effect, of the firmness (or, more precisely, the lack thereof) of the bond between the sign and the thing (the referent) -- Derrida underlines the difficulty in finding the "true" meaning for (or of), in this case, the word for the revelation of God (gala). And this difficulty, in turn, leads to a 'revelation' (so to speak) of the logical difficulty inherent in distinguishing, finally and definitively, between the philosophical truth (of reason) and the mystical truth revealed by God.

In particular, it becomes clear that the opening of philosophy promised by the unequivocality of scientific discourse cannot be strictly opposed to those 'equivocal', 'apocalyptic' discourses of the end. Consequently, it is impossible to maintain the Kantian dualism between scientific truth as the one voice (tonality) which speaks equally to all, and that mystical polyvocality which speaks variously, and only to the few. For what emerges in Derrida's analysis is that the equivocal and polyvocal voice of "mysticism," -- of that "exalted vision" (Kant, cited in Derrida 1983a, 20) -- is itself the very condition of the philosophical 'opening'. A discourse of the "end," in effect, does not mark the "closure" of philosophy, but rather its inception (1983a, 20-21). Derrida writes.
But if Kant denounces those who proclaim that philosophy has been at an end for two thousand years, he has himself, in marking a limit, indeed, the end of a certain type of metaphysics, freed another wave of eschatological discourses in philosophy. His progressivism, his belief in the future of a certain philosophy, of another metaphysics, is not contradictory to this proclamation of ends and of the end (1983a, 20).

On the contrary, as Derrida elaborates, Kant thereby inaugurated a "powerful program" and a "untransgressible contract among discourses of the end," of which "the themes of the end of history and the death of philosophy represent only the most comprehensive, massive, and gathered forms. . ." (1983a, 20). Thus, even though there are obvious differences between the Hegelian, Marxist, and Nietzschean eschatologies, Derrida claims, these can all be seen to "take the form of a going-one-better in eschatological eloquence, each newcomer, more lucid than the other, more vigilant, and more prodigal too. . ." (1983a, 20).

On this basis, Derrida wonders "if eschatology is a tone, or even the voice itself." "Isn't the voice [of language] always that of the last man?" (1983a, 21).

There is light, and there are lights, the lights of reason or the logos, that are not, for all that, some other thing. And it is in the name of an Aufklärung that Kant, for example, undertakes to demystify the overlordly tone. In the daylight of today we cannot not have become the heirs of these Lumières. We cannot and we must not -- this is a law and a destiny -- forgo the Aufklärung. in other words, what imposes itself as the enigmatic desire for vigilance, for the lucid vigil [veille]. for elucidation, for critique and truth, but for a truth that at the same time keeps within itself some apocalyptic desire, this time as desire for clarity and revelation, in order to demystify or, if you prefer, to deconstruct apocalyptic discourse itself and with it everything that speculates on vision, the imminence of the end, theophany, parousia, the last judgment (1983a, 22).

As I shall argue in Chapter Five, it is the nature of this desire for clarity and revelation -- this desire which we "heirs" of the Enlightenment "cannot not" share -- that must be explained, not merely announced, if we are to appreciate fully the
normative nature of Derrida's endeavour. At this point, however, I want to emphasize that what Derrida is pointing toward here is precisely the co-implication of philosophy \textit{qua} scientific discourse and apocalyptic discourse \textit{qua} (mysticism or) revelation.

It is especially important to underline this claim, for it seems to represent that aspect of Derrida's work that is most difficult to convey. For example, although he cites a section of the passage I have just quoted as well, it is not entirely certain that Christopher Norris reaches the same conclusion I have just identified, or that he understands its deepest implications: namely, that there is something \textit{in} or \textit{of} the desire for Enlightenment -- the desire for reason -- that is in principle incapable of being 'lit' or illuminated \textit{by} reason.

Certainly it is clear that Norris has studied Derrida carefully -- as is indicated by his reading of Derrida's "Of an Apocalyptic Tone" in the essay I referenced above (Norris 1992). Yet Norris argues that, to the extent that Derrida's "essay itself is shot through with apocalyptic figures and devices, among them various mystical injunctions from Jewish and Christian source-texts." Derrida is asking us to see the limits of or, as it were, the exterior to the "ethos of Kantian civilized reason" (1992, 189-90). Moreover, it seems that Norris's belief that "deconstruction belongs with that 'philosophical discourse of modernity'" defended by Habermas is based on the assumption that Derrida's insistence on the intermingling of "'ordinary' language" and "various extra-ordinary styles, idioms, metaphorical usages, 'expert' registers and so forth." is intended to "defamiliarize our commonplace beliefs" (1992, 170, 190; my
emphasis). It is impossible to know just exactly what Norris has in mind, but these kinds of comments lead one to suspect that he views Derrida's unorthodox 'style' simply as an additional resource that is philosophically valid, but is not fully appreciated by Habermas, and that, consequently, deconstruction too can be seen to aim at more Enlightenment. Norris apparently misses or overlooks the point I have been stressing throughout this discussion, and which is being more fully developed now: that deconstructive strategies of reading tend to reveal (to illuminate or 'enlighten') that this progressive aim of 'more' enlightenment is itself simultaneously undercut by, though never replaced with, a regressive tendency that is inherent in that philosophical project itself.

In order to substantiate this claim, however, it is necessary to look more closely at the tone of apocalyptic discourse itself. If we do so, Derrida argues, what we will notice is that this tone is, above all, that which is taken to announce the truth. The "overlordly." or "mystagogical" tone is always "the revelatory of some unveiling in process" (1983a, 24) -- the tone, one might say, of "disclosure." Furthermore, the apocalyptic tone is (always) the tone that discloses something to the following (for example) effect:

The end is soon, it is imminent. . . . I see it, I know it, I tell you, now you know, come. We're all going to die, we're going to disappear. . . . We're the only ones in the world. I'm the only one able to reveal to you the truth or the destination. I tell you it, I give it to you, come, let us be for a moment, we who don't know yet who we are, let us be for a moment, before the end the sole survivors, the only ones to stay

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25 On this point, see also René Vincente Arcilla (1995). While Arcilla shares with Norris the belief that deconstruction has de-familiarizing effects, he sees in this not an argumentative strategy, but rather a reminder of "our awful and awesome, sublime communion with indefinite Being" (1995, 171). I discuss Arcilla's interpretation of deconstruction in Chapter Three.
awake, it'll be the stronger for it. We'll be a sect, we'll form a species, a sex or gender, a race (Geschlecht) all by ourselves, we'll give ourselves a name (1983a. 24-25).

Thus the regular characteristic of the apocalyptic tone is not simply that it announces (reveals) the truth which is; what is significant is not merely that "truth itself is the end, the destination, and [the fact] that truth unveils itself is [itself] the advent of the end" (1983a. 24). More importantly, what the above characterization indicates is that apocalyptic tone names into being," so to speak, the "we" (a "sect," a "sex," a "gender," or a "race"). the privileged few, who are witnesses to the truth as this end. This "we" survives the end because "we" is determined by the apocalyptic tone that announces the end; the "we" survives, that is to say, as an "as such" (as being 'this' or 'that,' here now). or, as we here name ourselves now as witnesses to this particular apocalypse).

In this sense, the apocalyptic tone is the tone that says, "come." Come and be (present, here now, and as such) witness to the end which is coming. The apocalyptic tone, then, is the gesture, in speech, that signals this "come."

Once understood in this way, it can be seen that an apocalyptic discourse (any apocalyptic discourse) -- or more precisely, as Derrida says, the tone he has "translated into discourse" (1983a. 25) -- "always cites or echoes in a certain way" the scene of John's Apocalypse:

'I know your works:
you are renowned for living.
but you are dead.

Stay awake! [Esto vigilans says the latin translation]26
Strengthen what remains, so near dying.

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26 In Latin, then, the phrase would seem to indicate a command to "be vigilant," or to keep watch: do not cease bearing witness to.
If you do not stay awake.
I shall come like a thief:
you will not know at what hour I shall come upon you.’

Yet if we try to determine who, exactly, says "come" in this originary scene -- from
whence issues this directive (to stay awake, to watch, to witness as an "us" the coming
of the end) in the Johannine text itself -- we see that this is exactly what cannot be
decided. Thus Derrida returns to the Apocalypse of John (to the text) in order to
trace the original meaning (the truth) of the apocalyptic tone (the tone which comes
to say the truth) discussed by Kant.

What Derrida finds, however, is that John receives the revelatory dispatch
from an unnamed and indeterminable, "narratorial" voice. For even before the
scene in which John is seen to be writing what Jesus dictates (i.e., the injunction to
"Stay awake"). Derrida says, "there was a preambule without narrative, or in any case
[w]ithout [SG] narratorial voice, a kind of title or name tag come from one knows
not where..." (1983a. 26) This preambule, which is "come from one knows not where,"
announces the announcement dictated by "Yéshoua" and written by John. Derrida
cites.

Disclosure of Yéshoua the messiah (Apokalupsis Jesou Khrístou)
Elohim gives of him
to show his servants
what will arrive quickly.

He signifies it by sending it through his messenger

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27 Derrida specifies the "narrative voice" in order to distinguish it, as Blanchot does, from the
narratorial voice, that of an identifiable subject, of the narrator or determinable sender in a
narrative, a récit" (1983, 25). The wording is slightly confusing, but Derrida's suggestion seems to
be that the "narrative voice" refers to the whole narrative -- to all its voices as an overall narrative
effect -- within which the "narratorial" voice is "that of an identifiable subject."
Based on this reading, Derrida concludes, the biblical discourse of the apocalypse already can be shown to reflect a certain "unmasterable polytonality" (1983a, 23); it cannot be determined, finally, who is saying/writing what, or consequently, where this apocalyptic tone, this gesture "come," comes from. It thus emerges that the 'truth' of the apocalypse can be traced to an originary division ("plit" or fold, as well as "envelope, letter, habit or message" [1983a, 28]) within the narrative message of the apocalyptic vision. A non-truth, then, at the source of truth. Or, as Derrida says, an apocalypse without vision, without apocalypse.

"One does not know (for it is no longer of the order of knowing), to whom the apocalyptic dispatch [envoi] returns; it leaps [saute] from place of emission to the other (and a place is always determined starting from the presumed emission); it goes from one destination, one name, and one tone to the other; it always refers to [renvoie à] the name and to the tone of the other that is there but as having been there and before yet coming, no longer being or not yet there in the present of the récit" (1983a, 27)

Two consequences can be drawn from this discussion. The first is that if the "come" that this apocalyptic discourse signals is the gesture that names into being the presence of the truth (the truth as 'presence' or revelation of the "we", the being, that is its witness), then this would be a structural gesture of discourse as such, and not merely of apocalyptic discourse -- which would only be "an example, an exemplary revelation of this transcendental structure" (1983a, 27). For the naming into being (the claim "it is") is what discourse does. The second consequence is that if the "come" itself is unrevealable in principle -- because the "come" does not come from
an identifiable subject, a narrator, a source that can be unveiled or disclosed or revealed as such (as an 'as such') -- then as Derrida asserts, "there is no certainty that man is the exchange of these telephone lines or the terminal of this endless computer" (1983a, 27):

[As soon as one no longer knows who speaks or who writes, the text becomes apocalyptic. And if the dispatches [envois] always refer to other dispatches without decidable destination, the destination always remaining to come, then isn't this completely angelic structure, that of the Johannine apocalypse, isn't it also the structure of every scene of writing in general? (1983a, 27)

The structure, that is to say, and not the content. For the discursive gesture "come" is the opening of discourse (of philosophy). It is that which brings into being (the witness), presently (here now), as the survivor of the end who can speak of it: the one(s), namely, who can tell us what it is. (It is always this apocalypse, here now -- the end of man, of philosophy, of religion or of metaphysics, for example). The saying of "what is" (any saying of "what is") is thus conditioned by the "come." "Come" as apocalyptic gesture, therefore, cannot be recovered by or determined within the "grammatical, linguistic, or semantic categories" (1983a, 34) it sets in motion. This, to be sure, is one of the limits of the demystification that would be attempted by "we Aufklärer of modern times" (1983a, 29): the ultimate irrecoverability in discourse of the "come," or the gesture which opens discourse, means that the task of 'denouncing false apocalypses', as Derrida says, is interminable. The apocalypse is always already with us, in our speech.

28 As I show in Chapter Five, this distinction can be shown to parallel the Levinasian distinction between the "saying" and the "said," precisely in terms of the difference between that whose source (/destination) is indeterminable, and that whose source is determined as ontologically present.
There is a second limit as well. "All language on apocalypse," Derrida shows, is "also apocalyptic, and cannot be excluded from its object" (1983a, 30). Now, apocalyptic language, in not letting itself be recovered or determined "simply by philosophy, metaphysics [or - SG] onto-eschato-theology," is potentially a radical challenge to the established receivability [recevabilité] of messages and to the policing of destination" (1983a, 30). Yet even if the analysis of the apocalyptic tone is a potentially progressive force in this sense, such an analysis, insofar as it is itself apocalyptic, will be received according to the given and conventional codes of discourse. It is here that we find Derrida’s most pointed rebuttal to Habermas:

We could even say that every discord or every tonal disorder, everything that detonates and becomes inadmissible [irreceivable] in general collocation, everything that is no longer identifiable starting from established codes, from both sides of a front, will necessarily pass for mystagogic, obscurantist, and apocalyptic. It will be made to pass for such (1983a, 30).

The limit of demystifications undertaken by deconstruction, in other words, is that they will always be first received as that very 'mystagogy' they attempt to reveal. This is precisely why. I suggest, "postmodernism" in general, and the labour of deconstruction as characterized by Habermas (above) in particular, are so often considered to exceed the boundaries of legitimate, critical political debate, and to present an irrational, irresponsible, or nihilistic approach to politics.

If, as I contend in contrast, the normative dimension of deconstruction -- its ethico-political "responsibility" -- consists in its unwavering insistence on recognizing and accounting for the rhetorical, the tropological or (in this case) the apocalyptic dimensions of discourse, however, a third limit to deconstructive demystification identified by Derrida helps us to understand why this endeavour cannot be identified
(pace Norris) with "a simple progressive demystification in the style of the Enlightenment" (Derrida 1983a, 30). Recall that, first, the apocalyptic tone is the tone which announces the imminence of the end. If "translated into discourse," moreover, it can be seen that the apocalyptic tone says "come," and in this way, names into being the "we" that witnesses the end. So understood, "come" is a *gesture* of speaking, not a content of speech, and therefore cannot be recovered by anything that can be said. To this extent, we have seen, there is a certain apocalyptic dimension (an apocalypse *without* end, without apocalypse) that is intrinsic to all discourse, including the philosophical. It follows, therefore, that this tone which says "come" -- this apocalyptic tone *of* philosophy -- is the very condition whereby philosophical discourse can offer an end to mystagogy or an end to apocalyptic discourses as mystagogical. Consequently, however -- given that there is no possible self-presentation of the apocalyptic, discursive gesture ("come") itself -- the analysis of such 'mystagogy' will be interminable rather than final.

This is one of the implications, for instance, of Derrida's distinction between the "closure" and the "end" (1983a, 21) discussed above. For, as I have shown, Kant's own discourse of Enlightenment offers another beginning or opening to philosophy -- not simply by refuting the "mystagogical" discourse of philosophy's end, but on the contrary, by himself marking the 'end' of a certain mystagogical metaphysics and the beginning of an era of "enlightenment." The discourse of ends or of apocalypses, therefore -- even the most careful, the most precise, or the most rigorous of deconstructive discourses -- do not close the debate, for they cannot exhaust the
"overdeterminations and the indeterminations of apocalyptic strategems" (1983a, 29) among which deconstruction itself must be included.

Unlike the project of Enlightenment simple, then, deconstruction does not aim at a horizon of ultimate closure or an ideal of perfect translatability (qua scientific univocity). In fact, deconstruction does not, properly speaking, "aim" at all, since it is always already the destination of philosophy (its ends, or its 'good' of a reason that is 'pure') that it questions. It does so precisely by revealing the way in which the "apocalyptic" tone is the tone of philosophy -- or, rather, is that which crosses through philosophy as its perpetual opening -- not its clear exterior.

What this analysis demonstrates, therefore -- what it illuminates or en-lightens -- is that the logical function of language cannot be said to bear a strictly autonomous status with regard to its rhetorical or tropological dimensions. Significantly, however, this means that deconstruction can no more be said to belong to "that same 'philosophical discourse of modernity' that Habermas sets out to defend" (Norris 1992, 170), than it can be considered a purely anti-Enlightenment discourse, as Habermas and others contend. For deconstruction does not impose the rhetorical in or on philosophy, but rather reveals (en-lightens) the rhetorical (the apocalyptic) as the necessary, unacknowledged (non)original condition of the modern philosophical enterprise qua Enlightenment. Thus, just as the rhetorical was seen to undo, without replacing, the primacy of logic within the trivium, and just as the sublime was shown to destabilize the category of the aesthetic within the Kantian system or architectonic, so the apocalyptic tone here emerges as the very condition of that "knowledge or
science" by virtue of which life "regulates itself" in the original signification of the term "philosophy" (Kant, in Derrida 1983a, 8; cited above).

Only when this is understood, I have claimed, is it possible to outline what are and are not the normative consequences of so-called "postmodernism" for a critical political or educational theory of emancipation. In particular: if deconstructive strategies of reading do not replace logic with rhetoric, the aesthetic with the sublime, or philosophy with mysticism, and if they do not do so because they cannot -- both because a purely rhetorical, sublime, or mystical discourse is strictly unintelligible, and because (even before this) the categories are not purely autonomous to begin with -- then it cannot be the case that challenges to the philosophical premises of modernity will necessarily endanger the very possibility of progressive or "democratic," social and political reform. This cannot be the case because, if logic and rhetoric (or, for example, theory₁ and theory₂) are thoroughly co-implicated from the start, then any democratic project that was founded upon the strict configuration of the classical trivium was bound to be misguided, up to a point. That point is precisely the moment at which the unacknowledged interests that are buried within particular philosophical arguments (by virtue, for example, of their rhetoric, as we have seen) are actually the ones at stake in a given debate.

While he is primarily concerned with the controversy over deconstruction within the field of literary theory, for example, Paul de Man is by no means unaware of these broader, the ethico-political, implications. On the contrary, he argues that if "what we call ideology is precisely the confusion of linguistic with natural reality, of reference with phenomenalism," then
the linguistics of literariness is a powerful and indispensable tool in the unmasking of ideological aberrations, as well as a determining factor in accounting for their occurrence. Those who reproach literary theory for being oblivious to social and historical (that is to say ideological) reality are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit. They are, in short, very poor readers of Marx's *German Ideology* (1982, 11).

As de Man’s suggestion makes clear, the critical significance of deconstruction for those who still believe in the relevance of a political educational project should not be understood in terms of an either/or choice: either we embrace what Jean-François Lyotard calls a "metadiscourse" or a "grand narrative" of modernity on the one hand (Lyotard 1984), or we postulate its reversal into negativity, and concomitantly, the absolute absence of any critical resources or grounds whatsoever with which to combat injustice (Norris 1993, 287), on the other.

Where the significance of deconstruction for a critical political theory is to be found. I will propose, is in its provocation to rethink the very foundations of our

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29 de Man explains this distinction between reference and phenomenalism with the following example: "no one in his right mind will try to grow grapes by the luminosity of the word 'day', but it is very difficult not to conceive the pattern of one's past and future existence as in accordance with temporal and spatial schemes that belong to fictional narratives and not to the world" (1982, 11). As a case in point of just such "ideological" confusion, consider Charles Taylor’s justification of the spatial metaphor he uses in his monumental study, *Sources of the Self*. Taylor argues, "to speak of [fundamental] orientation [to one’s "moral horizon"] is to presuppose a space-analogue within which one finds one’s way. To understand our predicament in terms of finding or losing orientation in moral space is to take the space which our frameworks seek to define as ontologically basic. . . . In other words, we take as basic that the human agent exists in a space of questions. And these are the questions to which our framework-definitions are answers, providing the horizon within which we know where we stand, and what meanings things have for us" (1989, 29). This reflects precisely the confusion between fictional narratives and the world -- between reference and phenomenalism -- to which de Man refers. For Taylor, spatial orientation is an "analogue" -- which is to say, it is a trope that evokes the way in which one linguistic thing (moral orientation) is like another linguistic thing (the concept of space); to understand ourselves in terms of this trope is to take our fictional or narrative "frameworks" as "ontologically basic" -- which is to say, to take our fictions as a fundamental feature of what "is", or of what is "phenomenally there", in the world. These literal or phenomenal/figurative "space" of the questions in which we literally and/or figuratively "stand" as human agents.
beliefs about ethics and politics, and, more specifically still, in its provocation to reconsider the consequences of the fact that emancipatory projects of education necessarily reflect those original, Enlightenment ideals. Specifically, I have shown, the Kantian inauguration of a notion of reason as critical -- as ethico-political, or as normative in nature -- is the bedrock on which the modern project of education as emancipation finds its ground. Yet this ideal is in turn deeply indebted to a classical conception of logic's primacy within the sciences of language and the sciences of the natural world. Now, if both the classical and the modern formulations of this conception of reason can be shown to cover over contingently-determined, historically specific, and politically-loaded interests, then such an analysis will necessarily have profoundly important implications for a political theory of education that purports to be critical.

Thus, as Lyotard so famously argued in *The Postmodern Condition*, "The 'crisis' of scientific knowledge, signs of which have been accumulating since the end of the nineteenth century. . . represents. . . an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge" (Lyotard 1984, 39). This erosion, in turn, has deeply destabilized what Kant saw and von Humboldt institutionalized as the university's fundamental, ethico-political role: that of ultimate judge of scientific, moral and political legitimacy. In short, as Robin Usher and Richard Edwards observe, the breakdown of educational discourse's self-legitimation has given rise to a profound challenge to the educational project itself (Usher and Edwards 1994, 126).

As I shall elaborate in Chapter Two, the nature of this challenge is both complex and equivocal, given that it begins from the Enlightenment desire for clarity
and revelation even while it questions it. For as I argue, the very idea of reason in its emphatic or normative sense -- the idea of reason, that is to say, that Kant first established in his critical architectonic - requires, cannot do without, what I call an illegitimate "bracketing" of the sublime. This impossible necessity gives rise to what Lyotard calls the "postmodern condition," but not in the sense that it encourages an attitude of scepticism towards the modernist ethos of Enlightenment from, so to speak, without. Rather, the condition of "incredulity" he describes issues from an unmasterable moment of deconstruction inside the Enlightenment project itself. This moment can be traced to the way in which Kant first established the link between the normative value of "autonomy" or "freedom" and the epistemological undertaking of a critical inquiry into the transcendental grounds of reason in its three aspects of theoretical, practical, and reflective judgment. This link between ethics and epistemology, I show, covers over what Derrida calls the irrecoverable, apocalyptic (or "sublime") opening of philosophy, and so establishes reason as "critical" in the modern sense only at the expense of "critique" itself. Or, to put this in other terms, the very Enlightenment desire for clarity and revelation itself culminates in a revelation of the impossibility of a legitimate standard of ethico-political critique.

Notwithstanding the aporia at the root of the modernist ethos, however, it remains that the reversal signalled by an appeal to (for example) the sublime as "ultimate heterogeneity" (Norris 1993, 21. citing Lyotard) is untenable. Indeed, if (a certain) "postmodernism" cannot be viewed as a simple rejection of Enlightenment ideals, this is not least because the very meaning of critical education already reflects these ideals' implicit endorsement; a critical theory of education is always already
based on the ideal of critical reason originally formulated by Kant. And this means that the modernist legacy cannot simply be replaced, either, with a postmodern celebration of difference -- as such theorists as Patti Lather (1991), Jennifer Gore (1993), Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, 1985) suppose.

In fact, I show in Chapter Three, critical educational theorists generally do no such thing, but rather mobilize the very ideals they purport to reject. Thus, for example, Aronowitz and Giroux equate "learning with the creation of critical citizens" and they characterize teachers as, ideally, "engaged and transformative intellectuals" (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991, 118), just as political theorist Cleo Cherryholmes argues that poststructural insights can lead to a fuller understanding which "brings with it the promise of increased freedom . . . from social structures, and more power to create our societies and schools rather than the other way around" (Cherryholmes 1988, 149).

In each of these cases -- and there are countless others from virtually every corner of the educational sphere -- the ability to make autonomous and reliable epistemological judgments (the ability to "master the linguistic field," as it were) is still being directly (if only implicitly) linked to the realization of a broad, even universal, social good (such as "emancipation," "democracy" or "critical citizenship"). More importantly still, the formation of this critical reasoning ability in such a society's future citizens is still considered as the specific purview -- the raison d'être, in fact -- of the educative enterprise (eg., McLaren 1989, Giroux 1988). In this sense, therefore, the Enlightenment belief in social and cultural progress through the
deployment of critical reason is very far from being dismissed. My point in Chapter Three, however, is not that this is wrong or misguided; on the contrary, I argue that the case can not be otherwise. What is a problem, though, is that such an understanding of critical pedagogy cannot be logically reconciled with the claim that we must, at the same time, embrace uncertainty and the fragmentary nature of subjectivity. Such a theoretical project is, as I shall show, incoherent in its aim. Consequently, I contend, one must take issue with educational theorists on both sides of the philosophy of education (modernism) and critical pedagogy (postmodernism) divide.

To this end, the chapter on the "postmodern" critical educational literature is followed by an in-depth consideration of Habermas's theory of communicative ethics as a critical theory of society. Specifically, Chapter Four demonstrates that just as a "postmodern" reversal of values cannot be the outcome of the deconstructive challenge to Enlightenment reason, so the modern legacy by which we still abide cannot simply be revised along Kantian (albeit ostensibly "postmetaphysical") lines either, as a number of theorists have proposed. For example, in addition to such educational theorists as Nigel Blake, Wendy Kohli and Les Burwood, we find Harvey Siegel attempting to "redeem rationality" (Siegel 1997) and Helmut Peukert characterizing the educational project in terms of an initiation into existing "human" values through the development of reason (Peukert 1993, esp. 169; see also Smeyers 1995a and 1995b). These philosophers of education all attempt in one way or another to respond explicitly to the postmodern challenge by offering a reformulated Enlightenment project, and each one of them appeals to Jürgen Habermas's theory of
communicative ethics in order to do so. Rather than disputing them on a case by case basis, therefore, I turn directly to the texts of Habermas himself.

My thesis in this chapter is that Habermas's attempt to "finish the project of modernity" in postmetaphysical terms (1987) cannot serve as the normative basis of an anti-postmodernist critical educational or political theory, as numerous theorists contend. It cannot serve in this way because Habermas ultimately fails to 'de-transcendentalize' the Enlightenment subject. On the contrary, I argue, tacit assumptions concerning a transcendental conception of reason and a subject that is teleologically predisposed toward its rightful end are the logical pillars of Habermas's two most crucial claims. First, unless Habermas presupposes an abstract and decidedly unencumbered moral discussant, he cannot maintain his claim concerning the rationality -- and hence the unconditionality -- of the moral principle he describes. Secondly, unless Habermas begs the question of the proper end of individual and collective development, he fails to support the claim that his version of moral reasoning speaks to the obligatory nature of the moral 'ought'. Because it ultimately re-entrenches rather than overcomes Enlightenment metaphysics on these bases, the Habermasian formulation of moral reason does not ultimately address the deconstructive, ethico-political critique of reason I have identified.

One should not be surprised to find, however, that critical theorists of education on both sides of the "modernism-postmodern" debate appeal in various ways to the very "metanarrative" of Enlightenment they purport to reject. For the question that certain "postmodernist" analyses pose is not what the aim of education should be understood to be now -- as though the discourse of reason that is endemic
to the Enlightenment tradition has been discarded altogether. The question, rather, is what can be the normative nature of the critical theoretical enterprise -- what I am calling its "ethical dimensions" -- once we acknowledge that critical theory cannot appeal to a notion of 'pure' or unconditioned reason as its ground.

This is exactly where, I argue, a deconstructive mode of analysis has something important to offer. Given the untenability of both the "postmodernist" and the "anti-postmodernist" approaches to critical educational theory, Chapter Five returns to my earlier claim that the critiques of reason levelled against Enlightenment ideals by contemporary thinkers can be shown to evidence a substantive, ethico-political impulse. Specifically, the chapter addresses the question of how Derrida's version of deconstruction can and cannot serve as form of critique. Clearly, a revelation of the impossibility of basing a standard of ethico-political critique on unconditional epistemological grounds -- a revelation of the apocalyptic opening of philosophy, as it were -- cannot be equated with "critique" in its traditional sense. because such a revelation is the deconstruction of that very possibility. At the same time, however, we shall see that deconstruction itself issues from the very demand for legitimacy that characterizes critical thought. In this paradoxical sense, therefore, I argue that deconstructive inquiry can be qualified as what I will call a "certain critique."

In order to make this case, I turn in Chapter Five to the extensive work done on this question by Drucilla Cornell (1992a, 1992b), since she has gone further than most in aligning Derrida's thought with the tradition of Frankfurt school critical theory. In particular, the chapter focuses first on Cornell's hypothesis that
deconstruction can be 'translated' as a version of ideology critique that is applicable to the field of law. My response to her analysis begins from the contention that Cornell's Levinasian understanding of the ethical import of deconstruction in fact collapses the deconstructive gesture into the very decision whose conditions it aims to expose. Thus, despite her acknowledgment that deconstruction cannot be translated directly into a positive political or legal program, Cornell's -- and indeed, at certain moments Derrida's own -- rendition of deconstruction's "(nonpositive) affirmation" in terms of a messianic 'call' ultimately inscribes a theological imperative at the heart of ethico-political thought.

Once we concede the theological aspect of Levinas's ethics, however, we are faced with the prospect of an ultimately unjustifiable "responsibility" to reason that an ethico-political critique implacably demands. In other words, the "inescapable responsibility for justice" that Cornell evokes as a critical legal standard is actually derived from, but cannot be authorized by, the classical principle of reason. Thus, in terms of a critical-theoretical intervention in education, politics, or the law, it is finally the desire for reason that must be explained in non-theological terms if the deconstructive impulse is to bear the ethical-political weight assumed by Cornell and Derrida alike.

In order to show exactly how (to what extent and in what regard) deconstruction can serve in a critical theoretical capacity, therefore, I turn next to the question of philosophical and moral "responsibility" itself. Here I argue that a responsibility to reason is best explained through the framework of a psychoanalytic understanding of psychic integrity. Specifically, I demonstrate that the normative
dimension of a "certain" critique is contingent upon socially-conditioned modes of subjectivity. In this sense, what I call a "certain critique" entails only a quasi-responsibility. In other words, the ethico-political 'responsibility' that impels deconstruction and critical theory alike is contingent upon the reproduction of a particular social subject that is itself ultimately unjustifiable in any strict sense, and whose normative commitments are strictly psychically, rather than morally, derived.

The consequence of this analysis, I contend, is that advocates of the principle of reason (such as Derrida or Habermas) can be shown to be mobilizing more than an idiosyncratic notion of moral obligation: insofar as critical political theory takes its normative bearing from those who are already constituted as subjects that are (unconsciously) desirous of subjective coherence and, concomitantly (as I shall show), of logical coherence as well, such theory is bound (and imperatively so) to a commitment to reason and its logical imperatives. This may well suggest that deconstruction mobilizes more than a purely relative notion of the good; what it does not suggest, however, is that deconstruction simply replaces the universal subject of the Enlightenment with the 'decentred' subject of postmodernity. For when the ethical dimension of political and educational theory (its quasi-responsibility) is taken as I propose, it sacrifices the possibility of a universal and unconditional grounding, and necessarily so. As a psychic imperative, the responsibility to reason that critical theory enacts is historically, socially, and politically produced, and must be limited to this more modest scope.

With its argument that the Enlightenment ideal of criticality must be radically rethought in the psychoanalytic terms of subjective coherence (rather than in terms of
finding a new epistemologically-grounded 'good' such as "difference," for example)
Chapter Five thus concludes the study as whole. Neither classical epistemology
(modernism) nor deconstruction ("postmodernism") can ultimately justify the critical-
theoretical ideal of revealing the "true" good or the "real" nature of injustice, and so
neither can reaffirm that opposition between justice and ideology that modernists and
certain putative "postmodernists" hold so dear. By this token, I argue, educational
theory is 'good' neither when it promises the logical mastery of rhetorical
undecidability (the mastery of the sublime, the apocalyptic, or différence), nor when it
suggests that rhetoric (fragmentation, sublimity, uncertainty or difference) can master
logic. Instead, theory is 'good' (quasi-responsible) only insofar as it takes
responsibility for its own 'apocalyptic' (and ideological) dimensions, and this means
both taking a risk and offering a chance. On my view, the affirmative nature of
deconstruction -- and, by extension, the ethical dimension of political and educational
thought in general -- is most fruitfully taken in this way.

In terms of both politics and pedagogy, then, it is not that the "postmodern"
"decentring" of the subject leaves us with nothing -- with no basis whatsoever on
which to challenge the injustice and oppression to which critical political philosophy
addresses itself. But it does not provide us with some thing, an(other) ontological
ground, either. What it offers, critically speaking, is merely a chance. But, as we are
about to see, that is all there ever was to begin with.
2. BEGGING THE QUESTION: 
Lyotard, Kant, and the Impossible Necessity of Critique

If we had more time, we could follow out Leibnitz's interpretation of the semantic shift which leads from the ratio of the principium reddendae rationis, the principle of rendering reason, to reason as the rational faculty -- and in the end, to Kant's definition of reason as the faculty of principles. ...The question of this reason cannot be separated from a question about the modal verb "must" and the phrase "must be rendered." The "must" seems to cover the essence of our relationship to principle, it seems to mark out for us requirement, debt, duty, request, command, obligation, law, the imperative. Whenever reason can be rendered (reddi potest), it must. Can we, without further precautions, call this a moral imperative, in the Kantian sense of pure practical reason? It is not clear that the sense of "practical," as it is determined by a critique of pure practical reason, gets to the bottom of the "must," or reveals its origin, although such a critique has to presuppose such a "must." It could be shown, I think, that the critique of pure practical reason continually calls on the principle of reason, on its "must" which, although it is certainly not of a theoretical order, is nonetheless not simply "practical" or "ethical" in the Kantian sense. Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils" (1983b, 8).

In the introductory chapter, I argued that Kant's incorporation of ethics into a logical system (or "science") of knowledge was decisive for the philosophy of education, because it was through this move that reason (as such) took on its quintessentially modernist sense of "critique": its sense as emancipatory, as emphatic, as normative or, in Kant's terminology, as "practical" (as having a moral as well as a theoretical interest). As I shall further elaborate here, Kant's explication of practical reason is based on the central tenet that legitimate moral judgments are universal determinations derived from an a priori, logical principle of freedom; these are explicitly contrasted with judgments that stem from contingent local beliefs based merely on tradition or authority. Importantly, then, Kantian practical reason entails that the legitimate moral judgment is rational in kind. that the capacity for rationality is the true, the essential and the highest feature of the human subject (i.e., "universal man"), and that, concomitantly, an ideal version of justice (a "kingdom of ends")
entails universal moral agreement. From this it follows that the enhancement or 'education' of the capacity for independent, rational thought -- the inculcation of the capacity to 'universalize' on one's own, as it were -- is the normative thrust of the Enlightenment. The capacity for such moral "work" was precisely what an educational practice aimed at democracy was intended to instill.

Indeed, in Kant's well-known formulation, "enlightenment" already entailed just this political dimension: "enlightenment" is, "man's release [or emancipation] from his self-incurred tutelage," wherein the term "tutelage," in turn, is defined as that "inability to make use of [one's own] understanding [or "intelligence"] without direction from another" (Kant 1959, 85). Consequently, as Dieter Misgeld remarks, "the Enlightenment concern with education must follow from its interest in emancipation" (Misgeld 1985, 81). Wilfred Carr has observed this correlation between the political good of social emancipation and the educative project of Enlightenment as well. He writes,

Historically, the cultivation of this capacity for rational independent thought has been the aim of liberal education -- a form of education that was first developed by the Greeks to meet the needs of the 'free man' capable of making rational judgments as a member of an educated public. In eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain, access to a liberal education was the exclusive preserve of an aristocratic élite. But as democracy replaced aristocracy, so the need to extend to all the kind of intellectual development that a liberal education is designed to promote has increasingly been seen as a political obligation of the democratic state (Carr 1995, 75; compare Peukert 1993, esp. 166).

In both Misgeld's and Carr's remarks, what becomes clear is that the modern sense of "enlightenment" as emancipation -- and, more specifically, as the political good of

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1 As Misgeld provides a slightly different translation of these lines I have inserted alternative phrasings accordingly (1985, 81).
progressive social reform for all (rather than merely for a select elite) -- was from the start intrinsically an educative ideal. Thus, as Paul Smeyers summarizes,

For the Enlightenment, education was the road to becoming human: i.e., rational. Rationality, as the proper end of what being human is, does not necessitate means-end reasoning. In becoming free from one's own inclinations and passions, one realises one's true nature: one puts oneself under the guidance of reason, which is never alienating, given that to be rational is the same for everyone" (Smeyers 1995a, 111).

Taken together, these observations invoke a number of quintessentially "modern" themes -- responsibility, autonomy, the rational public sphere, democracy, and the distinction between emancipatory and "mean-end reasoning," among others -- to which I will return over the course of this study. For the moment, however, I want merely to highlight the general recognition that, in relating questions of knowledge and truth to questions concerning a universal ethical and political 'good' in terms of a normative notion of "practical reason" -- a notion, it must be recalled, whereby an ethico-political judgment is considered "legitimate" only insofar as it is "rational," and is qualified as "rational" only insofar as it is based on the logical, universal principle of "freedom" rather than on anything contingent, relative, or locally historical -- Kant effectively mobilized the classical primacy of logic over rhetoric for a progressive educational project in its paradigmatically "modern" political sense. It was at the onset of modernity, in short, that education itself first came to be understood in a way that is still reflected in formulations of "critical" pedagogy today.² Specifically, education then came to be seen, as Robin Usher and Richard Edwards explain,

² A direct treatment of the critical pedagogical literature will be undertaken in Chapters Three and Four, where I examine the relationship between Kantian reason and the concept of critique in contemporary theories of education.
as the vehicle by which modernity's 'grand narratives', the
Enlightenment ideals of critical reason, individual freedom, progress
and benevolent change, are substantiated and realized. The very
rationale of the educative process and the role of the educator is
founded on modernity's self-motivated, self-directing, rational subject,
capable of exercising individual agency (Usher and Edwards 1994, 2).

Since the work of such figures as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and
Jacques Lacan reflects just the kind of "incredulity" towards this particular narrative
that is said to characterize the "postmodern condition" (Lyotard 1984, xxiv), theorists
working in the field of critical educational theory are right to take it quite seriously.
For these philosophers have undertaken a series of complex, careful and often
pointed critiques of the transcendental, rational subject on whose critical agency the
modern epic of emancipation depicts. For example, by providing an analysis of an
inescapable structure of undecidability that is logically prior to determinate,
theoretical (or practical) judgments (Derrida), of the inextricable imbrication of
knowledge with power (Foucault), or of the unavoidable ways in which unconscious
desire both conditions and undermines subjective mastery over discourse (Lacan),
Derrida, Foucault and Lacan have effectively problematized the universality promised
by a unified theory of knowledge. And, in thus suggesting that the 'good' of
universality itself can give rise to ideological distortions, they bring important ethical
considerations to bear on a modernist understanding of the relationship between
emancipation and education.

It is important to underscore, however, that if we do not clarify Lyotard's very
broad definition of "postmodernity," we risk overlooking that few continental theorists
(if any) advance an outright or generalized dismissal of the modern narrative of
emancipation as a whole. As I will demonstrate here with specific reference to the
modern educational ideal of "critical reason," not only does the philosophical "decentring" of the transcendental subject not ensue from a dismissal of the "metanarrative" of modernity in toto, but the decentred subject is in fact a logical consequence of the attempt to account for (or, to render reason to) the very legitimacy on which modern discourses of philosophy, education, and politics are based. Indeed, as I have already begun to argue, attempts such as Derrida's can be characterized as the illumination of the groundlessness of the very grounds on which these discourses necessarily depend. What I will further clarify in this chapter, however, is that the decentred subject is a direct outcome of the modern, philosophical imperative to provide grounds, or to legitimate, in the first place. Since, as I will show, a certain "post"-modernism thus effectively issues from modernity's own ethico-political force, the charge that "postmodernism" negates or displaces the modern ethos of reason is profoundly mistaken.

Lyotard's characterization of the "condition of postmodernity" in terms of "incredulity" tends to elide precisely this philosophical point, notwithstanding his own much more nuanced understanding of the "postmodern" problematic. For the word "incredulity" signals "an inability to believe" (Burbules 1996, 40), what one might call an attitudinal problem, and thus reduces substantially diverse philosophical interrogations to a generalized mood of distrust or scepticism. On such a view, to be sure, the analyses just briefly outlined can be seen as a variety of rhetorical expressions of an over-riding, cultural ethos endemic to late-capitalist, Western
society. In contrast to that view, the case presented here is that it is insofar as these are rigorous interventions into the philosophical discourse of modernity, not merely timely cultural expressions that exceed it, that such "postmodern" work should be taken seriously by critical theorists of education.

Specifically, I suggested earlier that these analyses bear on the fact that the ethico-political narrative of emancipation so crucial to the modern educational project was first authorized by its tacit endorsement of the priority of logic within what was once called the "sciences of language" or the trivium. As I showed, this classical priority was not discarded in the discourses of modernity; on the contrary, logic was seen to be the linchpin of the Kantian architectonic as a whole. More precisely, I proposed that two premises are necessary for Kant's original inclusion of "practical reason" within his metaphysical system of knowledge and, hence, for the notion of "criticality" that he inaugurated. In analytical order these premises are, a) the autonomy of the categories of logic and rhetoric -- i.e., the premise that logic can be definitively distinguished from rhetoric, and b) the primacy of language's logical

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3 Thus, for example, Patti Lather writes, "[P]oststructuralism is not so much about a seismic cultural shift as it is about the Academy catching up with one. Poststructuralism is part of the Zeitgeist, the culture and ethics of its time," and this time is one characterized by a "crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems" (1991, 89, 159; reference omitted). Similarly, Wilfred Carr characterizes the "postmodern" condition as the "gradual erosion of the self-confidence and self-understanding of those who have embraced Enlightenment ideals" (1995, 79).

4 Here the term "metaphysical" should be understood in its Kantian sense; it pertains to, "the system of pure reason, that is, the science which exhibits in systematic connection the whole body (true as well as illusory) of philosophical knowledge arising out of pure reason... is entitled metaphysics." Kant continues, "Metaphysics is divided into that of the speculative and that of the practical employment of pure reason, and is therefore either metaphysics of nature or metaphysics of morals. The former contains all the principles of pure reason that are derived from mere concepts (therefore excluding mathematics), and employed in the theoretical knowledge of all things; the latter, the principles which in a priori fashion determine and make necessary all our actions." (1929, 659).
function (and, or as, grammar) over and above its rhetorical function (and, or as, the sublime or the apocalyptic, for example) -- i.e., the premise that logic can decide or determine (in effect, can "master") rhetorical ambiguity. These two assumptions are implicit in the claim that a given (ethical or epistemological) judgment is scientific (neutral) rather than dogmatic (politically-interested), philosophical rather than literary or aesthetic, and universal rather than contingent. Together, they are necessary for the legitimation of the Enlightenment ideal of critical reason, and are thus foundational to the educational "metanarrative" of modernity.

If the "postmodern" analyses sketched above are fundamentally correct, therefore -- if, that is to say, deconstructive strategies of reading really do undermine the priority of logic entrenched in the Kantian architectonic by showing that such a system is constitutively incapable of mastering the sublime, the apocalyptic, or the mystagogical dimensions of theoretical discourse -- then this does far more than simply cast a "mood" of doubt on the educational ideal while leaving its legitimacy intact. Rather, to appreciate fully the implications of these analyses is to realize that what is at stake in the deconstructive interrogation of philosophy is the very legitimacy of the procedures for (or standards of) legitimacy -- procedures or standards among which Kantian practical reason is only one form. Or, to put this in slightly different terms, what is at issue in the "modernism-postmodernism" debate is the actual normative sense, the ethico-political promise, of "enlightenment" as a vehicle of social and political betterment.

In this chapter, therefore, my purpose is to show that just as the problem at hand is not best understood as a "crisis of faith," so the question for educational
theorists is not how to uphold a traditional emancipatory educational agenda in the face of postmodern "doubt" -- as Nicholas Burbules, furthering Lyotard, misguidedly submits (Burbules 1996). As I hope to make clear, the problem with this kind of an attempt to come to terms with the "postmodernist" challenge is that it entails the very assumptions that "postmodernism" puts into question. That is to say, to leave the ideal itself intact while reflecting only upon our "postmodern" reluctance to embrace it is tacitly to accept the very autonomy and primacy of logic that grants that ideal its original legitimacy. Ironically, perhaps, such a strategy thus provides no alternative at all to those who accept the autonomy and primacy of logic, and who thus dismiss "postmodernism" on the grounds that it "aestheticizes" philosophy.

For just this reason, Burbules can be grouped with unabashed defenders of the discourses of modernity. Like them, he misunderstands the normative point I shall elaborate throughout the course of this study. It is that the conception of "critical" reason that numerous educational theorists wish to retain or reformulate -- the conception of a capacity to make judgments or decisions between justice and injustice, between legitimacy and illegitimacy or, in short, between truth and ideology -- can only ever figure as an educational 'good' by virtue of an illegitimate (an ideological) occlusion of its impossible conditions of possibility. But this occlusion is one we cannot do without; it is the question that must be "begged" for the sake of that very emancipation that contemporary critical theorists, even today, wish to uphold.

It is just this case that the present discussion is intended to uphold. Earlier I showed that just as rhetoric cannot be finally subjugated to logic within the trivium
because "literariness" (theory 2) can neither be assimilated to nor circumvented by a "science" (theory 1) of language, and just as the sublime can neither be included in nor excluded by the critique of aesthetic judgment, so the apocalyptic cannot either be absorbed by nor can it fully be expelled from the philosophical delimitation of mystagogy. Further to that elucidation, what the present discussion adds is the demonstration that, paradoxically, the erasure of such uncontainable excess or "supplementary" matter is just what must occur in order for the Kantian notion of critical reason to assume its undeniable, political force. And what this means, I shall show, is that a certain "violence" is always, already there within the very notion of critical reason that theorists hope to mobilize against ideology, injustice, and harm.

In order to substantiate this claim, however, it is necessary to refine a number of key terms which, thus far, have been used only in their broadest senses. They are "critique," "legitimation" and, relatedly, "critical." Most importantly, I will propose in Section I, the terms "critique" and "legitimation" denote two analytically distinct levels of philosophical discourse -- what one might call a "meta" and a "micro" level of argumentation -- that, although linked, must be carefully delineated if the emancipatory sense of "reason" is to be properly understood. If the term "critical," in contrast, cannot be analyzed in this way, this is exactly what is so interesting about it; as I will show, "critical reason" necessarily denotes both of these levels of argumentation at once.

With these distinctions in view, I then turn to Lyotard's analysis of the meaning of "postmodern" (Section II). What I will show is that, although he elaborates the "postmodern condition" in much more complex terms than Burbules's
account suggests, Lyotard himself ultimately misconstrues the analytical difference between what I am calling the "meta" and the "micro" sense of "critique." Specifically, Lyotard sees these moments as symmetrical, and is led to characterize two equivalent but distinct metanarratives of legitimation that are said to be undergoing a process of delegitimation: a scientific one and an emancipatory one. When the difference between the "meta" and the "micro" levels of "critique" is taken in the asymmetrical sense that I propose, on the other hand, it becomes clear that there is only one broad "metanarrative of legitimation" that is at stake in Lyotard’s account, and it is neither exclusively scientific nor strictly emancipatory; in fact it partakes of both of these discourses at once. And what this means, I will submit, is that the internal resistance to theory, that takes the form of the rhetorical, the sublime, or the apocalyptic, for example -- the theory, or "delegitimation" that is at issue in the European Enlightenment metanarrative of legitimation -- must be formulated anew.

To this end, I return in Section III to the Kantian texts in order to bring out the precise way in which what Lyotard calls an inherent potential for erosion can be said to inhere in the very notion of practical reason, or "critique," that Kant first established for educational discourse. What I show is that undecidability or "différence" plays at the heart of the Kantian system, and that this undecidability concerns nothing less than the inside and the outside -- the "meta" and the "micro" levels of "critique" -- on which the Kantian understanding of critical reason necessarily depends. As I hope to make clear, the difference between the critical system and its epistemological objects is the very basis on which a ethico-political standard of critique with its corresponding vision of justice can be philosophically justified.
If différance at the heart of the Kantian system thus potentially deconstructs or
delegitimizes that very architectonic through which the ideal of "critical reason" first
came to be known, however, I will also argue that différance remains the logically
necessary condition for that particular understanding of criticality. Most importantly,
without an undecidable "play" between the system's inside and its outside -- a play
within the very meaning of "critique," so to speak -- Kant cannot establish both a
scientific justification of moral knowledge and a moral justification of science. As I
shall demonstrate, the politico-educational ideal ultimately requires no less. The
consequence of this analysis, therefore, is thus not only that the condition of
possibility for ethico-political "critique" is impossible (indeed, is critique's own
impossibility), but that the impossible determination of the undecidable must itself be
covered over through the violent institution of a transcendental subject if the critical
Enlightenment ideal is to continue to stand. I conclude this chapter, therefore, with
an enumeration of the consequences of this internal erosion and its erasure -- this
potential for deconstruction discovered within Kant's critical architectonic -- for the
critical discourse of education. These consequences will be taken up directly in
Chapters Three and Four.

I: On the critical difference between "Critique" and "critique"

As I have indicated, it is necessary to to begin by refining the definition of "critique."
As is well known, this term was was first employed by Kant to designate the
transcendental investigation into the legitimate scope (or reach) of human knowledge.
Not only is its task, as Lewis White Beck explains, to "rescue those principles that
constitute metaphysics 'as science'" (in Kant 1993a, ix), but what Kant entitles the "Critique of Pure Reason" (1929, 58) itself takes the form of a "special science." As Kant writes,

[R]eason is the faculty which supplies the principles of a priori knowledge. Pure reason is, therefore, that which contains the principles whereby we know anything absolutely a priori. . . . [W]e can regard a science of the mere examination of pure reason, of its sources and limits, as the propaedeutic to the system of pure reason. As such, it should be called a critique, not a doctrine, of pure reason. Its utility, in speculation, ought properly to be only negative, not to extend, but only to clarify our reason, and keep it free from errors -- which is already a very great gain. I entitle transcendental all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori (1929, 58-59; emphases his).

As the transcendental "examination of pure reason, of its sources and limits," "critique" thus denotes the knowledge (or science) of knowledge. It is specifically aimed, as is well known, at a determination of what Kant calls "all the interests of my reason" as these are 'combined' in three decisive questions: "What can I know?"; "What ought I to do?" and "What may I hope?" (1929, 635).

In attempting to answer these questions in three Critiques, Kant thus understood his task in terms of a preparation (propaedeutic) for a complete system or "doctrine" of knowledge, but not as that doctrine itself. Significantly, however, this difference is by no means clear cut. For the purpose of the critique of pure reason is specifically "to lay down the complete architectonic plan" for the "idea of a science," or "transcendental philosophy" (1929, 60), and an architectonic plan, in turn.

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5 Unless otherwise specified, the phrase, "the critique of pure reason" refers to Kant's entire critical project -- to the critical investigation of all three faculties of judgment (theoretical, practical, and aesthetic or reflective). The phrase does not refer merely to the first of the three Critiques (which is always identified with italics, as it indicates the title of a text).
is that "systematic unity" that "first raises ordinary knowledge to the rank of science, that is, makes a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge" (1929, 653). As such, "architectonic" is none other than "the doctrine of the scientific in our knowledge" (Kant 1929, 653; italics mine).

If the difference between a propaedeutic (that critique which provides a unified, "scientific" explication of the a priori conditions of all knowledge), and a doctrine (a complete, unified system or "science" of knowledge) thus begins to blur, this is not least because, in Kant's view, a "philosophy of pure reason" -- alternatively entitled "speculation" or "metaphysics" -- actually entails both of these meanings at once. On one hand, he says, the "title 'metaphysics' may...be given to the whole of pure philosophy, inclusive of criticism, and so as comprehending the investigation of all that can ever be known a priori as well as the exposition of that which constitutes a system of the pure philosophical modes of knowledge of this type..." (1929, 659). On the other hand, however, he also claims that, together with metaphysics, "especially that criticism of our adventurous and self-reliant reason which serves as an introduction or propaedeutic to metaphysics, alone properly constitutes what may be entitled philosophy" (1929, 665; emphases mine). The critique of pure reason (i.e., the overarching critical project) is thus itself conceived as a scientific doctrine or philosophy -- it lays down a unified plan -- of the philosophy of pure reason, that is, of metaphysics. or a unified theory of knowledge as a whole (i.e., inclusive of its overall plan). Critique, paradoxically, is thus the philosophical doctrine of a doctrine of philosophy that includes it.
Now, this transcendental or speculative investigation into the conditions for knowledge as a whole, understood provisionally as an overarching "doctrine" of knowledge (of its possibility), is what I will call "Critique" at the "meta" level (hereafter, with an upper case "C"). I shall discuss later the problematic nature of "Critique" in this doctrinal sense. For the moment, however, what is important is merely this: by systematically establishing the very possibility of knowledge in terms of a priori principles, Kant ensures the logical coherence and, hence the 'scienticity,' of the architectonic as a whole. In this way reason in its entirety -- in both its theoretical and its practical employment -- is granted its philosophical legitimacy (hereafter "Legitimacy" in the upper case).

"Critique" in this broad sense is thus a fair match for the notion of theory (theory_1_) I discussed in the Introduction. "Theōria" (or 'contemplation'), it must be recalled, was already for Boethius that stable and universal system of knowledge, based on the logical correspondence of the trivium and the quadrivium, through which the reliability of scientific and humanistic understanding was ensured. Interestingly, the term Boethius used for this was rendered as "speculatio" (Inwood 1992, 271), which later became precisely what Kant understands as "speculation." For "Spekulation," in Kant's work, is "linked to Metaphysik" (Inwood 1992, 272) -- and metaphysics, as was noted earlier, is nothing other than a complete philosophy of

6 Indeed, Derrida argues, the Leibnizian understanding of the principle of reason as the "search for 'roots', 'principles', and 'causes'" -- that understanding which characterizes the Kantian Critique -- was already for Aristotle the obligation of "metaphysics" or "primary philosophy." Thus the requirements for "modern" 'science and technoscienticity', "lead back to a common origin" (1983, 8, 4).

7 Thus Rodolphe Gashé writes, "speculation, or speculatio... together with contemplatio makes up the Latin translation of the Greek concept of theōria (1986, 42).
pure reason. Insofar as it qualifies as *theória* (theory), then, Kantian "Critique" corresponds with speculative philosophy as such. Like any speculative philosophy, Kantian Critique represents,

...a form of theorizing that goes beyond verifiable observation; specifically, a philosophical approach informed by the impulse to construct a grand narrative of a worldview that encompasses the whole of reality. . . . It sets for its goal a unifying matrix and an overarching system wherewith to comprehend the considered judgments of cosmology, psychology, and theology. . . . [S]peculative philosophy aspires to a comprehensive understanding and explanation of the structural interrelations of the culture spheres of science, morality, art, and religion (Schrag 1995, 758).

As a speculative "theory" of knowledge in just this sense, Kantian Critique is the condition of possibility for -- and the Legitimation of -- all of the 'interests of my reason," including the possibility of the moral interest, which takes the form of Kant's second question: "what ought I to do?" This particular knowledge -- of reason in its practical employment alone -- may be entitled "critique" and, correspondingly, can be said to give rise to "legitimation." in the narrow sense of both terms. For Kant is very clear, particularly in the second Critique, that the maxims of practical reason which follow from the a priori condition of "freedom," in no way extend our theoretical knowledge as speculation (1993a, 4, esp. 141-142). They do, however, provide a procedure (in the form of a categorical imperative or a moral "law") by virtue of which a knowledge of the difference between legitimate (lower case) and illegitimate moral norms may be gained. The moral law thus expresses a standard of "critique" in a narrow, and quite common, sense of the word: it allows us to make *reasoned*
judgments concerning justice.* Moreover, as Seyla Benhabib reminds us, "critique." together with "crisis," is etymologically connected to the Greek word \( \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\zeta \) -- "which means dividing, choosing, judging and deciding." Benhabib writes,

*Krisis* refers to dissent and controversy, but also to a decision that is reached and to a judgment that is passed. "Critique" is the subjective evaluation or decision concerning a conflictual and controversial process -- a crisis. The connection between a process of social and natural disturbance and subjective judgment upon this process is even more striking in medical terminology, to which the terms were restricted in the Middle Ages. In this context, "crisis" designates a stage in the development of a disease that is a turning point and during which the decisive diagnosis concerning the healing or worsening of the patient is reached (1986, 19).

Practical reason is "critique" in precisely this way: it is that particular employment of reason (to use Kant's terminology) that resolves a "controversy" or a "crisis" by providing the criterion for a moral *decision*. On the basis of the moral law, a turning point in a process of moral uncertainty is achieved.

As I have suggested, Kantian "critique" (i.e., reason in its practical employment alone) represents a momentous change with regard to prior moral theory. Most notably, it entails for the first time a fully epistemological explication of moral legitimacy. Because the categorical imperative is logically founded on a principle of reason, Kant claims, we can have determinate practical knowledge of -- and not merely an arbitrary (e.g., traditional, dogmatic or religious) prescription for -- "what [we] ought to do." At the same time, precisely because the pure practical distinction between justice and injustice does in turn gain *its* legitimacy as a

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* In his introduction to the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, James Ellington describes the categorical imperative in exactly these terms. He says it is a "precise formulation" of, "a *consistent standard according to which everyday actions are judged* as being moral or not" (Ellington, in Kant 1993b, vi; my emphasis).
particular kind of knowledge only insofar as it is positioned within an overarching architectonic (a unified matrix of reason in its totality). "critique" in the micro sense depends first and foremost on "Critique" in the meta sense. In Kant, that is to say, "Critique" furnishes the Legitimation of the process of legitimation, or of "critique."

II: Lyotard and the "postmodern" condition

Theorists and philosophers of education cannot simply do away with a speculative theory of knowledge -- what Lyotard calls a "grand narrative" of Legitimation9 -- therefore, simply because it is not "trustworthy" anymore. Without such a narrative in place (whether positive, negative, or pragmatic), there is no way to establish a rational standard for the normative critique of society nor, consequently, is there a basis for the very ideal of "critical" consciousness that educational theorists, even today, wish to retain. Indeed, it should be recalled, "critical" consciousness is the epistemological perspective (however it is construed) from which an understanding of the requirements for justice, a moral decision, can be reached. If this "critical" notion of reason is everywhere at play in current theories of pedagogy, this is hardly surprising; the normative project of education has long been understood as just the attempt to inculcate a spirit of "critique." Importantly, however, this means that "Critique" in the meta sense cannot simply be discarded, because it is the very condition of possibility for such standards and ideals.

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9 For the sake of clarity, I shall continue to use the upper case "L" to indicate "Legitimation" in the meta sense. Although this practice of distinguishing graphically between a meta and a micro level of legitimation is not shared by Lyotard, he is clearly working with the same distinction, as I explain below.
It is precisely this logically necessary condition, the "meta" status of Critique with regard to critique, that deconstruction exposes as troubled. As I have said, the normative consequence of a deconstructive reading is the exposure of the problem that the necessary condition for critical reason cannot be recovered by reason. What I want to add to that earlier analysis now, however, is that this perception does not issue from a "postmodern mood" of scepticism that is brought to bear on the philosophical discourses of modernity. It stems, rather, from a rigorous exposition of the impossibility of that relationship which is intended to ground criticality, to legitimize "critique," in the first place.

In Lyotard's analysis, for example, what is often overlooked is that the process of delegitimation symptomized by "the postmodern condition" is not simply imposed from without as though it were an extraneous or intrinsic feature of scientific thought - -- if, for example, "postmodernism" were merely a politically-motivated attack on scientific 'objectivity'. Rather, delegitimation is (always already) the outgrowth of modern modes of Legitimacy. More precisely, as Lyotard argues, the inability to believe in les grands récits is "fueled by the demand for legitimation itself" (1984, 39; my emphasis). Here is the passage in its entirety that was cited, only in part, above.

The "crisis" of scientific knowledge, signs of which have been accumulating since the end of the nineteenth century, is not born of a chance proliferation of sciences, itself an effect of progress in technology and the expansion of capitalism. It represents, rather, an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge. There is erosion at work inside the speculative game, and by loosening the weave of the encyclopedic net in which each science was to find its place, it eventually sets them free (1984, 39; emphases mine).

What Lyotard here calls the "speculative game," it should be noted, refers specifically to, "the discourse on the [L]egitimation of scientific discourse" (1984, 33).
This "language game" of Legitimation, on his view, is only one of two. It is "not state-political, but philosophical," and it is linked to the politics of the high school and the university rather than to that of the primary school (1984, 33, 31). He writes, "the University is speculative, that is to say, philosophical." And the role of philosophy, in turn, is to

restore unity to learning, which has been scattered into separate sciences in laboratories and in pre-university education; it can only achieve this in a language game that links the sciences together as moments in the becoming of spirit, in other words, which links them in a rational narration, or rather a metanarration (1984, 33).

Significantly, although Lyotard has in mind the Hegelian model in particular, the meta notion of Kantian Critique discussed above can be seen to correspond quite directly to the speculative narrative of Legitimation as well. It is particularly telling, for example, that Lyotard explicated this mode of Legitimation as follows:

German idealism has recourse to a metaprinciple that simultaneously grounds the development of learning, of society, and of the State in the realization of the "life" of a Subject, called "divine Life" by Fichte and "Life of the spirit" by Hegel. In this perspective, knowledge first finds legitimacy within itself, and it is knowledge that is entitled to say what the State and what Society are. But it can only play this role by changing levels, by ceasing to be simply the positive knowledge of its referent (nature, society, the State, etc.), becoming in addition to that the knowledge of the knowledge of the referent -- that is, by becoming speculative. In the names "Life" and "Spirit," knowledge names itself (1984, 34-35: emphases mine).

Insofar as Kantian Critique (the scientific knowledge of knowledge) has been seen as precisely that 'change of levels' Lyotard describes, we can add Kantian "reason" to the list of names by which speculative knowledge "names itself."

Interestingly, however, Lyotard himself would characterize Kantian philosophy in terms of what he sees as a fundamentally different narrative of Legitimation. For
as I have indicated, the "speculative" narrative with its scientific principle of unity and its insistence on the self-legitimating capacity of knowledge is distinguished from another discourse: one Lyotard calls the "narrative of emancipation," or "freedom." This other narrative, which is linked to the politics of primary education rather than to the university, is described as follows:

According to this version, knowledge finds its validity not within itself, not in a subject that develops by actualizing its learning possibilities, but in a practical subject -- humanity. The principle of the movement animating the people is not the self-legitimation of knowledge, but the self-grounding of freedom or, if preferred, its self is the story of its emancipation from everything that prevents it from governing itself (1984, 35).

"Clearly," he continues, "this mode of [L]egitimation through the autonomy of the will gives priority to a totally different language game, which Kant called imperative and is known today as prescriptive" (1984, 36). This version is even "gaining new vigor," according to Lyotard, in the wake of the breaking apart of the speculative metanarrative (1984, 35).

Just as each of these narratives solves the problem of Legitimacy in a different way, according to Lyotard -- one by virtue of the speculative principle of knowledge, the other by virtue of the emancipatory principle of freedom -- so the inherent potential for erosion will be different in each. In the scientific narrative, as has been suggested, erosion is due to the demand for Legitimacy itself. This demand directly concerns the question of "proof." Specifically, Lyotard argues that science demands that the very axioms by virtue of which scientific research is 'proven' must themselves be Legitimated or 'proved' as justifiable. In order to Legitimate the axiomatic itself, therefore, a "metalanguage" is required, and that "metalanguage" is logic (1984, 42).
Here, however, the possibility of scientific Legitimacy begins to falter. For if we then ask, with Lyotard, "by what criteria does the logician define the properties required of an axiomatic?" (1984, 42), we are led to the general criteria for a logical mathematical system. These criteria are consistency, syntactic completeness, decidability, and independence (i.e., "of the axioms in relation to one another" [1984, 42]). Yet, as Lyotard remarks, Gödel established that mathematical systems are themselves unable to meet these requirements. Rodolphe Gasché explains:

In an essay, On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems, Gödel demonstrated that metalogical statements concerning the completeness and consistency of systems any more complex than logical systems of the first order cannot be demonstrated within these systems. Derrida, in Dissemination, transcribes Gödel's theorem in the following terms: "An undecidable proposition, as Gödel demonstrated in 1931, is a proposition which, given a system of axioms governing a multiplicity, is neither an analytical nor deductive consequence of those axioms, nor in contradiction with them, neither true nor false with respect to those axioms. Tertium datur, without synthesis" (Gasché 1987, 9. references omitted; see also Critchley 1992, 66-67 and Ulmer 1985, 26).

Moreover, Lyotard proposes, such undecidable propositions are not only to be found in mathematical systems: rather, the situation can be generalized (1984, 43; see also Peters 1989, 102-103). Consequently, all complex formal systems are incomplete and thus internally limited. Or, to put this in slightly different terms. they all are open to (in a state of) deconstruction. The recognition of this complication gave rise not only to the mathematics of the Bourbaki group, Lyotard says, but to analogous developments in other sciences as well: "they owe their status to the existence of a language whose rules of functioning cannot themselves be demonstrated but are the object of a consensus among experts" (1984, 43).
This insight into the logical impossibility of a scientific system (as such) has a number of outcomes. One such consequence, on Lyotard's view, is that the goal of the production of scientific proof changes from truth to "performativity" (1984, esp. 46-53). Another result, he says, is that knowledge may now be seen to "progress" in two distinct ways: "one corresponds to a new move (a new argument) within the established rules; the other, to the invention of new rules, in other words, a change to a new game" (1984, 43). What is most directly relevant here, however, is that regardless of the form that any new "game" may take, "what never fails to come and come again . . . is the question of [L]egitimacy. For it is not philosophy that asks this question of science, but science that asks it of itself" (1984, 54).

I will return to this problem of the erosion at work inside the "speculative game" shortly, for it corresponds, as I will show, to the relationship between theory₁ (a unified system of knowledge) and theory₂ (theory's inherent "resistance" to systematization) that was treated in the Introduction, above. But before undertaking that discussion, it is necessary to examine more closely Lyotard's distinction between the scientific principle of the self-Legitimation of knowledge and the "metanarrative of emancipation" with its "self-grounding" principle of freedom. This distinction must be attended, for it is misleading in a significant way. Specifically, it is simply not accurate to claim that the metanarrative of emancipation prioritizes, "a totally different language game" -- i.e., that of the "imperative" or the "prescriptive" rather than that of the "truth" (cited above, my emphasis). It does not do so, as I have already argued, because with regard to the educative and political ideal of critical reason, the discursive 'games' of prescription and truth (of "critique" and "Critique") are
fundamentally entwined from the start. Because he separates the discourses of science and emancipation in such a stark way, Lyotard overlooks that the "erosion" (or "resistance") at issue is actually common to them both.

In order to understand why this is, it is important to remark that, in representing the emancipatory "self-grounding principle of autonomy" as fundamentally different from science's "self-legitimating principle of knowledge," Lyotard has considered the Kantian explication of practical reason alone, without regard for its placement within the Critical System as a whole. As Lyotard says, the "distinguishing characteristic" of the "emancipation apparatus flowing from the Aufklärung," is that "it grounds the [L]egitimation of science and truth in the autonomy of interlocutors involved in ethical, social, and political praxis" (1984, 30-40, my emphasis). So it does, to be sure. This does not mean, however, that the principle of "freedom" is vulnerable as such, and thus entails a different mode of delegitimation than does scientific knowledge, as Lyotard claims.

Recall that, on Lyotard's view, the inherent potential for erosion within the metanarrative of emancipation is that emancipatory discourse brings with it an unbridgeable divide between the theoretical and the practical employments of reason. As Lyotard argues, "There is nothing to prove that if a statement describing a real situation is true, it follows that a prescriptive statement based upon it (the effect of which will necessarily be a modification of that reality) will be just" (1984, 41, 81). Not only is this difficulty insoluble, for Lyotard, but the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive statements effectively places science on a par with an altogether different discourse (i.e., that of morality) and, in so doing, delegitimizes
the former. This has implications for the Legitimacy of the metanarrative of emancipation as well. Once science loses its status as a master discourse, Lyotard contends, the road is paved for a dissolution of the social subject altogether, who becomes lost in a veritable multiplicity of (equally relative) language games. If the potential for erosion inherent in the scientific (philosophical/speculative) metanarrative is that it cannot satisfy its own conditions for Legitimacy, then, the problem with the metanarrative of emancipation (the metanarrative of freedom), in contrast, is that it supposedly entails the introduction of a language game that competes with science, and thereby opens the door to a multiplicity of discourses, none of which can be finally established as supreme.

Now, this discussion may give rise to some confusion given that, on the view that was presented above, the Kantian discourse of emancipation (the explication of reason in its purely practical employment) was itself characterized as scientific or "speculative." From this perspective, for example, I indicated that Lyotard's description of a unifying philosophy that 'changes levels' (such as Hegelian speculation) applies to Kantian Critique as well. The problem can be cleared up, however, once it is noticed that Lyotard's understanding of the "discourse of emancipation" does not imply the Kantian Critique of pure reason as a whole. Rather, I have suggested that Lyotard's description of the metanarrative of emancipation is based on a consideration of practical reason alone. Lyotard specifies, for example, that the emancipatory discourse is one in which knowledge is conceived not as an end in itself (as per the philosophical discourse), but rather as a means to an end: namely, as a means to determine legitimate moral action, or the knowledge
of what we are to do (1984, 36). (Similarly, Kant contends that in practical reason the understanding is in the service of reason, rather than the other way around.) The practical knowledge Lyotard describes, therefore, is none other than what I have called a standard or process of "critique" -- the means of "legitimation" -- in the narrow sense of both terms.

From this point of view, the proposal that there are two metanarratives of modernity rather than one is actually quite telling. For what is misleading about Lyotard's formulation is that it loses sight of the fact that practical reason <i>qua</i> critique is not itself a metanarrative of Legitimation (not, at least, if we take Kant at his word), but is merely legitimation in the lower case. Taken out of its Critical context, to be sure, practical reason (Kantian critique) can be distinguished quite sharply from merely theoretical reason. Thus Kantian philosophy, entailing as it does a substantial explication of the difference between nature and freedom, is commonly thought to inaugurate a decisive distinction between epistemology and ethics -- a distinction that is no doubt at work in Lyotard's characterization of these two metanarratives of modern Legitimacy. On the other hand, however, I have shown that what Lyotard calls the "emancipation apparatus flowing from the <i>Aufklärung</i>" is itself crucially dependent on the scientific status of the Critical system as a whole; the "emancipation apparatus" cannot be confined to the moral nature of micro critique as such. Indeed, the epistemological role of the Critical architectonic (of the scientific plan) is that it Legitimates all forms of knowledge, <i>including</i> the specifically practical
knowledge of (the prescription for) what we "ought" (morally) to do.\textsuperscript{10} What Lyotard does not notice, in short, is the necessary relationship between critique and Critique.

Once the asymmetrical nature of this relationship is taken into account, it emerges that what Lyotard sees as a problem for moral legitimacy (as such) is not really one: by virtue of the Critical project as a whole, the "freedom" of the interlocutors is itself \textit{scientifically} authorized as a Legitimate principle of moral action -- provided, that is to say, that logic's priority over rhetoric is retained from the \textit{trivium}, thereby ensuring the scienticity of the system itself. Thus, to put it more simply, the narrative of emancipation that Lyotard wants to separate out as a different and competing discourse turns out to be itself Legitimated by the \textit{speculative} unity characteristic of \textit{theōria} (theory\textsubscript{1}) since Boethius, and defined by Kant as "science."

In distinguishing between the metanarratives of science and freedom as he does, Lyotard thus misrecognizes the precise nature of the internal erosion or "resistance" (theory\textsubscript{2}) that is threatening to both, and so ultimately misdiagnoses the root of the "postmodern condition." Specifically, insofar as emancipation and science (prescription and description) are for the Enlightenment both entwined "\textit{inside} the \textit{O”}

\textsuperscript{10} Kant is explicit on this point. In the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason}, for example, he asserts, "[I]f pure reason of itself can be and really is practical, as the consciousness of the moral law shows it to be, it is only one and the same reason which judges \textit{a priori} by principles, whether for theoretical or for practical purposes. Then it is clear that, if its capacity in the former is not sufficient to establish certain propositions positively (which however do not contradict it), it must assume these propositions just as soon as they are sufficiently certified as belonging impreciscriptibly to the practical interest of pure reason. It must assume them indeed as something offered from the outside and not grown on its own soil, and \textit{it must seek to compare and connect them with everything which it has in its power as speculative reason}" (1993a, 127-128, my emphasis; compare 1993b, 4). This is for Kant the "path to wisdom": it "must for us men unavoidably \textit{pass through science}" (1993a, 149; my emphasis), precisely because on Kant's view only scientific discourse can Legitimate moral knowledge as knowledge.
speculative game," so to speak, they share in common the requirement for "self-legitimation" that science demands, and that logic (the metadiscourse for theory and practice alike) is intended to provide. But Enlightenment speculation is neither purely scientific nor purely emancipatory; on the contrary, its distinguishing characteristic is precisely that it is both. By this token, the potential for erosion that inheres in the grand narrative of the modern European Enlightenment will necessarily touch on both aspects. In contrast to Lyotard, I therefore want to suggest, the delegitimation in question concerns neither (simply) the impossibility of logically establishing the completeness of a mathematical system, nor (simply) the impossibility of relating prescriptive to descriptive claims. It has to do, more precisely, with the impossibility of establishing the self-Legitimating principle of science (with its unifying, systematic telos) as the normative "end" of the subject in his, her, or their freedom. What is at stake in the postmodern delegitimation of knowledge, more simply, is the unconditional status of a normative principle of reason. It is this possibility and none other on which the 'good' of an ethico-political, or "critical," reason depends.

Kant's Critical philosophy can be seen as an attempt to make good on precisely this aim. As we have seen, his systematization of theoretical and moral knowledge within a unifying architectonic is a Critical formulation of the speculative philosophical project as an ethico-political, emancipatory enterprise. This is the modern project par excellence: it is the educative enterprise of "Enlightenment."

If the rational status of moral critique is dependent upon its inclusion in a systematic Critique of reason, however, and if the Critical system as a whole, in turn, can only Legitimate the moral law by virtue of its logical systematicity (its character
as "science"), then the very possibility of moral legitimacy is (always already) vulnerable to the "erosion" that is "fueled by the demand for [L]egitimation itself" (cited above). It is this deconstructive potential, rather than a mood of scepticism, that actually constitutes the "postmodern condition."

Here we might turn to a second definition that Lyotard offers for this phrase - one that is certainly less famous than the first but, on my view, is somewhat more apt. In an appendix entitled "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?"

Lyotard writes,

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable. . . . The [postmodern] artist and the writer. . . . are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. Hence the fact that the work and text have the characters of an event; hence also, they always come too late for their author, or, what amounts to the same thing, their being put into work, their realization (mise en œuvre) always begins too soon. Post modern would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (modo) (1984, 81: emphases his).11

Similarly, we might say, the revelation of the impossible grounds of meta Critique, the "postmodern" delegitimation of knowledge is, in a phrase, what modern Legitimacy will (always already) have been about. For "Critique" itself inherently resists (or deconstructs) its own possibility as Legitimating ground.

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11 On this point, compare Deborah Britzman as well. In the introduction to her book Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytical Inquiry of Learning, she writes, "In the chapters that follow, my interest in a certain psychoanalysis is closer to what Adam Phillips calls a 'post-Freudian Freudianism,' a time to consider a learning in which there can be no experts, in which curiosity is incited and the demand of education meets those other demands and then does something more. The "post" is that strange time of learning when one can get lost in thoughts: when the inside meets the outside and the outside meets the inside" (1998, 20; note omitted, emphasis mine). "Post'-modernism, I shall show, is exactly this: the meeting of the inside and the outside that occurs in the "strange time" of the future anterior.
III The undecidability of C/critique

In order to demonstrate how the very demand for Legitimacy itself 'fuels' a process of delegitimation with regard to the normative principle of reason, it is necessary to return to Kant's discussion of the relationship between a (propaedeutic) "Critique" and a (metaphysical) "doctrine" of pure philosophy. Earlier, I drew attention to a veritable Möebius strip which emerges in Kant's explication of this relationship. In particular, I showed that the meaning of the term "Critique" equivocates between its sense as a doctrine of knowledge and its sense as the determination of the a priori principles on which any scientific doctrine must be based. The formulation suggested above was that Critique is (impossibly) the (all-inclusive) doctrine of a doctrine that includes it. Paradoxically, "doctrine" and "Critique" are each the condition of possibility for one another. Another way to formulate this would be to propose that the idea of science as a unified system of knowledge (a "doctrine" of pure philosophy) and the idea of Critique as a speculative systematization of the a priori conditions of that doctrine, cut across one another in the form of a chiasmus.  

Now, this in itself had no immediate bearing on the previous argument since, in that context, it was merely the status of Critique as a unified theory or "system" that I wanted to highlight. It was, I argued, only by virtue of the Critique's systematicity (its doctrinal quality) that moral knowledge, in particular, could be

\[\text{12 As Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley explain, "the figure of the chiasmus [is] etymologically constituted by the two lines of the Greek letter \(\chi\)" (Bernasconi and Critchley, eds. 1991, xiii). Here perhaps a brief clarification is in order. "Critique" and "doctrine" can be said to form a Möebius strip with regard to the simple question of their difference. The figure of the chiasmus, on the other hand, can be seen to emerge when it is specifically the question of their priority that is at issue.}\]
Legitimated. Significantly, however, if Kantian "Critique" is not reducible to what Kant understands as a "doctrine of pure philosophy" notwithstanding its doctrinal character, this is because the term "Critique" as Kant employs it is also in a chiasmic relation with the meaning of "critique" (i.e., with the explication of reason in its practical employment alone). In effect, as I will establish shortly, it is only because it is not possible to decide the difference between a scientific "Critique" of the a priori conditions of knowledge in general, and a moral "critique" of ethico-political legitimacy in particular (i.e., the difference between Legitimacy and legitimacy) that it is possible to distinguish between a propaedeutic "Critique" -- the scientific knowledge of knowledge -- and a metaphysical "doctrine" that denotes the "whole of pure philosophy," and therefore includes its Critique (i.e., between the determination of the conditions for knowledge and an encyclopedia of that knowledge itself). It is precisely because Critique becomes critique, in short, that "Critique" can be distinguished from "doctrine." Conversely, it is only insofar as a Critique shares with a doctrine of pure philosophy the scientific quality of logical systematicity that Critique can be distinguished from critique. And this "play" on the signifier "critique." I shall explain in the next chapter, has direct consequences for the ideal of "criticality" that educational theorists on both sides of the modernism-postmodernism divide wish steadfastly to uphold.

It is important to underline now, however, that neither of the distinctions can be relinquished. What is at stake in the first -- that between a doctrine of pure philosophy and a propaedeutic "Critique" -- is the scientific (meta-)Legitimacy of "pure (transcendental) philosophy." Critique guarantees this Legitimacy by virtue of
the fact that, precisely *qua* the *propaedeutic* determination of the a priori principles of reason and not *qua* "doctrine," it grounds the systematic doctrine, thus confirming its scienticity. But the second distinction -- that between "Critique" and "critique" -- is just as important as the first. For on the second distinction hinges the very possibility at which Kantian Critique, as a speculative *system* of knowledge, aims: the establishment of an overarching "theory" (a unified *doctrine* of knowledge) *within which* a critical standard of moral legitimation can be Legitimized. Precisely *qua" doctrine."* then, Kantian "Critique" is differentiated from merely moral "critique," and thereby confirms the Legitimacy of reason in its practical employment as well, which is to say, in its morality.

It is only when "critique" is mobilized in both of these senses at once, therefore, that Kant actually instantiates the politico-educational ideal of *critical* reason: that is, an ideal of reason that is simultaneously scientifically Legitimate and practically normative. This simultaneity is the logical condition of possibility for such an ideal. Taken together, however, these distinctions entail a play on the term "Critique," whereby it oscillates between the meaning of "doctrine" and that of "critique." As this equivocation is not immediately apparent as long as only one of the distinctions is being put to work at a time, each of them appears to be tenable when considered on an individual basis. When the distinctions are mobilized simultaneously, however, it emerges that "Critique" is *both-neither* "doctrine" *and-nor" "critique."

In this sense, the equivocation of Kantian "Critique" signifies a structural "undecidability" (in Gödel's sense) -- what Derrida calls "*différence*" -- at work *in the*
very difference between the inside and the outside (legitimacy and Legitimacy) of the Kantian architectonic. For, as I now want to show, "Critique" signifies not only a unified "doctrine" of pure philosophy, or the 'outside' of the Kantian architectonic, but also its 'inside'; as "critique." (meta-)Critique also indicates the standard for moral legitimacy alone. Something we might designate as "C/critique" thus is to the difference between "doctrine" and "critique" just what the "sublime" was to the difference between the aesthetic and the teleological judgment: that 'critical' (or 'aesthetic') 'something' that is neither scientifically doctrinal, nor strictly moral (neither strictly aesthetic nor properly teleological), but which, impossibly, partakes of both. It is in exactly this sense, I shall show, that the normative principle of reason is itself logically indeterminable.

Recall, in the first place, that among all of the a priori conditions of knowledge that the Critique of pure reason is intended to uncover, none is as important as the unconditioned condition of freedom: the a priori principle of reason its purely practical employment. As Kant writes in the second Critique, "every interest is ultimately practical, even that of speculative reason being only conditional and reaching perfection only in practical use" (1993a, 128; my emphasis). Now "speculative reason," we have seen, is linked to "theoretical reason" in the Critique of Practical Reason (1993a, 4-5, 141-142), and theoretical reason, together with practical reason, in turn comprises what Kant calls "metaphysics" (1929, 659). If the speculative dimension of metaphysical philosophy is "only conditional" upon its practical use rather than an end in itself, however, it would seem that "pure" philosophy (the knowledge of the unconditioned) is ultimately Legitimated by the Critique of practical
reason alone. In other words, if speculation itself reaches perfection only when it is used for moral ends, then we must be able to determine what our unconditioned moral ends actually are, and this requires the Critique or Legitimation of reason in its pure practicality. And indeed, immediately following the description of metaphysics provided in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes, "Now, morality is the only code of laws applying to our actions which can be derived completely a priori from principles. Accordingly, the metaphysics of morals is really pure moral philosophy, with no underlying basis of anthropology or of other empirical conditions" (1929, 659).\(^\text{13}\)

Not only does the Critique of practical reason provide the (scientific) ground for the only "pure moral philosophy," moreover, but Kant also insists that pure moral philosophy is in turn "superior" to "all other occupations of reason" (1929, 658). For, "moral philosophy" is the philosophy which "deals with the whole vocation of man" -- what he otherwise calls 'man's' "ultimate" or "highest ends." These, together with the "subordinate ends" of reason (the means by which the ultimate ends are achieved), are what Kant calls the "essential ends of human reason" (1929, 658, 657, my emphasis). The essential ends (the moral ends of 'man') represent, in a phrase, the practical "interest" of reason as reflected in the question "What ought I to do?"

Within Critique *qua* a unified "doctrine of the scientific in our knowledge" (1929, 658, 657, 658, my emphasis). The essential ends (the moral ends of 'man') represent, in a phrase, the practical "interest" of reason as reflected in the question "What ought I to do?"

\(^{13}\) Another example of the extremely close proximity between "metaphysics," "speculation," and the moral ends of 'man' is expressed in the following passage of the first *Critique*: "Quite apart from its [metaphysics's] influence, as science, in connection with certain specific ends, it is an indispensable discipline. For in dealing with reason it treats of those elements and highest maxims which must form the basis of the very possibility of some sciences, and of the use of all. That, as mere speculation, it serves rather to prevent errors rather than to extend knowledge, does not detract from its value" (1929, 665; emphasis in original).
Then, the Critique of practical reason -- providing as it does the only "completely" a priori principle and thus scientifically Legitimating the "highest occupation of reason" -- sits at the apex.

The preeminence of the moral law over the natural law of causality within the Critical architectonic emerges quite clearly in the Critique of Practical Reason as well. As Kant announces in the Preface, "The concept of freedom, in so far as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason" (1993a, 3: emphases mine). Again, Kant here explicitly acknowledges that, precisely because it alone is "apodictic" (necessarily certain), the moral law is primary among all the elements of the Critical architectonic; as such, it is the "keystone" (or the final stone of an arch, for example [Schlusssstein]) of the scientific doctrine of philosophy (i.e., of "the whole architecture" [Gebaeude]).¹⁴ In light of the explication offered in the second Critique as well, then, it is clear that the a priori principle of practical reason (the moral law) constitutes the apex of the Critical system, and is thus the sine qua non of its preparatory (or propaedeutic) work for a complete metaphysical doctrine of philosophy.¹⁵

I have drawn attention, in the first place, to the preeminence of the Critique of practical reason within the Critical system as a whole (and to the preeminence of

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¹⁴ I am indebted to Dieter Misgeld for providing and translating the original German terms. The usage to which these have been put is my responsibility alone.

¹⁵ On this point, see also the section entitled "On the Primacy of Pure Practical Reason in its Association with Speculative Reason" in the second Critique (1993a, 126-128), as well as the translator’s Introduction (White Beck, in Kant 1993a, xv-xvi).
practical reason itself above all other employments of reason), in order to highlight
the following point: although the Kantian distinction I have been discussing concerns
a doctrine and a Critique of pure reason in general, the primacy of practical reason
within the system alerts us to the fact that the Critique that is especially at issue is
the Critique of pure practical reason. Notwithstanding the difference in its subject
matter, however, it is important to recall that the Critique of practical reason is
intended as no less of a "scientific" investigation into a priori conditions for all that.
For this reason it is especially significant that, in the second place, this particular
Critical investigation can be distinguished from a doctrine not so much by virtue of
the scienticity of the principle it discovers (as was the case with theoretical reason),
but by virtue of its morality. In other words, the scientific verification of the a priori
condition of pure practical reason is the very investigation in which "Critique" in fact
slides inexorably away from its link to a scientific "doctrine" of pure philosophy, and
into the moral meaning of "critique."

The principle of freedom, to be sure, does appear at the outset to qualify as
the "scientific" or a priori ground of pure practical knowledge (the "law" of its
possibility), just as the a priori principle or law of natural causality was shown to
ground the possibility of pure theoretical knowledge (eg. at 1993a, 49). However, this
parallel does not actually hold up. For as Kant explains, the possibility of practical
reason is merely the possibility of the will not being sensibly conditioned; i.e., the
possibility of "autonomous" action. He writes, "the proper and estimable worth of
an absolutely good will consists precisely in the fact that the principle of action is free
of all influences from contingent grounds, which only experience can furnish" (1993b,
Hence: "An absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative, will therefore be indeterminate as regards all objects and will contain *merely the form of willing; and indeed that form is autonomy" (1993b, 48, my emphasis). In the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* it thus already becomes apparent that, as Kant insists throughout the second *Critique*, the principle of the moral law (namely, "freedom,"), and the moral law itself (the categorical imperative to legislate or "will" universally and, hence 'freely'), are fundamentally "inseparable," or, "inextricably bound" (1993a, 58, 98; also at 29, 47, 73, 124).

In fact, it would be more accurate to say that they are fundamentally the same. For the moral law is itself named as "causality through freedom" (1993a, 51), insofar as it expresses the imperative to "[s]o act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as the principle giving universal law." Because this imperative to legislate for oneself universally (i.e. 'lawfully') thus expresses "nothing else than the autonomy of pure practical reason, i.e., freedom." (1993a, 34). Kant maintains that the moral law "is itself demonstrated to be a principle of the deduction of freedom as causality of pure reason," and that this "is a sufficient substitute for any *a priori* justification" (1993a, 49, my emphasis). This point is later confirmed: "the causality [of freedom] is determinable only through the moral law" (1993a, 82).

Unlike in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with its treatment of the a priori possibility of natural causality, therefore, the question at stake in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is not how to determine the principle of causality as freedom. This 'principle' is necessarily postulated by virtue of an awareness of the moral law which
immediately expresses it (1993a, 29, 30).\footnote{In fact Kant often refers to "freedom" as a "postulate" rather than as a principle. He writes, "The postulates of pure practical reason [immortality, freedom as the causality of an intelligible being, and the existence of God] all proceed from the principle of morality, which is not a postulate but a law by which reason directly determines the will" (1993a, 138-139, and 129, 149-150). "Freedom" is also variously defined as a "faculty" (1993a, 110), as a "concept" (1993a, 111), as the "autonomy" inhering in the moral principle (1993a, 33-34), and as the moral law itself (1993a, 51). In contrast to the ambiguity inhering in the notion of "freedom," Kant insists throughout that the presupposition of "freedom" is itself justified \textit{a priori} by the moral law, and is postulated "for its sake" (1993a, 151n., 140).} The question, rather, is how do we \textit{know} the moral law itself, as the mere form of lawfulness, to be inherently binding on or imperative for us? In Kant's formulation, "how is the consciousness of the moral law possible?"

His initial answer is that "we can come to know pure practical laws... by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us and to the elimination from them of all empirical conditions" (1993a, 29). What I want to demonstrate now, however, is that his explication of this necessity is precisely what leads him away from a purely scientific determination of practical knowledge, and into the realm of morality proper. Thus, although it may have first appeared that the a priori determination of freedom parallels the a priori determination of natural causality, it later becomes clear that the two principles are far from being strictly analogous. For Kant's "Critique" of the way in which reason "prescribes" its laws is significantly different from his "Critique" of the way in which "nature" does so: the \textit{Critique of Practical Reason} uncovers the moral law only insofar as "Critique" becomes "critique."

Kant begins his investigation by remarking, immediately following his provision of the formula of the categorical imperative, that the practical law, the rule
that "One ought absolutely to act in a certain way," enjoins the subject categorically because, by virtue of it, the will is determined by the "mere form of the law" completely independently of all empirical conditions (1993a, 31). It is in this context that the concept of "autonomy" is first introduced: "The sole principle of morality." Kant says, "consists in independence from all material of the law (i.e., a desired object), and in the accompanying determination of a choice by the mere form of giving universal law which a maxim must be capable of having" (1993a, 33).

Autonomy or freedom thus entails what Kant calls both a "positive" and a "negative" sense: the will can be said to be determined by a "negative" autonomy insofar as it is free from all sensible conditions (that it is objective) and hence is contra to natural causality. At the same time, the will is also "positively" determined insofar as it does (positively) legislate solely to itself, without any "heteronomous" influence from sensibility (1993a, 33-34).

Now this self-legislating capacity or "positive autonomy" -- like the moral law itself -- is said to be a "fact of reason," not an empirical fact; by virtue of the consciousness of the law, reason "proclaims itself as originating law," or, "shows itself actually to be practical" (1993a, 31-32, 43; my emphases). Thus, Kant says, the "fact" of the moral law is "inextricably bound up with the consciousness of freedom" -- i.e., it is bound up with the "fact" of our consciousness of reason's self-legislating capacity (1993a, 43). This means, however, that the consciousness of the moral law is itself intrinsically related to the "positive" sense of autonomy as this capacity for self-legislation. Yet the question still remains as to how the mere capacity for self-legislation -- the consciousness that is after all consequent upon purely logical
reflection -- may be said to exhibit not simply a speculative but indeed a uniquely "moral" interest as reflected in the question, what 'ought' I to do?\textsuperscript{17}

In the \textit{Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals}, Kant forgoes any attempt to solve this puzzle. He states simply,

\begin{quote}
[I]t is quite impossible to discern, i.e., to make \textit{a priori} conceivable, how a mere thought which itself contains nothing sensuous can produce a sensation of pleasure or displeasure. For here is a special kind of causality regarding which, as with all causality, we can determine nothing \textit{a priori} but must consult experience alone. However, experience can provide us with no relation of cause and effect except between two objects of experience. \ldots Consequently, there is for us men no possibility at all for an explanation as to how and why the universality of a maxim as a law, and hence morality, interests us (1993b, 59-60.)
\end{quote}

Since, for Kant, "interest is that by which reason becomes practical, i.e., a cause determining the will" (1993b, 59n.3). the question of "how pure reason can be practical by itself without other incentives" is, therefore, "quite beyond the power of human reason" (1993b, 60). He adds, "this idea of an intelligible world would here have to be itself the incentive or have to be that in which reason originally took an

\textsuperscript{17} As Kant explains in both the first and the second \textit{Critiques}, the idea of freedom as an unconditioned cause arises first for speculative reason by virtue of the fact that "reason aspires to the unconditioned in a causal series" and thus ensnares itself in a series of antinomies (in Kant 1993a, 30). The postulate of freedom, that is to say, is based on the logical assumption that "for every series of conditions there must be something unconditioned, and consequently a causality which is entirely self-determining" (1993a, 50; compare Kant 1929, 409-415). As White Beck puts it, "as rational beings, who want to know the 'reasons' for things, we seek for completeness in knowledge, with no unsupported foundations and no loose ends" (in 1993a, xiv). Kant's speculative postulation of an intelligible world, along with the principle of freedom as causality it is said to entail, thus merely expresses the desire for \textit{logical coherence}: "speculative reason had to assume [the faculty of the will] as at least possible (\textit{in order not to contradict itself in finding among its cosmological Ideas something unconditioned in its causality})" (1993a, 49; my emphasis). The \textit{Critique of Practical Reason} is thus required to demonstrate why there is anything intrinsically "moral" about the causality ("freedom") in question.
interest. But to make this conceivable is precisely the problem we cannot solve. . . .

Here then is the extreme limit of all moral inquiry" (1993b, 61).

Although Kant reiterates the point in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, however, it is clear that he cannot again leave the question merely at that. For as Ellington comments, if the purpose of the *Grounding* is to present "moral philosophy as falling under the province of a single supreme principle of pure reason," the purpose of the second *Critique*, in contrast, is to investigate "the grounds for justifying such a supreme *a priori* principle (the categorical imperative) as being the fundamental principle of the autonomy of reason in action" (in Kant 1993b, v-vi, and viii, vix; my emphasis). On this basis, Kant does not leave the question unanswered, but indeed dedicates a chapter of the *Critique* to the task of explaining exactly how it is that "the certainty of a disposition which agrees with the law is the first condition of any worth of the person" (1993a, 75-92, esp. 76). He does so, moreover, with a specific view to elaborating the claim first made in the *Grounding*: namely, that "a mere thought which itself contains nothing sensuous can produce a sensation of pleasure or displeasure" (cited above).

It is in this context that Kant first elaborates his well-known assertion concerning our necessary "respect" for the moral law. Specifically, his argument is that the "positive" and "negative" senses of the term "autonomy" described above each entail a special kind of non-sensuous "feeling." Negatively, the constraint of sensuous impulses and inclinations that the moral law demands -- the constraint of all

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18 He states, "For how a law in itself can be the direct motive of the will (which is the essence of morality) is an insoluble problem for human reason" (1993a, 75).
sensibility — "is itself feeling." He writes, "Consequently, we can see a priori that the moral law as a ground of determination of the will, by thwarting all our inclinations, must produce a feeling which can be called pain" (1993a, 76). At the same time, the moral law has a positive "feeling" associated with it as well. Positively, the (self-)consciousness of a capacity for self-legitimation (i.e., of "intellectual causality") -- is itself "an object of respect," because the moral law 'strikes down' or "humiliates" self-conceit (1993a, 77). "Respect for the moral law, therefore, is a feeling produced by an intellectual cause, and this feeling is the only one which we can know completely a priori and the necessity of which we can discern" (1993a, 77: emphasis mine). As he argues.

If anything checks our self-conceit in our own judgment, it humiliates. Therefore, the moral law inevitably humbles every man when he compares the sensuous propensity of his nature with the law. Now if the idea of something as the motive of the will humiliates us in our self-consciousness, it awakens respect for itself so far as it is a positive motive. The moral law, therefore, is even subjectively a positive motive (1993a, 78).

Most significantly, however, this is not to say that the moral law has a subjective motive: in fact it does not, for this would make it heteronomous. Rather, it is to say that the moral law is a subjective motive. As Kant writes, "Thus respect for the moral law is not the drive to morality; it is morality itself" (1993a, 79: emphasis mine).

It is by virtue of exactly this "drive" that the subjective effect of the moral law can be said to inscribe the moral "interest" (1993a, 83). Kant explains.

Since the law itself must be the drive in a morally good will, the moral interest must be a purely nonsensuous interest of practical reason alone. . . . But it is a feeling which is concerned only with the practical, and with the representation of a law simply as to its form and not on any account of any object of the law; thus it cannot be reckoned either as enjoyment or as pain, yet it produces an interest in obedience to the
law, and this we call moral interest. And the capacity of taking such an interest in the law (or of having respect for the moral law itself) is really moral feeling (1993a, 83, my emphasis).  

This moral "feeling" alone -- this feeling of respect for the moral law which, we have seen, is the positive sense of "autonomy" as self-legislation and also the only feeling "we can know completely a priori and the necessity of which we can discern" -- is the true ground of practical reason on Kant's account. Hence, what was earlier referred to as the "apodictic law of practical reason" through which the reality of freedom is "proved" (1993a, 3) turns out to be not the principle of freedom as such, not the moral law which expresses it, and not even the mere consciousness of the moral law. What alone is "apodictic," rather, is the specific experience of the "sublime" feeling (1993a, 8) of "respect" for the law.

In fact, Kant writes, the concept of respect "can never have other than a moral ground": "we use the term to pay attention to the mysterious and wonderful, but frequent, regard which human judgment does have for the moral law" (1993a, 85n.,

19 I leave aside for the moment the dubious status of this "non-sensuous" feeling, except to remark that Kant is particularly coy on this point. He claims, for example, that it is illusory to think that "the subjective element of this intellectual determinability of the will" is either "sensuous" or "an effect of a particular sensuous feeling," since the phrase "intellectual feeling" is "self-contradictory" (1993a, 123). Yet notwithstanding this disclaimer, Kant speaks regularly of the moral law as a "subjective motive," as a "drive" which effects "moral feeling" and as "an inner but intellectual compulsion" (1993a, 79, 128, 33). The feeling of respect for the moral law is also qualified as "satisfaction" or "self-contentment," and is later characterized as "intellectual contentment" (1993a, 124) -- a contentment which, inexplicably, can be distinguished from the merely "pathological" (i.e. emotional) sense of "enjoyment or gratification of happiness" (1993a, 123). Regardless of any argument over these particular English translations, the problem remains that Kant actually needs to have it both ways. One on hand, "respect" for the law must compel action, or else the second Critique will not have advanced for morality the merely speculative (theoretical) discovery of freedom; on the other hand, "respect" cannot be qualified as "emotional" lest it lose its autonomous (disinterested) status, and hence no longer qualifies as "rational." This problem is likely insoluble. As I shall argue in Chapter Four, the strictly formal nature of the moral principle presents a seemingly impassable obstacle for Habermas's theory of communicative ethics as well.
emphasis mine; compare 1993a 79, 91, 123, and 1993b, 33, 43, 44, 46). Here Kant
waxes poetical:

Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing
charming or insinuating but requirest submission and yet seekest not to
move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion
or terror, but only holdest forth a law which itself finds entrance into
the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always
obedience) -- a law before which all inclinations are mute even though
they secretly work against it; what origin is worthy of thee, and where
is the root of thy noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with
the inclinations and from which to be descended is the indispensable
condition of the only worth which men alone can give themselves? (1993a,
90).

The "root" of its "noble descent, Kant answers, is 'man's' "own personality" as an
intelligible being; because of 'man's' own sublime, supersensible nature, Kant argues,
the moral law is "holy" and thus exacts unconditional respect.

It is, then, finally the "sublime," "mysterious and wonderful," moral 'feeling,
not the logical idea of freedom, that provides the "indispensable condition" of moral
worth and thereby allows us to decide whether the will has been solely determined by
practical reason and whether an action is, consequently, truly just. For as Kant insists,
what the concept of duty demands of a maxim of action is

subjective respect for the law as the sole mode of determining the will
through itself. And thereon rests the distinction between consciousness
of having acted according to duty and from duty, i.e., from respect for
the law. The former, legality, is possible even if inclinations alone are
the determining grounds of the will, but the latter, morality or moral
worth, can be conceded only where the action occurs from duty, i.e.,
merely for the sake of the law (1993a, 84-85, and also at 75, 123-124,
157, 158; first and last emphases mine).

Similarly, Kant asserts in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* that a
metaphysics of morals is "indispensably necessary" because "morals themselves are
liable to all kinds of corruption as long as the guide and supreme norm for correctly
estimating them are missing. For in the case of what is to be morally good, that it conforms to the moral law is not enough; it must also be done for the sake of the moral law" (1993b. 3). Again, the "supreme norm" or the a priori principle of practical reason is the moral feeling of respect for the moral law of universalization. This feeling alone determines what is "morally good" and, hence, alone provides a "standard of critique."

What here becomes clear, therefore, is that the meta Critique of practical reason -- the scientific determination of its principle -- and the critical standard for moral legitimacy in particular (the basis for the knowledge of what we 'ought' to do) are actually indistinguishable. For on the one hand, the function of the (meta) Critique was the determination of an a priori law for practical reason that can be apodictically known and, as such, incorporated into an architectonic -- a (scientific) doctrine "of the scientific in our knowledge." In the course of this Critical investigation, however, not only does it emerge that the knowledge of the principle of freedom follows from the knowledge of the moral law rather than the other way around, but the knowledge or consciousness of the moral law, in turn, is seen to be nothing other than the sublime moral 'feeling' of intellectual "respect." This is what the Critique of practical reason, qua Critique, establishes.

Once put thus, however, critique emerges as the condition of possibility for Critique. For on the other hand, "critique" -- the very standard with which we determine what is morally legitimate -- is nothing but the injunction to respect the law by legislating lawfully. That is to say, the standard for moral legitimacy is a "categorical imperative": legislate in such a way that your maxim can become a
universal law of nature. To "will" (to legislate) in such a way is nothing more and nothing less than to act morally: it is to base an action on the (necessary) respect for the moral law (for the sake of it, and not merely in accordance with it). To act responsibly, in effect, is to enact a response-ability to the law.²⁰

Now if this moral imperative to respect the law (to respond to it) is itself the only thing that can be apodictically known as the law and, as such, is the epistemological condition of possibility for the practical law of causality as freedom -- if, in other words, what alone is "apodictic" and thus known a priori is merely the moral feeling of respect -- then "critique" (with its rational principle of strictly moral legitimacy in particular) is the condition of possibility for "Critique" (which was defined as the scientific determination of the a priori principle of reason in its pure, practical employment and, as such, the determination of epistemological Legitimacy in general). In short, we cannot know how moral knowledge is possible (what its condition is and, thus, why it is Legitimate) unless we already know what is morally legitimate to begin with. Since to have the latter (the moral feeling of respect) is at once to establish the former (the logical principle of freedom), critique in this case precedes Critique, and provides its ground.

²⁰ I borrow this term from Geraldine Finn, who uses it to signify Emanuel Levinas's notion of an ethical response to the absolutely 'other': in Finn's usage, the term can be contrasted to an ethical practice that takes the form of merely "technically" refining social norms that are already in place. The latter is not actually "ethical," Finn maintains, because it is ultimately "un-response-able to the otherness of others and the possibilities of difference and change" (1996, 175, 176). The usage suggested here is not entirely unrelated. For as we have seen, Kant understands "morality" in terms of "the capacity of taking such an interest in the law" -- which is to say, as the capacity to respond to the sublime and unknowable, supersensible principle of freedom (or, what amounts to the same thing, to our sublime nature as supersensible beings) with the feeling of respect, and he insists that only action done on this basis is strictly "practical." Action which merely conforms to the law but is not undertaken as a response to its sublimity, in contrast, is merely legal, or "technically" correct action.
At the same time, however, this does not mean that the relationship between an epistemological Critique and an ethico-political critique can simply be reversed. For even though, as I have shown, the principles of nature and of freedom are by no means strictly analogous -- because natural causality is logically determined, whereas causality as freedom is morally determined -- the Critique of practical reason does still ensue in an a priori determination of "freedom." As Critique, in other words, this investigation does still establish an a priori moral "interest" in the logical principle of freedom, and this principle can therefore be included in the scientific unity of the architectonic as a whole. By virtue of this very inclusion, we have seen, the moral knowledge of what one ought to do in a given case is deemed to be possible. Thus, a meta-account (an over-arching, speculative theory of knowledge) is still the condition by virtue of which critique in the micro sense -- the rational distinction between just and unjust norms -- may be considered to be a Legitimate form of knowledge. In short, it remains that Critique is (also) the epistemological condition for "critique."

Again, therefore, we encounter the logically paradoxical figure of the chiasmus. The Critique of practical reason (the apex of the Critical "doctrine" of Legitimation) and the moral procedure itself (the "critical" standard by virtue of which a moral crisis is resolved) cut across each other in such a way that each is the condition of possibility for the other.

It is precisely because of this second chiasmus regarding critique and Critique that the difference between a doctrine of pure philosophy and a Critique can be made clear. Recall, in the first place, that the Critique of practical reason is the linchpin of the Critical architectonic because it provides the "only completely" a priori
principle, and thus scientifically Legitimizes the "highest occupation of reason." This occupation, secondly, is the realization of the "essential ends" of 'man', as these are reflected in the purely practical "interest" of reason. In the course of the Critical investigation, however, it emerged that the practical "interest" is first known apodictically as an inescapable *feeling* of moral respect for the law -- that, "the first condition of any *worth* of the person" is "the *certainty of a disposition* which agrees with the law" (Kant 1993a, 76; my emphasis). Consequently, we saw in the third place, the law *of* the practical interest that was uncovered by its Critique -- the law determining genuinely "moral" or responsible action -- turned out to be an inescapable interest *in* the moral law: namely, the *response-ability* that determines moral legitimacy as such, and thus provides a rational standard of "critique." On this basis, I claimed, the moral interest of practical reason is established by Critique in its role as critique. What I want to suggest now, however, is that it is precisely because "Critique" in its quintessential moment -- i.e., in the investigation of the only pure a priori there is (that of practical reason) -- can be re-signified as (micro) "critique" (as the determination of moral legitimacy), that "Critique" is *not* reducible to a scientific system (or "doctrine") of pure philosophy.

Specifically, a "Critique" is different from a "doctrine" proper because Critique *qua* critique provides the normative *Legitimation* of the philosophical doctrine.

Indeed, as Kant had already clarified in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, practical reason's "interest" in 'man's "essential ends" -- the pure practical determination of the moral object of the subject -- provides the fundamental ground (the "real basis") of doctrinal "philosophy":

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Hitherto the concept of philosophy has been merely a scholastic concept -- a concept of a system of knowledge which is sought solely in its character as a science, and which has therefore in view only the systematic unity appropriate to science, and consequently no more than the logical perfection of knowledge. But there is likewise another concept of philosophy, a conceptus cosmicus, which has always formed the real basis of the term 'philosophy' . . . On this view, philosophy is the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of human reason (teleologia rationis humanae), and the philosopher is not an artificer in the field of reason, but himself the lawgiver of human reason (1929, 657, 658).

Now, "knowledge solely in its character as science" -- by virtue of its appeal to a priori grounds -- was first shown to provide the condition and hence the epistemological Legitimation of the moral concept of "freedom." That "scientific" conception of philosophical knowledge, we have seen, confirmed an irreducible difference between a "Critical" doctrine of metaphysics in its entirety (an epistemological doctrine) and a strictly moral "critique." What here becomes clear, however, is that "freedom" itself -- the essential "interest" of reason qua the sublime feeling of moral respect -- provides the Legitimation for philosophy in its very scientificity. What the above citation reveals, in other words, is that the very autonomy that is known as the moral respect for the law is itself the ground (the "basis") of that "science" through which practical reason was supposed to be scientifically Legitimized in the first place. (This was, after all, the very purpose of the transcendental Critique.) In contrast to the original conception, then, Kant is here explicitly saying that the real basis of philosophy itself (as metaphysical speculation, or as theōria) concerns its relation to 'man's' ends (the subject's moral "interest," or object). And this means that the scientific concept of reason (1929, 653) -- which, as we have seen.
is realized only in the Critical architectonic \textit{qua theōria} -- is itself underwritten by \textit{pure practical reason's concept of science}, that is, by "critique" in the lower case.

Thus, just as it was first established that, by virtue of its \textit{identity} with "doctrine," Critique could be distinguished from "critique," so it now becomes clear that, specifically by virtue of its identity with "critique," a "Critique" can be \textit{differentiated} from a doctrine of pure philosophy. Critique as the determination of the ultimate a priori condition \textit{for} a doctrine of philosophy -- and, hence, as its very \textit{Legitimation} -- thus loses its purely scientific, doctrinal status precisely at the moment at which it becomes critique: the moral principle of practical reason alone (the principle instantiated as "respect"). The scientific doctrine of philosophy is grounded on nothing less than this sole "apodictic" law.

A third chiasmus, then, that underwrites the other two: the standard of "critique" is (impossibly) the legitimating ground for a doctrine of philosophy that Legitimates it. "Critique" is not only the scientific (doctrinal) determination of normativity, but it is also, \textit{qua} "critique," the normative determination of scienticity -- which means that it is neither. Or, conversely, \textit{C/critique} signifies neither scientific Legitimacy as such, nor normative legitimacy alone within this particular speculative "game," precisely because it means both. For morality and scienticity are \textit{both} founded, in one and the same move, on the rhetorical sublimity entailed by our "respect" for the moral law. As such, \textit{C/critique} is the ungrounded ground, the \textit{differential} and thus non- or illegitimate 'basis', of the specific \textit{difference} between a Legitimating, epistemological doctrine and a legitimate, moral critique.
Thus Lyotard is not wrong at least in this: there is indeed a sense in which, within the "grand narrative of emancipation," the principle of "freedom" grounds "the [L]egitimation of science and truth." Insofar as this is true, however, it is an extremely serious problem with regard to the necessary relationship between a Critique (or, a unified knowledge of knowledge) and a critique (a standard of moral judgment) that was shown earlier to be an essential condition of the educative ideal of critical reason. Specifically, I have shown that the Kantian determination of a rational standard for normative critique necessarily mobilizes a (meta)narrative authority, or a Critique, because the latter is required to establish the logical boundaries of Legitimate knowledge. This condition is seen to be lacking, however, once it is acknowledged that the moral law (our response-ability with regard to it) grounds the scientific doctrine at one and the same time that the doctrine grounds or Legitimates moral knowledge. For this means that the very border of the Critical architectonic -- the crucial difference between its inside and its outside -- is itself equivocal.

Consequently, the epistemological doctrine of knowledge (of its possibility) cannot be absolutely demarcated from the various kinds of knowledge (the epistemological objects) the doctrine is said to comprise.

In this sense, the logical doctrine of reason as a system is itself breached or ruptured by the strictly non-logical and ultimately unthematisable, sublime feeling of moral respect. For this "feeling" -- Kant's invocation of a capacity to respond to the moral law ("response-ability") as the only pure a priori principle -- does not only condition the strictly moral determination of normative justice inside the system. In addition, I have argued, the a priori knowledge of the "feeling of respect" (qua
"freedom") is the logically unknowable determination of "Critique." The systematic unity or logical coherence of the whole architectonic is itself (in)determined rhetorically as C/critique -- which is to say, from without.

Thus, to return to the argument presented in the Introduction, the Kantian explication of the "sublime" feeling of moral respect can be shown to parallel precisely that "apocalyptic" gesture that is inscribed in philosophy, according to Derrida, as its perpetual opening. For not only is the a priori "feeling of respect" the 'revelation' of a "moral" response that is itself "mysterious and wonderful," but this sublime feeling is also an absolutely indispensable condition of the scientific discourse of Legitimacy as well. What is "sublime" in us reveals for us (unveils) the 'true'
meaning of philosophy, and opens us to its "scientific" path. As Kant writes,

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. . . .But though wonder and respect can indeed incite to inquiry, they cannot supply the want of it. What, then, is to be done in order to set inquiry on foot in a useful way appropriate to the sublimity of its objects? . . .In a word, science (critically sought and methodically directed) is the narrow gate that leads to the doctrine of wisdom. . ." (1993a, 169, 169-170, 171; emphasis mine).

So understood, the sublime 'feeling' does indeed inaugurate the philosophical discourse of education; moreover, it comes from one 'knows not where'.

It is this unmasterable moment of "deconstruction" inside the Enlightenment, speculative "game" to which Lyotard's understanding of the potential for erosion properly refers. Moreover, this deconstruction can be said to be "fueled by the demand for legitimation itself" because it has emerged simply by virtue of the attempt to account for, or to legitimate, the Enlightenment metanarrative of Legitimacy. At
stake, as I will show more clearly in the next chapter, is the educative ideal of "critical reason" -- the possibility of a rational self-legislation or self-determination that theorists from Kant and Hegel, through to Habermas, McLaren and Giroux, consistently call "freedom." This ideal of "criticality" is at stake insofar as it still bears -- even in its contemporary manifestations -- its original Kantian signification of that rhetorically indeterminable desire for reason that Kant characterizes as a sublime "interest" in the moral law.

Indeed, because the sublime moral "interest" provides the very standard of "critique" that in turn determines the legitimacy of the transcendental "Critique," the Enlightenment ideal of criticality depends upon a logical "undecidable" in precisely Derrida's sense: Kantian C/critique cannot be "restricted" to either the (meta)

21 As does Maxine Greene, for example, as well. See The Dialectic of Freedom (Greene 1988).

22 Deborah Britzman provides an extremely interesting example of the attempt to maintain just this notion of "criticality" in the absence of a "grand narrative" of speculative philosophy. Specifically, she relates the desire of analysis, of self-analysis in this case, to a progressive theory of pedagogy that takes the unconscious resistance to learning into account. She writes, "Karen Horney's discussion of how to analyze the self begins with . . . qualities of attentiveness: 'inner freedom, ingenuity, and finger-tip feelings'. . . . There are no directions to follow, no grand plan to ensure consistency, no guarantees. But if, as Horney maintains, the work of self-analysis is to be a work of art, indeed, the arts of getting by one's own constraints, such work does not depend upon what Horney calls 'an enigmatic artistic endowment'. What matters, both for self-analysis and for learning, is one's interest or incentive. This remains a subjective factor, but is it not the decisive one for most of the things we do? What matters is the spirit and not the rules'. Can education be educated to tolerate this existential angst, to make its matter the question of the spirit?" (1998, 47-48, my emphasis). In Britzman's "postmodern," psychoanalytical "Inquiry into Learning," then, there is an unexpected parallel to Kant's understanding of normative worth as that action that is done to fulfill the "spirit," and not merely the "letter," of the moral law (Kant 1993a, 75) -- i.e., a parallel with the very meaning of "critique" (in the lower case) that first inaugurated the educative project of Enlightenment. I return in Chapter Three to the contemporary pedagogical literature, where I engage a wide variety of educational theorists in order to demonstrate this parallel much more fully, and to discuss its significance. For now, however, I want only to note that on the reading of Kant I have suggested here, it is fair to say that in a certain sense the "matter" of education has never been anything but its spirit. Thus the modernist, emancipatory sense of reason constitutive of the Enlightenment project has, in Britzman's text at least, by no means been replaced.

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doctrinal or to the (micro) moral sense of the term, but "generally" exceeds the meaning -- and is ultimately constitutive -- of both.\(^\text{23}\) As such, "C/critique" is what Derrida might call an "archi" notion (as in, "archi-critique") that corresponds directly to his description of "archi-writing" or "différance" (1982, 3-27, esp. 12). As Derrida explains,

What is written \textit{différance}, then, will be the playing movement that "produces" -- by means of something that is not simply an activity -- these differences, these effects of difference. This does not mean that the \textit{différance} that produces differences is somehow before them, in a simple and unmodified -- in-different -- present. \textit{Différance} is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences. Thus, the name "origin" no longer suits it (1982, 11).

On Derrida's account, \textit{différance} is a 'generalization' of difference, in that it marks the moment of an irreducible, structural condition that is neither strictly active nor passive, that cannot itself be determined as such, and that is necessary for the determination of any particular \textit{difference}.\(^\text{24}\) \textit{Différance} 'determines' difference in the

\(^{23}\) I borrow the terms "restricted" and "general" from Derrida's reading of Hegel through Bataille, in "From a Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve" (1978, 251-277, esp. 259, 270). Alan Bass provides the following explanation: "In that essay Derrida began his consideration of Hegel as the great philosophical \textit{speculator}; thus all the economic metaphors of the previous sentences [i.e., in Derrida 1982, 19 - SG]. For Derrida the deconstruction of metaphysics implies an endless confrontation with Hegelian concepts, and the move from a restricted, 'speculative' philosophical economy -- in which there is nothing that cannot be made to make sense, in which there is nothing \textit{other} than meaning -- to a 'general' economy -- which affirms that which exceeds meaning, the excess of meaning from which there can be no speculative profit -- involves a reinterpretation of the central Hegelian concept: the \textit{Aufhebung}" (Bass, in Derrida 1982, 19n.23).

\(^{24}\) The most well-known version of this argument, of course, is the "generalization" of textuality, which Derrida calls "archi-writing" (1976). But he has undertaken this analysis on a number of fronts. For example, Derrida "generalized" the concept of "friendship" in just this way in his analysis of the distinction between politics and friendship, wherein he shows that the concept of "friendship," properly understood, is both what must be excluded from the political domain, and what remains its necessary condition of possibility (see Derrida 1988c). Similarly, we find the notion of a "generalized" (archi-) art in Derrida's unpacking of the art-science dualism in \textit{Of Grammatology}. On the basis of his reading of Rousseau's analysis of art, for example, Derrida writes, "[The outline] cannot give rise to [literally provide space for] art (techné) as \textit{mimesis}
sense that it is the differing/deferring *process* through which signification becomes meaningful at all (see Derrida 1982, esp. 13). It is exactly what I described in the Introduction as an "apocalyptic gesture" of speech: this gesture "come" opens discourse by naming *into* being, but cannot (itself) be recovered by it.

Kant's equivocation on the term "critique" functions in just this way: "C/critique" marks in the critical philosophy of pure reason a logically-unmasterable or undecidable "trace" that both preserves and negates (is "the playing movement" of) the logical relationship between doctrine (system) and critique (object), thereby instituting (non-originally) their *difference*. "C/critique* qua *archi-critique* is a (non) 'originary' *différence*, then, precisely insofar as it is the sublime "supplement" to the logical system of philosophy; that is (as was noted earlier), it is a necessary yet unassimilable 'something' (that which is both "missing and "extra." as Alan Bass explains [in Derrida 1982, at 12 n.14]) without which the critical system cannot function, but with which the system cannot be logically reconciled. Within/without the Critical system, archi-critique "itself" (but this is exactly what is in question) is not an *is* but a *trace*: it cannot be reduced, as such -- to a position of "this" (doctrine) or "that" (critique) for example -- and consequently does not reveal itself. Archi-critique

without constituting it forthwith as a *technique of imitation*. If art lives from an originary reproduction, the outline that permits reproduction, opens in the same stroke the space of calculation, of grammaticality, of the rational science of intervals, and of the 'rules of imitation' that are fatal to energy" (Derrida 1976, 209; textual insertions and emphases in original). Yet another example occurs in Gashé's discussion of Derrida's analysis of the distinction between philosophical truth and literary fiction, where we find the notion of a "generalized" (archi-) fiction. As Gashé writes, "A deconstructive focus on the relation between philosophy and literature not only requires that both be taken seriously in their irreducible difference, but also that that difference is seen as resting on an infinite bringing forth of itself and its differentes" (Gashé 1995, 116). It is to the "infinite bringing forth," itself unthematizable and thus other than the "as such" of either speech or writing, of politics or friendship, of science or art, or of philosophy or literature (for example), that the notion of *différence* refers.
(is), rather, the unrevealed opening or revelation of the presentational system.

whereby the objects of reason (its "interests") are presented before the subject; archi-
critique brings forth (infinitely) the difference between the outside (doctrine) and the
inside (critique) by virtue of remaining hidden. It is indeed, in Derrida's sense, an
abyss. He writes,

The principle of reason installs its empire only to the extent that the
abyssal question of the being that is hiding within it remains hidden,
and with it the question of the grounding of the ground itself, of
grounding as gründen (to ground, to give or take ground: Boden-
nehmen), as begründen (to motivate, justify, authorize) or especially as
stiften (to erect or institute, a meaning to which Heidegger accords a
certain pre-eminence) (1983b, 10).

Clearly, this 'rhetorical' (or, alternatively, this aesthetic, literary, mystagogical,
or apocalyptic) moment within the philosophy of education has not simply been
imposed, here, on the basis of a "postmodern" incredulity -- an inability to believe in
the modern metanarrative of emancipation -- nor has logic simply been refused or
replaced with a mystagogical literariness. On the contrary, I have shown, the
discovery of a certain 'mystagogy' -- a certain "unmasterable polytonality" at the heart
of the educative project of the European Enlightenment -- emerges through a logical
inquiry into the structure of the Kantian Critique of pure reason -- a "Critique" which
is traditionally lauded for establishing the possibility of legitimate, moral knowledge,
and so marking decisively the difference between the ethical and epistemological
realms. For the undecidability in question -- the différence from which derives the
very difference between epistemological Legitimation and moral legitimacy (doctrine
and critique) that is the logical condition of possibility for the educative ideal of
critical reason and which lends to it its very meaning -- imposed itself strictly by
virtue of the fact that the possibility of Legitimacy has here been taken entirely seriously. In the very search for the origins of modern Legitimacy -- the very attempt to honour the classical principle of reason by 'going to the root' (Derrida 1983b, 8) of that normative principle of reason which informs the modern educational project from its inception -- we arrive at an inescapable and uncircumventable breach in the speculative system itself. Again, therefore -- to borrow the terms of Paul de Man’s analysis -- it can be seen that it is precisely by paying heed to theory, its own "loftiest aims" that we arrive at a knowledge (a theory) of the "resistance" to theory -- a deconstructive potential for erosion -- that inheres in the logical unity itself.

Conclusions

The consequences of this analysis can now be enumerated as follows. First, the deconstructive exposure of "archi-critique" as a rhetorical moment in the Critical philosophy that exceeds the possibility of logical determination -- the exposure, that is, of an inescapable, inherent resistance to theory from within it -- is, to be sure, a decentering of the transcendental subject from its traditional centre of mastery with regard to the phenomenal world. Moreover, to decenter the subject’s transcendental relation to (its own) moral worth is to put into question the very notion of "responsibility" or "agency" that gains its critical force in precisely this way. Such an analysis has profound consequences for a critical theory of education, for it undermines the very basis of the traditional educative ideal, and it does so by virtue of reason’s own logical demand to determine an ultimate causal ground for itself.
As I shall go on to argue in Chapter Three, however, the outcome of a deconstructive decentring cannot be said to be the placement of a non-transcendental subject in the traditional critical position. Even though it certainly prepares the way for such a belief, the deconstructive interrogation of "critique" is not undertaken simply to celebrate "difference" by shifting the site of (the same) moral agency -- the possibility of ethico-political knowledge -- from one kind of subject to a different one: from the transcendental to the empirical, from Man to Woman to the transsexually-gendered, from White to Black, from the colonizer to the colonized (and or as the aboriginal), from the heterosexual to the gay or lesbian or bi-sexual, from the able-bodied to the disabled, or from the bourgeois individual to the working class as a group. Such "critical" attempts to concretize the subject in response to deconstruction (or to "postmodernism") simply miss the point: the subject(s) itself is necessarily reinscribed as the transcendental site (the site of an unconditioned moral knowledge) as soon as the emancipatory possibility of a rational standard for "critique" is invoked. This is an inescapable effect of so-called "critical consciousness" no matter which subject(s) come to occupy the centre of the educational-political discourse.

For the discursive mobilization of an emancipatory notion of "critical reason" necessarily depends upon the supposition that there can be such a thing as a Legitimating meta-Critique, by virtue of which the conditions for and the limits of knowledge can be established. Even in a variety of contemporary critiques of ideology (Marxist, feminist, or multicultural, for example), I will argue that a form of meta-Critique is still at work in its original, speculative role; namely, as an over-arching doctrine or "theory" within which the knowledge of moral legitimacy can emerge in
demystified form (i.e., as unconditioned), and can thus be known as a standard of ethico-political "critique." The positing of a determinate standard of critique, in short, necessarily brings the Kantian formulation of the relationship between morality (or ethics) and epistemology into play.

As I have shown, this relationship between the epistemological, doctrinal "Critique" and the moral determination of a standard of "critique" entails an asymmetrical distinction between the inside and the outside of the Critical system: "critique" itself is only Legitimized by the Critical architectonic as a whole, and this takes place specifically by virtue of the fact that the moral interest is determined as a distinct epistemological object within the scientific system. In Kant, what guarantees the necessary difference between the levels of legitimation (meta and micro) is the fact that the moral law is itself the legitimating ground of the scientific architectonic in its totality. Indeed, I have argued, this is why a propaedeutic, meta "Critique" of the scientific in our knowledge is not the same thing as a "doctrine" (or theory) of that knowledge itself: in the Critique of Practical Reason, the propaedeutic "Critique" becomes (micro) "critique" -- the moral determination of the strictly moral a priori -- and, as such, gives the ground, or the reason for, the "scientific" doctrine itself. Precisely because the Critique of pure reason (the whole doctrine) is ultimately grounded on a (propaedeutic) Critique of reason in its pure practicality in other words -- a "Critique" which itself turns out to be none other that the very standard of "critique" (namely, "respect") -- the epistemological doctrine can be shown to be distinct from a propaedeutic "C/critique."
The difference between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the Critical system that is mobilized in the very invocation of "critical" consciousness is thus dependent upon the apodictic (a priori) knowledge of the moral law, since it is by virtue of that knowledge alone that the doctrine and the Critique are ultimately distinguishable. But how is the strictly logical postulate of causality as freedom itself established as a normative 'good'? Such moral knowledge, I have shown, depends solely on our capacity to respond to "duty" -- which is to say, it depends on our "response-ability" to the law of universalization. The "respect" that the law of causality as freedom inspires is thus said to be the apodictic ground of practical reason. It is clear, however, that such "response-ability" must exceed the possibility of logical determination (i.e., it is "mysterious"). In effect, the possibility of (re)presenting "freedom" as a transcendental object of the consciousness of the subject (as moral knowledge) requires that an unthematizable, sublime "response-ability" to the moral law is reduced (or, as it were, is "violently" object-ified) as the transcendental essence (as the unconditioned "as such") of the subject in its super-sensibility. The "critical" consciousness by virtue of which moral legitimacy is known and thus objectified, in short, is by definition always already the consciousness of the transcendental subject.

As Derrida says of the imperative to render reason in general,

The modern dominance of the principle of reason had to go hand in hand with the interpretation of the essence of being as objects, an object present as representation [Vorstellung], an object placed and positioned before a subject. This latter, a man who says I, an ego

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25 In a certain sense, one might submit, Habermas is well aware of this. It is precisely why, for example, his attempt to continue the project of modernity is also an attempt to account otherwise for the subject's capacity for a certain "transcendence" of his or her contingent life circumstances -- that is, without recourse to Kant's noumenal realm. I develop this point in Chapter Four, below.
certain of itself, thus ensures his own technical mastery over the totality of what is. The "re-" of *repraesentatio* also expresses the movement that accounts for -- "renders reason to" -- a thing whose presence is encountered by rendering it present, by bringing it to the subject of representation, to the knowing self. . . .This relation of representation . . . has to be grounded, ensured, protected: that is what we are told by the principle of reason, the *Satz vom Grund* (1983b, 9-10).

As I have shown, this relation of logical grounding and subjective "essence" is just what Kant inscribes in the move whereby morality is determined as the "freedom" or the self-legislation -- indeed, as the auto-legitimation -- of the subject. Precisely because it has been illegitimately determined as an unconditioned "ground" (as an "as such"), respect for the law of universality can be posited as the "essential end" of reason and, as such, an object of the subject's knowledge (as masterable by 'him'). Indeed, it is instructive to recall here Kant's claim in the first *Critique*: "I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*" (cited above). As we have seen, the universality or lawfulness of the moral law is "an object of our respect" and as such interests us a priori (as 'ground') - - which is to say, transcendentally. Thus the respect for the moral law can be determined as the epistemological object of pure practical reason and can be mastered, as such, by the transcendental subject who so determines it.

To mobilize the notion of self-legislation (the subject's capacity for his, her, or their self-determined "freedom") as a normative ideal for education, then, is not only to establish a difference between Critique and critique on the abyssal 'basis' of an "archi-critique" -- or, to put this in different terms, it is not only to decide a determinate meaning on the basis of an erasure of apocalyptic polyvocality. It is by
this very token also to 'name "Man'' into being' -- to transcendentalize the subject even in its explicit specificity (as variously embodied) -- as well.

The second consequence follows from the first. If this version of "critical" consciousness necessarily mobilizes the chiasmic relation between "Critique" and "critique" (between epistemology and ethics, in effect), and if this distinction is in turn established by virtue of the naming of the subject's essence -- its logically undecidable, excessive imperative to respect the law (which ever one) -- as an object of its consciousness (as a determined moral 'good') -- then there is an inescapable "violence" inherent in the very ideal of 'criticality' (the ideal of an epistemologico-ethical "responsibility") at which emancipatory theories of education are generally aimed. In other words, the very 'good' of "critical" reason qua the educational aim of Enlightenment is necessarily instituted violently. It is so instituted by the philosophical discourse of "enlightenment" as the occlusion of its "hidden" (unrevealable) opening, regardless of the moral good that is at stake.

Recall, first of all, that the moral "interest" must be 'grounded' or legitimized -- the reason for it must be rendered -- since it is only in this way that the moral standard can be said to be rationally rather than arbitrarily based (i.e., determined on the merely relative bases of tradition, culture, or religion, for example). As I will elaborate further below, this remains true whenever "critical reason" is at issue: the Legitimation of the legitimacy of moral knowledge is the epistemological role of a meta Critique.\footnote{Notably, this does not change simply by virtue of the fact that "we" no longer believe in the efficacy of modern speculative philosophy. On the contrary, the relationship is maintained even in some versions of pragmatism. For example, if knowledge is said to be contingent in nature -- as it...} However, it is precisely because of the
way in which the Kantian system in particular first established this requirement that his thought has been so important for the historical development of philosophical reflection on education: by incorporating morality into a logically coherent system (or "theory") of grounded knowledge -- a logical system in which the aesthetic, the sublime, or the apocalyptic is ostensibly subdued -- Kant turned ethico-political judgment into something we can know. By virtue of just this move which "grounded" morality as a priori knowledge, a critical or emphatic conception of reason became the normative ethos of the emancipatory, educative project of the modern "Enlightenment." And this ethos, we shall see, is still very much with us today.

Secondly, however, I have also shown that the epistemological grounding or Legitimation of moral legitimacy can only take place by virtue of what I have called "archi-critique": the differential "bringing forth" or revelation of the presentational system that Kant calls our inescapable, "sublime" response to the moral law of universalization. What has been established by the above analysis, in other words, is that the singular, moral "interest" of the modern subject is only knowable as that subject's transcendental essence by virtue of (a) différence. Otherwise understood, différence (is), I have argued, the apocalyptic gesture that issues "come" or, alternatively, the sublime response that incites the philosophical investigation in the first place.²⁷

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²⁷ On the discursive, "apocalyptic" gesture "come" and its undoing of the philosophy-mystaogogy dualism, see the Introduction, above.
What this means, however, is that the epistemological ground of the moral interest (or, alternatively, the ground of the indispensable distinction between an epistemological doctrine and an ethico-political "critique") depends upon the occlusion of a philosophical unknown. Not only is the undecidable différence "hidden,"\textsuperscript{28} moreover, but it must remain so, in order for both the inherent worth of the subject and the logical system (the difference between the moral subject and its epistemological object) to be instituted or erected. This is precisely the moment in Kant at which logic is illegitimately determined as primary with regard to language's rhetorical excess.

Thus moral legitimacy entails an ideological moment as well, and it is a inescapable one for politics: the determination of a moral standard of critique entails a decision about the undecidable essence of the subject and, hence, depends upon the ideological erasure of the subject's undecidability, or its "sublime," excess. The judgment which 'cuts' or decides the différence of "archi-critique" as the difference between "Critique and "critique" is thus itself not a "critical" but a mystifying, political move whereby a structural undecidability is ideologically erased. And it is specifically by virtue of this erasure that reason can be said to give rise to a standard of responsibility, to a basis for an emancipatory "critique." This is precisely why, to borrow a formulation of Thomas Keenan that was cited above, "grounding and subjectivity" can "figure each other": the philosophical discourse of enlightenment

\textsuperscript{28} The claim that the trace remains "hidden" can here be further qualified. Since différence is not an object that is revealable as such -- it is not a position that can be determined but the very possibility of positionality -- it is not as though the trace could even potentially be revealed. Rather, one might say that différence (is) just this unrevelability, by virtue of which the object is established, here-now.

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takes as given "the essential assumption of the subject's capacity to 'master its
discourse,' to 'author its acts or ideas'," because it occludes an "abyss."

In the next chapter, I shall argue directly that the Kantian problematic of
Legitimation can be generalized to a certain extent -- that contemporary critical
theorists of education do not leave the speculative problematic behind and, indeed,
that they cannot. For, I have shown, taken simply qua imperative, the desire for the
moral law (for a determinable or knowable morality) exceeds the possibility of a
logical determination by the subject, as its "essential end." The essence of the subject
cannot, after all, be "mastered" without a certain restriction that is simply imposed.
Thus the ethico-political "freedom" that is said to ensue from "critique" is necessarily
founded on an occlusion of the différantial (non)grounding of the difference between
the subject and its moral object whenever the moral good is said to be rationally
determinable -- in effect, whenever social and political emancipation is associated
with epistemological "enlightenment."

This is the structural violence that is instantiated by "critique" wherever and
whenever it is invoked in the name of a determinate 'good' such as "freedom." It is
the unwarranted restriction of the subject to a particular essence, and it is not
circumvented simply because one no longer determines the subject precisely as Kant
did. In other words, we need not call our essence "freedom," nor need we name the
subject as a "supersensible man." On the contrary, although the Kantian approach is
still undeniably appealing to many, there has been a veritable explosion of debate
over the last few decades over the question of how to name the subject in a more
politically progressive way; alternatives to "Man" include, for example, Woman, human, Black, worker, and queer.

Significantly, however, the third consequence of the present analysis is that the violence is structural and, consequently, uncircumventable: as I shall suggest below, it inheres in any naming whereby an unthematizable moral response is determined as what "we" are in order to establish what is legitimately 'good'. In other words, no matter how the subject is essentially determined, it is always problematic when it is named in ethico-political discourse at all as the ground of what Kant calls "duty" -- i.e., when the subject itself is determined as the source or "cause" of a moral "imperative," or what we might call the "mysterious" desire for moral legitimacy. For this imperative, we have seen, can only be qualified as "moral" by virtue of a restriction of the "generalized" or the strictly unthematizable (eg. "sublime") nature of the subject in terms of its essence. Consequenly, a claim that is made on the basis of a rational standard of critique -- on the basis of a moral legitimacy that is known (and indeed taught as a politically progressive critical "consciousness") -- is a claim that violently institutes a particular subject (one that is exclusive of other subjective possibilities) as the ground of the moral 'good'. It thereby repeats the Kantian manoeuver.

Thus, just as an illegitimate occlusion of the "trace" and the transcendentalization of the subject were the conditions for the "critical responsibility" first systematized and thus Legitimized by Kant as the quintessential, modern 'good'

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29 This is, I suggest, precisely why the "identity politics" prevalent in the 1980's gave rise to a series of debates about "essentialism," most notably in feminist theory, but not only there. Any politics that is grounded on a particular subject cannot but essentialize it.
so, I shall argue, occlusion and transcendentalism are still the necessary conditions for the "critical consciousness" -- the epistemological perspective from which a legitimate moral decision can be reached -- that remains the goal of pedagogical and political-philosophical discourses of today. Insofar as a critical theory of education assumes the possibility of a rational standard by which to determine moral legitimacy, in short, the critical reason at which it aims will still entail the occlusion of "C/critique."

Fourth and finally, since this "violence" is not imposed on the emancipatory ideal of "enlightenment" but emerges, instead, from within it, the imposition in question remains (almost) inerradicable by enlightenment.\textsuperscript{30} As I shall elaborate below, it is unavoidable precisely for we who, "in the daylight of today... cannot not have become the heirs of these Lumières" (Derrida, cited above). Archi-critique must be occluded in the critical discourses of politics and education alike, in other words, whenever and wherever reason itself is posited as the normative basis for an ethical or political 'good'. And reason does retain precisely this sense, I will show, insofar as the pedagogical aim is still fundamentally entwined with the normative ethos of Enlightenment, which is to say, with the emancipatory promise of a legitimate, ethico-political critique. To exactly this extent, a certain "violence" is integral to the contemporary educational-philosophical ideal.

Exactly what is the normative status of this insight, of course, still remains to be seen. As Derrida asks, "is answering to the principle of reason the same act as

\textsuperscript{30} It is for precisely this reason, I suggest, that when speaking on the question of "essentialism," Gayatri Spivak says, "Deconstruction, whatever it may be, is not most valuable an exposure of error, certainly not other people's error, other people's essentialism. The most serious critique in deconstruction is the critique of things that are extremely useful, things without which we cannot live on..." (1993, 4).
answering for the principle of reason? Is the scene the same? Is the landscape the same?" (1983b, 8). The answer, in a phrase, is: not simply. Peggy Kamuf describes this paradox most lucidly, and it is therefore worth citing her at length. She writes.

[I]t is here, within this circle [of the legitimated figure of legitimacy, or auto-destination], that the question of a destination not already comprised by the space of legitimated knowledge arises. But how can that question arise within the circle? Unless an opening has been left, a space wherein the auto- or the self- of destination dis-closes itself? Unless the dis-closure of the circle opens up a space that is neither within the legitimated domain nor simply outside it, but along the edge where the two divide? . . . [T]o the extent that this dis-closure of the circle along its unfigurable edge lets one challenge the legitimacy that is conferred by circular destination, it can be seen to arise as an illegitimate question, as falling outside the realm of legitimate reason. And this despite the fact that, as already suggested, the question can only be posed because the realm itself in effect produces the question of its limit at its limit. . . . The legitimacy that concerns us most -- the legitimacy of the very figure of legitimacy -- is open to question and to challenge only in a space opened within the circle, but which is therefore not a part of that figure. It is within without being a part of the circle and as such it is the very possibility of the figure's reconfiguration (Kamuf 1995, 102-103: original emphasis).

Similarly, Derrida asserts, if analysts end up working "on the structures of the simulacrum or of literary fiction, on a poetic rather than an informative value of language, on the effects of undecidability, and so on, by that very token they are interested in possibilities that arise at the outer limits of the authority and the power of the principle of reason" (1983b, 14). This must not be confused with a mere nihilism or obscurantism on their part, for these categories are still dependent on the principle of reason as its symmetrical opposite (Derrida 1983b, 14-15, 9).

On this basis. I submit, the deconstructive intervention in philosophy is neither simply the reinstatement of responsibility qua subjective mastery elsewhere, nor is it an outright destruction of the Enlightenment ethos. To be sure, a deconstructive
reading can reveal indeterminacy at the root of any of ethical, political or educational norms insofar as these are said to be rationally grounded, and can thus open them to the possibility of an ethico-political critique. Insofar as deconstruction can do so, however, it is paradoxically both within and without the very circle of legitimation (the auto-legitimation of the principle of reason) that it questions, and thus is neither strictly "critical" nor strictly "ideological." In fact, I will argue, deconstruction enacts "critique" otherwise. It can be qualified, therefore, as what I will call a "certain critique."

I return to this point in Chapter Five, where I explain why what I am calling a "certain critique" entails a politically affirmative gesture as Derrida quite regularly insists and that, for this reason, it can be qualified as "quasi-responsible." As I will show, deconstruction is a response to the very "law" that Derrida invokes; namely, that we cannot "forgo the Aufklärung, in other words, what imposes itself as the enigmatic desire for vigilance, for the lucid vigil [veille], for elucidation, for critique and truth" (Derrida, 1983a, 22, cited above). Before engaging in that discussion, however, it is necessary to underline the following point. Regardless of how the status of the deconstructive intervention is itself understood, it remains that insofar as critical pedagogical theory is based upon what is taken to be the possibility of the legitimate knowledge of a rational standard of critique that is itself teachable, it simply cannot leave the Enlightenment legacy behind. At the same time, if violence and mystification are inherent in this educational project itself, then deconstruction is the "quasi-responsible" exposure of an ideology we cannot do without.
In effect, what "we" (here, now, today) cannot do without is the possibility of knowing the difference between just and unjust norms. Not only must we be able to decide what is 'good', but our decisions must themselves be decidable in terms of their justice. Such are the political imperatives, still, today. Thus, if the deconstructive intervention in philosophy is represented simply as anti-Enlightenment discourse -- either (as it is by "modernists") as a nihilistic denial of "agency." or (as it is by "postmodernists") as an ostensibly politically-progressive replacement of the world-disclosing, logical capacity of language with language's aesthetic, its rhetorical, its mystagogical, or its apocalyptic dimension\(^{31}\) -- then the problem is not only that the co-implication of these categories is being overlooked by modernists and "postmodernists" alike. In addition, the misunderstanding leads in turn to a fundamental incoherence on the side of (so-called) "postmodernists" who wish to retain the emancipatory, critical pedagogical ideal, but simultaneously discard the primacy of logic over rhetoric on which that ideal depends. Because of this incoherence, I show, modernists cannot but have the upper argumentative hand.

Specifically, even though the defenders of a certain "post"-modernity do not want to occlude the "sublime" or apocalyptic opening of the logical, philosophical discourse of Enlightenment, and even though they try to avoid enacting the "violence" that such an occlusion entails, they ultimately support the same "critical" reason that

\(^{31}\) Notable exceptions within the educational literature include Britzman (1998), Feiman (1982) Flax (1992), Mohanty (1986) and Readings (1996). These theorists do not mobilize the discourse of deconstruction either to celebrate "sublime" difference (by issuing a normative call to respect absolute alterity, for example) or, conversely, to reinstate a demystifying critical theory aimed at the horizon of 'more enlightenment'. Rather, deconstruction emerges in these works -- at least to some extent -- as what I call a "certain" critique. I elaborate on this alternative understanding of deconstruction in Chapter Five.
modernists, too, wish to uphold. Indeed, right through to its present moment, theorists of critical, radical and feminist pedagogy attempt to think through the possibility of a teaching practice -- and the inculcation, thereby, of a capacity for "critical reason" -- that is explicitly based on a conception of moral legitimacy. Clearly, therefore -- regardless of the forms they may take -- such theories of pedagogy can never be said to aim at less "enlightenment" rather than more. On the basis of the present discussion, this enlightenment may be said to be based on a "fiction," to be sure: the fiction of the auto-legitimation of the subject in its essence. But it is a fiction, we have seen, without which a rational standard of critique cannot stand at all. Thus educational and pedagogical theory cannot simply replace the (fictional) self-grounding of normative legitimacy with a fragmented, a partial or an ungrounded subject in the name of a "postmodern" standard of critique that purports to be theoretically defensible, except at the cost of an outright incoherence in the political-theoretical project itself. Yet neither can anti-postmodernist educational and pedagogical theorists simply dismiss contemporary interventions in the discourses of modernity: to do so would be to risk reinstating exactly that ideological dimension of Enlightenment thought they explicitly hope to rectify.

As I shall argue below, what critical theorists can do is to interrogate the Enlightenment conception of "critique" -- the modern educational 'good' -- in a "quasi-responsible" way. For insofar as the normative core of political and educational theory derives from a 'spirit of critique', it can do no other than criticize the very standard of legitimacy on which it is based. Clearly, this "meta-meta" manoeuvre is by no means simply the expression of a sceptical incredulity, but neither, I have argued,
is it simply a *progressive* demystification, an aim at 'more' enlightenment, either.

Rather, I have proposed, such an undertaking is within-without the circle of
Legitimation and, as such, issues in a fundamental rethinking of the very promise of
Enlightenment *in* its normativity.

Such an interrogation, we have seen, reveals that "strange temporality" (the
future anterior time Lyotard describes) that inheres *in* modernity, *as* its inevitable
"post." Moreover, I shall show in Chapters Three and four, this paradoxical 'un-doing'
or de-legitimation of Enlightenment Legitimation imposes itself inescapably on
theorists on both sides of the modernism-postmodernism divide. Indeed, we shall see,
without the risk of its deconstruction, there is no critical "reason" to speak of in an
emancipatory theory at all. It is directly to the critical-theoretical literature in
education, therefore, that I now want to turn.
3. FROM THE "NEO" TO THE "POST":
Critical Theoretical Strategies in Education

[T]he "de-" of deconstruction signifies not the demolition of what is constructing itself, but rather what remains to be thought beyond the constructivist or destructionist scheme. What is at stake here is the entire debate, for instance, on the curriculum, literacy, etc. Jacques Derrida, "Afterword" to Limited Inc (1988a, 147).

A deconstructive approach, which does not reject all evaluation and judgment but does reject absolute 'objective' judgments, might appear to some to be lacking in ethical and political will; in my view, however, it is only lacking in the kind of arrogant will to absolute knowledge that the West's history has had rather too much of. Mariana Valverde, "Deconstructive Marxism" (1995, 338-39).

I: Introductory Overview

As the discussion until this point has been intended to make clear, "postmodernism" - at least in its deconstructive mode -- does not spell the end of any kind of normative or political engagement whatsoever (contrary to what numerous political philosophers have assumed), because deconstruction is a normative engagement in the classical philosophical sense. A deconstructive reading such as the one undertaken in the previous chapter honours the principle of reason by 'going to the root of' (by "radicalizing," that is to say) the Kantian concept of "Critique."

In particular, the above investigation into the conditions of possibility for "Legitimation" in its quintessential, modern sense (i.e., as the determination of grounds, or "Critique") reflects the attempt to bring reason to bear on (to render the reason for) reason's own ethico-political force. Ironically, if that investigation revealed the impossibility of the primacy of logic over rhetoric that modern political discourse seems to require for its very insistence on reason's ethico-political force, it remains that the result of this analysis is -- it was always already -- consequent upon the demand for Legitimation itself. For a deconstructive investigation of epistemological
Legitimacy can only destabilize the philosophical ethos of grounding action on reason to the extent that it heeds philosophy's own imperative to render reason -- to provide grounds and so to Legitimate -- in the first place.

One way to understand this enigma, however, is to recall that the normative demand to which deconstruction responds -- the demand that whenever reason can be "rendered" it must -- did not originate at the onset of modernity, even though this demand was thematized as such by Leibnitz only then, and even though it takes its particular, contemporary meaning from his formulation. For notwithstanding its modern articulation, the imperative to "render reason" was, as I noted earlier, already deemed by Aristotle to be the paramount obligation of "metaphysics" or "primary philosophy" (Derrida 1983b, 8). Thus the primacy of logic that modern political philosophy reflects in its demand for legitimate "grounds," along with a "postmodern" deconstruction of this very imperative, can both be traced to a classical philosophical requirement that can be brought to bear, quasi-legitimately as it were, on the Enlightenment ethos of critical reason itself. It is for just this reason, in other words, that I have suggested that deconstructive strategies of reading are properly characterized as "quasi-responsible" rather than as nihilistic.

To be sure, such a "quasi-responsibility" for the principle of reason yields a number of paradoxical effects, the most important of which is arguably the emergence of that abyss or différencé here called "C/critique." Specifically, I showed that différencé -- a structural necessity whereby "Critique" both must be and cannot be "critique" -- (is) the logical condition of possibility for the specific difference between the (epistemo-) logical "meta" project of the transcendental Critique, and the micro
standard of moral critique at which critical political theory aims in the name of an emancipatory politics.

It is only on the basis of an abyssal difference that is logically impossible and yet politically necessary, then, that Kant can Legitimate (that he can logically ground) the moral standard he variously calls "freedom," "autonomy," or "self-legislation." As we have seen, this standard serves as the rational basis for ethico-political judgment, and is therefore the minimal condition of possibility whereby a legitimate decision concerning justice can be said to obtain. What a deconstructive reading reveals, however, is that such a standard can only be established as epistemologically Legitimate (as properly "rational") insofar as Kant erases or covers over the radical impossibility of determining its logical, a priori ground. As I have shown, he does so precisely when he determines the subject ideologically: the subject’s unrepresentable, mysterious, sublime, response-ability or "respect" in the face of the strictly theoretical law of universalization is rendered as the subject’s true essence and, as such, as the subject’s moral end. Thus, the subject’s "response-ability" to the law of universalization is in effect "restricted" in the form of an objective, logical ground (as what "is") that Legitimates the transcendental, moral principle of freedom. Insofar as the subject in its transcendental is morality’s unconditioned ground, moreover, the philosophical discourse of modernity represents none other than a politics of identity.

As I have explained, deconstructive strategies of reading do indeed decentre the subject on which this Enlightenment discourse, this very politics, is based. For just this reason, deconstruction has been variously characterized as nihilistic, as morally reprehensible, or even as politically-pernicious nonsense (i.e., as a discourse that is
said to "deconstruct itself" and thus to lie beyond the bounds of reasonable debate altogether). It is important to recall, however, that the deconstructive move is merely the revelation, so to speak, of an ideological gesture that is there: a certain "mystagogy" is inherent in the Kantian determination of a rational procedure for ethico-political critique.

To say that deconstruction exposes the illegitimacy of an inescapable epistemological gesture that restricts the subject's excessive or "sublime" feeling of response-ability as its representable essence (and, as such, as a determinable object of transcendental knowledge), therefore, is also to say that the logical condition of Kantian critique is its (own) deconstruction. In effect, "critique" reveals itself as premised upon an ideological or mystagogical "centring" of the transcendental subject; critique reveals itself (self-deconstructs) insofar as a mystagogical move is the very condition of possibility for the meta-Critical determination of a non-ideological, demystifying, rational standard of ethico-political critique. Ironically, therefore, the normative outcome of deconstruction is the recognition that ideology is just what a political theory aimed at an emancipatory notion of reason -- at the end of ideology and at the horizon of Enlightenment -- needs.

It is in the context of this particular paradox that what I have called deconstruction's own "quasi-responsibility" comes into view. That is, if a deconstruction of the term "critique" reveals the rhetorical, the mystagogical, the apocalyptic, or what Kant himself calls the "sublime" opening of logical, philosophical thought on which the very possibility of ethico-political legitimacy depends, and if it does so by respecting even more rigorously the normative principle of reason that
impels us to seek after grounds (that is, to undertake a procedure of epistemo-logical "Critique" or "Legitimation") than did the Kantian explication of ethico-political legitimacy in the first place, then this means that the ethical dimension of a critical political or educational theory will necessarily take on a significantly different aspect. As I will show, instead of being grounded on a determinate standard of critique, a critical political or educational theory will come to assume the manner of a "certain critique." This reformulated ethical dimension of theory, the possibility of a quasi ethico-politico-philosophical "responsibility," is precisely what I will undertake to explain in Chapter Five.

Before I do so, however, it is important to remark that the result of "critique's" (self) deconstruction is not only that the ethical dimension of critical political and educational thought requires reformulation as a "certain" critique. In addition to this, the above demonstration has another significant (and equally paradoxical) result -- one that is especially important for critical theorists of education in particular. It is that the ethico-political ends of educational theory will require fundamental reformulation as well. For what follows from the analysis presented here is that a progressive pedagogical theory can either be aimed at inculcating a spirit of (quasi-)"critique," or it can be aimed at the inculcation of a determinate epistemological standard, but it cannot be coherently directed at both.

With regard to this second result, recall that the revelation of Critique's ideological closure -- the exposure of the (self) deconstruction of "Critique" -- is simply what happens if we look for the grounds of (if we undertake a meta-Critical investigation into) reason's ethico-political force. As we have seen, a meta-Critical
investigation into the logical grounds of practical reason cannot be shown to issue in a determinate standard for "critique" without an ideological move that distinguishes Critique from critique. This move is the one which occludes a différence here called "C/critique," and thus effectively halts the meta-Critical investigation before it deconstructs (itself). In this sense, a meta-Critique reveals that the very achievement of a rational standard for micro critique signals an illegitimate closure of the responsibility to reason. Critical reason in the sense that Kant understood the term thus undoes itself; it always already de-legitimates the possibility of its own Legitimacy. It follows, therefore, that reason can give rise to (a "certain") critique, but it can do so only at the expense of a Legitimate (epistemologically grounded) ethico-political purchase on the question of what is legitimate (or 'good').

In terms of the present discussion, however, what is more significant still is that this argument holds the other way around as well. Just as a (quasi) critical theory of education that adheres rigorously to the protocols of Enlightenment Critique foregoes the political decision, so a political theory of education aimed at emancipation is won at the cost of denying the very critical impulse that gave rise to that project in the first place. For it is important to recall as well that it is by virtue of the achievement of a rational standard for critique that it was deemed possible to make a legitimate judgment about justice -- a moral judgment, that is to say, about what 'ought' to be the case as compared to a merely theoretical judgment about what 'is'. As we have seen, the practical knowledge of what one 'ought' to do was thought to be given by virtue of the rational standard for moral judgment that reason provides for itself (namely, autonomy as self-legislation). On this basis, Kant thought
he had ensured a link between philosophy and politics -- the very link, that is to say, that was first promised by the emancipatory idea of "Enlightenment." This political promise (said to be) inherent in philosophy is just what is inscribed in the modern emancipatory discourse of education outlined at the beginning of Chapter Two.

Now if, in the first place, the socio-political emancipation (said to be) consequent upon Enlightenment is based on a rational standard of critique by virtue of which the difference between justice and injustice can be known, and if, in the second place, the determination of such a standard depends upon a decision regarding the logical status of that rhetorical undecidable here called "C/critique," and if, in the third place, the primacy of logic over rhetoric that this decision (this 'cut' between Critique and critique) requires is accomplished by virtue of an illegitimate restriction of the subject to its ostensible essence -- a restriction that halts the Critical investigation midway -- then the illegitimate closure of Critique is just what a political educational theory aimed at emancipation needs. The second result of the above analysis, in other words -- it follows from the meta-Critical exposure of the différential structure of C/critique -- is that if the knowledge of a rational, determinate standard for critique is still said to be possible notwithstanding its undecidable ground, then such knowledge is acquired only at the expense of the very (meta) Criticality that ostensibly lent practical reason its Legitimacy to begin with.

It is for this reason that, as I have said, the ethico-political end of education, its emancipatory promise, requires reformulation as well. Once the undecidable nature of C/critique is exposed, it emerges that progressive theorists of education are faced with a choice between advocating the inculcation of a capacity for "critical"
reason or promoting the knowledge of a politically emancipatory standard of critique, but that these cannot be coherently defended at once.

This, at any rate, is the conclusion that follows from a deconstructive reading of the Kantian elucidation of "critique." The consideration at hand now, however, is the extent to which this conclusion can be generalized. For philosophical reflections on the social and political ends of education draw on a variety of different approaches, among which Kant's critical philosophy is only one. In addition to the Kantian formulation of transcendental "reason," for example, noted philosophical resources for educational theory include Deweyian pragmatism, Freirian liberation theology, and Marxist, feminist, and anti-racist critiques of ideology. These various theoretical resources are widely mobilized, often in combination, as the bases for emancipatory theories of education and pedagogy and, without a doubt, each of them issues in an educational project that is significantly different from Kant's. It would seem perfectly plausible, therefore, to object that one can formulate a politically emancipatory theory of education that is explicitly critical of the modern metaphysical tradition and that is therefore free of the particular problems that are inherent in theories that draw on Kant. It is this objection that the present chapter is intended to address.

Specifically, I suggest that the Kantian formulation of "critical reason" does not warrant the intense focus to which I have submitted it merely because, as Wilfred Carr puts it, "the Enlightenment conceptions of reason and the rational subject . . . received their clearest expression in the philosophy of Kant" (1995, 79). More importantly, Kant's formulation warrants this focus because, notwithstanding the fact
that contemporary theorists and philosophers of education have mobilized just such alternative philosophical resources as those identified above in order to develop a "postmetaphysical" standard of critique, they have done so without fully appreciating that the very idea of critical inquiry at work in emancipatory theories of education is already dependent on Kant.

Indeed, I submit, what is peculiarly Kantian (as well as, more generally, quintessentially modern) is not the specific procedures for or standards of legitimacy that Kant himself upheld. More fundamentally, it is the assumption that underlies those procedures and standards; namely, that a standard for ethico-political judgment is something we can teach because it is something we can know legitimately, without recourse to ideology, mere opinion, or culturally-contingent mores. To say that this basic, meta-epistemological assumption is being made is to say that there is an assumed relationship between epistemological grounds (Critique) and ethical judgment (critique) -- it is to say, in effect, that there can and must be such a thing as moral legitimacy in the first place. This is the idea of Enlightenment as emancipation that Kant was the first to elaborate, and its continued political significance is precisely why debates within philosophy about the possibility of 'pure' reason carry so much political weight.

Theorists and philosophers of education who believe (whether happily or unhappily) that a deconstructive reading of philosophy reverses the logic-rhetoric dualism -- that it celebrates the aesthetic or rhetorical dimension of literature and narrative as an alternative 'good' over the logical, world-disclosing, problem-solving capacity of philosophy and science -- are thus fundamentally misguided, certainly with
regard to the problem that Derrida's work actually poses for the political ideal of emancipation through education, possibly with regard to the nature of that emancipatory ideal itself, and sometimes with regard to both. For they fail to appreciate that deconstruction demonstrates the irresolvable co-implication of the two sets of categories (logic and rhetoric), rather than the epistemological primacy of either one. When focused on the concept of "critique," for example, deconstruction reveals a bond between the epistemological and the ethical levels of legitimation that is both inescapable for political theory (logically necessary and, hence, ineliminable by a "postmodern" theory of emancipation) and, yet, ideologically established (i.e., rhetorically or "mysteriously founded" [Derrida 1992a] and, hence, irredeemable by a modernist theory as well). The corollary of the deconstruction of the concept of "critique," therefore -- and thus the precise problem that a certain "postmodernism" poses for educational theory -- is that the possibility of moral legitimacy in particular cannot be coherently separated from a meta-Critical, epistemological, "metanarrative" of Legitimation in general, but nor can it be finally cleansed. To attempt either of these moves would be to reinstate rather than to resolve Kant's dilemma. In the current

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1 That both of these characteristics apply has been shown by the previous analysis. The bond between ethics and epistemology is inescapable in the sense that a rational standard of ethico-political critique necessarily mobilizes the epistemological metanarrative or Critique; it does so because it is the theoretical metanarrative (the doctrinal meta-Critique) that grounds moral knowledge in logical terms, and thereby determines its specificity as a distinct epistemological object. Only in this way is the possibility of rational standard for critique both logically confirmed and epistemologically known. But the bond between epistemology and ethics is ideologically established as well. For moral legitimacy requires -- for its very specificity, so to speak, as a moral rather than an epistemological 'object' -- that a restricted, logical difference between the meta "Critique" and the micro "critique" can be said to obtain. And, as we have seen, the condition of possibility for this difference is a generalized and hence a logically undecidable difference: the notion of "archi-critique" (or "C/critique"). Since the undecidability of archi-critique is covered over (or mystified) as soon as this difference is established, there is an ideological moment inherent in the very determination of an epistemologically legitimate standard of moral critique.
theoretical context, this is the problem (it is one of them, at any rate) that a critical theory of education must try to address.

If this problem is under appreciated, however, it may well be because so many theorists have followed Lyotard, who himself misrepresents the nature of the "postmodern condition" with regard to this point. Specifically, Lyotard fails to underline the ways in which practical and theoretical reason (or ethics and epistemology) are necessarily co-implicated for modernity. As a result, he characterizes the discourse of emancipation erroneously: as equivalent to, and as separate from, the scientific metanarrative of Legitimation.

In response to Lyotard's characterization of two distinct metanarratives, therefore, it was important to underscore that the emancipatory, political end of Enlightenment was only ever guaranteed (or was thought to be guaranteed) by virtue of the inclusion of ethical reasoning into a philosophical, speculative, scientific system of Critique. Indeed, we have seen, reason can be said to embody the specific emancipatory interest that Kant described only insofar as the three "faculties" of reason (theoretical, practical, and aesthetic) are each logically grounded and systematized together in a scientific doctrine (a metanarrative) of pure philosophy. As I have explained, the Legitimacy of practical reason thus depends directly on the primacy of scientific logic that Kant borrowed from the classical model of the trivium. That is to say, it is by virtue of the very subjugation of rhetoric by logic and its isotope grammar within the trivium -- or, analogously in the Kantian architectonic, by virtue of the epistemological primacy of the purely aesthetic judgment of taste with its logical principle of "subjective purposiveness" over the potential irruption of the
sublime -- that it was possible to establish the coherence of that scientific system *(theoria)* within which moral knowledge came to be enclosed as one of reason's objective "interests." The primacy of logic over rhetoric that was based on the classical *trivium* and later fully realized in the Kantian architectonic, therefore, is what guaranteed the coherence of a system that is the *sine qua non* of a legitimate, non-relative knowledge of the moral world. And the possibility of this practical knowledge, in turn, is just what promised emancipation.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that it is precisely because Derrida, de Man, and other "deconstructionists" are believed to be advocating with Lyotard a reversal of the very relationship between logic and rhetoric that a "critical" notion of reason requires, that they have been taken to task by political and educational philosophers alike. On this basis, we have seen, deconstruction is bluntly dismissed. Yet even if the case against (or, indeed, for) deconstruction is not nearly so clear, its threat to the Enlightenment conception of emancipation stands; as critics of deconstruction well know, a challenge to the primacy and autonomy of logic is at once a challenge to the scientific or systematic coherence that grants a standard of ethico-political "critique" its duly rational (and, hence, its non-relative, and non-ideological) status.

Critical theorists of education who take seriously the implications of a "postmodern" interrogation of reason -- who take it seriously, that is to say, but believe it entails reversing logic and rhetoric as though these are equivalent *values* and that, therefore, we can sustain the possibility of an emancipatory discourse that is distinct from the scientific one -- are thus mobilizing the modern belief in moral legitimacy (in an ethico-political standard that is epistemologically justified) even
while they discard Kant's Critique (the justificatory apparatus). As a result, they are faced with a particular burden that those who would defend modern "reason" are quick to point out. It is that if an ethico-political notion of the 'good' such as "voice," self-legislation or self-determination is taken out of Kant's meta-Critical system (his system of "universal truths") but is still understood to serve as a political standard in any meaningful sense (as a fixed measure), the 'good' must be otherwise authorized. Thus, unless some form of "metanarrative" other than Kant's is provided for the specification and Legitimation of a standard of critique, unless some generalized account of the moral 'ends' of 'man' qua "Man," or, alternatively, qua "human," qua "Woman," qua "Black," or qua "queer" (for example) is provided to serve the same meta-Legitimating role as the Kantian Critique, the risk at hand -- even as it is identified by "postmodern" critical theorists of education themselves -- is that of an arguably relative political 'good'.

In effect, it follows from the very nature of moral legitimacy that to dismiss the Enlightenment "metanarrative" as hopelessly metaphysical, as "fictional," or as based on a "literary" narrative instead of on pure science is necessarily to give up on the possibility of a determinate standard for (micro) "critique" as well, regardless of where (in which alternative philosophical tradition) this standard is said to be found.

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2 To be sure, it is precisely a determinate notion of the 'good' that is and that must be mobilized in a given moment of political contest. Indeed, whenever one is taking a stand on justice, one necessarily (inescapably) engages in just this kind of rhetoric. Such claims will have politically exclusionary effects, however, because they will have to entail an unjustifiable 'restriction' of what is 'generally' undecidable -- namely, the political subject's moral 'end' -- in order to establish the basis for a determinate notion of justice that can be brought to bear against what is considered unjust. And this is exactly the point: a theory of education or of politics that purports to be critical must take responsibility for, must render reason to, the ideological nature of this restriction. I return to this necessity, this "must," in Chapter Five.
The one theoretical option that is *not* available, in other words, is that of maintaining that critical consciousness can issue in or can be based upon a determinate, knowable, and legitimately generalizable political 'good' (such as "freedom," "autonomy," "self-legislation" or "voice") notwithstanding our "incredulity" in the face of the Enlightenment metanarrative of Legitimation.

Once we have rendered the "postmodern" condition more accurately in terms of a potential for internal deconstruction (or "erosion") that inheres in the Enlightenment metanarrative of emancipation as a whole, in short, it is possible to see how the Kantian problematic bears on contemporary progressive pedagogical theory even in the context of an explicit rejection or reformulation of Kant's emphasis on the scientific dimension of moral philosophy. For theorists of education who adopt a Lyotardian rejection of Enlightenment speculation but still view education in its traditional political sense (as a vehicle of social emancipation) find themselves caught on the horns of a dilemma.

On one hand, insofar as one wishes to maintain the possibility of a critical standard by virtue of which the difference between justice and injustice can be legitimately established, one will necessarily invoke some version of the Kantian apparatus of (epistemological) Critique along with it. Those who opt for the strategy of endorsing a determinate standard of critique can thus be shown to reinscribe (albeit inadvertently) the very transcendentalism that the proposed alternative, post-metaphysical theory is intended to displace, even while they purport to have left the Enlightenment metanarrative of speculative philosophy behind. On the other hand, insofar as one would give up on the possibility of modern "reason" (the scientific
metanarrative of Legitimation) in view of its exclusionary effects, one would have to
give up its attendant standard of rational critique as well. In this case, one would be
left with a purely ethical or political understanding of the 'good' that is essentially
singular; such an understanding is thus strictly unrepresentable in or by a theory of
educational aims. A genuinely contingent and indeterminate political 'good' that
makes no epistemological claims whatsoever, in other words, can be neither
generalized legitimately nor even specified adequately.

Thus, for instance, norms such as "responsibility," "solidarity," "tolerance." or
the imperative to alleviate "suffering" may well be rhetorically powerful and even
politically effective, and any of these might conceivably (although they need not
necessarily) forego epistemological Legitimation.3 It remains, however, that these
norms are not only highly contestable, as numerous critics rightly suggest; in addition,
they are impossible to pin down epistemologically, and therefore serve strangely as
the substance of an emancipatory educational project that purports to inculcate a
determinate and hence knowable standard of critique. As I shall demonstrate,
theorists who adopt the strategy of dismissing Enlightenment philosophy tout court in
the name of an emancipatory politics aimed at such goods as social tolerance or
collective solidarity are therefore regularly (and indeed rightly) accused of explaining

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3 With regard to "responsibility," for example, Emmanuel Levinas offers a phenomenological
rather than a strictly epistemological justificatory frame (Levinas 1989, and in Bernasconi and
Critchley, eds., 1991). Analogously, Charles Taylor attempts to make a communitarian argument
for "tolerance" based on the inherent value of certain traditions (in Gutmann ed., 1994), while
Richard Rorty (1989) follows John Dewey in supporting the 'good' of "solidarity" on the explicitly
political grounds of democratic forms of social organization.
the educational dimension of the proposed political practice on grounds that are logically nonsensical.

The reason that Kant's critical philosophy may be said to be centrally implicated even in educational theories that differ significantly from it, in short, is that the very idea of "criticality" that various progressive theorists of education support -- and, indeed, that they need to support if the educative practice they espouse is to be both epistemological sound and politically emancipatory as many insist that it must -- already embodies Kant's philosophical legacy.

In order to substantiate this claim, that the political purchase of progressive educational theory is bought at the cost of metaphysically 'centring' or transcendentalizing the subject (and, thus, at the cost of the persistence of C/critique), I turn now to the three strategic responses to "postmodernism" that are most prevalent in critical pedagogical and educational theory. These strategies are designated here as "neomodernist," "anti-modernist," and "anti-postmodernist." They entail, respectively, the attempt to separate or decouple ethico-political critique from its epistemological framework (from Kant's Critique) while trying to retain critical legitimacy (neomodernism); the attempt to formulate a political educational theory and practice that entirely takes the place of the philosophical discourse of modernity -- i.e., to do without rational critique and the Legitimating framework of Critique alike

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While views that cannot be included in the rough framework I have just delineated may possibly exist, my purpose in this section is not to be exhaustive; rather, it is to illustrate some of the most general tendencies and difficulties in educational theory engaged with "postmodernism". On this basis, I have grouped and treated those theorists who explicitly attempt to address aspects of "postmodernism" with regard to the field of educational theory. In what follows, I treat what are, arguably, the most common and influential approaches to "postmodernism" in educational theory today.

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(anti-modernism) -- and, finally, the attempt to counter contemporary interrogations of the Enlightenment metanarrative and the moral legitimacy that goes with it by Legitimating moral universalism in terms of a contingent and fallible notion of reason that is ostensibly non- or only "quasi-" transcendental (anti-postmodernism). This third strategy, as I shall show, entails the attempt to reformulate the Critical metanarrative such that it no longer suffers from Kantian metaphysics, but still serves as a quasi-transcendental, epistemological Legitimation of critique.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four with regard to the third (anti-postmodernist) approach, theorists such as Blake, Peukert, Kohli, Burwood and Siegel cannot depend on Habermas's theory of communicative ethics to counter the "postmodern" critique of Enlightenment, since Habermas's theory is inadequate for the task of grounding critique non-metaphysically. Before I develop that case, however, it is important to stress that the Kantian problematic -- the impossible but necessary co-implication of Critique and critique -- is not simply bypassed in either the "neo-" or the "anti-" modernist case.

On the contrary, with regard to those who adopt the "neomodernist" strategy of maintaining a morally legitimate standard of critique while (ostensibly) eschewing the metaphysics of Kantian "reason," the tension between transcendentalism and relativism is plainly in view in the work of those such as McLaren, Giroux, Roberts, Carr, Smeyers, and Wardekker and Miedema. With regard to those who lean more heavily in the direction of the second ("anti-modernist") strategy, on the other hand -- those who advocate displacing the philosophical apparatus of "Critique" altogether by reversing the categories of logic and rhetoric with a view to endorsing the latter -- the
work of those such as Ellsworth, de Castell, Lather, Arcilla, McCarthy and McGee will be shown to be especially relevant. Here it will be recalled that, as I argued in Chapter One, the sublime can no more be promoted to a place of total primacy within the Kantian system that produces it than can rhetoric within the *trivium*, since "nothing can overcome the [logical] resistance to theory [qua rhetorical reading]," because "theory is itself this resistance" (de Man 1982; first emphasis mine). Consequently, the proposal that rhetoric, sublimity, partiality or difference should replace traditional philosophical categories emerges as both theoretically misguided and practically impossible. Thus we shall see that problems that attend the concept of "critique" -- problems revealed in contemporary continental analyses of modern philosophy but misdiagnosed in "modern" and so-called "postmodern" social theory alike -- lead to irresolvable difficulties in the first two cases as well.

II: Neomodernism

Among the strategic approaches to "postmodernism" outlined in the previous section, "neomodernist" educational theory is problematic in a particular way that other responses to "postmodernism" are not. For unlike either the anti-modernists or the outright anti-postmodernists, neomodernists try to have it both ways. In effect, neomodernists are those who both reject *and* support Enlightenment metaphysics, even while they refuse *and* embrace, simultaneously, a variety of contemporary critiques of modernity. The distinct problem with this alternative, in short, is that either it is not really one -- either it is based implicitly on an illegitimate centring of the subject (on Kant's transcendental manoeuvre) -- or else it entails foregoing the
very possibility of ethico-political legitimacy to which neomodernists want to lay claim. And what this means is that "neomodernism" is not only marred by irresolvable difficulties concomitant upon any attempt to mobilize the concept of "critique" for a political theory aimed at emancipation, but that, in addition, it is theoretically incoherent in a particularly egregious way.

Consider, for example, the description of the "neo-modern" response to the "postmodern condition" supplied by the anthropologist team John and Jean Comaroff, from whom critical educational theorist Peter McLaren borrows the term (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 13). According to McLaren, the Comaroffs advocate a method of social scientific inquiry into the ideological structures of societies that, takes seriously the message of critical postmodernism yet does not lose the possibility of social science; that takes to heart the lessons of cultural Marxism, seeking a conception of culture that recognizes the reality of power, yet does not reduce meaning to either utility or domination; that builds on the techniques of cultural history, pursuing the dialectic of fragment and totality without succumbing to brute empiricism; that, above all, proceeds, as it must, by grappling with the contradictions of its own legacy, seeking to transcend them -- if only provisionally and for the moment (Comaroff and Comaroff, cited in McLaren 1995, 278).

What I want to distinguish as "neomodern" is exactly this attempt to encompass both views; it is the strategic assumption of the legitimacy of modern ethical and epistemological norms in the very face of a "critical postmodernism" that subjects those norms to epistemological and political contest. Such a characterization aptly

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5 In what can only be deemed an odd choice of terms, Nicholas Burbules and Suzanne Rice have characterized this approach as "postmodern," on the grounds that it is "fundamentally continuous with the modernist tradition, although it seeks to challenge and redefine it" (1991, 397). On Burbules's and Rice's view, this "postmodernism" can be distinguished from what they call "antimodernism" by virtue of the middle ground between metaphysics and relativism it (the former) manages to secure. "The view we have termed postmodernism," they write, "has sought to turn these critiques [of knowledge, authority, and traditional educational aims and practices]
captures the nature of Peter McLaren's work (among others) throughout the last decade.

In the essay on "the politics of ethnographic practice" from which the previous citation was drawn, for instance, McLaren claims, "Critical ethnographers need to develop the will and the competence to reposition their sites of enunciation and narrative authority and to make choices outside the comfort and danger of an a priori standard based on Western, monocultural and universal constructions of identity and difference. It is also essential that ethnographic researchers act with the oppressed, not over them or on behalf of them" (1995, 291, emphases his). Just as this claim (which is clearly inspired by Paulo Freire's work on critical literacy in Brazil, and which mobilizes at once Gramsci's notion of the "public intellectual" and Dewey's radical understanding of participatory "democracy") explicitly refuses the metaphysics of Kant's conception of "Enlightenment," so McLaren elsewhere endorses "a postcolonial pedagogy and research practice [that] avoids a collusion with the antimonies of essential oppositions such as self/other by refusing the Hegelian foundationalism of positing the self-identical ground of all difference" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 14).

On the one hand, therefore, we find here (and indeed throughout McLaren's work) a clear rejection of the "impartial universal absolutism or foundationalism" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 7) that epitomize the modern philosophical tradition.

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toward an alternative conception of education based partly on the reformulation of selected modernist principles such as democracy or self-determination, but without sharing modernist assumptions, such as a belief in progress or the rational rule of law" (Burbules and Rice, 1991, 399, my emphasis). I return to "anti-modernism" below.
Even in an early piece in which he announced his own "ambivalence toward postmodernity" (1988, 66. and 77n.1. 79n.5). McLaren maintained that "[t]he project of placing desire into critical and self-conscious circulation . . . needs a non-totalizing language that refuses to strip experience from its contingency and open-endedness, that refuses to textualize oppression, and that refuses to dehistoricize or desexualize or degender the body, or to smooth over difference in the name of justice or equality" (1988, 67; emphasis mine, internal reference omitted).

In fact, precisely because McLaren does object to "the Enlightenment ideal of a unified human subject" and "the conventions of teleological closure" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993, 47), he attempts to formulate a theory of ideology critique in terms that refuse Enlightenment scientism and its correspondence theory of truth (McLaren 1989b). Specifically, McLaren opposes the orthodox Marxist perspective from which "the concept of ideology must be defended as something to be logically unveiled according to a defensible criterion rooted in objective reality," and which emphasizes "the primary determinants of distortion and false consciousness" (1989b, 176, 200). This understanding of ideology as "false consciousness," he maintains, is based on the "claims of science to universality, scientificity, and normativity," and is "grounded in an essentialist conception of society and social agency" (1989b, 180, 179, 180 emphasis his). According to McLaren, these conceptions have been seriously weakened by (among others) Ernesto Laclau's poststructural adaptation of Gramsci and Althusser, insofar as Laclau sees the social as indeterminate in nature and as fundamentally excessive of any structural system that tries to contain it symbolically. As McLaren writes.
This perspective highlights the relational character of identity and at the same time clearly renounces the fixation of those identities in a system. Instead, Laclau links the social with an infinite play of discursive differences. Thus the meaning of the social becomes impossible to fix because it no longer takes the form of an underlying essence (1989b, 180: his emphasis).

Based on this perspective, McLaren offers a theory of ideology that replaces the epistemological categories of "true" and "false" -- as in, for example, the determinations of true or false consciousness, or the true or false representations of what the social really is -- with the ethico-political categories of "emancipation" and "domination." McLaren supports this suggestion with reference to Ernst Bloch in particular, from whom he takes the idea that, although we cannot distinguish between ideological and nonideological representations of reality on the basis of a criterion of "truth" -- because, as Foucault argued, the "effects of truth' are produced within discourses that are neither true nor false" (1989b, 183) -- we can distinguish, within (so to speak) the discursive frameworks that structure our understanding, between "good" and "bad" ideology (1989b, 185).

"Good" ideology, as this emerges from McLaren's discussion, is ideology in its "positive," or enabling function (1989b, 188, 189). As he explains, "although particular discourses considered in isolation may indeed be structured in dominance within capitalist productive relations, nevertheless, through particular intersections, forms of reversal, and combinations with other discourses they may also be mutually informing, self-constituting, and capable of generating forms of knowledge which effectively escape assimilation into the dominated contents of capital accumulation"
"Bad" ideology, in contrast, refers to the way in which the very discourses, narratives and symbolic frameworks that allow us to make sense of and to act meaningfully in the world will inevitably be selective and thus distorting to some extent. Because the negative function of ideology therefore goes hand in hand with its positive function, McLaren speaks of ideology as a "double-sided process" that "possesses both positive and negative functions coexisting at any one moment" (1989b, 187).

Interestingly, however, McLaren's eschewal of Enlightenment scientism (with its stress on objective truth) is not at all consistent. For just as Bloch links good and bad ideology to "true false consciousness" and "false consciousness" respectively according to McLaren (1989b, 185, my emphasis), so McLaren himself stresses that understanding ideology requires "investigating which concepts, values, and meanings mystify our understanding of the social world and our place within the networks of power-knowledge relations, and which clarify such an understanding" (1989b, 188; emphasis his). McLaren cites Henry Giroux on this point as well, noting that "Giroux defines ideology as generic with 'the production, consumption, and representation of ideas and behaviour, which can either distort or illuminate the nature of reality"' (1989b, 188; emphasis mine).

First, given the fact that McLaren's own understanding of ideology as intrinsically double-sided in nature (i.e., his claim that the positive or enabling

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6 For a very similar argument, see Paul Smith's Discerning the Subject (1988), which McLaren references later on (1989b, 196).

7 The internal reference is to Giroux's Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition (1983).
ideological function of discursive representation is its constraining function as well) would logically preclude the identification of a non-mystifying concept per se. this seems an odd claim to make in this context. Secondly and more importantly, however, these comments indicate that the Enlightenment view -- that "critique" can have a bearing on truth, that a critique's moral purchase hinges on its epistemological veracity (on its capacity to "illuminate" the nature of reality) -- is still at play. This view has not been displaced simply because McLaren defines ideology in the ethico-political terms of "domination" and "emancipation" rather than in terms of truth and falsehood. McLaren's protestations notwithstanding, therefore, "critique" as it is explicated here does not diverge substantially from the sense it already had for Kant: an epistemological lever by virtue of which a legitimate moral decision can be reached (cf. Lankshear and McLaren 1993, 21, 42). To the extent that McLaren does not contest the epistemological status of "critique," however, he has not actually decoupled moral legitimacy from the epistemological, or meta-Critical framework on which that legitimacy depends.

In response to this charge, one might object that the either-or, the reference to clarifying rather than mystifying concepts and values, is merely a moment of awkwardness in McLaren's thinking. This awkwardness, although unfortunate (it might be argued), does not implicate the broader argument that social relations are contingently, discursively, and only ever incompletely structured and that, as a result, ideologies need not be conceived in exclusively negative terms -- that they can mobilize people for social change even though they may also have constraining or dominating effects. For example, as McLaren goes on to argue later in the article,
political theoretical analysis should be undertaken with a view to determining the "various degrees of an emancipatory or dominating logic" that social relations and practices represent, and this analysis should be based on "a set of core ethical principles" rather than on empirical criteria (1989b, 199). He writes,

At this point I would assert that it matters less that any test for the 'truth' of an idea is incontrovertible than that the idea can be linked to a praxis of emancipation. Although political praxis cannot be the criterion for theoretical truth, it is politics, not philosophy or science, which seems the more appropriate site for understanding the rules of justice and social transformation (1989b, 199).

Even if this is the position McLaren wishes to take with regard to an ideology critique's epistemological status, however, one would still need to know what the basis is, what the "core ethical principles" are, that would allow one to gauge the 'degree of emancipatory logic' a given set of social relations entails. That an analysis is propelled by ethical principles rather than by empirical or speculative "truth" does not alter in any way the strictly logical function such principles must serve; namely, as the basis for an epistemological distinction, a 'cut' between emancipation and domination, by virtue of which we can know the difference between them. And, once they are seen to perform this irreducible epistemological role, the principle(s) of critique themselves must be rationally determinable as such.

Thus, not only does the concept of "emancipation" not preclude these epistemological questions, but it is unlikely that it could do so. For the objection still persists: by virtue of what do the ethico-political 'goods' McLaren espouses represent legitimately generalizable, and determinate principles of critique that can be brought to bear on a contingent political situation (on this classroom rather than that one, for example) in the service of illuminating or clarifying what is (truly) 'just'? In the
absence of a knowledge of the "good", why should the evocation of given principles not simply be deemed a politically-interested, dogmatic, and purely strategic attempt simply to get what "we" want now?

As will be recalled, it was exactly this question (how do we know what we 'ought' to do; what is the ground or principle of moral knowledge) that provoked the Kantian analysis in the first place, and it is not rendered irrelevant simply because McLaren has called for a "non-totalizing language" that eschews the "impartial universal absolutism and foundationalism" of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy. On the contrary, McLaren cannot discard the totalizing gesture; even he recognizes the necessity of universalizing his claims in order that they may bear the political purchase he intends. He says, "Somewhere between the essentialism of the orthodox position and the voluntarism of the ultrarelativists, a common ground for discussing ideology must be sought by both Marxists and non-Marxists alike" (1989b, 200: emphasis mine). Similarly, he writes elsewhere,

We need to understand, as critical educators, that we are living in an epochal transition to an era of multiple feminisms, liberalisms, Marxisms which, on the one hand, hold the enabling promise of liberation, while on the other hand threaten to splinter the Left irrevocably in a maze of often mutually antagonistic micro-politics. This calls for some form of totalizing vision -- what I want to call an arch of social dreaming -- that spans the current divisiveness we are witnessing within the field (1988, 74; my emphasis).\footnote{McLaren has repeated this claim quite recently: "[T]here is a danger in the possible abandonment of a universal application of the principles of freedom and justice in an attempt to get outside the metanarratives of value and morality. We need, in other words, to ground our theory of resistance (counterhegemony) as we struggle to negotiate among competing discourses and among multiple centres of identity. We court disaster unless we realize that totality and universality should not be rejected outright, but only when they are used unjustly and oppressively as global, all-encompassing, and all-embracing warrants for thought and action to secure an oppressive regime of truth (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 8, 9, my emphasis; see also McLaren and Lankshear 1993, 411). Two points should here be noted. The first is that "totality" and
On McLaren's own view, then, it is clear that, as I argued in the previous section, unless some form of "metanarrative" or generalized account of the political subject's moral ends other than Kant's is provided for the Legitimation (the "grounding") of a standard of critique, the risk at hand is that of a relative and indeterminate political principle. Or, as McLaren and Giarelli put it, "Unless we have some provisional narrative of liberation, we can easily and unknowingly fall prey to the very error that critical educators seek to correct, that duplicate the original silencing of the Other, that replicate the concepts and systems of power they seek to revoke, that centres the very terms they seek to reject" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 9-10).

This metanarrative need not take the form of Kant's or Hegel's in order embody the illegitimate primacy of logic over rhetoric that a deconstructive analysis reveals. Indeed, in this case the illegitimately-determined 'good' McLaren wants to avoid is the one contained in the "Eurocentric, patriarchal, and colonialist narratives" (McLaren and Giarelli 1993, 10) derived from the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, this makes no difference with regard to the way in which the argument will structurally demand what I have called the occlusion of C/critique.

"Universality" are not categories that can be used or not as "all-embracing" or "all-encompassing" warrants for thought, since this is what they denote. A partially or non all-embracing totality is a logical absurdity. The second point is that the suggestion that totalizing or universalist claims can be used without any unjust or oppressive effects at all directly contradicts the argument that 'truth effects' are always 'ideological' in both positive and negative respects. Yet it is implied here that some claims to truth (such as, presumably, McLaren's own claims concerning the way in which the theory is said to be 'grounded') do not entail oppressive or "negative" as well as emancipatory or "positive" effects. In the earlier article, in contrast, McLaren wrote, "Resistance occurs as part of the very process of hegemony; not in reaction to it" [1989b, 197, his emphasis]). One might wonder, therefore, whether McLaren meant to reinstate in 1995 the orthodox notion of "ideology" as false consciousness he rejected in 1989, or whether, alternatively, he never moved very far from that orthodoxy to begin with -- as his belief in a strict difference between 'clarifying' and 'mystifying' concepts would suggest.
For what McLaren and Giarelli are here emphasizing is the problem that, unless the ethical principles underlying critique really do capture (are 'grounded' on) a broadly-shared and legitimate conception of human interest that can serve as an epistemological lever -- which Kant's and Hegel's transcendental, foundationalist principles of reason clearly did not -- the liberating promise will be lost in the antagonistic battle of micro-politics. To this end, the principle guiding critique must be robust enough, compelling enough, and firmly enough grounded in what is universally true to bridge the political divisiveness McLaren identifies and to point toward a broadly acceptable "common good" (see, eg. McLaren 1988, 73). This is precisely why a "metanarrative" or "totalizing vision" is required, however "provisional" it is said to be (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 8, 9).

As McLaren well knows, however, whatever is said to be true about our moral "ends" will be vulnerable to a deconstructive critique, because any determination of the universal human interest will entail restricting the subject to an essence that is constitutively undecidable and that, consequently, will have to have been violently reduced in order to be known (i.e., to be representable by a subject as an object of its consciousness). In other words, if (as per McLaren) all "representation is representation within particular ideological configurations" and "every signification constitutes a mask" (McLaren 1995, 281) -- or, to put this in the terms that were used earlier, if rhetorical undecidability is a constitutive (internal) feature of logical determination that is covered over by the appearance of systematic coherence embodied in a metanarrative -- then unless the subject's "ends" are represented as indeterminate, contingent, and open-ended in nature, that representation will
"constrain" as well as "enable" human liberation because it will exclude other features of human experience or social action that need to be revealed (i.e., the representation will also take the pernicious form of "negative" ideology).

In effect, then, McLaren's "neomodern" response to the postmodern condition is that ideology critique both does and does not illuminate what is really 'true' because it both is and is not itself based on legitimate knowledge (on an undistorted epistemological perspective) and that, similarly, a truly liberating, progressive theory of pedagogy and politics must mobilize a critical standard that is both grounded and not grounded at the same time. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that when it comes to identifying just what the "core ethical principles" of critical pedagogy might be, McLaren is virtually impossible to pin down.

Certainly it is true that for McLaren and Lankshear, as much as for an earlier generation of critical theorists, the ultimate target of political theory is "the reality of human suffering and struggle in a world rife with pain and suffering" (McLaren and Lankshear 1993, 412). On this basis, McLaren speaks throughout his work of "a new ethics [or "ethos"] of compassion and solidarity" (1988, 70, 74), of "humane values and liberating political action" (1993, 198), and of "relations of cooperation, mutuality, and reciprocity" (1995, 273). These are, to be sure, all laudable and virtually universal features of "emancipation"; one would be hard-pressed to find a theoretically-cogent rebuttal of the claim that human suffering requires critical and political attention. But this is not where the real theoretical problem lies.

Justice, compassion and liberation are definitional 'goods', just as injustice, suffering and pain are definitional ills, in any discourse in which these categories are
invoked at all. As such, it is tautological to say that suffering is 'bad' or that what is humane is 'good'. Beyond their tautological status, however, the problem remains that these claims are only meaningful contextually; unless compassion and suffering are conceived as all or nothing propositions (i.e., as absolute categories whereby they are said to obtain either purely, or not at all), the moral line between "justice" and "injustice" must be determined within particular socio-political contexts and with regard to particular, political claims. This is precisely where a logical principle of ethico-political critique will come into play. Thus, for example, even if we follow McLaren in his injunction to cease "dichotomizing ideology into authentic reflections or distortions of reality" on the basis of Enlightenment foundationalism and scientism, and even if we agree that we should adopt instead a conception of critical pedagogy that "[conceives] reality -- most importantly, classroom reality -- as a multiplicity of classroom relations, embodied metaphors, and social structures which cohere and contradict, some of them oppressive and some of them liberating" (1989b, 201), we will still need an alternative to Kant's transcendental principle of "autonomy," an alternative "core ethical principle," by virtue of which the difference between oppression and liberation can be logically established.

McLaren makes a number of gestures in this direction, but none of them are upheld in anything like a consistent or unequivocal fashion. Most notable, for example, are McLaren's arguments concerning bodily authenticity (McLaren 1988, 70, and 1995, 280) and the "hermeneutical privilege" or "prominence" he urges his readers to allocate to marginalized "Others" (McLaren 1988, 75, and 1995, 289; McLaren and Lankshear 1993, 406). To be sure, the "body" or the "voice" of the
oppressed can both function as the epistemological lever McLaren requires, but only at the cost of essentializing the subject in the way he is clearly trying to avoid: by signifying an ontological 'real' that speaks simply for itself, in a transparent and undistorted way. For this reason, McLaren tends to undercut his claims at the very moment that he makes them. In so doing, however, he unwittingly undercuts as well the very standard of critique by virtue of which the 'degree of emancipatory logic' at work in social relations is potentially gauged.

With reference to the body as a category of political-theoretical analysis, for example, McLaren writes,

A project is more than a subjective disposition, rather it constitutes a political imperative grounded in an ethical discourse. The ethical project known as critical ethnography is one that does not emerge transcendently in textual forms detached from perception, bodily experience, and the friction of social reality. It is an ethics that emerges concretely from the body, is situated in the materiality and historicity of discourse, in the call of the flesh, in the folds of desire (1995, 280; emphasis his, internal reference omitted).

On first consideration, such a "ground" seems significantly different from the transcendental one provided by Kant. Unlike the category of "pure reason," bodily experience is said to be socially, historically, politically and discursively produced. Specifically, "the body" is for McLaren "an effect of power/knowledge relations and also...a site of their articulation" just as, conversely, knowledge can be understood as "a typography of embodiment" (1995, 279) by virtue of which "culture is somatized" or "incarnated in and through our bodily acts and gestures" (1989b, 191). In McLaren's concept of "enfleshment," then, we seem to encounter a thoroughly constructivist notion of bodily experience: there is virtually nothing "natural" or "essential" about it. Thus the category of "the body" apparently obviates the entire Critical apparatus of
the Kantian architectonic; it is posited as an alternative, non-transcendental standard of ethico-political critique that is not epistemologically, but rather politically, based.

Significantly, however, a closer examination of the way in which the body serves as a category in McLaren's political-theoretical analysis reveals an equivocation on his part that corresponds exactly to the choice that emerged earlier in the deconstruction of Kant's "Critique." On one hand, that is to say, bodily desires and experiences that are understood to be socially-constituted and multiply configured may serve as the basis for what I have called "a certain critique." On this view, the contradictory and indeterminate nature of experience or desire could potentially impel the delegitimation of traditional socio-political norms. This understanding of "critique" is just what McLaren evokes when he suggests, for example, that it is imperative that as educators for the postmodern age we begin to examine issues such as the feminization and masculinization of the body and the reification of the body politic. We need to study how our needs and desires as educators have been shaped in contradictory ways through dominant cultural forms, modes of subjectivity, and circuits of power. A critical pedagogy must grapple with the ways in which youth resist the dominant culture at the level of their bodies because in so doing the utopian moments to which such resistance points can be transformed pedagogically into strategies of empowerment (1988, 69-70. his emphasis; internal reference omitted).

Similarly, in "Collisions with Otherness" McLaren writes, "One way that ethnographers can avoid the tyranny of cultural imperialism is by fashioning themselves as ethical subjects who both acknowledge and respect the heterogeneity of the Other not by stepping outside of Western culture but rather, as Robert Young suggests, "by using its own alterity and duplicity to effect its deconstruction" (1995, 293; internal reference omitted).
However, this understanding of "critique" as the critical interrogation of Western culture based on contingent bodily experience or desire does not actually deliver what McLaren promises: a "totalizing vision" of liberation that "transcends" the contradictions of the modernist legacy (1995, 278), or a "pedagogy of hope" that leads to a concrete political "praxis" (1988, 71, 72). This first view of "critique" can only lead to the revelation of those contradictions, not to their resolution, because it does not contain (nor is it said to contain) a legitimate ethico-political purchase on the question of what is "good".

McLaren wants and promises more than this: he explicitly advocates a notion of "critique" that entails "going beyond the structure of oppositions and sanctioned negations that [a discourse] supplies," and by virtue of which we can "escape the still invisible logic of domination that continues to underwrite many anticolonialist struggles and resistances" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 8-9, 10, emphases mine). On this second view, McLaren seems to imply that bodily experience can do more than inform a critical contestation of accepted norms: it can serve as the ground of a legitimate standard of critique. In terms of its theoretical purchase, in other words, bodily experience is not only presented as an analytic category that can be mobilized for a "certain" critique, whereby the illegitimacy of given norms might be revealed. It is also presented, contradictory, as a categorical basis for an ethico-political decision on the question of what is alternatively good. McLaren suggests this second interpretation when he says,

even in these postmodern times we are capable of seizing the stage of history in the unity of our thinking and doing, and bringing forth a new world at the command of our own voices and with the strength of our own hands. The prerequisite for such an enterprise lies in reclaiming
the authenticity of the body and in formulating strategies of opposition whose primary referent consists of new ways of thematizing knowledge and subjectivity (1988, 70; emphasis mine).

The view that authentic bodily experience provides the standard of what is 'good' appears in a 1995 text as well. There we find that, despite his insistence that "an ethics grounded in the body" cannot be understood as "objective" but must be seen instead "as the product of competing discourses," McLaren nonetheless maintains that "projections of embodied image schemata" that take the form of understanding and knowledge "can form the basis of mutual understanding, since bodily experience is shared" (1995, 281, 280; my emphasis).

This question of whether bodily experiences are at some level "shared" or whether they are radically incommensurable, of whether there is something "authentic" of the body to "reclaim" or whether there is not, is far from trivial. On it hinges the very promise of McLaren's ideology "critique." In particular, the significance of McLaren's equivocation can be spelled out as follows. If bodily experience only becomes meaningful at all insofar as it is discursively representable -- through, that is to say, symbolic frameworks of representation that are themselves locally, historically, socio-politically, and contradictorily structured -- and if, therefore, bodily experience is in this sense a subsequent effect of discourse rather than something which ontologically precedes the contingency of representation, then although a given concrete bodily experience or desire might be put forth to contest prevailing ethical or political norms, such experiences cannot ground an alternative
vision of the 'good'. They can only give rise to a "certain" critique. For any experience or desire that would be posited as a ground for critique is already understood to be as contestable as that which it comes to displace.

On the other hand, if bodily experience can be determined as authentic or not, the legitimacy of alternative 'goods' would follow, for these 'goods' would be based upon what is authentically true and, concomitantly, on a legitimate standard of critique. In this case, however, the "arch of social dreaming" McLaren promotes would be tied to the premise that there is an uncontestable essence in or of the body that an ideology critique (based on "true false consciousness") is in a privileged position to reveal. This premise directly contradicts the understanding of "enfleshment" (a site of the effect and articulation of power/knowledge relations) that McLaren espouses. A thoroughly constructivist (or, if you will, "postmodern") view of bodily experience, in short, cannot be reconciled with the kind of modernist argument -- one which assumes that the proper rebuttal to injustice is "authenticity" or truth --

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9 It should be stressed, here, that to say bodily experience is an effect of discourse is not to say that such experience is discourse and, therefore, textual rather than "real." This common objection is based on exactly that misunderstanding I treated in the Introduction, for it misconstrues the deconstructive analysis of the co-implication of various traditional dualistic categories -- such as logic and rhetoric, philosophy and literature, "politics" and "aesthetics" or, in this case, materiality and textuality -- as an argument for their reversal. Just as I argued earlier that to say that the "apocalyptic" crosses through philosophy as its perpetual opening is not to elevate the apocalyptic over the philosophical but rather to complicate and to contest philosophical discourse such as it is and on its own terms, so I submit that to say the body is not prior to signification is not to say it is not "real" (see Butler 1992, esp. 21 n.13). To say that only what is signified as "matter" can be experienced as "real" is to say, however, that our "real," authentic, bodily experiences, such as they are, are socially, culturally and politically contingent rather than ontologically necessary. Most importantly, this means that experience, precisely what we know as "real," is itself an ideological effect and, as such, is open to political contestation and re-interpretation.
that McLaren is trying to make. As a theoretical response to the "postmodern condition," "neomodernism" is this contradiction writ large.

The conflict between a critical standard and a certain critique that is illuminated by McLaren's equivocation on the ontological grounds of the theory becomes particularly obvious when he tries to draw a value-laden distinction between the ways in which bodily "streetcorner knowledge" and "classroom knowledge" are ritually performed (1989b, 192-6). "Streetcorner knowledge" cannot be said to represent a more authentic mode of bodily knowing than does "classroom knowledge" as McLaren implies (1989b, 194-5). even though the former may well provide a resource for resistance to the latter. even though classroom knowledge may indeed be. as McLaren suggests. "removed from any celebration of the body as a locus of meaning." and even though "to resist meant to fight against the monitoring of passion and desire and the capitalist symbolization of the flesh" (1989b. 193. 195). For the streetcorner knowledge McLaren is referring to. it turns out. takes the form of "a regressive image of machismo and physical pleasure" for males and the representation of females as "sexually active subjects" who were either "decent ones" or "sluts" (1989b. 195). Thus streetcorner knowledge is no less the 'somatization' of oppressive cultural norms than is classroom knowledge: it simply entails that a different set of (oppressive) cultural norms are at play. On just this basis. no doubt. McLaren remarks that "a cultural politics of resistance on the part of students does not always manifest itself as a form of oppositional praxis. as an overt or innovative political statement and activity in which the invisible forces of domination are probed and
contested for their unsaid propositions. As such, resistance does not always serve as a form of lived critique" (1989b, 196).

In order to be able to determine when "resistance" serves as a form of "lived critique" and when it does not, a critical pedagogy grounded on the body would have to do more than simply put forth an alternative set of cultural norms to contest the dominant ones. It would have to provide a basis on which to determine the difference between, for instance, "our real needs and those of our students from fantasies in pursuit of artificial needs" (1988, 70. emphases mine). For unless we can tell which experience, desire, or bodily pleasure (or which dimension of these) among an infinite variety of possible choices is actually an "authentic" one, we do not have any ground (bodily-based or otherwise) for a critical vision of liberation that "transcends" the contradictions of the modernist (or any other) legacy. If something about bodily experience is to serve as the ground or "core ethical principle" of McLaren's pedagogical project, then, this experience simply cannot be viewed as an a posteriori effect of discursive representation. On the contrary, McLaren's narrative of liberation logically requires that he abstract from the cultural contingency of experience what is ontologically prior to discourse -- that he make a transcendental or quasi-transcendental claim about what "authentic" bodily experience or "real needs" truly are. Only on this basis can a given bodily experience serve as a standard which demystifies or clarifies the difference between what is liberating ("true false ideology") and what is oppressive (and, thus, merely "false").

Such a determination would certainly provide the standard of critique McLaren is seeking but, as I have tried to make clear, it would do so at the cost of a
metaphysical determination of the subject and, thus, at the expense of the very "postmodernism" McLaren seems to espouse. Conversely, if McLaren forgoes the required epistemological gesture of identifying what is ontologically prior to the ideology of discourse -- if he accepts that "we cannot peel away the flesh to yield an unobstructed view to some irreducible urge or desire since intentionality is always produced within historically and culturally specific forms" (1989b, 201) -- then he can no longer lay claim to the epistemological lever he needs to gauge the ethico-political difference between "emancipation" and "domination" and to ground his alternative conception (his "totalizing vision") of what is 'good'. From McLaren's own "postmodern" perspective, then, the body could be said to provide the basis for a "certain critique," but we would have to forgo the political decision on which he also insists (eg., 1988, 71, 72, 78, n.5-6).

This contradiction is precisely the outcome of McLaren's related argument that the liberated political subject need not be predetermined, but can be conceived as an entity that comes into being through and as a result of an emancipatory political process. In this sense, according to McLaren, the emancipated subject is, as it were, "not yet" (McLaren 1989b, 185 and at 1995, 281). "Identity need not be fixed in advance by internal necessity or as a function of race, class, or gender construction." McLaren and Giarelli write, "but can be forged anew by exercising our sociological imagination and by building new social spaces, an 'arch of social dreaming', that will encourage students to contest the debilitating limitations of 'mono-logical' thought" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 8). By the same token, McLaren and Lankshear advocate "constructing a place of hybrid pedagogical space . . . where
individual identities are not essentialized on the basis of race, gender, or nationality, but where these expressions of identity can find meaning in collective engagement with conditions which threaten to undermine the authority and power of individuals to speak and to live with dignity and under conditions of equality and social justice" (1993, 414; cf. McLaren 1988, 74).

These claims, compelling though they may seem given their implicit appeal to Dewey's robust notion of democratic political participation, give rise to a fundamental problem when they are placed within a broader theoretical context. That is, if McLaren and his colleagues mean to suggest a radically open conception of identity -- that the subject, its "authentic" bodily desires, or its "voice" cannot and should not be determined in advance of political praxis -- then there is no basis on which to assert that the norms and identities that emerge from the struggle will be any more "just" than those that currently prevail. since these new narratives of subjectivity too will take the form of "double-sided" ideology.10 On the other hand, if the authors are implicitly evoking a particular understanding of authentic and undistorted subjectivity by virtue of which the degree of emancipation that a given practice promises can be gauged in advance -- by virtue of which, in effect, "collective engagement" can be predicted to ensue in justice rather than in domination -- then there is something essential for McLaren et al. about the subject after all.

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10 In order to make the case that a process of collective, political engagement will give rise to norms that are just rather than unjust, one would have to add a further argument concerning the pragmatics of argumentation (of communicative action), such as Habermas provides. I treat Habermas's moral theory in Chapter Four.
On the view that McLaren is evoking a radically indeterminate subjectivity, we have the promise of what I have called a "certain critique," whereby the undecidability at the root of given ethical and political norms is being mobilized for their contestation. However, such a view does not support a morally legitimate standard against which alternative norms could be weighed. On the other hand, on the view that McLaren is offering a determinate standard of critique -- the "authentic" bodily experience or the 'undistorted voice' (eg., McLaren 1988, 76) that can be emancipated from oppressive structures and thereby "reclaimed" (McLaren and Giarelli 1995, 6) -- he would have to admit that there is for him something in or of the subject that can be taken as fixed. To this extent, the critical interrogation of foundations and of teleological closure would have been foreclosed.

As these comments anticipate, the theoretical contradiction that emerges when a decentred or "postmodern" understanding of subjectivity is mobilized as an analytic category within a (neo)modernist political project is equally at issue in McLaren's discussion of the "voice of the oppressed." On one hand, that is to say, McLaren wants to offer such voices as a determinate standard of critique. He proposes, for example, giving prominence to "the plight of those people who embody and enact the 'postmodern' themes of degraded otherness, subjected alienness, and subaltern marginality, that is, the wretched of the earth (poor people of color, women, workers)" (Cornell West, cited in McLaren 1988, 75). More recently, McLaren has similarly claimed that

The primary referent for the empowerment of those who have been deemed lesser or unredeemed should not be their moral strangeness or displacement outside the boundaries of the familiar, but rather the establishment of criteria that can distinguish claims of moral superiority.
which we exercise as outsiders. That is, the Others have a hermeneutical privilege in naming the issues before them and in developing an analysis of their situation appropriate to their context. The marginalized have the first right to name reality, to articulate how social reality functions, and to decide how the issues are to be organized and defined (1995, 289; emphasis his, internal references omitted).

The wording here is somewhat confusing, but McLaren seems to be suggesting that a standard of critique can be based on the lived experience of oppressed people. By virtue of this standard, ethico-political imperialism (i.e., "our moral superiority") can be named for what it really is: a hidden form of oppression.

Yet even leaving aside the question of how the quality of "Otherness" might be legitimately attributed (i.e., of when to grant this "hermeneutic privilege" in the first place) if not by virtue of individuals' "moral strangeness and displacement outside the boundaries of the familiar" (i.e., if not by tacitly enforcing concrete instances of "marginalization"), the point remains that the "voice" of the oppressed does not provide a more reliable standard of critique than does "the body." For on the other hand, as Lankshear and McLaren point out, this Freirean model of praxis has been criticized by poststructuralist and feminist theorists alike as being "too closely wedded to the Enlightenment ideal of a unified human subject" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993, 47). That is, they go on to explain, the Freirean model of agency overlooks that "to a certain extent we are all structured as social agents through a type of discursive ventriloquism," insofar as "the social and semiotic structures of meaning 'speak' us into existence as social agents" (1993, 48). Thus, even if the authors are reluctant to "give up the idea of constructing our identities from the inside out altogether," they do acknowledge the need to give up, at the very least,
"the idea of a single truth" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993, 48). As McLaren and Lankshear write, "individual and group experiences should be taken seriously because these constitute the voices students bring with them into the classroom," but they "should not be celebrated unqualifiedly" (McLaren and Lankshear 1993, 406).

McLaren himself is thus very clear that one's "voice" as such (oppressed or otherwise) does not and cannot provide a transparent standard of critique. Rather, given the "impossibility of the disinterestedness of any discursive claim or cultural practice" (McLaren and Lankshear 1993, 387, my emphasis), all representations of experience must themselves be critically appraised in turn. Such an appraisal (based, for instance, on "an ethics fully grounded in the body") is a necessary antidote to the risk of "fetishizing' the voice of the marginalized" (McLaren 1995, 281). Yet, since we have seen that representations of bodily experience no more escape the effects of ideology than do any other representations, this merely returns us to the question with which we began: what, exactly, are the core ethical principles by virtue of which we can know what we ought to do or what, in fact, is just?

Insofar as the answer to this question entails an illegitimate 'centring' or transcendentalization of the subject, Kant's legacy has not been left behind. Indeed, we have seen, whenever McLaren refuses to determine metaphysically, to transcendentalize, or to de-contextualize or abstract the subject from a variety of contingencies, he loses the grounds on which to answer it. What I have tried to show, in other words, is that the transcendentalism that McLaren risks at the very moment that he rejects relativism is not something he can do without. For McLaren at least, the progressive pedagogical ideal of "criticality" still embodies the necessary yet
impossible co-implication of epistemological grounds and ethical norms -- of “Critique” and “critique” -- that the neomodernist response to "postmodernism" purports to undo. This ideological dimension of critique is precisely what McLaren's critical theory with its determinate notion of "justice" (its vision of the 'good') demands. For just this reason, I have claimed, the political purchase of the theory is bought -- it is necessarily bought -- at the cost of a "certain" critique.

Because the neomodernist attempt to decouple a standard of ethico-political critique from Enlightenment foundationalism and scientism overlooks or denies this necessity, however, it suffers from an incoherence that other approaches to "postmodernism" do not. Specifically, a "neomodernist" perspective such as McLaren's rejects and embraces critical legitimacy simultaneously. The difficulty that this entails will take a different form depending upon the philosophical context from which the alternative standard of critique is originally derived, but in each case the fundamental structural problem remains the same. Thus, just as we have seen that McLaren's (and Lankshear's and Giarelli's) Gramscian, Freirean and Deweyan-inspired pedagogical theory leads both to the assertion and to the rejection of such ontological grounds as the "body," the "subject." or the "voice" of the oppressed, so Henry Giroux's attempts to mobilize Freire's thought (in particular) in response to the "postmodern condition" manifests a crucial equivocation as well. Consequently we can find in the work of Giroux, just as in that of McLaren, an ambivalence with regard to the grounds for a determinate standard of critique, even while Giroux would agree that a critical theory of society must embody a vision in which social justice rather than injustice prevails.
Thus, for example, if McLaren equivocates on whether or not an ontological "real" (an authentic bodily experience, a nonideological expression of voice, or a determinate subject of history) indeed supports a legitimate standard of critique, Giroux's equivocation takes the form of a refusal to decide whether the phrase "literacy and voice" signifies the ground for a legitimate moral determination of the difference between justice and injustice -- whether it is a standard for critique -- or whether the phrase signifies an epistemological framework or metanarrative (what I have elsewhere called a doctrinal meta-Critique) through which the possibility of all knowledge, including a knowledge of what is just, can be (quasi-) transcendentally established. This difference is significant, given that Giroux's "postmodern" reformulation of Freire's "critical literacy" takes into account (as does McLaren's) the power/knowledge nexus elucidated by Foucault. If it is understood as a meta-Critical appraisal of the epistemological possibilities and limits of critique rather than as a legitimate standard for critique, therefore, Giroux's pedagogy of "literacy and voice" would preclude the possibility of a rational or determinate moral standard based on what is purely 'true'.

The difficulty can be elucidated as follows. On the view that Giroux is positing "literacy and "voice" as a standard of critique, it could be said that Giroux's vision of a just society is based on a Freirean understanding of "critical literacy," an understanding that is offered as a theoretical ground for ethico-political critique. "Critical literacy" takes its meaning, on this view, in contrast to a conventional theory of "literacy" that tacitly keeps unequal relations of power and privilege in place. Thus, for example, Giroux regularly evokes the categories of "voice," (1988b, 68, 71) self-
determination (1988b, 70), and individuals' own "experiences and commonsense perceptions" (1988b, 63) as critical lenses through which students can interrogate "the history they are told" (1988b, 68). Here the emphasis is clearly on the way in which "literacy" (in the Freirean sense) provides a standard of critique by virtue of which ideologically-structured forms of knowledge and subjectivity can be both identified and combatted by actors who become increasingly self-aware and self-determining as a result of their critical political praxis (eg., 1988b, 70).

At the same time, however, Giroux is not unaware of the problems attached to the Enlightenment conception of autonomous agency he thereby evokes. For instance, he directly urges that "the culture that such students [from subordinate groups] bring to the schools may be in dire need of critical interrogation and analysis" (1988b, 63). Thus a second view of Giroux's theory might be presented as well. In particular, it could equally be argued that the phrase "critical literacy and voice" does not signify for Giroux a standard for critique per se, but rather an epistemological framework which delimits the conditions of possibility for knowledge in general. This second view follows from claims such as the following:

As a narrative for agency and a referent for critique, *literacy provides an essential precondition for organizing and understanding the socially constructed nature of subjectivity and experience and for assessing how knowledge, power, and social practice can be collectively forged in the service of making decisions instrumental to a democratic society rather than merely consenting to the wishes of the rich and the powerful* (1988b, 65-66, emphasis mine; cf. 1988b, 70 and 1993).

and,

*a critical pedagogy of literacy and voice must be attentive to the contradictory nature of student experience and voice and therefore establish the grounds whereby such experience can be interrogated and analyzed with respect to both its strengths and weaknesses. Voice in
this case not only provides a theoretical framework for recognizing the cultural logic that anchors subjectivity and learning, it also provides a referent for criticizing the kind of romantic celebration of student experience that characterized much of the radical pedagogy of the 1960s (1988b, 72, emphasis mine).

As an epistemological metanarrative, to be sure, "a critical pedagogy of literacy and voice" may well provide "a referent for criticizing" a "romantic celebration of student experience" (i.e., of "voice"). Clearly, however, such a referent cannot be the "voice" of the oppressed, since what is to be criticized is the voice of the oppressed (e.g., "students from subordinate groups," as above). As a "framework for critique," in other words, "critical literacy" can perhaps offer an understanding of such things as the contradictory nature of the cultural logic through which subjectivity and experience are socially constructed and 'anchored'. Consequently, Giroux could be said to be describing a theory that offers real insight into the ideological dimensions of every students' and every teacher's "voice." On this view of Giroux's formulation of critical pedagogy as a "certain" critique, however, he could not be said to have delineated a standard by virtue of which we can know (can make a logical determination as to) when student voices are in "dire need of critical interrogation and analysis" and when they are not.

Of course, one might well go with the first interpretation instead, in which case student experience or voice would be "the referent" or standard for an ethico-political critique of social injustice and oppression. Significantly, however, if the phrase "literacy and voice" is taken as signifying "referent for critique" rather than as signifying a theoretical framework which outlines the discursive (and thus ideological) grounds of all forms of self-representations (of all "voices"), then it is again being
assumed that there is something that is ontologically basic or prior to ideology in the 
voice of the oppressed that can be represented as "true." In other words, insofar as 
the "voice" and experiences of those who have been oppressed is the principle that 
does the interrogating, so to speak, and insofar as individuals' own "experiences and 
commensense perceptions" (their own "voices") are intended to serve as a critical lens 
through which to interrogate "the history they are told," these voices are not and 
cannot themselves become available to ethico-political interrogation. On the contrary, 
to exactly this extent they must be taken as fixed for the purposes of the critique. 
Consequently, a critical inquiry into the social and political constitution of those 
voices and experiences will have been foreclosed.

In effect, then, what Giroux is advocating is a "pedagogy of literacy and voice" 
that both celebrates and interrogates "voice" at the same time. It does so because 
"literacy and voice" is both a "theoretical framework" and a "referent" for the critical 
interrogation and analysis of "student experience and voice." Insofar as "literacy and 
voice" is the "theoretical framework" for the interrogation of the "referent" "voice," 
however, Giroux has emptied the phrase of any analytical meaning. In other words, if 
the Kantian imperative that the "referent" for (or standard of) critique must be 
"grounded" in a meta-Critical doctrine (in a "theoretical framework") appears to be 
satisfied, this is merely because both levels of legitimation have been collapsed into 
the same thing: "voice" appears to fulfil both the epistemological and the moral 
function of "critique" (qua C/critique) at once -- which means that it fulfils neither. As 
with McLaren, then, "voice" is said to be both ontologically basic and discursively- 
constituted at the same time -- though for different reasons. In McLaren's case, the
equivocation concerns the epistemological status of the very principles he explicitly evokes. Where Giroux equivocates, in contrast, is on the question of whether "literacy and voice" describes a moral principle (of "critique") at all, or whether it represents an epistemological framework (a "Critique") through which all knowledge can be revealed as ideologically structured and constituted.

In both events, however, the end result is the same. For Giroux and McLaren alike "voice" both is and is not a legitimate ground for an ethico-political vision of a democratic "human community" -- a community in which "all voices in their differences become unified," and which is "developed around a shared conception of social justice, rights, and entitlement (Giroux 1988b. 72 and 1991, 56; emphases mine). That is to say, since "difference" per se is not "a basis for solidarity and unity" as Giroux suggests (1988a. 174). Giroux's vision of global unity would have to be premised upon a unifying principle such as an essentialist conception of "voice" that transcends differences, just as McLaren's would. For it is only as an ontological concept -- only if the very category of difference is turned into a ground for sameness -- that "voice" can be said to unify legitimately (rather than merely to be itself implicated in) "the socially constructed nature of subjectivity and experience." On the basis of an essentialist conception of "voice" Giroux could indeed ground his political vision; ironically, he would also have reiterated none other than what McLaren aptly called the Hegelian trope of the "self-identical ground of all difference."

On the other hand, I have argued, Giroux could forgo, and indeed he does frequently seem to wish to forgo, the essentialism which his particular political project logically demands. In this case, however, critical literacy would not provide a basis on
which to distinguish between emancipatory and oppressive expressions of "voice," nor would it offer any insight into what "social justice, equality, and democratic community" (1988b. 68) might concretely entail. Paul Smith has made this point as well in response to another text by Giroux (i.e., Giroux 1983). He writes,

"Even though he certainly recognizes that all oppositional behaviour is not necessarily to be defined as resistance, he [Giroux] offers very few real clues as to how such a distinction could be made or to what end. What is at stake here is a question of the reach of ideology, or a question of whether resistance to ideology can itself be described as ideologically determined, and this is a matter that is clearly tied to the definition of human agency (1988. 67; Smith’s emphasis)."

As this comment indicates, insofar as Giroux adopts with McLaren the "neomodern" approach to social scientific inquiry -- an approach which mobilizes the modern belief in an ethico-political standard that is epistemologically justified even while it discards (with "postmodernism") the transcendental, justificatory apparatus of Critique -- his pedagogical theory is fundamentally flawed as well. This flaw can be seen when we attend to the equivocal meaning of "literacy and voice" in Giroux's work. That is, when taken as a theoretical framework, Giroux's modified version of Freirean "literacy" fails to provide the critical standard needed for the interrogation of student "experience and voice." Conversely, when taken as a legitimate principle or standard of critique that can be brought to bear on the ideological occlusion of injustice and suffering, the category of "literacy and voice" mobilizes an implicit essentialism that contradicts Giroux's own insistence on the socially constructed nature of subjectivity and experience.

If Giroux's "neomodern" elaboration of Freirean pedagogical theory is no more successful than McLaren's, however, this might well be expected. To be sure, in
Giroux's theory C/critique persists by virtue of the peculiar fact that "literacy and voice" is said to signify both a meta-Critical "theoretical framework" for the critique of essentialism, and an ontologically-basic or essential "referent" of ethico-political critique. But this contradiction merely expresses in a particular form the incoherence that lies at the heart of any neomodernist attempt to reconcile a modernist understanding of the emancipatory potential of schooling -- the school as the democratic site of the development of a critical and hence nonideological consciousness, as per Freire, for example -- with radical "postmodern" interrogations of such categories as authenticity and subjectivity, and their roles in the ethico-epistemological metanarrative of modernity.

This incoherence will manifest itself in one way or another as long as the "postmodern condition" is understood as a process of delegitimation that pertains to scientific "truth" alone -- leaving untouched (as per Lyotard) the modern metanarrative of emancipation -- rather than as an insight into the ideological nature of moral legitimacy (qua autonomy, self-determination, or "voice," for example) itself. In other words, even a so-called "postmodern" critical theoretical approach to education will have to occlude that logically undecidable (or rhetorically-based) difference between epistemology and ethics that Kant's Critical philosophy first instantiated, if it overlooks the ways in which ethico-political legitimacy and the metanarrative of emancipation it supports is part and parcel of modern, scientifico-epistemological ideals, not distinct from them.

In the work of McLaren, for example, this undecidability and its ideological occlusion manifests itself as an equivocation on the truth status of the principles of
moral critique he espouses. In Giroux's work, it takes the form of an outright collapse -- embedded in the category of "literacy and voice" -- between the two levels of legitimation themselves. In both cases, however, moral legitimacy is not and cannot be formulated as independent of modern scientifico-epistemological ideals. It cannot be formulated as independent of those ideals, because the conception of a legitimate standard of critique that McLaren and Giroux espouse already embodies them; as we have seen, the theories derive what political purchase they have precisely to the extent that they entail epistemological *Legitimacy* -- that a meta-Critical, transcendental, or essentialist characterization of the subject is implicitly being made. Thus, even though the McLaren and Giroux (*inter alia*) purport to be taking "postmodernism" into account, their "neomodern" solutions are fundamentally incompatible with "postmodern" insights into the (self) deconstruction of critique I have described. Moreover, insofar as this incompatibility between modernist ideals and ("postmodern") insights into the self-deconstruction of critique gives rise to inescapable contradictions within the theory, it is possible to reveal the limitations of any progressive pedagogical theory that is based on the neomodernist approach -- the 'both/and' modernism-postmodernism perspective -- that was profiled above.

Before discussing the "anti-modernist" approach to the "postmodern condition," therefore, I want to treat briefly four additional neomodern attempts to outline a progressive educational theory that takes the "postmodern condition" into account. Each of these theories aims at the modernist, ethico-political goal of emancipation, but they are based on such divergent alternatives to Kantian philosophy as Freirean political praxis. Dewey's educational theory, a Wittgenstein-
informed conception of "forms of life," and Vygotsky's developmental psychology. In all four cases, the theory's capacity to illuminate a determinate difference between oppression and liberation is bought at the cost of the "postmodern" principles the theory sets out from the start. At the same time and contradictorily, however, a "postmodern" critique of Enlightenment epistemology is brought into each of the theories directly — in the form of a replacement of Enlightenment reason (i.e., as it is embodied in the moral principle of "autonomy") with such values as Freirean "conscientisation" (Roberts 1996), Deweyan "social intelligence" (Carr 1995), the responsibility inherent in 'our' (Wittgensteinian) "form of life" (Smeyers 1995a, 1995b) or Vygotskyian "openness" and "change" (Wardekker and Miedema 1997). To just this extent, the theories lose their ethico-political force altogether. What characterizes these attempts as specifically "neomodern," therefore, is that in each case the theorist tries to have it both ways.

Peter Roberts' reformulation Freirean "conscientisation," for example, entails a stated commitment to the "postmodernist notion of multiple subjectivities" alongside an explicit appeal to the Freirean belief that "all human beings have an ontological vocation of humanisation" (1996, 179, 189). Of course, Roberts himself — like Giroux — is well aware of modernist assumptions underpinning this Freirean understanding of subjectivity; Roberts writes that, particularly in his early work.

Freire explicitly situates the knowing, praxical, dialogical human Subject at the centre of his ethic, and in the notion of conscientisation we find the educational manifestation par excellence of this ideal. . . .The critically conscious person. . . appears, at first glance, to be the very embodiment of the self-knowing, self-directing, self-contained subject so central to the Enlightenment project. Critical consciousness implies not only an ability to change the world, but a self-conscious, reflective, rational process of change (1996, 189-90, emphasis his).
If he is to reconcile Freirean praxis with the "postmodern" notion of multiple subjectivities, therefore, Roberts must first modify or re-read the Freirean position such that it no longer can be said to 'centre' the subject epistemologically in this quintessentially modernist way. What must be underlined, however, is the change to the ethico-political purchase of the theory when he does so.

What Roberts proposes is that Freire can be shown to reject the Enlightenment conception of an autonomous "I"; on Roberts' reading, human consciousness (critical or otherwise) is for Freire a fundamentally social achievement that is never "pure" because it is always culturally and politically "situated" (1996, 192). Thus Roberts argues that the mechanical or "stage theory" of Freirean conscientisation, by virtue of which individuals are said to progress linearly from "magical," through "naive," to the pinnacle of "critical" consciousness (1996, 181; cf. Shor 1992, 126-27), must be replaced by an understanding of conscientisation as an "ever-evolving" and endless process which "consists in the constant search for what lies beneath the surface" of reality (Roberts 1996, 187). This interminable interrogation into the "essence or reason behind the object of study" takes the form of a dialogical social and political engagement with others rather than the form of transcendental self-constitution on the part of an individual subject.

On Roberts' view, therefore, the subject-centred epistemology that is (according to some critics) characteristic of Freire's early work can be replaced with a construct of conscientisation that views critical consciousness as a "dialectical," "momentary reflective process" (1996, 189). Because it "implies constant movement
between the three levels" rather than 'locking' them into discrete positions, Roberts contends. this is a "postmodern perspective" (1996, 194). He explains.

The focus is no longer on a single, 'self-contained', self-knowing human subject directing his or her life in an increasingly critical fashion. If there is no essential self, then we can only talk of a person as he or she 'is' at any given moment engaging in reflective action. Through conscientisation, a person shifts his or her 'position' in the world, though not in the ordered, sequential, behaviourist fashion implied by the stages model (1996, 194-95).

On one hand, the re-interpretation of Freirean conscientisation that Roberts proposes does have the desired effect of decentring the subject of political praxis: on Roberts' proposed view, it can no longer be claimed that the epistemological ground of the critique is "the self-knowing, self-directing, self-contained subject so central to the Enlightenment project" (cited above). On the contrary, Roberts maintains, "from a postmodern point of view...any effort to act or think in a particular manner must be recognized as partial, incomplete, and possibly contradictory" (1996, 195). On the other hand, however -- as in the cases of McLaren and Giroux -- we can see quickly why such an adaptation of "postmodernism" for a critical pedagogical theory is crucially flawed: Roberts' interpretation of conscientisation leaves us with no critical political standard by which to gauge the achievement of conscientisation at all. Unlike Freire's unreconstructed view, therefore, Roberts' theory of conscientisation has no ethico-political force.

Consider, for example, Roberts' conclusion that "[t]he postmodern turn in social theory (and in ethics and education especially) does not...rule out the possibility of attempting to understand -- and act within and upon -- the world in ever more critical ways" (1996, 195, emphasis his). One cannot dispute that such attempts
are undoubtedly always possible, but the point remains that, in light of Roberts' analysis, they must also be deemed misguided — if, that is to say, "any effort to act or think in a particular manner must be recognized as partial, incomplete, and possibly contradictory" (my emphasis). For in this case we cannot ascertain when thinking about and action upon the world is critically-informed, and when it is not.

Clearly, this is not a problem endemic to Freire's own work, since Roberts gives us to understand that, for Freire himself, "critical" consciousness is characterized by

depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations, by the testing of one's 'findings' and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old -- by accepting what is valid in both old and new (cited in Roberts 1996, 180: internal reference omitted).

On Freire's own view, then, the "critical consciousness" that sits at the apex of conscientisation -- that process through which we aspire to our 'ontological vocation' to become more human -- entails all the normative 'goods' of modernist, Western science in general. The critical subject is a) proficient at generating both deductive (causal explanations in lieu of magical ones) and inductive (testing of findings) forms of proof (soundness of argumentation), b) aspires to interpretations that are nonideological and legitimately grounded rather than dogmatic or politically-interested in kind (the critically conscious subject attempts to avoid distortion, and accepts what is valid in both old and new), c) displays the virtue of autonomy (refuses to transfer responsibility), and d) is an active subject rather than a passive
object (rejects passive positions). However contestable these dualisms may be (and, as I have tried to show, they are profoundly contestable), they nonetheless provide a clear guide for the determination of relative levels of criticality. "Critical" reflection (so understood) can thus be brought to bear on the "conditions of oppression" and, for just this reason, it clearly embodies a "political character and liberatory intent" (Roberts 1996, 195).

In contrast to this, Roberts' "postmodern" version of conscientisation does not retain any political or liberatory force. For once we replace Freire's subject-centred, modernist epistemological frame with what Roberts thinks is a "postmodern" position on epistemology -- namely, with the understanding that all modes of consciousness and all levels of knowing are "partial, incomplete, and possibly contradictory" -- it is no longer clear on what basis the achievement of critical consciousness can possibly be claimed. Most importantly, if we deny the ideally autonomous subject (individual or collective) its role as the epistemological ground of the political-theoretical analysis, then we are left with a view of conscientisation as praxis that essentially has nowhere to go. To reformulate Roberts' claim, "particular emphasis" cannot "be placed on enhancing possibilities for moments of dialogical, critical reflection on conditions of oppression" (1996, 195), since the theory does not provide a basis on which to determine when such reflection is actually occurring and when it is not.

In response to this charge, one might argue that Roberts is suggesting (at least tacitly, that "criticality" is that form of consciousness that is least distorted and thus best equipped to get at the "essence or reason" behind the ideological distortions of oppressive forms of social organization. On this basis, for instance, it could be argued
that there is a way to measure the achievement of critical reflection after all; namely, against the standard of our "ontological vocation" to become more human by becoming more critical. On this view, it would not be misguided to attempt to understand and direct the world in "ever more critical ways." If he is making this argument, however, then Roberts is supposing that what can be achieved is a mode of critical consciousness that escapes the reach of ideology -- or that aims at the horizon of such an ideal escape -- because it is epistemologically grounded on what is ontologically and transcendentally true about the subject as such (namely, our "ontological vocation" to aspire to the scientific norms of criticality Freire describes). Roberts might thus respond to the above charge, but to do so he would be forced to contradict the "postmodern" tenets he set out at the start. In Roberts' analysis, therefore, Freirean political theory emerges as fundamentally incompatible with the "postmodern critique of subject-centred reason" that Roberts purports to adopt (1996, 179).

This incompatibility, I have argued, is due to the fact that any determinate basis for an ethical-political critique will always already depend upon a form of epistemological Legitimation that is peculiarly Kantian, notwithstanding the fact that Kant's critical philosophy may be explicitly rejected in favour of an alternative philosophical framework. For the metaphysical gesture is attached not to the specification of the standard itself -- we can always replace the moral value "autonomy" or "freedom" with some other ethico-political term (such as "humanization") -- but rather to the necessity of grounding that value transcendentally. Only by virtue of its transcendental status can a value such as
"autonomy" or "humanization" serve as an epistemologically legitimate principle through which the 'truth' of social oppression can be systematically revealed. For Freire no less than for Kant, this grounding obtains by virtue of an ineluctable reference to what about the subject transcends the contingencies of given political and social determinations; something about the subject must be said to be ontologically and thus necessarily rather than only contingently 'true' if the logical difference between justice and injustice is to be given by the theory. Thus in both Kant and Freire we find a metanarrative of emancipation that is premised on what we essentially 'are' and, for just this reason both philosophical frameworks, although different in so many significant respects, issue in a determinate standard of critique.

In progressive pedagogical theories aimed at emancipation through education, therefore, we should not be surprised to find again and again that "critical" consciousness is the consciousness of this essence, however the latter is defined. For, I have argued, a problematic relationship between ethics and epistemology will remain at the root of any progressive educational or political theory that has an emancipatory intent. In what I am calling "neomodern" approaches to social critique, however, we will also continue to find a refusal of the very essentialism on which the modern philosophical ethos of Enlightenment is based. As a result of just this neomodern ambivalence, it emerged that each of the theorists discussed thus far -- McLaren, Giroux and Roberts -- can only be said to decouple the particular

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11 The impossible but necessary relationship between Critique (epistemological grounds) and critique (ethico-political standards) will persist, that is to say, unless the possibility of ethico-political legitimacy is sacrificed altogether, as in the "anti-modern" approaches to educational theory to which I turn next.
moral standard(s) they advocate from a meta-Critical, epistemological metanarrative of Legitimation to the extent that they can also be said to sacrifice a standard of critique altogether. This outcome is demonstrable in the work of the remaining three neomodernists as well.

Wilfred Carr, for instance, sets himself the task of separating Critique from critique explicitly. He asks, "Can we devise a way of thinking about the relationship between education and democracy which is 'modern' in the sense that it does not abandon emancipatory ideals but 'postmodern' in the sense that it abandons the Enlightenment narrative within which these ideals have hitherto been articulated" (1995, 81; 1997, 325). In response to this challenge, Carr proposes that John Dewey's educational philosophy offers "the most significant and -- as yet -- unexploited theoretical resources for the deliberate and self-conscious development of a postmodern educational strategy" (1995, 82). For, according to Carr, Dewey's philosophy represents "a 'dephilosophised' or 'post philosophical' educational strategy" (1995, 89) -- one which provides a viable alternative to the foundationalism, ahistoricism, and transcendentalism of Kant. It can thus be mobilized to support "the emancipatory aim of rational autonomy" (1995, 87, 76-77) in a way that allows this value to "outlive the philosophical justification that the Enlightenment provided for [it]" (1995, 80).

As I have argued, a theoretical project aimed at reconciling moral legitimacy -- and especially the principle of autonomy -- with the "postmodernist" critique of Enlightenment epistemology must be viewed as inherently flawed in its conception. In this particular approach, however, there is another problem. It is that Carr is arguably
misconstruing Dewey quite fundamentally insofar as he wishes to reframe the Kantian standard of rational autonomy in the non-foundationalist context of Dewey's educational theory; as I will argue, the standard as it stands has no foothold in the decidedly non-transcendental and anti-idealist thought of the pragmatic philosopher. In this sense, one might say that if Roberts found a need to reformulate Freire as less of a metaphysician, Carr's neomodernist need is precisely to understand Dewey as more so.

Indeed, if Dewey is taken on his own terms -- specifically, as rejecting the possibility of a principled basis or logical standard by which to gauge ethico-political progress -- then Carr will run aground on the same problem I have been treating throughout this chapter: namely, the problem that if the process of democratic engagement is to be taken as open-ended, non-essentialist, contingently-structured and experimental in nature in the way that Dewey suggests, then it is not clear why the results of this process should be seen as an improvement over, or indeed as \textit{legitimately} better than, any previous state of affairs. For to forgo the engagement with epistemological grounds, I have argued, is simultaneously to forgo a legitimate purchase on the question of what is 'good'. On this view, the most that might by said is that the Deweyan perspective supports a relative 'good' that is historically and culturally-specific.\footnote{This reading of Dewey as offering a politically relative rather than a rationally-grounded conception of critique is offered by Blake (1996, esp. 217), for example, in response to Carr. To the extent this reading suggests that Dewey does not attempt to substantiate a rational or universal principle that is morally "legitimate," it leads to the conclusion that Dewey belongs more properly in the "anti-modernist" than the "neomodernist" camp. In the following sub-section, I explain that what qualifies anti-modernism is, among other things, that it is understood as being grounded in a politically contingent rather than a logically necessary way. I discuss Blake's own theoretical strategy in Chapter Four, wherein I treat "anti-postmodernism" directly.}
In order to qualify mere (potentially anarchic) change as ethico-political improvement in terms that are any more persuasive than this, as Carr is trying to do, a standard (or fixed measure) of critique must, implicitly, be being brought to bear. And, as in the cases discussed above, the presence of (pre)determinate notion of justice signals that the political purchase of Deweyan pragmatism so bought would be gained at the cost of a "certain critique." For to bring a determinate ethico-political standard to bear on the question of democratic engagement is to reinstate the transcendental, epistemological grounds of ethico-political critique, and thus to undermine the non-transcendental, post-philosophical position that Dewey is said to maintain.

In order to see how Carr’s "neomodernist" approach manifests both of these problems at once, it is important to begin by noting that Dewey made a number of critical objections to ‘philosophy as usual’. These objections are on Carr's view basically congruent with "postmodernism." First, according to Carr, Dewey insisted that philosophy for much of its history played a conservative cultural role: it "operated as an ideological device for legitimising prevailing social arrangements" (1995, 82). Secondly, Dewey believed that a misguided search for a transcendental justification of Enlightenment arrangements and norms gave rise in turn to abstract philosophical problems that have no bearing on the real problems of men [sic] (1995, 82). Not only did philosophy thus become increasingly culturally irrelevant but, in the third place, the very history of the philosophical inquiry into timeless transcendental truths must be judged "a spectacular failure" (1995, 80). For Dewey, in short, "the effort of Enlightenment philosophers to ground their vision of society in some
timeless philosophical truths was really nothing other than a rhetorical device to present this vision as something more than a historical project designed to promote the development of a more secularised and humanistic European culture" (1995, 81).

However, Carr argues, if philosophical inquiry is reinterpreted (or "reconstructed," to use Dewey's [1948] term) as historically situated and as contingent as Dewey proposed, its real significance can begin to emerge. Specifically, what is significant and culturally relevant about philosophical inquiry for Dewey is (according to Carr) its on-going practice of critique. Here "critique" is understood not as an inquiry into transcendental grounds, but rather as an immanent interrogation of the discrepancies between social reality and a society's own professed beliefs. As Carr explains, in liberal democratic societies that are "committed to promoting their self-avowed values and goals,"

educational philosophy would be a form of critical inquiry aimed at rethinking and revising traditional educational strategies and tasks. It would thus focus on making the existing relationship between education and society more transparent, on exposing the tensions and contradictions between democratic values and educational institutions and practices and on understanding how these institutions and practices may be reconstructed so that they can operate in a more democratic way (1995, 88).

Moreover, what counts as "democratic values" in this context is conceived by Dewey as historically contingent as well. In other words, lest it be argued that any form of critical inquiry that merely accepts social values (such as rational autonomy) prima facie would be incapable of revealing the way in which values themselves might have been mystified as "timeless truths." Carr underlines that the only "common good"
Dewey actually supports is an open-ended conception of the 'growth of social intelligence' (1995, 84, 86-7).13

On Carr's own reading of Dewey, then, the democratic 'good' of "growth" (not unlike Freirean conscientisation on Roberts' view) must be contrasted to "rational autonomy" rather than aligned with it as Carr suggests. For the growth Dewey has in mind is fundamentally non-teleological in nature, and is not conceived as an essential property of the subject (1995, 87) but merely as the evolutionary outcome of "collective deliberation about the relative attractions of various alternative courses of action" (1995, 88; cf. Rockefeller 1992, 179). In other words, insofar as the idea of the "growth of social intelligence" draws on Darwin's theory of evolution and is roughly analogous to it, "growth" is said not to be conceived by Dewey in a predetermined way. As Carr points out, an increase in intellectual potential is for Dewey merely the effect of contingent, collectively and cooperatively achieved resolutions to culturally-specific and historically-bound social problems. Carr writes, "'Growth' is thus the dynamic and dialectical process of self-transformation and social change. It is the process whereby individuals, in the course of remaking their society, remake themselves" (1995, 85).

In this sense, an emancipatory educational strategy based on Dewey's thought may indeed entail the possibility of a robustly democratic public sphere as Carr, like McLaren, suggests. For the Deweyan ideal of "growth" presupposes that the school itself must be a democratically organized institution that enables student participation

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13 Steven Rockefeller has characterized the Deweyan notion of "ongoing human growth (to use the language of [Dewey's] later philosophy)" as "the most fundamental social objective and a supreme moral good" (1992, 171).
in processes of collective decision-making. Dewey says, for example, that "full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he [sic] belongs" (cited in Rockefeller 1992, 174). Schools that in this way promote the "social attitudes and intellectual dispositions intrinsic to the democratic way of life" would thus, on Carr's Deweyan account, "support the evolution of a more democratic way of life" (Carr 1995, 87).

So understood, the Deweyan conception of the democratic 'good' of "growth of social intelligence" is closer to Aristotelian phronesis than it is to Kantian practical reason with its emphasis on autonomy, as Carr rightly points out. For Dewey has in mind a form of reasoning that evolves socially rather than strictly on an individual basis, that is the result of solving contingent practical problems rather than the realization of a transcendent subject essence, and that entails the elaboration and application not of rationally grounded 'truths,' but merely of contingent practical belief (Carr 1995, 88; cf. Rockefeller 1992, 180). As such, social intelligence is not an epistemological lever for the appraisal of "timeless truths," and its "growth" is merely the outcome of a cooperative effort to resolve problems provisionally. Similarly, in contrast to a transcendentally-grounded, Enlightenment conception of critique based on the universal 'good' of the rationally autonomous subject, Dewey's understanding of critical inquiry is presented by Carr as immanent in its method (i.e., it is the comparison between pre-existing social norms and their incomplete realization), and as based on an open-ended conception of subjectivity that goes hand in hand with ongoing human growth.
Given these views, Carr may well be right to suggest that the very nature of
the basic democratic and educational aim, no less than the nature of philosophical
inquiry, can be revised on Deweyan grounds to reach beyond the confines of what
Dewey saw as a counter-productive and metaphysical Enlightenment tradition.
Significantly, however, this reconstruction cannot and will not issue in the "principled
view of education" that Carr advocates (1995, 78; 1997, 323, 325) although it can,
perhaps, take the form of a "certain critique," whereby the ethico-political values of
the modern philosophical tradition might be further interrogated.14

Thus Dewey's wholesale rejection of Kant's epistemological meta-Critique
leaves the onus firmly on Carr to demonstrate why rational autonomy in particular
should be imposed as a legitimate educational aim. On this point Carr offers only
that this Enlightenment value, among others, is "[congruent] with our present
understanding of ourselves and . . . [remains] the most reasonable and appropriate to
adopt" (1995, 81). This claim is contradicted by the fact that the very
"postmodernism" Carr insists we take seriously -- "the postmodernist critique of
Enlightenment philosophical thought" (1995, 79) -- has seriously challenged the
'reasonableness' of the rationally autonomous subject. The contradiction signalled
here might be expressed in a reformulation of Carr's "central question" (1995, 81) as
follows: 'Can we devise a way of thinking about the relationship between education

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14 For example, in this vein Carr suggests that a form of educational studies that "puts notions
of rationality and truth to work in the practice of teaching, scholarship and research," but which
"no longer relies on the Enlightenment meta-narrative," would have the role of "[engaging] in the
kind of dialectical questioning of fundamental educational principles for which the divided and
fragmented nature of existing forms of educational studies can afford no place" (1997, 327;
emphasis mine).
and democracy that is "modern" in the sense that it does not abandon the emancipatory ideal of rational autonomy, but is "postmodern" in the sense that (with Dewey) it abandons the Enlightenment narrative, the transcendental, speculative meta-Critique which gave rise to the concept of the rational, autonomous subject, and which provided the philosophical justification of autonomy as an emancipatory politico-educational aim?"

On Carr's reading of Dewey, the answer to this question would have to be that the attempt to mobilize Dewey in this way is fundamentally misconceived. As I suggested earlier, it is not possible to invoke an approach such as Dewey's as an alternative basis on which to maintain that critical reason can issue in or can be based upon a determinate, knowable, and legitimately generalizable political 'good' (such as "rational autonomy"). while simultaneously expressing an "incredulity" in the face of the Enlightenment metanarrative of Legitimation.

Indeed, not only is it the case that "the Enlightenment aim of 'rational autonomy'" cannot be achieved through "that form of reason that Dewey called 'social intelligence'" and that Aristotle described as phronesis" (Carr 1995, 87-88) because these concepts are actually in conflict, and not only is rational autonomy not, therefore, the principle and telos of Dewey's democratic educational project, but it would be misguided even to ask what is. In this sense Carr's theoretical project is flawed in a second sense as well. He seems to overlook that what distinguishes Dewey's thought as pragmatist is precisely that it neither begins from nor argues for a principled view of education, but rather derives educational values contingently -- from a given social context, and only for a time. To the extent that such values as
"democracy" and "cooperation" are given as intuitively self-evident rather than as philosophically justified, Dewey provides not a rational but rather a relative standard of critique. Similarly, we have seen, "social intelligence" is merely the term Dewey uses to characterize the application and elaboration of "contingent practical belief." As it is described by Carr, therefore, the philosophy of Dewey does not allow for the possibility of formulating a morally legitimate principle of critique by virtue of which we can know what a "more democratic way of life" is in any fixed sense, nor does it proffer normative "growth" as a standard by virtue of which social change might be qualified as universally 'good'.

For this reason in particular, the concept of "social intelligence" cannot be reread as "critical consciousness" in the Kantian sense; that is, as an epistemological perspective that is grounded on a logical principle and that therefore allows us to judge determinately between knowledge and ideology — to know, in effect, what we ought morally to do. To serve in this role "social intelligence" would have to be conceived from the start not merely as one contingent effect among others, but rather as a capacity that is (ontologically) already there within the subject or, alternatively, as a potential (metaphysical) capacity that the subject really and essentially ought to manifest. In other words, unless it is conceived on analogy with how "rational

15 On one view, the reading of Dewey as essentialist in this sense is not entirely misplaced. For example, Steven Rockefeller suggests that "ongoing human growth" is synonymous with "realization of the personality," and that the personality (or "self") is "essentially a self-determining will" (1992, 171: my emphasis). Indeed, for Dewey the democratic way of life is said to be "animated by a faith in human nature" (1992, 175). Moreover, Rockefeller explains, a democratic way of life is one in which each member is treated as an end in him or herself and which, according to Dewey, not only produces an "authentic community" (1992, 172), but indeed "offers a path to the deepest and richest fulfilment possible" (1992, 173). These comments support the suggestion that, contra Carr, Dewey's understanding of why democracy is 'good' follows from a particular conception of what the essence of the human subject authentically is (it follows, that is
autonomy" was conceived by Kant -- as the objective essence of the subject and hence as the logical ground of a judgment about 'our' moral end -- "social intelligence" cannot serve as an epistemological category (a category of knowledge) through which to mark the cardinal logical difference between what 'is' and what 'ought' (morally) to be the case. Only if it is ontologically or metaphysically predetermined as the essence and hence the proper aim (the justified telos) of human development, in short, can a capacity for social intelligence serve as a determinate logical standard of ethico-political critique.

But on Carr's view, we have seen, to predetermine the educational telos in this way would be to misread Dewey's own understanding of democracy as "simply 'an experiment in co-operation'" -- one that is "open and indeterminate and hence subject to reinterpretation and reconstruction" over time (1995, 85, 89) -- just as it would be to fail to appreciate that "social intelligence" is merely the contingent and indeterminate intellectual co-relative of "democracy" by virtue of which individuals remake themselves in the process of collectively remaking their society. For Carr's Dewey, at least, "democracy" and "social intelligence" do not signal anything transcendental or essential; they are simply among the various values that are 'ours'. Consequently, they do not serve as principles by virtue of which to judge which 'goods' in particular (educational or otherwise) a society ought to aim at, nor do they signify in any but the broadest of senses the concrete procedures by which a group

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...to say, from what I characterized earlier as an ideological "restriction" of the subject. If Dewey's approach to education is indeed premised on essentialist assumptions, of course, he cannot be said to share the "postmodern" perspective that Carr is advocating.
might proceed to find out.\textsuperscript{16} To rectify the problem this poses for a neomodern approach to educational theory -- an approach, that is to say, that insists on moral legitimacy but eschews the Kantian Critique -- one would have to conceive of "social intelligence" teleologically, for example, or endorse "cooperation" as a privileged feature of human nature rather than as a contingent social practice. And, in so doing, one would inscribe in Dewey's thought the very essentialism that Carr simultaneously wishes to escape.

In giving rise to this impasse between relativism and transcendentalism, Carr's mobilization of Deweyan philosophy thus exemplifies vividly the neomodernist contradiction: Carr attempts to support modern ethical and epistemological norms while embracing the very "postmodernism" that subjects those norms to epistemological and political contest. Specifically, the project Carr proposes can be understood as an attempt to maintain the emancipatory ideal of rational autonomy while simultaneously denying the validity of the speculative metanarrative which produced that particular concept as an emancipatory educational aim. Moreover, I have argued, contrary to Carr's suggestion that it is possible to formulate an emancipatory educational ideal that does not reproduce the metaphysics of Kantian philosophy, it is clear that in this Deweyan case as well, the link between ethics and epistemology that is accomplished through an illicit transcendentalizing of the subject is one which Carr cannot logically avoid -- not if he is to provide the "principled" view of education on which he insists.

\textsuperscript{16} As I noted in reference to McLaren, above, such a moral claim based on a procedurally-conceived democratic ethos would require the supplementation of an argument outlining the pragmatic features of argumentation such as Habermas offers.
For the problem attending moral legitimacy, we have seen, is that the very attempt to establish a logical principle of critique entails an ideological restriction of the subject to one particular essence; it requires, that is to say, an (impossible) logical decision about what is rhetorically undecidable. This means that the problem is not bypassed when a different essence is posited in the place of Kantian reason, but nor can the essentializing move be avoided altogether, except at the expense of moral legitimacy: at the cost of a standard for critique itself. Thus, for example, in the above discussion it emerged that the only way that rational autonomy might be said to be achievable through social intelligence (Carr 1995, 87-8) is if the latter is essentialized as an inherent characteristic of the human subject and, thus, as the logical foundation of a moral educational practice. In the absence of this epistemological move, all Carr is left with is a political, historically-contingent and culturally-relative claim about how he thinks "we" ought to live. By just this token, Paul Smeyers's Wittgensteinian attempt to discover "something non-relativistic, something non-contingent. . . about what the educator should or ought to do. . . in an ethical sense" and to explain "how his actions can be justified" (Smeyers 1995a, 110) exemplifies the untenability of the neomodernist approach as well.

Unlike Carr, Smeyers does not demand the development of a principled view of education in the wake of "postmodernism." To be sure, he does favour (with Carr) a form of "postmodernism" that "tries to rescue fragments of the past": however, Smeyers also insists that his preferred "postmodernism" advocates a "justification of education . . . [that] is of a looser (weaker) type than within the Kantian framework"
Specifically, he suggests that while it is impossible to give an "ultimate justification, in the sense of a 'rational' foundation," it is possible to support a value-laden educational project based on reasons -- as Smeyers says, "many, many reasons" (1995b, 412) -- that are "good reasons for us" (1995b, 403). Here the Kantian metanarrative (with its attendant transcendentalism), through which the emancipatory meaning of education was first established, is replaced with a justificatory framework that, following the later Wittgenstein, Smeyers calls a "form of life." As Smeyers explains, "With the concept of the 'form of life', Wittgenstein indicates what he considers to be the bedrock of our 'language-games'. This... comprises all of the most fundamental propositions on the ethical, epistemological, metaphysical and religious level. They are given. Precisely because of their givenness, justification comes to an end" (1995b, 402; his emphasis).

There are at least two important ways in which this framework must be distinguished from a metanarrative such as the Kantian Critique. First, unlike the speculative metanarrative, "form of life" is not a transcendental justification or

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17 This neomodernist "postmodernism," as I characterize it, can be contrasted to the (so-called) "postmodernism" that Smeyers rejects: namely, one in which "the project of education vanishes in the nihilism of a degenerated aesthetics of everyday life" (1995a, 115). As will be recalled, I argued in the first chapter that the charge that "postmodernism" 'aestheticizes' morality and politics begs the questions of the autonomy and priority of logic over rhetoric that deconstruction (yet another "postmodernism") problematizes. In other words, since an assumption of the very priority of logic over rhetoric (in the form of a bracketing of the sublime) is what supports the legitimacy of moral knowledge within the Kantian archetypic as a whole, Smeyers' dismissal of a certain "postmodernism" on the grounds that morality can be opposed to the (merely) aesthetic has the (undoubtedly unintended) effect of performatively reinscribing the very metaphysical link between a critical epistemologico-educational ideal of pure reason and an ethico-political ideal of progressive, social reform that he wishes to displace with his Wittgensteinian account. Insofar as Smeyers tacitly reinscribes the modern ethos of pure reason in his very dismissal of "postmodernism," in short, his qualifies as a "neomodern" rather than a "postmodern" response to current theoretical developments.
rational ground for any given action: contra Smeyers, it is not in fact a "justificatory framework" at all. Rather it is "the complex network of the constituent rules of social life and of the language which we use" (1995b, 402). So understood, a form of life is merely the "boundary" which determines "what we call objective and true." Because we cannot stand outside it, we cannot determine whether the boundary itself is either true or false, rational or irrational or, indeed, is anything at all (1995b, 402). It is simply that frame within which our justifications and arguments are meaningful.18

Secondly, because this bedrock of our "language games" is not a rationally established speculative theory in the Kantian sense but rather an intersubjective structure into which we are initiated and which constitutes for "us" our "common world" (1995b, 407), any claims about "what the educator should or ought to do. . . in an ethical sense" must be understood as strictly relative to the culture that is "ours." On this view, ethical claims are necessarily contingent upon particular forms of life. To this extent, the possibility of moral legitimacy has not only been de-coupled from the meta-Critique; it has been lost altogether.

It is intriguing, therefore (to say the least), that Smeyers hopes to base "something non-relativistic, something non-contingent" on his Wittgensteinian account. For, as he himself submits, "to accept this historicization and at the same time de-centralization of what one is engaged in makes the justification of the

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18 Interestingly, the "form of life" Smeyers has in mind might thus be said to correspond to what Derrida calls "archi-writing" or différence: it is (itself) a differential field (the general linguistic field, for example) or an excess of meaning through which or on the basis of which meaningful determinations -- the difference between this and that, true and false, etc. -- can be established. To put this in other terms, we might say that for Wittgenstein the "form of life" is the "apocalyptic" opening of philosophical determination. It is the infinite opening of philosophy or of justification and, as such, it is (itself) neither justified nor not justified.
content of education risky business" (1995b, 409). For example, Smeyers proposes that instead of thinking of education as emancipation, it is better understood as "an initiation into what is considered 'worthwhile' for us" -- specifically, as an initiation into the valuable "activity of caring as such" (1995b, 409). This proposal ties the Wittgensteinian idea of a shared form of life to Frankfurt's discussion of responsibility and to Oakshott's understanding of education as an initiation into the "ongoing conversation of 'mankind'" (1995b, 409, 408). For Oakshott, of course, an adequate educative initiation was said to provide to some extent an understanding of the human condition (i.e. "mankind"); notwithstanding the fact that the conversation worth having was limited to the one "informed by familiarity with the traditional literary, philosophical, artistic and scientific expressions of European civilization." (Oakshott, cited in Smeyers, 1995b, 404; emphases mine). A generalization such as this may well suggest that the form of life in which European civilization is what is valued most is indeed universal and that Oakshott's argument, when taken with Wittgenstein's, therefore supports something "non-relativistic."

For Smeyers, however, the case is not nearly so clear. First, he claims to reject Oakshott's general position (along with its Eurocentrism) as he is interested only in the concept of education as a conversational initiation. Second, Smeyers specifies that what is "important" is so only to those who "share a culture" (1995b, 409). and third, Smeyers acknowledges that "culture" itself is "not a unity" (1995b, 411). Once these qualifications are taken into account, however, Smeyers' argument cannot be said to support an educational project based on "a general idea of what is worthwhile for humankind" as he proposes (1995b, 412 n.2). In other words, if a form of life
constitutes a culture rather than the human condition per se, and if culture itself (in this broad sense) is multiply-determined, heterogeneous, and irreducible to a unified essence, then although one may indeed provide "many many reasons" for a given educational goal, someone else may offer many many other reasons in support of the claim that this goal is undesirable. These other reasons may well be based strictly upon one's different position in, or one's different relation to, the same indeterminate "form of life." For just this reason, Smeyers acknowledges "there can and has to be a discussion concerning who is the 'we', in the expression 'what we care for'. and even this will have to be decided, at least to a certain extent, politically" (1995b. 411; his emphasis).

The question of what culture is is thus hardly an unimportant or peripheral matter as Smeyers suggests (1995b. 410. 411). For what is lost in the theoretical shift of frameworks that Smeyers proposes -- from a Kantian meta-Critique with its universalist pretensions to a Wittgensteinian form of life understood in its local and contingent sense -- is precisely the question of the "criteria to be used in working out what should be studied" (1995b. 410: my emphasis). What is sacrificed, in effect, is precisely a non-relativistic, and non-contingent standard of critique by virtue of which "to reveal what is unjust in society" (1995b. 408) and what, concomitantly, an educator ought to do in an ethical sense. For this, "a different inspiration has to be looked for" (Smeyers 1995b. 408; my emphasis). Indeed, Smeyers acknowledges, if it is taken as presented, the Wittgensteinian account leads to the conclusion that the educative task is merely "to initiate people into a conservative blend of 'what is'"
(1995b, 407); it does not provide a way to determine how what 'is' should be changed.

Thus Smeyers' rejection of the Enlightenment metanarrative in favour of a decidedly non-metaphysical conception of "form of life" does not deliver the theoretical results he promises; namely, the resource with which "to speak to a human culture, or more generally to discuss and criticize its content" in the wake of "postmodernism" (1995b, 401). In order to provide such a resource on the basis of "our" form of life -- one for which, for example, "the Great Books" (i.e., "the traditional literary, philosophical, artistic and scientific expressions of European civilization") are worthwhile, and in which the nihilism of an extreme "postmodernism" is rejected on the basis of a shared sense of "responsibility" to our community (1995b, 410, 411) -- Smeyers would be forced to generalize these values by arguing that their worth transcends the particularities of his own culture and is, thus, of interest to all of "humankind" (1995a, 110; 1995b, 404, 405). However, Smeyers' own presentation of Wittgenstein, much like Carr's presentation of Dewey, undermines this kind of a transcendentalist, universalist understanding of the term "form of life," whereby it might be understood as a new metanarrative of Legitimation or "justificatory framework." Consequently, his argument does not provide an adequate rebuttal to the problem that he names. It merely offers the broad notion of responsibility -- understood as an intrinsic caring about what is worthwhile -- which, while by no mean entirely "random," is nonetheless directly vulnerable to political contestation in the name of a different 'good'.
Wardekker and Miedema's Vygotskyian strategy leaves us in much the same boat. Just as McLaren's "metanarrative" or "totalizing vision." Giroux's "framework" of "literacy and voice." Roberts' evocation of 'our' "ontological vocation" to become increasingly critical, Carr's insistence on the epistemologico-ethical category of "rational autonomy." and Smeyers' search for something non-relativistic and non-contingent all tacitly reinstate the very (epistemological) metanarrative their particular 'goods' are said to stand without, so Wardekker and Miedema call for a "theory of the historical genesis of rationality" (1997, 59, emphasis mine) that can support a standard of critique of society, while they simultaneously criticize the continual reintroduction of "ahistorical and even transcendent principles" into the critical pedagogy tradition (1997, 52). What qualifies all of these approaches as specifically "neomodernist," in short, is that they reject explicitly the epistemological support required to legitimize the modernist themes and ideals they evoke -- and this in the name of a putative "postmodern" fragmenting, decentring, or shattering of the subject -- even while support for that very legitimacy is implicitly slipped in from the back.

In the Vygotsky-inspired approach proposed by Wardekker and Miedema, the incoherence that characterizes neomodernism is perhaps at its most stark. Here "openness" is given as a fixed educational "aim" and as the principle of ideology critique (1997, 59), while the validity of ahistorical, universalist and transcendental principles is denied (1997, 52, 56): here it is said that an overarching theory of the historical genesis and development of rationality is needed to account for how human beings can become (at least) partially independent of social and political structures
and can thus develop into rationally autonomous agents (1997, 59, 60, 56; compare Cherryholmes 1988, 149), while it is equally urged that the development of personal identity is a "thoroughly political" result of the partial internalization of external expectations that are mutually contradictory (1997, 59, 57; emphasis theirs); and here it is argued that a "postmodernism that denies history and replaces it with mere social change is one which loses sight of the standard of critique by virtue of which to know which direction of development is desirable (1997, 59), even while it is simultaneously maintained that the term "history" signifies nothing other than that 'development has taken place.' and that the only ideal is "change" (1997, 58).

While it would be counter-productive to draw out all of the specific permutations and ramifications these conflicting claims entail, it is instructive to consider broadly the two mutually-contradictory tendencies that such a confluence suggests. As in the cases discussed above, these tendencies manifest but fail to resolve the paradoxical relationship between Critique and critique elucidated in the previous chapter. In particular, it is possible to identify in Wardekker and Miedema's account both a theoretical impulse to refuse the (meta-Critical) epistemological gesture of predetermining the subject, and thus to sacrifice a rational standard of "critique," and a theoretical impulse to reinstate the ideological closure of the epistemological meta-Critique in the name of a particular 'good' (in the name, that is to say, of moral legtimaey), and thus to repeat Kant's metaphysical move. As in the other neomodernist examples I have discussed, these conflicting impulses are manifest in Wardekker and Miedema's account simultaneously; there is both the loss of a purchase on the critical difference between knowledge and ideology by virtue of
which education might be said to continue to play its politically emancipatory role, and/or the reinstatement of a transcendental subject at the centre of the theoretical apparatus that promised to decenter it.

Wardekker and Miedema’s promise to decenter the subject inheres in their rejection of the modernist assumption that "a consistent and uncontradictory identity is a necessary condition for being an adequate subject as a source of 'agency'" (1997, 56, their emphasis). Against this view, they argue that in the current "postmodern era" it has become clear that "a fixed and stable identity has always been an ideological illusion" (1997, 57). Indeed, they insist, identity is better understood as an intersubjective "activity" that "is always only a local stability" rather than a permanent essence. For "within every person there are different voices, which can be, and usually are, contradictory" (1997, 57). Thus, identity is not only "produced dialogically," but it "always retains a dialogical character" (1997, 57: emphasis omitted). Once the nature of identity is understood in these terms, they continue, education would be better served by Vygotsky’s developmental model of subjectivity rather than by the Enlightenment’s transcendental one, since a Vygotskian-inspired theory would begin from the premises that no "authentic" human subject can be said to exist, and that identity simply cannot be understood apart from its connection to the contingency of intersubjective social relations (1997, 58).

On Wardekker and Miedema’s account, therefore, individuals are not said to gain a "unified perspective which could be called identity in the accepted sense"; they are said to gain instead only a certain continuity of built-up "perspectives on oneself in relation to the learning situations one finds oneself in" (1997, 58). To be sure,
since the continuity of perspectives derives from the fact that human beings are said to internalize not social structures themselves, but rather "the meaning the individual learns to give to these structures in his interaction with others and in relation to what he has learned before" (1997, 58, emphasis theirs), the theory would not suggest an utterly disharmonious or schizophrenic view of the individual, nor would it entail that individuals are solely and passively determined by external social circumstances. The theory does suggest, however, that there is no authentic core in or of the subject, no sovereign author(ity), to coordinate activity in a transcendental way (1997, 57). On the contrary, the boundary of individual identity is radically unfixed: identity is made and remade "for a short period, in a specific situation, and before a specific public" (1997, 57).

If the merit of the proposed Vygotskian approach to education is thus that it decentres, de-transcendentalizes, and de-essentializes the subject, however, the problem that this raises is that, as the authors themselves suggest (1997, 49, 56), it is no longer clear that the idea of human agency ought to be embraced as an unquestioned, educational aim at all. Indeed, they specify, "postmodern theories" demonstrate that there can be no knowledge that is untainted by power. Consequently, it is implausible to appeal to a notion of authentic human subjectivity that escapes, transcends, and ultimately masters contingent determinants of subjectivity that are social and political in kind (1997, 56-8). And, if we cast aside the hope of determining a rational and hence universal principle for identity formation, it becomes difficult to sustain the goal of agency -- "the idea of a free and self-aware humanity" that has "[emancipated itself] from the coercion of nature and of tradition"

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(1997, 56) -- as the standard of critique which provides a "point of reference for values and norms," and which thereby 'legitimates' the educational project (1997. 59). How, in short, is it possible to sustain the educational aim of "rational activity" through the inculcation of an awareness of oneself "as a continuously judging and acting person" (1997, 56) -- as one who gives meaning for oneself in continuous way -- without a transcendental conception of the subject, of its moral end of agency, that is epistemologically secure?

The answer, of course, is that it is not possible. For insofar as it is agreed that Wardekker and Miedema do not put the rational, coherent subject at the centre of their theory -- as, for example, a driving force of history -- insofar as they do see identity as radically unfixed, they have no basis on which to determine why or when change is good. The response to this difficulty cannot be that, following Vygotsky, the 'good' should be conceived simply as the potential for "continuous change" itself -- a value that "holds on the individual level (that is, the individual development does not have an end) as well as on the societal level (we can only speak of 'history' if and where development takes place)" (1997, 58). As in Roberts' account, the problem with eschewing any transcendental grounding of the moral 'good', with rejecting Kant's implicit essentialism, is that we are left without a logical criterion on which to base the crucial ethico-political decision (the determination of what is just) that an emancipatory theory of education requires. In other words, much like Roberts' open-ended understanding of "critical consciousness" -- or, for that matter, the concept of "voice" that McLaren and Giroux espouse, Carr's ideal of undetermined "growth," and Smeyers' notion of education as initiation into an
unfixed and unfixable form of life -- the Vygotskian concept of "openness" cannot itself serve as "a point of reference for values and norms" as the authors propose (1997, 59). On the contrary, if openness itself is what is lauded, the authors have effectively foreclosed the possibility of establishing which subjective and social formations are ethically just, and which are not. On this view, we are given as open to, and as (heteronomously) formed by, them all. Taken in these terms, therefore, Wardekker and Miedema's account leads to the "postmodern" relativism they seek to dispute (1997, 59).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that it is at just this moment that Wardekker and Miedema introduce the need for an epistemological meta-Critique, a theôria or "theory of the historical genesis of rationality" (1997, 59, emphasis mine). By virtue of such a theory, it emerges, the moral principle of "continuous change" can be imbued with a teleological end: namely, the presupposed 'good' of enhancing one's historically-evolved capacity for 'managing one's own development' (1997, 58). Indeed, the role of a theory that makes reference to social, political, and historical categories is to "speak to the relationship between the private and the public sphere between the development of the person and that of society," and so to account for the way in which "the child learns to give meaning and act socially in an autonomous way according to her own judgment" (1997, 56; emphasis mine). What a theory of the historical genesis of rationality is implicitly said to provide, therefore, is an epistemological (or meta-Critical) basis on which to specify what is "a desirable direction to the development of society and of rationality" (1997, 59) -- or, in other words, on which to specify a standard for critique. That standard is, in a word,
'autonomy'. Significantly, Wardekker and Miedema uphold this value notwithstanding the fact that (as I argued with reference to Carr) once they agree that the subject should not be ideologically restricted to this or any other essence, the onus is on them to explain why this is the moral principle that one necessarily will, or necessarily ought to, respect.

On this view, to be sure, it might be said that the merit of the proposed approach to education is that it does derive from Vygotsky's developmental psychology a determinate standard of critique, whereby ideology critique would be "aimed at situations that impede openness (1997, 58). However, it must be acknowledged as well that to say this is just to say that the authors have embraced, rather than rejected, "the possibility of a universalist principle for identity formation" (1997, 59). For indeed, we have seen, openness is not endorsed here in its indeterminate, non-teleological sense: its value is supplemented by the (presumably self-evident and universal) 'good' of the developmental capacity for autonomous action -- a capacity for achieving the transition "from what a child can or wants to do in the context of a social activity. . . to what she can or wants to do individually and independently" (1997, 58). Behind the empty and non-teleological conception of "continuous change," then, there rests a tacit endorsement of the moral principle of autonomy or self-determination that is epistemologically-grounded. An historical account (or metanarrative) of the genesis and development of rationality (of enlightenment) is thus essential to the argument that the brute, ontological "openness" that characterizes the human subject on Vygotsky's developmental account can serve as a principle of ideology critique, just as Kant's epistemological, doctrinal
Critique was essential to the argument that the logical principle of freedom can give rise Legitimately to moral knowledge as such.

As in the other neomodernist arguments considered earlier, therefore. Wardekker and Miedema evoke the Enlightenment ideals of autonomous judgment, agency, and authorship -- which is to say, they evoke the transcendental subject -- as the logical ground of ethico-political critique at the very moment that they call for a "theory of the historical genesis of rationality" (1997, 59, emphasis mine) that is intended to circumvent the reintroduction of "ahistorical and even transcendent principles" into the critical pedagogy tradition (1997, 52). If this contradiction seems like a problematic response to the condition of "postmodernity," however, it must be recalled once again that Wardekker and Miedema are merely varying on a theme. The particular contradiction that appears in their text merely expresses the general, constitutively-insolvable problem that inheres in any attempt to produce a Legitimate standard of ethico-political critique in the face of the "postmodern" acknowledgment that the meta-Critical, epistemological metanarrative of the Enlightenment is ideologically secured through an erasure of rhetorical undecidability. Either such attempts will issue in relativism. or (/and) they will reinstate just the kind of transcendental metanarrative that these neomodernists promise to renounce.

III: Anti-Modernism

In the previous section, I argued that no matter to what extent neomodernists embrace the "postmodern" turn, they do not leave the ideal of self-legislation -- the moral righteousness of "voice" -- very far behind. On the contrary, an appeal to the
rational principle of self-determination or autonomy still grounds the neomodernist, pedagogical-theoretical enterprise, even though neomodernist theorists appreciate that, in the wake of "postmodernism," it is no longer possible to lay claim to that very "reason" which, in purportedly grounding or determining itself, produces a "sublime" feeling of intellectual respect and so gives rise to a moral standard of critique. Nonetheless, neomodernists appeal to self-determination (or some version of it) as a logical principle of ideology critique, and they legitimate this principle in turn by entrenching it in a scientific metanarrative (or in some version of it). Theorists who adopt this strategy thus reinstates the impossible bond between ethics and epistemology -- between critique and Critique -- in support of the emancipatory, educational project, even while they explicitly profess to leave the modern metanarrative of epistemological legitimation behind.

To be sure, the charge of relativism appears to be averted; however, an insurmountable difficulty ensues. It is that as soon as a principle of moral critique is epistemologically grounded -- as soon as a normative claim is legitimated with reference to a "totalizing vision" (McLaren), a "theoretical framework for critique" (Giroux), a teleological account of "our ontological vocation" (Roberts) or of our ontological capacity for "social intelligence" (Carr), a "justificatory framework" provided by 'our' form of life (Smeyers), or "a theory of the historical genesis of rationality" (Wardekker and Miedema) -- some particular characteristic of the subject (such as self-determination, intelligence, rationality, humanization, responsibility, or autonomy) will have been transcendentally essentialized. For the mobilization of the subjective capacity for self-legislation as a logical principle of ethico-political critique
always already names "Man" as such into being (it transcendentalizes the subject), and it does so even when the subject is specified in a radically contingent, open-ended, and indeterminate way.

Neomodernists thus unwittingly perpetuate a mystifying tendency that inheres in the Enlightenment project itself: whenever logic is posited as capable of mastering rhetoric or, that is to say, whenever reason (qua autonomy) is posited as the logical ground (as the a priori principle) of ethico-political critique, the normative aim of critical, educational thought will have been violently restricted with reference to some particular cultural, historical, racial, sexual and/or class-based interest(s). And this means that some other capacity, characteristic, or developmental possibility will have been unjustifiably (for "mystical" reasons) foreclosed. The fundamental problem with the neomodernist position, in short, is that it requires a problematic centring of the transcendental subject whose very centrality and coherence is explicitly denied.

To circumvent this difficulty, some theorists of pedagogy propose rejecting the entire apparatus of Critique (i.e., they reject the Critical metanarrative and the rational standard of ethico-political critique alike). Specifically, the anti-modernist view is that a political educational theory and practice should take the place of the philosophical discourse of modernity. An emancipatory educational project, it is argued, would be better off if it ceased aiming at moral legitimacy -- and, concomitantly, at a rational standard of critique -- altogether. For, on the anti-modernist view, such an aim inevitably entails the imposition of a particular 'good' that cannot be universally compelled, and that may well be oppressive in its effects. Thus, instead of either unproblematically linking together (modernism) or trying to
take apart (neomodernism) the categories of ethics and epistemology within a 
Legitimating metanarrative, anti-modernists appeal to what is ostensibly outside 
philosophical discourse altogether. They appeal, in a word, to politics.

Elizabeth Ellsworth, for example, argues persuasively that there is something repressive, something that "perpetuate[s] relations of domination," in such key values as "'empowerment'. 'student voice'. 'dialogue'. and even the term 'critical'" (1992, 91). She contends that the assumption of rationalism underlying critical pedagogical theory is exclusionary in its effects, that even a "critical" understanding of the notion of "voice" cannot address structural differences of power among students themselves as well as between them and the professor -- whose own "voice," Ellsworth remarks, tends not to be problematized at all -- and that "dialogue" among equals is not made possible simply by virtue of one's wish that it is so (see also Gore 1993, esp. 105-111 and Orner 1992).

Since the critical educational theory with which Ellsworth takes issue was itself originally intended to rectify some of the more pernicious aspects of Enlightenment metaphysics, it is particularly significant that she came to these conclusions following her own attempt to put what I have called "neomodernist" educational theory to work in the classroom. After trying to apply emancipatory theories of education (such as those discussed in the previous section of this chapter) in her course on racism at the university, Ellsworth made these observations:

when participants in our class attempted to put into practice prescriptions offered in the literature concerning empowerment, student voice, and dialogue, we produced results that were not only unhelpful, but actually exacerbated the very conditions we were trying to work against, including Eurocentrism, racism, sexism, classism, and "banking education." To the extent that our efforts to put discourses of
critical pedagogy into practice led us to reproduce relations of domination in our classroom, these discourses were "working through" us in repressive ways, and had themselves become vehicles of repression (1992, 91).

In contrast to critical theorists of education such as McLaren, Giroux, Carr, and others I have identified as "neomodernist," therefore, Ellsworth came to believe that the necessary partiality of all knowledge, and the necessary multiplicity of all subjects, means that reason simply is not and cannot be an emancipatory force. She writes,

Literary criticism, cultural studies, post-structuralism, feminist studies, comparative studies, and media studies have by now amassed overwhelming evidence of the extent to which the myths of the ideal rational person and the "universality" of propositions have been oppressive to those who are not European, White, male, middle-class, Christian, ablebodied, thin, and heterosexual. . . . In contrast, poststructural thought is not bound to reason, but "to discourse, literally narratives about the world that are admittedly partial" (Ellsworth 1992, 96; internal reference omitted).

It is this strategic shift of the theoretical focus -- from universality to partiality, from logic to narrative, and from philosophy to politics -- that, following Burbules and Rice (1991, 398). I call the "anti-modernist" response to "postmodernism." For Ellsworth seems to be suggesting that if there is emancipation to be had, its hope rests with a rejection of the ethos of Enlightenment reason in the name of an emancipatory politics. It is precisely this conviction that Burbules and Rice attribute to anti-modernists: the conviction, that is to say, that "there are no sustainable norms of rationality and value" and that, consequently, "educational discourse . . . exists . . . only for the purpose of enfranchising certain group interests over others" (Burbules

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19 The internal reference here to Stanley Aronowitz is somewhat ironic, given that he would likely take issue with Ellsworth's willingness to sacrifice a "vision" of democratic ends in the name of partial truths (see, for example, Aronowitz 1997, 194).
and Rice 1991, 395). Indeed, this is how Ellsworth's course was concluded: "Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies" eventually evolved into a number of affinity groups, each of which possessed "only partial narratives of its oppressions" (1992, 110). Together, these groups engaged in specific political actions (1992, 110-12).

The approach Burbules and Rice call "anti-modernist" thus differs from neomodernism in at least one important way: anti-modernists take contemporary challenges to Enlightenment universalism directly to heart. Because they believe that the modern philosophical tradition is constitutively exclusionary, anti-modernists do not grapple directly with the impossible bond between ethics and epistemology in the name of "postmodernism." They advocate, rather, the negation of traditional modern values altogether. On the anti-modernist view, critical pedagogy should be understood as an explicitly political discourse instead of as a discourse of Enlightenment reason, and it should be so understood because "postmodern" social theory is said to support the ethico-political celebration of difference over sameness, of partiality instead of totality, and/or of rhetoric and the "literary" in the place of logic and scientific truth.

Ellsworth manifests the tendency to reverse the priority of (for example) logic and rhetoric when she rejects the ideal of "rationalized, individualized subjects capable of agreeing on universalizable "fundamental moral principles"" — the ideal that, as Ellsworth notes, underlies the conventional pedagogical goal of "dialogue"
(1992, 108) -- and advocates instead what she calls "a pedagogy of the unknowing" (1992, 110). Ellsworth writes,

The terms in which I can and will assert and unsettle "difference" and unlearn my positions of privilege in future classroom practices are wholly dependent on the Others/others whose presence -- with their concrete experiences of privileges and oppressions, and subjugated or oppressive knowledges -- I am responding to and acting with in any given classroom. My moving about between the positions of privileged speaking subject and Inappropriate/d Other cannot be predicted, prescribed, or understood beforehand by any theoretical framework or methodological practice. It is in this sense that a practice grounded on the unknowable is profoundly contextual (historical) and interdependent (social) (1992, 115; my emphasis).

This understanding of the normative implications of "postmodernism" -- one which issues in the proposal to replace a critical theory of education grounded on rational principles with contextually-contingent political action grounded on the unknowable -- is shared by other theorists and philosophers of education as well. Suzanne de Castell, for example, claims "[w]e have... a good deal to learn from postmodernism." reversing as it does the traditional values of text, of linearity, of coherence, and of argument, and replacing these with image, with simultaneity, with rupture, and with story (de Castell 1995, 242-243). On de Castell's view, what this purported reversal can teach us is that traditional practices of philosophy are "not merely inadequate but indeed corrupt" (1995, 255), for philosophy as it has been practised entails generalizing abstractly in the face of the concrete differences that structure people's various relations to power and to privilege. Moreover, de Castell argues, philosophers of education are necessarily complicit in evil, because "the very artifacts and practices we value most have been produced and continue...to be produced in and through the oppression and exploitation of others" (1995, 248).
These texts and practices should be left behind, she says -- relegated to the history of a bygone era -- so that philosophers of education who are "seriously concerned with the appalling conditions of people's lives in the present" (1995, 255) can begin to address their concerns.

Like Ellsworth, therefore, de Castell seems to support precisely the "anti-modernist" perspective that Burbules and Rice describe. For de Castell, the task of the philosopher in the wake of "postmodernism" is to right wrongs based on social difference rather than to pursue abstract universality or totalizing knowledge. Patti Lather, too, takes this position when she suggests that "postmodernism" displaces the Enlightenment project altogether. From a feminist pedagogical perspective, Lather insists that "[useful theories of social change] celebrate the dispersion and fragmentation that has displaced the ideal of a global, totalizing project of emancipation which attempted to unify and solidify what is contradictory, diverse and changing" (Lather 1991. 164; emphasis added).

Or consider the argument of René Vincente Arcilla, which evidences the normative shift that characterizes anti-modernism -- from universality to partiality, from logic to narrative, or from philosophy to politics -- as well. "Jacques Derrida and allied thinkers," he writes, "invite us to balance the 'scientific' tendency in philosophy to value the features of language that promote ideal clarity, verified communication, and committed consensus, with a 'literary' appreciation of those features that disclose material opacity (particularly of the signifier), unconscious signification, and undecided possibilities of interpretation" (1995, 168). In this vein, Arcilla goes on to underline the importance of recognizing the "indefinite and self-estranging" nature of

An educational discourse based on this recognition, he proposes, would be one in which

a politics sensitive to cultural differences would meet a politics that finds in these differences the natural limit of our intelligible identities; an incongruous mix of cultures would thus yield a common sense of strangeness. And so is born hope for a new politics of commonality, one grounded in nature conceived not as an intelligible (to some privileged cultural language) cosmos but as the withdrawing source of language and linguistic beings, the mysterious X. Such a politics would be guided by a discourse of universal rights for a multicultural society (1995, 170, emphasis mine).

It is difficult to know just what Arcilla is saying, given his insistence on a discourse of universal human rights at the very moment he contends that no natural human, and no "recognizable" identity (167) can be determined in a multicultural society. Nonetheless, the normative implications are clear: what is "unknowable" or unintelligible is, according to Arcilla, just what we ought to embrace:

Thus *philosophia* could be transformed from a project to eliminate or reduce indefiniteness, from an epistemological project, into a giving thanks for how the return of indefiniteness reminds us of our awful and awesome, sublime communion with indefinite Being (ontologically different, as Heidegger shows, from culturally defined beings) (1995, 171: note omitted. emphasis mine).21

This group of theorists, it emerges, understands "postmodernism" in a distinctly different way than neomodernists understand it. Neomodernism is characterized by the belief that traditional ethico-political values can be reclaimed for "postmodernity" if only they can be divorced from the original, epistemological metanarrative. Anti-modernism, in contrast, is characterized by the rejection of

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21 As Harvey Siegel (1997, 162) points out, Arcilla is clearly evoking the Kantian notion of the "sublime" as an educational ideal.
traditional educational values, and the proposal to replace them with their negative, arational, or even irrational counterparts. Educational values proposed by anti-modernists include, for instance, partiality and the "unknowable" (Ellsworth 1992), disruption (de Castell 1995), fragmentation (Lather 1991, 1992), "indefiniteness" (Arcilla 1995), "multivocality" (McCarthy, C. 1993) and radical pluralism (McGee 1993).

Ironically, this tendency to reverse the traditional categories aligns the anti-modernists much more closely with the traditional modernists discussed in Chapter One -- those who dismiss contemporary critiques of the Enlightenment out of hand -- than it does with the neomodernists discussed above who, in supporting at least a version of "postmodernism," would seem to be their more likely theoretical companions. But as we have seen, neomodernists support "postmodernism" only insofar as it is said to continue the modernist project, not insofar as it is said to negate it. The anti-modernists profiled here, in contrast, see "postmodernism" as modernity's outright replacement. They thus share with traditional modernists (anti-postmodernists) the erroneous belief that philosophers such as Derrida stand "the primacy of logic over rhetoric, canonized since Aristotle, on its head" (Habermas 1987, 187).

It remains, therefore, that even though anti-modernists and anti-postmodernists draw diametrically opposed conclusions about the ethical and political merit of "postmodern" theory, the anti-modernist proponents of "postmodernism" go astray on the same basis as the anti-postmodernist critics. For, while the "postmodern" theory I have been discussing is not simply a continuation of the
modernist project of Enlightenment (as neomodernists would have it), it is not its negation, either.

In fact, I have shown, the understanding of "postmodernism" as a straightforward negation of the modern ethos of Enlightenment leaves intact one of the two crucial premises that de Man, Lyotard, Derrida, and other "postmodernists" have challenged. Specifically, I have argued that -- whether they take it for good or for ill -- those who believe that deconstruction "aestheticizes" political philosophy beg the question of logic's purity with regard to language's tropological effects. In other words, while the priority of the categories (the first assumption) may well have been reversed by anti-modernists, the autonomy of the categories (the second assumption) is still being taken for granted. Yet it is just this distinction between logic and "rhetoric" (that feature of language de Man calls its "literariness" or its tropological dimension), between the aesthetic and the sublime, or between philosophical and apocalyptic discourse, that (a certain) "postmodernism" attends.

Anti-modernists (no less than modernists) overlook this point; the status of the "literary" as (mere) aesthetic ornament as opposed to the philosophical is here being upheld. Consequently, anti-modernists still obscure what de Man calls the "epistemological thrust" of rhetoric itself -- that is, the provocative capacity of a "rhetorical reading" to disarticulate the theoretical system as a whole -- and "postmodern" revelations concerning the rhetorical dimensions of logic, the apocalyptic opening of philosophy, or, indeed, the "sublime" cause of "critique," are thereby denied. The anti-modernist thus loses sight of the very critical resource -- the "post-modern" in Lyotard's sense of the future anterior, whereby the "post"-modern is
what will have been modernity's undoing -- that they call upon to counter the exclusionary effects of Enlightenment.

It is important to underline once again, therefore, that once these terms are understood, it becomes apparent that their reversal is out of the question. This for two reasons. The first is that terms such as "rhetoric," the "sublime," the "apocalyptic," or the "mystagogical" are not objects of consciousness -- not concepts or categories -- at all. These terms may appear to signify something determinate that is, on first glance, analogous to logic and its correlates. Paradoxically, however, they stand in for what is necessarily absent and thus constitutively indeterminable: what is mystagogical, sublime, or rhetorically ambiguous is precisely what we cannot determine, objectify, or know.

This is why logic had to be prioritized over (so-called) "rhetoric" in the formulation of the link between the trivium and the quadrivium: knowledge cannot be founded on an outright incapacity to know. The primacy of logic over rhetoric (which was itself then inscribed as the merely ornamental dimension of language, rather than as linguistic undecidability) was (and remains) indispensable for "scientific" (systematic) knowledge or theōria. The cost of theōria, in other words, is the erasure of a rhetorical "undecidability" that not only cannot be got rid of, but that is actually a necessary condition for the very knowledge, the very theory, that denies it.

Now, if a literary theory "that foregrounds the rhetorical over the grammatical and the logical function" (de Man 1982, 14) brings an undecidability at the root of the classical theory of language into view, then what kind of "theory" could this be? Clearly, what I called (literary) theory, is not itself simply an(other) theory of the
aesthetic function of language. Rather, it is the inevitable disruption or
deconstruction of systematic knowledge qua theòria (or theory₁) and, as such, is not a "theory" at all. On the other hand, insofar as "theory₂" is a systematic disruption of systematicity, it partakes of the very "resistance" to "literariness" that characterizes theory (theory₁) as such. To this extent, even so-called "rhetorical" readings do not actually negate the place of "logic," for they never are strictly "rhetorical." On the contrary, they partake of theory₁ as well. Ambivalently, then -- insofar as they both are and are not 'theory' -- rhetorical readings cannot but help upholding, even while they deny, the possibility (i.e., of logic over rhetoric) entrenched in the classical trivium.

When this argument was mapped onto the relationship between ethics and epistemology -- the relationship, that is to say, that authorizes the outright rejection of "postmodernism" (described in Chapter One) and that is nothing less than the condition of possibility for the modernist educational project of Enlightenment described in Chapter Two -- it emerged that the impossible primacy of logic and its erasure was mobilized once again for the modern discourse of Enlightenment when Kant established for the first time a critical or normative doctrine of reason in its totality. In Kant, the illegitimate (yet necessary) prioritizing of logic occurs when the potentially disruptive tension between the beautiful and the sublime is contained in the third Critique -- when it is impossibly contained, that is to say, by virtue of a bracketing of what is, as "sublime." beyond the bounds of aesthetic or logical meaning. Kant thus established as "science" (i.e., as theòria) a universal system of
knowledge within which moral knowledge could be enclosed and thereby Legitimated as a distinct epistemological object.

Indeed, it was precisely because his system was conceived in strictly epistemological terms that Kant had to distinguish what is distinctly moral about reason as compared to its merely theoretical status. To this end, Kant argued that the principle of practical reason in particular (i.e., the unconditioned condition or ground of a legitimate standard of critique) is rooted in the subject's excessive, sublime essence -- that is, in its 'response-ability' to the law of universalization. Moreover, by virtue of this logical objectification of (undecidable) sublimity as autonomy (as the subject's essential "freedom"), Kant was able to ground the critical system as a whole (the theoria) on a normative or moral basis. Thus, by restricting illegitimately the sublime quality of response-ability to a logical concept of "freedom," Kant not only established a moral standard of critique; he simultaneously lent to merely theoretical reason a critical, emphatic force -- a force that continues to be upheld in the name of the emancipatory promise of Enlightenment.

Just as in the case of a "literary" theory of the relationship between logic and rhetoric within the trivium, however, the priority of the terms cannot be reversed simply because a deconstructive reading reveals the way in which a bracketing of the sublime founds (it founds impossibly) the Critical doctrine as a whole, or because it reveals that the relationship between the Critical doctrine and the ethical critique is grounded on the subject's sublime essence. These foundations may well prove to be mystagogical. Nonetheless, the "sublime" nature of "Being" can no more usurp the place of a restricted conception of rational "autonomy" (as per Arcilla) than can the
aesthetic sublime usurp the place of the beautiful within the Kantian architectonic as a whole — or, for that matter, than can a pedagogy of the "unknowing" usurp the prescription made possible in advance by a "theoretical framework or methodological practice" (Ellsworth 1992, 115). On the contrary, the possibility of a logic that is pure must be upheld, and logic must be prioritized over rhetoric, since the priority of this autonomous category is the sine qua non of any meaningful, translatable, communicable, sense, including the distinctly moral sense that Ellsworth, de Castell, Lather and Arcilla want to make of the so-called "unknowable." Similarly, I argued above, any theory which aims to understand with logic the rhetorical challenge to logic will also "resist" its own rhetorical undoing; consequently, the possibility that rhetorical reading (literariness) could take the place of theory (of logic) is ruled out from the start.

The necessity is thus a strictly logical one: once the "sublime" is understood as, simply, what is unrecoverable by discourse -- namely, discursivity, or the gesture of speech, as such -- it becomes clear that any political project based the priority of the sublime would be utterly unintelligible. In other words, what is truly "unknowable" or "sublime" (by definition, as it were, not in terms of ontological essence) is what exceeds the possibility of cognitive or imaginative re-presentation (it is what is mysterious, unrepresentable, and unimaginable) -- for Kant and for contemporary theorists alike. Insofar as the sublime really does inhere in the logical principle of practical reason, therefore, it undoes every determination, every objectification, and every (re)cognizable value, including those values determined as "the unknowable" (Ellsworth), "the disruptive" (de Castell), or "the mysterious X" (Arcilla).
Furthermore, just as the "sublime" (once revealed) deconstructs every value on which it is brought to bear, so the reverse will follow as well. The moment the "unknowable," the "disruptive" or the "indefinite" are themselves determined as identifiable 'goods', the moment these terms are attributed with moral meaning, they uphold (even while they deny) the possibility of knowing in advance what we ought, morally, to do -- just as a systematic disruption of systematicity (theory) upholds, even while it denies, the priority of logic over rhetoric entrenched in the classical trivium. As soon as it is discursively positioned as a value, in other words, the sublime loses its deconstructive force, its capacity to undo determination, precisely because it no longer is what we understand as "sublime." This is exactly the moment at which deconstructive différance is rendered as difference, and stripped of its radical import.

To suggest that one ought to celebrate the "literary" (qua the sublime, the mystagogical, the rhetorical or, indeed, the political) with or instead of upholding "science" (qua systematicity, philosophy, logic, or reason), therefore, is to misconstrue the meaning of these terms. The "sublime" in any of its various guises (such as 'multivocality', strangeness, "indefiniteness," border-crossing, "unknowing," or fragmentation), is not and cannot be a(nother) type of phenomenal sense, a(nother) kind of ethico-political principle, or a(nother) representable object that is available to consciousness, nor can the indeterminacy that de Man calls "literariness" and Derrida calls "différance" ever take the place of determinate knowledge or aesthetic meaning as such.

It is just because this reversal does issue in unintelligibility, I propose, that the theorists I call "anti-modernist" are in fact deeply ambivalent about how the ineffable
idea of "unknowing" or "indefiniteness" can actually "ground" (Ellsworth, Arcilla) a political educational project aimed at social justice. What Ellsworth says on this point, for instance, is that with Minh-ha, she "refuses to know and resist oppression from any a priori line of attack, such as race, class, or gender solidarity" -- that, in effect, she rejects outright the strategies of an ahistorical or decontextualized identity politics -- and that "fundamental moral and political principles are not absolute and universalizable, waiting to be discovered by the disinterested researcher/teacher" (1992, 113, 108). On the other hand, the explicit goal of the course was to combat social oppression by "winning semiotic space for the marginalized discourses of students against racism" (1992, 94, 111), and the key moral term of that undertaking was that of "self-definition" (1992, 97, 101, 110 and 114). In this sense, there clearly was a conception of social justice already in place.

This ambivalence is economically captured towards the end of the article. After describing the three anti-racist actions undertaken by "Coalition 607" (the class), Ellsworth writes, "Thus students engaged in the political work of changing material conditions within a public space, allowing them to make visible and assert the legitimacy of their own definitions, in their own terms, of racism and anti-racism on the UW [the University of Wisconsin-Madison] campus" (1992, 111, emphasis mine).

In the context of Ellsworth's argument, this claim is important, since it is intended to expose precisely the distinction between Ellsworth's own pedagogical programme to disrupt "the ways social technologies of gender, race, ability, and so on define Otherness and use it as a vehicle for subordination" (1992, 113) -- i.e., her programme to undertake a "certain critique" -- and that of the (neomodern) theorists

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who impose in advance an a priori principle (i.e., a critical standard) that is based on the fixed identity of the rational subject, and that thereby occludes the relations of privilege and power that are already at play. However, the reference to the prior 'good' of self-definition does more to align her approach with that of modernists of various stripes, than it does to distinguish it as a viable alternative.

To be sure, this appeal to the self-evident 'good' of self-definition may indeed lend credence to Ellsworth's views, insofar as it allows her to ground the "pedagogy of unknowing" she proposes on a conception of justice that allows us to judge. The principle of self-definition may well have been introduced expressly to solve the problem that the narratives of oppression each group in her class possessed could only ever be partial -- both in the sense that they "project the interests of 'one side' over others." (1992, 97) and are thus "predicated on the exclusion of the voices of others" (1992, 110). and also in the sense that they are "unfinished, imperfect, limited" (1992, 97). Consequently, the political strategies that the class undertook on the basis of those narratives could never be guaranteed to safeguard the struggles of other groups, or even the struggles of various affinity groups within the class itself.22 As Ellsworth insists, "accounts of one group's suffering and struggle [are not] immune from reproducing narratives oppressive to another's," and "there are no social positions exempt from becoming oppressive to others. . . .any group -- any position --

22 In light of this point, it is particularly interesting that each proposal for political action was in fact appraised by the class according to a "final arbiter" (or critical standard) of moral acceptability that had been intersubjectively determined. Before they were implemented, proposals first had to be judged as to whether or not they would "succeed in alleviating campus racism, while at the same time managing not to undercut the efforts of the other social groups to win self-definition" (1992, 110; original emphasis). But since Ellsworth's own account this is in principle an unanswerable question, the judgments students made clearly did not and could not function as an 'arbitrating' standard of critique.

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can move into the oppressor role" (1992, 99, 114; internal reference omitted). The principle of self-definition is needed, therefore, to allow us to evaluate which disruptions of the social status quo are emancipatory, and which are not.

In effect, if we already know that "self-determination" is an unconditional good, we can gauge whether the action proposed will be emancipatory or oppressive in its effects. Thus, while a pedagogy of the unknowing suggests that no culturally or historically-determined identity can be specified as unoppressive in advance, we can nonetheless appeal to our human capacity for and right to self-definition as the gauge for assessing the relative merit of given cultural determinations and socially-embedded narratives. By virtue of this standard, we can know what is bad when we see it.

Significantly, however, this view is one which suggests that "legitimacy" derives from the groups' assertions of "their own definitions, in their own terms." What makes the opposing definitions of racism and anti-racism "legitimate," in other words, is just that they are the students' own, self-determined ones. If this is the meaning Ellsworth intends, then it follows that she is tacitly endorsing the classic, Enlightenment value of self-determination as the (epistemological) ground of (moral) action. On this view, in other words, it appears that Ellsworth is positing the subject as such, the subject to whom rights accrue, as that being distinguished by its essential capacity for self-determination -- as capable of constituting (or 'causing') itself, notwithstanding contingent social determinants, and so transcending contingency -- even though she is directly critical of that Enlightenment perspective. And, if Ellsworth is read in this
way, her position is clearly vulnerable on the same count as that of any other neomodernist: namely, she fails to explain how or why the logical idea of self-determination (self-causality, as it were) should be taken as an ethico-political 'good' once the modernist metanarrative, with its illegitimate, transcendental justification of moral autonomy, is explicitly eschewed.

But the claim is rhetorically undecidable and thus lends itself to the alternate interpretation as well. Specifically, Ellsworth may merely be reporting that her class provided a context in which counter-hegemonic terms and definitions could be asserted as (equally) legitimate bases for contesting racism on campus. If the term "legitimacy" is taken in this more colloquial sense, it would appear merely to lend rhetorical support to the political assertion of an opposing, yet arguably equally "legitimate," point of view. (As in, for example, the claim that my view is as legitimate as yours, which is simply to say that no view is any more legitimate intrinsically than any other.) On this latter reading, significantly, it follows that the educative project of inculcating critical reason -- the capacity to distinguish rationally between legitimate and illegitimate views -- should give way to a strictly political project of providing students with opportunities to identify and assert a variety of claims, whatever these may be. On this view all claims appear to be relative, since none of them bear any legitimate status -- any prior bearing on social justice -- at all. Thus, while the second interpretation would indeed rescue the proposal from the Scylla of transcendentalism, it does so by virtue of an encounter with the Charybdis of relativism instead.

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23 As she is, for example, by Burbules and Rice (1991, 401-2).
As it should now have become clear, what is of special interest here is not which interpretation we choose. In fact such a decision would be misplaced, since neither the grammar nor the logic of the argument can help us out. What is of interest, rather, is that such an equivocation obtains. For Ellsworth's simultaneous appeal to and denial of ethico-political legitimacy, I contend, evidences the inherent senselessness of appealing to the ineffable of "unknowing" as an ethico-political 'good'. In particular, the impossible structure of the anti-modernist argument is that it logically demands that one introduce an alternative standard of critique that can be mobilized toward the vision of social justice that one upholds, even while it announces -- and announces correctly -- that what makes indeterminacy a normative force at all is precisely that it undermines, disrupts, and challenges the ways in which any such standard, and any such vision, will be oppressive in its turn. Since these claims are mutually exclusive, anti-modernist attempts to combine them will undoubtedly give rise to the kind of ambivalence that was witnessed above.

On this basis, for example, we find in Patti Lather's text the following queries:

How can postmodernism begin to clear the ground and challenge the plethora of concepts that appear as givens in our debates about the possibilities and limits of emancipatory education? How can such self-reflexivity both render our basic assumptions problematic and provisional and yet still propel us to take a stand?" (1991, 44).

One might redirect these questions back to Lather herself. What could it possibly mean, for example, to "[display] under the sign of (post)critical" a pedagogical practice in which "emancipatory space is problematized via deconstruction of the Enlightenment equation of knowing, naming and emancipation" (1992, 131; 1991, 118), if the very designation "(post)critical" means the "continued centrality of critical
reason" in its sense of "the driving force behind modernism" (Lather 1992, 131, 121, my emphasis)? As I argued above, the "driving force behind modernism" is the equation of knowing, naming, and emancipation. "Postmodernism" cannot both clear this ground or challenge its equation and also instantiate it at the same time.

This impossibility leads one to question just how deep Lather's wish to deconstruct Enlightenment precepts -- particularly those concerning the centrality of the subject -- actually goes. To be sure, we are told that "deconstruction can serve to problematize critical pedagogy in ways that resituate our emancipatory work" such that it can interrogate and reflect upon itself (1991, 47. 154) -- and this precisely because the "goal" of deconstruction is "to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, [and] to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal" (1992, 13). In this sense, the "postmodern" is said to "break with totalizing, universalizing 'metanarratives' and the humanist view of the subject that undergirds them" (1991, 5).

But the progressive potential of this "postmodernism" is never spelled out. On the contrary. Lather maintains that "relativistic assumptions of a free play of meaning that denies power relations are of little use for those struggling to free themselves from normalizing boundaries and categories" (1991, 116), and that "the debunking of foundational grounding... the insistence upon a fragmented, de-centred self, and the retreat from teleology via historical progress and human agency... may be useful strategies 'for the inheritor of the voice of the transcendental ego', but they pose dangers for any appropriation of postmodernism on the part of the marginalized" (1991, 37-8: internal reference omitted). It is on this basis (one suspects) that
"postmodernism" is characterized as 'irredeemably politically ambivalent' (1991, 31), and is thought to require the correction of a political feminist practice. What is most notable here is that feminist practice, according to Lather, characteristically appeals (in all of its various strands) "to the powers of agency and subjectivity as necessary components of socially transformative struggle. For it is feminist discourse that has raised the most questions about the fractured, fragmented subject postulated by poststructural discourse" (1991, 28).

It is understandable, of course, if the standoff between feminism and poststructuralism inspires in Lather an "ambivalence" about "the politics of postmodern thought and practice" (1991, 1, 38). For the conflict between the logical need for a standard of critique that feminist theory and practice provides (however problematically), and the "postmodern" interrogation of that possibility that Lather promotes, is arguably insolvable. But insofar as her ambivalence is itself ultimately offered as category of critique, Lather is misconstruing the meaning of that term in exactly the way that was outlined above. Specifically, she writes that her own position is one of "deliberate ambivalence":

I see this ambivalence as a way to interrupt the contestatory discourses of the various feminisms, neo-Marxisms, minoritarianisms, and poststructuralisms in order to begin to move outside of both the logic

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24 It is worthwhile comparing what Lather says about Ellsworth's pedagogical project. Specifically, notwithstanding these concerns about the political implications of a fragmented subject, Lather contends that "Ellsworth... begins to give a feel for the political possibilities of the multiply-sited subject of poststructuralist theory, a subject characterized by heterogeneity, irreducible particularities, and incalculable differences." Ellsworth's work is thus said to demonstrate that "postmodernism has much to offer those of us who do our work in the name of emancipatory education..." (1991, 48: emphasis mine). However, since the most forceful conclusion that Lather draws is that "there is nothing in postmodernism that makes it intrinsically reactionary" (1991, 49), she has not actually countered these worries with a demonstration that there is something in "postmodernism" that makes it intrinsically progressive instead.
of binary oppositions and the principle of non-contradiction. Situated in our multiple sites for movements of social justice, we can begin to "reinscribe otherwise" while avoiding the fall into an infinite regress of demystification (1991, 163).

In fact, I have argued, we cannot avoid the "infinite regress of demystification" that Lather fears. Not, that is to say, if it is recalled that the ultimate irrecoverability by discourse of the apocalyptic opening of discourse means that the task of 'denouncing false discourses' is, as Derrida says, constitutively interminable. Or, to put this more simply, insofar as we can never finish 'enlightening' the Enlightenment about itself, there is no "outside" -- no non-mystagogical space -- to which to escape.

Certainly "ambivalence" itself cannot figure such a space. since ambivalence -- like rhetorical undecidability within the trivium, sublime response-ability to the law of universalization, or literary resistance to theoria -- signifies an indeterminacy that we cannot (re)cognize, objectify, or know. Ambivalence as such, so to speak, cannot lead us out of the domain of non-contradiction or logical determination any more readily than the uncommon can 'be' what is "common" to us all (Arcilla). To suggest that it can is precisely to reinscribe ambivalence not "otherwise," but rather as the Other of the Same. To just this extent, ambivalence itself is rendered as a determinate position -- it is turned into a(ther) contestatory discourse that is "deliberate" -- and its critical capacity to "interrupt" various discourses of intelligibility is immediately lost.

But the fact that terms such as "unknowing," "indefiniteness," or undecidability are not discursively recoverable as determinations that can ground an alternative stance is not the only argument against the attempt to reverse the positions of logic and rhetoric. There is a second argument as well. It is that insofar as the "apocalyptic tone" of philosophy conditions the possibility of distinguishing between philosophy and
mystagogy, or insofar as the sublime is what first opens the aesthetic (i.e., as the "beautiful") or the theoretical (philosophy proper) to its own possibility — apocalyptic polyvocality and the sublime do not stand outside philosophy as its symmetrical negation or as, themselves, analogous kinds of discourses. Rather, we have seen, our indeterminable, sublime response to the moral law is what first makes both critique — a knowledge of the difference between moral and immoral acts — and Critique (a knowledge of the principle of moral knowledge) possible. So understood, polyvocality, rhetorical undecidability, or différence opens the determinate difference between the categories of ethics (or politics) and epistemology (or reason); it does not serve as epistemology's complement.

On this basis, I argued in Chapter One that the category of the sublime is that without which Kant could not have determined what is "beautiful," what is true or, indeed, what one "ought" to do. Similarly, I argued in Chapter Two, contrary to those who read Lyotard (1984) as advocating a rejection of modernist philosophical tenets in the name of the "postmodern," The Postmodern Condition does not describe an external position that the subject intentionally adopts (or not, at will) with regard to modernity. Rather, Lyotard is diagnosing modernity's own erosion or deconstruction, from within. In this sense, what de Man calls "literariness," what Derrida calls the "apocalyptic opening of philosophy," what Lyotard calls modernity's "internal erosion" and what Kant himself views as the "sublime" causality of practical reason all stand, as it were, 'inside' philosophy as its (internal) constitutive 'outside' — these terms are what figure by and for philosophy its own "supplemental" lack. As such, the terms themselves figure what cannot be figured but what nonetheless first enables — what
"possibilizes" (Gashé 1995) -- philosophical completeness as such. The sublime is simply not, on this account, the Other of the Same.

What is most important here, then, is that the apocalyptic, the mysterious, the "sublime," or the undecidable are philosophical reason's own impossible necessity -- not its rejection, not its absolute other, and not its logical equivalent. For this reason as well, what Ellsworth calls the "unknowable," de Castell calls "disruption," Lather calls "dispersion" and Arcilla calls "indefiniteness" cannot take the place of those ethico-political values that underpin the philosophical discourse of modernity. To say that rhetoric possibilizes logic, that the sublime possibilizes the aesthetic, or that something we might call 'archi-critique' possibilizes the Critical architectonic as a whole is to say that the very determination of value -- the very appeal to any ethico-political term that is (literally) meaningful -- simultaneously presupposes and erases just that unknowability, just that disruption, just that sublimity, and just that indefiniteness these theorists would here evoke. Or, to put this differently, normative (ethico-political) claims for the unknowable are themselves always already inside, and always already structured by, the very discourse of definition, restriction, and exclusion of the unknowable that Ellsworth, de Castell, Lather, and Arcilla wish to avoid.

Contrary to Burbules and Rice, then, the fundamental problem with the anti-modernist approach to educational theory is not primarily that it generates educative practices that "seem largely dependent upon the preferences of those who advance

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25 On the sublime as the "constitutive outside" of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment and, thus, as its "supplement" in the Derridean sense, see Chapter One.
them" (1991, 399). In a certain sense this is true, but the problem can be more precisely formulated. It is that, with their normative appeal to what is "outside," to what escapes logic, determination, and reason's exclusionary effects, anti-modernists no less than modernists presuppose a hard and fast distinction between (for example) universality and partiality, logic and rhetoric, or philosophical reason and ethico-political 'goods', and this distinction itself is always already indebted to the irrecoverable, apocalyptic opening of philosophy -- and, indeed, of discourse in general -- that is thereby obscured from view. In short, the anti-modernist determination of différence as a value reinstates the impossible difference between the epistemological and the ethico-political. and so covers over the différential structure of the very divide that "postmodernism," rightly, brings to attention.

In effect, then, if an anti-modernist approach to education generates practices that cannot be legitimated in universalist terms, this is not because the approach is "postmodern." It is because, on the contrary, the belief in a pure contest of wills (a pure ethical or political stance) against which there can be no rational appeal depends on a classically modern erasure of the undecidable difference between "philosophy" and "politics." The belief does not derive from the "postmodern" theory of de Man, Derrida or Lyotard at all.

This misreading of différence (structural undecidability) as "difference" (politics instead of philosophy) is a common one; however, it is doubly unfortunate when it occurs in an anti-modernist approach to education. For as I have indicated, the error does not only give rise to a fundamental confusion at the heart of the theory. It also blinds us to the normative potential of deconstruction itself: namely, to the possibility
that the 'ungrounded ground' of the philosophy-politics difference, once brought into view, will undo the purity of both of these categories at once, and so offer precisely the kind of critical challenge (a "certain critique") against Enlightenment reason that anti-modernists actually support. This possibility suggests that if we are to sustain the idea of reason as critique, then its ethico-political ends will have to be revised.

With their unwavering focus on traditional political ends, anti-modernist educational theorists fail to understand that différance can be mobilized for a critical inquiry into the grounds of those 'goods' themselves. In anti-modernist theory, the impossibility at the root of a legitimate ethico-political critique is itself restricted as a(nother) distinct normative end, and the ideological effects of that emancipatory discourse is once more upheld.

Despite these misunderstandings (and they are significant), however, it is important to recognize that anti-modernist theorists like Ellsworth, de Castell, Lather and Arcilla, no less than neomodernist theorists like McLaren, Carr, Giroux, and others, are also right. Political philosophers of education are necessarily complicit in a kind of "evil" (de Castell) and do inevitably 'exacerbate' the conditions we are trying to work against, including, as Ellsworth says, "Eurocentrism, racism, sexism, classism, and 'banking education'." In fact, theorists and philosophers of education will continue to be complicit in these ills as long as we believe that the task of a progressive, educational theory is to formulate a particular, ethico-political agenda that is morally legitimate. For in order for a particular political 'good' to be taken as a legitimate educational aim, the 'good' must be tied to a critical standard that is rationally grounded. Such a standard is the basis for a 'critical consciousness' through
which we can distinguish the genuinely just from the genuinely unjust. As we have seen, however, the ethico-political standard of critique that will inform this decision can only be determined and Legitimated -- it can only be epistemologically-grounded in what is unconditionally true, and so can only embody reason in its normative sense -- by tacitly appealing to the subject’s inherent, transcendental essence (its moral end). And any such reference will be exclusionary in its effects. Thus, a traditional philosophy of education aimed at social justice does entail generalizing abstractly in the face of concrete differences, as de Castell, among others, suggests.

Critics of Enlightenment are thus not wrong to underline the oppressive effects of reason in philosophical discourses of emancipation. Where the anti-modernists and neomodernists err is not in this, but rather in the belief that one can understand political norms in different terms -- for example, as strictly political, without any bearing on legitimate (philosophical) grounds at all. On this basis, anti-modernists argue, the emancipatory aim of the educational project can still be upheld, despite the contemporary challenge to its traditional philosophical justification.

For a number of reasons, this proposal is untenable. First, I have argued that every political claim will implicate a determinate standard of critique since, in the absolute absence of any logical (and, hence, necessarily restrictive) principle of ethico-political judgment, one cannot speak to the difference between justice and injustice, and so can neither contest nor support a given state of affairs. To say that one’s claim supports justice, in short, is just to say one that has taken a stand. And, once this distinction between the just and the unjust is in fact being made, the
question of legitimacy will ineluctably arise. On what basis, we must ask, is this not simply a version of "might makes right"?

Significantly, this Kantian question is not bypassed just because the standard in question is determined as the rhetorical, the literary, or the sublime -- as, for example, anti-modernists suggest. For the very naming of these categories as values -- values which instantiate a logical distinction between the good and the ill -- ensures that they remain inside the speculative game. For anti-modernists and neomodernists both, therefore, it emerges that the emancipatory intent of Enlightenment is salvaged from the contemporary, deconstructive critique only insofar as political theory that upholds it is still founded on a philosophy of the subject in its essence -- on, for example, our (unconditional) capacity for self-determination, or on the (true) "existence" of an "indefinite, mysterious self," (Arcilla 1995, 169, my emphasis). Something, in each case, is still said to be (truly) "common" to "us all."

Thus the transcendentalizing move is not a concomitant of philosophical inquiry into grounds; it is not, strictly speaking, the consequence of our reasoning about or our inquiry into the rational foundations of claims. On the contrary, I have shown, such an inquiry reveals that it is only ever by virtue of an illegitimate closure of Critique, only by virtue of a mystagogical move, that the logical principle of moral

26 It should be noted that Arcilla denies that this "self" can be judged to be authentically truer than other "fictive identities" we assume (1995, 169). If we take Arcilla at his word, however, then we must consider as theoretical nonsense any mention of the "existence" of an "it" or a "self" that assumes various practical roles and identities. For these ontological categories suggest the existential truth that Arcilla denies. Secondly, we must also ask why the fiction of a "self" that "has no positive qualities" and that "exists" purely as "aporia" should be celebrated before or above any other fiction we might wish to tell (1995, 169, 170). Presumably, it is precisely because this "self" is to be taken in an ontological or quasi-ontological sense that it deserves the pedagogical attention that Arcilla recommends.
determination is revealed. For this reason, I contend, transcendentalism is attendant upon those ethico-political claims that can be meaningfully expressed, shared, or taught, themselves. And it is just because metaphysics is the *sine qua non* of ethico-political norms themselves -- at least insofar as they are not purely relative -- and not of a strictly epistemological Critique, that neither neomodernists nor anti-modernists can escape the Kantian problematic, no matter how creatively, or how strenuously, they try.

What is of special interest in the anti-modernist case, however, is that the failure to escape the Kantian impasse is consequent on the very way that they have attempted to do so. Specifically, anti-modernists insist on a radical distinction between politics and philosophy, and so unwittingly determine as *difference* the indeterminacy of *differance*. It was for this reason that I claimed that anti-modernists and anti-postmodernists are secretly allied. Because they share the assumption that such categories as philosophy and politics can be definitively separated, both beg the question of the autonomy of the logical and the rhetorical dimensions of language. The crucial difference between them, then, is not that one is modern and the other is its "post." Rather, it is that unlike anti-postmodernists, anti-modernists have nowhere intelligible to go. In other words, the anti-modernist strategy entails the determination of the indeterminable as such, and this effort results in an educational theory that simply makes no sense. Thus, as I claimed earlier, anti-postmodernists will have the upper argumentative hand.

In the next chapter, therefore, I examine Jürgen Habermas's vigorous attempt to counter the contemporary delegitimation of modern legitimacy with a
reformulation of reason's normative force in non (or only quasi-) transcendental terms. In so doing, Habermas appears to offer to educational theorists a solution to the transcendentalism-relativism problematic that was first instantiated by Kant.
4. TRANSCENDENTALISM AND TELEOLOGY IN HABERMAS'S DISCOURSE ETHICS

The fallibilism built into the theory of discourse is merely the converse side of the postulate that every sufficiently precise question admits of just one right answer. Even if we find this convincing for assertoric propositions, things appear to be otherwise in the case of normative questions. But insofar as what is at issue is in fact a moral matter in the strict sense, we must proceed from the assumption that in the long run it could be decided one way or the other on the basis of good reasons. Jürgen Habermas, "Remarks on Discourse Ethics" (1993, 59).

If one does not take rigorous account of undecidability, it will not only be the case that one cannot act, decide or assume responsibility, but one will not even be able to think the concepts of decision and responsibility. . . If responsibility were not infinite, you could not have moral and political problems. There are only moral and political problems, and everything that follows from this, from the moment when responsibility is not limitable. . . .Every time I hear someone say that 'I have taken a decision', or 'I have assumed my responsibilities', I am suspicious because if there is responsibility or decision one cannot determine them as such or have certainty or good conscience with regard to them. Jacques Derrida, "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism" (1996, 86).

I: Anti-postmodernism and the case of Habermas

As we have seen, an examination of neomodernist and anti-modernist educational theory reveals that the tension between 'all' and 'nothing' is evident across the theoretical board -- from adaptations of Gramsci, Freire, Dewey, Wittgenstein and Vygotsky for critical educational theory through to anti-racist, feminist and multicultural critical theories of education -- and, thus, just how pertinent the Kantian formulation of the relationship between ethics and epistemology still is. Since this relationship is still at play in the very meaning of "criticality" being advocated today, it remains that one must contest the Kantian formulation directly if one is to uphold the distinction between knowledge and ideology that the conception of education as emancipation demands. Otherwise, the critical standard of de-mystification being espoused will entail the very mystification -- the occlusion of C/critique and the
transcendentalizing of the subject -- that Kant himself inscribed in the meaning of "critique."

To the extent that it alone addresses this necessity, a third strategic response to "postmodernism" -- one which embodies a much more direct engagement with the Kantian legacy -- is arguably the strongest position of the three. This "anti-postmodernist" approach to educational theory is commonly based on a clear recognition of the problematic status of critique once it has been decoupled, either ambivalently (as in neomodernism) or definitively (as in anti-modernism), from the Enlightenment metanarrative of Critique. Specifically, anti-postmodernism entails the attempt to retain reason's emancipatory promise by countering, rather than embracing, "postmodernism's" exposure of reason's ideological effects. To this end, anti-postmodernists offer a reformulation of reason's own normative ground, but this time in fallible and phenomenal, rather than in (Hegel's) ideal or (Kant's) noumenal, terms. Thus, it is argued, it is possible to formulate a post-metaphysical, de-transcendentalized version of the Kantian standard for critique. In various forms, this rebuttal to the 'totalizing' "postmodernist" critique of the Enlightenment ethos can be identified in the work of such theorists as (among others) Blake, Peukert, Kohli, Burwood and Siegel.

Significantly, these philosophers of education are among many who routinely appeal to Jürgen Habermas's theory of discourse (or communicative) ethics in order to make an anti-postmodernist, ethico-political case. As I have already indicated, for example, Nigel Blake is expressly critical of Carr's (Deweyian) neomodernist approach to educational theory, since Carr endorses democracy as a social norm, but
fails to make a compelling case for "the superiority of a modern democratic form of social organization" (Blake 1996, 218, 217). "If only for our own assurances," therefore, "we need stronger reasons than Dewey's to back our appeal to democracy," and "Habermas's conception of rationality" justifies this case (Blake 1996, 234, 225).

In this vein, Helmut Peukert has mobilized the Habermasian argument as well. He says,

The basic task for a theory of education as well as for a theory of democracy remains to develop a critical concept of communication which would be able to describe the structure and goal of transformatory educational processes and, at the same time, to establish the \textit{regulative ideals for communication in non-ideological decision-making}. The most promising candidates for this task seem to be theories of communication which include a discursive ethics of self-reflective communication (1993, 167, emphasis mine).

Habermas's theory of discourse ethics is said to establish the needed ideals, because according to Peukert the theory includes a normative core that defines the basis of ethics. As he summarizes it, the Habermasian thesis is that

if I enter into communication with another person at all, I accept him or her in principle as someone who is able to speak and make himself/herself understood and to contradict me. I accept him or her as an equal partner and am prepared in what I say to expose myself to his or her criticism and response and to attempt to reach agreement with him or her on the truth of statements or the correctness of norms. These \textit{fundamental and inescapable} propositions depend primarily on recognition and acceptance of the other person, an acceptance which must prove itself in jointly worked out norms of behaviour. This mutual acceptance, in principle, can exclude no one as a partner in communication. The moment I begin to speak I enter a universal dialogue (1993, 164; emphasis mine).

Thus, the argument that the principle of autonomy can be "apprehended a priori" as inherent in the structure of language (Habermas, cited in Peukert 1993, 163) -- rather than as an essential fact about the subject -- and, consequently, that any
communicative act entails a set of universal normative presuppositions, is deemed by Peukert to be "fundamentally correct in its central intuition" (1993, 164, 163).

It should be noted, however, that Peukert does not adopt discourse ethics in its strict Habermasian form. Rather, he problematizes it with reference to Levinas's argument that there is a fundamental asymmetry in our relation to others, insofar as "what first makes us a responsible subject" is the immediate and prior claim made on us by the other in his or her 'otherness.' This asymmetry can itself "become an instance of the exercise of power," Peukert says. "If I do not make myself aware that I in my vulnerability also place a claim on the other which can make excessive demands on him or her." Thus, "an ethics that proceeds from the implications of the conversations about validity claims, is always in danger of losing sight of the temporality of human activity" (1993, 165) and, by this token, of the role that the 'other' (present or absent) has already played in my determination as a (free) subject. This is what Peukert elsewhere calls "anamnestic solidarity"; it is the "most extreme paradox of a historically and communicatively acting entity" because "one's own existence becomes a self-contradiction by means of the solidarity to which it is indebted" (1984, 209).

In view of this aporia at the heart of discourse ethics, Peukert proposes complementing the concept of justice that discourse ethicist Karl-Otto Apel espouses -- whereby the autonomous subject "interprets reality and acts in mastery over it" -- with a concept of solidarity that is said to converge with Habermas's own view (Peukert 1993, 166), but that is originally derived from the thought of Emmanuel Levinas. This concept of solidarity is based on the idea that "the practical
recognition of the freedom of the other" is only realized in the "mutual activity" of aiming at the "future realization" of "intersubjectively reflected self-determination" (1993, 165-6). In other words, instead of assuming with Apel that there already exists a finite, "fully developed autonomous subject" who is morally conscious and who can therefore enter into non-ideological discursive relations and so take part in the collective production of legitimate ethico-political norms, Peukert is suggesting that non-ideological and non-violent discursive structures themselves are precisely what allow subjects to anticipate, and thus to embody, their "still awaited" (infinite) potential to identify as beings capable of freedom and autonomy. A dialogical or intersubjective anticipation of identity that is theologically grounded\(^1\) is thus said to be the condition for the universal moral consciousness that Apel and Habermas see (in deontological terms) as already in place (1993, 166).

The relation between this "clarification" and Habermas's own theory is a complex one, but it is not necessary to examine it here.\(^2\) In the present context, the

\(^1\) A theological agenda is explicit in such passages as the following: "the affirmation of the other in interaction is achieved through the experience of the nearness of the absolute mystery, toward which human experience transcends in turning concretely to the other. The determination of the reality of God thus becomes possible in the process of transcending in interaction and in the reality experienced and disclosed within this process" (1984, 274). For a full explication of this particular thesis, see Peukert (1984, 211-275).

\(^2\) It might be noted in passing that while the formulation that Peukert proposes of ethics' deeper ground (albeit extremely interesting) is based on an insightful penetration into a paradox at the heart of the programme, it may actually lessen rather than complement the credibility of the communicative ethics thesis in its original (Habermasian) form, and thus implicitly undermine the theory of education that Peukert himself is trying to articulate on that basis. In this sense, Peukert's reformulation is double-edged. On one hand (to anticipate the ensuing discussion), the Levinasian-inspired clarification establishes at the heart of discourse ethics the interactive and intersubjective quality not merely of the decisions we reach, but of the very "autonomy" we (ostensibly) mobilize to reach them. On Peukert's view, it seems, the possibility of subjective freedom (autonomy) is itself only ever intersubjectively, and only ever prospectively, achieved. In light of this reformulation, traces of Kantian monologism lingering in discourse ethics may well have been overcome. On the other hand, to speak of a "symmetry of asymmetries" (1993, 165) in

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only salient point is that Peukert does find Habermas's theory of discourse ethics to be fundamentally correct in its explication of the normative core of communicative action, and that it is precisely for this reason that Peukert feels a clarification is needed at all. In other words, it is just because the normative presuppositions of symmetry and reciprocity that are embedded in speech are taken to be universally binding to begin with, that the paradox of anamnestic solidarity comes into view.

Peukert describes this paradox in the following way:

According to our previous analysis, unconditioned and universal solidarity with others was seen as the constitutive condition of one's own being human. How can one retain the memory of the conclusive, irretrievable loss of the victims of the historical process, to whom one owes one's entire happiness, and still be happy, still find one's identity? If for the sake of one's own happiness and one's own identity this memory is banished from consciousness, is this not tantamount to the betrayal of the very solidarity by which alone one is able to discover oneself? (1984, 209; emphasis mine).

Clearly, the concept of solidarity (with its attendant paradox) is derived from the unconditioned universal norms that the theory of communicative action postulates. It follows that, if these norms are not as secure epistemologically as

the dialogic relation with respect to the mutual willing-into-being of the subject (as such) that is said to take place, is in the first place to blur the distinction between self and other that Habermas requires. As I argue in Section II, legitimate norms must embody a strict impartiality on Habermas's account, and the impartiality of which we are capable a priori is in turn indebted to a metaphysically determined concept of 'pure' or transcendental reason and, concomitantly, to the possibility of a self-constituting, subject (i.e., one that is not influenced by contingent factors or goods). Thus the suggestion that we are not (yet) fully developed autonomous beings poses a real problem. In the second place, the suggestion that we are for our autonomy dependent on the 'other' also contradicts Habermas's claim that progression towards autonomy occurs in the individual as an "inherent tendency" (Peukert 1993, 164), and this poses a problem as well. For as I argue in Section III, it is only insofar as this tendency is thought to be inherent and not contingent on others or on a given form of life that Habermas can claim for discourse ethics a substantive, emphatic force that is universally binding. Again, therefore, the proposed reformulation may do as much theoretical harm as it does good. In Chapter Five I shall discuss the peculiarly theological nature of Levinas's phenomenological view.
discourse ethicists suppose, the very objection that Peukert raises (the paradox of anamnestic solidarity) will be moot. Peukert's (1993, 1984) radical reformulations of the ground of discourse ethics notwithstanding, therefore, what is of sole importance is the purported link between universality (and, hence, rationality) and normativity that Habermas's theory of discourse ethics is said to provide -- by Peukert as much as by Blake.

Another two theorists for whom Habermas's work plays a crucial role are Les Burwood and Wendy Kohli. For Burwood, for example, Habermas's analysis of the "a priori presuppositions of discourse" provides "some relatively uncontaminated point of reference beyond and independent of any particular culture" (1996, 426). Such principles, Burwood says -- including "truthfulness, consistency, meaningfulness, weighing evidence and sincerity" (1996, 426) -- can be mobilized in collective judgments about what is educationally and socially valuable in a multi-cultural society, thus lending to those judgments a "rational" quality that rebuts the relativism charge.

For Kohli, similarly, Habermas provides a key starting point for critical reflection on the possibility of a "truly 'rational' society" (1995, 109). Unlike Burwood, Kohli both recognizes and shares many of the concerns that have been raised (particularly from a feminist perspective) about the "dominant Western view of reason, even critical reason" that Habermas's work provokes (1995, 107). But she also believes that, historically, reason has served "as a liberating force for women and other subordinated groups" (1995, 107). Hence she contends that it is both possible

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3 With respect to Habermas's version of critical reason, Kohli makes reference to Seyla Benhabib's criticisms in particular (Kohli 1995, 106-7).
and worthwhile to "reconstruct" reason's liberatory potential" in a way that builds on such key Habermasian criteria as "the dialogical and the historical" as these are explicated in the theory of communicative ethics, but that takes into account these important criticisms" (1995, 107-8). Such a reformulation or "reconstruction" of discourse ethics, Kohli implies, will allow philosophers of education to continue to appeal to the "normative and the universal" in the wake of "postmodern discourse" (1995, 108, 103).

Perhaps the most strongly argued "anti-postmodernist" position, however, is that of Harvey Siegel. Siegel has written extensively on "rationality as an educational ideal" (1988, 1997), and has in recent years paid particular attention to what he calls the broad "'anti-Enlightenment' currents in philosophy of education and in general philosophy" (1997, 1). Against these currents, Siegel mounts a frontal attack on such "postmodern" (or, in my terms, "anti-modern") pronouncements as 'all truth claims are contextually derived and therefore relative', 'metanarratives must be rejected

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4 It should be noted that Kohli's reconstruction, like Peukert's, arguably undercuts her own case. Specifically, Kohli argues that "neither Benhabib nor Habermas acknowledges the complexity of the affective dimensions of communicative reason." The possibility of men and women living "more rationally in the world" would therefore require "the development of new structures and processes that attend to the emotional effects of internalized oppression" (1995, 110-11). Of course, Kohli's point is well taken: some conversations may inevitably give rise to "fear, embarrassment, or inadequacy" or "deep anger or rage," and so fail to meet the criteria of a "mutually-respectful dialogue" (1995, 110-11). However, as I shall argue in Section II with reference to Seyla Benhabib's formulations, the rationality and the normativity of the discourse ethics procedure demands that all participants in the dialogue are able to transcend their contingent life circumstances and their particular ethical concerns. Therefore, if what is needed -- as Kohli proposes in even a more radical way than does Benhabib -- is a reconstruction of the "ideal speech situation" such that it can accommodate the expression of intense personal feelings, then this speaks to the impossibility of the kind of rational society that Kohli, following Habermas, envisions. It is unlikely that Kohli is aware of the problem that inheres in the attempt to expand or transform the notion of reason (1995, 108, 111) in this way; like Peukert, she implies that the Habermasian method of "rescuing reason from its instrumental purposes and from the seventeenth century legacy of the disembodied/disembodied (male) ego" is at least fundamentally correct (1995, 108).
because they entail distortion and exclusion', "the ideal of inclusion necessitates the rejection of all universalistic theories' or, "rationality is personal, idiosyncratic, and indeterminate in nature". Since Siegel finds one or another of these claims at work in the texts of each of his 'conversational' partners, he is able to make short shrift of them all. In particular, he rightly points out that, as I argued in the previous chapter, theorists who adopt these positions are either assuming the possibility of the kind of transcendental justification that they explicitly refute, or they are endorsing radical projects of progressive social and educational change that are only ever 'arbitrarily grounded'. Thus, Siegel maintains, the "substantive, epistemic sense of rationality" he defends should continue to stand (1997, 188).

Siegel's defense of "that old-time Enlightenment metanarrative" (1997, 2) is largely persuasive in the context of this all or nothing debate. As Burbules has remarked, however, it has considerably less force against a position that is not reducible to a "simple antirationalism or relativism" (1996, 41). The argument I have been developing in this study, for example, is that the classical ideal of critical reason (that Siegel endorses) is not undercut by (certain) "postmodernists" in the simple sense that they reject it; rather, "critical reason" is undercut by -- or, more precisely, it undercuts -- itself.

5 See in particular Siegel's (1997) treatment of Nicholas Burbules in Chapter 7, his treatment of Mark Weinstein in Chapters 8 and 9, his treatments of Lynda Stone and Vincente Arcilla in Chapter 11, and his treatment of feminist epistemology in Chapter 12. In these and numerous other instances throughout the text, Siegel's preferred strategy is to argue that in making a putatively universal claim about, for example, the ubiquity of uncertainty in women's lives (Stone) or the reasonableness of reasonableness itself (Burbules), the theorist is engaged in a performative contradiction, because he or she is mobilizing the very epistemic and argumentative resources they are trying to escape. This, in Kathryn Pauly Morgan's words, is "the transcendental argument so dear to Siegel's heart" (Morgan 1996, 28).
Specifically, I showed in Chapter Two that the very demand for reason or for legitimacy to which "Critique" responds, issues in a revelation of mystagogy at its own root -- at least in the Kantian case. As I argued, "critical" reason can only be said to be at once both rationally and normatively imbued (as it is by Kant and Siegel [1997, 2, 3] alike) insofar as the abyssal subject (its sublime capacity of response-ability) has been violently restricted to a determinate, epistemological object (the logical principle of "autonomy"). Since this restriction (whereby indeterminable sublimity is determined as a logical principle) is itself not a critical but rather a dogmatic move, the Enlightenment ethico-political agenda with its attendant standard of autonomy has been won (paradoxically) at the cost of suppressing the very critical impulse -- the imperative to render reason -- that gave rise to that project in the first place.

On my view, such an outcome may well be called "postmodernist," insofar as it entails a decentring of the subject on which modernist, ethico-political discourses of education depend, insofar as it reveals the way in which logic fails to master rhetorical undecidability even though modern science demands that it must, or insofar as it issues in a de-legitimation of the modern metanarrative of Enlightenment. In response to Siegel, however, it must be underlined that the outcome of deconstruction I have described does not by any account embody a simple rejection of Enlightenment legitimacy; on the contrary, what is "post" issues from the normative demand for legitimacy itself. De-legitimation is, we have seen, what modernity will have been about (Lyotard 1984).

If Siegel is to respond to this kind of "postmodernism," therefore, he must to do more than defeat a series of straw "postmodernists": he must justify his own
commitment to rationality -- and particularly to the Kantian version of "critical reason" that he favours (e.g., 1997, 145-6, 2) -- in a way that rebuts the argument that the modern norm of "criticality" undoes (will have undone or deconstructed) itself. Siegel's response, in short, must answer to reason by rendering the reason for reason itself in a way that rectifies (rather than simply reiterates) the Kantian problem, if he is to justify his (traditional) understanding of "critical thinking" as a legitimate educational end.

Interestingly, Siegel does believe that it is both legitimate and even necessary to justify the normative prescription of criticality itself. He writes,

> When our critical thinking students ask, . . "Why should we be governed by such epistemological concerns -- why shouldn't we be moved to accept some conclusion, even though it is reached by fallacious reasoning which can't rationally move us," they are asking for reasons for accepting our view of the importance of epistemological constraints on our thinking, believing and acting, and of the importance of rationality more generally. In this case our students are asking why they should be rational. If we cannot answer them, then they will have detected a fundamental inconsistency in our position [that one ought to believe and act on the basis of reasons]. . . The demand for reasons which warrant a commitment to rationality is as legitimate a demand as is the demand for reasons which warrant any other claim, position, or commitment" (1997, 76-77).  

Here Siegel is in full agreement with Derrida: "whenever reason can be rendered, it must" (1983b, 8: my emphasis). But then, as I argued earlier, the satisfaction of the normative demand to render the reason for moral norms themselves is, for modernity, simply what moral legitimacy means. That this understanding of legitimacy is shared by anti-modernists and anti-postmodernists alike, in fact, is precisely why

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6 Siegel notes that such a demand is not only legitimate but in fact "basic to regarding critical thinking as a fundamental educational ideal" (1997, 198, n.1, and 191, n.13: emphasis mine).
(anti-modernist) appeals to legitimacy that eschew reason altogether are impossible to sustain in a coherent way.

However, the link between ethics and epistemology that the term "legitimacy" entails places a burden on the anti-postmodernist as well: in the wake of the kind of "postmodernism" I have described here, someone who is committed to a modernist, ethical imperative — someone who does think that what makes beliefs and actions legitimate is that the reason for them can be rendered — must do more than appeal to the ostensible self-evidence or simple 'obviousness' of such a normative stand.7 The theorist either must account for the ethico-political 'good' of "critical thinking" otherwise (than Kant), or must concede that insofar as reason can give rise to (a certain) critique, it does so to the extent that we lose a Legitimate (epistemologically-grounded) purchase on the question of what is the 'good' end of an educational or political project.

7 As Siegel does, for example, in the following context. After remarking that "[t]he fact remains that the principles which establish that marginalized persons and groups are treated wrongly and deserve better treatment. . . apply with equal force to all persons and all cultures" (1997, 144), Siegel notes that "it is very difficult to challenge these principles ['one ought not to treat others unjustly,' or 'one ought always to treat others with respect'] themselves. But the upshot of this point is: if such principles are benign or uncontroversial, then woe to those positions. . . which do try to challenge them; any position which denies the obvious is hopeless" (1997, 210, n.7). Again, Siegel apparently misses the point: to show that the Kantian principle of respect lacks the logical grounding that is claimed for it is not simply to "deny it." It is to point out that the 'ought' in question is not strictly legitimate (or "justified" in Siegel's sense) and, thus, that more needs to be said. It should be further noted, however, that Siegel is being less than fully frank in respect of his normative commitments. What is at issue in Redeeming Rationality? is more than the tautology that one 'ought' not to (that it is unjust to) treat others unjustly. This claim is devoid of content. What is at issue is that one ought to (that what is just is to) act on principle alone, and that epistemologically valid principles for moral action can in fact be had. This much more substantive claim informs the text as a whole, and it underpins every claim that Siegel makes (see, for example, 1997, 152). If my earlier analysis of the way in which Kantian practical reason deconstructs itself is persuasive, therefore, the legitimacy of Siegel's more substantive claim is not "obvious" at all.

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It is significant, therefore, that for a text that purports to 'redeem rationality' against authors who have challenged the Enlightenment project, the proffered justification of this normative ideal is actually quite thin. Siegel offers, in effect, two distinct lines of support for rationality (or "criticality") as an ideal. The primary defense is the substance of Chapter 5, where he makes the case that rationality can be defended in a non-circular and non-question-begging way. Specifically, Siegel's argument is that reason is "self-justifying" in the following sense:

\[ \text{[T]he posing of this question ['why be rational?'] presupposes the possible forcefulness of putative answers, and so presupposes the epistemic legitimacy of reasons and the appeal to reasons. And that reasons are legitimate and forceful is just the position of the rationalist. The serious posing of the question assures that the poser is committed to the justifiedness of the rationalist's stance. ... The very raising of the question, in other words, commits one to a recognition of the epistemic force of reasons. To recognize that force is to recognize the answer to the question: we should be rational because (for the reason that) reasons, as the rationalist holds, have force (1997, 82, 83).} \]

Siegel's primary line of support for rationality thus amounts to the defeat of a straightforward scepticism: those who question "seriously" the reason for rationality thereby presuppose the overpowering force of reasons, and so support the rationalist position.\(^8\)

There are many questions one might raise in response to this claim. Most importantly: is the belief or presupposition that (all?) reasons have epistemic force reducible to the belief that one ought (morally) to be "rational"? To be sure, the quality of being rational is defined by Siegel here simply as the disposition to be compelled by reasons. If to be rational is merely to "presuppose the legitimacy of

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\(^8\) Scepticism, it should be noted, is itself a well-established and a rational philosophical position. Thus Siegel has not gone very far afield in his search for an alternative perspective.
reasons" (1997. 82) then, in this limited sense, the question "why be rational?"
supports the rationalist's position by preempting the challenge: in the face of the
inquiry, it is not necessary to respond with a proof of why one 'ought' to ("should")
be rational, because one's interlocutor already is.

If "rationality" refers merely to the recognition of the force of any kind of
reason at all, however, then Siegel must also agree that it is (on his definition)
*rational* to ask, "Why did I have to forget my umbrella?" and it is rational to answer.
"Because I am an idiot." Similarly, it is rational to ask, "Why did she have to die?,"
and to answer, "Because it was her time": or "Oh God, why hast thou forsaken me?,"
and. "God has forsaken me so that I might take on the burden of humanity." In each
of these cases, one has presupposed (by virtue of one's very question) that reasons
have force. On this view, however, one might as easily ask, "Why ought I to kill my
neighbour." and to answer, "Because he has a swimming pool." The claim that (a) 'the
belief that reasons have epistemic force' is reducible to (b) 'the belief that one ought
(morally) to be rational' thus hinges on the concession that these examples of reasons
all evidence "rationality" at work.

The ground on which Siegel would (most certainly) not concede this last point
is indicated further on. He writes, "As Rescher argues, asking for a justification of
rationality is asking for a *rational* justification" (1997. 85, emphasis Siegel's). By this
Siegel means that *not* merely any reasons will do (as is implied above); only reasons
that have "probative force" are actually at issue (1997. 85, 2-3). In other words,
rationality is evidenced not simply by the disposition to be compelled by any reasons
at all, but rather by the disposition to be compelled by good reasons. It is, in effect, to ask for a "serious" response.

This point is well-taken, to be sure, but if it is given, the argument that the very question "why be rational?" itself justifies a normative commitment to rationality no longer holds up. Rather, the justification would then appear to entail that we have first reduced the question "why be rational?" to a demand for "justification," and that we have then further reduced the demand for justification to a demand for "rational justification." In short, the proposed justification of rationality that the question "why be rational?" ostensibly performs implicitly requires that one has requested a formal (philosophically sound) "justification" of rationality. And, once the self-justification of rationality is seen to hinge on this requirement, the way in which Siegel begs the question becomes clear: he is presupposing that someone who does not accept the rationalist's position to begin with is nonetheless, in asking for a reason, demanding a "rational justification" in the formal, philosophical sense.

This is an arguable assumption, and cannot be taken as given. For example, someone who does not share Siegel's views might well be expecting (and might well be fully satisfied by) a completely different response, such as, "I try always to be rational because it really bothers me when I contradict myself"; or "If we do not

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9 Reasons are "good" reasons, according to Siegel, "if (and only if) they afford warrant to the claims or propositions for which they are reasons. . . . There are all sorts of good reasons - causal, inductive, explanatory, purposive, deductive, etc. - but they all share this crucial epistemic feature: they provide warrant for that for which they are reasons." Moreover, the ways in which reason "provide warrant" is in turn "sanctioned by a common epistemology: a theoretical understanding of the nature of reasons, according to which putative criteria are recognizable as appropriate criteria of reason assessment" (1997, 32; emphasis mine). Siegel does not here spell out his own "theoretical understanding," but it presumably rules out such reasons as "because it was her time," or "because he has a swimming pool."
behave rationally, there can be no hope for the human race"; or, "Behaving rationally/
thinking critically is what we we do here." Indeed, the possibility that such reasons
may be taken as 'good' ones is presumably exactly why Siegel thinks "critical thinking"
has to be taught: 'we' are not all already critical thinkers (in Siegel's sense) to begin
with, and so must learn which reasons qualify as 'good' ones and by virtue of what
criteria to tell the difference. Additionally, we must also (on Siegel's view) be taught
to care. Thus it is even on Siegel's own view by no means the case that the mere
demand for a reason for rationality necessarily and inevitably entails the demand for
a "rational justification" in the formal, philosophical sense.

Once these considerations are taken into account, it would appear that
Siegel's demonstration is more modest in scope than he allows. What follows from his
argument is this: those who inquire "seriously" after the reason of reason (those who
seek "justified grounds" for a commitment to rationality) do instantiate that
normative desire for reason that Kant first characterized as our "sublime interest" in
moral legitimacy. In other words, when someone presupposes (however unwittingly)
the legitimacy and epistemic force of reasons by asking for the grounds of rationality,
they do perform the commitment to rationality that Siegel upholds. For example, all
of the educational theorists I discussed above can be caught in the transcendental
trap that Siegel has set, since all must answer to the principle of reason that their
own theoretical projects logically employ in one way or another. The question that
Siegel must answer, however, is not whether that commitment already obtains some
of the time, but rather why it ought to obtain all of the time -- why, in short, "critical
"thinking" ought to be taught. For this purpose, the modest conclusion that rationality (sometimes) obtains simply is not enough.

Moreover, it will not do to argue that his "transcendental argument" has no force against those who do not ask for (or want) "justification" to begin with (namely, those who are not already critical thinkers) because anyone who is not inclined to seek out such grounds has "not joined the issue or provided any reason for thinking that my conception is inadequate" (Siegel 1997, 83. 188). This contention is disingenuous, since it is the imposition of critical thinking on these others that Siegel is trying to justify.

In other words, if it is the case that (probatively forceful) reasons already have (normative) force -- as is suggested by Siegel's self-justificatory argument for rationality -- then the ideal of "critical thinking" is an extant reality, and need not be inculcated at all. Conversely, if critical thinking is not already an extant reality, the onus is on Siegel to explain why his definition of the "critical" subject ought to be taken as the educational norm. Indeed, to posit critical thinking as an educational ideal is to prescribe that one 'ought' to inculcate such an interest when it is not already there. For on Siegel's view, it must be recalled, the desire for reason(s) characterizes the critical subject as such, and the production of "critical" subjects is the proper end of educational practice. Thus what is required is more than the demonstration that such a commitment obtains only in the specific instance we have identified -- that is, if (and only if) one is already answering to the principle of reason by seeking out a rational justification of rationality to begin with. What is required is that, to paraphrase Derrida (1983b), one answers for the principle of reason as well.
Kant, of course, had attempted to undertake just this task. As we saw, he argued that the commitment to rationality (that Siegel discovers in the very question "why be rational?") is by definition a morally legitimate one, because the demand for reason (for grounds) imposes itself affectively on the subject as that subject's noumenal essence. Specifically, reason (in the form of the law of universalization) was said to "humiliate" and so "[humble] every man when he compares the sensuous propensity of his nature with the law." In so doing, reason's own law of universalization thus "awakens respect for itself insofar as it is a positive motive" (Kant 1993a, 78), and this feeling of "respect" for the moral law, when in force, is what defines an act as a distinctly moral one. Thus, unless Siegel is merely adopting -- with all of its attendant problems -- Kant's own explanation of why one 'ought' (morally) to be rational, the burden is on him to provide an alternative explanation to Kant's.

It is here that Siegel's secondary line of support for rationality as a (morally legitimate) educational ideal becomes relevant. On Siegel's view, a particular judgment -- in this case, the judgment that rationality ought to be embraced as an educational ideal -- not only can have universal application and legitimacy, but indeed must have universal application and legitimacy if it is to be considered 'justified'. Siegel admits that he has not "systematically defended [this thesis] here"; he suggests, however, that it is defended "by Habermas and Apel" (1997, 216, n.31). It appears, therefore, that Siegel's second line of defense of the Enlightenment metanarrative -- along with the arguments against "postmodernism" offered by Blake, Peukert, Burwood and Kohli -- stands or falls on the basis of Habermas's work.
To be sure, this wide reliance seems to be well-placed: Habermas offers a compelling argument to support the thesis that reason can be "redeemed" in postmetaphysical terms and that, on this basis, it can still be said to enlighten the path to social and political betterment. Against this (anti-postmodernist) view, however, I have argued that the ground of "critique" is constitutively undecidable -- that it is not possible to determine a logical principle of moral judgment without illegitimately restricting the subject, with its "sublimely" indeterminable responsibility, to some particular essence, and so illegitimately closing the responsibility to reason that the very term "criticality" is intended to convey. What I now want to show, therefore, is that this argument applies to Habermas no less than it does to Kant. Specifically, in what follows I examine the theory of discourse ethics carefully and in its own terms. Only in this way is it possible to bear out the claim that those I am calling "anti-postmodernist" do not actually resolve the difficulties that a wide variety of critics of the Enlightenment have rightly identified.

To date, this case has not been fully made. On the contrary, notwithstanding the fact that discourse ethics has, over the years, provoked extensive and wide-ranging critiques and reformulations, the Habermasian approach to moral theory has largely remained intact. On one hand, a considerable body of research has been produced by those who stand in general support of the programme -- critics, that is to say, whose goal has been to raise and address narrowly-specified problems within the theory and, thereby, to correct some of its more troublesome aspects with a view to
strengthening the project as a whole. On the other hand, there are those who have challenged discourse ethics on a deeper level, particularly communitarians and neo-Aristotelians. Yet so far these critics have been met with generally persuasive rebuttals. For example, in response to the common complaint that discourse ethics maintains an insupportable preference for the transcendental subject of Western Enlightenment, Habermas and his defenders have redirected attention to other moments of the theory, or have pointed to damaging weaknesses within the programmes of communitarianism and neo-Aristotelianism themselves. Such responses have been possible, I suggest, because the stronger opponents of discourse ethics have not produced a point-by-point, analytic demonstration of the way in which the programme’s unthematized suppositions undermine it at the most fundamental of levels.

The present contestation of the anti-postmodernist mobilization of Habermasian discourse ethics for critical educational theory, therefore, must meet a crucial burden of proof. Specifically, I intend to show that because discourse ethics is bolstered by a set of metaphysical assumptions that the theory cannot sustain,

10 In addition to the educational theorists already discussed see also, for example, Wellmer (1991), Rehg (1994), Benhabib (1987) and Heath (1995).

11 Peter Dews, for example, notes that the implication of Charles Taylor’s critique is that "Habermas’s whole conception of a discourse ethics ultimately rests on specific, albeit culturally deep-rooted, commitments to freedom and autonomy" -- commitments which "cannot be derived from the normative structure of the speech-situation as such" (1995, 274; see Taylor 1989, 85). Compare Christopher Zurn, who observes that William Rehg’s contribution to communicative ethics implicitly privileges impartial reason over more contextualist forms of argumentation without adequately proving that there are no viable alternatives to the culturally-specific, historical emergence of that 'post-Enlightenment' ethos (Zurn 1986, esp. 115-119).

12 A case in point is Habermas’s rebuttal to Taylor’s critique and his subsequent analysis of the shortcomings of Alasdair MacIntyre’s approach (Habermas 1993, 69-105).
Habermas does not provide an adequate rebuttal to the challenge posed by a certain "postmodernism." To this end, I demonstrate that when key critical points proffered by Habermas's most careful readers are brought forward together, with a view to exposing the metaphysical underpinnings of his overall approach, rather than independently, with a view only to rectifying or correcting specific issues on a case-by-case basis, these criticisms can be shown to constitute a decisive challenge to the discourse ethical programme as a whole. What the following discussion shows, in particular, is that Habermas's reconstruction of "the moral point of view" -- the perspective of impartiality and universality\(^\text{13}\) that is ostensibly tied to communicative action as such -- cannot but privilege the (Kantian) subject characterized by a "sublime" capacity for moral reason. Consequently, discourse ethics ultimately depends upon the transcendentalism and the telos of Kantian 'Man'. This metaphysical legacy, moreover, is structurally indispensable: it is embedded, ironically, in the very strategies through which Habermas distinguishes his position from that of Kant.

Among these strategies, the most important for my purposes is Habermas's proposed shift from solitary reflection to intersubjective agreement on moral norms. On this basis, in fact, Habermas explicates the moral 'dignity' of our ability to universalize (i.e., to reason impartially) not in terms of a noumenal Kingdom, but rather in the phenomenal terms of the intersubjective, hence materially or socially-

\(^{13}\) Habermas defines "the" moral point of view as the impartial perspective (1990, 198; 1993, 118). For the sake of clarity, I retain Habermas's phrase ("the moral point of view") throughout this essay. The definite article is occasionally emphasized to problematize the coincidence between morality and impartiality assumed in this formulation.
constituted nature of psychic integrity. In contrast to Kantian morality, then, discourse ethics attempts to treat the reality of moral pluralism in a post-traditional world, and it does so precisely through a shift from monologic to dialogic modes of normative legitimation.

Now, once the material reality of moral pluralism is acknowledged, and once it is agreed that normative claims therefore may be contingent upon one's social, historical, or cultural context, it becomes apparent that the possibility of universal moral validity depends directly on the difference between particular and universal norms. In other words, if he is to de-transcendentalize Kantian "Man" by discarding the doctrine of the two realms without, at the same time, sacrificing the possibility of moral universalism, Habermas must draw a sharp distinction -- here and now in everyday practice, so to speak; he must be able to distinguish between norms that are amenable to rational argumentation and therefore may be said to be 'universally justified' -- norms that constitute the so-called "moral" sphere -- and norms that follow from particular conceptions of the 'good life' and, as such, resist rational, consensual resolution (i.e., so-called "ethical" norms).

The following argument bears directly on this crucial demarcation. For, as Seyla Benhabib recently remarked, the division between 'justice' and the 'good life' is "truly an important point, and one to which sufficient attention has not been paid in the literature" (1997, 104). In contrast to Benhabib, however, the question that interests me most is not how discourse ethics might be reformulated without this

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14 Benhabib provides a helpful overview of the difference between the original Hegelian, and the contemporary Habermasian meaning of the terms "morality" and "ethical life" (1997, 103-104).
sharp distinction in place, but rather why this divide is necessary and what, given its necessity, are its consequences. Specifically, I underline that Habermas's theory actually requires a morality-ethics split, and that this requirement gives rise, in turn, to two mutually contradictory necessities.

These conflicting necessities can be spelled out as follows. First, Habermas must maintain the rationality of the moral sphere against incursions from the contingencies of ethical life. For it is only in this way that discourse ethics may claim to have 'justified' a universalist perspective and, thereby, to have avoided falling prey to such biases as metaphysics or ethnocentrism. In other words, in light of the reality of moral pluralism in the post-metaphysical (post-traditional) world, the theory of discourse ethics must be conceived in purely procedural and formal terms, lest it be argued that, in being permeated by contingent, ethical 'goods', the moral sphere as explicated by Habermas reflects and imposes only the particular form of life which Habermas, among others, prefers.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) Benhabib takes issue with this claim, arguing that there can be universal, as well as culturally-specific 'goods': she offers the example of the 'good' of human rights. Yet Benhabib herself is very clear that, when conceived as a 'good' rather than exclusively in terms of what is just, the ethos of human rights is in part culturally-constituted and, as such, is not strictly rational; it is, therefore, ethically contestable relative to other goods. Indeed, based on the argument that a universalist morality of human rights and of liberal tolerance follows from the perspective of the third person legislator, and that this perspective, in turn, entails culturally-specific, albeit thin, notions of the good, Benhabib accuses Rainer Forst of coming closer in some respects "to an ethnocentric communitarian position" than she herself does, insofar as Forst would limit himself to that standpoint alone (Benhabib 1997, esp. 105-108; Forst 1997). Since it is the charge of ethnocentrism that the autonomy of the moral sphere is intended to refute, however, such a softening of the line between morality and ethical life as Benhabib proposes will not serve Habermas's theoretical purposes. (Peter Dews's solution to the problem of distinguishing sharply between justice and the good coincides with Benhabib's [see Dews 1995, 207]). I return to this issue below.
In the second place, however, discourse ethics must still qualify as essentially *normative*, not merely analytic, in nature. For if Habermas insists that only a formalist ethic can meet the demand of rationality and thereby overcome the charge of cultural contingency, he is nonetheless aware that such an undertaking cannot lose its empathic character altogether -- that a purely procedural ethics risks being a trivial one, whereby it could be said that there is nothing substantively 'moral' about it at all. To this extent Habermas, no less than Kant, is also impelled to demonstrate that there is something distinctly *moral* about logical universalism. Taken together, however, these necessities leave Habermas in the predicament of having to explicate 'the' moral point of view in such a way as to render it both "ethically" empty and yet normatively full. Discourse ethics therefore will require compromises beyond what either of its aspects can bear.

Given the constitutive difficulty of this project, it should come as no surprise that Habermas's version of discourse ethics is troubled on both fronts. In what follows, I treat each aspect -- the formal elucidation of communicative ethics (Section II) and the argument for its normative bearing (Section III) -- in turn. I show that in order to reconcile its contradictory ends, Habermas's theory must tacitly implicate both a transcendental notion of reason and a teleological conception of psychological maturation. As I shall argue, Habermas cannot discard these implications except at the cost of falling prey (in the first instance) to the charge of relativism and (in the second instance) to the charge of triviality. With its illustration of exactly how, when and where the discourse ethics programme shores up the metaphysics it putatively transcends, therefore, the present chapter concludes the discussion of critical
theoretical strategies in education with the contention that one cannot formulate a politically emancipatory theory of education that is entirely free of the particular problems encountered in Kant, notwithstanding the fact that one might be explicitly critical of the modern metaphysical tradition from a neomodern, an anti-modern, or even an anti-postmodern, perspective.

II: On the autonomy of the moral sphere
With regard to the first dimension of the Habermasian project, the attempt to address the pluralism of the modern world in post-metaphysical terms, we must begin by recalling that for Habermas, as for Weber, modernity is characterized by the fragmentation of reason into its different applications in the spheres of science, morality and art (Habermas 1982, 240; 1987, 339). As a consequence of this "historical result." Habermas claims, pre-Kantian concepts of substantive reason are simply not plausible; we no longer have recourse to "collectively binding religious or metaphysical worldviews" (1993, 70). This, quite simply, is what it means to Habermas to "take modern pluralism seriously" (1993, 123). Indeed, Habermas asserts. "Only at the cost of Occidental rationalism itself could we rescind the differentiation of reason into those rationality complexes to which Kant's three critiques of reason refer. Nothing is further from my intention than to make myself

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16 Habermas uses the phrase "historical result" specifically with reference to the development of moral universalism (1990, 208).
an advocate of such a regression, to conjure up the substantial unity of reason" (1982, 235).

It is on this basis that Habermas insists upon a narrow, purely procedural role for moral reason; given a plurality of world views, the theory of communicative ethics is intended to explicate only the process of normative legitimation, and is to be held entirely separate from evaluative questions of the good. "Moral theory is competent to clarify the moral point of view and justify its universality," he says, "but it can contribute nothing to answering the question 'Why be Moral?' . . ." (1993, 76). Indeed, even more pointedly, Habermas says,

What moral theory can do and should be trusted to do is to clarify the universal core of our moral intuitions and thereby to refute value scepticism. What it cannot do is make any kind of substantive contribution. By singling out a procedure of decision making, it seeks to make room for those involved, who must find answers on their own to the moral-practical issues that come at them, or are imposed on them, with objective historical force (1990, 211).

Yet notwithstanding its evaluative neutrality, the formal delineation of communicative reason is intended to serve a crucial moral role. Specifically, it would not be unfair to characterize the driving motivation of the discourse-ethical project as a whole in terms of Habermas's desire to establish an incontrovertible moment of normative unconditionality for the theorization of social life. For Habermas, this moment is the

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17 And, even more strongly: "In contrast to the neo-Aristotelian position, discourse ethics is emphatically opposed to going back to a stage of philosophical thought prior to Kant" (1990, 206).

18 This particular essay ("Remarks on Discourse Ethics") is among Habermas's most recent and sustained attempts to clarify and correct his theory in light of critical objections from a variety of perspectives. It is therefore fair to say that this essay, along with, for example, "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification" and "Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?" (in Habermas 1990) represents Habermas's considered word on his position.
\textit{sine qua non} of a justified critique of society. Without the unconditional, he says, "we must be prepared to renounce the emancipatory potential of moral universalism and deny so much as the possibility of subjecting the structural violence inherent in social conditions characterized by latent exploitation and repression to an unstinting moral critique" (1993, 125).\footnote{Similarly, Habermas elsewhere writes, "Even Marx set out his theory in such a way that he could perceive and take up the trial of reason in the deformations of class society. Had he not found in proletarian forms of life the distortion of a communicative form of life as such, \textit{had he not seen in them an abuse of a universal interest reaching beyond the particular}, his analysis would have been robbed of the force of \textit{justified} critique" (1982, 221; first emphasis mine).}

Significantly, this insistence on the unconditional means that the distinction between "morality" and "ethical life" is absolutely crucial for Habermas's argument. In other words, if it is only by virtue of "the moral point of view" that one can arrive at agreements which are universal -- that is to say, unconditional and therefore "rational" -- in nature, then what Habermas calls 'moral-practical discourses' do indeed "require a break with all of the unquestioned truths of an established, concrete ethical life"; they require, in fact, the "distancing [of] oneself from the contexts of life with which one's identity is inextricably woven" (1993, 12). Most importantly, to fail to determine a sphere composed of universalizable norms would be to "[succumb] to a relativism that robs moral commands of their meaning and moral obligations of their peculiar force" (1993, 76). Against Seyla Benhabib, then, we must concede that the morality-ethics divide is structurally indispensable; it concerns nothing less than the very basis, in Habermas's eyes, for a legitimate critical political response to social and political forms of injustice. The first issue at stake, therefore, is the strength of Habermas's case for the autonomy of the moral sphere.
With regard to this question, the thesis I wish to defend is that Habermas fails to distinguish clearly between the moral and the ethical spheres — that is to say, between "justice" and "the good" — except at the cost of burying a metaphysical premise in the theory of communicative ethics. In other words, I shall argue that discourse theory is caught between the equally undesirable choices of either having to derive the legitimacy of 'the' moral point of view from an unthematized reference to transcendence, or of falling prey to the charge of relativism Habermas has consistently sought to refute. Consequently, discourse ethics can be shown to privilege a subject that is removed, in essence and by definition, from the contingencies of everyday life.

This claim may seem strong, given that Habermas is fully aware that the insistence on universality carries a particular danger for contemporary deontologists. He knows, in particular, that Kant could appeal to the ideal of universalizability (in the form of the categorical imperative) as the very 'form' of reason, only because the Enlightenment philosopher saw reason itself as the constitutive feature of the noumenal subject. Habermas, of course, no longer depends on such a strategy of argumentation; as he well knows, a postconventional, postmetaphysical perspective cannot invoke the subject's noumenal 'essence' — what Kant called "the fact of reason" — to support the relation between reason and normative validity. At the same time, however, for Habermas the moral sphere only qualifies as such insofar as it comprises those norms which are amenable to rational justification through a procedure of universalization.
In order to solve this problem, Habermas proposes a reformulated principle of universalizability (U). For Habermas normative validity is conferred not merely by virtue of the fact that a moral actor employs the rational ideal of universalizability in a process of solitary reflection ("Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" [Kant 1993b. 30), but rather by virtue of the concrete enactment of universalization in the form of an un-coerced consensus among a genuine plurality of communicative subjects (1993, 51). Habermas formulates the principle (U), therefore, as follows: "a contested norm cannot meet with the consent of all of the participants in a practical discourse unless (U) holds, that is, "Unless all affected can freely accept the consequences and the side effects that the general observance of a controversial norm can be expected to have for the satisfaction of the interests of each individual" (1990, 93; his emphasis).

Many theorists, of course, have drawn attention to the crucial shift Habermas proposes: from monologic to dialogic processes of justification. I shall return to this shortly. For the moment, however, I want to underline a particular aspect of this move. It is that, as Albrecht Wellmer has carefully argued, in order to qualify as 'valid', a norm must not only be considered through a process in which all interests are fairly and fully (reciprocally and symmetrically) represented -- i.e., a process in which all the reasons of all concerned are weighed equally and impartially so as to determine which reasons are the most 'forceful'. Additionally, the norm must also be one to which all have actually agreed -- i.e., the interests of all concerned must also, in fact, have been served (see Wellmer 1991, 113-231).
This requirement becomes apparent once we notice, with Wellmer, that the justificatory process itself can only be redeemed (i.e., determined as a valid one) retroactively. In other words, Wellmer argues, when taken as a principle of justice, Habermas's (U) is "quasi-circular": we can only say that all interests have been impartially represented in the first instance (i.e., that all reasons and interests have been brought forward and equally weighted in the argument) in light of a consensus (i.e., the determination of a norm which actually serves all interests) in the second instance (1991, 149). Thus Habermas's explication of a "common will escapes the charge that it is a metaphysical postulation precisely because it is a factual achievement; unless an actual agreement results from the discussion, there is no "common" will to speak of at all.20

It cannot be argued, therefore, that (U) provides only a formal presupposition of, or regulative idea for, argument -- that, insofar as "communicative reason, unlike practical reason, is not itself a source of norms of right action" (1993, 81), (U) is merely a rule of argument the goal of which is consensus. While this claim is fair as far as it goes, it obscures the fact that we cannot establish that a norm is legitimate unless we can establish that the principle of (U) has been applied, and -- most crucially -- (U) cannot be said to have been applied unless an actual consensual

20 As Habermas writes, "as long as the isolated subject, in his role as custodian of the transcendental, arrogates to himself the authority to examine norms on behalf of all others, the difference between his supposition concerning a general will and an intersubjective agreement concerning a common will never comes to light. . . .[O]nce we abandon the metaphysical doctrine of two separate spheres of reality, subjects encounter each other as individuals who can no longer rely on [an] antecedent transcendental agreement" (1993, 51, emphasis his; compare 1990, 203).
agreement among impartial discussants has been reached. Significantly, therefore, while the conditions of the procedure itself are a necessary feature of its 'rationality' (I return to this shortly), they are insufficient in themselves as the criterion of normative validity. Equally important is an actual consensus -- the achievement of an agreement among 'us' as to what our 'common' (universal) interest really is -- since only a consensus qualifies the strictly valid norm, and only the identification of such a norm, in turn, can retroactively establish the moral sphere. Indeed, it is precisely in this sense that Habermas speaks of the "discursive redemption" of validity claims (1993, 29, 51).

Once this is acknowledged, another significant difference between Kantian and Habermasian morality can be brought to light. In discourse ethics the meaning of 'universalizability' shifts from what I (or we) can generalize without contradiction to what we have all (universally) actually agreed we should generalize. Most importantly, this means that rationality can no longer be said to follow from the mere achievement of universality (i.e., consensus) -- as it did follow in the Kantian

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21 For Wellmer, the fact that discourse ethics requires an actual and not merely an ideal consensus means that Habermas is open to the charge that discourse ethics is nothing other than "the application of a general consensus theory of truth to the specific case of the concept of justice. To this extent (U₂) is not a specific principle of justice at all." Wellmer's subscript here signifies that this is the second of four explications he offers for Habermas's principle (U). This explication reads, "(U₂) A norm is equally in the interests of all those affected precisely when it can be accepted without coercion by all those affected as being equally in the interests of all those affected" (1991, 145-150, esp. 149).

22 For this reason above all it is clear that Wellmer's proposal that Habermas discard the requirement of consensus (1991, 153f.) is simply implausible.

23 As Thomas McCarthy phrases it, "The emphasis shifts from what each can will without contradiction to be a general law, to what all can will in agreement to be a universal norm" (cited in Habermas 1990, 67; emphasis is mine).
paradigm from the mere fact of being able to will without contradiction -- since a 'universal' agreement might be reached on any one of a variety of bases (agreement might be based purely on fear of reprisals, for example). The mere fact that we have agreed is not in and of itself evidence of rationality. Thus what Habermas calls the "rational potential inherent in everyday practice" (1987, 341) resides not in the criterion of universalizability alone but, additionally, in the discursive process whereby a universal agreement is achieved.24 As Wellmer notes, the "structural characteristics of an ideal speech situation" become for Habermas the defining feature of rationality (1991, 164-5 and 245, n.52). More specifically, an agreement is deemed fully rational only when it is based solely on the force of the better argument; viz, when the conditions for the agreement are (or at least adequately approximate) the ideal conditions of mutual recognition and reciprocity.25

Now this demand for an impartially-determined norm through actual consensus is precisely where Habermas runs into trouble. For it is precisely here that the definitive distinction between the categorically moral and the contingently evaluative must be established; here that an unconditional moral 'ought' must be shown to be identifiable under real and not merely ideal discursive conditions, and here that the theory of discursive ethics must be identified as a moral theory in its own right rather than as a specific application of a consensus theory of truth applied

24 "Universal" here is to be taken to mean, 'among all concerned with or affected by the norm in question'; i.e., the rightful participants in the moral discourse.

25 Habermas qualifies the "redemption" of a validity claim in terms of "the framework of a discourse which is sufficiently close to the conditions of an ideal speech situation for the consensus aimed at by participants to be brought about solely through the force of the better argument, and in this sense to be 'rationally motivated'" (cited in Wellmer 1991, 166). I leave aside the obvious objection that the "better" argument in moral disputes is rarely transparently evident.
to the realm of justice. Yet it is at this crucial moment that Habermas's theory of discourse ethics relies tacitly upon the possibility of transparent, ahistorical and culturally-unencumbered rationality.

It is somewhat ironic that this conclusion can be demonstrated with reference to Seyla Benhabib's work, given her obvious sympathy with the Habermasian approach in general. But Benhabib has argued that the justice-ethical split that characterizes the onset of modernity translates into a split between the public and the domestic or private, with the consequence that the latter is simply left behind as part and parcel of an atemporal state of nature that is prior to history (1987, 86). This means that the public, male figure of moral and political, justice-oriented theory is himself split "into the public person and the private individual" -- a dualism Benhabib characterizes in terms of what she calls the "generalized" and the "concrete" other. Most significantly, she suggests there is an "epistemic incoherence in universalistic moral theories" such as those of Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls, which entrench this dualism by focusing exclusively on the standpoint of the "generalized other" (1987, 88-89). She argues.

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26 Significantly, while Benhabib is here treating Lawrence Kohlberg's theory in particular, there is no doubt that Habermas follows Kohlberg in this regard. He too characterizes the achievement of postconventional morality with its justice orientation -- both socially and ontogenically -- in terms of a catastrophic but 'natural' break from a state of nature (Habermas 1990, 126). I return to this point in the next subsection of the present chapter.

27 The concept of a "generalized other" signifies for Benhabib the abstract, public persona of modern moral and political thought -- it is based, notably, on the male head of the bourgeois household, and it suggests the standpoint of "formal equality and reciprocity." The standpoint of the "concrete other," in contrast, is based on the private world of personal and domestic life. This standpoint "requires us to view each and every rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution" (1987, 87).
[W]e must ask whether the identity of any human self can be defined with reference to its capacity for agency alone. Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of my choices, namely to how I as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life story. . . . The self is not a thing, a substrate, but the protagonist of a life's tale. The conceptions of selves who can be individuated prior to their moral ends is incoherent. We could not know if such a being was a human self, an angel, or the Holy Spirit (1987, 89).

If the idea of a 'self' prior to its concretization is incoherent as Benhabib suggests, and if, therefore, "there is no human plurality behind the veil of ignorance but only definitional identity, then this has consequences for criteria of reversibility and universalizability said to be constituents of the moral point of view. Definitional identity leads to incomplete reversibility. . ." (1987, 90; emphases hers). Benhabib's argument thus suggests that the very distinction between justice and the good life which characterizes modern Western societies institutes a 'generalized' concept of the self which renders universalistic moral theories constitutively incapable of accounting for concrete differences among actual moral discussants.

This contention is directly relevant to the matter at hand, since Habermas, like Rawls, calls for 'complete reversibility' in the specific sense that "in communicative action speaker and hearer assume that their perspectives are interchangeable" (Habermas 1993, 131). Indeed, we have seen that the discourse ethical claim to rationality stands or falls with the impartiality of the process whereby consensual agreement is achieved. To this end, Habermas contends, at the level of 'argumentative praxis', "perspectives, relations of recognition, and normative expectations built into communicative action become completely reversible in all relevant respects, for participants in argumentation are credited with the ability to
distance themselves temporarily from the normative spectrum of all existing forms of life" (1993, 131).

There is a curious equivocation at work here, however, for unlike Rawls Habermas also insists that the role of such idealizations -- for example, "crediting interlocutors with the ability to distance themselves from values of a evaluative, substantive kind" -- does not entail the problem of empty formalism. On the contrary, he claims. "First, (U) regulates only argumentation among a plurality of participants: second, it suggests the perspective of real-life argumentation, in which all affected are admitted as participants. In this respect my universalization principle differs from the one John Rawls proposes" (1990, 66: emphasis mine). Thus Habermas maintains that the idealization entailed by moral-practical discourse, the supposition that the conditions of the 'ideal speech situation' sufficiently obtain

does not bear on the objects treated in argumentation; it leaves the identity of the participants and sources of conflict originating in the lifeworld untouched. The moral point of view calls for the extension and reversibility of interpretive perspectives so that alternative viewpoints and interest structures and differences in individual self-understandings and worldviews are not effaced but are given full play in discourse (1993, 58).²⁸

This equivocation signals a crucial problem. If Habermas can be said to escape Benhabib’s critique of Rawls by virtue of the fact that in his theory individual self-understandings and identities are not to be suspended but are, on the contrary, to be given "full play in discourse," then the procedure of moral discourse cannot be said to establish rationality by virtue of its impartiality. For in this case the strict criterion of

²⁸ Elsewhere Habermas writes, "if actors do not bring with them, and into their discourse, their individual life-histories, their identities, their needs and wants, their traditions, memberships, and so forth, practical discourse would be robbed of all content" (1982, 255, his emphases).
impartiality will not have been met. On the other hand, if the individual participants in a moral discourse are fully to 'distance' themselves from the contingent, "normative spectrum of all existing forms of life," the result for discourse ethics will be a transcendentalizing of the subject and the consequent "epistemic incoherence" Benhabib finds in moral theories that focus exclusively upon that standpoint. Either way, therefore, rationality cannot be said to be established solely by virtue of the discourse ethical procedure.

In response to Benhabib's analysis, Rainer Forst has argued that Rawls' description of an "original position" is intended only to establish the legitimacy of the principles of equality and reciprocity in discourse; "any further 'concrete' moral, political or legal questions," he says, "have to be dealt with in different ways," and "these ways obviously include others as concrete persons." To this extent, Forst argues, Kantian theories (such as Rawls') do not entail the sharp opposition between the "general" and the "concrete" that Benhabib describes (Forst 1997, 93, 94).

Such a critique, however -- even if plausible -- cannot be mobilized here. For there is a significant difference between Habermas's theory of justice and that of John Rawls, and to this extent Forst too quickly dismisses Benhabib's analysis as it bears on Habermas's work. Whereas as Rawls merely posits 'primary goods' and an 'original position' in order to arrive at principles of justice, Habermas seeks to derive those same principles from the structural features of communicative action as it might actually take place (i.e., in "real life argumentation"). Importantly, this means that fully embodied, concretely-situated persons are necessary not only for the resolution of "further questions," but for the legitimation of the principles themselves. For this
reason, it will not do for Habermasians to appeal to "an unavoidable 'ideal' moment in the sphere of morality," whereby the "criteria of moral validity necessarily transcend[s] moral agreements. . . that have been reached" (Forst 1997, 92). For it is that very ideal, qua normative criterion, that Habermas is trying to establish in actual (pragmatic) rather than in transcendental terms (see, eg., Habermas 1990, esp. 75-76).

Habermas in fact foregoes Rawls' strong version of "generalizing the other" for precisely this reason; he insists that the legitimacy of norms follows from having given specific viewpoints and interests full play in a moral discourse. Therefore, it would appear that the discourse ethicist cannot do without the kind of concretization that Benhabib is calling for, since only "concrete" selves can engage in the full reversal of interpretive structures that Habermas demands. Consequently, however, he must give up the discourse ethical claim to impartiality as well. For concretely-situated "others," in contrast to general or abstract ones, are decidedly partial, precisely to the extent that they cannot be said to be removed from the normative spectrum of their everyday lives. The implication of Benhabib's argument for Habermasian discourse ethics is thus that the impartiality of the moral point of view is bought at the cost of transcendentalizing the subject. On the other hand, insofar as Habermas intends a genuine and not merely a nominal pluralization of moral interlocutors, his distinction between morality and ethical life -- the very distinction upon which the rationality of

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29 As Romand Coles notes, "In the idealizing supposition of a consensus open to criticism, the possibility of diverse voices on a given issue is not repressed, but rather the very condition of possibility for the legitimacy of the agreement" (1995, 25). Compare Habermas: "Discourse ethics prefers to view shared understanding about the generalizability of interests as the result of an intersubjectively mounted public discourse" (1990, 203; emphasis his).
discourse ethics depends — is untenable. Indeed, Benhabib notices that it was the very shift to a "justice" or "moral" orientation within modern political thought that gave rise to the general-concrete difference in the first place.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, Habermas is quite right to take issue with Benhabib's own solution. Her proposal is to replace a strictly 'moral' theory with a "communicative ethic of need interpretation," whereby "the object domain of moral theory is so enlarged that not only rights but needs, not only justice but possible modes of the good life, are moved into an anticipatory-utopian perspective" (1987, 93; see also Benhabib 1990, 349, 350).30 Yet once it is agreed that evaluative or ethical 'goods' are necessarily implicated in justificatory processes of "moral" legitimation, the discourse ethics project is undone altogether. As Charles Taylor explains.

[T]he boundary between questions of ethics [i.e., Habermasian "morality"], which have to do with interpersonal justice, and those of the good life [here, "ethics"] is supremely important, because it is the boundary between demands of truly universal validity and goods which will differ from culture to culture. This distinction is the only bulwark, in Habermas's eyes, against chauvinistic and ethnocentric aggression in the name of one's way of life, or tradition, or culture. It is thus crucial to maintain it (1989, 88).

Clearly, Habermas must reject Benhabib's version of discourse ethics; his refutation of the charge of relativism rests directly on the contention that the universal core of

30 Forst notes that this move seems to reflect an Hegelian-influenced vision of reconciled life which is not supported by the theory (1997, esp. 79-81). See also Benhabib’s response (1997). For further criticism of Benhabib’s suggestion, see Herta Nagl-Docekal (1997, 70-71).
'our' normative intuitions can be distinguished absolutely from the contingencies of ethical life on the basis of the application of the principle of universalizability (U).\textsuperscript{31}

Now in Habermas’s reconstruction of (U), it will be recalled, the rationality of moral action shifts from its basis in the Kantian injunction to universalize without contradiction to that of a procedure aimed at a universal consensus guided by impartial reasoning and ideal role-taking. Yet we have also seen that the impartial reasoning and ideal role-taking Habermas has in mind are the characteristics of a 'generalized' other that is definitionally incapable of undertaking the full reversibility upon which Habermas himself insists. Indeed, the principle (U) may be said to have been applied only when concretely situated individuals (each of whom necessarily brings his or her substantive, ethical concerns and perspectives into the discussion) have actually participated in a debate. Consequently, no purely 'rational', non-relative, unconditioned sphere of morality can be said to emerge \textit{from} the procedure itself.

Without recourse to an unthematized transcendentalism, then, (U) cannot be relied upon to mark \textit{retroactively} the distinction between questions of justice and questions of the good life and, thereby, to confer moral validity (in the form of unconditionality) on the process of normative legitimation. Such unconditionality would require a \textit{prior} distinction between morality and ethical life: without a distinction between justice and the good \textit{already} in place, there is no basis for the

\textsuperscript{31} This argument does not only apply to Benhabib: it poses a decisive challenge to any attempt to render discourse ethics more responsive to social and cultural difference by softening the morality/ethics divide. Within the field of educational theory, for example, compare the arguments of Kohli (1995) and Strike (1995).
postulation of a generalized (transcendental) other capable of the pure impartiality moral legitimacy requires. Without the prior availability of this distinction, in other words, we must face the reality of concrete discussants who are not impartial, transcendental subjects, but are situated, partial individuals whose moral arguments are inextricably layered with contingent evaluations. Consequently, the theory of discourse ethics must either fall prey to the charge of relativism, or it must continue to rely on an abstract notion of the human subject -- it must rely on a subject, that is, whose 'transcendence' of the historical, gender, racial, class and cultural (inter alia) contingencies of everyday life is not merely a temporary achievement but a constitutive attribute.

Habermas's attempts to address Benhabib and Gilligan's critiques of the Kohlbergian 'self' do not resolve this difficulty with specific regard to moral justification. On the contrary, he shifts the terms of the debate, arguing.

Practical reason is not fully realized in discourses of justification. Whereas in justifying norms practical reason finds expression in the principle of universalization, in the application of norms, it takes the form of a principle of appropriateness. Once we grasp the complementarity of justification and application, it becomes clear how discourse ethics can address the misgivings you [Torben Hviid Nielsen] share with Seyla Benhabib and Carol Gilligan (1993, 154).

Not only does this response leave the problem of transcendentalizing the subject intact with regard to justification, but it brings to light a further issue. That is, upon examination it emerges that the determination of 'appropriateness' (A) in the context of application no more reflects a contextual mode of thought than does the determination of universalizability in the context of justification. Rather, just as (U) entails abstracting from normative worldviews, so (A) requires that "[a]n impartial
judge must assess which of the competing norms of action -- whose validity has been established in advance -- is most appropriate to a given concrete case once all of the relevant features of the given constellation of circumstances have been accorded due weight in the situational description" (1993, 128f., esp. 129-130; emphasis mine).\textsuperscript{32}

Leaving aside the arguable assertion that "the" relevant features of a moral question could be definitively determined, we need only note that the original charge may be redirected to the issue of application as well: if the judge of 'appropriateness' is also to be impartial (by 'distancing' him or herself from contingent notions of the 'good'), it is not clear either how that achievement is to be determined, or in what way. precisely, the necessity of concretizing moral discussants in their socio-historical contexts has actually been addressed.

It would certainly seem, then, that the programme of discourse ethics is caught at an inescapable impasse regarding the demand to distinguish between questions of justice and questions of the ethically good life. As the argument concerning the partiality of moral discussants bears out, Habermas must either concede the relativism of discourse ethics, or he must support the autonomy of the

\textsuperscript{32} On the principle of "appropriateness," this would seem to be Wellmer's view as well. In his essay "Ethics and Dialogue," for example, Wellmer presupposes there can be only one "correct" interpretation of a given situation. On his view, the question of appropriateness raised by the application of norms in concrete situations thus lends itself to the moral point of view as well (1991, 202, 203). Compare Habermas's "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," in which he claims, "Interpreted from the perspective of discourse ethics, practical reason does indeed require practical prudence in the application of rules. But use of this capacity does not restrict practical reason to the parameters of a specific culture or historical period. Learning processes governed by the universalistic substance of the norm being applied are possible even in the dimension of application" (1990, 181-182; emphasis mine). If I understand him correctly, Habermas is here saying, once more, that the prudential question of "appropriateness" can be answered impartially -- eventually -- as well. This interpretation is supported in the interview with Hvidt Nielsen (1993, 172).
moral sphere on the basis of a metaphysically determined concept of 'pure' or transcendental reason. In either event, the demonstration of a postmetaphysical break between questions of the good and questions of justice has not been provided; rather, the neutrality of the discourse ethics programme relies upon an unacknowledged metaphysical stake.

III: On the emphatic nature of moral unconditionality

So far I have been arguing that Habermas fails to demonstrate the autonomous status of the moral domain vis-à-vis what he calls conditional, evaluative questions of the good. Yet crucial though this problem is, it is still only one dimension of what I have characterized as an essentially dichotomous project. That is to say, one may, on one hand, accept the contradiction inherent in the first aspect of Habermas's project by acknowledging that communicative ethics achieves its status of unconditionality by virtue of implicating an unthematized transcendentalism. Lacking a transcendental subject, the proceduralism in question may be seen to be culturally and historically loaded; it is not, however, liable to the charge of triviality since, on this view, substantive, ethical beliefs are always already implicated in moral discourses.

On the other hand, if one can establish the autonomy of the moral sphere by resolving the problem I characterize as Habermas's 'pluralization' of transcendental man, the possible triviality of the programme becomes a real risk. For if (U) could truly be said to act "like a knife that makes razor sharp cuts between evaluative statements and strictly normative ones" (Habermas 1990, 104) -- if the explication of (U) had actually established a definitive separation from between the moral sphere
and ethical life -- then Habermas would confront an additional and perhaps impossible task. In the face of a definitive divide, he would have to substantiate his own crucial contention "that the procedural explanation discourse ethics gives of the moral point of view -- in other words, of the impartiality of moral judgments -- constitutes an adequate account of moral intuitions which are after all substantive in kind" (1990, 199; his emphasis).

In order to counter the charge of triviality, then, Habermas must demonstrate a necessary connection between a procedurally-derived universalism, and the substantive nature of moral belief; he must somehow reunite -- without compromising its ethical neutrality -- the sphere of moral validity with that of evaluative goods. Yet the theory of discourse ethics, I shall argue, does not adequately support the possibility of an unconditional feature of ethical life. Rather, the 'unconditional' normativity of the Habermasian 'ought' is on my view 'conditioned' by an unthematized teleology.

Given my contention, it is important to note that, on the face of it, Habermas is very clear that a truly postmetaphysical, deontological theory can provide no answer to the question "Why be Moral?:" "[O]nce the bond between the right and the good is broken," he writes, "the question of why one should act morally at all can no longer be answered satisfactorily" (1993, 119). Nor can moral philosophy 'awaken' moral perception, for moral action is affectively 'impressed' upon us "prior to all philosophizing" (1993, 75-76). Indeed, in marked contrast to what he sees as the teleological moment of Karl-Otto Apel's version of discourse ethics, Habermas insists that "communicative reason is not itself a source of norms of right action" and, to this
extent, it provides "only weak rational motivations" rather than a "binding practical orientation" (1993, 81).

Yet this is not to say that Habermas views discourse ethics as no more than a normatively empty procedural mechanism. On the contrary, he speaks regularly of "the substantive normative presuppositions of argumentation" which the theory is intended to elucidate (eg., 1993, 77 and 83, my emphasis; also at 1990, 204). In fact, we have seen, what is at stake here is nothing less than "the possibility of subjecting the structural violence inherent in social conditions . . . to an unstinting moral critique" (1993, 125). Now if the procedural rationality characteristic of modernity is intended not only, as Habermas says, 'to give credence to our views in the area of moral-practical insight' (1990, 3-4) but indeed, to serve as the very basis of a justified critique of society, then Habermasian moral theory must do more than specify 'to each discussant an equal and reciprocal share'. Additionally, the theory of discourse ethics must explicate the precise sense in which such procedural necessities as (U) might command are substantively normative in nature.

This demand cannot be met merely with reference to the rational dimension of (U) as it has been elucidated so far. As Wellmer insightfully argues, even if (U) could be said to ensure the rationality of the moral domain by giving rise to genuinely universal claims, this feature of discourse ethics alone would not suffice to explicate a specifically normative 'ought'. For, most importantly, the corollary of replacing Kant's metaphysical doctrine of a Kingdom of Ends with the process and outcome of real argumentation is not merely that we no longer merely postulate
universality. It is also that we can no longer tie the 'force' of reason's demand to our 'self-respect' or 'dignity' as supersensible beings.

Clearly, Habermasian "morality" no longer signifies the 'self-respect' that accrues to noumenal subjects; for Habermas the term 'moral' refers instead only to the much thinner notion of 'universalizability'. In this sense, Wellmer contends, Habermas collapses two distinct features of the Kantian imperative. For Kant, it should be recalled, acting in contradiction of the principle of reason would be acting "in contradiction of the conditions for the possibility of our self-respect as rational beings" (Wellmer 1991, 151-52). Yet here the sense and the condition of morality are not the same thing: since Kant already knows what morally-right action is (i.e., action in accordance with our nature as supersensible beings), he addresses only the condition of its realization: the postulation of a Kingdom of Ends (Wellmer 1991, 120-21, 122). In Habermas's reconstruction, on the other hand, (U) is intended to serve as both the condition and the sense of morality; (U) is both a rule for the legitimation of moral norms, and the meaning or sense of those norms themselves in terms of what Wellmer calls an "elementary" concept of justice as equality.

Yet even in Habermas, Wellmer argues, the distinction should be maintained. The generalization (or 'equality') principle is, strictly speaking, merely a logical principle of legitimation; it tells us to be consistent in our behaviour by treating like cases equally, and, on this basis, allows us to determine whether a norm meets the conditions for legitimacy. However, insofar as the 'elementary concept of justice' (equality) that this rule entails is -- at least on Wellmer and Habermas's view -- the only normative concept which could itself be legitimized on these terms (i.e.,
consensually agreed to by everyone concerned), the 'sense' of morally right action and the 'conditions' for its realization seem to coincide: both are determined as "universalizability" in Habermas's moral theory, and in this sense, a more substantive 'sense' of "morally right action" is accordingly lost.

In fact, once morality has been reformulated as Habermas proposes, it is no longer obvious that (U) conveys substantive normative content. For if no argument is made specifically concerning its normative dimension, (U) could be fairly said to represent a general principle of distributive justice (i.e., justice as participatory 'equality'), but not a strictly 'moral' principle. Given Habermas's divergence from Kant, then, he is faced with the added burden of providing a non-metaphysical explanation of the relation between rationality and normativity. Unless he can do so, discourse ethics will amount to no more than an amoral explication of the purely logical imperative not to contradict ourselves. In this sense, the necessity at stake is that of being able to show not only that agreements reached among discussants are 'rational' -- as might be said of a consensual agreement on any question -- but that they are also necessarily 'moral', which is to say normative, in nature.

It is to this end that Habermas insists on the emphatic dimension of communicative ethics. Indeed, he directly addresses charges of 'empty formalism' and 'abstract universalism' by arguing that participants in practical discourse are inevitably 'exhorted' to partake in ideal role taking -- that is, to accept the normative content inherent in the pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation -- and that participants are "constrained to speak and act under idealized conditions" (1990, 198, 203; his emphasis). Since the exhortation and constraint we experience as communicative
agents is directly consequent upon our intersubjectively (hence collectively) constituted identities. Habermas argues, discourse ethics entails an ineradicable concern for the common weal. As he says, "though organized around a concept of procedure, [discourse ethics] can be expected to say something relevant about substance as well and, more important perhaps, about the hidden link between justice and the common good. . . ." (1990, 202). And it is in making this case that a teleological assumption is unavoidably implicated in the communicative ethics project.

To see this we must note that, for Habermas, (U) is derived from procedural rules of argumentation -- that is, from a 'reflective form of communicative action' -- and communicative action in turn entails both a 'strategic' and an 'understanding' orientation. Thus Habermas attempts to demonstrate that a 'bridging principle which makes consensus possible' -- the formal principle (U) -- can be derived from the very rules of discourse we already accept, "in conjunction with a 'weak' idea of normative justification" (1990, 68, 92). He says,

[T]here is no form of sociocultural life that is not at least implicitly geared to maintaining communicative action by means of argument, be that actual form of argument ever so rudimentary and the institutionalization of discursive consensus building ever so inchoate. Once argumentation is conceived as a special form of rule-governed interaction, it reveals itself to be a reflective form of action oriented toward reaching an understanding. Argumentation derives the pragmatic presuppositions we found at the procedural level from the presuppositions of communicative action. The reciprocities undergirding the mutual recognition of competent subjects are already built into action oriented toward reaching an understanding, the action in which argumentation is rooted (1990, 100).

Most importantly, "that is why the radical sceptic's refusal to argue is an empty gesture": on the basis of the quasi-transcendental demonstration that this refusal entails a 'performative contradiction', Habermas contends that the sceptic "remains
bound" to the presuppositions already implicit in the "communicative practice of
everyday life" (1990, 100-101).

As I have already suggested, our 'being bound' to the communicatively-derived
presuppositions of argumentation is crucial to the task of explaining the normative
dimension (as opposed to the rationality) of a specifically "moral" domain. By rooting
a virtually inescapable rule of argumentation in action oriented toward reaching an
understanding, therefore, Habermas seeks to ground the normative ideals of
reciprocity and symmetry (i.e., the impartial point of view) as the 'sense' -- the
obligatory force -- of the moral 'ought'.

We can now understand Wellmer's observation that "what is expressed in the
unconditional character of the moral 'ought' is the fact that our possible identity as
creatures capable of speech is tied to... a structure of intersubjectivity" (1991, 152).
For as Habermas explains, morality can be understood in "anthropological terms" as a
"safety device compensating for a vulnerability built into the sociocultural form of
life." He maintains as a "basic fact" that we are constituted as subjects at all only
insofar as we 'externalize' ourselves by engaging in intersubjective communication,
and that this engagement results in "an almost constitutional insecurity and chronic
fragility of personal identity" (1990, 199; see also Habermas 1979, 69-94). Similarly,
he says, "Morality is aimed at the chronic susceptibility of personal integrity implicit
in the structure of linguistically mediated interactions, which is more deep-seated
than the tangible vulnerability of bodily integrity, though connected with it" (1993,
109). To the extent that our very possibility as subjects depends upon our
communicative interaction, then -- and indeed Habermas insists that the alternatives
to such interaction are schizophrenia and suicide in the long term (1990, 102, 100) -- the impartiality that characterizes the moral point of view as elucidated within discourse ethics is a quasi-natural, inescapable, affectively compelling aim of both individual and social development.

This is why Habermas relies -- as indeed he must continue to rely -- on the developmental psychology of Lawrence Kohlberg.\(^3^3\) For against the charge of relativism.

Kohlberg's theory of moral development offers the possibility of (a) reducing the empirical diversity of existing moral views to variation in the contents, in contrast to universal forms, of moral judgment and (b) explaining the remaining structural differences between moralities as differences in the stage of development of the capacity for moral judgment (1990, 117; last emphasis mine).\(^3^4\)

Thus, just as the utopian social ideal of critical theory is said to be rendered intelligible in Habermas's theory of discourse ethics because it is rationally based on the normative presuppositions of communicative reason (Wellmer 1985, 58), so the teleological individual ideal of psychic maturation is said to rest on a communicatively-based tendency toward postconventionality.\(^3^5\) Habermas writes,

\(^{33}\) Habermas says that "the normative reference point of the developmental path that Kohlberg empirically analyzes is a principled morality in which we can recognize the main features of discourse ethics" (1990, 117).

\(^{34}\) Significantly, the claim that all moral views can be contained within the same formal structure holds only insofar as Kohlberg can be said to have achieved a plausible account of human -- and not just western, middle class, white, male -- development. Against this claim, Carol Gilligan's research, while not definitive, introduces the possibility of a fundamentally different, yet equally plausible, moral scheme. The possibility of what she calls a "different moral voice" casts doubt on the genuine universality of the Kohlbergian programme (see Gilligan 1982).

\(^{35}\) This Kohlbergian version of psychic development has remained a consistent feature of discourse ethics. As recently as 1996 Habermas formulated the motivational dimension of his universalist ethic in the following terms. "[A] principled morality [which] views everything through the powerful but narrow lens of universalizability... facilitates a knowledge that is meant to orient one's action but does not thereby dispose one to act rightly." Significantly, however, he continues,
If by way of a thought experiment we compress the adolescent phase of growth into a single critical instant in which the individual for the first time -- yet pervasively and intransigently -- assumes a hypothetical attitude toward the normative context of his lifeworld, we can see the nature of the problem that every person must deal with in passing from the conventional to the postconventional level of moral judgment. The social world of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations, a world to which one was naively habituated and which was unproblematically accepted, is abruptly deprived of its quasi-natural validity.

If the adolescent cannot and does not want to go back to the traditionalism and unquestioned identity of his past world, he must, on penalty of utter disorientation, reconstruct, at the level of basic concepts, the normative orders that his hypothetical gaze has destroyed. . . . Ultimately all that remains is a procedure for a rationally motivated choice among principles that have been recognized in turn as in need of justification (1990, 126).

This shift of attitude "has something unnatural about it." Habermas continues, which "is like an echo of the developmental catastrophe that historically once devalued the world of traditions and thereby provoked efforts to rebuild it at a higher level" (1990, 127).36

Notwithstanding this unnaturalness, however -- or perhaps because of it -- the telos of sociocultural and ontogenetic development is, in turn, precisely what confirms the link Habermas needs to establish between morality and ethical life. For the

36 Elsewhere Habermas claims, similarly, that "moral universalism is a historical result" (1990, 208: his emphasis). But compare Habermas's remark that moral intuitions are acquired in a "quasi-natural manner through socialization" (1990, 98: my emphasis). The latter comment seems to undermine the implication that moral universalism is, for those of us born into this historical epoch, virtually inescapable.
consensual end of our argumentative practice "is not something we can treat so arbitrarily as the contingent ends of action. [It is]. . . intimately interwoven with the intersubjective form of life to which subjects competent in speech and action belong" (1990, 95). In other words, Habermas here offers an account in which the strictly formal principle of (U) can be said to link up with the substantive nature of our moral beliefs exactly to the extent that this principle already reflects a substantial interest in psychic integrity that is common to all members of communicatively structured societies, and towards which all members of such societies must necessarily strive. On Habermas's view morality as such -- the rule of impartiality derived from communicative action -- addresses precisely the vulnerability which communicative action first creates; since feelings of vulnerability and empathy ensue from an intersubjectively shared web of relations, (U) is said to be normatively binding (see 1990, 202, 203).37

Given the fact that an explicit feature of discourse ethics is its emphatic refutation of value scepticism, this stress on the affective dimension of his moral principle will come as no surprise. The problem with Habermas's argument, however, is that (U) can only be said to confer -- not merely legitimacy in the legal sense -- but what Wellmer identifies as "a corresponding obligation to act" (1991, 158) insofar as the propensity to universalize is understood in terms of a 'quasi-natural' development.

37 Elsewhere he writes, "With the validity claims raised in communicative action, an ideal tension is imported into social reality itself, which comes to conscious awareness in participating subjects as a force that explodes the limits of the given context and transcends all merely provincial standards" (1993, 164-65). Again Habermas's point is that procedural morality bears a normative or moral 'force' which links universal claims of justice to (all) particular notions of the good.
In other words, unless (U) is virtually inescapable, there is no basis for Habermas's claim that the empty procedure of discourse ethics is structurally related to the substantive, 'ethical' interests of all communicative agents. Moreover, unless discourse ethics addresses a "structural feature of the good life" in this sense, Habermas also will not have satisfied the burden of proof regarding his contention that "my moral principle is not just a reflection of the prejudices of adult, white, well-educated, Western males of today" (1990, 197). His response to the charge of ethnocentricism in this case as well thus hinges on the historical and psychological developmental theories he cites, since these are the sole bases of his claim that (U) elucidates a substantive moment of normativity common to all forms of sociocultural life.

If Habermas intends to meet the demand for a universally valid normative principle on the basis of a fixed conception of psycho-social development -- if this is how he proposes to support his argument concerning the normative force as well as the universal validity of (U) -- then it is difficult to see why he perceives a problem of moral justification at all. For in this case there would be no reason to believe that we cannot leave the "gradual embodiment of moral principles in concrete forms of life" to Hegel's absolute spirit after all: there is in fact (Kohlberg's analyses are methodologically empirical) no reason to doubt that the "fragmentary realizations" of "the moral intuitions that discourse ethics conceptualizes" will continue to "proliferate" as they already have (1990, 208). In other words, as Seyla Benhabib rightly contends, "Insofar as the project of communicative ethics is presented as an
inevitable sequence of moral development, one reverts back to the philosophy of the subject. ..." (1986, 12).\(^{38}\)

On the other hand, perhaps Habermas does not intend to rely completely on theories of psycho-social development; perhaps Habermas intends for us to overlook his emphasis on the (un)natural tendency toward postconventionality. Certainly there is textual evidence to support this view; Habermas explicitly rejects recourse to "an objective teleology" (1990, 210) and, as noted earlier, he is clear that postconventional moral reasoning is far from universally inescapable. In fact Habermas says it requires the support of "socialization processes that meet it halfway by engendering the corresponding agencies of conscience" (1996, 113; my emphasis). Now if this is so we can well agree that discourse ethics itself is "a moral theory that no longer claims to know the telos of "the" good life and which, therefore, "must leave the question 'Why be Moral?' unanswered" (1993, 127). As I have argued, however, the logical outcome of this view of discourse ethics is that (U) would specify only 'to every participant a numerically equal say' -- it would be a rule, in short, which could not account for its own moral (rather than merely logical) status.

On this view, it is true, "postconventional moral consciousness" would not be said to stand alone on the basis of a teleological supposition; rather, it would need to be "supplemented by an enlightened existential self-understanding that entails that I can respect myself only as someone who as a general rule performs the actions he

\(^{38}\) Asher Horowitz makes a more elaborate version of this charge in the course of a discussion on Habermas's use of the concept of performative contradiction. Horowitz writes, "The Subject does not at all disappear within the philosophy of language. The Subject becomes language, or, better, the form of the forms of objectivity given in language" (1998, 19).
takes to be morally right" [i.e., in terms of a common rather than a subjective
interest] (1993, 80). Notably, however, two charges can be levied against this
argumentative strategy. First, lacking an inherent telos, the theory cannot be said to
entail a justified basis for the social imposition of such an enlightenment: the
specification of (U) alone does not support the prescription of such a highly
circumscribed, collectively-shared understanding of "self-respect." Secondly, to replace
a universal telos with support from the "existential self-understandings" of the
individuals involved would again compromise the autonomy of the moral sphere. For
Habermas insists that in "existential-ethical" discourses "reason and the will condition
one another reciprocally, though the latter remains embedded in the life-historical
context thematized" (1993, 12; my emphasis). Significantly, in other words, if moral
consciousness requires existential-ethical supplementation, and if the latter is rooted
in the particularities of a given context, then Habermas would seem to be explaining
the normative force of the principle (U) -- the universally obligatory force underlying
the impartial, transcendental point of view -- in terms of a particular life-historical
context. It follows that, without being impelled by the contingencies of one's
particular context, there would be no force in "the" moral point of view at all. And
this is exactly the position Habermas must reject (as he does implicitly at 1993, 84).

On the view that moral theory makes no teleological claims, moreover, moral
consciousness would also need the supplemental implementation of political power
for, as Kant already knew, norms are strictly 'valid' only under conditions of their
'general observance', and "Legal institutionalization alone can ensure general
adherence to morally valid norms" (1993, 155 and 87-8). Here is it worth citing Habermas’s comments in full:

It is only at the level of a discourse theory of law and politics that we can also expect an answer to the question invited by our analyses: Can we still speak of practical reason in the singular after it has dissolved into three different forms of argumentation under the aspects of the purposive, the good, and the right? . . .The unity of practical reason can no longer be grounded in the unity of moral argumentation in accordance with the Kantian model of unity of transcendental consciousness, for there is no metadiscourse on which we could fall back to justify the choice between different forms of argumentation. 

. . .Moral theory must bequeath this question unanswered to the philosophy of law; the unity of practical reason can be realized in an unequivocal manner only within a network of public forms of communication and practices in which the conditions of rational collective will formation have taken on a concrete institutional form (1993, 16, 17; emphasis mine).

Here Habermas concurs with Hegel that "unless discourse ethics is undergirded by the thrust of motives and by socially accepted institutions, the moral insights it offers remain ineffective in practice" (1990, 207).

Yet such an argumentative strategy is again problematic, for Habermas also concedes that "in distinction to the moral norms that regulate possible interactions between speaking and acting subjects in general, legal norms refer to the network of interactions in a specific society" (1994, 124; emphasis mine). Indeed, he continues,

the more concrete the matter at hand, the more the self-understanding of a collectivity and its way of life. . . are expressed in the acceptability of the way the matter is legally regulated. We see this in the broad spectrum of reasons that enter into the rational process by which the legislature's opinion and will are formed; in addition to moral considerations, pragmatic considerations, and the results of fair negotiations, ethical reasons also enter into deliberations and justifications of legislative decisions (1994, 125).

To this extent, he admits, "every legal community and every democratic process for actualizing basic rights is inevitably permeated by ethics" (1994, 126).
The conclusion that can be drawn from these concessions is this: if Habermas is prepared to acknowledge that he cannot appeal to a metadiscourse such as a teleologically-oriented theory of ego development to justify the choice between different forms of argumentation, and if he acknowledges that his version of "the" moral point of view requires socio-institutional support in order to ensure its proliferation, then there are no grounds on which to privilege 'moral' or right-oriented argumentation as the foundation of those same socio-political institutions. In other words, the argument appears to be circular: Habermas is proposing the creation of 'concrete institutional forms' in order to ensure the proliferation of 'the' moral outlook. This outlook is said to give rise to 'universally valid norms'. And these norms, in turn, are said to provide the legitimate grounds of the very institutions -- the political concretizations -- which are deemed necessary to ensure the proliferation of "the" moral point of view on which our 'self-respect' is ostensibly based. Clearly, a principled moral outlook of the Kohlbergian sort cannot itself serve -- in the name of unconditional validity -- as the justificatory grounds of those institutions which are intended to condition or produce it, unless a particular outcome of moral development (namely, the "self-respecting" moral agent) has been presumed from the start.

Thus Habermas does not actually explain -- not, at least, without implicating teleology -- how the legitimation principle (U) can be said to constitute the conditions for a so-called "dignified" human existence (1990, 209). Lacking an ethical -- which is to say, a culturally and historically-contingent -- supposition about moral developmental ends, there is no basis on which to universalize Habermas's
understanding of 'our' moral "self-respect." Rather, I submit, this particular understanding of morality 'ethically' privileges the figure of a fully autonomous, unambiguously rational, Kantian 'Man'.

**IV: Concluding Remarks**

Much more might be said about Habermas's complex and multifaceted programme of discourse ethics. This limited discussion of its pivotal features has been intended only to highlight the specific ways in which Habermas relies on the metaphysics of an Enlightenment perspective he intends to have left behind. Thus, just as we have seen that a transcendental notion of the subject is implicated in Habermas's argument for the autonomy of the moral sphere, so I have argued that the teleological dimension of discourse ethics cannot be discarded except at the cost of the theory's very force. Here it emerged that either discourse ethics will gain its normative power by virtue of a teleological conception of sociocultural and ontogenic development that is implicit in the theory, or else discourse ethics will lack the substantive ethico-political sense that any moral theory is intended to provide. Consequently, Habermas can be said to be no more successful with regard to the task of re-connecting ethics to morality -- the task of refuting the charge of triviality in a post-metaphysical way -- than he was with regard to establishing the unconditionality of the 'moral' sphere by virtue of their separation.

Thus, while the problems of transcendentalism and teleology that are inherent in Kantian (and Hegelian) philosophy are indeed addressed directly by Habermas and his proponents -- much more directly, in fact, than these problems are generally
treated by educational theorists who seek either to replace Enlightenment idealism with the philosophy of Dewey, Freire, Wittgenstein or Vygotsky (for instance), or alternatively, by those who try to escape the modern discourses of Enlightenment altogether -- the metaphysical dimensions of the modernist conception of reason are not eliminated in Habermas's neo-Kantian philosophy. On the contrary, in both moments of the communicative ethics project -- in the establishment of an autonomous moral domain as well as in the determination of that domain's normative relevance -- Habermas extricates discourse ethics from the charges of relativism and triviality by multiplying (or 'pluralizing') a subject that is only ever illegitimately universalized. Against those such as Blake, Peukert, Burwood, Kohli and Siegel who would mobilize the discourse ethics of Jürgen Habermas for the philosophy of education, therefore, I contend that Habermas's 'postmetaphysical' deontological ethics does not serve this end.

Taken together, therefore, it remains that none of the three strategic responses to "postmodernism" -- neither neomodernism, anti-modernism, nor anti-postmodernism -- ultimately dodges the dilemma at hand: the political purchase of critical educational theory is gained at the expense of a certain critique. In effect, I have argued, it is simply not possible to bypass the double bind in which the pedagogical goal of ethico-political knowledge is caught. Consequently, I submit, a critical theory of education must attempt to account for, rather than to escape or deny, critique's (own) "mystagogical" effects. To be sure, such a theory will sacrifice the possibility of a Legitimate (epistemologically-grounded) purchase on the question of what is 'good'; in so doing, however, it arguably exemplifies a "certain critique."
Paradoxically, therefore, my argument in Chapter Five is that it is precisely in this way that deconstruction's own "quasi-responsibility" comes into view, and thus provides a radical re-configuration of the ethical dimensions of political and educational thought.
5. CONCLUSION: CRITICAL RESPONSIBILITY OR RESPONSIBLE CRITIQUE, On Deconstruction and Justice

All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique and its translation would have to take that into consideration. It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression towards a simple element, toward an indissoluble origin. These values, like that of analysis, are themselves philosophemes subject to deconstruction. No more is it a critique, in a general or in a Kantian sense. The instance of krinein or of krisis (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential "themes" or "objects" of deconstruction. Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend" (1988a, 3).

I: Introduction

The extended survey of the field of critical educational theory I have undertaken in the previous two chapters has not been intended to demonstrate simply that this theorist or that philosopher of education has read "postmodernism" (or, indeed, modernism) wrong and that, from this point of view, deconstruction is therefore "most valuable an exposure of error" (Spivak 1993, 4, cited above). It has been intended to demonstrate that the political demand for legitimacy, the demand that we render the reason for our ethico-political commitments and so cover over the undecidability at their root, is one that imposes itself inexorably on both sides of the modernism-postmodernism debate. The "error" of Enlightenment thought, to paraphrase Spivak again, is "extremely useful"; it is one without which political theory cannot "live on." In other words, what a deconstructive reading of "critique" (of "criticality," or of "legitimacy") reveals is that the bond between ethics and epistemology -- the very bond that the term "critique" embodies -- is an inescapable one for political thought, notwithstanding the fact that it is an ideological one as well.

In particular, I have argued, political and educational theorists cannot speak to the difference between justice and injustice in a way that is not simply culturally,
historically, socially or otherwise contingently based without a determinate and rationally-grounded standard of critique. Without such a standard in place, the theory cannot issue in the legitimate ethico-political decision (the "critique") that it requires. Without reference to a standard of critique, in effect, no assessment of responsibility is possible at all. This is (so to speak) a theoretical rather than a strictly ideological or political necessity. For this reason, the Kantian problematic -- which concerns the difficulty of finding the logical ground for the criteria of the ethico-political decision itself -- emerges in progressive pedagogical theory despite many theorists' explicit rejection of Kant's own emphasis on the "scientific" (and transcendental) status of moral judgment. The problem reappears, in other words, even when the theorist has ostensibly ceased aiming at moral legitimacy and at a rational grounding of "critique" altogether.

To support this claim, I have tried to show on one hand that, notwithstanding the fact that various theorists of education -- particularly those who adopt what I have called an anti-modernist theoretical strategy -- mobilize substantially different philosophical resources than those provided by Kant to support a politically progressive educational project, they nonetheless appeal to an ethico-political value that can be determinately established. To the extent that such values as "openness," "unknowing," or "indefiniteness" serve as determinate criteria or standards for ethico-political judgment, the theory profits all the same from the ungrounded link between ethics and epistemology that Kant first ideologically established, and that has yet to be non-transcendently justified.
For, as I argued in the introduction to Chapter Three, what is peculiarly
Kantian is not the specific procedure for or standard of moral judgment that Kant
himself upheld. Rather, it the assumption that we can know (and hence teach) what is
properly ethical, that there can be such a thing as moral legitimacy (a principled or
grounded good) at all. And, as soon as any value is posited as the ground or principle
of a critical theory of society, the spectre of moral legitimacy will already have been
roused. Once this is the case, the only remaining question concerns the theoretical
solidity or soundness of that value that is named. And, for reasons I have tried to
elaborate, anti-modernist arguments which tend to prioritize rhetoric (in the form of
such undecidable goods as indefiniteness, unknowing, or openness) over logic do not
bear up well in this regard.

On the other hand, I have also tried to show that numerous modernist and
neo-modernist attempts to produce an alternative theoretical justification of why such
logical principles as "autonomy," "voice," or "self-determination" ought to figure as the
universal, ethico-political aim of education -- and, consequently, as the ground of a
"critical consciousness" -- have failed as well. For while theorists who undertake this
justificatory project do understand that a "responsible" critique is one that is by
definition based on a standard of justice that can be justified, we have seen that a
variety of theoretical efforts to bypass Kantian metaphysics cover over the
undecidable grounds (the apocalyptic opening) of various ethico-political claims
nonetheless.

Specifically, from McLaren and Giroux through to Siegel and Habermas, the
charge of relativism is countered only by virtue of the fact that a (markedly Kantian)
subject is ultimately (re)instituted as the universal, normative ground of the critique. In both the anti-postmodernist and the "neo-" and "anti-modernist" cases, therefore, the link between ethics and epistemology that Kant first illegitimately established -- that is, the link he established by rendering the transcendental subject’s sublime "response-ability" as its essential 'truth' -- still stands as the ungrounded ground (the apocalyptic opening) of the critical-theoretical enterprise, or else the enterprise founders altogether. And this means that political educational theorists of every sort will implicate. they will implicate necessarily, the very ideology they intend to challenge in the name of justice. It is for just this reason that, I have claimed, ideology is just what a political theory aimed at emancipation through the inculcation of reason -- at the end of ideology and at the horizon of Enlightenment -- needs.

Once a deconstructive interrogation of Enlightenment reason reveals the inescapability of an ideological moment at the heart modernist and so-called "postmodernist" critical political theories alike, it becomes clear that the affirmative or normative relevance of deconstruction does not relate to its putative "reversal" of classical, philosophical hierarchies. As I have argued with respect to various critical educational theorists in particular. those who understand deconstruction in this way collapse différences -- that "non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin" of difference (Derrida 1982, 11) into, simply, another kind of "difference." Différence-cum-"difference" is then itself celebrated as a critical standard in the place of universality (or not). Or, to put this another way, those who understand deconstruction in this way to turn theory's own rhetorical undoing (theory$_2$) into,
simply, another kind of theory (theory) -- only this time in such a way that rhetoric, rather than logic, becomes the operative, logical term.

In both the modernist and the anti-modernist case, however, the (rhetorically undecidable) co-implication of ethics and epistemology is missed. Thus, whether claims concerning deconstruction's ethico-political pertinence stem from either position (pro or con modernity), critical theorists who presuppose that deconstruction "aestheticizes" philosophy in this way are taking for granted the very possibility of moral legitimacy (or, alternatively of theory as such) that "postmodernism" puts into question (or, to be more precise, the 'erosion' of which itself issues in "postmodernism").

From this point of view, the "ethics" of deconstruction (such as it is) can be seen to lie solely in the revelation of a certain ideology at the root of any ethico-political critique that claims to be legitimate, whether that critique is undertaken in the express name of universality, totality, and autonomy, or not. In other words, deconstruction can be qualified as a "certain" critique insofar as it exposes an ideological moment at the root of "critique" whenever and wherever moral legitimacy is said to obtain. For the insistence on an epistemological principle, on a root or ground of moral knowledge -- even, paradoxically, an insistence that culminates in knowledge's own undoing -- is just what has characterized reason in its "critical" mode (in its "responsibility") all along. To say that deconstruction's ethico-political pertinence should be understood in this way, therefore, is to say that the (self-) deconstruction of critique -- that is, the way in which the postulation of moral legitimacy itself brings about the exposure of "legitimacy's" own mystagogical or
apocalyptic grounding on the abyssal structure of archi-critique (C/critique) -- can be formulated in the opposite way as well. If we grant that "critique" (is) what will have been its own deconstruction, then we must equally grant that deconstruction (is) what will have been critical to begin with. In this sense, deconstruction might be said to be "post" critical (in the Lyotardian sense).

The definition of the term "post-critical" that I suggest here, however, must be rigorously distinguished from the definition proposed by Patti Lather, which I discussed in Chapter Three, Section III (pp. 236-7, above). For Lather, it will be recalled, "post-criticality" refers to a position on the part of the critic that can be characterized as a kind of neomodernist ambivalence or equivocation; the term is said to refer to both the continued centrality of critical reason in its modernist sense (whereby "criticality" is understood as the equation of knowing, naming, and emancipation), and to the interrogation of that equation at the same time. The definition of the term I offer here, in contrast, has nothing directly to do with the attitude or the activity of the critic, least of all with an attitude of incredulity or doubt. Rather, "post-criticality" as I am using the term refers to the inevitable de-centring and de-legitimation of critical reason (in its modernist sense) that occurs when the concept of "critique" (as that equation) is brought, self-reflexively so to speak, to bear upon itself. Deconstruction is thus "post-critical" in the precise sense that it issues in a legitimate (or quasi-legitimate) de-legitimation of legitimacy.

This postulation entails the assumption that the deconstruction of legitimacy is "always already" a response to the demand for reason (or for legitimate grounds) that Kant established as the meaning of "critical" consciousness to begin with. Or, to
phrase this another way, the postulation that deconstruction (is) what already will have been critical suggests that the normative or ethico-political responsibility at work in deconstruction rests, paradoxically, on its interrogation of responsibility as such.

Now, if such an interrogation results in the end in the deconstruction of critique in its very possibility, this would seem to suggest that in terms of both politics and pedagogy, the "postmodern" decentring of the subject leaves us with nothing -- with no basis whatsoever on which to challenge the injustice and oppression to which critical political philosophy addresses itself. For clearly deconstruction is not itself, on this "postmodern" view, simply a(nother) political theory with a(nother) standard of critique: rather, it is a critical interrogation of the possibility of "responsible" critique as such. Is this to say, then, that deconstruction is, simply, the critique of a critique -- one which, this time, replaces the standard we have used to gauge injustice with, instead, nothing but the poor recognition that critique (will) no longer (have had) any force?

Not simply. For once it is understood as "post-critical" in the sense I propose, it becomes clear that deconstruction can be neither, simply, a form of (responsible) "critique," but nor can it be said to rest outside the sphere of responsibility, outside of the jurisdiction of ethico-political legitimacy, either. Thus deconstruction does have a "certain" normative force. But just what is its claim to responsibility, and just what are its implications for political and educational thought, remain to be seen.

As Derrida has rightly remarked, for example, it is important that . . . it not be said too precipitately that these questions or these propositions ["What is the ethiccity of ethics?, the morality of morality? What is responsibility? What is the 'what is?' in this case?, etc.] are already inspired by a concern that could by right be called ethical.
moral, responsible, etc. I know that, in saying that ('And let it not be said too precipitately... etc.), one gives ammunition to the officials of anti-deconstruction, but all in all I prefer that to the constitution of a consensual euphoria or, worse, a community of complacent deconstructionists, reassured and reconciled with the world in ethical certainty, good conscience, satisfaction of service rendered, and the consciousness of duty accomplished (or, more heroically still, yet to be accomplished)" (Derrida, 1992c, 14-15).

Most importantly, the reason that the deconstructive interrogation of "morality," "ethical," or responsibility cannot be said to be "already inspired" by an ethical, moral, or responsible concern is because this characterization would have to be drawn from precisely the kind of legitimacy whose "complacent" self-certainty deconstruction challenges. Such a challenge, then, is issued in the name of what? This is the primary question that the present chapter shall attempt to address. By way of conclusion, I then turn to the question of what implications deconstruction’s peculiar enactment of critical responsibility can have for a political discourse of education.

I begin with the argument that Drucilla Cornell develops in The Philosophy of the Limit (1992a). For she argues with respect to the field of critical legal studies -- just as I have argued with respect to the field of critical educational theory -- that deconstruction challenges the law in its very legitimacy (in its putative "justice"). However, she goes further than this: she contends in addition that it does so responsibly. On Cornell’s view, deconstruction responds to an infinite, messianic notion of justice against which positive laws can be gauged, and so can itself be "translated" as a version of critique insofar as it exemplifies "an attitude that permits us to choose (krinein), and so to decide and to cut decisively in history and on the subject of history" (Derrida 1992a, 54). Thus despite her acknowledgment that deconstruction cannot be translated directly into a positive political or legal program,
Cornell argues that the law's own inescapable openness (its justice) "can be 'translated' as a standard" by which to judge different legal systems and even "the justices themselves" with regard to the exercise of judicial responsibility (Cornell 1992a, 181, 166).

This reading of deconstruction as the exposure of a messianic injunction to honour justice -- this understanding that deconstruction provides the basis for a justified critical decision in the field of American jurisprudence -- leads to the formulation of deconstruction (the undecidability at the root of reason and the law) itself as a radical standard of critique. To be sure, the formulation is not entirely misplaced. Indeed, if I referred provisionally to deconstruction as a "radicalization" of critical reason in the introductory chapter, it was just because this understanding of the ethos of deconstruction presents itself quite readily. Derrida himself has often referred to deconstruction as a kind of "radical critique" -- in, for example, his 1984 interview with Richard Kearney (in Kearney 1984, 118) and again in Specters of Marx (1994) -- and has even proposed that its motivating affirmation takes the form of 'a response to the call of an alterity that necessarily summons it' (in Kearney 1984, 118). Moreover, in his "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'," Derrida specifies that legal theorists such as Drucilla Cornell and Samuel Weber in particular are furthering a deconstructive program that would aspire "to change things" -- to intervene politically, as it were, in the world (Derrida 1992a, 7, 8) -- thereby implicitly equating deconstruction with a classical version of Marxist critique.

Yet notwithstanding his apparent endorsement of Cornell’s theoretical trajectory, Derrida has also consistently maintained that deconstruction -- a practice
of reading which 'disseminates', which multiplies meaning, which 'writes the trace of a decision as the margin of its own impossibility' (Derrida 1981, 5) -- is neither critique nor the critique of a critique (as the epigraph to the present chapter indicates).

Rather, he insists, it is a strategic practice of reading that tries to think the possibility of critique "from another point, that of the genealogy of judgment, will conscience, or activity. . ." (1995, 286). Thus Cornell's equation of deconstruction with ideology critique, along with Derrida's own approval of her theoretical agenda in general, deserve a second look.

To this end, Section II elucidates Derrida's distinction between "law" and "justice," in order to show precisely what Cornell has in mind when she invokes the possibility of an ethico-political critique of law derived from deconstruction. Here I show that Cornell understands deconstruction as the quintessential form of responsible critique not because it is grounded on a more secure principle of reason than is the Kantian notion of ethico-political "critique." Rather, it is because the deconstructive "critique" of law Cornell describes is normatively demanded by an infinite otherness that both precedes and exceeds the laws and principles of judgment themselves.

Significantly, however, the concept of "responsibility" that Cornell is mobilizing here, whereby the deconstructive reading is characterized as a response to the injunction of an otherness that inheres in the law, is not derived solely from Derrida's own work. It is derived, rather, from Emmanuel Levinas's formulation of "responsibility" as a response to a messianic injunction that imposes itself in the primary, phenomenological experience of radical alterity. The infinity of the Other

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imposes itself, it makes an ethical demand on me, Levinas argues, at the moment I encounter an other (person). Moreover, as I argue in Section III, Levinas presents the concept of "responsibility" as a religious relation, and he conceives it as an external site from which to launch a critique of philosophy. This is the argument that is mobilized by Cornell, who uses it to justify her contention that deconstruction enacts a "critical" intervention in the law and, concomitantly, that it has a particular normative status. In fact, I show, the reason that deconstruction is not said by Cornell to be "already inspired by a concern that could by right be called ethical, moral, responsible, etc." in a Kantian sense, is that she sees deconstruction as "already inspired" by a messianic ethicity instead.

In section IV I take issue with this view. Specifically, I argue that in proposing that deconstruction mobilizes a Levinasian, rather than a Kantian, standard of critique, Cornell has in fact neglected Derrida's own reading of Levinas. For what Derrida's reading suggests is that the messianic dimension of experience on which Levinas's (and Cornell's) 'external' critique of philosophy is based 'takes place', so to speak, neither 'outside' nor 'inside' philosophy but rather, as philosophy's own apocalyptic opening. Indeed, I argue, Derrida's reading of Levinas, no less than his reading of Kant, results in an understanding of deconstruction itself as the exposure of the impossibility of the very 'outside' on which Levinasian responsibility (no less than Kantian autonomy), qua critique, depends. Consequently, it emerges, deconstructive strategies of reading have the paradoxical effect of putting the meaning of critical responsibility -- including the putative responsibility of the
deconstructive intervention itself -- profoundly into question. They do so, I shall suggest, by virtue of their very adherence to the (Kantian) protocols of critique.

In this way, Derrida's work points ultimately to the need to re-think the concept of critical "responsibility" itself in terms of the way in which it fails -- and fails constitutively -- to account for its own desire. In other words, although it is possible to say that deconstruction bears a "certain" critical or normative force (a quasi-responsibility) and is, therefore, of consequence for the fields of education, politics and the law, it remains that it is finally deconstruction's (or, more precisely, the deconstructionist's) own desire for reason that must be addressed.

In the concluding section, therefore, I undertake to explain the normative status of the deconstructive intervention itself in terms of a psychic, not a strictly moral, imperative. This reformulation of the desire for reason (for C/critique) in a psychoanalytic register does not leave us with nothing, I argue. For the psychoanalytic explication of the desire for reason suggests a commitment to ethico-political responsibility that we "heirs" of the Enlightenment cannot not share, even if it one which we cannot adequately legitimate, either. What is more than nothing, then, is the conditional sense in which the imperative of unconditionality, the imperative to determine a self-grounding ground, inexorably imposes itself, notwithstanding the constitutive impossibility of satisfying this demand.

So understood, however, deconstruction cannot be said to provide us with some thing, another ontological ground, either. On the contrary, because the "reason" -- the normative demand for grounds -- to which critical theory responds is itself contingent in nature, any theory that purports to be "critical" cannot at the same
time advocate the perpetuation of reason as an emancipatory, educational ideal. The imperative to question the ethical dimensions of political and educational thought, therefore, is all that a critical educational or political theory can impel.

II: On Deconstruction as a "standard" of justice

Clearly, Cornell's characterization of deconstruction's ethico-political purchase is not the common one. Cornell's formulation can be contrasted, for example, with Habermas's charge that deconstruction 'levels' the distinction between literature and philosophy and thereby 'aestheticizes' the fields of ethics and politics (Habermas 1987, esp. 205). It can be contrasted as well with the neo and anti-modernist belief that, in undermining the possibility of any textual authority whatsoever, deconstruction renders meaning in terms of an undecidable 'free play' whereby all readings are as valid as any others. And, most crucially for the field of critical legal studies, Cornell's outlook can be contrasted with the standard anti-postmodernist charge: if deconstruction is an exposure of the law's imbrication in socio-political power -- if, that is, it shows that legal interpretation is ultimately unjustifiable in unconditional terms -- then the result is that legal critique will be informed by whatever interpretive scheme happens to strike the preference of the critic.

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1 It should be noted that although the implication of knowledge in socio-political power is often and readily attributed to deconstruction -- and while this thought is certainly not foreign to it -- the theoretical insight and its development is indebted to the work of Michel Foucault. See, for example, the edited collection of Foucault's interviews and writings called "Power/Knowledge" (Foucault 1980).

2 In a recent essay, for example, Michael Salter proposed "[Foucaultian] discourse theory, continental philosophy, law and literature, cultural studies, psychoanalytic theory, poststructural ethics, and feminist epistemology, theory, and politics" as among the possible interpretive schemas chosen by those who have relinquished their belief in justified legal critique on the basis of (so-
Against these views, Cornell's undertaking is quite radical. She contends not only that deconstruction is not the levelling of moral differences between different legal systems or alternative judicial interpretations -- not only is it not, therefore, the abdication of critical theoretical responsibility -- but that it is on the contrary the essential condition of any justified critique of the law whatsoever. A "justified" critique. That is to say, a critique of law that is undertaken in the service of, and which aims at, justice, and which does so on legitimate grounds.

Significantly, then, there are at least two assertions buried in Cornell's explication of the normative status of deconstruction. While these are fundamentally entwined, it is important to distinguish between them. The first claim is that deconstruction has a critical function, and that this functions rests in its unique ability to expose what Derrida calls the "mystique" or the 'mystagogical foundation' of law, 'there' where justice is said to have taken place.

This thesis corresponds to the way in which deconstruction qualifies on my own view as a "certain critique," but it is based in this case on Derrida's discussion of "justice" and the "law" (1992a). In his discussion Derrida shows that, for essential and structural reasons, justice as such (that is, in its essence or pure form) is never literally present or 'there' to be found in the law. Any enforcement of the law in the name of justice, therefore, will necessarily miss its mark. Succinctly phrased, the crucial paradox or "aporia" at issue in the question of the relationship between justice and the law is that the 'general form of the rule, norm, or value' that constitutes the law

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called') 'deconstructive' exposures of the law's socio-political conditions (Salter 1997, typescript p. 3).
"prescribes a singular application in each case" (Derrida 1992a, 17; italics mine). Most importantly, this means the law must suppose the "generality of a rule, a norm, or a universal imperative" in order to sustain its legitimacy (the law cannot be legitimate if it is for me or you alone), just as ethico-political legitimacy must presuppose epistemological legitimation. At the same time, however, if it is to be "just," the law must also be specifiable in the singular -- it must be susceptible of being addressed to each (and any) idiomatic case.

What is most important in this analysis of the law as justice, then, is that it leads to the conclusion that, rigorously speaking, such justice is impossible. On one side: the general, determinate, and calculable rule. On the other, an infinite idea of justice as the singular, the idiomatic and the incalculable. Between these poles, no rule exists or could exist to guide a passage. There is, quite literally, no way forward. In aiming at justice, in promising to address itself to the other, law must in effect calculate the incalculable. Now if a law truly specifies, if a law is 'just' in the sense that it is adequately idiomatic, then this means that it is not yet a universal law. If, on the other hand, the law does entail a repeatable calculation that can be universally applied then, strictly speaking, the law is no longer fully just. For no 'idiom' can be translated into a universalist discourse without a loss. In this sense, the law is either too early or too late for justice. So the inescapable aporia of law -- its impossible passage, its deepest secret and its profound 'mystique' -- is that the law as the realization of justice, the law in its very meaning, cannot 'be' (here now). Its very possibility and promise of 'justice' (is) this impossibility.
More significantly still, this impossibility (as was the case with the apocalyptic opening of philosophy, the discursive gesture 'come') cannot appear as such, for it cannot be recovered by the universalist discourse (the repeatable formulations and codes) it sets in motion. Moreover, if the relation between the calculable rule (a given law) and the incalculably idiomatic (the singular case) is as unavoidable as it is impossible, this means that any 'preservation' of the law (as justice) by virtue of its enforcement is at once its 'invention' and so, strictly speaking, not simply a (re)enactment of the (same) law. In other words, any application of a law -- if it is to be 'just' with respect to any singular case -- will mark its 'first' instantiation and, hence, its (non) original legitimation. Consequently, legitimations of the law (precedents) are on Derrida's view always *coups des force* (1992a, 13) -- which is to say, violent 'blows', but also 'cuts', or decisions. Applications of the law *retroactively* legitimate that which they ostensibly preserve. For this reason, Derrida contends, an aporia, a 'not-is-ness' of law *as* justice, so to speak, remains at the heart of law; the law, therefore, is interminably open to deconstruction. And justice, as this undecidable promise *in* the law, 'is' the deconstruction, which is to say, the desedimentation or the "internal erosion" (Lyotard) *of* the law.

This understanding of the nature of justice gives rise to Cornell's first assertion concerning the normative nature of the deconstructive impulse. In light of the non-coincidence between justice and the law that Derrida describes, Cornell maintains, there is always an opportunity for a (certain) *critical* engagement. There, in its very claim to legitimacy, the law (any law) will necessarily (it will always) have covered over the non-legitimate foundation of its own force. Similarly, I have shown,
this kind of occlusion occurs for the possibility of moral legitimacy defended by Kant as well: as soon as it is announced, the moral law (whichever one) covers over the non-legitimate ground (the "mystical origin," as Derrida would say) of its own determination. And this means that if we begin by accepting (as political and educational theorists, I have shown, inescapably do) that Legitimacy is what a moral claim must bear, or that justice is what the law must effect, then we can always take issue with a given law or a given ethical standard by looking for the traces of its founding violence.

Cornell demonstrates how such a deconstructive "critique" might be effected with reference to the legal case of Bowers v. Hardwick. The case at issue is one in which two gay men were criminally convicted on the basis of the ruling that "the state of Georgia has the right to make homosexual sodomy a criminal offense" (Cornell 1992a 159). In his judgment of this case, Justice White essentially concluded that the defendants' fundamental rights to privacy and to 'life, liberty and property' (the 9th and the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution) were not violated, since neither the constitution nor the legal precedents cited in the men's defense specifically enumerated 'the right of privacy to homosexual activity' (see Cornell 1992a, 159, 160-61 and 207n. 25).

With regard to this case, Cornell makes the argument that the judge in question used one of two predominant myths of legal justification: the myth Stanley Fish calls "the plain meaning of the words" (Cornell 1992a, 158). Formulated in terms of deconstruction, she says, this myth can be understood as "the myth of full readability" (1992a, 159): that is, the fiction that there is a complete transparency, or
translatability, between meaning and signification, whereby the law can be evoked as an ideally transparent origin of legitimacy. By appealing to this myth, Cornell argues, the Justice was able to overlook the unavoidable interpretive and evaluative moment entailed by his own reading of the Constitution; he does not acknowledge, for example, his own crucial determination that "family, marriage, and procreation" have on his view nothing to do with homosexual practices (1992a, 160-1).

A moment of (re)interpretation such as this, Cornell suggests -- the inevitable calculation of the incalculable -- is an ineradicable feature of any legal decision. Hence, it can be seen that in upholding the prejudices prevalent at the time of the Constitution's writing, Justice White in fact re-legitimated and re-founded those very prejudices in the name of a just decision. By appealing to a seeming origin -- the 'real' meaning 'there' to be simply read in the law -- Justice White effectively re-founds the legitimacy of the oppression of gay men in the very gesture of his ostensible "conservation" of that law. Thus a strategy for criticizing oppression enacted by the law is what, for Cornell, deconstruction can contribute to critical legal studies. As she says.

The exposure of the mystical foundation of authority... [shows] that the establishment of law is violence in the sense of an imposition without present justification. ...The point, then, of questioning the origin of authority is precisely to undermine the conflation of justification with an appeal to the origin, a conflation made possible

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3 The reference here is to Walter Benjamin's distinction in "The Critique of Violence" between "law-making or founding violence" and "law-preserving or conserving force" (Cornell 1992a, 156).
because of the erasure of the mystical foundation of authority (1992a, 164).

Now, Cornell’s contention that a critical practice of reading such as deconstruction can illuminate a certain violence -- namely, the ungrounded force with which laws themselves are (newly) legitimized in each case -- seems in this case to be apt. What I want to contest is not simply this notion of deconstruction as a certain critique -- that is, its capacity to expose an 'originary' non-foundation at the base of legal legitimacy if such legitimacy is assumed to be given -- but something that is further to this. For as I said, it is not merely that, for Cornell, deconstruction exposes a certain 'violence' and that, in so doing, it enacts a certain critical responsibility. To be sure, this claim is itself contentious; it requires further elaboration, which I shall provide shortly. But before this, there is also another, much more emphatic contention at work in Cornell’s argument. It is that a deconstructive practice of reading is itself the justified -- possibly even the most justified because the most responsible -- form of critique. For Cornell, deconstruction is not just a mode of critical responsibility; it is also the most responsible critique. I want to engage first, then, with what Cornell sees as the exemplary status of deconstruction qua responsibility as such.

As Cornell notes, deconstruction has inspired a particular anxiety for critical legal theorists. It is that, as Dominick LaCapra has argued, if the origin of all legitimate authority is 'mystical' insofar as it is ultimately based on a groundless

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4 The phrase "the mystical foundation of authority" is the subtitle of Derrida's keynote address (Derrida 1992a). It refers to the "performative power itself" insofar as that power retroactively instantiates what will have been ('mystically') legitimate (1992a, 14). This 'will-have-been', it will be recalled, is the grammatical category that for Lyotard characterizes the "postmodern condition."
violence, then the ethico-political significance of deconstruction might be seen to rest in its "dangerous equalizing force" (Cornell 1992a, 163). In particular, according to Cornell, LaCapra's uneasiness has to do with the possible danger of "an irresponsible turn to violence, because" -- lacking a legitimate origin of authority -- "there can be no projected standards by which to judge in advance the acceptability of violent acts" (Cornell 1992a, 167; emphasis mine). For LaCapra, in short, a danger exists that no judgment, and no legal system, may be shown to be more 'just' than any other, once the originary violence on which they are founded have been (deconstructively) revealed. Fred Dallmayr voices the danger inhering in this purported radical perpectivism as well. He asks: does not the rule of law "become a captive or instrument of arbitrary caprice, of the whim of particular interpreters? Are we not witnessing here the triumph of power over law, of [a radical or "deconstructive"] 

voluntas over ratio (which the hermeneutic circle had hoped to obviate)?"

Cornell's explanation of why deconstruction is not simply irresponsible can be addressed not only to LaCapra, but to Rosen (the critic Dallmayr is paraphrasing) as well. She insists,

[I]t is not that the question of the ultimate ground or foundation is pointless for Derrida [as it is for LaCapra]; instead, it is the question of the ultimate ground, or correctly stated, lack of such, that must be asked, if we are to heed the call of Justice. That no justificatory discourse can or should insure the role of a metalanguage in relation to its dominant interpretation, means that the conserving promise of the law can never be fully actualized in a hermeneutic circle that

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5 Dallmayr's question, it should be noted, is in that context a rhetorical one. He goes on to position his own understanding of hermeneutics against precisely this kind of (in his view) "farfetched and excessive" concern as it is expressed, for example, by S. Rosen (see Dallmayr 1992, 298f).

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Even more directly, she adds, "Thus we can respond to LaCapra's concern that all legal systems not be conceived as equally 'rotten'. All judges are not equal in the exercise of their responsibility to Justice, even if justice can not be determined once and for all as a set of established norms" (1992a 166; italics added).

Most notably, then. Cornell's response reveals that she thinks deconstructive reading itself provides a critical standard (a legitimate "must") by virtue of which we can determine or decide the relative justice of the judges. This standard is formulated in terms of a "responsibility to justice." Indeed, the entire weight of Cornell's rebuttal hinges on the performative strength of this 'must'. For without recourse to such an imperative, Cornell's response to LaCapra and to Rosen is no response at all. In other words, it is only by virtue of an unassailable appeal to the ideal or horizon of absolute responsibility that is signalled by the capitalization of "Justice" -- that is, it is only by virtue of our imperative response to a non-present singularity that we hold over and against the 'mystical' positivity of the law (and, hence, over and against a logical principle of ethico-political judgment such as autonomy, as well) -- that we can make sense of Cornell's claim that systems judgments can be judged as relatively (rather than as merely equally) rotten.

On this basis, Cornell claims to have adequately answered the charge that deconstruction issues in an irresponsible turn to violence. Not only is it not the case that deconstruction forecloses the possibility of responsibility, she implies, but deconstruction actually demands that one be critically responsible with regard to the justice of legal decisions and systems. Against LaCapra, Cornell suggests that we have
a legal response-ability to the singularity of every case, and that this responsibility can serves as the 'standard' by which to judge, to decide, or to choose between 'competing' legal systems (Cornell 1992a, 166). To this extent, it appears, deconstruction may itself function as critique (as the "philosophy of the limit," as Cornell says). Clearly, it follows that deconstruction's own "must" here has been decided.

But this means a crucial shift has occurred. The Derridean view I have presented throughout this study leads, arguably, to the conclusion that deconstruction 'is' (or that deconstruction takes place 'as', so to speak) the exposure of an essential impossibility of the "just" law (or the "legitimate" moral decision) as such. The exposure of this aporia and, consequently, the revelation of the inescapable failure of legal (or moral) legitimacy, is what deconstruction does, here from 'inside' (at the internal-external limit of) the law. On this basis it is clear that, if it is "of obligation that we must speak" whenever we speak of justice (to paraphrase Derrida), it is the law's own obligation as droit to aim at justice, to address itself to justice (and, consequently, to encounter the aporia of the undecidable relation within it) that Derrida actually evokes. It does not seem to be our obligation to expose the law's constitutive failure (its failure to address the singular fully, adequately, or without a loss) that Derrida has in mind. Justice as deconstruction -- or, rather, justice as the (non)site of deconstruction -- was merely Derrida's formula for "the self-authorization of law (droit) as the possibility of the exercise of deconstruction" (1992a, 15; emphasis mine).
With regard to our responsibility to deconstruct -- our charge to pose the
'question of the lack of ground' -- Derrida is much more oblique. The practice of
deconstructive reading, it is true, is said to find its motivation in and to be "mad
about the desire for" the possibility of a certain justice (1992a, 20-21, 25). This
'madness' -- Derrida's name for the idea of an "infinite" justice characterized by the
"demand of gift without exchange, without circulation, without recognition or
gratitude, without economic circularity, without calculation and without rules, without
reason and without rationality" -- this madness, then, is said to be the "basis" of
deconstruction's "operation" (1992a, 25, 26). But is this madness, this infinite justice
itself, the deconstructionist's own ethico-political charge? Or is it, rather, that
"deconstruction," "justice," and "madness," are all names for a structural impossibility
that, we have seen, we "experience" 'there' where justice is said to 'take place'?

On this latter view, one might say, justice as undecidability is no more and no
less than a structural feature of law in (or 'as') its address to an infinite idea of
justice (qua the singular or the radically heterogenous). "This kind of justice, which
isn't law, is the very movement of deconstruction at work in law," 'here' where the
impossible takes place (Derrida 1992a, 25). This is precisely why justice for Derrida
cannot function as a horizon or a limit, as he cautions us repeatedly (1992a, esp. 25-
27). For justice as aporia is never there (anywhere), but only ever 'here': it is the
impossible (not 'present', not 'as such') experience (meaning) of an absolute alterity

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6 Derrida elsewhere calls this "the injunction of différance" (cited in Critchley 1995, 10, 11).

7 Similarly, Cornell insists as well that the Derridean notion of justice does not correspond
with the "traditional Kantian projection of a horizon" (1992a, 153, 134-5, 165).
(the infinite opening at the origin of what 'is') (1992a 27). It is in this sense that Derrida contends that "the interest of deconstruction, of such force and desire as it may have, is a certain experience of the impossible (1992a, 30). It is in this sense too that deconstruction has the motivation of an "always unsatisfied appeal" (1992, 21).

But it is not at all clear how one might move from Derrida's description of deconstruction to Cornell's prescription to deconstruct on the basis of Derrida's own analyses. To say that deconstruction exposes (or, rather, that it "is" the impossibility of) an ultimate ground that is promised is not synonymous with saying that deconstruction can be determined as the responsibility to expose. It is not to say that it must. Thus, without recourse to an argument that goes beyond Derrida's own, we are no closer to understanding why, for Derrida at least, the question of the ground "must" be asked.

To say -- although it is by no means all he says -- that deconstruction is motivated by an unsatisfied appeal, that it corresponds to the structure of an incalculable promise, or that it 'is' an interest in the experience of the impossible, is to be sure to tie the force of deconstruction to the inherently "affirmative" meaning of motivation, of promise and of interest. Yet it must be noted, too, that when in "Force of Law" (1992a) Derrida himself explicitly evokes the "must" of an ethical-political imperative, he does not do so in the name of deconstruction or incalculable justice per se. Rather, when Derrida evokes an ethico-political "must," he does so in the explicit name of a "classic emancipatory ideal" -- an ideal, in fact, for which we must risk the worst. Specifically, he admonishes, the fact that justice exceeds the law
and that "the unpresentable exceeds the determinable" is no excuse for political quietism. For,

Left to itself the incalculable and giving (donatrice) idea of justice is always very close to the bad, even to the worst for it can always be reappropriated by the most perverse calculation. It's always possible. And so incalculable justice requires us to calculate. . . . Not only must we calculate, negotiate the relation between the calculable and the incalculable, and negotiate without the sort of rule that wouldn't have to be reinvented there where we are cast, there where we find ourselves; but we must take it as far as possible, beyond the place we find ourselves and beyond the already identifiable zones of morality or politics or law, beyond the distinction between national and international, public and private, and so on. This requirement does not properly belong either to justice or to law. It only belongs to either of these two domains by exceeding each one in the direction of the other (1992a, 28).

What I find most significant about this passage, therefore, is its indication that the aporetic relation between justice and the law (and, hence the deconstructibility of the law) is not itself the name of an imperative 'to deconstruct' but is, rather, the condition of an emancipatory ideal that Derrida himself wishes to uphold, and that he wishes to uphold despite the fact that it cannot be grounded, it cannot be legitimately calculated, and that it cannot be guaranteed. What is required, Derrida says, is that we judge, that we decide, or that we choose -- that we choose a good -- in order that we may avoid the "worst" which the incalculability of "justice" -- Cornell's infinite ideal -- itself necessarily risks.

Thus it is, finally, in the name of emancipation, in the name of "a new Enlightenment for the century to come" (Derrida 1994, 90), and in the name of a critical responsibility -- a "responsibility for responsibility" (1992a, 20) -- that the incalculability of justice must (impossibly) be calculated and not, precisely, "left to itself" (cited above).
I return in Section IV to the relation between justice and the emancipatory ideal in Derrida, as it is central to this discussion; for now I want only to note that the Derridean "must" is not -- or at least is not simply -- a moral imperative that arises strictly from the aporia at the heart of law. It is not, on my reading of Derrida at least, that we must ask after the origin if we are to heed the call of "Justice"; rather, it seems instead that we must heed the call of justice as the absolutely singular -- as what exceeds the law infinitely -- if we are to serve the particular emancipatory ideal that the law as justice already embodies.

This condition is a crucial one, I shall argue. To understand the nature of this condition is to draw a distinction between the Derridean notion of deconstruction as an affirmative and perhaps even indispensable questioning of ethicity, of morality, or of the law -- a questioning that is impelled by the promise of legitimacy to begin with -- d Cornell's notion of deconstruction as a determinate ideal -- as the basis for a critical practice which undertakes to determine responsibly the relative justice of a given case. Insofar as Cornell sustains this latter view, her argument hinges on the possibility that deconstruction itself can give rise to the ethico-political decision (to *krinein*, or to critique), and that it can do so legitimately, apart from pre-existing ethical, social or legal codes. For her, therefore, it is precisely a deconstructive 'must' that is at stake. And it is to substantiate just this prescriptive claim, I submit, that Cornell turns to the thought of Emmanuel Levinas.
III: Justice as messianic injunction

Levinas's "messianic conception of justice," Cornell writes, "demands the recognition of the call of the Other, which always remains as a call and can never be fully answered." This conception, she further asserts, "is exactly the notion of justice as aporia that Derrida emphasizes" (1992b, 87, emphasis mine). Now, for reasons I will clarify in Section IV, it is not plausible to suggest that this conception is "exactly" the notion that Derrida emphasizes. Before I do so, however, I first explain just what Levinasian "responsibility" is said to entail.

Most importantly, Levinasian philosophy marks a decisive shift away from the Kantian notion of moral action whereby, in responding to "duty," one takes one's direction from an epistemologically-grounded principle. On Levinas's view, responsibility is said to derive instead from one's willingness "to depose or dethrone [oneself] -- to abdicate [one's] position of centrality -- in favour of the vulnerable other" (Levinas, in Kearney 1984, 63). The Other⁸, for Levinas, thus not only precedes my existence: "his" very ethical demand on me produces my capacity for knowledge, for an ontological relation to the world, to begin with.⁹

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⁸ Richard Beardsworth provides a useful schematism of Levinas' practice of capitalization. He explains, "Autrui or Autre is the alterity of time qua the infinite responsibility of the ego to autrui [the other]. Phenomenal human beings to whom the I is responsible ad infinitum are called autrui (lower case). Autrui (upper case) [Other] is the face of alterity 'in' phenomenal human beings, such that I am always responsible to others. In other terms, Autrui is the 'ad infinitum' of autrui; and l'Autre is the alterity particular to the face, the transcendent infinite in the finite (what Levinas also designates as l'Autre [the Other] as against le Même [the Same])" (1996, 133; emphases his).

⁹ As a number of commentators in the collection Re-Reading Levinas (Bernasconi and Critchley, eds. 1991) have remarked, Levinas's is an essentially a masculinist philosophy in the sense that his exclusive references to 'fraternity', the 'son' and the 'other man' do not appear to consider the implications of a possible female subject. Luce Irigaray, for example, has charged that Levinas subsumes sexual difference under ethical difference insofar as he "substitutes the son for
This thesis embodies the reformulation of at least three major Heideggerian ideas. The first concerns the difference between the "ontic" and the "ontological," or what Heidegger calls the "ontico-ontological" difference. Generally put, this difference can be understood as a distinction between Being (which is to say, the 'Being' of beings, or Sein) and beings as entities or Seinde (Beardsworth 1996, 104). For Heidegger, Being is not simply another kind of being, but rather the very meaning of what it is to 'be'. Because it has forgotten this difference, however, Heidegger maintains that the metaphysical tradition has been unable fully to think the ontological question that inaugurates philosophy: the question 'what is'. Rather, traditional metaphysics has posed the question 'what is' in terms of the very categories of Being which already presuppose its meaning. Thus what characterizes the metaphysical as such, for Heidegger, is a certain occlusion of the question Being. In this sense, ontology in the metaphysical tradition is actually "onto-theology"; it thinks the question of Being (ontos) in terms of the possibility of a highest being (theos), because it presupposes that what Being 'is', is being(s) in their exemplarity (see Gasché 1994, esp. 154, and Colebrook 1997, 85). In contrast, Heidegger's own attempt to think Being more authentically puts the very possibility of the 'as such', the essence or 'presence' of the entity, directly into question.

the feminine," while Catherine Chalier proposes that the feminine is the (non)site -- the 'beyond being', so to speak -- of absolute responsibility to the Other. See also Derrida's "At this very moment in the work here I am," in which he undertakes a form of "radical ingratitude" by 'returning' Levinas's discourse on the other not to Levinas, but to (a) "woman" as the "wholly other." Simon Critchley comments on Derrida's strategy in "Bois -- Derrida's Final Word on Levinas." These analyses all appear in Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley's (1991) edited anthology. Since a treatment of this issue would take me beyond the scope of the present discussion, I retain the masculine pronouns, 'he' and 'his' throughout, with the proviso that their status -- whether universal (generic) or sexually specific -- remains at issue.
Specifically, in *Being and Time* Heidegger attempted to redress Western metaphysics through a meditation on the question of time (see Heidegger, e.g. in Derrida 1982, 31 n.3, 33 n.6). This is the second Heideggerian idea that Levinas reformulates. Heidegger argued that the thought of Being as a self-coinicident entity that is simply 'here-now' is first made comprehensible by virtue of a notion of time whereby the 'now' is also conceived as a present that coincides with itself and is thought, simply, as presence. This is what Heidegger calls the "vulgar notion of time" (see Derrida 1982, esp. 35).

Against this notion, he remarks that just as the meaning of Being can be distinguished from entities (beings), so the idea of the present as 'now' can be distinguished from the becoming of the now, what Heidegger calls the 'temporalization', of time. In particular, he argues, the 'now' as present does not coincide with itself -- any more than (as I showed earlier) the law as justice coincides with itself. Rather, the 'now', like the 'just' law, is either not yet or it is no longer. There is no instant at which the now is 'now'. Properly speaking, according to Heidegger, now is always coming -- this is the mode of its temporalization, which is to say, now becomes what we understand -- and, indeed, what we experience -- as 'now' by virtue of its imminent arrival, its 'to come'. And, since experience itself is only possible for me insofar as I experience every 'now' as 'present' to my consciousness, my experience is itself made possible (or 'possibilized') by the becoming, the temporalization, of time. This mode of time as temporalization, the mode in which time becomes 'now' or present for me, is what Heidegger calls "primordial time."
The third idea that is important for Levinas follows from this. For Heidegger, the fact that time only becomes present through its temporalization (its 'to come') means that 'authentic dwelling in being' can only occur through the experience of myself as a being-towards-death. Since death marks for me the temporal horizon of my own future and consequently, the way in which I live my own being (as Dasein), "authenticity" for Heidegger names my response to the call of Being. This response takes the form of a recognition of time as primordial, and it is made possible in and as the experience of the possibility of my own death (Beardsworth 1996, 104-114).

"Primordial" time, for Heidegger, thus 'awakens' the present. It calls me as a being to the inmost of Being from or as futurity. Otherwise stated, "authenticity" is for Heidegger my response to the call from Being. It is the "call of conscience." This call, according to Richard Beardsworth, is a demand to Dasein to 'possibilize' the future. And this 'possibilization' is none other than the possibilization of my own death, since my death is what marks for me the temporal horizon, the becoming now of my being, as such. It is, as Beardsworth says, the "limit experience" (1996, 130).

Thus Beardsworth writes,

To open up the 'as' of entities from under metaphysical concealment (ontological 'or' technical) means reflecting upon the 'as' according to primordial temporality. Such reflection (the questioning of being) develops the ecstatic unity of past, present and future. . . . For the early Heidegger this articulation is the ecstatic structure of Dasein itself. Heidegger's presentation of the existential 'being-towards-death' confirms that the above 'unity' of time is nothing else than the self-projection of Dasein from the future. For Heidegger, in other words, being-towards-death confirms that the unified ecstatic of authentic time is structured from the future as Dasein's self-affection (1996, 108-9; emphasis his).
As I have indicated, Heideggerian temporality goes some way toward explaining the nature of Levinasian responsibility, but it undergoes a radical reformulation first. For Levinas as for Heidegger, time does entail a radical alterity or excess insofar as it is irreducible to the presence of 'now'. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between the call of conscience for Heidegger and the call of responsibility for Levinas. Most importantly, for Levinas time as infinite -- as that which is immeasurably beyond my experience -- cannot itself be rendered cognizable, least of all through a gesture in which I appropriate (possibilize) my own death as the possibility of my future. Thus, whereas for Heidegger the call of Being is a call from myself to myself, so to speak, Levinas insists that death (which signifies the futurity or becoming now of time) is never mine. Rather, it is always that of an other. On Levinas's view, I cannot "experience" the possibility of my own death at all (Beardsworth 1996. 130). This difference is crucial. It means that the possibility of time's excess (its 'infinity') can only be encountered in and through an ethical experience of the relation to another person in their alterity, rather than in terms of an ontico-ontological conceptualization of Being.

Indeed, the relation to the other (as Other, or as the trace of infinity) is for Levinas the ethical relation. Ethics (not metaphysics, as Aristotle maintained) is for Levinas "first philosophy" in that it precedes, and is the very condition for, ontological or philosophical speech (the "said" of 'what is', here-now). Thus Levinas's challenge to Heidegger is that he finds in that thought the same appropriative, calculative, and ultimately violent gesture that Levinas sees as characteristic of all philosophy following the Greek trajectory. As he says.
Perhaps the most essential distinguishing feature of the language of Greek philosophy [before the incursion of the Jewish and Christian cultures] was its equation of truth with an *intelligibility of presence*. By this I mean an intelligibility which considers truth to be that which is present or co-present, that which can be gathered or synchronized into a totality which we would call the world or *cosmos*. According to the Greek model, intelligibility is what can be rendered present, what can be represented in some eternal here-and-now, exposed and disclosed in pure light. . . . The Greek notion of Being is essentially this presence (Levinas, in Kearney 1984, 55).

What I want to underline, then, is that while Levinas relies heavily on Heidegger's philosophy, he takes specific issue with Heideggerian Being insofar as the possibility of (re)cognizing or re-presenting it is premised upon a calculable relation to time. For Levinas, in contrast, the radical impossibility of a self-coincident 'now' means that my relation to the other, to time as the other, cannot be conceptualized or calculated at all.

Instead my originary encounter with the Other -- and in particular, with the *face* of the other -- is radically asymmetrical. I am commanded by the Other before I am determined as self. As Levinas says, "I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an 'I', precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I'" (in Kearney 1984, 62-63; emphasis mine).

What the 'face' of the other signifies, then, is the excess of my ontological existence as what cannot be rendered present; the alterity of the Other is an absolute alterity that provokes my first response -- or, in Levinasian terms, my "saying" -- prior to the "said" of the 'yes' or the 'no' (Derrida 1978, 95-96). The face of the other is not only that which I see, but also that which looks back at me, as speech and as glance (Derrida 1978, 98). For Levinas, importantly, "the face is the other who asks
me not to let him die alone, as if to do so were to become an accomplice in his death. Thus the face says to me: you shall not kill... To expose myself to the vulnerability of the face is to put my ontological right to existence into question. In ethics, the other's right to exist has primacy over my own, a primacy epitomized in the ethical edict: you shall not kill" (in Kearney 1984, 59-60). And this primacy of the Other is what opens, apocalyptically, the possibility of my own speech.

If Heidegger understood the call of conscience as my response to and appropriation of primordial time in terms living as a being-towards-death, then. Levinas here inscribes my response to the other -- whose face bears the trace of time's excess as infinitely Other and thus who presents me with the possibility of 'his' death -- as my responsibility for the Other's death. I am responsible, for Levinas, not to myself but to the other qua Other.

Importantly, however, the ethical relation at stake cannot be fully appreciated unless one remembers that for Levinas the ethical is always already a religious experience -- which is to say, an experience of God. The reason the face is significant at all, in fact, is because it is present to me as the trace of that which is 'beyond being', unrepresentable, and un(re)cognizable in or through an onto-logical grasp of conceptuality. My encounter with the face of another, in short, is none other than my "ethical or biblical" encounter with the Absolutely Other, in and through the interhuman relation. Levinas's commentary on this point is worth citing in full. He says.

The interhuman realm can... be construed as part of the disclosure of the world as presence. But it can also be construed as a part of the disclosure of the world from another perspective -- the ethical or biblical perspective which transcends the Greek language of
intelligibility -- as a theme of justice and concern for the other as other, as a theme of love and desire which carries us beyond the finite Being of the world as presence. The interhuman is thus an interface; a double axis where what is 'of the world' qua phenomenological intelligibility is juxtaposed with what is 'not of the world' qua ethical responsibility. It is in this ethical perspective that God must be thought and not in the ontological perspective of our being-there or of some Supreme Being and Creator correlative to the world, as traditional metaphysics often held. God, as the God of alterity and transcendence, can only be understood in terms of that interhuman dimension which . . cuts through and perforates the totality of presence and points towards the absolutely Other (in Kearney 1984, 56-57).

Thus, Levinas himself concedes that "biblical thought has, to some extent, influenced my ethical reading of the interhuman" (in Kearney 1984, 57; my italics).

For my purposes here, then, what is most significant is that Levinas understands his challenge to the onto-philosophical tradition as being launched from an absolute outside. The "ethical call of conscience" he is clear, is a "religious vocation" (Levinas in Kearney 1984, 61; see also Derrida 1978, 96). Indeed, as Levinas himself understands it, the very basis of his accusation of ontology -- the very charge by which he accuses Heidegger of violently reducing the excess of time, the infinity of the Other, to the calculative order of the same -- is no other than a biblical messianism. For Levinas, to be sure, the encounter with Absolute alterity is ostensibly found at the very heart of experience. It is explained in phenomenological rather than in religious terms. What Levinas argues, however, is that it is precisely in my phenomenological experience of the other's face as 'trace' that I encounter time's irreducibility to presence, and so am directed towards what is strictly unrepresentable as God.

This formulation seems to beg a crucial question. Why is the other's mortality (as signified by time's excess) transparently my responsibility? The claim as it stands,
I submit, is by no means explained. To understand this claim in strictly phenomenological terms (as Levinas purports to do), is to presuppose not only that the experience of infinity in the face-to-face encounter actually obtains, but that such an experience is the experience of a messianic, religious, "ethical" or biblical call to responsibility to begin with. It must be presupposed, in other words, that my strictly phenomenological experience of the other's mortality (my encounter with the infinity of time I "see" in 'his' face), impresses upon me, inescapably demands of me, an ethico-political injunction to respect 'his' life, and so not to kill.

To interpret the phenomenological event of the relation to the Other in this way, is thus to posit that a certain messianic, biblical, and ethical force is the original condition for experience as such. Ethicity is thus philosophy's radical, and absolute outside. One would have to grant, for example, that individuation itself is originally a distinctly ethical event in the sense that, as Fabio Ciaramelli explains, "I am linked to the other by the responsibility that I bear him or her" (1991, 91). And this is just what Levinas suggests. Specifically, he argues that the injunction not to kill, the radical obligation that the Other is said to demand of me, precedes and transcends my freedom as a willing (self-determining) subject. Here the Other's accusation is prior to my autonomy, in that it first calls out in me my personal responsibility (it calls me), before I am a subject. As Levinas writes,

The Other becomes my neighbour precisely through the way the face summons me, calls for me, begs for me, and in so doing recalls my responsibility, and calls me into question. What one sees in this questioning is being as mauvaise conscience; to be open to question, but also to questioning, to have to respond. Language is born in responsibility. One has to speak, to say I, to be in the first person, precisely to be me (moi). But, from that point, in
affirming this *me* being, one has to respond to one's right to be (1989, 83, 82: emphases his).

And this injunction comes from one knows not where; it is the apocalyptic, messianic opening of philosophy, of principled morality, and of ontology. As Levinas phrases it.

It is in a *responsibility that is justified by no prior commitment*, in the responsibility for another -- in an ethical situation -- that the meta-ontological and metalogical structure of this anarchy takes form, undoing the logos in which the apology by which consciousness always regains its self-control, and commands, is inserted. This passion is absolute in that it takes hold without any a priori. The consciousness is affected, then, before forming an image of what is coming to it, affected in spite of itself (1989, 92; emphasis his).

Thus of "itself," of ethicity as first philosophy, we can only say that it "remains hidden" -- ethicity is what is *beyond* discourse and *beyond* the "what is"; it comes from one knows not where. For this reason, Levinasian ethics might be said to escape the cognitive reach of that theology to which even Heidegger, on Levinas's view, returns Being. The ethical relation to the Other is prophetic or ethico-eschatological rather than theological, in effect, because as Derrida says, Levinas's notion of the face-to-face evokes "a discourse *with* God rather than discourse *on* God and his attributes as *theology*" (1978, 108; last emphasis his). Ethics is thus strictly unthinkable in or as philosophical discourse.

My evocation here of the earlier discussion (in Chapter One) of the "apocalyptic tone of philosophy" is deliberate. For there is an almost negligible, but absolutely decisive (for politics) difference between Derrida's elucidation of that "apocalyptic opening" without which philosophical discourse cannot begin -- his elucidation of the "rhetorical" dimensions of logic, so to speak -- and Levinas's postulation of an ethico-messianic *origin* of philosophical ontology that precedes, or is
"otherwise than being," absolutely (Levinas 1981). For Derrida, it must be recalled, the apocalyptic or the mystagogical are inscribed within philosophy itself. As I explained in Chapter One, the apocalyptic tone of philosophy is what names into being the "we" that comes to say the truth (the truth of the end of mystagogy and the beginning of philosophy). In this sense, the messianic to which Derrida refers is a certain apocalyptic tone that is structurally necessary for discourse as such, including - and perhaps even especially -- for the discourses of we "Aufklärer of modern times" (Derrida 1983a. 29).

But this peculiar messianism is not an absolute outside or "origin" in any common sense -- no more so than différence is, simply, the "origin" of difference, or that the sublime feeling of moral respect is, simply, the origin of the logical principle of autonomy posited by Kant. The impossible necessity of "C/critique," one might say - or the mystical foundation of authority, the rhetorical dimension of logic, the mystagogical opening of philosophy, or the différential structure of difference -- are not prior causes. Rather, they signal or figure what is undecidable as, the "playing movement" within, the determinate categories of cognition themselves. What is strictly "undecidable," we have seen, is "a proposition which, given a system of axioms governing a multiplicity, is neither an analytical nor deductive consequence of those axioms, nor in contradiction with them, neither true nor false with respect to those axioms" (Derrida, cited in Gasché 1987, 9; emphasis mine). What is undecidable thus both produces and is produced by one and the same system or doctrine that it undoes. To "give" as a possibility the legitimate authority of the law, the philosophical grounds of a moral critique, the logical determination of difference, or even the self-evident
axioms of geometry, is at once to "give" or grant the possibility of their internal erosion, their deconstruction, as well. The messianic or apocalyptic indeterminacy that 'founds' philosophy comes, on Derrida's view, from nowhere else.

What Levinas describes must be contrasted with this. For Levinas postulates, we have seen, an ethico-messianic origin of philosophical ontology that is absolutely Other, and that precedes in a temporal sense -- as a prophetic or ethical "Saying" -- the philosophical ennunciation of the "Said."10 The messianism in question here is thus not derived from this authority, from this understanding of legitimacy, or from this instatement of law; it is derived, in effect, from our transcendental relation to God.

What is at stake in Drucilla Cornell's account of the (moral) imperative to deconstruct, then, begins to become apparent. For Cornell's understanding of deconstruction is premised upon and in fact neatly parallels the Levinasian understanding of ethics as "first philosophy." Both deconstruction as rendered by Cornell, and ethical responsibility in Levinas's sense, are conceived in terms of a radical, incalculable obligation that is pre-philosophical, and that comes from one knows not where. For Cornell what is at issue is an infinite obligation to a messianic form of "Justice," the "trace" of which is before me in, as it were, the being of the positive law, and whose (infinite) voice is my imperative command.

Now, if Levinas can be said to escape the charge of theology only insofar as his version of ethics appeals to the even more authoritative, more primary, and more

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10 As Ciaramelli notes, "Levinas continually underlines the ethical dimension of Revelation in Hebraism (ethical because prophetic and at the same time prophetic because ethical). . . . Prophecy is the real modality of the manifestation -- and universal significance -- of the ethical" (1991, 103 n.41).
originary messianism that he derives from a phenomenological account of subjectivity. then Cornell’s evocation of "responsibility" in its Levinasian sense must meet a crucial burden of proof if it is to serve as the ground for a "justified" (indeed, for "the justified") critique of law. Cornell can only mobilize Levinasian ethics as the basis for the deconstructive charge (the charge to deconstruct), that is to say, if Levinas’s explicitly biblical understanding of an ethical interrogation of law is adequately and fully rendered in strictly phenomenological terms. This is the question I will next address.

IV: Ethics as Desire: a certain Derrida against Levinas

I suggested earlier that, in contrast to Cornell, I do not think that Levinas’s "messianic concept of justice" is exactly "the notion of justice as aporia that Derrida emphasizes." and I would like to return to this now. For we cannot fully appreciate the messianic notion of justice that Derrida himself has in mind without taking into account, as Drucilla Cornell apparently does not, his earlier reading and emendation of Levinas’s thought. Specifically, Derrida (1978) has argued that the Levinasian notion of absolute alterity -- the very notion which ostensibly preserves in phenomenological rather than in onto-theological terms a religious relation here at the heart of experience -- this very notion of the absolute Other, then, is a feature of philosophical conceptuality itself. Thus the notion of justice at work in "Force of Law," while indeed linked to the issue of responsibility, does not provide the external ground, the absolute outside, that Cornell logically requires to gauge the 'relative’ justice of the judges.
Derrida's engagement with Levinas is extremely complex, but with regard to
the argument being developed here the key point can be summarized as follows. In
effect, Derrida returns Levinas's prophetic discourse ("Saying") -- the discourse with
God that Levinas poses over and against an onto-theological discourse on God -- to
the "Said" of traditional ontology. The difference between these two discourses, it will
be recalled, is the difference between the ontological, calculative reduction (of the
Other to the Same) that Levinas finds in Heidegger's thought, and the infinite,
incalculable ethical relation to the radically Other that Levinas postulates in its place.

Now, what Derrida notices about Levinas's formulation of responsibility in
terms of an ethico-messianic relation is that the very condition for my encounter with
the Other as an absolute exteriority -- that is, the very condition for the asymmetry of
the ethical relation in which the other appears as the wholly Other to whom I am
(always already) infinitely indebted -- is still the appearance of the other as an other
ego. "The Other is not myself," Derrida writes, "-- and who has ever maintained that it
is? -- but it is an Ego, as Levinas must suppose in order to maintain his own
discourse" (1978, 110: his emphasis). In order to encounter the Other as 'Him' to
whom I am radically obliged for my very existence, in other words, I must have
already (re)presented the Other to myself as a general other (as a universal subject or
I) -- which is to say, as an other like the 'self', the ego, that I am in general.

This is what Husserl means by the term "analogical appresentation"; it means
the act of the ego in its constitution of the world as a world -- my presentation to
myself of what 'is' there as I am here. Husserl maintained that an egoic opening of
the world is thus the precondition of all experience, including that experience which
Levinas would consider the most sublime of all: the encounter with Absolute Alterity that characterizes the ethical relation.

Now, if this "egoic opening" is an inescapable condition of experience, the ethical relation that Levinas describes cannot be said to be absolutely outside, or finally to precede, the philosophical or conceptual realm. Therefore, it cannot serve as the external origin of, and the legitimate lever for, the interrogation of philosophy or the law (as per Cornell). On the contrary, there is already a form of ontological discourse at work in the ethical relation as such. What is at work there, Derrida argues, is what one might call an originary metaphoricity -- the metaphor, in this case, in which the face of God is like the face of (a) man. This metaphor is that through which the possibility of the wholly Other, the Absolutely Other, must pass. Absolute alterity is figured by the face (Derrida 1978, esp. 143).11

The event of conceptuality, therefore, the event in which the other appears to me, as another "I" like the ego that I am, is indispensable even here in what is ostensibly a purely phenomenological event that Levinas characterizes as a transcendental discourse with God (i.e., a "Saying"), and that he postulates as supposedly preceding, and indeed exceeding, any possible conceptual account of what ontologically 'is' there in (or appears as) the world (i.e., what Levinas would call the "Said"). The indeterminable excess of the ethical relation beyond conceptuality, Derrida shows, cannot be experienced as what it is without a (non)originary moment

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11 Jill Robbins develops this point at length in her "Visage, Figure: Reading Levinas's Totality and Infinity" (1991).
of language as metaphoricity -- which is to say, without that rhetoricity which
(pre)conditions logic.

The significance of this insight may have been overlooked by Drucilla Cornell. For from Derrida’s Husserlian argument concerning the necessity of an egoic opening of the world it does not follow that the relation between the self and the other can now really be seen (contra Levinas) -- or can now simultaneously be seen -- as a fundamentally symmetrical relation that somehow reflects or reinscribes a "moment of universality" (the possibility of generalizing the "I") against the potentially violent asymmetry of the ethical relation that Levinas describes, in which I am hostage to the Other who comes first (Cornell 1992a, 174-75). Cornell’s interpretation of Derrida’s analysis suggests, as Thomas Keenan says, "a certain resurfacing of the phono- or logocentrism that has dominated (and largely crippled) critical political discourse and to which deconstruction has formulated the most startling challenges" (1995, 266).

In fact Derrida is very clear on this point. First, against Levinas, he argues that there is no protection against the originary, "pre-ethical violence" (as he calls it) that Cornell is trying to overcome, because ethicity itself is only ever opened by virtue of what Derrida calls an "economy of violence" (1978, 128, 129). One might say that, just as "alterity had to circulate at the origin of meaning" (Gasché 1994, 151), so meaning had to circulate at the origin of alterity. The other as absolutely Other, and the calculative reduction of the other to the Same (to an-other ego) take place in one

12 Thomas McCarthy (1988, 647) makes this suggestion as well, though this time from a Habermasian point of view.
and the same move. Thus the very possibility of ethicity occurs only by virtue of a reduction or calculation of the incalculable that cannot even be recognized as a form of violence, yet, but which nonetheless is not beyond it either. Second, Derrida agrees with Levinas that the greater "violence" at issue rests precisely in the very universalizing and calculative tendencies of the conceptual 'symmetry' that Cornell wants to celebrate; symmetry is not an antidote to violence on either Derrida or Levinas's view, but rather its essential character. And third, Derrida argues -- further to Levinas -- that the asymmetrical nature of the ethical relation, the fact that the Other accuses me first, before I even know that "I" am, is in no way levelled or aligned by the fact that it is conditioned by what can only be termed the 'pre-ethical violence' of conceptual reduction. Violence is ineradicable, because a "pure" ethicity would not know what it was.

Thus the significance of Derrida's insight -- that there is an inescapable reduction of the other to the economy of the same 'prior' to and necessary for ethical encounter as such -- lies elsewhere. It is that the alterity that for both Derrida and Levinas provokes ethical responsibility is actually encountered 'in here', inside -- or, rather, at the limits of -- the philosophico-conceptual domain. Ethicity in Levinas's sense is itself provoked, in other words, in and as the very move of egoic constitution against which Levinasian (and Cornell's version of legal) "responsibility" is supposedly opposed. And this means that there is no way to experience what 'is' beyond being, no way to experience that which exceeds the onto-theology of Being/being as its originary, ethical sense, except by mobilizing the very apparatus of onto-theological
conceptualization that both Husserl and Heidegger describe, and that Levinas sets out to critique.

For this reason, the messianic, ethical injunction with which Levinas interrogates philosophy cannot be distinguished absolutely from theology on the grounds that he suggests. On the contrary, Derrida argues, an onto-theological gesture is a necessary, inescapable risk of any thought which investigates the conditions for or the limits of thinking, and experience, itself. As Rodolphe Gasché explains, for example,

If the positive infinite has to rely on a negative term (in-finite) through "the negation of (finite) spatial exteriority [Derrida 1978, 114]," this positivity is perhaps not positively infinite, but finite. If the "infinitely Other" can be what is only if it is Other, that is, other than... the Other "is no longer absolved of a relation to" another ego and, therefore, "no longer infinitely, absolutely other [Derrida 1978, 126-7]." Hence, "the other cannot be what it is, infinitely other, except in finitude and mortality (mine and his)." Derrida notes [1978, 114-15]. In short, since it is impossible to separate infinity and alterity from negativity, from death in the last resort, a positive infinity and absolute alterity called God must compromise with such negativity (1994. 159-60, last emphasis mine).

Without putting too fine a point on it, then, there is a moment of negative theology -- a moment in which the discourse with God is considered in terms of a relation to what God (in his Being) 'is' not, and whereby "God" is simply the ineffable -- in and as Levinas's very refutation of onto-theological discourse. This is what Derrida's discussion shows: Levinas's move to interrogate philosophy from its messianic-theological 'outside' is, in a certain sense, always 'already' philosophy's own move. Hence, the purely "ethical" appeal to the absolutely Other is always already in a certain way onto-theological, or negatively theological, too.
This is why Derrida's own evocation of a messianic concept of "justice" must be rigorously distinguished from that of Cornell. Just as the ethical interrogation of philosophy is philosophy's own postulation of an 'outside' from inside it, so we have seen that the promise of law as justice, and the impossibility that this promise entails, was always already the condition of the law to begin with. The law's own resource for critique is the trace of a promise it bears, and not the realization of a legitimate (and non-violent) origin. This promise is the inscription (the "trace") in the law of an ethical site that appears to be against, outside, and prior to the ontico-ontological realm. It is the trace of an infinite idea of justice beyond what the law 'is', but which issues, so to speak, from within ontology itself. And it is this impossible 'outside' -- this apocalyptic responsibility whereby justice is promised as the origin and end of a law which can never 'be' its realization -- this is "exactly" the conception of justice as aporia that Derrida emphasizes.

Cornell follows Levinas in positing this trace as a pre-ontological 'origin' and so falls unwittingly into philosophy's "theological trap" (Gasché 1994, 161). Derrida, in contrast, is clearly not posing deconstructive responsibility as an 'external' or as an absolute standard against which 'the justice of the judges themselves' can be determined. Derrida refuses, it seems, to attribute the name "God" or "goodness as such" to the call or the promise of justice, and so seemingly eschews the possibility of the (most) justified critique. Rather, the "critical responsibility" of deconstruction, if such can be said, its nominal 'justice', is conceived as the radically impossible possibility of philosophy in its "apocalypticity" (or, alternatively, the messianicity of the law) itself. So understood, the "messianic" or apocalyptic dimension of philosophy
or the law can be taken as that trace which is produced in the here-now as the structural futurity (and the elsewhere) of a justice "to come."

Once reconceived in this way, however, it becomes clear that the messianic notion of justice as aporia that Derrida emphasizes, is strictly "undecidable" in the technical sense. "Justice" as what "is" 'good' here-now (justice as present), is only ever (non-temporally) 'subsequent' to the "messianic notion of justice" (what we might call archi-justice) that Derrida describes, since justice as aporia never takes place as such. It is, rather, merely the name for a radical indeterminacy that opens the future to both good and ill, but without which "justice" (as "a" or "the" good) has no chance. And this means that we can derive from Derrida's thought a conception of responsibility that is no longer strictly Kantian, but that is not strictly Levinasian, either.

In order to clarify this point, however, it is necessary to underline that the (quasi-)"responsibility" of deconstruction rests -- if it rests anywhere -- on the Derridean understanding of structural undecidability; this is why deconstruction cannot be said to be "already inspired by a concern that could by right be called ethical." Indeed, the decision -- that this is good, or that this is evil -- can itself only ever come to pass by virtue of what Derrida calls a traversal of the "ordeal of the undecidable" (1994, 87). What he means by this is not that a decision does not happen; even less is it a matter of advocating indecisionism -- as various critics have implied (see, eg., Soper 1996). It is simply that, from the perspective of an event's possibility, the decision is not yet (has not yet come into being and, hence, is undecided, and undecidable).
Derrida characterizes this structural condition of determinate judgment as its "messianic" opening. Thus the messianic dimension of the decision is said to 'tremble on the edge of an event'; indeed, it is this hesitation. However, he insists, "the messianic hesitation does not paralyze any decision, any affirmation, any responsibility. On the contrary, it grants them their elementary condition. It is their very experience" (1994, 169). In other words, it is precisely the traversal -- the opening of and passage through a possible futurity -- that enables or renders the presence of the present such that I can say (can decide) it 'is'. Experience as such, is, in a sense, this determination.

Why call this a possible futurity? Because the point of Derrida's analysis is that the event, the coming to pass of what occurs -- which is nothing less and nothing more than the saying, the decision, of what is -- this coming to pass must not or can not already have occurred if it is to be possible. First it must be possible and thus, not yet. That is its condition. A condition in the form of a promise. This will be. And yet it is only ever afterwards, only when the event has always already happened, that we may say 'it is'. We must have already decided, having inscribed the presence of the present, in order that the is, as well as the is not, take place. And this is because Being is for us none other than the presence of the present since we can only experience it -- which is to say, we can only experience at all -- on this condition. That is why the future is also impossible. It is what must take place now, as future, but which we can know as 'now' only when it has passed. In this sense, the future --

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13 Alex Callinicos rightly underlines Derrida's close affinity with Walter Benjamin in this regard, particularly with the Benjamin of the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1996, 40-41).
one should say, 'futurity' -- is (always already) no longer: it is a spectre, a trace, neither being nor nonbeing, but -- to put it in a word -- the movement of différance. Différance is this promise, the promise of what is to come.

This thought, this thinking of différance as a trace or a possible futurity, is precisely the site of Derrida's intervention into Heidegger's consideration of the "gift" -- a notion which is central to the spirit of critique that Derrida elucidates in Specters of Marx (1994), just as it is central to the "giving" (donatrice) notion of "justice" that he describes in "Force of Law" (1992a). Specifically, it is important to note that, in his discussion of the classical Western notion of "justice," Heidegger links the disjoining of the present just outlined -- the impossible future inscribed in the present as such -- to a notion of excess and, more specifically, to a notion of excess as the incalculability that characterizes the gift.

According to Heidegger, Derrida says, the disjunction of the present with itself, the inescapable out-of-jointedness of time, entails a debt. That is to say, the necessary disjointure of the present entails the injunction or duty to give back jointure, to establish an accord. And it is to give back what one does not have. As Derrida summarizes, "giving rests only in presence, it does not signify simply to give away (waggeben) but, more originally, to accord, that is here, zugeben which most often indicates addition, even excess, in any case that which is offered in supplement, over and above the market, off trade, without exchange..." (1994, 26: my emphasis).

It follows, says Derrida, that for Heidegger "justice" in its classical, Greek sense means 'jointure'; justice is the accord that consists in giving to the other, over and above what one does not have and does not have to give, beyond what is owed,
exchanged, or reducible to a market economy, what is 'proper' to him or her. To
leave the other this accord -- that is the 'giving' of presence, and that 'gift', in a word.
is "justice" on Heidegger's reading of Western philosophy.

Yet here Derrida intervenes with a question that bears quoting in full:

Once one has recognized the force and the necessity of thinking justice
on the basis of the gift, that is, beyond right, calculation, and
commerce . . . is there not a risk of inscribing this whole movement of
justice under the sign of presence, be it of presence to meaning of the
Anwesen [Heideggerian 'presencing'], of the event as coming into
presence, of Being as presence joined to itself, of the proper of the
other as presence? . . .Beyond right, and still more beyond juridicism,
beyond morality, and still more beyond moralism, does not justice as
relation to the other suppose on the contrary the irreducible excess of
a disjointure or an anachrony . . . some "out of joint" dislocation in
Being and in time itself, a disjointure that, in always risking the evil,
expropriation, and injustice (adikia) against which there is no calculable
insurance, would alone be able to do justice or to render justice to the

A number of points bear underlining with regard to this intervention in
Heidegger's analysis. The first is that the question of the gift that opens Specters of
Marx and establishes its entire problematic is for Derrida an unflinchingly political
one. What is at stake, here as always in Derrida's work, is the question of the just
relation to the other, against the violence of a "totalizing" politics that would effect
presence at the expense of an irresponsible exorcising or erasing of the condition of
undecidability.

Secondly, it should be noted that Derrida mobilizes a distinctively Marxist
analysis in this discussion of justice, in the sense that the meaning of the gift is
explicitly characterized as that which exceeds, that which cannot be contained within,
the market-based circuit of economic exchange. Indeed, Derrida's elaboration and
development of Heidegger's analysis of Western metaphysics is intended as a
corrective to Heidegger's own tendency to return justice to a "totalizing horizon" of "adequate restitution" -- a tendency whereby juridical-moral rules risk being reinstated precisely as the possibility of an economic return (1994, 28). It is against an economic tendency in Heidegger himself then -- whereby the singular and incalculable nature of justice risks, finally, being violently reduced to capitalism's ideological order of the 'Same' -- that Derrida intervenes.¹⁴

And thirdly, this explication of justice in the Marxist corpus as incalculable 'gift' is directly implicated in -- even if it is in a certain sense (non-originarily) 'prior' to -- the decision of good or evil, of "socialism or barbarism." The issue for Derrida is that of a passage or an ordeal of undecidability that must have conditioned our experience in order that we choose. For Marxism or against it. The problematic of the gift is thus implicated as the very condition of this ethico-political choice.

Concomitantly, however, this means that there is no avoiding the risk of totalitarianism. no insurance to be had; on the contrary, the demand of justice is precisely that we chance it. As Derrida says.

To be out of joint, whether it be present Being or present time, can do harm and do evil, it is no doubt the very possibility of evil. But without the opening of this possibility, there remains, perhaps, beyond good and evil, only the necessity of the worst. A necessity that would not (even) be a fated one (1994, 29).

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¹⁴ Callinicos dismisses Heidegger as "a thinker who can [hardly] be treated as a reliable guide to the political" (1996, 41), and therefore apparently overlooks what Derrida is at pains to demonstrate: that Marx himself invokes the classical notion of "justice" that Heidegger describes, with all of the ambiguities that such a notion entails. For this reason, Derrida's treatment of Heidegger would seem to be apt.
The risk of totalitarianism — or the risk Derrida identifies as that of an absolute evil (1994, 175) — is here inextricably linked to a notion of justice that is a structural feature of experience. Derrida writes,

[What remains irreducible to any deconstruction, what remains as undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction is, perhaps. a certain experience of the emancipatory promise; it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justice -- which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights -- and an idea of democracy -- which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today (1994, 59; my emphasis).

If an understanding of justice in terms of the 'gift' -- an inescapable moment of undecidability and disjointure that conditions the ethico-political decision for 'good' -- is granted, perhaps it can be agreed that it is mistaken to take issue with the indeterminacy of Derrida's political thought. One can not have read Derrida closely and still be inclined to say, 'Bravo that Derrida has finally taken a position. If only he could have been more precise.' For indeterminacy, the undecidable ordeal that constitutes experience, is justice's enabling feature. As Ernesto Laclau submits, for the very justice that critical political thinkers would advocate, one must take (one must have taken) a chance. "The political and ethical significance" of deconstruction, he says, "is that by enlarging the area of structural undecidability, it enlarges also the area of responsibility -- that is, of the decision" (1995, 93). Such a formulation may stand, provided we heed the proviso that it is the conditions for, not the consequences of, the ethico-political decision that are at stake in Derrida's analysis.15

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15 For an interesting discussion of the difference between Derrida and Laclau with regard to the question of the decision, see E.E. Berns's "Decision, hegemony and law: Derrida and Laclau" (Berns 1996).
The point is not, then, as Tom Lewis suggests, that from the perspective of
deconstruction "revolutionary socialist politics today should be considered no more
than terroristic rites of ideological exorcism," or that "all future attempts to actualize
the egalitarian ideals of socialism within material society remained doomed -- a
priori. . . because of the 'impossibility of Being'" (1997, 31). Rather, the point is that
the condition for any such attempts and for any such actualization (for any such ends)
is a structural undecidability that must be taken account of, rather than exorcised
away, if political efforts are to be (quasi-) responsible.

It is for this very reason -- because it is incumbent upon those who claim to be
for "justice" to know whereof we speak -- it is important to take the present
discussion one further step. Specifically, it seems that the deconstructionist may
plausibly meet the charge that the evocation of a 'messianic opening' does not entail
political quietism. And it may be argued, too that the spirit of Marxism to which
Derrida refers in particular is one whereby the field of responsibility is enlarged.
What remains unclear, however, is how one can escape asking after the possibility of
a transition from a logical to an ethical injunction.

In other words, given the nature of deconstruction, one cannot avoid
addressing an issue that Laclau formulates as follows: if the "messianic" in question is
merely "the structure of a promise which is inherent in all experience and whose lack
of content. . . is the very possibility of justice and gives its only meaning to the
democracy to come," then one must be very careful not to make an "illegitimate
logical transition" to the particular ethical contents of a "classic emancipatory project"
(1995, 91, 92). Indeed, he continues, "from the fact that there is the impossibility of

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ultimate closure and presence, it does not follow that there is an ethical imperative to 'cultivate' that openness or even to be necessarily committed to a democratic society" (1995, 93). From whence, in short comes the imperative to deconstruct?

To put this in terms of the earlier discussion, the issue at hand is this: why would the disjointure described above, even given that such undecidability takes place, be said to entail a debt that is normative or moral in nature? Lacking Cornell's recourse to Levinas's biblical formulation of messianism, deconstruction's normative status no longer immediately obtains, since it is only authorized, if it is authorized at all, by the very concept of "criticality" whose authority it puts into question.

Ironically, then, it emerges that the problem with calling deconstruction "just" is its very formality; the problem does not concern its contingency, the indeterminacy of deconstruction's political ends (on which virtually all of Derrida's critics have remarked), but rather the almost inescapable, structural nature of its conditions -- which is to say, the purely logical status of différance. For, most importantly, to say a "messianic" moment can be discerned in the structure of all experience -- that undecidability is a logically and constitutively inescapable condition of the decision -- is not to say how or why this feature of signification makes an emphatic demand on me. Similarly. I argued above, the question that must be put to Cornell concerns the grounds on which deconstruction can be "translated" as a form of normative ideology critique.

With respect to this question, what is most significant is that, in order to link the structure of a messianic promise to the contents of an ethico-political call, Derrida refers explicitly to a spirit of "radical critique" he finds in Marx. He says,
To continue to take inspiration from a certain spirit of Marxism would be to keep faith with what has always made of Marxism in principle and first of all a radical critique, namely, a procedure ready to undertake its self-critique. . . . Such a critical "wanting-itself" [to be open to its own transformation] necessarily takes root, it is involved in a ground that is not yet critical, even if it is not, not yet, pre-critical. This latter spirit is more than a style, even though it is also a style. It is heir to a spirit of the Enlightenment which must not be renounced (1994, 88; emphasis his).

In the first place, then, the "spirit of Enlightenment" Derrida most cherishes is one he identifies as a spirit of "radical critique." In the second place, Derrida defines 'radicalization' as follows:

The point would be to do more or less than 'radicalize', or something other, for the stakes are precisely those of the root and its proposed unity. The point would not be to progress still further into the depths of radicality, of the fundamental, or the originary. . . . One would try instead to go there where the schema of the fundamental, of the originary, or of the radical, in its ontological unity and in the form in which it continues to govern the Marxist critique, calls for questions. . . . that are not or not sufficiently put to work in what dominates the discourses that call themselves Marxist (1994, 184. n.9; emphasis his).

On Derrida's reading, what is demanded by Marx (by his spirit) is, in effect, a 'radicalization' of the principle of reason in Marx, such as that principle was formulated by Leibnitz in the seventeenth century. For on Leibnitz's view, it should be recalled, the principle of reason comprises the law of noncontradiction and the principle that, for every true proposition, reason can be rendered. Taken together, of course, these principles inform the classical Enlightenment conception of "critique" in its normative sense (i.e., qua "C/critique"). But significantly, if we are to "go there where the schema of the fundamental, of the originary, or of the radical" itself governs a critique, then we cannot but question the grounds of the injunction itself. "Radicalization" is thus formulated as an injunction to ask after the basis of the
injunction to render reason (by going 'to the root'). The demand to interrogate the
schema of the radical, in short, is the demand to bring the principle of reason to bear
on its own raison d'être; it is the responsibility to return reason to itself.16

What emerges here, then, is that the Marxist spirit of radical "critique" which
Derrida elucidates entails the normative demand to give (reason) precisely what one
does not have (reason). In this sense, it is not enough to say that a Marxist spirit of
justice or of responsibility is rendered in terms of the gift. More specifically, the
giving in question must be understood, in turn, as a response to the critical injunction
to render, impossibly, the reason of reason itself. The ethico-political force of
différence, therefore -- its specifically normative bearing -- is effectively tied to an
Enlightenment notion of critique that Derrida finds in the spirit of Marx (see esp.
Derrida 1994, 91). Stated this way, it becomes apparent that the notion of "justice as
aporia" as Derrida understands it is ultimately another name for reason in its critical,
its normative, and its emphatic sense. Justice as aporia, one might say, 'is' the
impossible necessity of C/critique. And it is in this sense too that the putative
responsibility of deconstruction was always already "critical" to begin with.

Importantly, this emphasis on Derrida's part is by no means limited to Specters
of Marx. On the contrary, I have shown, the theme of an injunction to question the
ground, to go to the root, to question the law of the law, and so forth -- this spirit of
Enlightenment critique that "must not be renounced" -- can be found in virtually

16 As Derrida elsewhere writes, "Who is more faithful to reason's call, who hears it with a
keener ear, who better sees the difference, the one who offers questions in return and tries to
think through the possibility of that summons, or the one who does not want to hear any question
about the reason of reason?" (Derrida 1983b, 9).
everything Derrida has written. One recognizes here precisely the gesture that opens the field of undecidability. Philosophy or reason in its normativity, I have argued, has no reason, no such ground, of its own, and yet it is impelled by an ideal of legitimacy that presupposes that grounds are there to be found. This is its aporetic structure. Indeed, I argued in Chapter One, this is precisely why the desire for reason is incapable of being lit or illuminated by reason.

In terms of my argument here, therefore, what is most significant is this: once the messianic openness of constitutive undecidability has been linked to the radical spirit of critique governing critical political thought since the Enlightenment, the question at hand is why we are bound to such a spirit at all. Why do we feel, if we do, why do we experience ourselves, if we do, as impelled -- in the emphatic or ethical sense of that word, to honour reason? If, according to Derrida, "we cannot and we must not forego the Aufklärung in other words, what imposes itself as the enigmatic desire for vigilance, for the lucid vigil, for elucidation, for critique and truth," (Derrida 1983a. cited in Norris 1986), then the status of this desire has yet to be explained. An obligation to truth, to be sure, is always possibly heard as the voice of the oracle, as Derrida himself has remarked (1983a, 12). We have seen, moreover, that such a messianic-theological possibility is philosophy's foundational risk. But, if there is another way to think desire from here, from inside the philosophical-conceptual-metaphysical where we are, might it not be to think the desire for reason, historically, socially, politically?

This problematic of a socially-constituted desire, I suggest, this critical "wanting-itself" (to use Derrida's formulation) to provide grounds or to avoid
contradiction, for example -- the inquiry, in short, into my or our stakes in the principle of reason -- this inquiry would lead toward an understanding of the peculiarly ethical nature of the messianic injunction to deconstruct. In this way, a "certain" deconstructive critique -- which is to say, a critique of "critique" that no longer lies either strictly within or wholly beyond the jurisdiction of critique's own ethico-political responsibility -- might be said to bear a limited, normative force. It is with some reflections on this possibility and on its implications for a critical political theory of education, that I would like to conclude.

V: The quasi-responsibility of a certain critique: Freud and Lacan

Throughout this study, I have been arguing that the normative import of deconstruction for critical political and educational thought rests, if it rests anywhere at all, in its capacity to reveal a certain inescapability attached to the Kantian problematic. What is apparently inescapable is that ethics must be linked to epistemology (or else the theoretical project will founder), but it cannot be so linked, except at the cost of an ideological restriction of the critical theoretical enterprise. This is the impossible necessity of C/critique -- which reveals itself as the response to a desire for reason, a moral "interest" as Kant would say, that cannot be rationally recovered.

In occluding this structural (im)possibility, Kant achieved something that was absolutely decisive for the project of education as an emancipatory, political ideal. For it was by virtue of that bond between the two modes of judgment, by virtue of the ostensible achievement of a rational standard of (ethico-political) critique, that it
has been deemed possible ever since to make a legitimate judgment about what 'ought' (morally) to be the case. This political promise of emancipation through Enlightenment, the promise first said by Kant to be inherent in philosophy, is just what critical political theory has always subsequently sought to achieve. For in the absence of this promise of a legitimate, ethico-political critique, I have argued -- which is to say, lacking the theorization of a determinate basis that is epistemologically grounded on which to decide the difference between what ought and what ought not to be the ethico-political case -- we are left with a notion of "criticality" that essentially has no where to go.

Thus the demand for legitimacy, the demand in effect for the reason for reason, imposes itself on those of us who are heirs of the Enlightenment. It does so inexorably, that is to say, insofar as my earlier analysis of political and educational theorists on both sides of the modernist-postmodernist divide is taken to be more or less correct. On this contestable assumption, I offer two remarks.

The first is that one would be hard-pressed to formulate an argument from a modernist or even a neo-modernist position against the claim that the Kantian problematic imposes itself inexorably, since modernists and neo-modernists themselves begin from the premise that an ethico-political critique must be grounded on principle, and that principles must be Legitimate. As I have shown, those who adopt either of these approaches criticize deconstruction (or "postmodernism" in general), or are at least ambivalent with regard to it, because a deconstructive analysis of modern Enlightenment thought seems to undermine this crucial political-theoretical imperative: namely, that we can know, Legitimately, what we ought
(morally) to do. Thus the (impossible) necessity of "critique" in the Kantian sense would not seem to be vulnerable to any decisive arguments from this point of view.

My second remark concerning the inescapability of the Kantian problematic is that the anti-modernist approach to "postmodernism" ultimately implicates the impossible necessity of the ethics-epistemology link as well. In the end, I have argued, this approach does not actually give rise to an alternative -- or even a coherent -- political-theoretical strategy. To be sure, those I have characterized as "anti-modernist" educational theorists, unlike those I have deemed "anti-postmodernist" and "neomodernist," are extremely lucid about problems attending Kant's foundational premises, and seem to have rejected these outright.

What I have tried to show, however, is that a closer examination of this approach reveals two distinct things. First, the alternative values that anti-modernists mobilize for progressive educational theory -- such as the "unknowable," the "indefinite" or the "contradictory," for example -- are either underwritten by, or ultimately transformed into, more traditional and determinate 'goods' (such as "self-definition" or "the mysterious X"). or the values must remain, literally, without any meaning. The priority of logic, in this sense, simply cannot be refused in the name of différence, except at the cost of signification itself. Second, insofar as the anti-modernist strategy is to elevate "rhetoric" over "logic" or "politics" over "philosophy," the autonomy of these categories vis-a-vis one another is unwittingly sustained. In other words, the very determination of the "rhetorical," the "undecidable," or the "sublime" as goods (as 'goods' in themselves, or as such) always already presupposes and erases just that mystagogical, just that différential, or just that "apocalyptic"
opening that conditions the distinction between logic and rhetoric, or philosophy and mystagogy, to begin with, and that Kant himself covers over in the meaning of "critique." So a non-ideological, non-metaphysical, or "post"-Enlightenment approach to politics is not here to be found. On the contrary, I have argued, insofar as rhetorical undecidability is once again covered over, the ideological strictures of reason have imposed themselves in this case as well. And, insofar as the theory will benefit from reason's (re)stricture of the undecidable to a determinate good that can be mobilized for critique, the demands of reason, to render the reason for, must be satisfied as well.

On the condition that one is willing to grant these arguments concerning the (impossible) necessity that confronts us, then -- namely, the demand to justify our ethical principles on Legitimate (epistemological) grounds just as Kant once tried to do -- a certain corollary follows. It is that the imperative to give an account of, to render the reason to, or to take responsibility for our putative standards of ethico-political critique is one which we "cannot and . . .must not forego." In effect, such paradigmatic Enlightenment themes (or philosophemes) as "autonomy," "responsibility" and "justice" are necessarily vulnerable to the imperative of Critique, notwithstanding the fact that they will deconstruct (themselves). And this means in turn that one must rule out the possibility of undertaking a "certain" critique (a deconstructive reading) at the same time that one attempts to inculcate "critical" consciousness -- the consciousness of a determinate standard of critique. For an obligation to ask the unanswerable question of the reason for reason imposes itself yet again, here at the meta-Critical level of "critique" no less than before.
But why, then, is it still "of obligation that we must speak" (Derrida 1992a, 24)? If we resist the temptation to characterize the "must" of reason -- with its inevitable implication in the apocalyptic opening of a radical heterogeneity -- in terms of what is "most sublime" in "man" (Kant), in terms of 'man's' prophetic capacity to experience an unrepresentable, "ethical" relation (Levinas, Cornell), or in the ultimate terms of a commandment by God (theology proper), then how best can its character be named? In an interview with Richard Rand, Derrida has put this issue well. He says.

No longer capable of mastery or belief in mastery, we have difficulty defining our responsibilities. Along with all its implications (subjectivity of the individual subject, consciousness, intention, free will, representation, objectivity, and so on), the concept of responsibility -- which we inherited and cannot separate from the inheritance we have just been talking about -- is no longer commensurate with what we have to think and do. Doubtless it never was. Knowing this and saying so is not to abdicate, is not to renounce responsibility; it is instead to appeal to a surplus of responsibility. . . . This surplus of responsibility -- for me, the very experience of deconstruction -- leads to interrogating, suspecting and displacing those tranquil assurances in whose name so many moralisms, today more than ever, organize their courts, their trials, and their censures (in Rand ed. 1992, 202; emphasis in original).

This "surplus of responsibility," interestingly enough, was already remarked on by Kant. In the Critique of Pure Reason, he writes that reason is "driven on by an inward need" (1929, 56). At the same time, however, I have argued that Kant's own attempt to render this need, this indeterminate moral "interest" as he calls it, in terms of a logical principle of judgment entails (no less than does Habermas's) an

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17 One might compare Habermas here as well. Participants in dialogue, we have seen, are said to experience an exhortation and a constraint "to speak and act under idealized conditions" (1990, 198, 203).
illegitimate restriction of the subject to what Kant himself saw as the subject's sublime essence. Kant thus abdicates responsibility in the specific sense that he reduces without cause or foundation the surplus to the calculable, at just this point. If we were instead to leave or to let be the surplus as it 'is', therefore, we would need to speak in another register than that of ontology. It would be one which could speak to the a-logical (or pre-logical) structure of need or desire 'itself'.

If philosophical discourse thus reaches its limit by virtue of the inadequacy of the calculative language of de-limitation, however, there is arguably another register in which this "more" (this "supplement") might be said. That register is the discourse of psychoanalysis, which takes as its object of investigation precisely the "surplus," the pre-logical excess, indeed the exorbitance of the subject, 'itself'. In fact, I suggest, "exorbitance" is exactly what here is at stake. In its usual meaning, what is exorbitant is what goes beyond what is reasonable, just, or proper. It means what is extravagant or immoderate. Its archaic meaning, however, is "lawlessness," and this brings us closer to the nature of the "inward need" that "drives" reason according to Kant. Indeed, if the desire for reason that opens the subject to its putative responsibility is incapable of being illuminated or being 'lit' by reason, this is just because, I submit, the (sublime) interest in the moral law as such -- the (unrepresentable) law of the law (of universalization and non-contradiction) -- is none other than the abyssal or lawless constitution of the subject as such. Lawfulness or justice is founded. I suggest,

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18 When one speaks of a "surplus of responsibility" in a Derridean or Levinasian sense, one can only mobilize the language of positivity, the language of ontology, under erasure. It is for this reason that I re-mark such terms as "is" or "itself" in this context. (In terms of graphic precision, one ought to have crossed them out.)
on a pre-lawful (a lawless) desire for a subjectivity that takes the form of the law of logical coherence and non-contradiction.

Theodor Adorno has already proposed this in a certain way. In a lengthy note in his *Negative Dialectics*, he elaborates as follows:

In the history of modern philosophy, the word "identity" has had several meanings. It designated the unity of personal consciousness: that an "I" remains the same in all its experiences. This meant the Kantian "I think, which should be able to go with all my conceptions." Then again, identity was what is legally the same in all rational beings - thought as logical universality -- and besides, it was the equality with itself of every object of thought, the simple $A = A$. Finally, epistemologically, it meant that subject and object coincide, whatever their media.

Not even Kant keeps the first two layers of meaning strictly apart, and this is not due to a careless use of language. It is due to the fact that, in idealism, identity designates the point of indifference of the psychological and logical moments. Logical universality, as the universality of thought, is tied to individual identity, without which it would not come into being. . . . The Kantian "I think," the moment of individual unity, always requires the supra-individual generality as well. The individual I is one I solely by virtue of the generality of the principle of numerical unity; the unity of consciousness itself is a form of reflection of the logical identity (1973, 142n.)

For Adorno, of course, this insight stems from a critique of idealism that would be effected by virtue of what he calls a "negative dialectics" that puts the object first, before the subject. On this basis, the "violent" effects of the "insatiable identity principle" (Adorno 1973, 141-43) might somehow be escaped. Identity, in effect, would never come to 'be'. From Freud, however, we can derive an explanation of why this illicit idealism -- the pre-lawful desire for the law of identity (in both its psychological and its logical sense) with its "sacrificial logic" (Adorno 1973, 141; Derrida 1992a, 18-19) -- is arguably the *sine qua non* of subjectivity itself at this determined historical, cultural, and socio-political juncture. From the later writings of
Jacques Lacan, in turn, we can derive the hypothesis that this subject (desires to) take the form of, or to figure (itself) as, the grammatically decidable subject "I" that intends what it does, means what it says, and knows what it is. When taken together, these hypotheses offer an historically and socially contingent account of how it can be, still, of a certain "obligation" that we may speak.

To begin with, Freud's work (1984, 1979) suggests that the subject, or the unified "ego" to use Freud's own term, comes into being by virtue of a process in which stable cathexes are established -- that is, through a process in which perceptions and representations are invested with "a relative power to endure, i.e., to remain identical to themselves" (Weber 1982, 70). More precisely, Freud argues that an unconscious instinct -- or, better, its ideational representative -- can only be perceived if it is associated with an investment on the part of the ego, rather than refused and, consequently, repressed. In other words, the ego must acquiesce to instinctual needs in order for these to be mobilized and acted upon, for it is only by 'transforming itself into external perceptions' (Freud 1984, 358) that anything arising as a psychic impulse can be experienced (can appear to consciousness) at all. In this process of cathexis -- for which the "id" (or the instinctual psyche) requires the support of the ego -- unconscious libidinal energy (what Freud calls "Eros") is transformed into the valuation (the qualitative assessment) of an external object.

Now, as long as the ego is acting solely in this mediating capacity -- which is sometimes characterized by Freud as its role as 'reality-tester' -- the ego serves merely to reconcile or, if need be, to repress, the demands of the external world with regard to the unconscious needs of the id. The "ego," on this view, is said to be
a coherent organization of mental processes. . . . It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility -- that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes. . . . From this ego proceed the repressions, too, by means of which it is sought to exclude certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness but also from other forms of effectiveness and activity (1984, 355).

This characterization, in other words, is one in which the ego appears merely as a broker; the ego here is that original agency of approval or disapproval, rather than anything that might be itself implicated in any direct way in the libidinal investment it directs.

But the psychic situation Freud depicts is more complicated than this. For the ego is not and cannot be determined as an autonomous causality or origin of agency to begin with, as though it were primary already, over and against the id. On the contrary, "the ego is identical with the id," Freud maintains; it is, "merely a specially differentiated part of it," the weakness of which would quickly become apparent if a "real split" had occurred, and whose strength is displayed only insofar as "the ego remains bound up with the id and indistinguishable from it" (1979, 249). And, if this is the case, the question arises as to how the ego can come to function as an "agency," or even as an organizing principle, at all.

On this point one might refer to the arguments developed in Freud's analyses in such texts as "Mourning and Melancholia," "On Narcissism," "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," and "The Ego and the Id" (in Freud 1984) -- analyses I will only sketch schematically here. Taken together, these works seem to suggest that the ego first becomes distinguished from the id when the egoic function of the id is split off and posited as an ideational representative, and indeed as the idealized object of a
libidinal cathexis, itself, following the primary experience of unsatisfied need. In this process that Freud calls "primary narcissism" (1984, 82) what is represented to consciousness, it seems, is an idea of an organizing unity in which libidinal energy is invested. Thus, the idea of ego as the "impulsion to bind together and unify" -- a necessity to synthesize which "grows stronger in proportion as the strength of the ego increases" (1979, 250) -- becomes a kind of ego ideal. And this process, he says, is one without which the ego itself cannot come to be.

The melancholic process through which the ego ideal comes to compensate (as a cathected, internalized object) for an originary lack is elaborated in Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia." Here it emerges that loss is only ever mourned and thus overcome non-pathologically by virtue of an individual's ability to cathect, to invest his or her libidinal energy in an object, to begin with. For non-pathological mourning is described as the work of withdrawing all libido from its attachments to the object that has been lost, and displacing them onto a new object (1984, 253-255). But where does this capacity to invest in an object come from? It is in turn fundamentally bound up with identificatory or narcissistic ego-libido -- that is, with the "ego-instincts" of self-preservation (1979, 110; 1984, 67-70, 380). Unlike the sexual instincts with their object-libido, the ego-instinct works in opposition to the purposes of Eros; it does so "by thus getting hold of the libido from the object-cathexes, setting itself up as the sole love object, and desexualizing or sublimating the libido of the id" (1984, 386; emphasis mine). This narcissistic ego-libido, it emerges, is not a "perversion" at all, but rather "the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct for self-preservation, a measure of which may be found in every living creature"
Thus, I suggest, it would seem that the initially lacking being is threatened with dissolution. One preserves one's unity and completeness only by virtue of a melancholic introjection of the ego, which is given the ideational form of the organizing principle itself.

Thus, in what Freud sees as the pathological states of both melancholia and narcissism, we find the non-pathological (and indeed constitutive) conditions for subjectivity as such. On one hand, we are told, "the ego is formed to a great extent out of identifications which take the place of abandoned cathexes by the id" (1984, 389, 368), and the replacement of object-cathexes by an identification is just what characterizes melancholia. Indeed, in melancholia, an object that is lost is "set up again inside the ego" (1984, 367, 392). On the other hand, however -- for example, in "The Ego and the Id" -- Freud describes the relationship between object-cathexes and identification as "indistinguishable from each other (1984 368), and in "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" he asserts that "identification is the original form of emotional tie with an object" (1985, 136). It would thus appear that on Freud's account, the original condition for both object-cathexes and subjectivity (ego unity) is the libidinal investment of the ego in its identification with the egoic ideal (namely, unity or synthesicity).

What is significant here is that the "object" in question is not merely an ideational representative of an instinctual demand but is the ego itself; consequently, there is an added complication. It is that what is at stake in the possibility of self-preservation in this case is the synthesizing or unifying principle as such. The idealized principle serves, I suggest, to provide, "individuals with a unified object of
*desire*, which in turn will allow them to 'preserve themselves', not merely in the physical sense, but in the moral one as well. For it is," as Samuel Weber goes on to say, "only with the construction of a unified *object* -- be it of 'need,' 'desire' or of 'will' -- that an equally unified *self*, *capable of being preserved*, becomes *identifiable*" (Weber 1992, 243, his emphasis). Thus, "'preservation' does not follow upon the birth of the self: it constitutes it" (1992, 246). It is in presumably just this sense that the concept of narcissism, as Freud says, "brings the libidinal cathexis of the ego into line with the cathexes of objects and emphasizes the libidinal character of self-preservation" (1985, 285).

In effect, therefore, it follows that to idealize the ego as an object of its own cathexis for the good of self-preservation is to idealize or 'aggrandize in one's mind' (Freud 1984, 89) the egoic function, and thus to invest libidinal energy in the principle of reason itself. If, in other words, what is cathected first is in fact my ego, if my ego 'is' the function of an organizing principle that reconciles the external world to the internal demands of the psyche and which suppresses any possible contradictions, and if my libidinal investment in and melancholic introjection of this function serves the self-preserving impulse of the ego itself, then the cathexis will take the form of an unconscious investment in the unifying principle, the principle of reason, itself. This suggests that the ego in its ideality is unconsciously desired by the subject as the logical and grammatical "I" that Adorno describes. And, by virtue of this very desire for the ego as a valued object (as that which is most 'good'), the self as such comes into effect.
This particular process of idealization is, interestingly enough, precisely the site of Jacques Lacan's intervention in Freudian thought. For Lacan, the originary identification with the father that Freud describes as the foundation of the ego ideal or the "Super Ego" (Freud 1985, 134) -- namely, the resolution of the Oedipus complex with its consequent production and repression of a "true object-cathexis" towards the mother -- refers not to an originary lack of satisfaction of instinctual desire, but rather to the psychic moment of entry (of the male child) into the Symbolic Order of language and signification. This moment, which structures the unconscious (the repressed content of the ego) according to Lacan, is fantasized as a break with what is then (i.e., after the subject has entered language) imagined as a pre-discursive unity with the mother (thus the psychic realm that Lacan designates as the "Imaginary"). Beyond the break, or after the traumatic realization of the threat of castration, Lacan suggests, we are subjectivized as subject to the 'law' of signification, with its grammatical and logical dictates of non-contradiction and causality. On Lacan's account, we are subjectified as beings who are desirous of being the unified "I" of logic and grammar, because of a fantasized lack.

In Lacan -- much as in Freud -- this rupture and its meaning appear to be inescapable. Thus the linguistic constitution of subjectivity (with its implicit and explicit masculinism) is rendered in seemingly implacable terms. As Judith Butler has argued, however, there is a logical sleight of hand at work in both accounts. Just as Derrida reveals the mystical foundation of the force of law which deconstructs its authority, so Butler undertakes a certain critique of the law of castration (the authority of the symbolic) in Lacan (and in Freud) as well. She writes,
Although Lacan claims that the symbolic law has a semi-autonomous status prior to the assumption of sexed positions by a subject, these normative positions, i.e., the "sexes," are only known through the approximations they occasion. The force and necessity of these norms ("sex" as a symbolic function is to be understood as a kind of commandment or injunction) is thus functionally dependent on the approximation and citation of the law; the law without its approximation is no law or, rather it remains a governing law only for those who would affirm it on the basis of religious faith. If "sex" is assumed in the same way that the law is cited . . . then the "law of sex" is repeatedly fortified and idealized as the law only to the extent that it is reiterated as the law, the anterior and inapproximable ideal, by the very citations it is said to command. . . . What is "forced" by the symbolic, then, is a citation of its law that reiterates and consolidates the ruse of its own force (1993, 14-15; emphasis hers).

Given this revelation of the way in which this particular symbolic law produces its own authority retroactively and in a certain sense illegitimately, it follows that, potentially, one need not be subjectivized -- which is to say, one need not become bound to the dictates of logical coherence -- in precisely this way. The subjectivity that Lacan and Freud describe, therefore, is an historically, culturally, and sociopolitically contingent one, and not merely in terms of the heterosexual matrix it clearly implies. Even more fundamentally. I want to propose, what is contingent is precisely the injunction of reason itself.

To the extent that this 'law' to unify ourselves as grammatical "I's" does produce its effects upon us, however -- and I have argued that in political and educational theory these effects are in evidence today -- the principle of reason as an (unconscious) ideal of logical coherence will appear as a categorical imperative. It will come, so to speak, from one knows not where. In other words, insofar as the principle of (psycho-)logical identity is rooted in an unconscious injunction to preserve the ego in and as its idealized unifying function, the psychic impulse for self-
preservation can only be experienced (as we have seen) if it is given an ideational representative and associated with an investment on the part of the ego. That representative is, I suggest, the logical imperative itself. The impulse as such, however -- the desire for reason -- could never simply appear to consciousness. Thus there would always seem to be something prior, some more authoritative injunction, to which the principle of reason responds. This is its "sublime" character and interest.

If this is given, it would follow that neither the classical philosophical injunction to be consistent and to find the ultimate cause and so to unify, nor Habermas's principle of universalization (U), neither Kant's categorical imperative to will only what one would will without contradiction nor, even, the so-called injunction of différance to question the ground of the ground and so forth, that none of these formulations of the injunction of reason gives or could give the ground of moral or normative force. On the contrary: the categorical imperative of reason (the psychic desire for self-preservation and unity) is, itself, none other than the reason for the categorical imperative.

From this point of view, one might say that the chasm between ethics and epistemology that must and yet cannot be bridged -- that very impossible necessity that motivates countless attempts to account for the normative dimension of educational and political thought on legitimate, rational grounds -- and the inevitable failures to do so, can be reformulated in terms of a (socially and historically determined) chasm between conscious and unconscious psychic processes. What I propose, in effect, is that what we experience as obligation (if it is of obligation that we must speak) -- the phenomenological face of morality -- is experienced in this way
due to an understandable enough mis-recognition. The moral imperative, as such, I suggest, is ultimately a (socially-contingent) psychic imperative to maintain (the illusion of) ego integrity. On the psychoanalytic view, this impulse would be at bottom merely a survival instinct, not an ethical call. But it would be an injunction that imposes and expresses itself, for us, in an undeniably imperative way. This, in turn, is what I suggest lends reason its seemingly emphatic force.

To heed this injunction as a conscious act, therefore, would be none other than to attribute a normative value to reason -- that is, to the unifying principle itself -- and thereby to constitute ourselves through and by virtue of the citation of this principle. This experience, arguably, is what comes to be called a moral, and indeed a categorical, imperative. Understood in this way, one might say that the Kantian imperative (in any of its various formulations) is always after the fact. The law of morality comes too late for its justice, so to speak, in the sense that it locates its source in the conscious will which is produced by (and yet produces) a decidedly a-moral, unconscious wish.

On the other hand, since the psychic demand can be experienced in no other way than, as Freud says, through an ideational representative, the trace of that constitutive desire is simultaneously erased. That trace is the irrecoverable, apocalyptic opening of ethicity that we encounter, and not the revelation of the process of unconscious cathexis of the egoic ideal as such. But from the moment it appears, from the moment that there 'is' or there appears to 'be' a logical ground of ethics and politics, it follows that that ground is the "I think" -- the (ideally unified) rational agency or source -- of our ethico-political claims. For that erasure, the
"playing movement of that différance' 'is' what allows the untenable, temporary, tenuous subject to be read, retroactively (imaginarily) as that which was always already there. Thus the "I will" or (the "we will") becomes, ideologically in effect, an epistemologically certifiable ground.

The psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan lead, then, finally to this modest conclusion. Given the link between the principle of reason (the logical unity) and a structure of subjectivity that is contingently determined on a number of fronts and which produces and is produced by a certain injunction for psychological unity, the ethicity of the ethical, the morality of the moral, or the reason of reason cannot, ultimately, be guaranteed or Legitimated in any determinate way. What we find, there, is merely one explication of how the demand for reason achieves its seemingly normative force.

But perhaps this is not simply nothing. For insofar as the very postulation of the desire for reason as an "I think" as ground is produced in the here-now of today, insofar as this ground opens itself to its own a structural futurity by virtue of the potential for internal erosion that it necessarily bears, and insofar as this potential (to self-deconstruct) inhering in the law of logical mastery 'is' the ethico-political chance of a justice "to come," it seems to me that we are impelled, insofar as we are the subjects that we 'are', to attempt to render the reason for our interminable ideological propensities. For does there not issue -- from, so to speak, the (psychic) pressure of the very limit "inside" the "speculative game" here where "we" are -- at the very least a (quasi-) imperative demand to recognize and to account for the inescapable contingency, the conditionality and indeed, the inevitable ideology, that
inheres in reason itself? If there does, then is not "postmodernism" not merely relative, and not merely nothing, either?

Such, at any rate, is the limit of any possible critique that would know itself to be just. It is the reason, I submit, that although deconstruction may be understood as a "certain" critical intervention in education, politics, or the law, one must be very cautious about making any absolute claims about its status as responsible critique. If there is no (centred) subject as such, to be sure, responsibility is strictly impossible. But the moment one asks, "why reason?", at the very moment that the subject comes into question as what it is, the impossible has already occurred. The subject is already there. In this undecidable instant of questioning, ethical and political institutions and codes are once more at risk. But it is at this instant too when politics, for good or for ill, has its opening and thus its chance. This chance, which is no more and no less than the pedagogical question of reason, 'is' the ethical dimension of political and educational thought.
WORKS CITED


