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# HISTORY OF STRUCTURALISM

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FRANÇOIS DOSSE

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*Volume 2*

THE SIGN SETS, 1967-PRESENT™

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TRANSLATED BY DEBORAH GLASSMAN

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History of Structuralism  
*Volume 2*

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*Volume 2: The Sign Sets, 1967-Present*

Francois **Dosse**

*Translated by Deborah Glassman*



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The University of Minnesota is an equal-opportunity educator and employer.

To *Florence, Antoine, Cbloe, and Aurelien*

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*Structuralism is not a new method, it is the awakened and troubled  
consciousness of modern thought.*

Michel Foucault

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# Preface

Were there many structuralisms or simply one structuralism? By the end of the decades of structuralism's triumph described in the first volume of *History of Structuralism*, it had become clear that structuralism wove a reality of different logics and individuals resembling a disparate fabric more than a school. However, there were a specific orientation and many dialogues indicating a "structuralist moment." In the mid-sixties, both Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault were trying to bring together the most modern social science research around an effort at philosophical renewal that came to be known as structuralist. In 1966, these efforts reached their apex.

By 1967, cracks started to appear. It became clear that the groupings of the first period were often artificial, and a general withdrawal of sorts began at this point. Certain of the players sought less-trodden paths in order to avoid the epithet "structuralist." Some even went so far as to deny ever having been a structuralist, with the exception of Claude Levi-Strauss, who pursued his work beyond the pale of the day's fashions.

Paradoxically, while structuralists were distancing themselves from what they considered to be an artificial unity, the media were discovering and aggrandizing this unity. This period of deconstruction, dispersion, and ebb, however, only quite superficially affected the rhythm of structuralist research. Research continued elsewhere, in

the university, and obeyed another temporal logic. May 1968 had contributed to structuralism's institutional success, and this played an essential role in assimilating the program that had lost its blazened banner of a counterculture in revolt to become one of the theoretical, but unarticulated, horizons of social science research.

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# **Part I**

## *First Fissures*

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## One

# Chomskyism-New Frontiers?

In 1967, Pion published Nicolas Ruwet's doctoral dissertation, *Introduction to Generative Grammar*,<sup>1</sup> in which he presented Chomskyan principles. For Ruwet, as for many linguists, Chomsky was the expression of a radical break with the first structuralist period. Ruwet had discovered Chomsky thanks to an itinerary that took him from Belgium to Paris, where he attended many of the important seminars being held at the time.

Born in 1933, Nicolas Ruwet was first a student in Liege. Dissatisfied with a style of teaching that resembled the pedagogy at the Sorbonne, he left Belgium in 1959 to come to Paris. "I was vaguely thinking about ethnology, but I was also interested in psychoanalysis. I was a musician at the beginning and I had already read a certain number of works in linguistics including Saussure, Trubetzkoy, and Jakobson." From the outset Ruwet was at the confluence of different disciplines, a good indication of the totalizing structuralist imperative. He left Belgium seeking rigor and in the hope of participating in the scientific adventure that was unfolding.

In Paris, Ruwet went to Émile Benveniste's seminar at the Collège de France, André Martinet's seminar at the Sorbonne, and Claude Lévi-Strauss's seminar at Hautes Études. "What was going on in Lévi-Strauss's seminar particularly excited me, at the beginning when he brought in a long article by Roman Jakobson that had just come out in English, entitled 'Linguistics and Poetics.' He was completely car-

ried away by it and read us practically the entire text during the two hours of the class."! In 1962, Ruwet became a member of the poetics program in the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research (FNRS): "I was planning to do a thesis on Baudelaire, which I never did."<sup>4</sup> In 1963, he wrote the preface to the collected works of Jakobson, one of the major publications of the period, published by the Éditions de Minuit as *Essays in General Linguistics*.<sup>5</sup> He and his friend Lucien Sebag were both attending Lacan's famous seminar at the time. While on a trip together with Lacan's daughter and other friends in a house that Lacan had rented in Saint-Tropez, Ruwet discovered Chomsky, entirely by accident.

I was alone in the room that Lacan used as a study and there was a little blue book, published by Mouton, lying on his desk. It was Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*. I ordered it right away at the end of the vacation, and found it very interesting, but I did not understand a thing. There were still too many pieces missing."

Despite this fortuitous discovery, Ruwet continued to work along the lines defined by Jakobson and Hjelmslev and wrote an article for Éric de Dampierre summarizing the situation in general linguistics in 1964, in which he sang the praises of structuralism.<sup>7</sup>

## The Conversion

In 1964, everything changed. A friend from Liège lent Ruwet a book by Paul Postal which had just come out, *Constituent Structure: A Study of Contemporary Models of Syntactic Description*, in which Postal presented Chomsky's major ideas. "I read it on the train between Liège and Paris. When I got to the Gare du Nord I was a generativist. In the space of a few hours I had walked my road to Damascus. Everything changed. I had to finish my article for Éric de Dampierre, but I no longer believed in what I was saying."<sup>8</sup> Ruwet spent the next three years reading everything published on generative grammar and preparing to write his thesis—which he had initially not planned to publish as a book but only in order to get an official diploma and crown a rather interdisciplinary career, like that of most structuralists. In 1967-68, this book quickly became the breviary of the new generation that was discovering linguistics.

Chomsky was not well known in France at the time. Although *Syntactic Structures* had come out in 1957, it was only translated in

1969 at Seuil. Thanks to Nicolas Ruwet, who adopted an entirely new approach with respect to what had come before in linguistics, Chomsky became known in France. In December 1966, Ruwet introduced generative grammar in issue 4 of *Langages*; Chomsky gave him the possibility of working on syntax, which Saussure and Jakobson had ignored. While the search for greater scientificity provided the link between structuralism and Chomskyism, Ruwet saw an advantage in generativism's Popperian conception of science as falsifiable. "The break lies in the possibility of offering hypotheses that can be proved false. This made a deep impression on me."? Generative grammar required a precise and explicit theory, which worked like an algorithm whose operations can be applied mechanically. "Karl Popper clearly showed that it was possible to establish a science on the principle of induction."10 With the double articulation of language on the deep structure of competence and a surface structure of speech, a double universality was postulated. Not only were there established rules and a system, but there were also "a certain number of substantial universals."<sup>11</sup> This quest for universals carried structuralist ambitions even further, ambitions themselves taken from the general principle evoked by Plato in the *Sophist* (262 B.C.), offering "the material foundations of structural linguistics."<sup>12</sup> Plato had argued that the study of a system of signs presupposed a certain limited number of conditions: determining minimal units, their finite number, their combinability and, finally, that not all combinations are possible.

Although May 1968 would also weaken the structuralist paradigm, as we will see, Chomsky's thinking was in phase with the events of the late sixties. But this was due to a curious misunderstanding. In the first place, Chomsky was known as an American radical who protested the war in Vietnam, thereby embodying the very expression of a critical attitude. But even more, the term "generative" in France was understood "in the sense of that which engendered, fruitful moves. We no longer wanted static structures, and structuralism at that point was associated with conservatism. The term 'generative,' although purely technical, had nothing at all to do with all of that."<sup>13</sup> For Chomsky, in contrast, generative grammar meant simply an explicit grammar modeled on the competence of native speakers and it "simply meant the explicit enumeration by means of rules."<sup>14</sup> Thanks to these misunderstandings, generative grammar met the generation of protest, which saw in Chomsky's ideas the means of reconciling his-

tory, movement, and structure. This misperception was fruitful in many ways, including making generativism known in France.

### The Archaeology of Generativism

There was a second misunderstanding. Chomsky's criticism did not address European structuralism. It focused on American structuralism, represented by Leonard Bloomfield and his "distributionist" or Yale School, the dominant form of linguistics in the United States in the fifties. Bloomfield drew his inspiration from behavioral psychology, and considered that it was enough to describe the mechanism of language, to underscore its regularities. These mechanisms were the concern, the meaning of utterances was not. Utterances were to be broken down into their immediate constituents and classified in a distributional order. American linguistics prior to Chomsky was thus essentially descriptive, linear, and based on an assumed transparency between speech acts and their meaning. The systems of opposition emphasized by American structuralism made it above all possible to avoid mentalism. This descriptive, distributional approach was largely inspired by work done in the twenties and that sought to restore the various Amerindian languages. Ethnolinguistics, which Boas and Sapir had been developing on the other side of the Atlantic, removed from Saussureanism, saw linguistics in this light. "Chomsky's rupture has to be understood with respect to the school of American linguistics. The split is clear but there is an undeniable foundation, which is articulation. No theory proposes to analyze sentence structure."<sup>15</sup>

American structuralism, or distributionalism, also moved ahead thanks to the work of Zellig Harris, who described its method in 1951.<sup>16</sup> Like Bloomfield, Harris argued that meaning and distribution corresponded to each other. He defined the principles of an approach based on the constitution of a representative, homogeneous corpus in order to determine the different morphemes and phonemes by means of successive segmentations. To get to these original structures, Harris defined mechanical rules of calculus and eliminated all traces of subjectivism and context. "Functional notions such as the subject of a sentence, for example, were replaced by complex classes of distribution."<sup>17</sup> All forms of speaker intentionality were relegated to somewhere beyond the scientific field of distributionalism. Harris therefore pushed Bloomfield's logic to its limits, and introduced the notion of transformation in order to reach the study of discursive structures

using classes of equivalence. His research led him greater and greater formalism in order to make different discursive manifestations derive from a limited number of elementary sentences generated by fundamental operators. "Everything in this model depends on the assimilation of meaning to objective information and on the position of a weak semantics."<sup>19</sup>

## The Principles of Generativism

Initially, Chomsky adopted Harris's distributionalism and maintained the explicit character of the approach. But, together with Morris Halle at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he quickly oriented his work in a new, "generative" direction. He rejected the distributionalist imposition of limits to a corpus that did not exhaust the richness of a language. With the intention of going further than a simple description, he sought the more essential level of explanation and therefore denounced economical methods. Initially, he limited his field of study to syntax so as to establish an independent theory and an autonomous grammar. "The end results of this research should have been a theory of linguistic structure in which the descriptive mechanisms used in particular grammars were introduced and studied abstractly without any specific reference to any particular languages."<sup>20</sup> This grammar would take the form of a generative mechanism that revealed possibilities, rather than a corpus serving as the basis for induction.

By its formalism and rejection of meaning, the generative approach upheld the structuralist legacy. "This conception of language is extremely powerful and general. If we adopt it, we consider the speaker to be essentially a machine of the type known in mathematics as the Markov process with a finite number of states."<sup>21</sup> Once the technical hypotheses of the construction of this generative grammar were described in 1957, Chomsky published *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965, in which he described the philosophical dimension of his approach, rooting it historically and theoretically. Seuil published the French translation in 1971. Starting with the observation that every child learns its mother tongue with remarkable speed, Chomsky argued that a child had the potential to learn any language. But rather than concluding that an initial context determined language acquisition, he argued for universal laws that determine languages as well as universals of language. Every individual therefore possesses an innate

linguistic competence, to be distinguished from the use made of it in individual linguistic performance in a particular language.

Chomsky's linguistic universalism was therefore the expression of innateness, founded on a notion of human nature irrespective of cultural differences. This goal of universalization was also consonant with the general structuralist program, on the border between nature and culture. The analysis did not begin by describing any particular language, but started with the concept, the construction, in order to end up with reality. "The first object of linguistic theory is an ideal speaker-listener who belongs to a completely homogeneous linguistic community."<sup>22</sup>

Chomsky's approach was doubly rooted. Historically, he invoked the European linguistic tradition going back to the grammar of Port-Royal. He used seventeenth-century Cartesian rationalism with the theories of innateness of the period, Cartesian substantialism. P and hoped to scientifically establish this innateness with the help of genetics. In this he echoed Levi-Strauss's goal of reaching mental structures. "Everything happens as if the speaking subject . . . had assimilated into its very thinking matter a coherent system of rules, a genetic code."<sup>24</sup>

For Chomsky, genetics, on the threshold of technological modernity, made this primary structure accessible. "By adopting the cognitivist program, Chomsky and the Cambridge school adopted the following proposition: an idea has the structure of coded information in a computer."<sup>25</sup> Chomsky believed that with generative grammar linguistics could claim to have attained the level of science, in the Galilean sense of the term. He was explicitly scientific and his model was located in the natural sciences. Taking competence as his fundamental structure, he turned toward "an ontology of structures."<sup>26</sup>

Is the competence/performance distinction the equivalent of Saussure's language/speech dichotomy? Françoise Gadet considered that Chomsky essentially continued along lines drawn by Saussure: "This is a fundamental point where his ideas are consonant with those of Saussure . . . . Competence can be compared to Saussure's idea of language."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, we can easily discern a strong analogy between these two conceptual couples underlying the positive references Chomsky made to Jakobson even if, as of the early sixties, Saussure's conception of language was considered to be naive. For Nicolas Ruwet, however, underscoring the creative aspect of language in Chomsky implied that

"Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance is radically different from Saussure's dichotomy between language and speech."<sup>28</sup> Whereas Saussure defined language as a simple taxonomy of elements and limited creation to speech, Chomsky differentiated between two types of creativity: the one changed rules and the other was governed by rules. In the first case, performance gave the proof of creativity, whereas in the second, linguistic competence demonstrated creativity. For Ruwet, this notion fundamentally and radically renewed thinking about language: an infinity of possible sentences that the speaking subject could understand or produce while never having previously uttered or heard them.

Quite subtly, as Chomsky used the old notion of a dehistoricized and decontextualized human nature, structuralism became a structural naturalism. "Every true social science or any revolutionary theory of social change must be based on certain concepts of human nature."<sup>29</sup> He reoriented toward a cognitive psychology of which linguistics would be only one element, and in so doing, announced the future paradigm of cognitivism and of neuronal man. By contrast with behaviorism, Chomsky insisted on innateness and its genetic foundations. "It was a question of considering general principles like the properties of a biological given making language acquisition possible."<sup>30</sup> And yet, Chomsky's field of investigation remained strictly linguistic, syntactic, and the inspiration he drew from the biological sciences only played an analogical and essentially methodological role that served to establish the framework for a universal grammar.

For Ruwet, Chomsky offered a way of discovering his road to Damascus and of leaving the sidelines to which structuralism relegated him. For many other linguists, however, there was no significant break between structuralism and generativism. Louis-Jean Calvet remarked: "For me, Chomsky was profoundly structuralist. He is the heir to Saussure."<sup>31</sup> For Calvet, Saussure's legacy lay essentially in his work on language as a scientific object removed from the social realm and concrete sociological or psychological situations. Nonetheless, from a heuristic viewpoint, Calvet credited Chomsky with having furthered the idea of a syntactic model. Similarly, Oswald Ducrot saw in Chomsky a continuation of Saussure: "I never perceived Chomsky as opposed to structuralism. I don't see why the search for a formal system that accounts for all possible utterances would be antistructuralist. But it is true that, for historical reasons, he greatly threatened

many in France who called themselves structuralists."<sup>32</sup> Chomsky was as much a stranger to the idea of subject as he was to context, and he articulated his positions with respect to the continental model by referring to Descartes. He seemed to be constructing his generative grammar from the perspective of a European structuralist problematic, and in this respect the linguistics of utterances set the two approaches back to back.

### Is Chomskyan Theory Antistructuralist?

The tensions quickly ran quite high, however, between Chomsky, his disciples, and a certain number of eminent European representatives of structuralism, particularly Andre Martinet. Martinet had spent about ten years in the United States, from 1946 until July 1955, and was the editorial director of *Word*, one of the two important linguistic journals with positions radically opposed to the ambient and dominant Bloomfieldism. In the mid-fifties, Chomsky therefore chose to submit his first article on syntax to Andre Martinet. "Chomsky sent me his article at *Word*. I read it and immediately said, 'Impossible!' This perspective is going to get us into hot water. So from then on I was deemed the great enemy of Chomskyism."<sup>33</sup> The polemic was immediately violent. And Martinet did not at all appreciate being relegated during his own lifetime to the ranks of "antiquities" by an often thankless new generation eager to break with the past and the discipline's founding fathers. He reacted by tending to energetically reject any elaboration of structural methods, at the risk of finding himself isolated in his bunker. But above all he was careful to preserve the heritage whose bearer he considered himself to be, by stalwartly resisting the vogue for Chomskyism. "Chomsky represents the heights of a priori assertion when he claims that all languages are basically identical and that a deep structure therefore exists."<sup>34</sup>

Martinet was caught between a humanist tradition that saw him as a dangerous structuralist respectful of nothing and the development of Chomskyism with its purely formal conception of language, which, precisely in the name of humanist positions, he was reluctant to accept. For Martinet, this was a linguistics of engineers. As the grand heir to phonology and the work of the Prague Circle, he

did not see himself going back to school to be retrained in mathematics and informatics. He chose to leave America rather than adopt

an unappealing direction that he also felt was misguided. Of course he did feel a certain bitterness, especially since he was contested by both the extensionalists, who wanted to broaden the structural method, and by those who wanted to formalize it.<sup>35</sup>

Claude Hagege agreed that generative grammar represented a break with respect to other linguistic traditions, but he considered it negatively to the extent that it radicalized a break from social reality in order to generate its formal models free "of all social and historical interference."<sup>36</sup> The Saussurean dichotomy between language and speech was also antisociological, but Saussure had been influenced by Durkheim; we can see his dichotomy between language and speech as a linguistic reiteration of Durkheim's distinction between systems defined by their social relationships and those produced by individual creativity. Chomsky, on the other hand, "totally betrayed this sociological tradition, which had a long history in both France and Germany."<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Chomsky broke with all tradition, particularly that of the comparatists, and could persuade neither Andre-Georges Haudricourt, for whom generativism had essentially negative effects, nor Tzvetan Todorov, who remained strictly loyal to Jakobson and Benveniste.

The first structuralists were immersed in the plurality of languages, and could cite examples from Sanskrit, Chinese, Persian, German, or Russian. Chomsky, on the other hand, was the total and complete negation of all that because he always worked in and on English, his native language. Even if he was a good specialist in what he did, his influence was disastrous because it led to an altogether striking sterilization of linguistics.<sup>P</sup>

But Chomsky theorized this limitation to a native language and turned it into a methodological necessity: only a native speaker could recognize the grammaticality of a sentence from the language in question. Moreover, Chomsky's concern with syntax was perceived at once as a sign of progress, as if a new and long ignored field of analysis was being opened up, but also as a closure, because all other possible approaches—phonetics or semantics, for example—were eliminated.

Because of his notion of innateness and the distinction between surface and deep structure, Chomsky was considered by some to represent a regression. His approach did imply a return, which he made explicit, to the logic of Port-Royal according to which thought shapes itself independently from language, which serves only to communicate

it. In other words, he took an essentially instrumental view of language that structuralism, since Saussure, had rightly contested. "It is clear to me that the notion that a thinking human nature or human essence exists, a priori, was an ideology that structuralism condemned, and vigorously rejected."<sup>39</sup> In fact, the theoretical foundation that Chomsky laid with his notion of deep structure and human nature took its distance from structuralism in general, and, for example, from the fundamental principle expressed by Benveniste that "the linguist believes that no thought can exist without language."<sup>40</sup>

### Chomskyism: Structuralism's Second Wind?

Despite the structuralists' and functionalists' biases against Chomsky's generative grammar, it undeniably gave a second wind to linguistics in France at the end of the sixties. It made its way thanks to the notion of transformation. In fact, generativism was initially known as transformational grammar.

Jean Dubois was an important promulgator of this model for the French. As early as 1965 he had applied certain aspects of Harris's distributionalism." A French grammarian schooled in the thinking of the classical humanities about dead languages, Dubois turned his sights toward the models being used across the Atlantic. "Bloomfield was my preferred reading. The Americans were also working on languages they did not speak, on Amerindian languages."<sup>42</sup> Dubois's interest was also evident in his work in neurology. For many years, he worked with Dr. Henry Hecaen in a hospital laboratory in Montreal, and later in France. Dubois championed a syncretic position amalgamating the methods of functional structuralism, distributionalism, and generativism. "Because I was involved in making a contemporary French dictionary, I came to use a method that was half structural and half transformational."<sup>43</sup> Dubois's theories translated his institutional situation. He was at a point of confluence between different currents, a professor at Nanterre, the director of the review *Langages*, as well as a collection of the same name at Larousse, not to mention his activism among the PCF linguists at the CERM.

Dubois's interest in generativism led to a definitive rupture with Martinet, who could not stand the increasingly numerous references to Chomsky, which he interpreted as being part of an effort to challenge him. Dubois dates their disagreement to experiences with Larousse:

Martinet had arranged to create his review and his collection at Larousse. Then, clumsily, because he is a very honest man, he undertook parallel negotiations with PUF without saying anything about it. Larousse did not appreciate this, particularly since Martinet preferred PUF because its name included the word 'university.' Martinet was extremely unhappy that the project was taking shape without him at Larousse. In fact, I was in the situation of launching *Langages* in 1966 without ever considering that I was on the same level as Martinet.<sup>f</sup>

This vogue for Chomskyism was appealing because it offered the possibility of making structure into something dynamic, and reconciling genesis and structure, even if these were not Chomsky's intentions. The entire generation of linguists, including Julia Kristeva, reacted in this way: "I read Chomsky with great interest because his model was more dynamic than the phonological model. I felt that this could correspond to the vision of meaning in progress that I was beginning to envisage."<sup>45</sup> In order to underscore this dynamization, Kristeva turned to biology and the oppositions between genotype and phenotype, which she imported into linguistics as a mode of articulation between genotext and phenotext. With this distinction she could explain that the text is in fact a phenotype organized according to certain quasi-instinctual processes determined by a genotype. The field of interpretation was also opened up to psychoanalysis. Kristeva was interested in Chomskyism, but she did not really adopt its ideas. She rejected postulates of innateness and the always already there-ness of linguistic notions, which seemed to her to be secondary with respect to a certain phenomenology and to Freudian thinking: "I was quite disappointed by our conversations because of his disdain for everything involving stylistics and poetics. So far as he was concerned, these phenomena were little more than decorations."<sup>46</sup>

### Cognitivism's First Steps

Another aspect of generativism perceived as a sign of clear progress was its ability to formalize and test its hypotheses by verifying their validity, even if, with the development of expert informatics systems, things have gone even further in terms of formalization. Historically, Chomsky was an important moment. "This was the first time that we had been able to define the structure of a linguistic theory or been able to evaluate the different possible explanations that it offered."<sup>47</sup>

By pushing linguistics toward ever greater formalization, however, Chomskyism ended up by cutting it off from other social sciences, whereas, in contrast, the first effect, in the sixties, had been to breathe a new dynamism into linguistics, considered the pilot science among other social sciences. Generative grammar did infuse linguistics with its exigency for rigor and concern for explanation, along with a certain continuity of Saussurean thinking about language and its operations. But we might wonder whether generativists did not dig their own graves when such respected linguists as Françoise Gadet admit that generative grammar today "has become entirely unreadable."<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, generativism led to a scientific paradigm. In doing so, it renewed with the first thrust of structuralism and its hope of going beyond the nature/culture split to take the natural sciences as a model, with the cognitive paradigm. Joelle Proust discovered Chomskyism in the mid-sixties, but it was only in the seventies, at Berkeley, where she was immersed in the great flowering of the cognitive sciences, that she embarked on a new path. "At that point, I realized that many of the things I had learned had to be unlearned and re-assimilated differently."<sup>49</sup> She therefore adopted Chomskyism because of its search for the logical, computational, organic structure underlying the observable diversity of cultures. She embraced Chomsky's notion of human nature, which had been his first important theoretical reference and which Louis Althusser had qualified as an ideological notion. "Today, we have to admit that, scientifically speaking, there are universal bases to cognition; some things are shared by all members of our species and can, in principle, be duplicated by a machine. There is no reason to think that reason ends with man."<sup>50</sup> This working hypothesis presupposed that man's reason may not be specific to the organic matter that constitutes us, that a system of memory thinks because it calculates in symbols. After that, the only things that count are the relational, formal properties of calculus, while the organic aspect can vary just as different computers can use the same program. "That was the reason that we said that there might be a form of functional equivalence between men and machines."<sup>51</sup>

Chomsky's thinking was also used in anthropology, particularly thanks to Dan Sperber's double allegiance to Levi-Strauss and then Chomsky. This also ensured Chomsky's momentary success. Sperber sought to synthesize the two by examining the Levi-Straussian paradigm via Chomsky's theses. In 1968, he wrote the article on struc-

turalism in anthropology in the collective work directed by Francois Wahl at Seuil, *What Is Structuralism?* Having dealt with the two preferred realms of structural analysis-kinship systems and mythology-Sperber addressed the structuralist theory in the same way that Chomsky did when he argued against the inductive and descriptive orientation of structural linguistics. He began with the principle that, contrary to what Levi-Strauss says, structuralism does not claim to be a scientific method so much as a theory, which should be tested as such, as Popper suggests: "After Chomsky had demonstrated that structuralism was a particular theory in linguistics-which, moreover, he considered to be false-and not a scientific method, we are justified in asking whether we are not dealing with a theory in anthropology as well-true or false."<sup>53</sup>

Sperber began with this Chomskyian problematization to insist on the internal tension within a Levi-Straussian discourse between his scientific aspiration to reach mental structures and the ability to describe the semantic dimension of myths. Sperber credited Levi-Strauss with having entirely removed the study of myths from the conditions of their communication and with having envisaged them as codes. But if he lauded Levi-Strauss for this, he also criticized him for not having totally left the anthropological tradition but having stopped midway because he needed to construct the theory of the system. He criticized structuralism for continuing to regard myths as depending on a system of symbols. Of course, Levi-Strauss did break with empiricism when he evoked the internal constraints of the human mind, but, according to Sperber, he did not go so far as to construct a scientific method articulating the two levels of a work-levels that Levi-Strauss had discerned in his approach to myths, as, on the one hand, a language engendered by a grammar and, on the other hand, transformational products of other myths. Here Sperber reintroduced Chomsky's distinction between the structure of the mythic mind as competence and its exercise as performance. "I therefore saw that the transformation of myths among themselves did not define a grammar, contrary to what Levi-Strauss seemed to think."<sup>54</sup> Levi-Strauss could only realize his revolution by moving toward cognitivism rather than in the direction of his semiological aspirations. "Claude Levi-Strauss's work brings anthropology back to the study of its initial object: human nature."<sup>55</sup>

The key to constructing a true anthropological science was there-

fore to be found in the orientation of the human mind. For Sperber, Chomsky offered the tools for a second conversion following the one that had already taken him from Balandier to Levi-Strauss.

Generative grammar was a true scientific revolution proving the structuralist model inadequate and far too simple. But generative grammar in no way aspires to spread to other disciplines. Structural linguistics, paradoxically, aspired to establish a broader discipline, whereas its model did not even work in its initial field of language. Its claim to work for the rest of the universe was altogether doubtful.<sup>56</sup>

Chomsky's scientific exigency was, for Sperber, the possible and necessary dissociation of ethnography as an interpretation of specifics dependent on a literary genre, and anthropology as a possible science of the general. Seen in this light, Levi-Strauss did not break radically enough with the anthropological tradition because he continued to try to house the two realms within a single discipline.

After the high point of the structuralist paradigm in 1966, the introduction of Chomsky's work in France in 1967-68 appeared curiously as both a second wind and a crisis for structuralism. It drastically changed the configuration of semiology, and a rupture took place relegating Lacan's 1964 lecture on Chomsky, in which he criticized his theoretical postulates, to the past. He then reiterated the criticism he had raised as early as 1959 against Jakobson, and reproached Chomsky for having enclosed the subject in a grammatical structure by forgetting that it was not a coherent entity, but a split being. In contrast to the grammatical model, Lacan proposed his formal theory of the signifier.<sup>v</sup>

If, in 1964, the structuralist model still presented itself as a possible unification of all the various fields of research on communication, in 1967-68, with Chomskyism, a decisive fault line appeared within the very heart of what had till then been seen as a pilot science: linguistics.

## *Two*

# **Derrida or Ultrastructuralism**

What Americans call poststructuralism existed even before the structural paradigm waned. In fact, it was contemporary with its triumph. In 1967, two books came out by the same author, both questioning structuralism from a philosophical perspective. Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*,<sup>2</sup> collections of articles he had been writing since 1963, like the one on Jean Rousset, continued to target the problem of the spatiotemporal split that he perceived in the works of classical philosophy.

Derrida was born on July 15, 1930, in El-Biar, Algeria, in a Jewish milieu, although he was never completely immersed in a truly Jewish culture. "Unfortunately, I do not speak Hebrew. My childhood in Algiers was too colonized and too uprooted."<sup>3</sup> And yet he always felt, and cultivated, a certain foreignness with respect to the Western tradition. His exteriority was not, however, based on an Other, on another place, but on a lack, a place that was nowhere and that he had left at age nineteen, an outside space that dimmed any glimmer of a foundation. "The gesture that seeks to find draws itself away from itself. We should be able to formalize the law of this insurmountable separation. It is a game I always play. Identification is a difference from oneself, a difference with oneself. Therefore, with, without, and except oneself.?" Derrida relived in writing his personal experience of loss of time and memory and that which remains as ashes after death. "It's the experience of forgetting, but the forgetting of forgetting, the for-

getting of which nothing remains.<sup>1</sup> This personal itinerary led Derrida, like many of the philosophers of his generation, to Heidegger. And the principle of deconstruction fueling his entire undertaking was nothing more than the slightly displaced translation of Heidegger's term, *Destruktion*.

## Derrida, Phenomenologist

Before becoming the deconstructor of critical thinking as represented by structuralism, Derrida had been interested in phenomenology. His first published work was an introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geomtry's Phenomenology* was in vogue at the time and practically dominated philosophy in France; Sartre and Merleau-Ponty had given it a particular inflection through their interest in lived experience and the perceiving consciousness. Derrida's contribution was original: he did not adopt this orientation, but was interested above all in questions of objectivity and science and, by avoiding the level of internal observation, was more in the line of the German disciples of Husserl. Derrida did not deduce the death of the subject from his examination of the ultimate basis of phenomenology using the enigma of the geometric object, but rather its limits within a more restricted sphere. He spoke about the withdrawal of the principle of foundation, "necessary to appearance itself."<sup>2</sup> Using Husserl's text, he criticized the double errors of historicism and objectivism. He had already found, in *Origin of Geometry*, the internal subversion of the hierarchization used to subordinate writing to the voice, a theme developed in all later deconstruction. The notion of "transcendental" was the absolute certainty of this progression toward an origin perceived in its original difference, always to come. "It is also in this way that this writing has, as Husserl said, 'an exemplary meaning.t'"

Derrida then turned to the sign and to language, still using the Husserlian axiom of *Logical Search*" to emphasize Husserl's distinction between a preexpressive level (indicative sign) and an expressive level (expressive sign) in states of consciousness. The sign was not unitary but doubled. Husserl saw expression as complete externalization and the indication referred to the site of the involuntary. "The indicative sphere remaining outside of expressivity defined in this way limits the failure of this telos."<sup>3</sup>IO We cannot point to any truth or essence of the sign; the philosopher's task is to describe the conditions of its appearance. The theme of textual indefiniteness, of writing as

abyss, as a veritable cryptic universe, of a past that has never been present, was already here in Derrida: "To conceive as preoriginal and normal what Husserl thought he could isolate as a specific, accidental, dependent, and secondary experience: that of the indefinite drift of signs as errance."<sup>11</sup>

## Radicalizing Structuralism

At a time when structuralism was calling phenomenology into question in France, Derrida might have found himself aligned with tradition. He therefore managed to "radicalize phenomenology in order to go further even than the structuralist objection."<sup>12</sup> Going quickly from a defensive to an offensive position, Derrida systematically deconstructed each structuralist work by locating the traces of a logocentrism that had not yet been surpassed. He did not adopt a phenomenological perspective but used Heidegger to wage critical warfare against structuralism. His position was paradoxical for he was at one and the same time inside and outside the structuralist paradigm, "the first in France to raise a certain number of reservations about structuralism, and Derridean deconstruction was a movement that weakened the development of structuralism as it might have evolved."<sup>13</sup> But he might just as well have been considered to be the person who pushed the structuralist logic to its limits and toward an even more radical interrogation of all substantification or founding essence, in the sense of eliminating the signified. In this respect, Derrida was a structuralist thinker from the outset, even if he adopted a position of critical distance: "Since we live from the productivity of structuralism, it is too soon to destroy our dream."<sup>14</sup> This was only 1963, of course, during the still-glorious period of a promising program; Derrida was effusively praising structuralism, which he considered to be far more than a simple method or new form of thought. Structuralism at the time was a new "adventure of observation, a conversion regarding the manner of questioning any object."<sup>15</sup>

Derrida was referring to a veritable epistemological revolution, which could not be ignored, at the same time that he considered structuralism to be neither a simple question of style nor simply a particular moment in the history of thought. "The classical history of ideas cannot define structuralism,"<sup>16</sup> even if it unfolded during a period of historical dislocation during which the immanent fervor was reduced to formal concerns. Thus, "the structuralist consciousness is simply

the consciousness of thinking the past, I mean of the general fact. A reflection on what has been accomplished, established, constructed.:?" Even if Derrida, like Foucault, systematically avoided partisanship, he clearly abandoned the phenomenological horizon for the bases of the structuralist paradigm. Many structuralist semiologists of the sixties and seventies also drew on his work. "Deconstruction as a method was another name for a type of structuralist approach, which is to say transforming and simplifying a complicated text in order to make it legible, reducing it to oppositions and dysfunctions."18 Unlike the classical structuralists, however, Derrida, like psychoanalysts, was more interested in failure and dysfunction, rather than in the regularities or the invariants of structure. This considering of limits, which was also part of an entire literature of the same order, radicalized the idea of structural structurality by constantly decentering, such that no extrastructural order existed; "everything is structure and all structurality is an infinite game of differences."19 Structure became an endless game of differences, and thinking fell into the abyssal vertigo of a kind of writing that abolishes disciplinary boundaries in order to attain the pure creation of a writer incarnated by the figure of the poet.

This aesthetic concern drew its inspiration from the Mallarmean program and led to muddied boundaries between philosophy and literature, subjected to philosophical problematization anchored on the grounds of undecidability. The corpus of writers was drawn from the nether side of literary history: Antonin Artaud, Georges Bataille, Edmond Jabes, and so on. This proximity was consonant with the structuralist slant on questioning language, radicalizing it beyond the separation of genres and traditional classifications in order to address the text through the specific laws of textuality, "My first desire tended surely toward the point where the literary event traversed and even went beyond philosophy.t'-'?

Derrida continued to move ever closer to literature and away from epistemological concerns for pure creation. *Glas* provides a good example.P In 1965, he was a teacher at the École Nationale Supérieure (ENS), and an excellent didact of philosophy. Derrida was not only the first but also the most radical in changing the way philosophical texts were read, using new modes of interpretation taken from linguistics, psychoanalysis, ethnology, and all the leading disciplines of the social sciences. "He was basically a professor who profoundly changed and renewed the reading of philosophical texts, but

who ran after his interpretations. There was a somewhat blind side to the energy spent on establishing a practice. His readings raised the problem of their foundations."<sup>22</sup> He could put himself in the text being deconstructed in order to follow its internal thread. For a generation of philosophers, he was "extraordinarily efficient, incorporating by impregnation in order to give philosophy students, who must first of all master rhetoric, the impression of being heard and awaited by the professor."<sup>23</sup>

## Deconstruction

Derrida's strategy was that of deconstruction. This meant both destruction and construction, a strategy that made it possible to recognize the traces of Western metaphysics in the thinking of the other, while introducing a new manner of writing. Such a strategy considered the realm of writing to be autonomous and belonging to textuality in general, beyond the generic difference between philosophy and literature. So Derrida was in tune with the new structuralist literary criticism, but he avoided its scientific categories by aiming to create new and undecidable concepts and thereby rising to "the heights of a creative activity."<sup>24</sup> He realized the grand ambition of most structuralists who borrowed language from the social sciences in order to produce a creative, literary work. He was also in harmony with the early twentieth-century formalists of the Prague Circle, who had already tried to make a symbiosis between poetics and philosophical reflection. Derrida was therefore fully in line with structuralist objectives.

Heidegger's work was Derrida's other specifically philosophical source. "What I have attempted to do would not have been possible without the opening of Heidegger's questions, . . . without the attention to what Heidegger calls the difference between Being and beings, ontico-ontological difference."<sup>25</sup> In this respect, the entire work of deconstructing meaning attributed to being is directly set in Heidegger's tracks. Each concept was addressed to the limits of its pertinence, to its exhaustion and disappearance, which were supposed to simulate the disappearance of Western metaphysics itself. Deconstruction appeared in all its ambiguity, and was all the more seductive in 1967-68, because it was perceived "both as a structuralist and an antistructuralist gesture."<sup>26</sup> Derrida could thus win over an entire generation, as illustrated by *Tel Quel*, to recapture the structuralist legacy, while at the same time putting an end to structural hermeticism. Deconstruction

continued to valorize the hidden sphere of the unconscious but it made pluralization and dissemination possible by exploding all references to a structural center or to the unity of any kind of structuring principle. Derrida adopted a real strategy with respect to Western rationality. "The strategy of deconstruction is the ruse that makes it possible to speak, at the same time as there is, finally, nothing more to say."<sup>27</sup>

Derrida's success also had to do with the context of rupture with the Sorbonne's academicism. Like linguists with respect to dassicalliterary history, Derrida provided philosophers with a combat strategy that could radically destroy the foundations of metaphysics taught at the Sorbonne. Within the philosophical tradition, he introduced a series of undecidable concepts in order to shake up the foundations and denounce the errors. The subversive dimension of this strategy made it possible to weaken institutional foundations and radicalize the struggle of the structuralists, to broaden its base by linking it to all critical reflection—whether Lacanian, Foucauldian, Chomskyan, or Althusserian—while at the same time recuperating it within philosophy.

In this respect, it was also Derrida who took seriously the challenge of the new social sciences to enrich discourse and the questioning of philosophy. This strategy proclaimed the end of philosophy and recuperated the social sciences for philosophy, while at the same time discovering—even before Barthes's book had come out—textual pleasure: "There is produced a certain textual work that gives great pleasure."<sup>28</sup> The various binary couples—signifier/signified, nature/culture, voice/writing, perceptible/intelligible—that compose the very instrument of structural analysis were each put into question, pluralized, disseminated in an infinite game that peeled, disjoined, and dissected the meaning of words, tracking down every master word, every transcendence. A whole Derridean language destabilized traditional oppositions by bringing undecidables into play as veritable units of simulacrum, organizers of a new, carnivalesque order of reason.

Derrida drew his ambivalent concepts from the philosophical tradition in order to create a boomerang effect. From Plato he took the term *Pharmakon*, neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil. From Rousseau he took *supplement*, neither some more nor less, from Mallarmé *hymen*, neither confusion nor distinction. These ideas served as so many instruments of deconstruction, and had a point in common. "All cross out opposition from inside and outside."<sup>29</sup> Writ-

ing therefore could ready its attack on the concept and substitute a seminal stream opening up onto infinity. Deconstruction attacked not only phenomenology by decentering the subject but also the Hegelian dialectic with its notions of unity and identity. "Negation is relegated to the secondary role of a knowledge police. . . . The concept is relegated to the exercise of a theological commandment."<sup>30</sup> Derrida continued to give philosophy pride of place among the sciences while preparing a possible escape route via purely literary creation but not, à la Heidegger, as redemption. The Heideggerian perspective was radicalized because any possible foundation was eliminated. In its place was a simple errancy that "does not even grant itself a pause to recollect Being,"<sup>31</sup> and that preferred the Mallarmean margins. After Saussure, the referent was no longer a linguistic concern, Lacan had slipped the signified beneath the signifier, and Derrida eliminated it in favor of an indefinite signifying chain without any site at which it could be perceived. In so doing, he set in motion a spectacular reversal, and from this point on sought a physicalness of writing.

## Deconstructing Foucault

Derrida wanted to deconstruct everything. He began with the structuralists, who were closest to him and whom he considered to have remained prisoners of logocentrism despite themselves. His first target resembled the death of the father because the expiatory victim was none other than Michel Foucault, who had been his professor at the rue d'Ulm, Derrida had become Jean Wahl's assistant at the Sorbonne. When asked to lecture at the Collège de Philosophie,<sup>v</sup> he chose to lecture on Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*.<sup>v</sup> The conference took place on March 4, 1963, with Foucault in the audience, much surprised by his former student's attacks. Derrida published the lecture shortly thereafter in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* under Jean Wahl's direction.<sup>></sup> and later in *Writing and Difference*, a collection of articles published in 1967.

Derrida deconstructed the text, concentrating only on its internal economy. Selecting a minute part of it that he felt revealed the whole, much like a medical biopsy, he set his scalpel to work. Thus Foucault's tremendous doctoral thesis" was criticized on the slim biopsy of his reading of Descartes's position on madness, a mere three of the 673 pages! "The reading of Descartes and of the Cartesian cogito engages the entire problematic of *Madness and Civilization*."<sup>36</sup> Since contest-

ing the validity of the lessons Foucault drew from Descartes's first *Meditation* implied the whole of his work, we can take the measure of the radicality of a criticism of a work nonetheless considered to be a "book that is admirable in so many respects."<sup>37</sup> But the hour of emancipation had sounded, and with it came the symbolic murder.

First, in his capacity as a radical structuralist, Derrida criticized Foucault for having preserved the idea of subject. Even if his subject was the underside of history, Foucault was wrong to claim that the idea of a subject ran through history—that of madness. "This is what is maddest about his project."<sup>38</sup> Foucault was in fact sensitive to this criticism and his later archaeological project erased any viewpoint starting with any type of subject, repressed or not. Next, Derrida considered that it was illusory to imagine being able to place oneself outside the bounds of reason based on the elsewhere of madness as a site of exile. "The irreplaceable, insurmountable imperial grandeur of the rational order . . . is such that we cannot argue against it except by using it, we cannot protest reason without reason."<sup>39</sup> Where Foucault believed he had created a revolution, he had done little more than slightly disturb things. His demonstration began with the important decision presented as the very condition of history, initially excluding madness from the world of reason before incarcerating it. Foucault attributed this founding act of the classical age to Descartes in his first *Meditation* in which he ostensibly set the dividing line between two soliloquies that remain forever foreign to one another. This was the big point of contention between Foucault and Derrida, who considered that Descartes had not ostracized madness. On the contrary, for Descartes, "the sleeper or the dreamer is more mad than the madman."<sup>40</sup> Even if the hypothesis of the sly genius calls for total madness, the decisive split between reason and madness is not situated with the cogito since it is valid "even if my thinking is mad through and through."<sup>41</sup> Derrida thus challenged the validity of the binary pair reason/madness (a split that allowed Foucault to exhume the repressed part of Western history) by demonstrating that when Descartes created his cogito, he did not eliminate madness.

Derrida thus considered that Foucault seriously misread Descartes. But he went even further, fundamentally questioning Foucault's method. "Structuralist totalitarianism would enclose the cogito in a manner reminiscent of the violence of the classical age."<sup>42</sup> With this, Foucault was accused of having perpetrated the same kind of violence

he denounced. We can understand that he did not particularly appreciate his disciple's Parthian arrow, but he took his time before answering, silent and attentive in the audience and no less silent when the text appeared in *Writing and Difference* in 1967. In 1971, however, he responded in an article initially published in the review *Paideia*? and later reprinted in the new edition of *Madness and Civilization* published by Gallimard in 1972. Foucault called Derrida's argument "remarkable," but he maintained his interpretation of Descartes's text and considered Derrida's hypothesis to be valid only at the price of what it left out, and which allowed him to extirpate all the differences of the text in order to "transform the Cartesian exclusion into inclusion."<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Foucault considered Derrida's reading of Descartes to be not only naive but an application of a traditional system of interpretation characterized by erasing whatever is bothersome. Derrida became the latest representative of this tradition, as Foucault saw it. He did not limit himself to a defensive answer but went on to respond as a master judging his pupil. He reduced Derrida's work to a brilliant stylistic exercise with didactic pretensions:

I won't say that it is a metaphysics, metaphysics, or its closure that are hidden in this textualization of discursive practices. I will go much further and say that this is a small and historically well-determined little lesson that, in a very visible way, shows itself off. Pedagogy teaches the student that there is nothing beyond the text, and that within it, its intentions, its spaces, and in what goes unspoken, reigns the realm of the origin."

## Grammatology

In 1965, in the review *Critique*, Derrida laid out the bases of a new approach that was part of the logy-effect of the times-grammatology. His theses reached a broader public in 1967 when the Editions de Minuit published *Of Grammatology*. Beginning with the observation that the problem of language had never before so intensely concerned research in so many different disciplines, and using this to respond, as a philosopher, he advocated historicizing Western civilization's repression of writing and preference for the *phone*. Grammatology was the "science" of writing restrained by metaphysics, which "shows signs of liberation all over the world, as a result of decisive efforts."<sup>46</sup> The epigraph therefore referred to a scientific ambition, but this ambition was annulled as soon as it was announced since, once all the obstacles had

been overcome, "such a science of writing runs the risk of never being established as such and named that way."<sup>47</sup> Grammatology was not a discipline like others. "Graphematics or grammatography ought no longer to be presented as sciences."<sup>48</sup> Derrida was already in this intermediary zone, in an internal tension between writing and science, within a space of lack, of textual blankness, of inaccessible temporal spacing that dons the figure of a supplement forever eluding presence: "The constitution of a science or a philosophy of writing is a necessary and difficult task. But, thinking about the trace, *différance*, or reserve, having arrived at these limits and repeating them ceaselessly, must also point beyond the field of the *episteme*."<sup>49</sup>

Since Plato, the West has incessantly sought the proximate and the specific, since the voice is considered to be a veritable essence, a bearer of meaning and of the signified. The entire historical thread of the West is nothing other than the history of the elimination of writing. The distinctive unit and object of this new science capable of going beyond phonologism was the *gramme*, the *grapheme*. Derrida used Hjelmslev's glossematics, the most formal of linguistics. "Derrida considered that Hjelmslev freed the signifier from the signified and made possible a writing that replaces the phonic signifier,"<sup>50</sup> The graphic signifier can thus replace the phonic signifier.

Drawing his inspiration from Hjelmslev's *Principles of General Grammar*, Derrida dissociated the phonologicistic principle from that of difference. Glossematics gave him the bases of a formal science of language. Setting meaning aside also meant setting aside sound, and Derrida built his new science on linguistics, in an explicitly Hjelmslevian tradition. "Hjelmslev criticizes the idea of a language *naturally* bound to the substance of phonic expression."<sup>51</sup> The split allowing us to give primacy to writing dated from glossematics, alone making it possible to reach the basic literary element of the *gramme*.

But Derrida was not satisfied with taking up the legacy of the most formal branch of linguistic thought. He wanted to go beyond structuralism, claiming that "glossematics still operates with a popular concept of writing."<sup>52</sup> He introduced temporality, the lack of being, absence based on which writing is understood as trace, untethered from the idea of an origin. Trace referred to understanding the conditions of possibility preceding the existence of the sign, its condition of existence being irreducible to any being-present. Derrida was trying to create a symbiosis between glossematics and an archaeologi-

cal approach; his goal was not to restore the contents of thinking, but the conditions that make thinking possible. He set himself outside of and eccentric to Western thought. Grammatology presupposed a maximal autonomy of writing from its genesis, and in this respect entirely embraced the structuralist paradigm that broke with the referential framework. Writing eluded the speaker just as it did the listener and constituted a scientific object, like any other, by virtue of the reit-erability of reading. "All graphemes are of a testamentary essence."<sup>53</sup>

For Derrida, phonological structuralism had gone as far as it could go, but he avoided generative grammar, preferring a specifically philosophical approach. "He tried to radicalize the fundamental intuition of structuralism. . . . He took the direct route leading from the philosophy of conscious of the early Husserl to the philosophy of language of the late Heidegger."<sup>54</sup> In a Heideggerian perspective, Derrida renounced all ontology. The trace he perceived always eluded itself by a continuous veiling making it impossible to establish any meaning. So he used linguistics, transporting certain notions into philosophy via a scientific ambition foreign to Heidegger, who had always been hostile to scientific pretensions.

Grammatology was both a possible Heideggerian deconstruction of current scientific norms and a possible means of getting beyond the limits of the traditional field of scientificity toward a new scientific rigor free of logocentrist and phonological presuppositions. The critical side of grammatology especially was productive, but, as the prolegomena of a new science, it was quickly forgotten. The development of rationality was to be destabilized not by its hidden face of madness, as Foucault had thought, but from a truly external position. "We want to reach the point of a certain exteriority with respect to the totality of the logocentric period."<sup>55</sup>

## Beyond Structuralism

Constructing the future of structuralism required criticizing two of its founding fathers—Saussure and Levi-Strauss. *Of Grammatology* sought to do just this by identifying the phonological and logocentric limits of early structuralism. In Saussure, Derrida revealed an approach that had remained fundamentally a prisoner of the subject present to itself through its speech. He acknowledged that Saussure had broken with the metaphysical tradition by desubstantializing the contents of the signified and its expression but nonetheless felt that Saus-

sure had not gone far enough when he sketched out the notion of sign as a founding notion of linguistics, since the "age of the sign is essentially theological."<sup>56</sup> Saussurean thought was centered on the word as the unit of meaning and sound. It might have opened up an analysis of writing, but Saussure had refused this perspective by placing it in a quasi-evil exteriority: "Already in the *Phaedrus* Plato says that the evil of writing comes from without (275 a)."<sup>57</sup> Plato repressed writing because it was responsible for ruining memory, and Saussure, who demonstrated the importance of becoming aware of the specific way in which language functioned, began by devalorizing writing and presenting it as the simple reproduction of speech: "Writing obscures language, it is not a guise for language, but a disguise."<sup>58</sup> Writing and speech therefore were subordinate and devalorized one with respect to the other, something Saussure reinforced by incorporating the semiological project into psychology.

Nothing justified Saussure's distinction between linguistic and graphic signs, as far as Derrida was concerned. There was even an internal contradiction in Saussure when he suggested the arbitrariness of the sign and at the same time banished writing to the exteriority of language, its antechamber, or even its leper hospital. "One must therefore challenge, in the very name of the arbitrariness of the sign, the Saussurean definition of writing as 'image'-hence as natural symbol-of language."<sup>59</sup> For Derrida, to the contrary, writing escaped reality as a trace forever hidden from itself, as foreign as the acoustic image was to the referent or subject. "This deconstruction of presence accomplishes itself through the deconstruction of consciousness, and therefore through the irreducible notion of the trace (*Spur*)."<sup>60</sup>

The issue was to deconstruct this notion of the Saussurean sign central to structuralist thinking and to problematize writing. Given the collapse of disciplinary boundaries among those disciplines studying man, grammatology offered a way to consolidate the research that was taking off in all directions. It was presented as the fully accepted realization of structuralist ambitions pushed to their logical limits and receptive to the deconstruction of the One and to the disappearance of man. "Grammatology ought not to be *one of the sciences of man* because it asks first, as its characteristic question, the question of the *name of man*."<sup>61</sup> This science proposed to transcend the social sciences by appropriating their program without trying to use concepts from other disciplines. Derrida's hegemonic bid in fact reiterated the

dominant position of philosophy among those disciplines studying man, and if he preferred science to philosophy, this science was not simply to be added to the others but claimed to be free of all limits and boundaries.

### Deconstructing Levi-Strauss

Obviously, Levi-Strauss was the other grand master of structuralism whom Derrida took on. For Levi-Strauss, Jakobson's phonological model had been a valid scientific model for all of the social sciences. "Phonology cannot help but play the same role of renewing the social sciences that nuclear physics, for example, played for all the hard sciences."<sup>62</sup> Since Derrida was hunting down the traces of phonologism, he quite naturally took on Levi-Strauss, applying the same method he had used with Foucault. He took a small portion of an immense work—the "Writing Lesson" in *Tristes Tropiques*, in which Levi-Strauss described the advent of writing among the Nambikwara, which introduced exploitation, perfidy, and different forms of servility—and denounced the repression of writing. He considered Levi-Strauss's observations to constitute the proof that he was no more successful than Saussure had been in fully decentering Western ethnocentrism. It is true that Levi-Strauss belonged to the era of suspicion which had introduced the logic of play in order to escape conscious models, that preferred a signifying chain to a central signified and tried to escape the traditional nature/culture dichotomy. In all of these ways, Derrida's project "is quite clearly consonant with Levi-Strauss's, even if it does not begin, as Levi-Strauss did, by solemnly abjuring the exercise of philosophy."<sup>63</sup> Both sought differences between myths. Levi-Strauss saw their reciprocity, whereas Derrida saw them as texts within an intertextual weave. In issue 4 of *Les Cahiers pour l'analyse*, Derrida argued that Levi-Strauss's social anthropology reactivated Rousseau's thinking, and therefore implied a whole series of categories including genesis, nature, and sign, all of which demonstrated his logocentrism.<sup>w</sup> "Structuralism would remain a tributary of a philosophy of nature."<sup>65</sup> His article was reprinted in *Of Grammatology*, where he considered that Levi-Strauss was expressing his Western guilt by opposing innocent nature, full of goodness and beauty, and Western culture, which had breached this ideal reality presented through the equally deforming mirror of Western counter-ethnocentrism. "As always, this archeology is also a teleology and

an eschatology; the dream of a full and immediate presence closing history."66

Defending the philosophical turf that Levi-Strauss had abandoned, Derrida denounced anthropology's empiricism. In response to Levi-Strauss's criticisms of philosophers of consciousness, Derrida answered that none of them, neither Descartes nor Husserl, would have been as naive as Levi-Strauss had been to conclude so hastily in favor of the innocence and original goodness of the Nambikwara. Derrida saw Levi-Strauss's ostensibly ethnocentric-free viewpoint as a reverse ethnocentrism with ethical-political positions accusing the West of being initially responsible, through writing, for the death of innocent speech.

In this respect, Levi-Strauss was like Rousseau, his master, who had warned against writing: "The misuse of books is the death of learning." "We should not read, but rather look." "Reading is the curse of childhood."67 Hoping to get beyond Levi-Straussian structuralism, Derrida adopted certain of his positions minus their Rousseauian underpinnings, which prevented Levi-Strauss from breaking radically and forced him to borrow all the old conceptual tools and metaphysical dichotomies that he believed he had gone beyond but that caught up with him.

Derrida analyzed these Rousseauian presuppositions by reestablishing the site, the issues, and the link with Rousseau's *Essay on the Origins of Language*.68 He pointed out Rousseau's classic opposition between voice and writing as reproducing the opposition between presence and absence, between freedom and servitude. Rousseau ended his *Essay* with this judgment: "But I say that any tongue with which one cannot make oneself understood to the people is a slavish tongue. It is impossible for a people to remain free and speak that tongue."69 The soft maternal voice contrasts with the pitiless voice of writing. The social shift toward evil comes from a catastrophic moment, a simple and barely perceptible inaugural displacement. "He who willed man to be social, by a touch of the finger, shifted the globe's axis into line with the axis of the universe. I see such a *slight movement* changing the face of the earth and deciding the vocation of mankind."70 This subtle movement, this little sign, was no less than the hand of God, the divine trace. It opened the age of society, and with it the prohibition of incest: "Before the festival, there was no incest because there was no prohibition of incest. After the festival, there is no longer

any incest because it is forbidden."?' This prohibition was the Law determining all laws and was, as it was later for Levi-Strauss, the seam between nature and culture. According to Derrida, Rousseau's description of this substitution of written expression for speech and presence was useful. A prisoner of metaphysics, however, Rousseau could not conceive of this writing as endogenous to and preceding speech: "But Rousseau's dream consisted of making the supplement enter metaphysics by force."<sup>72</sup> He kept life and death, good and evil, the signifier and the signified in a relationship of exteriority, whereas Derrida intended to shift all of these boundaries.

## *Three*

# **Derridean Historicization and Its Erasure**

In 1966, Jacques Derrida went to the United States for a colloquium on the topic "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Gerard Genette, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Lucien Goldmann, Tzvetan Todorov, and Nicolas Ruwet also took part. French critical thought, united beneath the structuralist banner, was at its zenith. Americans were fascinated and curious about what was going on in France. Derrida's lecture was symptomatic. He described his double position as a structuralist seeking to go beyond the paradigm while at the same time defending critical thought and criticizing criticism for not going far enough. He set his lecture—"Structure, the Sign, and the Game in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"—within the scope of Levi-Strauss's work in order to deconstruct it. Although he acknowledged that structuralism heralded an important break, he himself intended to open up a game of differences by denying any reference to any kind of center that would put an end to the game of possibilities. Yet, "a structure lacking any center represents the inconceivable itself."<sup>1</sup> He therefore took on the heart of structural thinking and as a result was considered a poststructuralist in America.

Derrida agreed that Levi-Strauss's *Mythologiques* represented an entirely positive attempt to jettison all references to a center. "The mythological discourse should itself be mythomorphic. It should have the shape of what it speaks of."<sup>2</sup> But while considering that Levi-

Strauss's thinking had gone in directions that were harmonious with the work of deconstruction, he still criticized Levi-Strauss for lacking dynamism and for neutralizing historicity, which belonged to his structural theme.

### Historicizing Structures: Differance

It was true that Levi-Strauss had rightly broken with history as the accomplice of Western metaphysics. In doing so, however, he had run the risk of an equally classical ahistoricism, since he referred to a Rousseauian notion of history. This was one of the major thrusts of Derrida's criticism. With it, he echoed the feeling so present during the latter half of the sixties of wanting to make the structures more dynamic and more historical. This was the sense of the notion of *differance* that he introduced, and which was the focus of his lecture at the French Philosophical Society on January 27, 1968. Written with an *a* rather than an *e*, *differance* became the most effective instrument of deconstruction. It had both the temporal sense of deferring, of putting something off—"This temporizing is also a temporalization and a spatialization, the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time"<sup>3</sup>—and the more common meaning of differing, pointing to that which is not identical. Derrida could pull these two definitions together with the "a" of *differance* in order to introduce the idea of temporization, missing in the classical definition of difference. Ideally, this idea let Derrida play the role of undecidable that systematically unveiled any illusion about thinking of being by contrasting that which, in the present of the present, never presents itself. *Differance* also played on reintroducing the absent movement in the idea of structure. It added a dynamic dimension from within, drawing it infinitely forward. By offering an example of an aurally imperceptible but graphically visible concept, Derrida could reduce the importance of the phonological postulates of structuralism: "Contrary to an important and widely held prejudice, there is no phonetic writing."<sup>4</sup>

Deconstruction's most important notion made it possible to consider the conditions of possibility of what we call reality, rather than reality itself. There was therefore no concern for any essence or existence; what counted was to open up the deconstructive play of logos as broadly as possible. The term *differance* also magnificently expressed Derrida's ambiguous position with regard to structuralism. He agreed that Levi-Strauss had found a conception of difference in

primitive societies, but at the same time he wanted to radicalize this savage mind even further by freeing it from any empirical reality. He hoped to set all Western metaphysics on fire. The notion of *differance* or of trace-as simulacrum-of presence was also expressive of the literature of Maurice Blanchot in particular, who privileged the figure of the oxymoron, a rhetorical figure of internal contradiction wherein an identity contains its own effacement.

In the same way that Being was forever absent from being for Heidegger, *différance* conditioned the existence of positivities without ever being perceptible in them for Derrida. Claiming that "the theme of *différance* is incompatible with the static, synchronic, taxinomic, ahistoric motifs in the concept of *structure*,"<sup>5</sup> Derrida also set this concept in a continuum with structuralist positions. "The concept of *differance* even develops the most legitimate principled exigencies of structuralism."<sup>6</sup> Beginning with the sign and the signifier/signified distinction in order to valorize signification at work even within the signified, he argued for a shift of the signified into the realm of the signifier, and thus made it impossible to codify language, opening it quite broadly onto the sphere of literary creativity. "To risk meaning nothing is to start to play, and first to enter in the play of *differance*."<sup>7</sup> To say that nothing remains to be said was deconstruction's perspective on the suspension/suspense of meaning.

Derrida reopened the door to history and the moment, but kept a traditional notion of history. Here, he based himself on Althusser's antihistoricist denunciation in his critique of Hegelianism. History was therefore also to be deconstructed, and if total history was banished to the illusory role of myth and error, it could nonetheless be perceived as plural and partial histories: "there is not one single history, a general history, but rather histories *different* in their type, rhythm, mode of inscription, intervallic, differentiated histories."<sup>8</sup> This multidimensional history made it possible to transcribe a conception of writing and to let movement filter into structure. But the wrinkles in time that unfold this knowledge in fact lead to its disappearance. Deconstructed history led to a foreclosed future. It was nothing more than the unfolding of the simulacrum of a slack and ungraspable present. There was no stopping point in the temporal carnival and even fewer options for shifting from one point to another. With his obvious penchant for making endlessly moving movement, Derrida reinfused

the morphologism being used at the time with a certain vitality and relativized the thrust of all philosophical concepts.

Hermeneutical reading became meaningless through deconstruction for hermeneutics was possible only when interpretation was limited. "A generalized interpretative posture is impossible unless it is conceived in a Nietzschean perspective."? Having considered the battle between interpretations to be endless, Derrida questioned the autonomous ontological existence of the text itself. Like Nietzsche, he shifted the original text and its contents from an experimental to an imaginative field. This supposed an initial "erasure"; barely emerging from a netherworld, the text was immediately dissolved. "Generalized intertextuality and the critique of textual closure are themes which only reiterate the Nietzschean paradox. They are a hypercriticism."10 This infinite flow of the order of things makes any effort at understanding vain. At the same time, it postulates an originary impotence. All of Derrida's liminary declarations, oral as well as written, "clearly express Achilles' anxiety at being unable to catch up with the tortoise. Since water cannot be stopped in order to grasp the river, reality collapses."11 During the debates of the sixties between hermeneutics and structuralism, Derrida sided with structuralism and took a firmer position on the question of eliminating the subject and the referent, while granting them the mobility and lability they had been lacking.

## Deconstructing Freud

Derrida's ideas were quite close to Freud's analytic practice, although he did not lean on psychoanalytic theory. Thus, the concept of trace evoked involuntary unconscious manifestations, even though it referred to no identity whatsoever, repressed or not. Some basic ideas were, however, transferred from psychoanalysis to graphematics. From the analyst's floating attention to Derrida's polyvalent polysemism there is a common ground, and a basis for collaboration and for a possible suture between deconstruction and the acknowledged scientificity of psychoanalytic discourse. "Derrida reinscribes what Freud explained by repression within the general economy of the text."12 Here, the idea of *differance* was conceived as a means of taking into account the forces of wear that Freud had observed, their modes of inscription in the ever out-of-sync moments of the after-the-fact.

Deconstruction needed Freud. Derrida's deconstruction of him, presented in a lecture at Andre Green's seminar at the Psychoanalytic

Institute and published in *Tel Quel* in 1966,<sup>13</sup> adopted the Freudian break insofar as it questioned the traditional divisions between normal and pathological, and pointed to the illusions of the notion of consciousness. Freud had offered a new conception of temporality. Particularly the notion of after-the-fact cast the originary moment as a supplement, and supported Derrida's argument for *differance*. The Freudian unconscious eluded this presence of the present that Derrida was tracking; it was always already out of sync, deferred, woven of differences, and forever other with respect to consciousness.

Derrida therefore paid Freud his deepest respects. "His thinking is doubtless the only one that is not exhausted in metaphysics or science."> And he acknowledged that Freud was the only thinker not to have repressed writing, but, on the contrary, to have problematized the stages of its infinite unfolding by means of paths opened by wear and through established resistances.

However, Derrida wanted to go beyond Freud, who was too conservative with respect to his own rupture. Freudian concepts were to be revisited since they "all, and without exception, belong to the history of metaphysics, which is to say to the system of logocentric repression that was organized in order to exclude or debase . . . the body of the written trace."<sup>15</sup> Derrida did not stop with the psychoanalytic notion of displacement. He completely reinserted everything outside the text, the hors d'oeuvre, into the textual weave itself, without limiting it to any interpretation that would, through displacement, favor certain elements of the trace to the detriment of others in order to re-compose a hierarchical explanatory system. Psychoanalysis could not consider itself to be an encompassing science; it could claim no interpretative privilege. And yet, given that its major object was the analysis of dreams, whose singular space offered no tangible boundaries with the nonphonetic space of writing, psychoanalysis was a force to be contended with given the consideration and status conferred on writing: "Freud . . . constantly appeals to writing, the spatial synopsis of the pictogram, of the rebus, of the hieroglyph, to nonphonetic writing in general."<sup>16</sup> His interest in Freud set Derrida in tune with an entire generation fascinated by psychoanalysis. At the same time, he could shore up philosophy against too many potential disaffections and conversions.

Derrida's implicit Freudianism led him to Lacan. While their theoretical proximity might have augured positive relations, it led to an

extremely violent dialogue. Doubtless their proximity was too great; the results were a fratricidal combat. "I know that at one point Lacan had a somewhat paternal relationship with Derrida. He once said, 'I'm keeping an eye on him,' which meant that he was interested in his work, but in a paternalistic way."<sup>17</sup> It would seem that a purely anecdotal and personal incident contributed to the eruption of an argument between the two, but this was doubtless also due to the confrontation between two hegemonic ambitions. Derrida in philosophy and Lacan in psychoanalysis were both implicitly following a disciplinary logic and combating institutional power. Each also tried to ensure that his renewed discipline reigned over others. His imperialist, annexationist ambitions meant that Lacan, who presented the analytic discourse as the crown of the four possible discourses, kept Derrida under close surveillance. Derrida reciprocated. He had no intention of paying allegiance to Lacan.

Their confrontation, therefore, could only be brutal. For Derrida, the work of deconstruction did not stop at the doors of the unconscious, and Freud and Marx were only so many moments, albeit important ones, in Western metaphysics. "There was an obvious incompatibility between these two terrible wills. Each had a terrifying will to power."<sup>18</sup>

Initially subtle hostilities broke out in 1971 on the occasion of an interview Derrida gave Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta for the review *Promise.t?* In a long note, Derrida evoked the absence of any reference to Lacan in his past work, complained about Lacan's many aggressions and reappropriations of his work. He went on to criticize Lacanian positions, whose limits he had already seen as early as 1965 when writing *Of Grammatology*. "Assured of the importance of this problematic in the field of psychoanalysis, I will point out a certain number of major themes that kept it within the critical questions that I was in the process of formulating, and inside the logocentric, that is phonologistic, field that I undertook to delimit and to shake."<sup>20</sup> Not only did Derrida reduce Lacan's contribution to a simple regional continent of knowledge, but he also raised a certain number of radical critiques that sought to present Lacan's contribution as merely an apparent contribution, as something to be deconstructed.

Derrida's criticisms were organized around four general issues: Lacan was the prisoner of a telos of speech identified with truth; he had uncritically adopted a Hegelian and Heideggerian perspective;

he had been light-handed in his use of Saussurean linguistics by carelessly adopting Saussure's phonologism; and Lacan had not really addressed the issue of writing in Freud, despite his positive return to him. Moreover, Derrida saw Lacan's attention to the signifier as the sign of a new metaphysics that did not dare to call itself such. Finally, he considered that Lacan's style was in the service of "the art of avoidance."<sup>21</sup>

But Derrida did not stop there. Six months later, he repeated his criticism during the conference at Johns Hopkins by taking up Lacan's proposed reading of Edgar Allan Poe's novella in his *Seminar on the Purloined Letter*, a speech that was later published in *Poétique*.<sup>22</sup> Derrida acknowledged that Lacan had taken an important step forward with his criticism of semanticism, considering the letter meaningless and that its author had no control over it. In short, the only important thing to consider was the letter's circulation. "Lacan is therefore attentive to the letter, which is to say to the materiality of the signifier."<sup>23</sup> But if Lacan made it possible to go beyond the referent and the subject, he did not take things to their ultimate conclusion because he brought us back "toward the truth that is not lost. He brought the letter back, showed that the letter returns to its particular space thanks to its particular path."<sup>24</sup> The letter's fate therefore would lead it to its place. And so, despite what he said, Lacan was in fact arguing for a hermeneutics whose ultimate signifieds were the sites of truth and femininity. This story of the purloined letter would thus ultimately lead to the unveiled truth of Marie Bonaparte as the bearer of Freud's work in its letter. As the repository of Freud's authority, she betrayed the letter of his teaching. "The fiction reveals the truth: the manifestation that illustrates itself while hiding itself."<sup>25</sup>

Unveiling truth remained tied to the power of the verb and Lacan, in Derrida's view, remained a prisoner of the phonologism he denounced. There was "a structural complicity in Lacan between the pattern of the the veil and the voice, between truth and phonocentrism, phallogocentrism, and logocentrism. Behind these theoretical accusations lay Lacan's claim to represent a discourse that would put an end to the philosophy that Derrida targeted. There was no attempt at renewal, therefore, that escaped coming under the deconstructive gun, and the most fruitful disciplines of the period, ethnology and psychoanalysis, both of which relied on the linguistic model, were subject to the critique of deconstruction, which remained the master of the game.

## Dissolving the Subject

For Derrida, writing did not belong to or depend on a context; it was independent of subjectivity. Writing traces were purely anonymous and no pragmatic analysis could account for them. Like Foucault and Lacan, Derrida also changed his first name. jackie became jacques at the price of a certain number of connotations from his childhood in the Jewish community in Algeria. But for Derrida, the I, the conscious model, was meaningless and decentering made the positions of structuralism in this area more radical. This position led Derrida to take issue with Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy.

In Montreal in August 1971, at the International Congress of Francophone Philosophical Societies on the subject of communication, Derrida gave a talk entitled "Signature, event, context," later known simply as SEC, which he published in *Marges*.<sup>27</sup> At the end of this text, Derrida began to debate John Austin's positions on performatives (a performative performs the action it describes: I promise is both an utterance and the act accomplishing the utterance). Derrida insisted on the limits of a theory of linguistic action that could not restore the Freudian slips, misunderstandings, and unspoken aspect of communication. He referred to the absence of the other in writing: "A written sign goes forth in the absence of its receiver."<sup>28</sup> The condition of its legibility was neither the other's presence nor any specific communication but the iterability of what was written. Far from expressing a context, writing was defined as an act of rupture. "This strength of rupture comes from the spacing that constitutes the written sign: it separates other elements of the internal contextual chain."<sup>29</sup> Derrida was interested in the objection of analytical philosophy and in the case of performatives that, as Austin saw it, could not be detached from their referent, unlike constative utterances. He answered that the utterance could only be understood if it answered a code, if it could be iterated. He argued for its autonomy with respect to the specific referential context of ordinary speech. The transparency of meaning was therefore a complete error, according to Derrida, in the case of performatives or constatives.

As a result of all iterability differing and differentiating, Derrida claimed that there was a "nonpresent remainder,"<sup>30</sup> since nothing proved that the meaning of a language act was the same when used a second time, for either reader or speaker, whose intention was never

entirely adapted to his utterance. John R. Searle, to the contrary, considered that the flexibility of concepts came from their intrinsic properties, which made it possible to perceive their mobility in the particular situations of daily language. Searle only learned of Derrida's text in 1977 when it was published in English in the review *Glyph*. He decided to defend the principles of Austin's theory, as well as his own theory of illocution: "To defend in particular the pertinence and interest of the fundamental distinction between serious and fictional uses of language, but also to establish the exact meaning and import of such notions as intentionality, repeatability, meaning, the success or failure of an illocutionary act, etc."<sup>31</sup> In his answer to Derrida, the author of *Speech Acts*<sup>32</sup> did not contest iterability as a condition of communication, but did not consider that it conflicted with intentionality; indeed, iterability was the presupposition of intentionality. We can easily understand the stakes of the debate. From Derrida's point of view, the issue was to assure the mobility of the game of signification for this or that subjectivity or intentionality so as to allow the infinite chain of repetitions in which "the individual withdraws in order to yield to the universality of the system."<sup>33</sup> Iterability did not operate in any observable way within ordinary discourse but eluded empirical observation and was located at a metalevel, the condition of possibility of discourse.

Loyal to his habitus of cutting off heads, Derrida never stopped trying to demonstrate the inanity of the demonstrations of Saussure, Foucault, Levi-Strauss and Lacan—and little appreciated it if anyone dared to contradict his theses. In 1977, he answered Searle's reply in a particularly bitter polemic on speech acts, during which he punned on his adversary's name, calling Searle a SARL.<sup>34</sup> "Poor Searle never recovered. He was very humiliated by this SARL. We have to say that Derrida's irony is rather unusual in intellectual debates in the United States."<sup>35</sup> Although this might appear to be little more than anecdotal, it was in fact characteristic of Derrida's identification with philosophy as the reigning discipline that justified his pulling out all stops and hitting below the belt.

Searle had raised a number of objections, nevertheless, that warranted discussion. Several arguments were put forth: that iterability was not just a privilege of writing; that the rupture that seemed to belong to writing between the utterance and its receiver had no relationship with quotability, and, finally, that the fact that writing could be

cut off from its author in no way excluded the idea of intentionality. Joelle Proust pointed out that Searle and Derrida could never have come to a consensus since Searle's underlying assumptions leaned toward confrontation whereas Derrida's assumptions tended systematically to avoid it: "The second type of procedure characterizing deconstruction involves putting the very nature of what is targeted in the exchange into question. . . . If we don't safeguard the independence of the logic, don't we lose the very grounds for a possible consensus?"<sup>36</sup>

Beyond the form, there were the historical roots underpinning this polemic. The difference in analytical and continental traditions goes back to their divergent sources: Saussure and Frege. Analytical philosophy belongs to the Austro-German tradition and is generally considered to descend from Frege. On the one hand, Saussure ignored the issue of reference in order to raise the question of the scientificity of linguistics; on the other hand, Frege popularized the distinction between meaning and reference, between the meaning of an expression, which is a certain way of accounting for the reference, and the object to which the expression refers. From this perspective, analytical philosophy was always concerned with distinguishing these two levels without losing sight of the problem of reference. By basing itself on Saussure's positions and broadening its own positions beyond linguistics, structuralism defined itself by eliminating this concern, arguing that language referred to nothing other than itself. Frege's analysis of language focused on the level of a thinking of language and of language propositions, and held that only a concrete proposition allowed any real victory in the language game. In this respect, "Derrida's view of the situation through Saussure is pre-Fregian. It is never a question of anything other than words and their meaning. He has no veritable theory of propositions."<sup>37</sup> Even if he changed the structuralist perspective by introducing temporality into the structure, Derrida's Saussureanism placed him clearly in the structuralist line, which he intended to deconstruct.

## ***Four***

# **Benveniste: The French Exception**

After its high point in 1966, structuralism underwent a long and progressive crisis. Generativism took up where structuralism had left off, Derrida's work met with success, and a branch of linguistics concerned with enunciation theory, or human utterances, repressed until that point, was on the rise. Emile Benveniste played a major but rather underground role in this, until 1968. He was an innovator, but from within. Despite his universally recognized notoriety, however, Benveniste was initially preaching in the wilderness in an era that had eliminated the speaking subject from language.

A Sephardic Jew, born in Aleppo, Émile Benveniste had been destined for a religious career; his father had sent him to a rabbinic school in Marseilles. However, Sylvain Levi, a well-known Indianist at the College de France, recognized Benveniste's exceptional talent and brought him to meet Antoine Meillet, a disciple of Saussure. Benveniste therefore began his training as a linguist, following in Antoine Meillet's double tracks as a comparatist and a Saussurean. After an indirect and rather marginal career, he was invited to join the College de France in 1937. And with him, structural linguistics made its way to the heights of scholarly legitimation. When Levi-Strauss appealed to linguistic structuralism to lend support to his anthropological project in 1960, he called upon Benveniste to codirect the review *L'Homme*.

His position as professor at the College de France did not, however, allow Benveniste to make his ideas widely known. The margin-

ality of the institution for shaping the nation's elite, together with the technical nature of linguistics, confined him in splendid isolation. "There were very few people in his courses, a dozen perhaps. It was only after the publication of *General Linguistics*) in 1966 that there were more, around twenty-five. Benveniste was very myopic and saw no one when he entered the hall. He went straight to his desk and spoke with tremendous aesthetic talent, improvising from his notes," recalled Tzvetan Todorov, who was privy to the master's confidences while nursing him after a debilitating stroke that left him a hemiplegic.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his isolation, Benveniste's renown was such that the most important linguists were drawn to his courses: Oswald Ducrot, Claude Hagege, Jean-Claude Coquet, Marina Yaguello all came. But Benveniste was by nature a loner and remained closed off from others. "Benveniste was a private person, a poor communicator. I took his course at the College de France for three years. He was extremely shy and distant."? Andre Martinet met him in New York before meeting him again in France, and confirmed this impression: "He came to my house in New York and we became pals. I was the only French linguist with whom Benveniste was friendly, insofar as he could be, because he was uptight.:"

## Recognition from beyond the Linguistic Pale

Benveniste was an Indo-European specialist and comparatist of a great number of ancient and modern languages. But thanks to his interest in utterances, in speech, the subject came back into the linguistic limelight. Benveniste defined a very distinct path from that taken by Anglo-Saxon pragmatic philosophy, while at the same time engendering a debate with it. "Personally, I owe this linguist more than any other. He was absolutely essential in demonstrating that while the linguistic system remains a system, it has to take utterances into account."<sup>5</sup> Particularly precocious in his concern for the speaking subject, Benveniste emphasized as early as 1946 what he considered to be universals. Unlike certain researchers, such as Ramstedt, who worked on Korean, he argued for the indissociability and universality of the relationship between person and verb, regardless of the language: "We seem to know no language in which verbs or verbal forms do not distinguish for person in one way or another."<sup>6</sup>

Structuralism avoided logic and analytical philosophy; Benveniste,

to the contrary, engaged in a dialogue with them. Ten years after his article on verbs, Benveniste linked his analyses to the pragmatic project of Charles Morris. "The utterance containing '!'" belongs to this level or type of language that Charles Morris calls pragmatic, including not only signs but those who use them."? However, Morris had worked with Rudolf Carnap and had tried to use pragmatics to supply the missing link in the general science of signs, which already included a syntax in logic and semantics, but which did not define the relationship between signs and their interpreters. "The problem raised by Charles Morris just after the war was quite clear. It was a question of manipulating crowds with signs and from there, of constructing a philosophical theory of action." 8

In 1956, Lacan needed an important linguist in his camp and solicited a piece from Benveniste for the first issue of his review *La Psychanalyse*. Benveniste, who appealed to Lacan because of his interest in the subject, wrote an article on the function of language in Freud that helped Lacan substantiate his thesis of the unconscious being structured like a language. "Psychoanalysis seems to distinguish itself from all other disciplines primarily in this: the analyst works on what the subject tells him."? Benveniste of course criticized the analogy Freud drew between the way dreams operate, indifferent to contradiction, and the way in which, according to Karl Abel, the most ancient languages ostensibly function. Abel's etymological speculations were without basis, as far as Benveniste was concerned, for he considered that all languages were systems that could not function without this basic principle of contradiction. But this objection to Freud's sources was designed to better emphasize Lacan's ahistoricity and his preference for rhetorical figures and tropes. "The unconscious uses a veritable rhetoric that, like style, has its figures. The old catalog of tropes gives us an appropriate inventory of the two registers of expression." 10 The dialogue with psychoanalysis clearly offered Benveniste a means to lend weight to his positions taking utterance into account, and in 1958 he wrote an article in the *Journal de psychologie* to once again support Lacan's positions. "It is in language that man constitutes himself as a subject because only language establishes the concept of the ego, in the reality of being." 11

Unlike the generally held view of the speaking subject, which structuralism had eliminated, Benveniste proposed a distinction between the speaking subject and the subject of what is being spoken. It

was only much later that his positions were adopted by linguists. "We might say that before 1970, French linguistics was only slightly or not at all familiar with the utterance as a theoretical whole for which Benveniste was arguing."<sup>12</sup>

The encounter between Lacan and Benveniste was not fortuitous. Both wanted to free their respective fields from a dependency on history-Freudian philogeneticism for Lacan and historical philology for Benveniste-and both were interested in establishing the scientificity of their discourse. When Benveniste presented the historical development of linguistics, he described a succession of three ages: the philosophical age of Greek thinkers on language; the historical age, from the nineteenth century onward, inaugurated by the discovery of Sanskrit; and finally, the structuralist period of the twentieth century based on which "the positive notion of a linguistic fact is replaced by the idea of relationship."<sup>13</sup> This new era was contemporary with social complexification and both Benveniste and Lacan, whose Real/Symbolic/Imaginary trilogy was to lead to the dominance of the Symbolic, considered that it opened up the vast cultural field of symbolic phenomena. Benveniste did not get the reception from linguists he had hoped for, and therefore, in order to alleviate his isolation, and to use the recognition he enjoyed among philosophers and psychoanalysts, he adopted a strategy of reaching beyond his own discipline and colleagues. He wrote and lectured actively, broadening the audience for his arguments on the relationship between the subject and language.

In addition to the article he contributed to the first issue of *La Psychanalyse*, he codirected *L'Homme* beginning in 1960, and he wrote a piece for the first issue of *Les Etudes philosophiques* in 1963 in which he presented the theses of analytical philosophy at a time when they were being carefully ignored, particularly by linguistics. "Philosophical interpretations of language generally inspire the linguist with a certain fear."<sup>14</sup> This article was published after the 1962 colloquium at Royaumont on analytical philosophy which had not really drawn many linguists. Benveniste had given a paper in which he discussed John I. Austin's work on performatives and his distinction between performatives and constatives. He approved Austin's pragmatism and drew attention to the interest these arguments could have while at the same time recalling that since 1958, he himself had em-

phasized the subjective forms of linguistic utterance and the distinction that followed between a speech act and simple information.>

Benveniste's reflection on the subject was therefore not an external graft but followed its own rhythm, always more on philosophical grounds for want of interest among linguists. In 1965, he published another article in *Diogene*, a philosophical review, on the relationship between temporality and subjectivity: "Of the linguistic forms that reveal subjective experience, none is as rich as that those that express time."<sup>16</sup> Benveniste discerned two notions of time: the infinite and linear physical time of the world, and chronic time, woven of events. Both temporalities had objective and subjective versions. Since chronic time eludes lived experience, what happens to linguistic time? "Linguistic time is distinguished by its organic tie to the exercise of speech."<sup>17</sup> It is therefore located both in a present that is reinvented each time as a new moment, and as an individual act. It necessarily refers to the subjectivity of the speaker, and to an intersubjectivity insofar as linguistic temporality should respond to the interlocutor's conditions of understanding. Linguistic temporality therefore refers necessarily to intersubjective exchange. "The time of discourse works like a factor of intersubjectivity."<sup>18</sup>

It was only in 1970 that Benveniste saw his positions win over linguists. His article on utterances, published that same year in the important linguistic journal *Langages*, was the sign of this success.<sup>19</sup> But the battle was not completely won. The subject was back for reasons that did not really have anything to do with linguistics, but rather with the effects on linguistics of May 1968, with the new questions that had suddenly been raised in the social sciences and that had made it possible for the subject to come back in through the window after having been tossed out the front door.

## The Repressed Subject

Until that point, and despite Gallimard's publication of *General Linguistics* in 1966, Benveniste had been carefully ignored by other French linguists. Claudine Normand confirmed this through a comparative study that allowed her to make a true discovery. She compared notes taken in 1966-67 in Paul Ricoeur's course to notes taken during the same year in Jean Dubois's class. She could thus measure the importance given to Benveniste by a philosopher on the one hand, and by a linguist, Jean Dubois, on the other hand, both of whom were

professors at Nanterre at the time.<sup>20</sup> Paradoxically, philosophy students at Nanterre were aware of the issues raised by Benveniste thanks to Ricoeur, whereas those in Dubois's class on linguistics were not. Normand concluded that "the philosopher seems armed to understand better and more quickly appreciate the import of certain new linguistic theories than linguists themselves, who are too busy transforming their traditional or recent methods to want to see them change dramatically already."<sup>21</sup>

In addition to this case study, her article in *Langagest?* demonstrated that the different articles written by linguists in the sixties made no mention of Benveniste as the initiator of enunciation theory. Despite his interest in Benveniste's work, Ducrot did not quote him in his *What Is Structuralism?* ("Structuralism in Linguistics" II.P At the time, Julia Kristeva (Julia Joyau at that point) quoted Benveniste in her 1969 work *Language, This Unknown*" but only to support structuralist theses without making any mention of the idea of enunciation. Similarly, Jean Dubois and Luce Irigaray coauthored an article in 1966 entitled "The Verb and the Phrase" in issue 3 of *Langages* in which they considered the speaking subject, but completely ignored Benveniste.

It was not because Benveniste was unknown that he went unmentioned. Structural linguistics deliberately set up roadblocks barring access to the subject. This was the price for the split from psychologism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, for everyone who embraced the structural paradigm. For both Greimas and Dubois, the subject had to be normalized since it parasitized the scientific object under construction, which was supposed to be "an objectified or standardized language from which all potentially descriptive elements concerning its analysis have been eliminated."<sup>25</sup> Such an analysis was completely uninterested in everything that was of interest to analytical philosophy. For Benveniste and Ricoeur, all forms of dialogue and the different modalities of subjective expression were important. Normalizing language with Hjelmslev's model of formalization made it possible to construct canonical third person utterances and to eliminate all temporal criteria for a "then," a deliberately vague term that referred to a past as indefinable as it was distant. "This was exactly the reverse of Benveniste's positions. He felt that it was important to establish the positional field of the subject and therefore the I/Here/Now triad that forms the reference point for any speech."<sup>26</sup> It was only after 1970

that this view gained any currency, having long been obliterated by structuralism.

This negation had been nourished by a misunderstanding of the contribution of analytical philosophy, and of the great logical philosophers of the turn of the century, including Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Rudolf Carnap, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, all of whom had been ignored in France, where the German, Nietzsche-Heideggerian tradition was favored. It is true that Gallimard published Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* in 1961, but it did not attract enormous attention except for a short book introducing Wittgenstein by Gilles Gaston-Granger, and later Jacques Bouveresse's work, which severely criticized Louis Althusser for having shut French philosophy off from the influence of analytic philosophy. "One day on the way to Althusser's house for lunch, we met Bouveresse, and Althusser said to me, 'you see, Bouveresse no longer says hello because he criticized me for having stopped the French from becoming familiar with analytical philosophy.' It's true that we were unaware of it for a long time."<sup>28</sup>

The Vienna Circle at the time and those who gravitated around it, mistakenly called the Anglo-Saxon School, were baptized neopositivists. This was enough to disqualify them. In the early years of the twentieth century, the interest in the philosophy of language had been left to psychologists whose expertise was quickly considered to have been definitively left behind by the partisans of structuralism.

Then, in the mid-sixties, at the height of structuralism's popularity, Paul Ricoeur became interested and wanted to integrate the philosophy of language into hermeneutics. So Ricoeur became the targeted enemy, particularly for the Althussero-Lacanian, who, in 1965, responded with a particularly virulent piece in *Les Temps modernes*. In an article by Michel Tort on Ricoeur's work on Freud,<sup>29</sup> Tort characterized Paul Ricoeur's enterprise as having the appearance of a simple pedagogical booklet, a manual for the neophyte Freudian, but that underhandedly applied to Freud the implicit treatment of external categories borrowed from hermeneutics. Hermeneutics was criticized in this polemic as running counter to the critical and epistemological concerns of the period: "Ricoeur's phenomenological epistemology is nothing more than a rationalization of an ethical-religious scruple."<sup>30</sup> Tort presented hermeneutics as an antiscience, a kind of phrenology of symbols whose only goal was the "sly denial of Freudian thinking."<sup>31</sup> Michel Tort rejected any attempt at an archaeology of the subject,

considering that it could only lead to an imaginary speleology limited to "exploring the abyss of its own misunderstanding of the subject,"<sup>32</sup> for the decentering of the subject that Freud demonstrated leads to the suppression of an organizing center. Yet Benveniste was closer to Ricoeur than to the Althussero-Lacanian when he conceived the unconscious symbolic as infra- and supralinguistic.

Several other reasons also help to explain the French resistance to the concerns of analytical philosophy. There was the radicality of the structuralist break which based its identity on holding at bay all current definitions of the subject, whether in philosophy with phenomenology or in literary history, with the psychologist vogue of the time. There was also a posthumous fascination with German philosophy. Moreover, work on logic in the French university had always remained very marginal, perhaps for contingent historical reasons since, as Canguilhem had said, French logicians had met tragic fates: Jean Cavailles, a member of the Resistance, was shot by the Germans during the war; Jacques Herbrand had died in a mountain accident on July 27, 1931. Beyond the deaths of the potential leaders of a French logical school, philosophical roots could also account for the different paths taken by Anglo-Saxon countries. "It goes back to the position of English mathematicians with respect to the status of the symbolic. There is a configuration that makes it possible to understand why analytical philosophy developed in England, and it is tied to taking a position on the nature of mathematical objects and on the existence of these mathematical objects, which is quasi-ontological."<sup>33</sup> By their metaphysical presuppositions, English mathematicians would have favored an idealist conception of a subject that existed in itself with a simple, quasi-instrumental relationship to language. Since French philosophers wanted to kill Western metaphysics, they were not well disposed toward accepting such an approach.

### Benveniste's Heirs

Under such conditions, Benveniste's efforts to include the subject among the theoretical concerns of linguists encountered a certain number of difficulties. But several of his disciples continued after him and, in a more favorable context, were more successful at introducing analytical philosophy. One was Oswald Ducrot, the author of the linguistic part of the anthology *What Is Structuralism?* published by Seuil in 1968. Ducrot's discovery of analytic philosophy was charac-

teristic of the state of ignorance and disdain of the period. A philosopher by training, Ducrot discovered structuralism while preparing to enter the *École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales*. "I was also very interested in mathematics and was trying to do something on the philosophy of mathematics. From there I drifted toward that area of mathematics that is the easiest for a philosopher: logic."<sup>34</sup> Oswald Ducrot then worked on formal grammars, which were used a good deal in Chomskyan grammar.

In 1963, Ducrot joined the CNRS to do a thesis on the history of philosophy, on Descartes. Like all CNRS researchers, he read the journals carefully, and it was while doing thesis research and simply compiling articles that he made an important discovery. "Those who had come last had the least interesting journals, journals that all the French philosophers were rejecting, so I found myself in charge of English journals on the philosophy of language. They were completely absorbing and led me toward the philosophy of language rather than toward structuralism."<sup>35</sup> Much later, at the beginning of the seventies, Ducrot introduced pragmatics in France. For him, he was abandoning nothing, but rather was giving a new dimension to structuralism, as his introduction to the French edition of John R. Searle's *Speech Acts* in 1972 amply demonstrated.

His introduction paid homage to Saussure for having dissociated the linguistic object of study from language, which could not be directly studied, and which contrasted both with the ability to speak and with speech itself. But he disagreed with Saussure's elimination of speech from the realm of scientific analysis. According to Ducrot, if the path leading from Saussure to Austin culminated in a new area, that of performatives, a certain continuity ran between them making it possible to add a specific, new sector to the basic structuralist postulate that would only have a completely marginal position in language. "The value of utterances, even if it does question the Saussurean thesis identifying linguistic activity with individual initiative, does not prevent us from maintaining a good part of this thesis."<sup>36</sup>

In considering the linguistic order to be irreducible to any other level of reality and requiring a logic *sui generis* to explain it, Ducrot was faithful to the Saussurean tradition. His analysis was fundamentally structural; it did not work from any empirical given but rather from the semantic unity that he called the meaning of the utterance.<sup>37</sup> Ducrot adopted structuralism's hermetic notion of language, and con-

sidered that the seduction of the philosophy of language was a reactivation of Platonism, "in other words, the idea that, before discussing philosophical problems, we have to agree on what we mean by the words we use. That is what I found completely engrossing and Platonian in Austin."<sup>38</sup>

There were two currents within the philosophy of language. There was the logical school that began with Rudolf Carnap, who, in his 1928 *The Logical Structure of the World*, sought to go beyond a simple critique of language in order to achieve a more perfect logic and demonstrate that a system of protocol utterances existed that could be divided in order to establish a basic scientific corpus. Everything that did not conform to the rules establishing this system of utterances was banished to the realm of nonsense, including metaphysical propositions. The entirely semantic and formalist elimination of metaphysics would therefore make it possible to articulate the elements into combinations and compositions giving a satisfactory picture of reality. This logical school was not the branch of the philosophy of language that influenced Oswald Ducrot, but rather the branch that remained inside language, represented by John Austin and Searle.

What later made me take my distance from them was that they saw the study of language as really offering a solution to philosophical problems. I, on the other hand, thought this was less and less true. Moreover, they thought that by studying the meaning of words one could find satisfying concepts for describing ordinary language, which I did not find reasonable since I don't see why language would be the best metalanguage for its own description."

Ducrot also considered that Searle and Austin's notion of the subject, which he saw as a complex, plural entity, was too simplistic.

So, although Oswald Ducrot was the best person to introduce pragmatics in France, his perspective had a structuralist twist and went back to Benveniste, who, since the seventies, influenced a whole current of increasingly numerous enunciation theorists. This was the perspective of Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, who sees herself as one of Benveniste's heirs. Her book on all the indices of subjectivity in language, beyond deictics, includes subjective verbs and lexical forms of subjectivity.<sup>w</sup> This problem of the subject's place in language and language acts produced an entire school of pragmatics in France, which included Francis Jacques, Jean-Claude Pariente, and François Recanatani,<sup>z</sup> for whom pragmatics involved studying "the use of language in

discourse and the specific marks that, in language, attest to its discursive vocation."<sup>42</sup>

Antoine Culioli and his school, also to be included in this group, were similarly concerned with constructing a theory of utterances based on deep universal patterns. These "mechanisms of production," a complete formal apparatus of utterances, were also part of Benveniste's legacy. Culioli, professor in the Department of Linguistic Research at Paris VII, influenced an entire school, including Marina Yaguello, but his work has become so sophisticated that it is unreadable for the neophyte and painful for the specialist. This search for deep structures à la Chomsky supposed the existence of what Culioli called *lexis*, and that led to predicative relationships. "There are enunciation operations that let deep structures come to the surface in certain languages where the enunciation operations receive what we call a grammaticalization."<sup>43</sup> Unlike the generativist approach, which goes from surface to deep structures on the basis of the native speaker's intuition about the grammaticality of the sentences, letting the speaker differentiate between possible and impossible locutions, Antoine Culioli postulated a certain number of operations (modalization, aspect, nominal and verbal determination) that let the speaker organize the verbal relationship and lead it to the surface utterance. "Culioli does not see the utterance as belonging to a corpus but as the discursive confirmation of these operations, which he postulates abstractly. There are utterances that can take very different forms but that still refer back to the same enunciative operations."<sup>44</sup>

Culioli reflected structuralism's early goals of formal translation, the quest for regularity and the universal based on invariables, the concern for going beyond the individual and the particular in a new field, which had initially been ignored because of the restrictive definition of language that Saussure had given, eliminating speech. "There is no isolated utterance; every utterance is one of many, selected by the speaker from among the many possible equivalents. In a word, every utterance belongs to a family of paraphrastic transformations. On the other hand, no utterance is unmodulated—in other words, is not unique."<sup>45</sup> Claude Hagege, who succeeded Émile Benveniste at the College de France, adopted a less formal perspective, closer in spirit to Benveniste, whose work he also helped bring out of the shadows to which it had been condemned during the era of structural splendor.

Did the progressive success of the question of the subject in lan-

guage contribute to the decline of the structural paradigm or did it offer a second wind with a new field of study? According to Marina Yaguello, it was just as legitimate to consider pragmatics as an adjacent or connected area:

We can consider that linguistics is one, and that there is both a theory of speech acts and a theory of language and that the two are articulated together. But we can just as well argue that we can address speech acts and therefore the illocutionary value of utterances (or when the utterance itself constitutes an act) without at the same time addressing the question of knowing how the utterances are made.<sup>46</sup>

## Five

### Kristeva and Barthes Reborn

Julia Kristeva arrived in France on Christmas 1965 and quickly began to shake up structural semiotics. Soon after her arrival, having enrolled in Roland Barthes's seminar, she gave a presentation on the important changes in the structuralist paradigm of the second half of the sixties, introducing a new vision, drawn from Russian postformalism and based on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin's work was unknown in France at the time, but she later introduced it in her preface to Seuil's edition of his works.<sup>1</sup> The choice was not gratuitous since Kristeva wanted to inject a historical dimension into the structuralist approach and get beyond textual closure in order to make literary texts more broadly comprehensible. Her presentation came at a particularly opportune moment. In 1966, structuralism was at its zenith and a certain number of attempts were in the making to weaken its monopoly. Derrida, Chomsky, and Benveniste were all beginning to seriously challenge the ambitions of the first period. Kristeva's presentation was initially published in *Critique* and when it was printed in *Semiotike, Research for a Semanalysis* in 1969, it reached a broader audience.

One listener who was particularly seduced by Kristeva's presentation was none other than Roland Barthes himself. Barthes later used Kristeva's ideas, which were new for him, to make a radical shift in his own work. "Bakhtin's approach was interesting because he saw the literary text, be it that of Rabelais or of Dostoyevsky, as polyphonic within the text itself."<sup>3</sup>

## Mikhail Bakhtin

Bakhtin saw the dialogue of literary texts among themselves as fundamental. Saturated by their literary predecessors, they engaged in a polyphonic dialogue that decentered their initial structure. Bakhtin therefore broadened literary-critical study to include the historical fabric in which literary texts were woven. His approach obviously contrasted from the outset with the structuralist position claiming that a literary text was hermetic and that this closure made the work's structure accessible. Bakhtin compared Rabelais's work with the popular culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Just as Lucien Febvre had already argued that Rabelais was not radically new when read in his context, thereby demonstrating that he could not have been an atheist, Bakhtin deciphered the enigma by looking at Rabelais's work through its popular sources and categories. He felt that Rabelais drew his inspiration primarily from the comic grotesque of the Carnival, of life turned upside down and of the parody of everyday life: "This was Rabelais's language."<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin condemned the mistaken interpretations of Rabelais as the poet of the flesh and of gluttony (Victor Hugo) and those who saw in him the expression of the bourgeois interest in the economic individual; Rabelais's style could only be understood as the translation of a popular, comic culture that he called "grotesque realism."<sup>5</sup> Beyond the comic effect lay a whole cosmogony in Rabelais, and his focus on orifices, protuberances, and outgrowths corresponded to corporeal parts that put the individual into contact with the external world.

Kristeva had immediately understood structuralism's historical limitations and intended to palliate these shortcomings with Bakhtin, and lend "dynamism to structuralism."<sup>6</sup> The dialogue between texts that she considered fundamental could serve to address the subject, the second element that structuralism had repressed, and reintroduce it as part of the theme of intersubjectivity, much in the manner of Benveniste. But in 1966, things had not yet evolved that far and Kristeva avoided the issue of the subject, preferring to use a new notion that was immediately successful: intertextuality, "It was at that point that I created the gadget called intertextuality."<sup>7</sup> Even today, Kristeva is invited to lecture on intertextuality in the United States and to write articles to further elucidate and develop this notion.

Mikhail Bakhtin had postulated a translinguistics and had used Ra-

belais, Swift, and Dostoyevksy to develop his arguments of a polyphonic thread. Kristeva added modern authors, including Joyce, Proust, and Kafka, whom she considered useful for a similar approach—pointing out, however, that representative and fictional dialogue was, with these twentieth-century authors, supplanted by an interior dialogue.

In addition to this intertextual perspective, Kristeva introduced dialogics (criticism as dialogue, the encounter between two voices). More than she realized at the time, this helped to seriously upset structuralism, even if dialogics was still considered to be immanent to structure: "Dialogism is coextensive with the deep structures of discourse."<sup>8</sup> It would be a mistake to see in this the return of the classical subject or the notion of the author in dialogics. Kristeva was quite careful to dissolve this notion within the narrative system itself, and, true to the structuralist perspective in this, she felt that the author "becomes anonymous, an absence, a blank, in order to allow the structure to exist as such."<sup>9</sup> So the author was nothing other than the expression of this vacuum, and in his place was the intertextual dialogue in which he dissolved as he appeared.

Kristeva distinguished two types of narrative: the monologic story that includes descriptive, representative, historical, and scientific modes in which "the subject assumes the role of  $\Gamma$  (God), and submits to this role by the same gesture,"<sup>10</sup> and the dialogic story, which expresses itself particularly through the form of the carnival, the Menippean satire and the polyphonic modern novel. In order to make the modernity of dialogism clear, Kristeva saw in it not only a new method for literary analysis that was richer than binarism, but also "the basis for the intellectual structure of our period."<sup>11</sup> With dialogism, the Hegelian dialectic could be reconsidered, it could be absorbed in a concept that was not an opposition that implied getting beyond, but a harmony based on a simple disruption that made it possible to concentrate on the work of transformation. "Dialogism puts philosophical problems in language, and more precisely, in language as a correlationship of texts, like writing-reading."<sup>12</sup> A person of letters enjoyed a certain hegemony and could analyze a range of fields, including philosophy. By opening the text up onto an environment that was more than referential and contextual and that included the surrounding literary universe of prior, contemporary, or future texts, new analytical perspectives became possible. The contemporary writer

in particular could dialectize his position as author-reader differently, and even include his reading within his own writing.

### A Turning Point for Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes was intrigued by all forms of renewal, and by youth in general. And with Kristeva's presentation, a bell tolled for the scientific ambitions so carefully laid out in *Elements of Semiology* and in *Critique et Vérité*. Barthes was engaged in a true exchange with his students and knew how to give and take. Extremely encouraging, he was always attentive to and encouraging of student presentations. "Roland played a very important role for me. He was the only person I knew who was able to read others, and, for a professor, this was enormously important because in general professors read themselves."<sup>13</sup>

Barthes's own work also reflected his interest in intertextuality. In 1970, he published *5/Z*, the trace of his 1968 and 1969 seminars at the *École Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, inspired by Kristeva's presentation of 1966. This was a major turning point; Barthes deconstructed his own conceptual grid and gave freer rein to his literary intuition. After the discourse on method came writing, the expression of sensibilities and infinite, undefinable meaning. "Like Sollers, Roland was first and foremost a man of letters. You might say that he used methods, for, as Buddha says, 'If you want to cross the river, take a pile of bits of wood, make yourself a raft, and then throw it back into the river.'"<sup>14</sup> From the beginning of *5/Z*, Barthes took his distance with what he later considered to be the illusory reduction of all the stories "to a single structure."<sup>15</sup> Not only did he consider this structuralist ambition overblown, but he also considered structuralism to be tainted with a questionable perspective because this Sisyphean effort led to the negation of differences between texts.

Given this new concern to make difference the goal rather than the means of the analysis as it was being used in phonological binarism at the time, we can easily see Kristeva's influence on Barthes and the entire *Tel Quel* group. Derrida in particular had adopted Kristeva's notion of intertextuality. Even before *5/Z* came out, Barthes remarked in an interview with Raymond Bellour: "We can speak about intertextuality with respect to literature, but not of intersubjectivity."<sup>16</sup> These were Kristeva's very terms. In 1970, Barthes confided to Bellour the names of those to whom he was indebted but who went intentionally unmentioned in *S/Z* to better suggest that the whole of

the work was a quote. "I removed the name of my creditors: Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Sollers, Derrida, Deleuze, and Serres, among others." 17

Beginning with *5/Z*, the whole of the deconstructionist problematic was at work in Barthes in his concern to pluralize and exacerbate differences, to set them into play outside the signified in an infinity in which they dissolved and gave way to the "whiteness of writing." Derrida's concerns were quite clear in this new Barthesian discourse that marked a turning point. Barthes addressed the question of the Saussurean sign: "Now we must take our battle even further and try to crack the very idea of the sign, not signs with signifiers and signifieds. We might call this operation semioclastic." 18 Behind his determination to fissure the foundations of Western discourse, of course, lay Derrida's deconstruction of Western logocentrism. The goals were not altogether synonymous, however, even if in both cases writing was the issue. For Barthes, the question was literature, whereas for Derrida it was philosophy. And yet, when Barthes said that "the writing of the writer depends essentially on a criterion of indeterminability," 19 we cannot but recall Derrida's undecidables, which were supposed to deconstruct Western metaphysics. At the end of the sixties, in the increasingly frequent interviews of 1970-71 explaining his reconversion, Barthes recognized quite explicitly that there had been a shift and a break.

His explanation confirmed his extreme sensitivity to his environment. "The causes for this change (for it is more a matter of mutation than of evolution) are to be sought in recent French history-why not?-and then also in the intertextual, by which I mean the texts surrounding me, accompanying me, which precede and follow me and with which, of course, I communicate." 20 His allusions to May 1968 were clear, and the philosophical guarantee of Derridean deconstruction let Barthes clearly express his wish to write Literature and to freely express his subjectivity and his difference, freed of codes and other formal systems. Describing his wishes for the seventies, Barthes expressed the desire to work within the signifier, or to write in what he called "the romanesque less the novel." 21 That was what he began to do with *5/Z*, which he considered to be very important in his personal itinerary thanks to the "formulators," the researchers surrounding him who "taught me things, who opened my eyes, who persuaded me." 22 The other reason for the shift came from the object of study itself.

*5/Z*, the first microanalysis Barthes had undertaken, focused on

Balzac's 1830 novella *Sarrasine*. Barthes described the interplay of five codes that allowed him to look at the internal plurality of Balzac's writing. He observed things differently here, following the text step by step and constantly setting writing against reading. Above all, he wanted to create a new form of writing/reading that was supposed to be the product of the notion of intertextuality. Kristeva's influence was quite clear: examining a process as it unfolded, and substituting structuration for structure: "To rediscover what Julia Kristeva calls a productivity."<sup>23</sup> Barthes perceived this productive horizon in the very unfolding of writing/reading, infinite and forever open. Balzac's text and its dissolution in contemporary languages and codes clearly expressed his desire for a limitless writing having nothing to do with the search for a system of single or multiple causes leading to a closed explanation of the text and to its definitive interpretation. "There is never an end to the text. Lansonians-" consider that the book stops with the author and his sources. Intertextuality makes authors anonymous and considers that the text goes on infinitely."<sup>25</sup>

For Barthes, the active/author, passive/reader relationship needed to be redefined by readers rewriting the written text, or a plural text allowing for many possible voices and paths. The five different codes used to allow the polyphony of *Sarrasine* to reverberate included the atemporal semic, cultural, and symbolic codes and the temporally irreversible hermeneutic and proairetic codes. The apparently rigorous method, drawn from a strict system of coding, radically broke with the first period of structuralism: "For the plural text, there can be no narrative structure, grammar, or logic to the story."<sup>26</sup>

The ambitions for narrative structures laid out in 1966 in *Communications* were set to rest. There were no other interpretations except those at the level of multiple meanings, but no total, hermetic text. Intuitive sensitivity triumphed beneath the rigidity of codes that were used but were carefully hierarchized according to the principle of taste. They made no claim to scientificity. "There are good and bad codes."<sup>27</sup> The proairetic had its place on the axis of insignificance. At the other extreme, the symbolic code was entirely positive, including everything that seemed intuitively interesting to him. Although implicit, "This hierarchy flows as it were from itself."<sup>28</sup> At the top was the symbolic, which depended on the pure signifier, on nonlogic, and on the power of textual plurality to which Barthes aspired. This symbolic code was so important in analyzing Balzac's novella that Ray-

ronnd Bellour saw in it the sign of the use of an underlying matrix of production structuring the text.

Three symbolisms-gold, meaning, and sexuality-set the dynamics of the text into motion and referred respectively to Marx, Aristotle, and Freud. Balzac's novella unfolded during the Restoration. The author severely criticized the new bourgeoisie, which had just come to power thanks to its wealth. By contrast with the dignity of the nobility's gold, theirs lacked true roots, and was unconnected to the land. The second part of the story focused on Zambinella, a castrato for the mistaken love of whom the sculptor Sarrasine, who believed Zambinella to be a woman, was assassinated. By shifting the symbolic code, Barthes drew a parallel between the two parts of the story: the satire of the gold-owning parvenus without a past paralleled the theme of the castrato which referred to a woman who was not a woman.

This interpretation, like Barthes's previous interpretation of Racine, borrowed heavily from psychoanalysis, and more specifically from Lacan, who, together with Kristeva and Derrida, was one of the major inspirations for Barthes's analyses. "My use of psychoanalytic language is, like the use of any other idiolect, playful, citational."<sup>29</sup> Barthes's work on the letter, which is set off by the book's title, *S/Z*, comes from the play of meanings that unfold in the impossible relationship between Sarrazine and Zambinella. In the first place, Barthes pointed out that a French ear would expect to read Sarrazine, whereas the Z gets tossed out. "Z is the letter of mutilation. . . . It cuts, bars, creates a zebra stripe. From a Balzacian point of view, this Z, like the one in Balzac's name, is the letter of deviation."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Z is the first letter in Zambinella, the castrato,

such that by this spelling mistake within the very heart of his name, at the center of his body, Sarrasine understands the Zambellian Z in its true nature, which is the wound of the lack. In addition, S and Z graphically reverse one another, as if they were the same letter seen from opposite sides of the mirror. Sarrasine contemplates his own castration in Zambinella."<sup>31</sup>

We can imagine Barthes's extreme pleasure in constructing his interpretation, which, by simply explaining the title *S/Z*, made it possible to take seriously the importance of the letter in the unconscious, according to Lacan, the importance of graphic writing and its repression by phonologisms, as Derrida saw it, and finally, the reintroduction of

the Saussurean bar reinterpreted by Lacan between Sand Z, a bar that formed the screen, the true censure, the wall of hallucination.

### The Empty Sign: Japan

In 1970, Barthes also published *Empire of Signs*,<sup>32</sup> which reconfirmed his new tack. This book, in which Barthes freely described his Japan using fragments, offers a posttheoretical counterpoint to the pre-theoretical *Mythologies*. Barthes abandoned the conceptual adventure, and although he was extremely caustic and critical about the signs of daily life in the West, he looked at those in the Orient through Chimene's eyes. What fascinated him above all, and in this there was a continuity between his two periods, was that the Japan he discovered and wrote about was a Japan that had rid itself of all full meaning.

Barthes experienced the intense pleasure of fully entering, for the first time, into a signifier finally freed of any signified, a world of empty signs, emptied of meaning and of all the forms of rigidification known to the West, and which he had denounced in *Mythologies*. He did not abandon his critical perspective but used the Orient to protest Western values, indirectly. "Like many of us, I profoundly reject my civilization, to the point of nausea. This book expresses my absolute demand for a total alterity, which has become a necessity for me."<sup>33</sup> For want of the possibility of getting beyond Western reality by using its internal contradictions, Barthes rejected everything about the Western universe, contrasting it with a binary utopia. One finds here the structuralist theme of the closure of history and the progressive elimination of the referent and then of the signified. "In our Western world, in our culture, in our language and languages, we must engage in a battle to the death, a historical battle with the signified."<sup>34</sup> The imaginary voyage to Japan to which Barthes invited his readers in 1970 reiterated his quest for the loss of meaning, known as satori in Zen, to let an infinite game of signifiers unfold. Everything was thus perceived, down to the slightest detail of daily life, as the illustration of this distance with respect to signs. Speech was empty and perception essentially graphic. Food, for example, was decentered: Japan has a veritable cult of raw food that is honored to the point of preparing food in front of the eater, in order to "consecrate by spectacle the death of what is being honored."<sup>35</sup> Entirely visual, composed of many fragments without any order of ingestion, Japanese food has no center but gives the eater free rein to use his chopsticks as he chooses.

Everything is fragmented and multiple in Barthes's Japan, in contrast to the West where everything is structured, focused, and ordered. This was also true for Japanese art; Barthes contrasted the Western tendency to transform an impression into a description based on a full subject with a subjectless haiku, which never describes but simply links signifiers without any demonstrative goal but with the trace of the pleasure of writing. Haiku serves no purpose and lends itself to no commentary. "It is that, it is thus, says the haiku, it is so . . . but the haiku's flash illuminates, reveals nothing."<sup>36</sup> Barthes was fascinated by what he had long repressed and that nonetheless constituted his veritable being, the freedom of the writer writing, the capacity to detach himself from any didactic discourse and to give intuition full rein. In 1970, Barthes therefore returned to literature after a detour via linguistics. His path was symptomatic of an entire generation of structuralists who adopted the discourse of the social sciences without fully renouncing the unavowed vocation of the writer. During the sixties, some of the important contemporary novels were "scientific" works.

### Paragrams; or, The Veiled Return of the Subject

Julia Kristeva used intertextuality to go beyond structuralist closure. But she also opened up a second new direction for research involving a dynamic subjectivity that was not that of the classical subject but that of the subject as Lacan understood it, the subject of desire. In 1966, thanks to Jean Starobinski's publication of some excerpts, Kristeva discovered what was called the second Saussure, the Saussure of the anagrams. She immediately saw the correlation between this quest for the proper name underlying Saussure's apparent text and the analytic approach as Lacan formalized it.

What became clear to me was that their writer is sort of influenced by the game of phonemes and syllables. This power gives a kind of consonantal and phonic regularity; repetitions and alliterations that can be stabilized in a proper name and that would be the obsessional proper name to which the individual is unconsciously tied for sexual or morbid reasons.<sup>37</sup>

This research referred to another dynamic of the unconscious structure that Kristeva explored in a programmatic text, "For a Semiology of Paragrams," in which she outlined a new science at a time when they were proliferating: grammatology in 1965 and paragrammatics

in 1966. Taking Saussure's work on anagrams, Kristeva claimed that he had been mistaken in looking for a single word or a particular anagram each time, whereas an entire underlying thematic chain slipped beneath the apparent text. "There is this insistence on paralogics, of meaning other than the explicit meaning."<sup>38</sup> Based on this, she proposed to read Mallarmé and Lautréamont differently. The paragram became a form of destruction of the writing of the other and of dissolving frozen meaning. "After destroying man, the paragram destroys the name."<sup>39</sup> This outline of a new direction for research bespoke the scientism of the period. Kristeva evaluated the reminiscences in the paragrammatic space on the basis of a solid alliance between semantics and mathematics. "The effort required to understand the logic of paragrams in an abstract way is the only means of getting beyond vulgar psychologism or sociologism."<sup>40</sup>

But beyond the scientific mask, Kristeva judiciously looked to the subject, which until then had been obliterated. The paragrammatic quest echoed the logic of the unconscious in everything that it had stored up, or "engrammed" like a signifier. This quest pointed to personal history, woven of souvenirs, reading, and different influences located at *levels* other than that of the language of communication, which limited, and by definition defined, the numbers of codes being used.

Taking this transversal path between linguistics and psychoanalysis, which Kristeva later called *semanalysis*, eventually *led* her to abandon literature and become a psychoanalyst. This type of reading already had the advantage of getting beyond neutrality toward subjectivity and setting up resonances with the literary critic's unconscious. This newly ascribed importance of subjectivity opened up the path toward literary writing and therefore gave Barthes the necessary scientific balast he needed to let his creative desires flourish. Kristeva, on the other hand, remained in the realm of science. Psychoanalysis provided the necessary conceptual grid for going further in her quest for the subject and in unveiling its mode of existence. "I felt slightly daunted for having put forward this personal subjectivity, particularly because French is a foreign language for me."<sup>41</sup> So Kristeva stayed within a theorizing discourse longer than did Barthes.

In order to take both analytic paths into account, she later distinguished between semiotics and symbolic. Symbolic referred to the simple denotation of a coded exchange; semiotics opened onto a "se-

cret continent of language in which the perfumes, colors, and sounds echo each other and all refer to a childhood experience and to the unconscious. "42 Defined this way, semiotics in fact took up the semanalytical project defined in 1969, which had already proposed a criticism of the sign able to deobjectify its object and to conceive of it based on a shard offering "a vertical cut unlimited by either beginning or end."43

Kristeva's semiotics drew on two important renewals that were under way—Marx by Althusser and Freud by Lacan. Yet she sought her legitimation at the very roots of Western culture, based on which we can understand its temporal density. "I am referring to the *Timaeus*, a text in which Plato speaks about a modality of signification that he calls the *chora*, or, in other words, a receptacle."44 Plato considered this modality of common sense to precede the One, and ascribed to it natural connotations of a nourishing and mobile receptacle. Kristeva used this dialogue to examine prelanguage, preceding linguistic signs, linked more closely to the relationship between the future speaker and its mother. "I tried to propose that notion of a semi-otic Chora that goes back to a translinguistic and more archaic model of signification."45 She differentiated herself in this from Derrida's absolute deconstruction, which had nonetheless been very important in her critique of the sign. Her interest in psychoanalytic discourse led her, to the contrary, to interpret and therefore to be attentive to the meaning revealed by psychoanalytic attention, to a truth, however provisional.

This receptivity to psychoanalysis and to subjectivity let Barthes free himself from a certain number of constraints. In 1971, he admitted that

the big problem for me, in any case, was to trick the signified, to trick the law, the father, and the repressed. . . . Wherever it is possible to undertake a paragrammatic effort or a certain paragrammatic tracing of my own text, I feel at ease. If I ever really had the opportunity to criticize my own work, I would center everything on "paragrammatism."46

Barthes embodied the sensitivities and ambitions of his period's avant-garde, and he moved in a new direction, thanks in part to this reorientation suggested by Kristeva's 1966 work, toward intertextuality and paragrams. This shift can also be seen as the literary expression of Benveniste's questions about enunciation. "Linguists who have a theo-

retical framework (Jakobson, Chomsky, and Benveniste) are men who raise the question of enunciation and not only the problem of the message."<sup>47</sup> Once linguistics raised this issue, it entered into contact with psychoanalytic thinking, with Lacan's work, as we have already seen in the case of Benveniste.

This shift was part of a new intellectual climate that gave priority to the search for the subject of desire in its different modes of expression. The same quest was taking place in literature: Philippe Sollers published *Dramaw* in 1965, reflecting on the use of pronouns, or, in other words, on signs in utterances. But beyond this propitious context in which the second Barthes was "born" there was above all an internal echo leading him to reembrace subjectivity and allowing his unacknowledged aspiration to flourish. Intuition gained ground as writing became freer and better able to openly express the pleasure it procured.

## **Six**

# **Durkheim Gets a Second Wind: Pierre Bourdieu**

At the beginning of the century, sociology had barely emerged from philosophy. Durkheimians had only half succeeded in their emancipation and had entirely failed in their attempt to unify the social sciences around the concept of a social morphology. But they were able to take advantage of the postwar growth of the social sciences and to establish themselves more and more securely in the university, although their institutional success did not mask their failure in terms of scholarly legitimation. Although they could determine their own curriculum, philosophers and historians in particular, but also the younger disciplines such as anthropology, with their dearly defined ambition and rigor, disdained sociology as a minor discipline, which they relegated to a secondary role, a disciplinary refuge for empiricism, with limited and essentially instrumental goals.

### **Philosophers Challenged**

When Pierre Bourdieu came to sociology, his theoretical goals, his hegemonic will, his way of problematizing sociology as an institution gave new life to Durkheimian ambitions. This second wind was possible because Bourdieu had assimilated the structuralist program—at least initially, for, like many others, he later took his distance from it. During the sixties, however, he proposed a structural-Durkheimian method that tended to consolidate Durkheimian positions in order to redynamize them and to reunify sociology, which was being fractured

into many ideological families. "His structuralism was extraordinarily enriching; it was the great contemporary sociological oeuvre."!

Bourdieu, like Durkheim, challenged philosophers, although he never really abandoned the philosophical problematization or accepted a rupture between sociology and ethnology. "In order to escape relativity, even somewhat, we must absolutely give up any pretension to absolute knowledge and remove the crown from the philosopher king."<sup>2</sup> Not that Bourdieu abandoned the philosophical debate, for within his own work he continued to dialogue with Kant, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Austin, which was altogether unique in sociology. "It seems to me that there was always an amorous attitude of rupture with philosophy."<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu challenged philosophy on its own grounds, amassing all of sociology's statistical tools, methods, concepts, and verification procedures. He could therefore calculate the advantages of a position that was at once philosophical and scientific: "Sociology long ago abandoned the grand theories of social philosophy. . . . So why not say that it's a science if it is one?"<sup>4</sup>

With Bourdieu, sociological analysis questioned the philosopher's position by establishing a correlation between the contents of philosophical discourse and philosophy's institutional position in the university. There was a great deal of work devoted to objectifying philosophical discourse by studying what validated and legitimated it in the very conditions of its pronouncement. Bourdieu considered sociology to be in a privileged position to do this, and therefore had to be heard in the chorus of discourses about the social sciences. In this way, sociology offered a liberating perspective: "Sociology frees by freeing from the illusion of freedom."! Sociology made it possible to formulate the most extravagant ambitions in order to unify the social sciences, which Durkheim had hoped to do, around the structural-Durkheimian paradigm. In order to accomplish this, Bourdieu introduced structuralism into sociology—a delicate introduction of a paradigm that sought to unlock what was hidden, occulted, and unspoken in a discipline that valorized testimony, interviews, and statistics, or, in other words, the realm of the visible.

### A Miraculous Recovery

Bourdieu's relationship to his object of study was one of radical denial. His vast system served to demonstrate the power of reproductive structures, the weakness of mobility, the futility of events, and the

ways in which an individual is defined by his or her roots. And yet Bourdieu is the living negation of his own theses; his personal itinerary belies institutional omnipotence and unbearable determinism. This contradiction in itself reveals a very particular role played out between Bourdieu and himself, a quasi-therapeutic confrontation between the individual at the height of scholarly legitimation and the man who has never hidden his roots and is increasingly uneasy in his academic and worldly success. "Curiously, my insertion in the social world should have been easier and easier but in fact it is becoming more and more difficult."<sup>6</sup>

Bourdieu recognizes himself as a miraculous escapee. Edgar Morin dubbed *him-polemically-bourdivin*.<sup>7</sup> All of his work can be seen in this transition from the religious (miraculous events) to the scientific (sociology) in order to attempt to rationalize a success that is as spectacular as it is unlikely, statistically speaking. "I am in a universe where I should not be. I should have been eliminated forty times over. . . . In two hundred years at the College de France, about 1 percent of the members have been in my category,"! This is not self-flattery on Bourdieu's part, for he comes from a popular, rural, exploited, and marginal background.

Born in a small village in Southwest France, his father was a petty civil servant who had come into public service rather late in life, a significant promotion for someone who had been a sharecropper for more than thirty years. "My childhood was marked by the experience of social inequality, and of domination."? Besides distinguishing himself at school, Bourdieu also stood out for remaining faithful to his first revolt, contrary to the development of other prodigious children from the popular classes, who tended rather to become integrated in order to free themselves of their roots and to recognize the validity and naturalness of the criteria that allowed them to liberate themselves from their milieu. Bourdieu went to *khâgne* at Louis-le-Grand High School in Paris in 1950-51. Later, he was admitted to the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) on the rue d'Ulm. This was not a happy period for him, even if this philosophical training attracted considerable recognition. "I felt paralyzed by a sort of infamy. . . . I felt terrifically bad.!" He was cut off both from the milieu of other students, whose pastimes he considered futile, as well as from his roots. Every time he went home to Mont-de-Marsan, it seemed farther and farther away, which Bourdieu found unbearable.

In order to express his alterity, Bourdieu chose a conceptual track, and tried to describe the mechanisms of domination. This led him to choose his objects of study from society itself. For students in *kbdgne* classes, Jean-Paul Sartre incarnated the philosophical ideal of the period. Sartre was the obvious and only model because he could cover the whole gamut of intellectual activities. He was as talented a writer as he was a critic and philosopher. In the early fifties, in the eyes of the ENS philosophy students, any philosopher worthy of the name was "forbidden to break the rules by becoming attached to certain objects, particularly those dealt with by specialists in the sciences of man."<sup>11</sup> Bourdieu felt disconnected from this ideal pattern, which he found both "fascinating and repulsive."<sup>12</sup> He was socially isolated at the ENS. Very early on, he became interested in philosophers like Martial Gueroult and Jules Vuillemin who were oriented more toward epistemology and the history of philosophy and of science, which he saw as a possible alternative. He felt close to them and to their positions in the intellectual and philosophical context of the period because they also came from popular and provincial milieus. At that point he was going to undertake his first research project on the phenomenology of affective life, which would have allowed him to apply philosophical thinking to biology—a concrete, scientific realm. But he ultimately chose ethnology, preferring a specific field of investigation and a method that claimed to be scientific. "The new prestige that Levi-Strauss had given to this science [ethnology] doubtless helped me a great deal."<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after the ENS, Bourdieu went to Algeria, which in 1957 was in the throes of a war of liberation. An assistant at the University of Algiers, he discovered not only a subject of study, but an existential proximity to and sympathy with the Algerian people, which led him to undertake a research project. He became a sociologist in order to account for colonial reality in Algerian society, and published his first book, *Sociology of Algeria*.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, he also focused on the situation of Algerian workers. But Bourdieu also became an ethnologist in Algeria. Interested in Kabyle society, he studied marriage laws, kinship rules, and symbolic systems. There was a continuum between sociology and ethnology, and he simultaneously carried out his research at these two levels. "During Durkheim's time, the ethnology/sociology distinction did not exist."<sup>16</sup> At the time, the field and its methodology were not considered to be more than temporary detours

with respect to philosophy, with which Bourdieu never really broke, except institutionally: "I only admitted to myself that I was an ethnologist very late. I thought I would do ethnology on a temporary basis and then come back to philosophy."<sup>17</sup>

## Bourdieu's Structuralism

Until the seventies, the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu's work was structuralist. He himself quite precisely dates his last "felicitous structuralist" work from 1963.<sup>18</sup> Not that he abandoned structuralism. In 1969, he published an article in which he contemplated how and under what conditions the structuralist method could be extended to sociology.<sup>19</sup> Much later, and despite a certain critical distance from the structuralist paradigm, he paid homage to a method that had made it possible to introduce a mode of relational thinking into the social sciences, and to break positively with a substantialist mode of thinking.<sup>20</sup> On the occasion of a broadcast on Levi-Strauss in 1988, Bourdieu again acknowledged that many aspects of his book, *Distinction*,<sup>21</sup> grew out of a structuralist approach, particularly the basis of the whole analysis tending to demonstrate that to exist symbolically is to differ: "*Distinction* bespoke a typically structuralist equation between meaning and difference."<sup>22</sup> Again in 1988, Bourdieu stated that he and Levi-Strauss had similar modes of thought and that the obvious differences between their work had less to do with their common theoretical framework than with their fields—ethnology for the one, sociology for the other. Bourdieu had to work on a differentiated society and had to consider its different levels—symbolic, economic, social—which meant that the effects of the same structural method yielded different results. Bourdieu therefore built his oeuvre over a long period of time within the structural paradigm: "I needed a very long time to really break with some of the fundamental postulates of structuralism. . . . In becoming a sociologist, I needed to get out of ethnology as a social world, so that certain unthinkable questions could become possible."<sup>23</sup> This led him to enclose objects of analysis within a system of essentially static determination in which events and historicity were reduced to meaninglessness: "This was typically a system for which there were no events."<sup>24</sup> The will to give precedence to oppositions in a relation set in the present led to a valorization of spatial, topological determinations at the expense of other considerations. This method made it possible to reveal certain logics, but it also

led to a certain reductionism when studying contentless confrontations and genealogies.

It was within this logic of desubstantialization that Bourdieu presented the Barthes/Picard polemic over Racine in 1965, in *Homo academicus*.<sup>o</sup> He reduced the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns to what was in fact a complicity between the two protagonists, a circularity in the arguments of the adversaries, and the simulacrum of theoretical combat. This was simply an epistemological couple "between the consecrated oblates of the great priesthood and the little modernist heresiarchs,"<sup>26</sup> brought together, in fact, by their structural complicity. So there would be nothing gained by looking at the arguments of each camp, by comparing their methods, "in the very content of their respective positions,"<sup>27</sup> for everything exactly reproduced the positions of the Sorbonne's literary studies and those of the social sciences at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes. On the other side, there was Barthes and the others, who were marginal with respect to the university. In the other camp were the canonized bearers of legitimacy, the die-hard defenders of tradition, such as Frederic Deloffre in 1968. Neither camp did much more than repeat, this time somewhat farcically, the battle that had been going on since the end of the nineteenth century between the new Sorbonne of Emile Durkheim, Gustave Lanson, and Ernest Lavisse and the old Sorbonne of the worldly critics. Racine was hostage to an underlying power struggle and the social success of structuralism could only be explained as a magic potion for getting jobs for an entire generation whose numbers were increasing, of professors and students engaged in new disciplines, "by allowing them to position themselves on the playing field of 'science.'"<sup>28</sup>

This dimension of things brought to light by Bourdieu did have its merit as there was indeed much in this quarrel having to do with institutional positions and power. But it was particularly reductive to limit the nature of the confrontation to its social aspect, in so cavalier a manner and in the name of a social topology, and to simply discount the arguments. Everything becomes little more than a simple structural game of different places in which all changes in the rules of play or all desire for real historical change can only be dissolved. Bourdieu's work displays certain characteristics of structuralism, applied to sociology, including denying all pertinence and emptying all content from the semiological arguments of the sixties that tried to make a de-

cisive epistemological break with structuralism. For Bourdieu, social actors, even those who considered themselves to be most free of social determination, were, unbeknownst to themselves, moved by forces that acted upon and reified them. It was up to the sociologist to restore these objective conditions of discursive practice in order to reach a causal level in which subjects were absent, or present only by their illusions. According to Raymond Boudon, "there is an exaggeration here of constraints, and the absurd idea that these constraints come from the social totality and from its ostensible concern for reproducing itself."<sup>29</sup>

This meant that Bourdieu adopted the paradox of most of the structuralists, who were leftist intellectuals working for change, developing theoretical critical weapons to advance a progressive struggle, while being simultaneously seduced by a paradigm that stifled all desires for change and in so doing announced the end of history. In exchange, it offered the guarantees of scientificity and the possibility of understanding the reified social realm in order to get a firm grasp on its totality. "This was the phase of despair, and it was not wanting for beauty. But this despair had more to do with defeated optimism than with any true rational pessimism.v-?"

The young Bourdieu who introduced structuralism into sociology maintained the theme of the absent subject subjected to its social destiny, outside of which it does little more than fool itself with words that mask its failures. The only comprehensible mechanism in the system was concrete material interests belonging to the process of objectivation by which the subject is revealed in a truth that does not belong to it.

## Structures of Reproduction

Bourdieu's work in sociology immediately became significant and influential, even if he considered it to be only secondary at the time, the simple expression of militant necessity. Bourdieu's more fundamental concerns still tended toward kinship systems and ritual systems—in other words, ethnology. But he wanted to react to what he considered to be a particularly simplistic ideology on the rise, which consisted in saying that all students constituted a social class unto themselves. He therefore decided to present a more scientific view, as a sociologist. In 1964, together with Jean-Claude Passeron, he published *The Inheritors*:» Both authors attacked the mystifying aspect of Jules Ferry's

egalitarian discourse on the public school, which claimed that every individual had an equal opportunity to realize his or her potential. In this respect, while this work remained true to structuralism by demonstrating the inescapable logic of the reproduction of systems, it became a real critical weapon against the school system and one of the central issues of May 1968. Bourdieu and Passeron in fact plainly showed that behind the facade of institutional pseudoneutrality, schools were fundamentally selection machines, albeit in the name of purely academic criteria, whose function was to reproduce existing social relationships. Real social selection was hidden. "For the most underprivileged classes, it is a pure and simple question of elimination."<sup>32</sup> Those who did manage to get to the university had two possible relationships to knowledge. Either they inherited culture and were relatively removed from scholarly knowledge, or they were the sons and daughters of the petite bourgeoisie, who "more strongly embraced scholarly values."<sup>33</sup>

The structuralist paradigm was palpable in this view of the school world. The truth about the school system and its ironclad logic was to be found in the hidden side of things. For Bourdieu and Passeron, all efforts or pedagogical thinking that did not serve to occult the reproductive function of the teacher came to naught. "The most routine professor fulfills his objective function in spite of himself."<sup>34</sup> There was no freedom, therefore, no possibility for the agents of the system to act, and those who were marginalized and excluded could do nothing other than turn to the sociologist as a therapist because he could at least explain their case to them, even if the conditions were incurable. "For want of changing the classification of the badly classified, he would give them 'the possibility of guiltlessly and painlessly accepting the situation.'"<sup>35</sup> Everyone had his or her place, teacher and student alike, whatever the content of the discourse or the singularity of the behavior; the acceptance or rejection of dominant knowledge was implacably recuperated by the reproduction machine. Escape was impossible since the most radical protest reinforced the system's capacity to classify. "How could we avoid seeing that the revolt against the school system and the efforts at escaping its constraints by taking up very different causes ultimately and indirectly served the university'S purpose?"<sup>36</sup> All escape routes were sealed off.

This book was remarkable for the paradox that it raised to a paroxysm and that clearly expressed the general situation of struc-

turalism in the sixties. On the one hand, it was possible to see critical thinking advance and to provide it with solid *tools*, but on the other, these weapons were stilled by the fundamental impossibility of any change. The revolt against the rule became a means of internalizing the rule. In 1964, this structuralist vision of the world of schools and university provided the future movement of May 1968 with serious arguments. At the same time, it denied, if not the possibility, then at least the significance and impact of May 1968. Once again the event and history were negated and static systems of classification given priority.

There was one important bit of progress, however, in terms of theory. The symbolic dimension was taken seriously and Bourdieu, as a sociologist of Marxist economism, managed to escape the mechanistic vulgate. In this respect, his contribution resembled the work of the Althusserians in the new importance given to superstructures. "At the beginning, I argued over this with Bourdieu at Lille, telling him that he gave too much importance to symbolic capital. I have to admit that he was right."<sup>37</sup> But, like the Althusserians invoking the autonomy of the modes of production, Bourdieu also spoke about the autonomy of the field of cultural production, in which each subgroup was governed by its own rules, leading to fights about internal classification in every field. With this notion, Bourdieu could escape the mechanism that amounted to making every form of discourse a reflection of class position within society at large, by hypothesizing the autonomy of the symbolic and its logic. But this autonomy was limited. Just as the economy was ultimately the determining factor for the Althusserians, so it was for Bourdieu. According to Alain Caille, this reductionism was made by analogy to the notion of material interest, the true matrix of Bourdieu's theory. "There was clearly a generalized economism that was no longer substantialist economism."<sup>38</sup>

Bourdieu rejected vulgar causal economism, replacing it with the idea of a total system that went beyond the dichotomy between economic and noneconomic. In this way, motivations stemming from material interests could be discerned just as much as those based on the most apparently gratuitous activities and least tied to anything economic. Reasoning essentially by analogy, Bourdieu constructed his own staggered, "generalized political economy,"<sup>39</sup> based on economic capital, social capital, and symbolic capital, each involved in complementary and autonomous relations. Where Marx saw class struggle as

the motor force of history, Bourdieu saw the struggle for classifications as the motor force of the logic of social space. The historical dialectic became dissolved into the synchrony and fixed stratification of the different fields and of the game of placement they made possible, according to a logic similar to that of material interests. "The same always engenders the same."<sup>40</sup>

### A Concern for Style

Bourdieu was concerned with style: he had not laid literature to rest. Although he had chosen to work in the human sciences, he also considered himself to be a writer like the other structuralists. "What interested me the most in Bourdieu is the work on the text, how little by little he unveils while hiding or hides while unveiling. . . . First he begins like a novelist."<sup>41</sup> Like a writer, Bourdieu's thinking works from analogy. Like a novelist, his observations and their commentary are more engaging than the raw material of sociological research. In this respect, scientific discourse serves as a base for telling his story by telling others' stories; his work unfolds by what goes unspoken, in the margins, notes, and exergues. "His writing inevitably evokes Balzac. We can but recall Rastignac or Lucien de Rubempre while reading the analyses explaining how the acquisition of a solid social and cultural capital can opportunely palliate the initial deficiencies of economic capital."<sup>42</sup>

Bourdieu often invoked another subjective analyst of society, a great writer whose work was so vast and so perfect that it tended to dissuade all rival literary vocations: Marcel Proust. He also referred to Flaubert, that other debunker of the *petite bourgeoisie*. Pierre Encreve thought that Bourdieu should be compared with Rousseau, given his militancy and determination to free people of their chains.

A writer and sociologist who shifted the boundaries of economy, sociology, ethnology, and philosophy, Bourdieu belonged above all to that unclassifiable French critical thought rallied around the sign and method of structuralist thinking, even if, as we shall see, he would take his distance during the seventies and eighties and become increasingly critical of certain orientations of this way of thinking.

## *Seven*

### 1967-1968: **Editorial** Effervescence

If the year 1966 was the high point for structuralism, a series of questions arose immediately on the heels of success. Not that the decline was palpable, however—on the contrary. It was actually in 1967-68 that the media had felt the shock waves of structuralism's success and a broader public joined the structuralist vogue, as if it were adopting a panacea. Structuralism was on the lips of anyone who was anyone, a phenomenon identified with modern thought itself, the means to felicitously unite almost all of the major thinkers of the period. Only the cabarets, which had tipped their hats to the existentialist era with a jazz tune, had yet to give a playful dimension to the phenomenon, for the rockers and *Hello Pals'* were not truly part of the structuralist festivities.

Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Lacan, Barthes, and Althusser had each enjoyed individual public acclaim. This time, structuralism provided a means of transcending the singularity and talent of each of these writers, leaving the public speechless for not having made the link before.

But while structuralism was being trumpeted, its foundations were being fissured, and the will to go beyond or radicalize the phenomenon was already in place. This lag simply translated the different rhythms of research, colloquiums, special issues of journals, and media attention. One sign of the end of the epic era and beginning of a new period of decreasing returns was that increasing numbers of publications began to come out claiming to take the pulse of the phenome-

non. These journals presented structuralism didactically so as to spread the word. They did, of course, contribute to the movement's success, but at the same time, the authors of the books being discussed became increasingly mistrustful of their transformation into part of a passing fashion. All forms of structuralist labeling were generally shunned; no one wanted to be a victim of the wave when it crashed. On the one hand, there was the ephemeral aspect of this type of collective taste, and, on the other hand, increasingly radical and numerous critics were voicing their dissent from within the structuralist camp itself.

### Alice in Structuralism Land

Everyone was mobilizing in the publishing houses. In 1967, Seghers put out *Keys for Structuralism-* by Jean-Marie Auzias, which described the different pieces of the movement. This work was didactic ("This book is intended for teachers"!) and peremptory ("Structuralism is not an imperialism! It aspires to be scientific, and is!") There was a run on the book; it was barely out before it was already out of print, even if a recalcitrant Francois Chatelet announced that he preferred to leave these keys "under the doormat."<sup>5</sup>

Privat published Jean-Baptiste Pages's *Understanding Structuralism* in 1967 and, the following year, *Structuralism on Trial*.<sup>6</sup> At PUF, Jean Piaget was asked to write for the *Que sais-je?* collection, and he cut structuralism up into its disciplinary pieces while reminding readers that neither the notion of structure nor its use in such diverse fields as mathematics, physics, biology, linguistics, and sociology was new. These observations made the range of conceptual advances manifest, and amply demonstrated the scientificity of the project, but only, according to Piaget, so long as other methods were not excluded and the human and historical aspects of things were included. In this respect, Piaget opted for a genetic structuralism close to Lucien Goldmann's positions. His own work on child psychology was one of the possible illustrations of reconciling history and structure. This *Que sais-je?* was intended as a university tool but quickly became the structuralist handbook, so much so that many today still identify structuralism with Piaget, whereas he was one of its critics.

In 1967, Payot published Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*<sup>8</sup> in a critical edition prepared by Tullio de Mauro and translated by Louis-jean Calvet. The rather arid, hefty tome was ripped from the

bookshelves, and not only by linguists. The return to Saussure, the rumor of the discovery of the philosophers' stone in the realm of the social sciences, ensured an extraordinary audience for Andre Martinet in 1967-68 at the Sorbonne. "In the Descartes amphitheater, there were all sorts of people. It was because there was something new, which was appealing. At the time I had Michele Cotta [a political TV commentator-*Trans.*], filmmakers . . ."9

But the important editorial enterprise in 1968 took place at the Olympus of structuralist ideas, the Editions du Seuil, the project of one philosopher-editor in particular: Francois Wahl. The project dated back to 1966, the wonder year for structuralism, when Wahl--editor for Lacan's *Ecrits*, for Barthes, and, a bit later, for Derrida--who was concerned with editorial coherence and very interested in what was going on in the social sciences (he even regretted "not having had the opportunity to publish Claude Levi-Strauss"},"? decided to undertake a collective work to answer the question, "What is structuralism?" in philosophy as well as in the social sciences borne along by the phenomenon of modernization. Wahl therefore invited articles by Oswald Ducrot on linguistics, Dan Sperber on anthropology, Tzvetan Todorov on poetics, Moustafa Safouan on psychoanalysis, and wrote the chapter on philosophy himself. The book was so successful that it was reprinted in small discipline-specific paperbacks in the Points-Seuil collection beginning in 1973.<sup>11</sup>

The structuralist designation was not just a media effect or a simple fantasy, as some have claimed, but had its place at the heart of the production of the phenomenon. In his general introduction, Wahl clearly translated the vision. "Under the term 'structuralism' we find the sciences of the sign, and sign systems."<sup>12</sup> The phenomenon cast a wide net and made it possible to set its sights quite high since, in the view of Francois Wahl, it was the model of models, and made it possible to attain the status of a science. "Whatever the case, structuralism is a serious thing, as we have seen. It gives anything having to do with signs a right to science."<sup>13</sup> The volume clearly expressed the euphoria of the moment, the way in which semiology bathed everything in a scientific wash. Today, Francois Wahl recognizes that there was something of an "epistemological naivete whose measure we have progressively taken. . . . We were somewhat blinded since we thought we were in the process of discovering the key."<sup>14</sup>

## Beneath and beyond Structuralism

Francois Wahl's contribution in philosophy allowed him to discern a structuralist underside in Foucault and a beyond with Lacan and Derrida, while the middle ground corresponded to Althussero-Lacanian positions. His choice made a nod in some measure to the day's fashion since he made no mention of Martial Gueroult or of Victor Goldschmidt, although today he considers their reading of Plato's *Dialogues* and of Descartes to "represent a historical culmination, and I am absolutely sure of that."! But since they were working only in philosophy, closed to the social sciences and unknown to the public, their contributions to philosophical structuralism went undiscussed. At the same time, Wahl gave considerable attention to Foucault, by investigating his notion of episteme. Although Wahl saw in Foucault's episteme the trace of structuralist concerns, he nonetheless considered Foucault as belonging more to philosophical nominalism. For him, Foucault did not make the announced break with phenomenology but remained a prisoner of it. When he sought the being of the sign, defined through its specific properties as an essence, or when he tried to grasp it at its originary presence, he was faithful to Merleau-Ponty's thinking. "To look at things as a phenomenologist, which is to say in the undersides of structuralism, the being of language defined by structuralism is a contradictory project that can only assign the status of that which remains to being."<sup>16</sup> Wahl did of course recognize that Foucault sought an organization of perception, but he was at the edge of vision, a nominalist with an impossible project that attempted to reconcile two incompatible models: the one phenomenological, the other structuralist. "We are beneath the sign, beneath discourse, beneath structure."<sup>17</sup> Foucault only led his reader to the edge of the Rubicon without crossing it, in order to go fishing. "Does an episteme of structuralism exist? And how is it that on this topic *The Order of Things* does not take a position?"<sup>18</sup> Wahl was referring to the break required to let this episteme exist, but saw it in Althusser's work and in his explicitly scientific project. "We cannot consider structuralism without thinking about science."<sup>19</sup>

Later, Foucault firmly rejected the structuralist label. But at the time, he was a full member of the movement. In *The Order of Things* he even went so far as to present himself as the philosopher of these important breaks in the epistemic anchor. So he hardly appreciated

having his philosophical project set at a distance from the structuralist project. "He was extremely angry at this, and I can even tell you that he was momentarily furious."<sup>20</sup> Wahl, in his presentation of philosophical structuralism, gave priority to Lacanian-Althusserian constructions, particularly those of Alain Badiou and Jacques-Alain Miller.<sup>21</sup>

In 1968, he brought together Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, the two warring brothers who politely hated each other, in a beyond of structuralism. He called one Jacques and the other Jacquot in order not to mix them up. On the one hand, Lacan made it possible to reconsider the subject, which until then had been eliminated, without, however, claiming a plenitude for it. This subjected subject could not reaffirm itself as a secure basis for thought, and was forever out of sync with respect to itself. Blocked doubly in its return as its own master, the subject was subordinated to language and to its structuration within the structures of the signifier. "The letter precedes the subject . . . the letter comes before meaning."<sup>22</sup> Derrida's beyond of structuralism had to do with the way he went beyond philosophical discourse by his Other, his argument against the notion of limits and of origins, using his notion of trace. For Wahl, structuralism was defined by this break: "Structuralism begins when the system of signs sends us elsewhere."<sup>23</sup>

### Single and Plural Structuralisms

The few preparatory meetings before the publication of this collective work produced no real common theme, since the points of view often differed. Dan Sperber, back from Los Angeles where he had taken Noam Chomsky's courses and had been put in touch with Francois Wahl by his friend Pierre Smith to translate Chomsky's work, was assigned the chapter on structuralism in anthropology. During these meetings, "there were not really any discussions other than my insistence that Ducrot talk about generative grammar, which he had not been planning to do."<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Oswald Ducrot, who was responsible for the linguistics section, presented the general outlines of Chomsky's thinking next to the other currents of structural linguistics, without claiming any hegemony for his discipline or arguing for its place as a pilot science. That the work began with the piece on linguistics was Francois Wahl's choice, and clearly reflected the role linguistics played in the development of the structuralist paradigm. "I recall having said

to Wahl that I saw no reason to start with linguistics. For him, it was obvious, and any other choice would have seemed scandalous to him."<sup>25</sup>

Dan Sperber had a choice morsel in having to describe Levi-Strauss's work. Starting from his Chomskyan positions, Sperber criticized Levi-Strauss and read his work in such a way as to give priority to everything having to do with structures of the human mind and the deep structures that recalled Chomsky's model of competence. He criticized Levi-Strauss for not having gone far enough and for having maintained a contradictory tension between his ethnological ambitions of inventorying cultural variations, and his anthropological ambitions of determining the specific learning capacities of the human race that orient these variations. "Personally, with generative grammar, I had reservations about structural linguistics from the beginning, and when I was asked to do the chapter on structuralism in anthropology I did not conceive of it as a manifesto for structuralism, but as a chapter intended to be partly critical."<sup>26</sup>

The psychoanalytic chapter, which Moustafa Safouan was asked to write, took a Lacanian line. Safouan, an Egyptian philosopher who had translated Freud into Arabic, had converted to psychoanalysis thanks to Lacan, and worked under his supervision for more than ten years. He addressed a number of themes that Lacan himself had addressed during his seminars at Sainte-Anne Hospital between 1958 and 1963, although his approach to the unconscious was less genetic and historical and more spatial and structural than was typical. "By saying that the unconscious is a place, we do little more than confirm the fact that Freud presented his doctrine on this subject as 'topical,' a metaphor, certainly, but which means that beyond everything that constitutes our relationship to the world, an Other Place exists."<sup>27</sup> The structure discovered by psychoanalysis was not located in any hidden meaning to be revealed to itself in its presence, but is to be found there where the subject did not know, in a rupture "that only the Law maintains against (and from) the temptation that pushes man to rediscover-in vain-his initial enclosure."<sup>28</sup>

Each of these four contributions represented a particular and institutionally sanctioned discipline. In addition to these, Tzvetan Todorov, who had introduced Russian formalism in France, wrote a long piece on poetics that was both new and connected to structuralism's roots. He wanted to demonstrate how the structuralist method could

profoundly renew literature. Poetics was defined as an approach both abstract and internal to literature, and that sought to restore the general, underlying laws of each work. Like Gerard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov did not present poetics as the exclusive activity of interpretation and hermeneutics but as its necessary complement: "Between poetics and interpretation, the relationship is one of complementarity par excellence,"<sup>29</sup> although only poetics participated in the semiotic project, for it alone was anchored by the sign. Poetics differed from a specifically linguistic analysis, where, according to Todorov, the process of signification had two major limitations. Linguistic analysis ignored the playful aspect of language, the problems of connotation and metaphorization, for example, and "barely went beyond the sentence as the basic linguistic unit."<sup>30</sup> Todorov was not only criticizing linguistics, but early structuralism as well, preferring plurality and polyvalence.

Both Bulgarians, Julia Kristeva and Todorov, were influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin. "It was Bakhtin who first formulated a true theory of intertextual polyvalence."<sup>31</sup> An entire mode of operative analysis resulted based on dialogics, an initially literary idea making it possible to link up once again with Roman Jakobson's initial thrust, when he declared in 1919: "The object of literary science is not literature but literality, which is to say that which makes a given work a work of literature."<sup>32</sup>

Even if each of the authors of this collective work was moved by considerations belonging to his or her particular discipline, the possible bridges between them were clear, making it possible to articulate a general understanding around the structural paradigm. A manifestly theoretical ambition drove the whole project and whetted the appetite of the moment for the structuralist key. At the same time, the work clearly translated the situation of general semiology, which had reached a turning point after having undergone diverse assaults to make it more receptive and ensure its imminent collapse. But the intellectual public was unaware of these internal contradictions, which appeared as so many sources of encouragement for this new and productive mode of thought. When Francois Wahl overheard a philosophy professor from a suburban high school express amazement that his twelfth-grade student was reading Freud, and heard the student answer that it was in order to understand Lacan, "At that point, I said to myself, I have won!"<sup>33</sup> Without being aware of it, this student was

working toward the return to Freud and encouraging both Lacan and his editor. How could anyone resist the collective euphoria under such circumstances?

### The Four Musketeers

In 1967 and 1968, Levi-Strauss was working on the publication of his monumental *Mythologiques*.<sup>34</sup> He was still the uncontested master and true force behind this effervescence, even if he carefully remained aloof from any of the extensions of his method. Levi-Strauss refused to assume any kind of paternity that might become burdensome or dangerous, but he was present in the many media echoes. He even increased the number of press interviews in order to present his work, but it was in order to remain within the strict limits of his structural anthropology, one way of keeping to the margins of a speculative structuralism in full bloom. *Le Nouvel Observateur* played a major role in reaching a wide and cultured public. On January 25, 1967, it devoted three pages to Levi-Strauss. He defined structuralism, implicitly refusing certain uses of the paradigm: "Structuralism is not a philosophical doctrine, it's a method. It took a sampling of social facts from experience and transported them to the laboratory. There, it tried to represent them in the form of models, always considering not the terms but the relationships between the terms."<sup>35</sup>

By carefully limiting the phenomenon to a method, Levi-Strauss firmly maintained an approach that he judged to be purely scientific, and that differentiated his from certain speculative and ideological uses, for he intended to confederate anthropology with the natural and physical sciences and was about to win his institutional wager without any specific university cursus. He was so successful that "we are obliged to discourage the students from this vocation."<sup>36</sup> Despite his complaint about inadequate funding, the number of chairs in anthropology went from five to thirty in twenty years (including the EPHE), and ethnology had gained ground in the university since ethnology was being taught in five universities outside of Paris: Lyons, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Bordeaux, and Aix-en-Provence.

Philosophically, Michel Foucault held the high ground in 1967-68, following the heralded publication of *The Order of Things* in 1966. Sartre, and then two Sartreans, Michel Amiot and Sylvie Le Bon, violently attacked Foucault in two very critical articles in *Les Temps modernes* in 1967. Still, he could count on the considerable support of

Georges Canguilhem, a man rather unused to throwing himself into the ring but who enjoyed the greatest admiration and prestige among philosophers. Canguilhem took up his pen to defend Foucault in the review *Critique*, in which he attacked, not without a certain degree of humor, a nascent league for the defense of human rights that seemed to be mobilizing to block Foucault's thesis, behind the slogan, "Humanists of all stripes, unite!"<sup>37</sup> He emphasized the major contributions of Foucault's work, thanks to his notions of episteme and archaeology, which avoided the errors of anachronism, so often encountered in the history of sciences. Canguilhem paid homage to this other history that used original texts of the period and whose related events "affect concepts rather than men."<sup>38</sup> He aligned Foucault with Jean Cavailles, who effected a similar shift from the point of view of consciousness to that of concepts, and saw in him the great contemporary philosopher who might realize this philosophy of the concept to which Jean Cavailles had appealed.

In 1967, Foucault was one of the four musketeers in Maurice Henry's sketch, which shows Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, and Foucault dressed up as Indians and chatting, with Foucault happily squatting among his structuralist peers, an enthusiastic participant in the community of thought wherein the press placed him." This explained his angry reaction when Francois Wahl's book confined him to a period predating structuralism, whereas at the time he defined himself quite explicitly as a structuralist. In an interview with a Tunisian newspaper in 1967, he distinguished two forms of structuralism: that of a fruitful method that could be used in different, specific fields of knowledge, and another structuralism, "which would be an activity through which nonspecialist theoreticians tried to define possible current relationships between this or that element of our culture, this or that science, this practical realm and that theoretical realm, and so on. In other words, this was a sort of generalized structuralism no longer limited to specific scientific realms."<sup>40</sup> This second structuralism, clearly the one in which Foucault saw himself, let him maintain his specificity with respect to the rising social sciences because it alone could confirm or invalidate their scientific conclusions, thanks to its critical distance from the individual fields of study.

Another musketeer at a turning point in his own work and with respect to literature, Roland Barthes was moving closer to the notions of subjectivity and of historical dynamism. This did not prevent him,

in 1968, from proclaiming his complete agreement with the basic principles of the structuralist approach. Moreover, the text he wrote announcing the "death of the author," which was the literary equivalent of Foucault's "death of man" in philosophy, made a considerable impact. An author would be nothing more than a recent notion born at the end of the Middle Ages thanks to capitalist ideology, which dignified the person of the author. But this mythical figure was on the verge of dissolving, for when "the author is entering into his own death, writing begins."<sup>41</sup>

Surrealism had begun to jolt the myth of the author, but linguistics would finish it off by furnishing "a precious analytical instrument for destroying the Author, by showing that the entire utterance is an empty process."<sup>42</sup> In its place came the scriptor, a sort of being outside of time and space, set within the infinity of the signifier's unfolding, making any attempt at deciphering a text hopeless: "To assign an Author to a text is to impose a stopping point, granting it a final signified, closing off writing."<sup>43</sup> Barthes joyfully celebrated the birth of the reader on the ashes of the still smoldering body of the Author.

The other front on which Barthes reiterated the structuralist orthodoxy was in its relationship to history. Although he had assimilated the notion of intertextuality, which allowed him to dynamize structure, he continued to refuse to fall back into historicism. Both of his 1968 articles on "The Reality Effect" and "Writing the Event" implied at once a rapprochement with the idea of transformation, of dynamism, and a reiterated rejection of history.<sup>t</sup> He suggested a complicity between literary positivism and the reign of "objective" history in their common concern to authenticate a "reality." He saw the historian's discourse as based on a myth, an illusion called "the referential illusion," transforming "reality" as a denotational signified to a connotational signified.<sup>P</sup> If one of the tasks of modernity was to dismantle the sign, and if this was happening with respect to realism in literature, here there was an error, regressive because it operated "in the name of referential fullness."<sup>46</sup>

The fourth musketeer at the structuralist banquet in Maurice Henry's sketch was Jacques Lacan. Lacan was surprised to find himself in such company: "I assigned myself to the so-called structuralist bucket,"<sup>47</sup> but in order to start a review in 1968 based on the structuralist principle of the death of the Author. Lacan even invoked the Bourbaki mathematicians in order to justify the principle of publish-

ing anonymous articles in this new review, *Scilicet*. And yet, the anonymity of scientific writing stopped with the Name of the Father, Lacan. "Our name, the name of Lacan, cannot be hidden in the program."<sup>48</sup> Lacan alone could sign his articles in the review, and those who did not participate in it "cannot be recognized as having been one of my students."<sup>49</sup> The sanction was clear for any potential foot draggers and the project was neatly tied up: maximal visibility for the words of the Master and anonymity for the others. The masses had to pay through the nose for the theorization of the death of the Author, the disappearance of the signature in the name of a scientific superego incarnated by Lacan, who was none other than Lacan's Other.

In 1967, a more serious undertaking was published by PUE Jean Laplanche and jean-Bertrand Pontalis coauthored *The Language of Psychoanalysis?* defining all of the notions of psychoanalysis. A precious tool indexing Freud's work with citations, as well as Lacan's notions, this work also concretized this return to Freud that Lacan had managed.

## The Seventh Art

Triumphant structuralism even included a new field in its vast empire: the seventh art, cinema. In 1968, Christian Metz published his *Essays on Signification in the Cinema* (i) which heralded an entirely new area of semiology. Metz had already written an article in the programmatic issue of *Communications* in 1966.<sup>52</sup> The book assembled his texts written between 1964 and 1968, and extended the applications of linguistic concepts to film criticism. "In a word, I wanted to go to the limits of the metaphor of a 'cinematographic language' and try to see what it encompassed."<sup>53</sup>

Ever since adolescence, Christian Metz had been an impassioned cinephile, but for a long time with no particular outlet except organizing programs in film clubs. Metz had studied linguistics, and "the idea of a semiology of cinema came to me by the connection between these two sources."<sup>54</sup> Given this, he went from cinephilia to a new approach to cinema, to which he applied the conceptual grid that he refined with his "grand syntagmatic." "The object of my intellectual passion was the linguistic machine itself."<sup>55</sup>

Metz's first semiological essay in 1964 began by reacting against the cinematographic criticism that ignored linguistic renewal and remained impervious to semiology while multiplying the invocations to

a specific cinematographic language. "I began with Saussure's notion of language . . . . It seemed to me that the cinema could be compared to language and not to speech."<sup>56</sup> Dealing almost exclusively with fiction films, Metz believed that he had found a model that could be applied to all of cinematographic language. His "grand syntagmatic" divided films into autonomous segments based on grand syntactic types (in 1966 there were six, and in 1968, they numbered eight). The autonomous shot (a single shot equivalent to a sequence); the parallel syntagm (parallel montage); the accolade syntagm (undated evocations); the descriptive syntagm (simultaneity); the alternating syntagm; the scene properly speaking (coincidence of the unique consecution of the signifier: what happens on-screen; and the unique consecution of the signified: the temporality of the fiction); the sequence by episodes (discontinuity become the principle of construction); and the ordinary sequence (the ordered arrangement of dispersed ellipses). These eight sequential types "are responsible for expressing different sorts of spatiotemporal relationships."<sup>57</sup> The validity of this code includes, in fact, classic cinema, which goes from the thirties to the new wave of the fifties.

This extremely formalized cinematographic language drew its linguistic inspiration essentially from Hjelmslev whose notion of expression defined the basic unit of filmic "language," according to Metz, whereas codification belonged to a purely formal, logical, and relational approach: "The way Hjelmslev understood it (equals the form of the content plus the form of the expression), a code is a commutable field of meaningful differences. So there can be many codes in a single language."<sup>58</sup>

On the eve of May 1968, structuralist France was bubbling. A new theory was shooting up at every moment between the Parisian paving stones, and the world was being remade from a topic and for want of a utopia. Structuralist energies seemed to represent the great fracture of modernity until another-this time historical-fracture came to jolt its convictions.

## *Eight*

# **Structuralism and/or Marxism**

A confrontation did occur in 1967-68 between structuralism and Marxism, the two important totalizing and universal philosophies. Marxism's decline seemed to feed structuralism's success, but in exchange, could not the Marxism of the late sixties find its second wind through structuralism? Could there be a reconciliation between these two approaches, or, on the contrary, were they incommensurable?

Marxists could no longer duck the issue. Althusser's work and its impact prevented them from doing so, and the spectacular interest in structuralism made the theoretical debate with structuralist positions unavoidable. Lucien Sebag had already begun this debate prior to 1968, by publishing *Marxism and Structuralism* (1964) at Payot. Like Althusser, he wanted to reconcile Marxism and contemporary rationality with the progress that had been made in the social sciences.

### **Lucien Sebag: An Attempt at Reconciliation**

Lucien Sebag was trained as a philosopher and a researcher at the CNRS. Like his friends Alfred Adler, Pierre Clastres, and Michel Cartry, he had turned to anthropology and thus to fieldwork. A student of Levi-Strauss, he left France in 1961 to spend nine months among the Euyaki Indians in Paraguay and the Ayoreo Indians in Bolivia. He was caught among the modernist pulls of the moment. A structuralist, he, like his teacher, considered that structure was purely methodological and not a speculative conceit. Interested in psycho-

analysis, he had begun an analysis with Lacan, who had a privileged relationship with this young philosopher who seemed able to lay the foundations for some new bridges to make his ideas known. A semiologist, Sebag was a student of Greimas, with whom he planned to work on structural semantics in order to make it receptive to the unconscious. A Marxist and member of the French Communist Party (PCF), he had been increasingly critical of the party since 1956. The rigor of the social sciences offered a good counterpoint to the vulgate diffused by the party leadership. He was critical of the Marxist economism of the time, which saw economic life as a reality in itself with a direct causal role in social relations.

Sebag appreciated the fact that Marxism had replaced the ambient idealism with a concern for studying objective reality, and more particularly, economic reality. However, using the linguistic edge of the structuralist theses, he criticized Marxism for having somewhat fetishized its privileged object and for having underestimated the underlying, immanent principles that organized economic reality, particularly those making it possible to transcend the differences between societies, this "creation of language that defines the very being of culture."! Sebag defended the humanist positions that led him to view structuralism as anthropology and to be skeptical of certain speculative extensions. "Man produces everything that is human, and this tautology prevents us from making structuralism into an extra-anthropological theory about the origin of meaning."<sup>2</sup> Many were hopeful that Lucien Sebag the theoretician could modernize Marxism transformed by its relationship with all forms of structuralism. But the book proclaiming the union between Marxism and structuralism also aspired to set the seal on another union, between its author and the woman to whom the book was dedicated: Judith, Lacan's daughter. The denouement was as brutal as it was intolerable: Lucien Sebag committed suicide by shooting himself in the face in January 1965. If Lacan admitted his distress to his close friends, Sebag's editor at Payot, Gerard Mendel, considered that the analyst had failed his patient: "For Sebag, it was tragic, for Lacan mixed everything up: private and public life, the couch, and he accepted anyone as a patient, even serious depressives."<sup>3</sup> Nicolas Ruwet, a friend of Lucien Sebag who, until that point, had been interested in Lacan's ideas, turned away from the man who could not save his friend from his ultimate despair,"

## The PCF Opens the Discussion

The plan to have the Marxist and structuralist paradigms face off against each other was rather quickly accepted by the PCF leadership. Without adopting Althusser's positions at the March 1966 session in Argenteuil, the central committee nonetheless emphasized the importance of the excitement and work in the social sciences. "Given the many new questions, we can no longer let our tools of expression grow old. Philosophical debates today are taking place not only on the terrain of principles, but also that of specific fields of knowledge (economy, psychology, sociology, ethnology, and linguistics)."<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the CERM (Center for Marxist Studies and Research) and to its two journals, the monthly *La Nouvelle Critique* and its weekly cultural journal, *Les Lettres [françaises]*, there was a new policy of receptivity to debate designed to ensure that intellectuals remained within the party and to stop the hemorrhage among members that had begun in 1956.

Communist intellectuals were responsible for two colloquiums to address literary theoretical problems held in April 1968 and April 1970 at Cluny. Designed to seal the union "between literature and professors,"<sup>6</sup> and to give rise to a structuralist Marxism, they were organized by *La Nouvelle Critique*, the CERM, the Vaugirard Group for Interdisciplinary Study and Research, and *Tel Quel*.

*Tel Quel* embodied the avant-garde, which a number of Communist intellectuals were discovering. "This colloquium at Cluny was extraordinary: Kristeva was the diva, and others were on bended knee before her. It was even pathetic intellectually to see the relationship."<sup>7</sup> Next to Julia Kristeva, who addressed the structural analysis of texts, Philippe Sollers gave a talk on the topic "The semantic levels of a modern text" in which he cited the material anchor of the text in the author's body, not the body that can be simply described "anatomically," but the fragmented body, "a body of multiple signifiers."<sup>8</sup> Implicitly addressing Althusser's trilogy of three generalizations, Philippe Sollers discerned three levels of textual approach—deep, intermediary, and superficial. These formed a transformational matrix with three functions: translinguistic, gnoseological, and political. Jean-Louis Baudry spoke about the structuration of writing, and Marcelin Pleynet about structure and signification in the work of Jorge Luis Borges.<sup>9</sup>

The *Tel Quel* group was clearly the theoretical organizer of this

collective thinking, and two months after the colloquium, Philippe Sollers, in the euphoria of the avant-garde role he could play with respect to the party "of the working class," created a Group of Theoretical Studies that identified its objective as putting together an overall Marxist-structuralist theory. The group included Barthes, Derrida, Klossowski, and many others, and met weekly on the rue de Rennes. "Lacan made a brief appearance."<sup>10</sup>

This excitement coursing through the social sciences drew a number of intellectuals into the PCP. One notable example, Catherine Clement, a member of the Lacanian organization the *École Freudienne de Paris*, joined in the autumn of 1968. At *La Nouvelle Critique*, she was responsible for a number of encounters around the theme "psychoanalysis and politics."

### Structuralism and the Test of Rationalism

In early 1968, on the initiative of another Marxist journal, *Raison presente*, directed by Victor Leduc and under the auspices of the Rationalist Union, daylong lectures organized around the theme "Structures and Men" took place at the Sorbonne and drew quite large crowds. Shortly thereafter, the proceedings were published as *Structuralism and Marxism*.<sup>11</sup> In the eyes of the organizers, structuralism was an ideology turned against Marxism and humanism, but the debates also drew detractors as well as the partisans of this new mode of thought.<sup>12</sup>

Henri Lefebvre warned against inappropriate applications of the linguistic model and Andre Martinet answered that there was no single model but, on the contrary, many linguistic models. Francois Bresson defended generativism and its applicability to activities other than natural languages. Victor Leduc presented the problem the colloquium organizers raised, of knowing whether or not this was simply a Parisian fashion or a new type of rationality.

The major issue revolved around the respective positions accorded structure and human initiative. "Based on a certain theory of structure, which would apply to all levels of reality, is there still a place for the historical initiative of human beings?"<sup>13</sup> Francois Chatelet became the devil's advocate for structuralism, even if he rejected the use of the term and only considered the epithet justifiable. "What characterizes structuralism, I believe, is much more a common state of mind."<sup>14</sup> Above all, he saw in the phenomenon a possible emancipation of the

social sciences, which could establish themselves in their scientificity if they could stop fetishizing the notion of the subject, which had been dominant since the classical age. Structuralism was above all characterized by a refusal: "the rejection of humanism,"<sup>15</sup> and the effort to rid itself of ideology in order to liberate theory. This radical split assumed the elimination of man: "In order to address the social sciences with this objectivity, everything depended on radically eliminating the concept of man."<sup>16</sup> The social sciences had to assert their positivity using the disappearance of the subject, just like the physical sciences, which defined themselves by rejecting the illusions of perception.

Olivier Revault d'Allonnes, the philosopher expert in aesthetics and a close friend of Francois Chatelet, was less enthusiastic about structuralism. He, of course, considered the notion of structure to be fundamental for the social sciences in the Durkheimian perspective of his teacher, Charles Lalo, professor of aesthetics at the Sorbonne in 1943-44, and grandnephew of the composer whose course he had taken on structural analysis of aesthetic consciousness. "Charles Lalo showed us that ostensibly purely affective, obscure, and spontaneous reactions on the part of the subject perceiving the work of art were in fact in constant and structured relationships with the whole of the psychic life of the society."<sup>17</sup> Because of his work on aesthetics, he reacted quite early on against the general use of pathos at the time and gave priority to structuralism before its time. And yet this orientation was not supposed to lead either to static structures or to structures without human beings. Taking the example of musical structures, he demonstrated that any musical system included areas of disequilibrium with which composers worked, reworking them until the system slid irreversibly toward a new structure. The possible paths of freedom were to be found in the search for the limits of structure. "What thrilled me in Bach was Debussy. . . . What thrilled me in Debussy was Schoenberg, and in Schoenberg, Xenakis."<sup>18</sup> Knowing the structures was necessary in order for human abilities to work at transforming them. This was the price of creation. In the absence of such an effort, creation would sign its death warrant and be reduced to static structures.

Jean-Pierre Vernant was equally lukewarm about structuralism, even if he had adapted Levi-Strauss's model to ancient Greece. But he opportunely reminded Francois Chatelet of his first work, *The Birth of History.t?* in which he had demonstrated the complementarity

between the *demos*, the collectivity's determination of its own political future, and the birth of a historical consciousness thanks to this realization that human beings can be active agents in history. Vernant calmly and lucidly announced, "I am not worried about man because, when he is thrown out the front door, he returns by the back door. We need only examine the contemporary evolution of linguistics to see this."<sup>20</sup> Vernant's other question concerned the status of history in structuralism, which he thought better suited the ethnologist and which ran the risk of reducing events to irrational contingencies, as, for example, when Levi-Strauss took the "Greek miracle" into account as a purely fortuitous phenomenon that could just as well have happened elsewhere.

Historians in general were less fascinated with structure, even those who worked on the structures underlying the fabric of events. They insisted on the necessary dialectic between structure and dynamic to make history, as Ernest Labrousse had defined it, the science of change: "A science of movement, history is also the consciousness of movement."<sup>21</sup> In the same spirit, Albert Soboul defined the historian's task as understanding the interplay of the forces of change endogenous to the structure. He studied contradictions, whereas the structuralist insisted rather on the systems of complementarity at work in the reproduction of structure, "so that even the soul of history is lost."<sup>22</sup>

However, regarding ancient Sparta, Pierre Vidal-Naquet demonstrated how fruitful the structuralist approach could be. Taking pairs of opposites, provided that they be set in a changing context, could shed light on ancient societies. "In Levi-Strauss's language I would say that the foot soldier is on the side of culture and of the cooked and that the crypt is on the side of nature, and the raw."<sup>23</sup> Madeleine Reberieux credited structuralism with having allowed historians to escape their Eurocentrism and with having thus transformed the way history was taught in high schools, which henceforth included the study of either a Muslim or a Far Eastern civilization. Reberieux praised this change, but she resisted a discontinuous vision of history.

## Words against Things

Marxism thus seemed able to adjust to a bit of structuralism, but Michel Foucault's work, which incarnated the speculative dimension of the phenomenon, was harder to swallow. He would be the object of severe criticisms by Marxists, with, however, some nuances. For

Jacques Milhau, Foucault's excommunication was total. Had he not committed the crime of relegating Marx to the nineteenth century? "Michel Foucault's antihistorical prejudices can only be subtended by a neo-Nietzschean ideology that, whether he realizes it or not, serves all too well the designs of a class whose major concern is to mask the objective paths of the future."<sup>24</sup> Jeannette Colombel saw in Foucault's work a trompe l'oeil choice between the desert and madness, "lucidity or despair, the lucidity of laughter. Made in USA."<sup>25</sup> However, in presenting the general arguments of Foucault's demonstration, she also insisted on its richness and value. Two longer studies went beyond book reviews and raised some methodological questions.

In 1967, *Raison presente* published Olivier Revault d'Allonnes's article "Michel Foucault: Words against Things," which was reprinted in *Structuralism and Marxism* in 1970. In it, Revault d'Allonnes denounced Foucault's attack on the historical approach, the expression of managerial technocratism, the excessive taste for words that allowed things to be repressed, the priority of instants, and a resolutely relativist conception and discontinuity of approach.

What surprised me the most and practically stupefied me in *The Order of Things* was that Foucault, whom I had known as a militant, claimed that the subject no longer existed, that it was writing in air. . . . He gives us remarkable but static snapshots; he takes care not to tarry over that which, within these epistemic spaces, already calls them into question.<sup>sf</sup>

The other basic criticism came from the historian Pierre Vilar and was published in June 1967 in *La Nouvelle Critique*.<sup>27</sup> For Vilar, by choosing discursive formations as his sole object of analysis, Foucault implicitly marginalized the historical reality that contradicted the conclusions he drew. There again the subordination of things to words was the issue, which led Foucault too hastily to conclude that there was no political economy in the sixteenth century. Pierre Vilar countered that the elements of a macroeconomics of national accounts were already in place in Spain in the Golden Age, which was then discovering the importance of the notion of production. The *contador* of Burgos, Luis Orty (1557), even attacked laziness by concrete political decisions, which contradicted Foucault's epistemic construction of political economy not being born prior to the nineteenth century.

Marxist intellectuals were nevertheless not overwhelmingly hos-

tile to Foucault's theses, which were well received in *Les Lettres [françaises]* in particular. Pierre Daix was becoming an enthusiastic structuralist, which led to the publication of *Structuralism and Cultural Revolution*.<sup>w</sup> In Daix's journal, Raymond Bellour interviewed Michel Foucault a second time, on June 15, 1967, which gave Foucault the opportunity to respond to a number of criticisms.

Foucault had not looked for absolute breaks or radical discontinuities between epistemes. On the contrary: "I showed the very form of the transition from one state to the other."<sup>29</sup> However, he did defend the autonomy of discourses, the existence of a formal organization of utterances to be restored, something historians had neglected until that point. He defined a horizon that could not be reduced to formalism, but sought to put this discursive level into relationship with underlying social and political relationships and practices. "This is the relationship that has always haunted me."<sup>30</sup> Responding to the criticisms of antihistoricism, Bellour recalled the last chapter of *The Order of Things* where Foucault privileged history. The author confirmed, "I wanted to do historical work by showing the simultaneous functioning of these discourses and the transformations that describe their visible changes,"<sup>31</sup> without giving excessive importance to a history that would be the language of languages or the philosophy of philosophies. And, in response to the war cries in the name of history provoked by *The Order of Things*, Foucault invoked the effective work of professional historians who recognized that his work was fully historical, such as the *Annales* historians, and he cited the new adventure represented by "the books of Braudel, Furet, de Richet, and Le Roy Ladurie."<sup>32</sup>

## Structuralism and Marxism

The important theoretical monthly of the PCF was also mobilized in this confrontation. The October 1967 issue of *La Pensee* was devoted to the theme "Structuralism and Marxism." The philosopher Lucien Seve, a more official voice, wrote an article to present the theoretical position of the PCP. For Seve, the structural method was an outdated epistemology rooted in the early twentieth century when evolutionism was in crisis and before dialectical thinking took hold in France. The method implied an epistemology of the model, an ontology of the structure as an unconscious infrastructure, a theoretical antihumanism, the rejection of the conception of history as human progress,

substituting in their stead human diversity. Indeed, the method was quite old, theoretically rooted in Saussure (1906-II), the German historical-cultural school of ethnology (Grabner and Bernhard Anker-mann, 1905), *Gestalttheorie* (1880-1900), and Husserl's phenomenology (*Logical Research*, 1900).

Therefore, according to Seve, one could not be satisfied with a division between the structural method (considered scientific) and a structuralist ideology (to be rejected as unacceptable). Those who made this division in order to reconcile dialectic and structure were in error. His target was less Althusser, whose theses had been condemned by the PCF leadership, than Maurice Godelier. "The goal of M. Godelier's research . . . : a structural science of diachrony."<sup>33</sup> The price to be paid for such a conciliation was the elimination by Godelier of the class struggle as a motor force, inherent in the structure of dialectical transformation. For Godelier, "structure is internal, but the motor force of the development is external."<sup>34</sup> According to Seve, Godelier missed the point of the very nature of dialectical thinking, which is to describe the logic of development by adopting the structural method. There could be no theoretical construction synthesizing the structural method and the dialectic, as he saw it. Although he recognized that the structural method clearly offered something on certain levels ("A Marxist can recognize the validity of the structural method next to the dialectical method"); he opened the narrow path of a union considered to be a struggle.

But Seve could not deny the fruitfulness of this new paradigm, whose eminent representatives also contributed to this issue of *La Pensee*. Marcel Cohen gave a historical synopsis of the use of the notion of structure in linguistics in the Continental school as well as in the United States. Jean Dubois wrote a veritable apology for structuralism in linguistics, showing that it had made it possible to liberate linguistics from the most destructive aspects of the prior methodology, "an outrageous psychologism and mentalism,"<sup>36</sup> and to establish it as a science. Jean Dubois acknowledged that two problems---creativity and history---had arisen because the implications of the subject had been minimized, because what was said was more important than enunciation, and he thought that the Chomskyan model of competence and performance "indirectly facilitated this reintroduction of the subject,"<sup>37</sup> which he considered necessary. Jean Deschamps presented the structuralist theses in psychoanalysis-Lacan's notions-

explaining the respective roles of metonymy and metaphor, which allowed for "a coherent theory of the status of the unconscious."<sup>38</sup> But Deschamps was critical of an approach that eliminated the dimension of lived experience by relegating it to the role of an insignificant epiphenomenon, and therefore losing even the Freudian notion of repression as a dynamic phenomenon by separating conscious and unconscious as two incompatible languages. Other articles led to a critical dialogue with Levi-Strauss's ideas. The issue showed how seriously the PCF took the structural challenge to Marxism, and intended to respond to it.

### The Structuralist Answer to the Crisis of Marxism

In 1967 and 1968, *La Nouvelle Critique* and *Les Lettres [rancaises* took advantage of the relative eccentricity of their position with regard to the party leadership to give broader coverage to the structuralist event. In March 1968, a debate moderated by Christine Buciu-Glucksmann, Louis Guilbert, and Jean Dubois at *La Nouvelle Critique* raised the question of whether this was "a second linguistic revolution." For Jean Dubois, Chomsky "seemed to reintroduce movement into the dead structure, a dynamic rather than a static approach."<sup>39</sup>

Antoine Casanova brought to *La Nouvelle Critique* the new methods of the *Annates* school. Looking at the relationship between history and the social sciences gave many historians the opportunity to write in the journal and led to another collective work, *Today, History*.<sup>40</sup> The *Annates* school clearly appeared to take a middle road with respect to structuralism. A historical dialectic remained possible, although the primary goal was the search for structures. Thanks to the *Annates* school, some reconciliation and combination between structure and movement was possible.

Above all, structuralism won over *Les Lettres [rancaises*. Pierre Daix and Raymond Bellour wrote articles to familiarize readers with the progress made in different social sciences. Benveniste, however little drawn to media pronouncements, agreed to an interview with Pierre Daix on July 24, 1968. He was surprised by the excitement and interest aroused by a doctrine that was both poorly and tardily understood since it was already forty years old in linguistics, where "things had already developed beyond structuralism."<sup>41</sup> Pierre Daix had, however, become the most resolute defender of structuralism: when

Mikel Dufrenne published *For Man*,<sup>42</sup> in which structuralism was made the guilty party, he went to the battlements to defend it.

He attacked the elimination of man to the benefit of the system. He linked structuralism and technocratism, and saw in this kind of thinking a return of nineteenth-century scientism. For Foucault, wrote Dufrenne, "man is only the concept of man, a fading figure in a temporal system of concepts."<sup>43</sup> Pierre Daix replied that this decentering was nothing more than a demystification for structuralists. Dufrenne brought together all the elements of structuralism that similarly intended to dissolve man. "Between Heidegger's ontology, Levi-Strauss's structuralism, Lacan's psychoanalysis, and Althusser's Marxism there is clearly a certain common theme that, in a word, concerns the marginalization of lived experience and the dissolution of man."<sup>44</sup> Dufrenne argued for a humanism that, in Pierre Daix's view, resembled what scholars claimed for God in the nineteenth century; structuralism, to the contrary, needed to "substitute the understanding of man's condition for his privileges, and to understand his condition in all senses of this word."<sup>45</sup>

While the official Marxist current, that of the peF, tried to consolidate resistance to structuralism, the fissures were increasing between those who, like the Althusserians, had chosen to adopt the structuralist perspective in hopes of renewing Marxism, and those who adopted structuralism as a way of leaving Marxism behind. Thanks to this confrontation, a number of commonalities in the two approaches became clearly apparent, and would link their destinies: initially a triumphant destiny, in 1967-68, but which would quickly go into a decline that affected structuralism as well as Marxism.

## **Media Success: A Criticism-fed Flame**

As structuralism was being theoretically fissured, its media triumph was being consecrated. The media image was one of a convivial gathering of traditionally clad gentlemen. These years, 1967-68, witnessed a veritable "structuralist contagion," } despite the fact that the structuralist feast was finished. But "had it ever happened? The diners deny ever having been there."?

The two important weeklies of the period, *L'Express* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*, gave the phenomenon a lot of press, although *UExpress* was the more critical of the two. Jean-Francois Kahn humorously described the careful conquest of structuralism which had already found its credo with *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, its king in Levi-Strauss, its completely horrible language and linguistic alphabet, its best-seller (*The Order of Things*): "Structuralism is the apex of the imperialism of knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

In *La Quinzaine litteraire*, Francois Chatelet wrote about a pseudo-school and an artificial unity established by unscrupulous adversaries. He nonetheless wrote a long article, illustrated by Maurice Henry's famous drawing, in response to the question, "Where is structuralism at?"<sup>4</sup> Chatelet considered the different elements of the movement known as structuralist and concluded that no homogeneous, doctrinal corpus could easily be discerned. "We can barely speak about a method."! And yet he saw a common feature in the rejection of empiricism. For to remedy the crisis of ideologies, all of these authors sought

not to replace the great, dead Subject of history (the proletariat) with small facts belonging to empirical sociology, but to define scientific methods of investigation in order to know "what we can, in fact, accept as a fact."> After having denied any structuralist unity, Chatelet acknowledged that despite its differences, structuralism did exist, since he saluted a "French" thought that was in the process of rediscovering, in disparate fashion, "the rigor of a theoretical vocation."?

*Le Nouvel Observateur* became a particularly effective trampoline for the structuralist adventure. Levi-Strauss answered Guy Dumur's questions, and when the ORTF (Office of French Radio and Television) broadcast a show produced by Michel Treguer on ethnology on January 21, 1968, *Le Nouvel Observateur* printed Levi-Strauss's remarks as well as his definition of structuralism. Benveniste also agreed to an interview with Guy Dumur at the end of 1968 and voiced his optimism about the evolution of all the social sciences. He perceived portents of a grand anthropology, in the sense of a general science of man, taking shape." When Foucault reviewed Erwin Panofsky's work? in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the journal's editorial team presented the article this way: "This language and these methods seduced the structuralist Michel Foucault. It's?

*Le Magazine litteraire* presented a long article by Michel Le Bris in 1968 entitled "Masterpiece: Saussure, the Father of Structuralism,"<sup>11</sup> illustrating the major tenets of Saussure's thinking by a series of photographs of the four musketeers of structuralism, labeled "Saussure's heirs."

Television was only slightly less involved in the celebration, but when Gerard Chouchan and Michel Treguer brought together Francois jacob, Roman jakobson, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Philippe L'Heritier in front of the camera to debate "Living and Speaking" on February 19, 1968, it was a real event.

## Structuralism: A "Religion of Technocrats"?

The invasion reaching from research laboratories to editorial rooms seemed to reduce structuralism to a single form of expression. This provoked a certain number of reservations if not to say exasperation, a mixture of theoretical rejection of and irritation with a discourse that, once it became dominant, went from theorization to a certain intellectual terrorism, disdaining any adversarial arguments as simply imbecilic.

Among those who expressed a discordant note in the concert of praises was Jean-François Revel, the philosopher become chronicler at *L'Express*, and responsible for culture in the ghost cabinet of François Mitterrand. Revel had published a polemical essay in 1957, *Why Philosophers?* and had already radically criticized Levi-Strauss's work. He attacked his formalism, a system that was too abstract and that progressively slid from sociological considerations into an ethnological discourse, suggesting, beyond the description of behavior, the existence "of a mental and sentimental system that is not to be found there."<sup>13</sup> In 1967, when he reviewed *From Honey to Ashes*, the second volume of Levi-Strauss's *Mythologiques*, Revel called Levi-Strauss a Platonic thinker in the realm of sociology. The key to Levi-Strauss's method was the assumption that what is hidden is real, whereas what is commonly called reality is the illusion from which we must divest ourselves. Opposed to functionalism, Levi-Strauss "formalizes, geometrizes, algebrizes."<sup>14</sup>

Somewhat later, Jean-François Revel reviewed the work of the Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who attacked structuralist ideology as the expression of the arrival of technocratic power.<sup>15</sup> He did not share the Hegelian-Marxist assumptions of Henri Lefebvre, but nonetheless accepted the analogy between structural thinking and the society being prepared by technocracy, and entitled his article "The Religion of Technocrats."<sup>16</sup> Passive consumer society and the dialogue-less communication of modernity concentrated the power of social laws in the hands of a machine that escaped human control and that had no other goal than to reproduce itself. "Politics is no longer a battle but an observation."<sup>17</sup> Thus, structuralism would be the continuation at a theoretical level of this technocratic society, a real white-collar opium. Similarly, with structuralism, the individual escapes the meaning of his own acts since he is already spoken before being. Linguistics operates as the basis of all science by suppressing language's referentiality.

Later, Revel deplored "the death of general culture."<sup>18</sup> He saluted the linguistic takeoff at the beginning of the century thanks to Saussure, a veritable "Galileo of this metamorphosis,"<sup>19</sup> but regretted that the emancipation of the social sciences had diluted the notion of general culture a little bit more every time and that in order to become sciences, the humanities had to stop being human. Going against the current with respect to those who saw structuralism as the decisive

shift toward scientificity, Revel saw rather the natural tendency of any philosophical doctrine, its ability to infiltrate and influence everything during any given period of time with a certain language that quickly became "an Esperanto into which all disciplines were translated."<sup>20</sup>

Claude Roy did not attack the four musketeers in his article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. He did, however, criticize the use that was made of their thinking, and the application of the "structuralist source or logic to strange mixtures."<sup>21</sup> He attacked the false Levi-Straussians and denatured heirs of Althusser who were making a very curious use of structuralism in the Latin Quarter, and particularly in the *Cahiers marxistes-leninistes*. What they had drawn from the structural lesson was simply the fact that only the relationship between terms counted, whereas the terms themselves did not. Limiting structuralism to this postulate opened the door to total confusion, making it possible, among other things, to present the Moscow Trials as terms to be contrasted to one another without defining any of them. "Alice in Wonderland always asked for the definition of the terms being used. This concern is not the one most of the world shares today. The pseudostructural delirium in literary criticism and political theory clearly demonstrates this."<sup>22</sup>

Another critical voice raised in 1968, even if he recognized that the structural method was valid in certain limited cases, was that of Raymond Boudon. He adopted Karl Popper's theories on falsifiability as an indispensable criterion of scientificity, and listed the different uses of the notion of structure, judging their validity by their ability to be verified. Boudon argued that there could be no general structuralist method, but only particular methodologies, which could be applied to specific disciplines. He contrasted those for whom structuralism was a simple operational method (Levi-Strauss, Chomsky) with those, like Barthes, for whom structuralism was a simple fluid. He insisted on the "polysemic character of the same notion,"<sup>23</sup> which prevented any claim of a unique doctrine. Boudon found the notion of structure to be particularly obscure, although it could be used to construct verifiable hypothetico-deductive systems, as was the case of C. Spearman's factorial theory, and Jakobson's phonology. Indirectly, Jakobson could deduce the order of complexity of phonemes, but "not the necessary coincidence between this order and the order of appearance of phonemes in a child, for example."<sup>24</sup> The structural method applied to no specific object, but to different objects to which a more or less

experimental and verifiable method could be applied. Boudon's angle of attack targeted every quest for an essence behind the structure, for the revelation of the hidden side of the visible world. But his criticism, which sought to impose some limits on the application of structuralism, went unheard in the euphoria celebrating the vague ambitions attributed to the promoters of structuralist thinking.

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## **Part 11**

*May 1968 and Structuralism;  
or, The Misunderstanding*

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## **Nanterre-Madness**

Referring to the different forms of structuralism, some spoke of a 1968 mind-set. Was there a kinship between the prevailing thinking, structuralism, and the events of May 1968? It is certainly true that structuralism presented itself as critical thought, and we can imagine its harmony with the protests of May 1968, but can we be altogether certain? Indeed, there is a flagrant paradox, for what could link a form of thinking that gives priority to the reproduction of structures and to synchronic games of formal logic with an event that completely breaks with a consumer society in full flower?

Before trying to answer this question, we might usefully recall how structuralism was viewed on the eve of May 1968 in that sanctuary of university protest known as the University of Nanterre. The two personalities who dominated the ideology at Nanterre were both well known for their hostility to structuralism, although each for different reasons.

### **Touraine and Lefebvre, at the Antipodes of Structuralism**

The sociology department was a hotbed of protest. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the historical leader of the movement, was a sociology student, like a good number of the radical militants mobilized against the American war in Vietnam. In addition to their increasingly determined protest against the bombings of the Vietnamese population, these students rejected their role as makers of tests used to recruit and

train business managers and workers. The sociology department was popular and a veritable stronghold of student malaise since many students were sure that they would have no professional future. And it was dominated by Alain Touraine. "Touraine was the professorial head of the movement, and he possessed an innate sense of the crowd and an undeniable oratorical talent."!

Touraine favored action, the possibility of change, and the role of individuals as social categories in these transformations. He drew a parallel between the role of student movements in the sixties and workers' movements in the nineteenth century. This allowed him to valorize the university as a place where real change occurred, contrary to Bourdieu's position. His sociology had nothing to do with structuralism; his criticism of French society in the name of the necessity of modernization echoed a good part of the student movement, which was a real social movement. In 1968, he wrote important work on it, *The Movement of Mayor Utopian Communism*.<sup>2</sup> Sociology students were less attracted to Levi-Strauss's *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* than to works like the Situationist International's *On Misery in the Student Milieu*,<sup>3</sup> which sold ten thousand copies and made a real impact, or Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*.<sup>4</sup> or Raoul Vaneigem's *Treatise of Savoir-uioere for the Young*.<sup>5</sup>

The second important tutelary figure at Nanterre for the movement of 1968 was Henri Lefebvre, the philosopher. Equally reticent about structuralism, Lefebvre contrasted the dialectic and movement to this static thinking that, in its search for timeless invariables, he considered to be a negation of history. As we have already seen, Lefebvre even linked this mode of thinking to advancing technocracy, which would affirm the end of history as it rose to power. In his teaching, Henri Lefebvre focused on a multidimensional critique of society. His major contribution was to use a framework that moved beyond economism to include the various aspects of daily life: home, city planning, belief systems. "Everything came into the critical eye."<sup>6</sup>

Lefebvre criticized structuralists for their myopic emphasis on structure to the detriment of the other levels of analysis, and worked on notions of form, function, and structure without giving any order of priority. First a CNRS researcher, and then on the faculty at the University of Strasbourg from 1958 to 1963, where situationism and *On Misery in the Student Milieu* were launched, Henri Lefebvre was

appointed to Nanterre in 1964, when it opened its doors. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was one of his students for two years.

He was slightly older than the others, and very smart. The important connoisseurs of a society are always external to that society. He had an extraordinary influence. I remember the first time he interrupted a meeting of all students interested in the social sciences, around November 10, 1967. There were quite a few of them. Alain Touraine was giving a speech explaining that he was going to teach them some very important things. Cohn-Bendit got up and said, "Monsieur Touraine, not only do you want to produce the train cars, but you also want to get them rolling"; all twelve hundred students broke out laughing."

Unfamiliar with the thinking of the time based on linguistics, Henri Lefebvre did not embrace any of the PCF positions either—he had been excluded from the party in 1956. But as a critical Marxist, he defended dialectical thinking against the different forms of structuralism: Bourdieu, for him, was a "positivist sociologist,"<sup>8</sup> Foucault had "eliminated critical aspects from thinking,"<sup>9</sup> Althusser "made Marxism rigid and eliminated all flexibility from the dialectic . . . . Althusser has the same relationship to Marxism as the Thomists do to Aristotelianism: a clarification, a systematization, but which no longer has anything to do with reality."<sup>10</sup>

## A Real Fascination

At Nanterre, Lefebvre's critical work was furthered by his two assistants, Jean Baudrillard and Rene Lourau. Lourau had been at Nanterre since 1966 and recalled that structuralism was well spoken of only in order "to bury it gleefully."<sup>11</sup> He found structuralism to be antimodern and cold, not only from a Marxist perspective—he was a Marxist at the time—but also with respect to the modernism of Crozier or Touraine, "which seemed more dynamic to us, even if we criticized them."<sup>12</sup>

Rene Lourau discovered structuralism in 1964 while he was a high-school teacher. Georges Lapassade had brought him to the last big historical of the UNEF (National Union of Students of France) colloquium in Toulouse, where he read Althusser's article in *La Nouvelle Critique* on the problems of the university. "There was something which seemed completely nuts to us in this distinction between the technical and social divisions of labor. In fact, he was reestablishing

traditional autocratic pedagogy, which we were beginning to fight."13 Two years later, at Henri Lefebvre's property in Navarrinx, there was a meeting of the group Utopia, which had founded its journal. During their two-week work session the group read and commented on Foucault's *The Order of Things*, and was stupefied by the fact that he relegated Marx to the shadows of the nineteenth century. "His casual elimination of Marxism as a sort of old witchcraft made us furious."14

If those around Henry Lefebvre initially reacted by more or less rejecting structuralism, things got more complicated later. Every member of the group was in fact attracted by this or that aspect of structuralist work, even if there was a general critique of what was perceived as an ideology. Rene Lourau, for example, was impressed by Jakobson's work in linguistics, seduced by Barthes, read Levi-Strauss with a great deal of interest, and went with a group of psychology students from the Sorbonne to Lacan's seminar every week. So it would be untrue to speak about a true confrontation between the Nanterre group and the structuralists ("It wasn't the battle of Fontenoy"),15 but rather of a syncretic reality composed of contradictory convictions, which were occasionally lived with a certain bad conscience: "I was a disciple of Lefebvre and had the vague impression of being unfaithful to him. It was a certain relationship to the father."16

This syncretism also held for Jean Baudrillard, Henri Lefebvre's assistant and a Master's student of Pierre Bourdieu in 1966-67, whose critical work was quite close to that of Barthes. Along the lines of Barthes's unfinished work in *Mythologies*, Jean Baudrillard continued an abrasively critical sociosemiological approach to the ideology of the consumer society in his 1968 *The System of Objects*.<sup>17</sup> In a 1969 article in *Communications* he criticized the usual notions of need and use value, which he replaced with their sign function.<sup>18</sup>

There were also two adversaries of structuralism in the philosophy department at Nanterre: Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas, both of whom were partisans of a phenomenological approach. And the psychology department was just as removed from the structuralist paradigm: two of the four professors who taught there, Didier Anzieu and Jean Maisonneuve, were clinical social psychologists and their assistants had some experience with group dynamics, based essentially on American theoreticians such as Jacob Levy Moreno, Kurt Lewin, and Carl Rogers. At the time, Didier Anzieu was publishing under the pseudonym Epistemon, and saw the growing atmosphere of protest at

Nanterre as an extension of this group dynamic. "What social psychologists restrict to group dynamics suddenly becomes the general dynamics of the group."<sup>19</sup>

Although structuralism did not win the social sciences departments at Nanterre to its cause, it did nonetheless fascinate many and score more decisive points in literature thanks to Jean Dubois and Bernard Pottier, who created a kernel of structural linguistics around them. When the events of May 1968 unfolded, Jean Dubois had just published his transformational grammar of the French language at Larousse and had organized the first colloquium on generative grammar. However, this was not enough to assimilate the ambient ideology of the campus at Nanterre to structuralism. Slightly later, the walls would blossom with scrawled slogans like "Althusser is useless."<sup>20</sup>

## **Jean-Paul Sartre's Revenge**

It is 5 A.M. Paris awakens to barricades, trees strewn in the streets. The protest is, according to General de Gaulle, difficult to grasp. Unforseeable, it profoundly shakes the government. A radical protest is sweeping France and provoking the most important social movement the country has ever known: ten million strikers. A shock. France was less drowsy than had been believed. History was gleefully buried; some had been looking for its last traces in third-world countrysides soon to encircle the cities, but instead it struck at the very heart of Paris.

Sartre could savor this rush of existential fever among dissatisfied youth all the more so in that two years earlier Michel Foucault had disparagingly presented him as a good nineteenth-century philosopher. But Sartre was tougher than that. As Didier Anzieu, under his pseudonym of Epistemon, wrote, "The student revolt of May tried out its own version of Sartre's formula, 'The group is the beginning of humanity.'" Sartre's analysis of the alienation of individuals caught up in the practico-inert, and his insistence on the capacity of individuals to impose freedom by the actions of committed groups fused into a dialectic that made it possible to escape isolation and atomization, shed more light on May 1968 than did any structuralist position about structural chains, the subjected subject, or systems that reproduce or regulate themselves.

May 1968 made no mistake. Jean-Paul Sartre was the only major intellectual allowed to speak in the main lecture hall of the Sorbonne

at the heart of the uprising. Reconciled with the younger generation, he explained over the radio that it had little option other than violence to express itself in a society that refused to dialogue with those who rejected its adult model. On the eve of May 10, 1968, just before the famous night of the barricades, a text came out in *Le Monde* signed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Blanchot, Andre Gorz, Pierre Klossowski, Jacques Lacan, Henri Lefebvre, and Maurice Nadeau clearly siding with the student movement:

The solidarity we affirm here with the movement of students throughout the world—this movement that has abruptly, in the course of a few shattering hours, shaken up that society of well-being that is perfectly incarnated in the French world—is first of all an answer to the lies by which all the institutions and political parties (with very few exceptions), and all the newspapers and tools of communication (practically without exception), have been seeking for months to alter this movement and pervert its meaning and even attempt to portray it as laughable.?

## The Divine Surprise

For everyone over whom the structuralist wave had washed, it was a divine surprise to be in sync with protesting youth who were making history with their actions and belying the paralysis in which they were ostensibly trapped. This was true for the old *Arguments* group. Jean Duvignaud, who was teaching at the time at the old Philosophy Institute in Tours, "came up" to Paris. To illustrate the festive aspect of the events, he, together with Georges Lapassade, put a piano in the Sorbonne courtyard. He ran through the "liberated" Sorbonne with Jean Genet for two weeks, and announced "the end and the death of structuralism" in front of a fascinated audience in the big lecture hall.<sup>3</sup> Jean Genet looked upon him skeptically. "He didn't give a damn, but he was fed up with listening!"? Then Jean Duvignaud and other writers joined in the "taking" of the Massa Hotel. "Nathalie Sarraute gripped my arm saying, 'Duvignaud, do you think that it was like this when they took the Smolny Institute?'"<sup>5</sup> Then, at Censier with Michel Leiris, Jean Duvignaud shouted what became one of the most famous slogans of May 1968: "Let's be realistic: demand the impossible!"

Edgar Morin was as much in his element as Jean Duvignaud during May 1968. With Claude Lefort and Jean-Marie Coudray (Cornelius Castoriadis), he wrote *May '68: The Breach* an apology for this juve-

nile commune, this irruption of a youthful sociopolitical force, a veritable faceless revolution with a thousand faces transcending itself in a class struggle of a new type, mobilized against the entire machinery of integration and manipulation set in place by the rising technocracy.

For having been negated, history negated its own negation, and Epistemon announced that May 1968 "is not only a student strike in Paris, . . . but the death warrant of structuralism as well." In November, Mikel Dufrenne, the philosopher who had written *For Man*,<sup>8</sup> confirmed, "May was the violence of history in a period that wanted to avoid all histories." The freeze that Edgar Morin had seen triumphing when he stopped putting out his own review *Argonauts* in 1960 gave way to spring. Imaginative, spontaneous graffiti was scrawled everywhere expressing every kind of desire. This breath of collective fresh air went well beyond attacking the trees in the Latin Quarter. Behind the overturned cars, it was codes that were targeted and crushed. It was the shrieking return of the repressed: the subject, lived experience. Spoken language, which epistemo-structuralism had eliminated, could then unfold, in an undefined flood.

### Structuralists in Disarray

The new structuralist edifice was shaken by May 1968, and so were structuralism's founding fathers. At the Collège de France, at the heart of the Latin Quarter and of the strikes, Algirdas Julien Greimas ran into Levi-Strauss, who made no secret of his regret. "It's over. All scientific projects will be set back twenty years."<sup>10</sup> What's more, given this deleterious context, Levi-Strauss, in a very de Gaullian fashion, withdrew from the Collège de France and waited to be called back once business resumed. "When I heard the screeching, I withdrew to my home, making a number of excuses and leaving them to fight it out with each other. There were about eight days of internal agitation and then they came to get me."<sup>11</sup> For the father of structuralism, May '68 was like a descent into hell, the expression of the decline of the university and of a degeneration reaching back to the beginning of time, and going from generation to generation. Levi-Strauss's pessimistic conception of history was confirmed; history was never more than the leading edge of a long decline toward the ultimate disappearance.

Algirdas Julien Greimas, the grand master of the most scientific semiotics, prepared for a difficult period. He fully agreed with Levi-Strauss that scientific projects had been set back twenty years. "From

1968 to 1972, everything was called into question. I don't know how I was able to stand my own seminar since having a scientific project seemed ridiculous when you were teaching people who had exercised verbal terrorism to explain that everything was ideological."<sup>12</sup> For three years, Greimas was reduced to silence in his own seminar on the sciences of language and went through a particularly bad time when the group that had been created around him between 1964 and 1968 was dispersed. May 1968 was a catastrophe for him.

Levi-Strauss saw May 1968 as a real turning point. At the profoundly solemn ceremony of the Erasmus Prize, which he was awarded in 1973 in Amsterdam, he declared that "structuralism, happily, has not been in style since 1968."<sup>13</sup> He congratulated himself for having continued to see structuralism as a scientific method rather than a philosophy or speculative thinking, and it was doing better in the seventies than it had during the late sixties. Its wane had above all affected this second element of structuralism, for which he had never felt any real intellectual sympathy.

Levi-Strauss cast a disapproving eye on any evolution toward deconstruction and the multiplication of codes, which was contemporary with 1968. He answered *S/2* by a carefully argued letter to Barthes in which he proposed another reading of Balzac; incest was the key to this reading. Barthes took the demonstration quite seriously, and called it "stunningly convincing,"<sup>14</sup> whereas, according to Levi-Strauss, the whole thing was a joke. "I hadn't liked *S/2*. Barthes's commentary resembled too closely that of Professor Libellule in Muller and Reboux's *In a Racinian Style*.<sup>t></sup> So I sent him a few pages in which I exaggerated even more, a little ironically."<sup>16</sup>

### Structures Don't Take to the Streets

If there was a May '68 mind-set, it was not to be found among the tenants of structuralism, but rather among its adversaries, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Edgar Morin, Jean Duvignaud, Claude Lefort, Henri Lefebvre, and, of course, Cornelius Castoriadis. Castoriadis's Socialism or Barbarism group had always decried structuralism as a pseudo-scientific ideology that legitimated the system and had argued for the self-institutionalization and social autonomy that made it possible to change all of the inherited system, from capitalism to the bureaucratic society. "What May '68 and the other movements of the sixties showed was the persistence and power of the goal of autonomy."<sup>17</sup>

The May '68 shake-up was such that *Le Monde* published a long section in November of the same year on the topic "Has Structuralism Been Killed by May '68?" with articles by Epistemon (Didier Anzieu), Mikel Dufrenne, and Jean Pouillon, who played the role of peace-keeper. In "Reconciling Sartre and Levi-Strauss," Pouillon accorded each a specific and clearly delineated terrain: an ethnological method for one, philosophy for the other. And since these were not on the same level, there could be neither confrontation nor opposition.<sup>t</sup> For some, May '68 was the death if not of structuralism, at least of "triumphant structuralism."<sup>19</sup> "All 1968 belied the structural world and structural man."<sup>20</sup>

No one was spared, and not only was the root of structural theory affected but certain structuralists were considered mandarins, even if they had only had peripheral positions up until that point. "I remember the meetings of the Action Committee on the sciences of language at which the professors didn't have the right to speak. Greimas's and Barthes's seminars had been combined. They must have been there but weren't allowed to do more than answer questions."<sup>21</sup> One day, Catherine Backes-Clement was returning from a philosophy general assembly and read a three-page motion ending with: "It is clear that structures don't take to the streets." This observation, like a bell tolling for structuralism, was written on the blackboard and amply and energetically commented on in front of Greimas. The next morning, Greimas, who had been there when the slogan was announced for the first time, found a large poster stuck to the door, announcing, "Barthes says: Structures don't take to the streets. We say: Barthes doesn't either."<sup>22</sup> By attacking Barthes and attributing remarks to him in his absence, the movement was attacking structuralism in general, viewed as a science of the new mandarins. This was in fact Greimas's analysis, and he thought "Barthes is only a metonymic actor here for an 'actant' we will call 'all structuralists.'"<sup>23</sup> Barthes, however, seemed strongly affected by May '68 and even elected to exile himself for a time to get away from the theater of Parisian operations. When the Moroccan professor Zaghoul Morsy suggested that he come to Rabat, "he leaped at the opportunity."<sup>24</sup>

We know how Althusser was used by the movement. May seemed to better illustrate the theses of the young Marx who denounced humanity's suffering because of its alienation. May '68 was a protest against the way structuralist thinking saw the world, and the priority

it gave to all kinds of determinations helping to establish the stability of the system; the protesters believed that they could free themselves from the structures of alienation in order to take the great leap toward freedom. "A sweet illusion, of course, but a necessary one because these changes had to take place."<sup>25</sup> Even if Roger-Pol Droit did not live May '68 as a protest against structuralist ideas—on the contrary—it seemed to him that in the aftermath May '68 "could have been read in the sense of a sort of protest, or compensation for the conceptual enclosure, of what I call the grid."<sup>26</sup> Of course those who had been there did not think along these lines, but what was going on mobilized a kind of affect that was altogether contrary to structuralism's theoretical disincarnation. The inexorable decline of the paradigm was, in this respect, the product of May 1968.

### The Event Erupts: A Lesson in Modesty

May 1968 exhumed what structuralism had repressed. History once again became a subject for discussion, even among linguists. In 1972, issue 15 of the review *Langue française*, edited by Jean-Claude Chevalier and Pierre Kuentz, was thus devoted to the topic "Linguistics and History."<sup>27</sup> Certainly the desire to make structures more dynamic had been expressed by Julia Kristeva as early as 1966, and the tendency had been confirmed and accelerated. Similarly, the events of May '68 ensured the success, beginning in 1970, of the questioning of the subject, of a linguistics of enunciation, and therefore of Benveniste's theses. Even if the ego had somewhat changed since the psychoanalytic break, and was split to such a degree that the all-purpose sentence became the famous "it hurts me . . . somewhere." This metamorphosed ego was back with a vengeance. In 1972, Jane Fonda and Yves Montand finished Godard's *Tout va bien* with a dawn shot: the dawn of thinking oneself historically, a clear sign of the new tendencies of the time.

Studying language also began to mean studying its social dimension. Labov's ideas, the birth and spectacular development of "sociolinguistics," made it possible to reintroduce the referent. In sociology, an alternative sociology raised its head, based on group dynamics and expressing the events of May 1968 rather than a structural sociology. Georges Lapassade's research on institutional sociology was organized along these lines, implying a "method by means of which a group of analysts, at the request of a social organization, institutes in this organization a collective process of self-analysis."<sup>28</sup> A whole area of non-

directive pedagogy developed along the lines of the antimandarin protest slogan, "The old teacher-student relationship is abolished."<sup>29</sup>

The scientism claimed by the social sciences was hard put by the enigmatic events of May 1968. The fact that sociology ostensibly studied the way society functions and had missed the precursory signs of the tempest was a good lesson in modesty. Francine Le Bret, a sociology student at the Sorbonne, took part in a survey on student participation in political life. The results showed that, contrary to the Durkheimian hypothesis that students were committed fighters, they were in fact rather well satisfied. And this on the eve of May '68! "It was obvious that this survey was idiotic and that we had missed the mark."<sup>30</sup>

This somewhat disqualified the social sciences and their methods of classification, which were revealed as inadequate and incapable of predicting events. This was a rather contradictory effect of May '68, for although it affected the social sciences whose growth had made the growth of structuralism possible, structuralism had already long ago taken a critical position with respect to their methods. Whence the recuperation/criticism of the social sciences by structuralism, which attacked their empiricism and shifted the question toward understanding the conditions under which a scientific object could be constructed in the social sciences.

## Satire

There was also a comical dimension to May '68. Structuralism was not spared when a philosopher by the name of Clement Rosset, using the pseudonym Roger Cernant, published the satirical *Structuralist Mornings*.<sup>31</sup> The book caused quite a stir among university professors, casting the structuralist style or tone as an initially brilliant and later exhausted fireworks display. Different kinds of structuralism were typologized: the structuralist parvenu: Michel Foucault; precious structuralism: Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan; rustic structuralism: Michel Serres; neopositivist structuralism: the ENS and Louis Althusser. Conceptual advances were reduced to a few truisms. Louis Althusser's great discovery was that "It would be untrue to crudely affirm that Beethoven's Seventh Symphony reproduces the economic structure of Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Of course, it did reproduce it, but not completely."<sup>32</sup> This neopositive variation of structuralism did little more than offer a series of banalities, but it

nonetheless had the merit of not giving the reader a headache. Such was the case, according to the author, with Pierre Macherey's book, which took three hundred pages to explain that literature was a product, like carrots, but a slightly special product.

Derrida was not as easy to read, and his writing process was described as follows: "I write a first sentence, but in fact I should not have written it, excuse me, I will erase everything and I'll start over again; I write a second sentence, but, after thinking about it, I should not have written that one either."<sup>33</sup> The book continues with a scene worthy of Marivaux's *Les Precieuses ridicules* dramatizing a meeting of *Les Cahiers pour l'analyse* at the ENS, led by Louis Althusser, incarnated by Louise, the rehearsal mistress surrounded by her feverishly faithful and entirely interchangeable disciples with barely altered names, including Jacques-Alain Minet (Miller) and Jean-Claude Miney (Milner) [the last names are homophonic and play on the popular term for "little *darling*"-*Trans.*]. One of the disciples, however, Michel Poutreux, dares to give a presentation that draws such remarks as "You are a liar and a plagiarist." But when Miney/Minet read their contribution, they are applauded. It turns out that Poutreux's text is exactly the same as Miney/Minet's. Louise reacts: "This may be simply fortuitous: the unexpected encounter of a signifying insignificance with an insignificant signified. I have already been told about such curious encounters."<sup>34</sup> This small book recalling the caustic spirit of '68 humorously poked fun at codified language, stilted speech, and the clan mentality.

## Discredit

Taken by surprise by the unforeseen irruption of history during May '68, the structuralists were quick to regroup. Althusser in particular was a target for his emancipated disciples, the Maoists of the Proletarian Left. By year's end, there were many demonstrations of an irreversible break: "Althusser is useless!" "Althusser not the people!"<sup>35</sup> "Althusser has gone to sleep, but the popular movement is doing fine!" The Althusserians had a bad time of it and were just as much the objects of opprobrium, criticized for their love of theory and for having stayed in the PCF and lending their support to the revisionist enemy of the Maoist groups, who believed that they incarnated the people moving forward. May '68 was clearly perceived right away as a difficult moment for the authors of *Reading Capital*. "May '68 was

the moment when texts against Althusser began to proliferate. I remember bookstore windows completely full of hostile books and journals. This was a very difficult time, exactly the reverse of the preceding period."<sup>36</sup> Pierre Macherey had been appointed to the Sorbonne in 1966 on the basis of the success of Althusser's work, and he continued to give courses, but under difficult conditions. Etienne Balibar went to Vincennes (Paris VIII) in 1969, but stayed only for a few months because he could not stand the repeated assaults of the Maoists, led by Andre Glucksmann, who kept sending bigger and bigger groups of commandos to classes, shouting, "Get out of here, Balibar!"<sup>37</sup> They got what they wanted.

For the Althusserians, the post-'68 period was personally very difficult, but they were also forced to reset their theoretical sights. "What '68 taught us was that there is something else to do besides philosophy, besides studying books. We tried to do things more concretely and less abstractly."<sup>38</sup> May '68 splintered the ambivalent Althusserians into their two components: the theorists, who kept to the PCF line, and those who favored a break and more concern for events, influenced by Lacan. This group joined the movement, and the frenzied political activism that donned the garb of Maoism. Jacques Ranciere was the only author of *Reading Capital* who adopted this activism without adopting Lacanian thinking: "There were, grossly put, those for whom it was the theory of knowledge and those for whom it was a theory of truth."<sup>39</sup> The Althusserians had a few problems, therefore, with praxis and the subjects of the historical process.

## Foucault beyond Torment

Michel Foucault was in Sidi-Bou-Said, Tunisia, writing his *Archaeology of Human Knowledge* when May '68 exploded. Out of touch with what was going on, he returned to Paris for only a few days at the end of May and confided to Jean Daniel, the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, while they were watching a student march: "They are not making the revolution, they are the revolution."<sup>41</sup>

Some of Foucault's students in Tunis were arrested and tortured by the government during the spring of 1968. Foucault intervened firmly to defend them, actively supported the mobilization to free the prisoners, and let activists use his garden to print their tracts. He was even hassled by the police in civilian dress, and slapped on the road leading to Sidi-Bou-Said. Foucault thus also experienced the student

ferment and got completely involved in action against the repression. This was a decisive change for a philosopher who, since his break with the peF, had been more of a reformist. "In Tunisia I was led to concretely help students. In a certain way I was forced to enter the political arena."<sup>42</sup>

Thus, a new Michel Foucault was born in spring 1968, who incarnated the hopes and battles of a student generation. These events led him to bring practice back into what until then had been a purely discursive perspective. And from then on, he was involved in every battle and resistance movement against all forms of punishment. On February 8, 1971, he organized the Information Group on Prisons, whose manifesto was cosigned by Jean-Marie Domenach and Pierre Vidal-Naquet. He became totally involved in the battle against French prison conditions, to the point of transforming his apartment into the headquarters for the organization and inviting the families of prisoners to make public and visible this hidden side of the democratic system. Foucault held no position of power in France in May 1968 and could therefore escape the antimandarin protests. His was a felicitous osmosis with the movement as of fall 1968, when he returned to Paris, but he was an exception during a period that seemed to send clear signs of its rejection of all structuralists.

## *Twelve*

# **Lacan: Structures Have Taken to the Streets!**

May 1968 was a whirlwind with contradictory aftereffects. Paradoxically, the national strikes and student protests ensured the success of structuralism: just as students protested against the Sorbonne as the stronghold of mandarins, academicism, and despised tradition, the structuralist critique also waged its battle against the classical humanities in the same venerable institution.

**In** the quarrel pitting the Ancients against the Moderns, the protest movement quite naturally sided with the Moderns, ensuring their victory. Those who aspired to power came out from the shadows to take their places in a splintered Sorbonne. The university modernized and structuralism triumphed thanks to May's quickening of history. Wasn't this the supreme paradox of an antihistorical paradigm? The contradiction led to polemical debates reminiscent of the surrealists, such as the one that took place on February 22, 1969. At a lecture by Michel Foucault to the French Philosophical Society, Lucien Goldmann apostrophied Jacques Lacan: "You saw your structures in '68. . . . Those were people who were in the streets!" And Lacan retorted, "If the events of May demonstrated anything at all, they showed that it was precisely that structures had taken to the streets!" Rene Lourau was in the audience. "We were terrorized by Lacan's nerve. I brought Lucien Goldmann home by car. He was like a stunned boxer."<sup>2</sup>

If structures did not take to the streets, they did occupy massive

numbers of new university chairs, which also meant more T.A. sections and fewer hours in lecture halls. The fact that May '68 and structuralism made a common protest against the position of the classical humanities and traditional disciplines like philosophy, history, literature, and psychology made the proclamations of the death of structuralism somewhat premature. "I was wrong to announce the death of structuralism. It was never stronger than after May '68."<sup>3</sup>

The protest against hierarchized disciplines, which corresponded to a revolt against authority, struck with full force against the discipline that considered itself the queen of the sciences. Philosophy was sent packing, an obsolete discipline forced to bow before the more serious work being done in anthropology, psychoanalysis, and linguistics. "I remember Tresmontant, a philosopher who worked on Teilhard de Chardin, as he was crossing the Luxembourg Garden after a meeting of philosophers at the Sorbonne in May. The agenda included asking whether or not it was permissible to ask oneself the question of knowing whether there were philosophical problems."<sup>4</sup> The social sciences had not yet been fully emancipated because of the immobility of a Bonapartist, centralized state and a hermetic and traditional Sorbonne. "A verbose revolution attacked the talkativeness of philosophers and legitimated itself by donning the virtues of the concept!"<sup>5</sup>

The lines of division, however, were muddier since the structuralist philosophers had prepared for this advent of the social sciences by familiarizing themselves with their conceptual contribution, not because they wanted to align themselves with their modes of classification, but because they wanted to renew and enrich philosophy. Thus, "we bet on epistemological reason, we valorized the weapons of rationality, and at the same time we undertook the modernization and dialectization of the rationality that expresses it."<sup>6</sup> The philosopher's point of view was finally maintained in a contradictory tension based on which philosophical goals were beginning to be denied. New goals were described in terms of rigor, theory, and an epistemic base—so many conditions for including the philosophical effort in the New Deal redistributing knowledge instituted within the university. In the course of this reorganization, the philosopher was to devote himself to a specific and rigorously defined field of study, as did linguists and anthropologists. This intellectual division of labor made Sartre's image of the philosopher-man of letters definitively archaic; his apparent re-

venge in 1968 did not fundamentally change the situation in philosophy, which had been favorable to structuralism since the sixties.

For the apprentice philosophers of the period, May '68 in no way meant the extinction of structural thinking. Quite to the contrary. Roger-Pol Droit, who was in *khâgne* in 1968-69 at Louis-le-Grand High School, "had learned to think—at least he thought so—with Marx via Althusser. He learned to spendlunthink with Freud via Lacan."? Beyond the Althussero-Lacanian Maoist, there was no hope for a hip philosopher in 1969. Structuralism reigned, and not to be a part of it was to stop being. High theory was combined with verbal terrorism of the French variety. "Conceptual grids held front stage. Structuralism climbed as if everything that had gone before were already rotting in the trash bins of history. Not to be an Althussero-Lacanian was to be an *Untermensch*, less than a man. Not to be a Lacanian was to expose oneself to being little more than a little nothing."!

### The Founders of Discursivity

Although May '68 did reintroduce the subject, it reconfirmed the death of the author—a battle the structuralists had been waging for a while—when it targeted the university mandarins and their psychological pathos, which, according to the protesters of May, belonged to the ideological realm, the worst of infamies. Here, there may have been a correspondence between structuralism and the mind-set of May, which Michel Foucault quite clearly understood. Foucault's oeuvre constantly referred to the effacement of the author's name. "What is an author?" he asked during the lecture given to the French Philosophical Society on February 22, 1969. He belonged to the strict structuralist orthodoxy in this, and was even self-critical on the use of authors' names in *The Order of Things*. "We must create a space where the writing subject does not stop disappearing."? Once again, the theme of an intertextuality that should not stop at the final signified of a proper name appeared. In an admirable rhetorical reversal, Foucault revisited the secular formula that saw writing as a means of gaining immortality and transformed it into a sacrificial act by its ability to kill its author. "The mark of the writer is no longer only the singularity of his absence; he must play the role of the dead man in the game of writing."<sup>10</sup>

Michel Foucault relativized the Western fetish of the name of the literary author. Before the seventeenth century, literary discourse did

not valorize this idea, whereas scientific discoveries bore the seal of their authors. Since then, "literary anonymity has become unbearable."11 Foucault did, however, discern the existence not of authors, but of founders of discursivity: Marx and Freud "established an indefinite possibility of discourse."12 These discursive foundations implied the legitimacy of a movement of return and opened the door to an approach to discursive formations that was more historical than ever, and that sought the very modalities of their existence. To a certain extent, Foucault announced the perception of a subject, not an originary subject, but the points of insertion and dependence as well as the conditions of its appearance. We can understand how Foucault echoed the famous "returns" of structuralism: the linguists' return to Saussure, Althusser's return to Marx, and Lacan's return to Freud. Lacan was in fact in the audience during this lecture and it had a real impact on him in developing his theory of four discourses. He joined the discussion and answered: "I have taken this return to Freud to be something of a flag, in a certain field, and here, I can only thank you for having completely met my expectations."13 This was the first time that Lacan had had any philosophical confirmation of his approach in his return to Freud. He used Foucault's position about how the idea of the author functioned and was functional, and took up the offensive again in his effort to redefine the division of knowledge with respect to philosophy.

Jean Allouch observed the chronology of Foucault's talk and Lacan's construction of the four discourses. In the seminar immediately following Foucault's remarks, Lacan repeated, and this time before his own public, that he had felt himself summoned by the importance granted this "return to."14 Another event also fed Lacan's interest in discursivity. On June 26, 1969, he publicized the letter he had received three months earlier from Tobert Flaceliere, the director of the ENS, terminating his use of Dussane Hall where his famous seminar where everyone who was anyone in Paris had congregated. Again Lacan was banished from an institution, the university this time, and from a special public of philosophers. His first reaction was caustic. During the final lecture of his seminar on June 26, 1969 ("From One Other to Another"), he tagged Flaceliere as Flatulenciere, Cordeliere, "don't pull too hard on the flaceliere." The seminar auditors decided to occupy the office of the director. Jean-Jacques Lebel, Antoinette Fouque, Laurence Bataille, Philippe Sollers, and Julia Kris-

teva, among others, were thrown out by the police after a two-hour sit-in.t"

Lacan the pariah was finally able to take refuge in a lecture hall quite close by in the Law School. It was large but less prestigious than the hall at the ENS and Lacan's sense of isolation, aggravated by the impression that Derrida and Althusser did not really come to his defense to force Flaceliere to change his mind, comforted him in the idea of a new and necessary assault, theoretical once again, against university discourse and philosophical pretensions. In this, he was in tune with the children of May '68. At the first meeting of his seminar at the Law School on November 26, 1969, Lacan mentioned for the first time the "discourse" in the sense of what later became his doctrine of the four discourses. He defined the existence of a university discourse that was close to the "discourse of the master and the hysteric."<sup>16</sup> Compared with these three discourses-academic, master, hysteric-the analytic discourse was the only one that was not neurotic and that could reach some truth, which legitimated its primacy. Lacan wanted to claim the superiority of psychoanalytic discourse, and his grandiose ambition clearly reflected the difficulties Lacanian psychoanalysis had in establishing and institutionalizing itself. His audience steadily grew as his power dwindled. This protest translated the state of mind of the students of 1968 quite well. "For me, it was a movement against the university. We hit on professors whom we found idiotic in the name of another knowledge."<sup>17</sup>

### The Althussero-Lacanian Vogue

Foucault also tried to link his positions to those of the fashionable Althussero-Lacanian during this period. He legitimated the "returns to," symptomatic of the structural approach, but gave the first fruit of the work he finished during the summer of 1968 to *Les Cahiers pour l'analyse*. His "Response to the Epistemological Circle" prefigured *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which was about to come out.<sup>18</sup> Foucault took up the challenge of May '68 and shifted the problem of the principal anchors of epistemology toward the articulation of the discursive sphere with the practices that anchored it. He provided the Althusserians with a vast area in which to do their research in order to stop theorizing and move philosophical work toward politics and the study of how power is inscribed.

This theory/practice articulation sometimes produced surprising

results. Alain Badiou, a former existentialist who, in 1967, rallied to Althusser's positions, felt in 1969 that the class struggle in theory included protesting the philosophy *agregation*, and he tried to dissuade students who were studying for it not to take the exam. "He was a case, doubtless the most brilliant person I knew, extraordinarily talented, a real understanding of logic, math, and at the same time a perverted discourse that went off the tracks somewhere,"<sup>19</sup> according to Jacques Bouveresse, who saw how certain of the ideas being promoted at the time more broadly expressed what Wittgenstein had analyzed in terms of pathology. It was only in the aftermath that a few people asked, "How could we have been crazy like that? Be a structuralist and be for the proletarian cultural revolution?"<sup>20</sup> But these internal tensions did not feel like contradictions at the time; on the contrary, they made it possible for structural Althusserianism to take off after May'68.

Similarly, there was an enormous contradiction in attacking the idols and the notion of the author, which all structuralists from all disciplines rejected, while continuing to laud the theoreticians of this burial as heroes. Structuralists compensated for their institutional homelessness this way and gave more and more lectures to audiences who perceived them increasingly as master thinkers and models of existence, as gurus. They became veritable stars, authentic authors giving voice to the intellectual concerns of the period for which they could speak, whereas the established mandarins were hotly contested. From mandarins to samurai, the cult of personality and the magical aura surrounding them never really faded; they simply had a tragic dimension that the existentialist generation had not had.

The tragedy stemmed from the exhaustion of the intellectual model born in the eighteenth century with Voltaire and revived by the Dreyfus Affair in the nineteenth century, a model that was based on the coincidence between the intellectual's involvement and historical necessity against the forces of irrationality, power, and money. For the structuralist generation, the experience of Stalinism put an end to this equation, and this shed some light on the radical pessimism underlying structuralist thinking, even at its most militant. The result was a strange mixture of hedonism, of a freeing of the forces of desire, which reconciled themselves with the most pessimistic current of European thinking in the early twentieth century. "It should have been like mixing water with fire."<sup>21</sup>

This tension most often became apparent in an act of abjuration, which facilitated the rise of structuralism. Many placed their old faith in the Subject-Stalin, their illusions in the construction of the model of models, hoping to break with their own position as lesson-givers by immersing themselves in structures, and at the same time science offered an escape. "There was a whole masochistic side of self-punishment in this attitude: I got trapped; my intellectual responsibility was therefore to denounce the trap and myself."<sup>22</sup> Pierre Daix, for example, converted to structuralism after 1968 and published a book glorifying the birth of structural science in 1971. "For structural research, there was a movement of human societies, which surround us and go beyond us, and whose meaning is to be sought beyond our immediate representation and experience."<sup>23</sup>

### A Thirst for Science

One of the essential aspects of the continuity between May '68 and structuralism was the scientific exigency of the heirs of May. Some made it seem that this was a revolution of dunces, but the leaders of the movement were at the apex of culture, dissatisfied with the knowledge being transmitted, and aspiring to change radically not only what was taught, but how it was taught. The conversion to the structural paradigm and its scientism was total in this respect, even if some exaggerated things in the name of science in order to disrupt the classes of those structuralists whom they found to be still too ideological and limited to reproducing a magisterial relationship to knowledge. Alongside the movement's hedonism was thus the whole dimension of this desire for scientific rigor, which ensured a happy future for post-'68 structuralism.

In addition to the internal university conflicts, there were the reactions of ENS intellectuals and literature professors in the university to the technocratization that was tending to relegate them to a secondary role, after the engineers and ENA graduates. The literary thirst for scientificity thus had something of the energy of despair faced with this onslaught of the technocrats. "I was struck by the wave of rationalism that drove masses of students into courses on logic in the aftermath of '68."<sup>24</sup> Epistemology and the theory of science were the only subjects that attracted students, which was all the more surprising in that this was a particularly hermetic field. For its part, linguistics was massively recognized as a scientific discipline, so "the title of grammarian, which

had little symbolic value, could be exchanged for the title of linguist,"<sup>25</sup> thanks to the movement of May 1968 and to structuralism writ large.

Right after May '68, the scientific flame reached its most paroxysmal heights and semiotics, the most formal branch of linguistics, became a fundamental vector. In 1969, the international journal *Semiotica* was created, published in Bloomington and edited by Thomas A. Sebeok. It had a Paris office headed by Josette Rey-Debove and Julia Kristeva. Linguistics continued its course, federating the human sciences like a pilot science dispensing models to other disciplines. This was enough to justify—although that was not its authors' intention—Seuil's 1972 publication of a *Dictionary of the Sciences of Language* by Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov. A general need for rigor comforted the number and strength of the interdisciplinary connections and ensured the success of interdisciplinarity, organized around a specific model, which became more appealing as a result.

Thus, Juan-David Nasio, an Argentine Kleinian psychoanalyst, converted to Lacanian thought in 1969, and worked on the Spanish translation of Lacan's *Écrits*. He met Lacan often during this period and adopted his ideas, based on Althusserian positions. "I was a Marxist-Leninist, a political militant. After reading Althusser, I wanted to criticize Melanie Klein."<sup>26</sup> Making the teaching of the social sciences more democratic and socially oriented, given their large presence and ideological bent, also ensured the success of the structuralist paradigm, which served to guarantee the scientificity requisite for becoming part of the university world and being able to impose successful changes in scholarly journals, the media, and the intellectual public, and become a well-anchored institutional presence.

The new architecture of knowledge thus presupposed this collective taste for science. The young generation graduating from high school and going to the preparatory classes and universities just after May '68 needed a certain dose of rigor in their training. Marc Abeles, who later became an anthropologist trained by Levi-Strauss, found that Maurice Godelier imposed a scientific approach that satisfied his need for rigor, which also had a necessary political aspect to it given his disappointment in the period's political figures and forces. "We said to ourselves: they are worthless, and perhaps what lay behind the rigor of these theoretical works was the need to react to political lifelessness by starting from a hard theoretical core."<sup>27</sup>

There were also those who felt the need to desert the well-trodden paths of traditional, albeit renewed, knowledge in order to embark on a scientific adventure in new fields. Marc Vernet, a modern literature student who joined the ENSET<sup>28</sup> in 1968-69, was one example: "I loved the cinema and I began to read Christian Metz. I elected scientificity and said to myself that semiology was going to explain everything. I seized the opportunity."<sup>29</sup> Vernet never finished at the ENSET despite the excellent teachers-Pierre Kuentz, Antoine Culioli-who kept students up on the research in linguistics while preparing them for the competitive exams. "I said to myself: literature is completely out of date. . . . I had the impression of being on a wave that was going to engulf everything."<sup>30</sup> Vernet switched to the EPHE to do a thesis with Christian Metz on the topic "Suspended Meaning in American Detective Films of the Forties," a thesis that led him to discover a whole field of structuralist research in a number of disciplines. When Vernet decided to work on cinematic semiology, he had not yet discovered Levi-Strauss. Daniel Percheron, a friend of his, suggested that he read Levi-Strauss, which he did with great interest, although it had no impact initially on his own work-until he asked himself what a character was, which, from a structural point of view, was generally contrasted with the narrator. Vernet got hooked when he read Levi-Strauss's text "Structure and Form," in which Vladimir Propp was criticized for treating characters on the basis of their attributes rather than their functions. "What fascinated me was Levi-Strauss's capacity to reduce plural groups of texts to structures."<sup>31</sup> This approach made it possible to scientifically understand his purely intuitive impression that all films made in the United States during the forties resembled each other. Of course Marc Vernet's theoretical perspective included the work of linguists. Beginning with his problematizing of the position of the character in cinematographic storytelling, he discovered the work Philippe Hamon had already begun on the character in literature." In the toolbox of cinematic semiology, Lacan was also to be reckoned with, all the more so in that during these years of the seventies, the work of the master, Christian Metz, had turned toward the relationship between cinema and psychoanalysis. So Vernet read everything Lacan had written, and found his article "On the Look as small object a"<sup>33</sup> particularly interesting "because the issue was vision, fetishization, and voyeurism."<sup>34</sup> After May '68, many research projects were thus fueled by a concern for scientific rigor, and this ensured structuralism's success.

## Bandaging the Wounds of Failure

Another dimension also made it possible to understand the excitement and taste for analytic discourse, the form of "psychoanalysis"-as Robert Caste! critically termed it-which was fashionable during the post-'68 period and which guaranteed Lacan a growing audience. It is true that Lacan was booed by the movement, particularly when he came to Vincennes campus, but the protest he provoked was something like what de Gaulle elicited. Lacan incarnated the father whose bourgeoisification was being decried, but he was also the alternative paternal figure. When things returned to their normal course, it was Lacan who could bind the wounds of failure and the lost illusions of a complete break with the previous world. If the world could not be changed, the self could be. There were many who, like Roland Castro, formerly of the March 22 Movement, took their place on Lacan's couch in order to understand the inherent difficulties of transgressing the Law and the illusions of the revolution (returning to the same point, etymologically speaking). "Those who began an analysis after '68 experienced it like a life preserver at a time when Maoism was declining; they included Roland Castro, Catherine Clement, Jacques-Alain Miller ..."<sup>35</sup>

Structure triumphed over the events in the calm following the storm. The failure was perceived as the expression of the inextinguishable force of structure; the structuralism option was thus doubly reinforced by the explosion of May and its "failure," at the very least as a general and radical break. Lacan embodied an alternative, gave a sign at the moment of the impossible revolution. And in May 1970, he was able to resist the pressure of troops of the Proletarian Left when, in need of money for their treasury which was overseen by Roland Castro, they sent a delegation that spent four hours remonstrating in vain with Lacan in his office, only to hear Lacan retort, "Why should I give you my money? I am the revolution!"<sup>36</sup>

## Ultrastructuralism Triumphs

May '68 had contradictory effects on structuralism. Old and new were mixed up, scientific rationalism and antirationalism linked, even in the minds of the same authors. In any case, May had its theoretical effects; it triggered neither structuralism's triumph nor its extinction but shifted the boundaries and speeded up the changes that had been going on since 1966-67.

Above all, ultrastructuralism was encouraged-essentially a structuralist orientation but turned toward multiplication, toward indeterminate, "nomadic" concepts, which became the dominant categories of thought during the following period. Everything that harassed structuralism from within before 1968 and that ensured that there be a beyond-generativism, theories of enunciation, intertextuality, the critique of logocentrism-triumphed thanks to May '68 and speeded the process that Manfred Frank called "neostructuralism."<sup>37</sup>

All of these totalizing categories were deconstructed and systematically pluralized. The idea of causality was called into question and replaced by the notion of periphery and relational patterns with multiple ramifications, without any organizing center. Structuralism of the first period had already attacked the notion of causality and privileged relational thinking. Ultrastructuralism emphasized this break, pursuing and inflecting it increasingly in the direction of desire rather than the norm, of the many rather than the One, of the signifier rather than the signified, of the Other rather than the Same, of difference rather than the Universal.

More than anything else, May '68 exploded the notion of a hermetic structure. The lock was picked and the point became a knot. "The structure of neostructuralism no longer knows assignable limits. It is open and can be infinitely transformed."<sup>38</sup> This opening or multiplication was particularly palpable in its historicization, not a return to any particular meaning of history or a philosophy of history, but a historicization in the sense of a Nietzschean-Heideggerian deconstruction. Structuralism took its revenge on history by deconstructing it.

In the longer term, all the internal unrest of structuralism, which 1968 helped bring to the fore, represented so many destabilizing forces of the structural paradigm and inevitably condemned structuralism to a decline in the seventies. Generativism, enunciation theory, intertextuality, and deconstruction at once ensured the necessary adaptation of structuralism and its dissolution, its own erasure.

Another-and more structural-element paradoxically worked in the same direction: the structuralists enjoyed an institutional triumph and, from 1968 on, were represented in force within the university.

## *Thirteen*

# **Institutional Victory: The University Conquered**

Until 1968, structuralists had been largely marginal. Student protests in May, a more modern university, and the Sorbonne's fragmentation, however, allowed them to break into the university world, and they entered in full force. The conquest of the capital and the numbers of chairs created for young professors as well as the creation of many departments devoted to structuralized knowledge confirmed this victory.

Theoretically, the consequences of '68 were ambiguous; institutionally, they were clear. Structuralism was the big beneficiary of the protest movement. For want of progressive reform, a "revolution" defeated the resistance at the Sorbonne. The most spectacular effect quite obviously was the creation of departments of general linguistics, for, until this point, linguists played only ancillary roles in language departments, where linguistics courses belonged to the curriculum of foreign languages and French grammar.

Just after May '68, the education ministry created a commission to define a new literature curriculum consisting of forty-eight class hours. Ten or so professors, including Jean Dubois, Andre Martinet, and Algirdas Julien Greimas, made up the commission. Andre Martinet wanted to offer general linguistics courses, although Jean Dubois was more partial to French linguistics courses: "I was seated next to the secretary who was writing the report, and things were rather confused. Proposals were written on the blackboard. . . . The secretary asked me what the issue was and I said, 'French linguistics.' That was

how it went off to the ministry and was accepted."1 At the Sorbonne, helped by May '68, Andre Martinet got more full-time staff and young assistants, who, like Louis-Jean Calvet, were appointed as of 1969.

### Taking Power at Nanterre

Jean Dubois and Bernard Pottier were already at Nanterre when a department of linguistics was created, violently. "In '68 at Nanterre, together with my assistants, we split from the professors of literature, *manu militari*. We threw them out of the office, but they fought back."2 Thanks to the events of May, young teachers could embark on careers and advance far more quickly than they might have otherwise. Recruitment needs produced a spectacular young corps of teachers and opened up real perspectives for modern work. The linguist Claudine Normand was a high-school teacher in 1968. After May, Louis Guilbert offered her a teaching job at the University of Rouen, and gave her twenty-four hours to consider his offer. "The following year, as of October 1969, I was at Nanterre."3 The linguistics department was receptive to all approaches to linguistics. Jean Dubois, who had never been sectarian, did not limit recruitment to PCF members, although they were well represented in the department. Above all, the department was enormous; in 1969, there were already twenty-two tenured professors (and later, twenty-seven).

The orientation was very sociolinguistic, with a particular partiality toward discourse analysis and lexicology. Jean Dubois, Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi, Denise Maldidier, and Francoise Gadet's work established the bases for interdisciplinary research and group research with some of the historians at Nanterre, including Regine Robin and Antoine Prost. Lexicology research was somewhat critical of the dominant ideology, but the goal was both theoretical and political. In line with structuralism, these linguists generally sought to link language and society, a link missing in Saussure's work, by establishing a double level of causal relationships. Essentially influenced by Harris's distributional method, but also by the more French tradition of lexicology, they examined the ideology embodied in historical and political discourse. Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi's thesis, *The Congress of Tours*,<sup>4</sup> comparing the discourse of the majority favoring the twenty-one conditions of the Communist International with that of the minority, which, along with Leon Blum, wanted to maintain the old positions, became the model for a number of case studies. Marcellesi concluded

that in 1920 no clear sociolinguistic distinction existed between the two camps beyond the content of their discourses.

In April 1968, a month before the strikes of May, a lexicology colloquium had been held at Saint-Cloud during which Annie Kriegel had analyzed the "unified" vocabulary of the Communists during the Popular Front. Denise Maldidier had carefully analyzed six daily newspapers and studied the political vocabulary used during the Algerian War. Antoine Prost compared the vocabulary of political families in France at the end of the nineteenth century, during the 1881 elections. This kind of lexicological work continued to develop at Nanterre after May '68, and in 1971, the February issue of *Langue française* came out, devoted to the theme "Linguistics and Society,"<sup>5</sup> and in September, issue 23 of *Langages* was devoted to the topic "Political Discourse."<sup>6</sup>

The distinctions between content, message (*énoncé*), and utterance, or the elements belonging to the language code and on which meaning depends, could be examined. Jean Dubois and Uriel Weinreich defined these, using four different concepts: the *distance* between the subject and the utterance; the *modalization*, or the way the speaker marks his or her message; the *tension* between speaker and listener; and the *transparency* or *opacity* of the discourse. Using these concepts, Lucile Courdresses compared the discourses of Leon Blum and Maurice Thorez in May 1936,<sup>7</sup> and discerned a clearly opposed, distant, didactic discourse in which the utterance was barely inflected (Maurice Thorez speaking in the name of a homogeneous group of Communists without any individual moods) and Leon Blum's discourse, which referred to the actors and where the extreme tension had a specific political goal. The historian Regine Robin and the linguist Denis Slatka studied the 1789 *cahiers de doléances* in which "citizens" enumerated their complaints." On the other hand, social history-s-Regine Robin's thesis on the land-leasing system of Semur-en-Auxois-e-joined hands with linguistics, and, on the other hand, pragmatics entered into the work of linguistics since Denis Slatka worked on the illocutionary potential of the act of asking." Françoise Gadet examined the social variations of language.<sup>1</sup>"

These discourse analyses were not only lexical studies on the numbers of times that different words were used, but also tried to establish a relationship between behavior and its verbal expression. Denise Maldidier looked at this dimension in her analysis of political

discourse during the Algerian War.<sup>11</sup> Structuralism could, in this way, be adapted to a growing political consciousness during the seventies, and sometimes produced results. Antoine Prost analyzed the declarations of candidates to the elections in the 1880s and concluded that those on the left spoke like those on the right when addressing conservative areas, and even occasionally left-wing areas.<sup>P</sup> But the conclusions of lexicological studies were too often disappointing. Long qualitative and quantitative analyses often only confirmed the researcher's initial intuitions,

### A Fragmented Sorbonne

Structural linguistics also made its way into the interdisciplinary and scientific University of Paris VII-Jussieu, created in 1970. Most of the literature professors battling with the Sorbonne mandarins who were not at Vincennes came to teach at Paris VII, replacing Lansonian criticism with a structuralist orientation. Thirty-year-old assistant professors, for the most part, but also some specialists like Antoine Culioli, chose this university to create a linguistics department.

Paris VII's interdisciplinarity was clear in the Department of History, Geography, and Social Sciences. "Was this because of structuralism? Yes, because what seduced so many people in structuralism and in Levi-Strauss's work was this fabulous possibility of going from the Bambara to Chomsky, to mathematics, and to ethnology."<sup>13</sup> Some wanted to make disciplinary boundaries so porous that different specialists could teach a single course that would include, for example, sociologists like Pierre Ansart or Henri Moniot alongside historians like Michelle Perrot and Jean Chesneaux. Not that this team planned to adopt the structuralist theoretical orientations except insofar as they could get beyond traditional disciplinary divisions.

Moreover, and in a more purely Parisian fashion, May '68 helped psychoanalysis to establish itself in the university alongside other social sciences. Until this point, psychoanalysis had been taught in divisions of letters, under the cover of psychology, along the lines laid out by Daniel Lagache, whose chair in psychology had been created for him at the Sorbonne in 1955.<sup>14</sup> Beyond the quarrels among different schools, this change came about thanks to the active participation of Lacanians in the structuralism of the sixties, alongside literature professors, anthropologists, and philosophers. Other mavericks such as Didier Anzieu at Nanterre and Juliette Favez-Boutonier at Censier,

who had created a Clinical Psychology Laboratory there in 1966, did make some inroads, but psychoanalysis remained highly precarious since there was no autonomous curriculum. "Either the clinic is psychological and should disappear, or it is medical and should be attached to medicine."<sup>15</sup> Favez-Boutonier did manage to create an enclave by attracting four assistants—Claude Prevost, Jacques Gagey, Pierre Fedida, and Anne-Marie Rocheblave. She had begun to enroll students despite the lack of official recognition of this area of clinical psychology. Thanks to May '68, and to this initial kernel and one other group, a division of Clinical Social Sciences took shape at Censier, Paris VII.

Other projects included an "experimental university" based on mathematics and social sciences proposed by linguist Antoine Culioli and psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche. "The idea was a return to basic sciences. . . . Rather than try to find space in psychology, we were looking for an experimental university."<sup>16</sup> But this project never got off the ground and Jean Laplanche became a member of the Division of Clinical Social Sciences, which quickly attracted hundreds of students. In 1969-70, he created a Laboratory for Psychoanalysis and Psychopathology, exclusively oriented around Freud's work.

This breakthrough at a literary university—Censier—was only possible because Lacanian psychoanalysis had been demedicalized and had points in common with linguistics. May made this institutional shift possible: the department of psychoanalysis at Vincennes offered concrete and spectacular proof of this.

### Conquering the College de France and America

The other sign of structuralism's institutionalization was Michel Foucault's nomination to the College de France at the end of 1969, which was a victory over Paul Ricoeur. Foucault's candidacy dated back to *The Order of Things* and was energetically presented by Jean Hyppolite, who began to organize Foucault's supporters, including Georges Dumezil, Jean Vuillemin, and Fernand Braudel. But Hyppolite's death on October 27, 1968 set the project back until it was taken up by Jean Vuillernin, since an empty chair in philosophy needed to be filled.<sup>17</sup> Three candidates were presented: Paul Ricoeur, Yvon Belaval, and Michel Foucault, who proposed to call his eventual slot the chair of the History of Systems of Thought, for which he presented a program of study. "Between the sciences that are already established (and whose

history has been written) and the phenomena of opinion (which historians know how to deal with), someone must undertake to write the history of systems of thought" in order to "raise the question of knowledge, its conditions, and the status of the knowing subject."<sup>18</sup>

In addition to this project, the professor at the College de France could choose a chair in the philosophy of action intended for Paul Ricoeur, or one in the history of rational thought, intended for Yvon Belaval. Of the 46 voting members, Foucault's project won the second round with 25 votes against 10 for Ricoeur and 9 for Belaval.!? On December 2, 1970, the heretical Foucault made his entry into this canonical institution with its intangible ritual, still smelling of the tear gas that had exploded on the Vincennes campus-an incongruous entry that can only be understood by situating Foucault's work within the structuralist movement; it allowed him to join ranks with Georges Dumezil and Claude Levi-Strauss as a legitimate and consecrated structuralist thinker.

A few years later, in fact, in 1975, the banquet of the four musketeers, minus Jacques Lacan, could be held at the College de France, when Roland Barthes joined Foucault, thanks to him, in the supreme consecration of his election to the venerable College. Foucault defended Barthes's candidacy, for his too-great worldliness gave some pause. "Don't you believe that those voices, those few voices whom we hear and listen to today just beyond the walls of the university, belong to our history and should be included here?"<sup>20</sup> Michel Foucault carried the day and Roland Barthes joined him, Claude Levi-Strauss, Georges Dumezil, Émile Benveniste, and shortly thereafter, Pierre Bourdieu. The College de France consecrated structuralism at that point as an intense and productive moment in French thought.

Seen from the other side of the Atlantic, these successes of the late sixties were fascinating. Bertrand Augst, a very francophilic professor in the French department at the University of California at Berkeley, wanted Americans to be able to take advantage of this intellectual energy and created a student center in the heart of Paris, at the Odeon, for training American students interested in film theory, who would come to Paris for a year of study. At the beginning of the seventies, this center enrolled approximately thirty American students from the University of California system, and then from other American universities, in courses that introduced them to structural semiology. Initially specializing in cinema semiology, the Odeon center diversified its

courses to include all the social sciences. Michel Marie, from the film department at Paris III, served as the Paris intermediary for these students, who later became the ambassadors to the United States for French structuralism.

In America, and particularly in California, Foucault's work was widely read. Derrida had already conquered the New World with his paper at the 1966 seminar at Johns Hopkins University, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." His work was sufficiently well known to warrant an annual seminar at Yale University, from 1973 onward, which was extremely well attended.

### The Perversity of Success

As structuralism made its way into institutions, its media conquest continued as well, particularly when Roger-Pol Droit became responsible for the social sciences column in the book review section of *Le Monde* in 1972. An Althussero-Lacanian, Droit was attracted to increasingly diversified structuralism. "I arrived at a moment when structuralism reigned in all its glory."<sup>21</sup> Droit resigned in 1977, when the structuralist wave was on the wane, but returned to *Le Monde* at the end of the eighties. "That all ended around 1975 in the clericature and the caricature of a world that had waned."<sup>22</sup>

According to Alain Touraine, one of the unpleasant consequences of structuralism's post-'68 institutional weight was to gut the protests of their social content and experience by emphasizing the break between the society and the university. "While the '68-discourse took hold in the university, its social reality was eliminated and took root elsewhere, among women, immigrant workers, and homosexuals. They changed society."<sup>23</sup> Eliminating lived experience closely corresponded with structuralist principles, which invited an epistemological, theoretical, and scientific break with its object in order to theorize events, whence the serious hermeticism of the academic world after it failed to connect with the social world.

But structuralism did have some social victories to its credit, particularly psychoanalytic structuralism, as the Freudian psychoanalyst Gerard Mendel emphasized. "Lacan's success occurred at a time when a whole intellectual proletariat (social workers of different sorts) existed for whom the noble path of psychoanalysis had been closed."<sup>24</sup> Lacan's orientation allowed analysts to work outside a medical world, and let new social classes leap into the breach thanks to more numer-

ous medical-pedagogical institutions. So psychoanalysis became more broadly socialized thanks partly to 1968.

But as it became institutionalized in universities and other august sites of scholarly travail thanks to the protests of 1968, structuralism also became increasing banal, losing its hard critical edge. Behind the triumph, therefore, we can espy the signs of future disintegration when no common battle was waged against a specific and obvious adversary and each discipline adopted a new and specific logic. Institutional triumph closed the militant phase and opened the period of dissolution and disintegration. The flamboyant history of the University of Vincennes is the best witness to these changes.

## *Fourteen*

### **Vincennes:**

### **The Structuralist University**

In the Bois de Vincennes to the east of Paris, next to a military shooting range, the minister of defense leased an area to the city of Paris, for a limited time, to open an experimental university beginning in fall 1968. This new university, Paris VIII, was to be the anti-Sorbonne, a veritable essence of modernity destined to open up new and original directions for research. The University of Vincennes swore fealty to interdisciplinarity and initially rejected traditional curriculum for preparing students for the national competitive exams leading to teaching jobs in favor of permitting an expansion of research. With few exceptions, lecture courses were proscribed; the Word was to circulate among small groups working in small classrooms. Academicism and the Sorbonne tradition were left outside the gates of a university that aspired to be resolutely contemporary, modern, and open to the most sophisticated technologies and scientific methods in the social sciences in order to ensure the renewal of the traditional humanities. Since modernization was identified with structuralism, Vincennes was structuralist, completely. It even symbolized the institutional triumph of structuralism, which left behind its marginal status and here made its entrance with head high through the portals of a Parisian university.

Vincennes was a fabulous campus, a real jewel in the crown of a tired Gaullist regime indulging in a plaything that was also a showcase. Wall-to-wall carpeting, a centrally controlled television hookup in every classroom, designer furniture everywhere, and all of this set in

a natural, verdant environment blissfully free from urban noise. Only the occasional sounds of distant shots from the army shooting range broke the otherwise natural silence.

This verdant, isolated campus became the refuge for the most pugnaeous of the May activists. Many Maoists were there, who, missing the red guards, tended to view this microcosm as the center of the world, or limited their world to the university campus. The lively forces of protest of May '68 met here, trapped within this confined and padded universe where agitation could flourish freely at a healthy remove from society. Distances would mute the effects of student protest between the campus and the heart of Paris. Indeed, the government was all too happy to have circumscribed the sickness in a forest, which also served as a cordon sanitaire. An entire generation passed through these gates and sharpened its critical weapons.

Despite its initial plan to build a showcase university, the government let Vincennes suffocate. Inadequately funded, it limped along, nearly bankrupt. Insufficient operating funds, daily breakdowns, and overcrowding angered students, who bashed ceilings in search of planted police microphones.<sup>1</sup> Vincennes quickly became a no-man's-land, although it was still shot through with a desire to pursue the experiment, with everyone jealously guarding the freedom, the quality of discussions and exchanges, and this liberated speech that remained a cherished and fundamental legacy of May. Behind the showcase window, the agitation of busy militants on the one hand, and the patent hedonism of the others, the research projects, and daily efforts to achieve a modernity and scientificity that outstripped that of all other humanities campuses in France, had international repercussions. If Paris is not France, Vincennes nevertheless could be the world. Ultimately, the danger of this brazier was resolved by its demolition and reconstruction to the north of Paris, on the Saint-Denis plain, well beyond the city limits.

### Harvard on the Seine?

Three perfectly bald-headed men took a certain pleasure in strolling together around the central fountain as the amazed students stared: the philosopher Michel Foucault, the linguist Jean-Claude Chevalier, and the literature professor Pierre Kuentz. With others, they incarnated the triumph of structuralism, the end of a long battle that had

fulfilled an impossible dream: a literary university reconciled with science where structural thinking played a major role.

The minister of education, Edgar Faure, had contacted Jean Dubois to ask him to be the dean of Vincennes. Dubois had developed Nanterre, and at Larousse had promoted a structuralist publishing program in linguistics. A PCF member known for his fair-mindedness, Dubois agreed to set up a department of linguistics, but he was not interested in any other administrative responsibilities. "I thought about it for a week. Mission impossible. Above all, I was a man of order. I visited the sites, which were splendid, but from the very first, the chairs had already been moved by the truckloads."<sup>2</sup> Raymond Las Vergnas, an anglicist and dean of the Sorbonne, took charge of organizing the new university. In October 1968, he invited a commission of twenty well-known figures, including Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Georges Canguilhem, and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, to discuss the orientation of the programs at Vincennes. A dozen of those present were quickly appointed to a central committee responsible for naming the academic staff.

There was a certain logic to these nominations and structuralists were given priority. Two members of the central committee represented the two branches of sociological structuralism: Jean-Claude Passeron, a Bourdieusian, and Robert Castel, a Foucauldian. When the sociologist Georges Lapassade met Robert Castel at a general meeting at the Sorbonne in November 1968, he indicated that he would like to teach at Vincennes and was told that the sociologists needed to maintain their epistemological coherence. "Later, Jean-Marie Vincent and Serge Mallet, both sociologists, also ran up against this sort of 'veto' in the same department."<sup>3</sup>

Michel Foucault was in charge of hiring the teaching staff for philosophy; Jean-Pierre Richard was responsible in French literature; Jean Dubois, Jean-Claude Chevalier and Maurice Gross decided on the teaching staff in linguistics. The university included a department of psychoanalysis, which was a real first, headed by Serge Leclair, second in command in the Lacanian organization.

The grand project was to make Vincennes a small MIT, an American university, a model of modernity, an internationally known enclave with overtly interdisciplinary ambitions. Reality was a far cry from the model. Limited budgets, especially the French attitude toward investing university faculty positions, far different from the

American approach, hamstringing the plans. "In American universities, professors are always available, they are in constant touch with their students, they have joint research programs and well worked-out administrative frameworks."<sup>4</sup> Nothing comparable existed at Vincennes, even if professors spent more time there than they did elsewhere since meetingitis was the university's infantile disease. But the most active professors were especially represented in the general meetings and action committees, and ultimately, despite some efforts, the contacts between disciplines and among specialists were relatively limited. As for contact with students, who were listened to in their sections, which was already unusual, the cafeteria was the best place for conversation. "In a word, what remained of the American model at Vincennes? The salon quality, the many auditors, and people hanging around in the sections, but very few ties. We did not really adopt the American model."<sup>5</sup>

This dilettantism was measurable by the numbers of students who came because they were unhappy with their home universities and were eager to embrace a perfect universe where they could go from department to department without any administrative obstacles.

After '68, I enrolled at Vincennes. The advantage was that we could take whatever courses we wanted. I took Ruwet's course for three months and then I left and took Deleuze's course, and Todorov's. . . . I stayed in literature where there were excellent professors like Pierre Kuentz, influenced by structuralism. It was a breath of fresh air. Deleuze's course was paradise. I was also going to courses in the psychoanalysis department. The dawn was breaking!

For working students and others who had not passed the *baccalaureat* exam, Vincennes offered the more prosaic possibility of taking night classes, scheduled until ten in the evening. These students were the pride and joy of this unusual university, like the deliveryman who took advantage of his stops there to enroll in the history department, where he took courses and later passed the *agregation* exam."

Although Vincennes generally adopted the American university model, the most militant faculty looked east, to Peking and to the Red Guards of the "Cultural Revolution," for its model. Maoists dominated ideology at Vincennes to such a degree that the Trotskyist cell of the Communist League, which included some of the great national voices (such as Henri Weber and Michel Recanati), mockingly called itself the "Mao Tse-tung cell."

## Generativism at Vincennes

The Americanization of Vincennes was particularly palpable in the linguistics department, where a marriage was forged between French linguists like Jean-Claude Chevalier and Jean Dubois and the American influence, represented by Nicolas Ruwet, who had been to MIT and was a staunch partisan of Chomsky's generative grammar, and Maurice Gross, a polytechnician who had planned to be a weapons engineer but who finally opted for linguistics after his return from MIT and his discovery of the possibilities of informatics. Gross was more of a Zellig Harris student than a Chomskyan, but the Vincennes linguistics department had a clear generative bent. Thanks particularly to Nicolas Ruwet who was obviously selected to join the staff, Chomsky's model held sway. Ruwet was just returning from MIT when Vincennes was taking off, and in the fall of 1968 he was promoted to the FNRS (National Scientific Research Foundation) in Belgium and could stabilize a career that until then had been precarious. One spring morning, while preparing to leave Paris to go to Belgium, he went to see Todorov at home. Just back from Yale, Todorov was also unhappy with the way things were going, and was surviving, precariously, on scholarships. The telephone rang. Derrida was calling, in his capacity as a member of the central committee of Vincennes, to ask Todorov if he would teach in this new university. He painted a glowing picture of the situation. Todorov answered that he was interested, and Derrida invited him to contact other competent potential teachers and come that afternoon to Helene Cixous's place, near the Place de la Contrescarpe in the Latin Quarter. Todorov and Ruwet went, and met Maurice Gross, who was also in a difficult institutional situation. A lately converted polytechnician, he had not studied literature, and had only a one-year renewable contract as an assistant lecturer associated with the university of Aix-en-Provence. Besides, since he was in conflict with Andre Martinet, he could not hope for a career in linguistics in France and was preparing to pack his bags for Texas. Gerard Genette was also there, mainly for his wife's sake. Jacques Derrida was the master of ceremonies and Helene Cixous spent an hour describing the plans for Vincennes. "We said to each other: We are in a nuthouse! It was so strange given what we knew of the university in general. We asked if a department of linguistics was possible at Vincennes and were told that that was obvious because linguistics was the driving force behind everything!"<sup>8</sup>

Jean Dubois then took matters in hand to set up the linguistics department, and Nicolas Ruwet became associate professor. Linguistics was initially funded for eleven full-time positions at Vincennes, "which was almost sad because there were not eleven linguists in France among those whom we would have wanted to have."<sup>9</sup> The following year, the department got another position and Nicolas Ruwet invited a twenty-four-year old researcher whom he had met at MIT to come. The staff was free to define its curriculum. "We did generative grammar above all, either the Gross version or the Chomsky version; and with Chevalier, there was also the history of grammar."<sup>10</sup>

Linguistics was at its zenith. Given how difficult and technical the discipline was, student enrollments were surprisingly high. "At the beginning, I had about a hundred students in my class."!<sup>11</sup> Those who were hungry for modernity saw generative grammar as the ultimate step in scientific innovation. This scientificity swayed the new generation of '68. Bernard Laks was in *hypokhâgne* at Lamartine High School in 1968-69 and his philosophy professor, Jean-Toussaint Desanti, introduced him to epistemology quite early on, and to the mathematical sciences. In literature, Lucette Finas was giving courses that were totally out of sync with her institution; she was uninterested in the national competitive exams and their centralized programs, and instead taught Todorov, Barthes, Foucault, and Bataille. After the February 1969 vacation, Lucette Finas spoke to her *khagne* students: "The world has changed and I'm leaving, I'm going to the only place that is interesting today: Vincennes. Those who like what I do should follow me. Things are dead here and I am going to a place where minds are alive."<sup>12</sup> Bernard Laks followed Lucette Finas and arrived at Vincennes in the middle of the school year and undertook a triple degree in literature, linguistics, and informatics. "At the end of the year, I concentrated primarily on linguistics because that was where science was."<sup>13</sup>

Fascination with a scientific approach and axiomatics went hand in hand with a Marxist commitment, because Marxism was seen as the science of political action. Sociolinguistics, one of the branches of the linguistics department at Vincennes, was spectacularly popular, growing by leaps and bounds in the wake of May '68. Pierre Encreve, who had been recruited by Maurice Gross to teach phonology and sociolinguistics, was the expert in this field. An assistant to Martinet, Encreve confided to Gross that he had quarreled with Martinet, which

was sufficient grounds for being hired. "Gross said to him, 'I don't need to know whether or not you are a good phonologist, I'm hiring you, . . . because Vincennes was to be a war machine against the Sorbonne, Censier, and Martinet.'"14

Sociolinguistics also used an American model based on Labov's work. Pierre Encreve did not see it as a subbranch of linguistics that, like the study of dialects or social covariances, had a limited field of study, but as a complete and independent discipline taking language as its object and variationist generativism as its paradigm. It was thus a different approach than that of most of the Nanterre faculty and of Marcellesi's social linguistics, as well as many other branches of a discipline that was at its height. In 1968 alone, more sociolinguistic works were published than in the seven preceding years. Bernard Laks counted no fewer than fourteen different sociolinguistic research projects. *is*

The department of letters was in theory less "scientific," and therefore devalued in the eyes of the linguists. Nonetheless, it fully participated in structuralist modernity under the direction of partisans of the new criticism who considered that literature could be studied using the structural paradigm and techniques drawn from linguistics. Many professors had been active at Strasbourg and Besancon during the mid-sixties; interdisciplinarity and modernity were the two linchpins of this new department where Henri Mitterand, Jean-Pierre Richard, Claude Duchet, Jean Levaillant, Pierre Kuentz, Jean Bellernin-Noel, and Lucette Finas, among others, taught. Taking care not to define literature along traditional lines, professors at Vincennes were particularly receptive to an interdisciplinary approach. Psychoanalysis and history, using two models of Freudian and Marxist analysis revisited by structuralism, were generally embraced by the department. "These studies were not in principle limited to French literature, or even to the expression 'literary.'"16

## Foucault Establishes the Lacanian-Althusserian Mechanism

The biggest news, however, was without a doubt Michel Foucault's nomination as head of the philosophy department. Because he was responsible for staff appointments, Foucault had solicited his friend Gilles Deleuze, who was quite ill at the time and could only come to

Vincennes two years later. Michel Serres immediately agreed to join Foucault at Vincennes. In the fall of 1968, with *Les Cahiers pour l'analyse* serving as intermediary, Foucault went to the ENS on the rue d'Ulm with one specific goal: to recruit some Althussero-Lacanian for Vincennes. He convinced Judith Miller, Lacan's daughter, Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, François Regnault, and Jean-François Lyotard, among others. The tone was structural-Maoist, even if some of the others were not Maoists: Henri Weber was a member of the Communist League, and Étienne Balibar was an Althusserian, but also a PCF member. To ensure that things worked smoothly, Foucault invited François Châtelet, a recent convert to the structuralist cause.

In addition to his responsibilities in the philosophy department, Foucault got involved in creating the Experimental Center at Vincennes. Above all, he wanted to eliminate psychologists and recruit psychoanalysts who could create their own department and use the entire budget and fill all the slots. "He could not avoid having the PCF impose a psychology department, so that when the jobs were limited, they were shared in a philosophy/psychoanalysis department."<sup>17</sup> Although Foucault created the department, the idea had come from Jacques Derrida. Serge Leclaire became the head, with Lacan's approval, but the fight had already broken out between Derrida and Lacan, preventing Lacan, the other structuralist superstar, from finally having a solid institutional footing by joining the faculty. "Since Foucault was heading up the philosophy department, it was normal that Lacan be head of the department of psychoanalysis, which Derrida opposed."<sup>18</sup>

Lacan was not at Vincennes, but Lacanian thinking was. With it, psychoanalysis officially integrated the university of letters. All of the faculty were members of the *École Freudienne de Paris* (EFP), and there were no fewer than sixteen seminars on psychoanalysis given by Serge Leclaire, Michele Montrelay, François Baudry, René Tostain, Jacques Nassif, Jean Clavreul, Claude Rabant, Luce Irigaray, Claude Dumezil, Michel de Certeau, and Jacques-Alain Miller, the husband of Lacan's daughter. The brains of Vincennes were there, and not only because this department was the most striking innovation of the period. The Proletarian Left reigned over the campus, and the Miller family held the reins in its hands: Jacques-Alain Miller, his wife Judith, who taught in philosophy, and his brother Gérard, who oversaw the political organization. Gérard Miller faced off against the vigorous

competition of another Maoist movement, which the Communist League called Mao-spontex: the Committee for the Abolition of Salaried Work and the Dismissal of the University, led by Jean-Marc Salmon, an extremely talented orator who could filibuster for hours on end by enrapturing an entire lecture hall, and by Andre Glucksmann, whose tactics for ridding the university of revisionists and assimilationists became increasingly terroristic.

This department of psychoanalysis wielded tremendous influence and became a permanent forum. Whether they were students or not, many came to visit for the pleasure of the show because every day brought something new. "There were memorable sessions. I remember a course-should I even call it a course?-that was rather pleasantly violent in a lecture hall in front of at least eight hundred people. Screams came from the four corners of the hall; I remember especially some particularly virulent remarks by Badiou."19 "We had seminars that horrified Jacques-Alain Miller and Gerard Miller, who came and found that things were not serious enough. We indulged in incoherent discussions before a very interesting nonanalyst audience, but which was very politicized and which had come to have it out with analysts. It amused and stimulated us."20

The high point came when Lacan, at the invitation of the philosophy department, held a meeting of his seminar in Lecture Hall 1 on December 3, 1969. Even the most refractory people on campus hurried to see him, delighted to have the chance to make fun of "the" Lacan. The confrontation was worthy of DaH:

J. Lacan (*a dog walks on the stage*): I will speak about my *Egeria*, who is of this sort. She is the only person I know who knows what she is speaking-I don't say what she is saying-not because she doesn't say anything, but she does not say it with words. She says something when she is anxious-which happens-she puts her head on my knees. She knows that I am going to die, which some other people also know. Her name is Justine . . . *Question*: Hey, this is crazy. He's talking to us about his dog! J. Lacan: It's my dog, and she is beautiful and you would have heard her speak . . . The only thing she's missing compared to the person who is walking is that she did not go to the university.s!

In fact, the master was no longer alone on the stage. A protester stood up and began to undress. Lacan encouraged him to go all the way. "Listen, man, I already saw that last night, I was at the Open Theater

and there was a guy doing that, but he had more nerve than you, he was completely naked. Go on, go on already, keep going, shit."<sup>22</sup>

The audience demanded that the master give a Maoist critique of psychoanalysis, of university discourse, and of himself. But Lacan answered that revolutionary struggle could only lead to the discourse of the master: "What you aspire to, as revolutionaries, is a Master. You will have him. . . . You are playing the role of the zealots of this regime. You no longer know what that means? The regime will show you. It says: 'Look at them get off.' OK. There it is. Good-bye for today. Bye. It's over."<sup>23</sup>

The curtain would soon be drawn on the master because he became less and less able to tolerate Serge Leclaire's power and autonomy at Vincennes. Leclaire wanted an independent department of psychoanalysis, freed from the oversight of the philosophers, and which could give credits; he was then attacked from all quarters. Alain Badiou questioned him, and accused him of being an agent of the counterrevolution; the EFP disavowed him and its members came to campus to denounce the heresy. Lacan fed the fire, and urged that Leclaire be abandoned. "Were we manipulated by Lacan without knowing it? It's possible. In any case, we had rejected Leclaire, and for three years we operated without a director."<sup>24</sup> Jean Clavreul succeeded Leclaire as the head of the department, but he stuck to daily business and gave all the department members a free hand.

Just a few short years later, in 1974, a second act took place. The department went into receivership under the leadership of the administration of the EFP, and therefore of Lacan, with his son-in-law Jacques-Alain Miller serving as intermediary. "Miller's arrival at the head of the department was getting us back in line. Lacan suggested that we comply with his wishes and we withdrew in good order."<sup>25</sup>

Roger-Pol Droit leaked the story of this coup in *Le Monde*. "I played a small role there when I wrote an article letting people know that a putsch was being prepared. But they needed to be sure that no one knew too much about it, as is the case for any putsch. A week later, this article forced a general assembly and the writing of leaflets."<sup>26</sup> Roger-Pol Droit called the operation a purification and denounced the Vichyist undertaking. The putsch made a few waves and the leaflet signed by Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard denouncing a "Stalinist operation" was a veritable first in university affairs, since tradition usually prevented private individuals from

directly intervening to fire or hire anyone. "Every kind of terrorism involves cleaning house: washing the unconscious seems no less terrible or authoritarian than brainwashing."<sup>28</sup> Henceforth normalized by its local Husak.s? jacques-Alain Miller, the department of psychoanalysis of Vincennes operated in a strict Lacanian orthodoxy. In 1969, Lacan had warned: "You will find your master" and the students naively believed that he was thinking of Pompidou. He was in fact talking about himself. Psychoanalysis at Vincennes once again became an orderly structure, which triumphed over the agitation to restore the hierarchy.

### Interdisciplinarity

Power struggles were less pointed in the other departments at Vincennes, but they did not preclude interdisciplinary exchanges. The history department made no secret of its objective of destroying the illusions of a historical science and raised questions about its very object of study, notably by comparing its methods with those of the other social sciences.

Such interdisciplinarity was also at the heart of the department of political economy, which was something new for a literary university. The outlines had been prepared by Andre Nicolai, although he did not teach at Vincennes, since the department only gave two years of courses and students could not get their third-year degree, the *Licence*. "It was the hard-core literary types who dominated and they wanted an alibi of scientificity by being sure that economics was taught."<sup>30</sup> At a time when econometrics and the mathematization of economic language were triumphing, the department of political economy was an exception. Generally open to historical, sociological, philosophical, and anthropological thinking, it argued that there was no pure economy. Michel Beaud, who later became the head of the department, considered that he was renewing the eighteenth-century tradition of political economy. "I think that we are right and that we are ahead of the others."<sup>31</sup> He remembered this period of richly diverse thinking thanks to undergraduates in other departments who had come to pick up some basics of economics. "They came up with objections using Deleuze, Foucault, Poulantzas, or others, and forced us to read and to think."<sup>32</sup>

The other important innovation that worked at Vincennes was a film department, which was spectacularly popular: twelve hundred students took courses and there were more than five hundred majors.

There were some technical courses like those at the National Cinema School (IDHEC), but the department was essentially theoretical and broadened the audience of the new cinema semiology. Christian Metz's work became a fundamental source of inspiration for the theoretical work at Paris VIII. Michel Marie used Metz's work for his analysis of Alain Resnais's film *Muriel*, breaking the film into the smallest discrete units possible, using textual analysis to discern the pertinent, minimal units of cinematographic language. Marc Vernet considered this fantasy of complete mastery over a film on the basis of its division and numbering into phases/sequences was "a historically legitimate idea at the time since we didn't have any films, so we had to photograph as many things as possible and have an exact decoupage. At the time, we had neither copies nor videocassettes."<sup>33</sup>

### Madness at Vincennes

Heads you had scientific discourse, tails you had raving. Occasionally, the same people were on both sides of the coin. This was the reality of Vincennes. And in the seventies, the group Foudre, sponsored by Alain Badiou and led by Bernard Sichere, became emblematic of this double reality. This Maoist group wanted to be a kernel of cultural criticism and did not hesitate to employ terrorist tactics. Among its credits was blocking the projection of Liliana Cavani's film *Night Porter* on the campus. But its favored target was Maria-Antonietta Macciocchi, a teacher who was, curiously enough, a great admirer of China.

Macciocchi was working in a collective on fascism at the time. She was accused of being a fascist for having wanted to transform her teaching group into a propaganda office, and for having shown the film *The Jew Suss*. The madness reached its apex in March 1976 when the group Foudre distributed a leaflet titled "Rolling Balls Gather No Masses":

Alas. We will never again see the illustrious Pythonisse of the Western World who made us laugh so hard! . . . One day, she thought she had found the solution-why look to reality when you have a crystal ball! An excellent palmist, depending on whether she tilted her ball toward the East or toward the West, she saw a mustache appear, without quite knowing if it was Stalin's or Hitler's, but all mustaches were pointed and ended up like these fish tails, she said, that intersect in the Gulag archipelago. One day, believing she was dreaming,

she saw a Ghost Ship and felt the stripes of Commander Sollers growing on her own head, and she looked at herself in the mirror for a long time and found herself quite beautiful. That was the end; she began to stutter and mixed everything up-Marxism and psycho-analysis, students and murderers, paranoia and paranoia, pens and felt tips, barricades and Mr. Dadoun's couch, the Marquis de Sade and concentration camps, fascism and Marxist-Leninists.>

Mad Vincennes? Beyond the folklore and the mad acting out of an impotent desire to incarnate absent populations, the campus was, above all, Structuralist Vincennes.

## *Fifteen*

### **Journals: Still Going Strong**

May '68 also led to the creation of international collectives reorganized into new journals and reinvigorating those that already existed. We have already seen how much energy went into creating new theoretical journals during the early years of structuralism's rise. This energy continued through the early seventies.

#### **Literary and Linguistic Avant-Gardes**

The great semiological adventure continued, with its characteristically intense linguistic and literary critical activity. When *Semiotica* was founded in 1969, with editor in chief Thomas A. Sebeok, it had two assistant editors in Paris, Josette Rey-Debove and Julia Kristeva. The editorial board was composed of well-known figures from seven different countries: Roland Barthes (France), Umberto Eco (Italy), Juri M. Lotrnan (USSR), Jan Pelc (Poland), Nicolas Ruwet (Belgium), Meyer Schapiro (United States), and Heinz Sailu (West Germany). *Semiotica* became the official journal for the International Semiotics Organization, headed by Émile Benveniste and run by Julia Kristeva. The review would publish semiotic research in all disciplines where the notion of the sign was recognized and discussed. As a result, articles were far-ranging.

In the same line as *Langages* and also published by Larousse, a new review, *Langue française*, was launched by French linguists, under the direction of Jean-Claude Chevalier, as a joint undertaking of

the Society for the Study of the French Language (SELF) and the department of general linguistics at Vincennes. The inaugural issue came out in February 1969 with a print run of five thousand copies.' "According to the jargon of the period, we wanted to join theory with practice . . . . The first four issues (on syntax, lexicon, semantics, and stylistics) indicated our pedagogical intentions.'?"

In his 1968 article in the collective work *What Is Structuralism?* Tzvetan Todorov had defined poetics as one of the elements of structuralism. *Poétique* focused on literary theory and analysis and systematically explored this path from its creation in 1970 at Seuil by Gerard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov, and Helene Cixous. Its theoretical givens were the structuralist and formalist orthodoxy. *Poétique* was to be a warhorse against psychologizing theory. Contributors were experienced literary types, familiar with linguistics and close to Barthes. However, in the early seventies, they were separated from him because of his rapprochement with the *Tel Quel* group and his partisanship with its textual ideology. "Barthes participated in this idea of a Text with a capital T, which implied something of a metaphysics of the Text, whereas Genette and I were much more empirically minded."<sup>4</sup> *Poétique* was strictly literary, and there was no question of subjecting thinking about literature to any derivative Marxist or Freudian model. The formalist slant implied that literary language would be studied independently from the referent, be it social or subjective, and in this it was faithful to the Russian formalists of the beginning of the century.

There were scientific aspirations. Philippe Hamon considered a literary character to be a group of signs on a page. "In that respect, we went too far. That was one of my most terrorist pieces."<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Seuil launched a collection entitled "Poétique" directed by Gerard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov, which published major works. The relationship between linguistics and literature was therefore central to many debates and studies."

As far as Vincennes was concerned, the department of letters created a review in 1971, shortly after *Poétique*, that was published by Larousse. *Litterature* tried to explore something other than the formalism championed by *Poétique*. The team of French professors was not particularly homogeneous and they decided to juxtapose different viewpoints in order to enrich literary analysis. "We had a common core that was vaguely Marxist and sociological, and some were

rhetoricians impassioned by the study of forms and ideology. Our two masters were Benveniste and Althusser."<sup>9</sup> The journal proposed a new slant in the structural paradigm and the attempt to connect it to the Subject and to history. A special issue came out on the beginnings of this reconciliation.<sup>10</sup> Reflecting the militant interdisciplinarity of the department of letters at Vincennes was the rule, not so much through real, joint research programs as through the variety of interests of each of the participants in the review. Some, like Henri Mitterand and Pierre Kuentz, were interested in structural linguistics, whereas others, like Claude Duchet, were more interested in sociocriticism. Jean Bellemin-Noel opened up critical work to an analytic approach that was not so much working on the author's unconscious as mirroring the fantasies provoked by reading the text. He called this impact on the reader's unconscious the textual unconscious. Bellemin-Noel characterized the interplay of production/reception as textual analysis and this led literary studies onto Freudian grounds, one of the major focuses of *Litterature*, together with a Marxist-Althusserian perspective.

## Writing and Revolution

The changes going on in structuralism as of 1967, which were accentuated and comforted by the struggles of 1968, found a special platform for expression in the avant-garde review *Tel Quel*. Derrida's deconstruction received its widest readership thanks to *Tel Quel*. Philippe Sollers, a friend of Derrida, addressed structuralism's different faces in order to sketch out what he called a "program" during the fall of 1967, and which Elisabeth Roudinesco later characterized as a "flamboyant manifesto of intellectual terrorism."<sup>11</sup> This program defined a revolutionary path and considered that in order for the revolution to happen, writing had to be shaken up. *Tel Quel* presented itself as the avant-garde of the proletarian revolution to come and, in a Leninist fashion, was to have a "scientific" program, of course. Seeking to move the masses, this volatile, literary Molotov cocktail was a scholarly potion mixing Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and Althusser.

*Tel Quel* thought of itself as bearing all modernist advances in the human sciences renewed by the structuralist paradigm. And it was powerful enough to come out with its 1968 collection at *Seuil* of a *Tel Quel: Theorie d'ensemble*, which adopted a scientific perspective. "We think that what has been called 'literature' belongs to a period that is now over, having given way to a nascent science of writing."<sup>12</sup>

To historical materialism, Philippe Sollers added semantic materialism, which adopted Jacques Derrida's architraces, Michel Foucault's epistemic breaks, and Louis Althusser's epistemological breaks, as well as Lacan's split subject.

Symbolically, *Tel Quel* managed to confederate the different elements of the current modernization in the social sciences, inasmuch as it had been the privileged partner of the PCF intellectuals at *La Nouvelle Critique*. According to its authors, the set theory would unite all of French society. The *Tel Quel* perspective nevertheless was above all literary. In 1968, the year Philippe Sollers's *Logiques* came out,<sup>13</sup> the focus was on marginal texts which subverted historical linearity and the very notion of truth, of the subject. This was the spirit in which Sollers took on the works of Sade, Mallarmé, and Bataille, as so many revolutionary textual breaks turned, not really toward a dialectical *Aufhebung*, but toward their own erasure through a process of consumption already at work in his *Numbers* and *Drama*. The text "burns at all levels, it appears only to efface itself,"<sup>14</sup> according to the oxymoron, a rhetorical figure of suspended meaning and history.

*Tel Quel* wanted to be the bearer of a "Red Front in Art," for which literature and revolution "make common cause."<sup>15</sup> This Front, which proudly waved the banner of the signifier finally freed from the signified, found concrete, structural support in its relationship with the PCP. Theoretically, *Tel Quel* was the organ of Derridean deconstruction. In reaction to Bernard Pingaud's criticisms, Philippe Sollers recalled that Derrida's *Of Grammatology* clarified and radically modified the thinking of the last years. "No thinking can henceforth avoid situating itself with respect to this event."<sup>16</sup>

Pingaud asked "Whither *Tel Quel*?"<sup>17</sup> giving Sollers the opportunity to clarify a certain number of turns in the sinuous path of the journal's history. In 1968, Sollers defined the foundations of 1960 as basically aesthetically ambiguous but correct insofar as they gave priority to an immanent practice of the text. This position, however, remained too mired in metaphysics, which saw the text as an expression, and tended to take the new novel's positivism—from 1960 to 1962, the form of writing championed by *Tel Quel*-too seriously. In 1962, thanks to linguistics, a new period began during which the status of writing came under examination. "At that point, indeed, linguistics was, for us, a powerful aid."<sup>18</sup>

In 1964, *Tel Quel* defined itself as a journal of the avant-garde, of

Bataille, Artaud, and Sade, writers who tested limits and whose non-metaphorical writing broke with tradition. Categories defining works and authors were called into question and the issue became more and more one of writing, based on the work of Derrida and Althusser: the notion of the sign was questioned, and literature was considered to be production.

While Sollers was in the process of clarifying the journal's orientation, it was on the verge of a radical swing from a Russian to a Chinese version of Marxism. Part of the fallout of May '68 and the success of the Proletarian Left, the shift was made in record time. In September 1968, *Tel Quel* was still publishing articles on contemporary semiology in the USSR (issue 35), introduced by Julia Kristeva, but by the beginning of 1969, it turned to the Red East to the "Great Helmsman," to a Stalinist Marxism-Leninism purified by President Mao, even if, after serious disputes, the journal decided to maintain its participation in a colloquium in 1970 at Cluny on the topic "Literature and Ideology." When the "Movement of June '71" was created at *Tel Quel*, no compromise was possible. Bridges had been definitively burned with "revisionists" and "new czars."

*Tel Quel* became the expression of intellectuals' fascination with China and their interest was reciprocated when a team from the editorial board including Marcelin Pleyne, Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, and Roland Barthes was invited to China.

We are the first writers to go to China, with a journal that prints five thousand copies (the issue on China went to twenty-five thousand copies). We are invited by a population of almost one billion individuals, thanks to this little journal. We come back, and all the newspapers are filled with our positions. In a word, it was quite effective.<sup>19</sup>

The 1974 trip to China was based on the idea of a possible leap forward thanks to the "Cultural Revolution," even though the Cultural Revolution had been over since 1969 and the Chinese Communist Party again had an iron grip on the Chinese population. So there was a big gap between the travelers' imaginary China and its Stalinist reality. Julia Kristeva admitted, in fact—but only in 1988: "Contemporary China disappointed me. We did not see the liberation we had hoped for, but rather much constraint, including torture and the murder of more or less free-minded individuals."<sup>20</sup>

*Tel Quel* was locked in a hollow Chinese discourse. It exerted its intellectual terrorism on a broad scale because it claimed to represent this little-known Oriental viewpoint, which represented a relatively large slice of humanity. It wanted to incarnate the overthrow not only of French society, but of all of humanity, from the countryside to the cities. A new generation of Maoists joined the editorial board. In 1971, Bernard Sichere became a Maoist and joined *Tel Quel* after a considerable and significant disagreement with the high school where he was teaching. "I came to the journal because of a disagreement with certain of the students' parents at the high school where I was teaching. I had used texts by Sade in my classes; our disagreement was political and literary."<sup>21</sup> The meeting took place with *Tel Quel*, which saw itself as expressing the most radical protest of politics, theory, and literature. "At the time, practice won out over theory, which revealed an excessive subjectivity over the will to theorize; all this gave rise to intellectual terrorism among psychoanalysts at *Tel Quel*, and in political groups."<sup>22</sup>

We can see this excess in the *Tel Quel* microcosm as something like a literature that did not manage to find itself, and therefore took indirect paths to valorize an aesthetic that could not admit what it was, during a period when the novel was in crisis and ideological criticism was tremendously active. Dissension and rupture resulted, and were all the more violent for being impassioned, for indeed, tremendous affectivity underlay the theoretical discourse. Every change for the journal resulted in staff changes around the original editorial group, and increased the numbers of pariahs.

In 1967, the fratricidal battle between *Tel Quel* and Jean-Pierre Faye had already begun. "On a day when I was feeling trustful, I mentioned two or three things about the very right-wing position of *Tel Que!* during the Algerian War. There were a lot of repercussions and a real explosion of anger."<sup>23</sup> The Maoist moment only further poisoned a virulent polemic between the two sides, so much so that Jean-Pierre Faye resigned from *Tel Quel* to create *Change*, which was also at Seuil. The editorial core was formed in the fall of 1967 and the first issue came out in 1968.<sup>24</sup> The title itself evoked the vacillation and hesitation between science and literature, between formal theory and ideological criticism. The editorial board planned to work on the construction of the *recit* in order to better understand the effects of the interplay of forms. "It was in this interval between construction and

dismantling that criticism shifted."<sup>25</sup> Writing was its focus, and *Change* directly rivaled *Tel Quel* right from the start.

Jean-Pierre Faye adopted the Prague Circle legacy, to which his journal devoted an entire issue. He wanted to restore historicity and dynamics in the structural model by using Chomsky's generative grammar, even if his approach was not completely consonant with Chomsky's own project. But this was how Faye understood and used it, pushing the notion of syntactic transformation to the forefront and making it possible to go from deep to surface structures (the models of competence and performance). *Change* also evoked the idea of mobile structures, and was inspired by a poem by Faye, "written in the Azores, in an archipelago in the middle of the Atlantic, halfway between Lisbon and Brazil. . . . This sort of hub of the archipelago was, for me, the sign of the change of forms."<sup>26</sup> Faye also found this idea of a "change of forms" in Marx, in a censured text clarifying the presentation he made to French readers, but in which the issue was the question of the market object that becomes part of the exchange process and changes form by changing hands—it becomes value. "It is this change of form that conditions and mediates the change of value, an extraordinary formula that completely reverses the vulgate and its ironclad infrastructures."<sup>27</sup>

Mitsou Ronat joined the editorial group. Her work on rule changing in poetic language was consonant with their orientation. Working on Mallarmé's prose, she carefully pointed out syntactic rules as rules of deviation and dissidence with respect to French transformational grammar, even though they had their own rigor. "It was a need to change language."<sup>28</sup> A third period in the history of *Change* came when it focused on the relationship with the story recounted, the act of relating a message, enabling the journal to look at history and utterances, the subject of Jean-Pierre Faye's thesis, published in 1972:<sup>29</sup> "What seemed to me to be the critical moment in the analysis of language, a common concern of philosophy and history, was the way in which language returns to its reality by changing it."<sup>30</sup>

## Ethereal Realms of Confrontation

These journals attracted research projects, generated consensus, and elicited powerful dissent. Reviews during this period were the best way to get theoretical debates going. In 1963, *Esprit* had already interviewed Levi-Strauss, and in 1968 it interviewed Michel Foucault,

who was asked the following question: "Doesn't the kind of thinking that introduces the constraints of the system and discontinuity into the history of thought undermine the foundations of any progressive political intervention?"<sup>31</sup> It was May 1968, so Foucault's answer went rather unnoticed at the time, but it was in fact absolutely relevant. He returned to his notion of episteme, which clearly posed a problem, and redefined the grand underlying theory that had seemed well established in *The Order of Things*. In its place, he proposed the notion of a dispersive space that made possible many analyses, always differentiated. Clearly, Derrida's notion of *différance* had influenced Foucault, for whom "the episteme is not a general stage of reason but a complex relationship of successive shifts."<sup>32</sup> Thus Foucault responded to the accusation that his philosophical system privileged constraints. Above all, he tried to replace causal relations that aligned all phenomena with reference to a single cause with a "polymorphous bundle of correlations."<sup>33</sup>

The archival work that he defined was a prelude to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* on which he was working. His was not a proposal to collect texts but to determine how they came to be, what the conditions of their legibility and transformations were. In contrast to structural linguistics, Foucault was not interested in rules of internal construction, but rather in the condition of the existence of what was said. This was the issue that led him to reject any structuralist label: "Is it necessary to reiterate that I am not what is called a 'structuralist'?"<sup>34</sup> As for the relationship between his thinking and political practice, in other words the question of progressivism, Foucault responded regarding the critical character of his work: "Progressive politics is a politics that recognizes the historical conditions and the specific rules of practice."<sup>35</sup>

After 1968 and until 1970, *La Nouvelle Critique* pursued its policy of openness, of promulgating structuralist ideas, and its special relationship with the *Tel Quel* team. In April 1970, a jointly organized colloquium was held at Cluny on the relationship between literature and ideology, and the papers were published in *La Nouvelle Critique*. But things unfolded in an atmosphere of crisis because the East was increasingly Red and, seen from Peking, the PCF looked like a pale shade of pink to the *Tel Quel* team.

In October 1970, Catherine Backes-Clement published a special report in *La Nouvelle Critique* on "Marxism and Psychoanalysis,"<sup>36</sup>

with contributions by Antoine Casanova, Andre Green, Serge Leclaire, Bernard Miildworf, and Lucien Sève.<sup>36</sup> The goal was to find a way to articulate the two "sciences." Julia Kristeva, who had stunned the intellectuals of the PCF at the first joint colloquium organized with *La Nouvelle Critique*, was given carte blanche. All the important columns of the journal were placed at her disposal, and in 1970 she was interviewed by Christine Buci-Glucksmann and Jean Peytard on the ideas in her *Research for a Semanalysis Y*

*La Nouvelle Critique* also publicized and analyzed Levi-Strauss's work. Having already written about *Mythologiques* in 1969, Backes-Clement interviewed Levi-Strauss in 1973. His remarks reassured Marxists: "I am deeply convinced that the infrastructure determines the superstructures."<sup>38</sup> In addition, he announced an impending and essentially ecological battle, which meant that he thought it was time to reconsider the notion of industrial progress. He considered that the environment needed to be preserved and that industrial pollution was an increasingly pressing problem, becoming even more important than the problem of relations among human beings themselves.

*Scilicet*, created in the fall of 1968, was Lacan's psychoanalytic and dogmatic answer to *L'Inconsdent*, a review that had been founded by Piera Aulagnier, Conrad Stein, and Jean Clavreul, and that put out eight issues. "Lacan criticized us considerably for having brought Stein on board while he was sending his daughter to him for analysis. So we created this journal and Lacan was furious; he was beside himself."<sup>39</sup> Jean Clavreul had to return to Lacan and, in 1973, Rene Major reacted to the compartmentalization of the schools by first launching a seminar, which quickly became a journal with the significant name *Confrontation*. At issue was the theoretical dialogue between the four groups. "I attempted to have them communicate by trying to compare the theories."<sup>40</sup> Serge Leclaire, in the name of the Lacanians, approved this initiative by a member of the Institute. "The crowd quickly gathered, things exploded, all the different orthodoxies were called into question."<sup>41</sup> The public included writers and philosophers; a friendship soon developed between Rene Major and Jacques Derrida, who approved the effects of *Confrontation* on the deconstruction of the Lacanian school and the erosion of Lacan's absolute power within it. Lacan reacted quickly. The school's director, Denis Vasse, was forced to resign for having gone to a meeting of the *Confrontation* seminar. This was just a measure to maintain order. Lacan

telephoned Rene Major, saying, "Major, don't worry, it's only a matter of internal politics."<sup>42</sup>

The journals welcomed these disciplinary confrontations among specialists, which allowed for some common reflection on writing. Having focused on the notion of structure prior to 1967, they became more interested in the pluralization and dynamization of structure in the second phase of structuralism.

## *Sixteen*

# **The Althusserian Grid: A Must**

May '68 had shaken Althusserian ideas. After the general strikes, the Althusserians fell silent. And yet, the protests of 1968 were inflected with a Marxist discourse and Althusser had provided the means of reconciling loyalty to Marxism with the desire for structural rigor. All of the '68 generation used Althusser's categories in every reach of knowledge, often without having read *For Marx* or *Reading Capital*. In 1968, *Reading Capital* came out at Maspero in paperback and it sold a phenomenal seventy-eight thousand copies (in the Maspero Paperback Collection [PCM]J in two years. Althusserian thinking was part of the times; many were Althusserians without even knowing it. Paradoxically, the political practice of an entire generation discovered Marx revisited by Althusser, who had based his famous epistemological break on purely theoretical grounds, as far as possible from action and praxis.

### **Althusser Is Back**

Because of May 1968, the apprentice philosopher Andre Comte-Sponville, an eighteen-year-old high-school student at the time, lost faith and quit the Young Communist Students and joined the "party of the working class." During the vacation prior to his *khâgne*, he read Althusser. The effects were shattering and it changed "my relationship to philosophy for a long time": "These two books [*For Marx* and *Reading Capital*] resembled blinding revelations opening up some-

thing like a new world."! Like many of his generation, Comte-Sponville became a Marxist of Althusserian persuasion. Althusser's rigor, with its tragic and almost Jansenist dimension, was appealing. "He was my master and he remained so."<sup>2</sup>

While students were absorbing Althusser's ideas, Althusser himself and those around him were keeping a rather low profile. It was not until 1972-73 that Althusser once again returned to the center stage of the publishing scene, while the traditional left was regrouping around the Common Platform and political leftism was becoming marginal. Three publications came out in quick succession: *Answer to John Lewis* (Maspero, 1972), *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of Scholars* (Maspero, 1973), and *Elements of a Self-Criticism* (Hachette, 1973) and made such an impact that the iconoclastic philosophy inside the PCF itself was finally officially recognized in 1976 when *Positions*, a collection of many articles published between 1964 and 1975, was published at Editions Sociales. This PCF consecration followed academic recognition: Althusser had been named professor after defending his doctoral thesis- in Amiens. The thesis represented his published work because his initial project, presented in 1949-50 to Jankelevitch and Hyppolite, for a thesis on the topic "Politics and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century" had been rejected. Despite this rather tardy university consecration, Althusser continued on as the *caiman* at the *École Normale Supérieure* on the rue d'Ulm in Paris.

Marxism's second wind among intellectuals after 1968 meant that Althusser's ideas had once again become interesting. He headed Maspero's "Theory" collection, and in 1973 Hachette started a new collection, called "Analysis," that he also directed. Once Marx had been read and reread using Althusserian categories, Althusser himself became the topic with Saul Karsz's 1974 *Theory and Politics: Louis Althusser.*' which also served as an introduction to the master's work, and gave a defense and illustration of his ideas. Karsz demonstrated the internal coherence of Althusser's theory, and also exonerated him in advance from the criticisms that were already being levied. In 1976, the review *Dialectiques* devoted an issue to Althusser in which Regine Robin and Jacques Guilhaumou expressed their emotional and intellectual debts. "It was a moment when I began to breathe For both of us, it was quite simply the possibility of doing history Althusser forced us to reread texts."<sup>5</sup> He represented a radical change for histo-

rians that allowed them to destroy the Stalinist setting, overthrow the taboos of the mechanistic Marxist vulgate, and free discursivity.

Althusser's ideas reached well beyond France. Latin America was particularly receptive and protests against Communist Party officials tied to Moscow were more often than not made in his name, particularly in Argentina. The *Answer to John Lewis* was a fictional polemic with the English Marxist philosopher John Lewis, and the positions he espoused in the spring of 1972 in the British Communist Party journal *Marxism Today*. The book provoked such interest among English Marxists that a group of philosophers from the British Communist Party decided to organize a two-day conference on Althusser's texts. In 1971, a new philosophy journal, *Theoretical Practice*, clearly oriented around Althusser's positions, was published outside official party circles.

## The SIAs

The Althusserian triumph of the seventies differed from the one that greeted his work in the mid-sixties. It echoed May '68 and its challenge to Althusser by shifting theory toward analysis, as the name of Hachette's new collection suggested. By this shift, Althusser implied moving from a purely theoretical and speculative point of view to one that made "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation," by beginning with conceptual categories, but at the same time avoiding empiricism. Economic conditions were henceforth to be studied based on Marxist theory, and the Althusserians left their ivory towers, where they had limited themselves to simple exegeses of Marx's ideas, in order to meet the real world.

It was from this perspective in 1970 that Althusser defined a vast research program with his famous article on the SIAs: State Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses.<sup>f</sup> He distinguished between repressive state structures, which imposed themselves violently, and ideological state apparatuses, which functioned by ideology. The latter, which included the family, political parties, labor unions, the media, culture, schools, and churches, served to forge loyalty to the dominant ideology and submission to the established order. Althusser agreed that educational institutions played a central role in establishing the hegemony of modern capitalist society, as Gramsci had already suggested: "It is the school apparatus that, through its functions, in fact replaces the old, dominant state ideological apparatus, or, in other words, the church."<sup>g</sup>

Althusser invited people to study the school system. This meant shifting the study from ideology as a simple discourse and to ideology as practice. **In** this, his positions were closer to those of Michel Foucault in 1969, when he argued that the discursive order needed to be complemented by the study of nondiscursive practices and their reciprocal articulation. For both Althusser and Foucault, ideology had a material existence incarnated by institutional practices. Althusser even based his approach on an ontologized ideology, which he considered to be an ahistorical category: "Ideology has no history,"! He reversed the positions of the vulgate, which claimed that ideology was a simple deformed outgrowth of reality, and argued that it was an essential structure, a veritable essence expressing the relationship of human beings to their world. "I will use Freud's expression verbatim and write: ideology is eternal, like the unconscious."?

Althusser opened up a vast area of study. **In** 1971, Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet, in *The Capitalist School in France*,<sup>11</sup> analyzed schoolbook selection. Roger Establet, one of the authors of *Reading Capital*, quickly turned toward sociology and used statistics professionally, unlike the philosophers at VIm. The double impact of both Althusser and Bourdieu's *The Inheritors* led Establet and Baudelot to test the hypothesis of the state's ideological tools by measuring their statistical validity in schools. They quite clearly differentiated between two periods of study, one short and one long, which made it possible to reproduce social divisions of labor within a capitalist mode of production. "We applied this model of the SIAs to statistical reality to try and see what was true and verifiable in this model in the school system."<sup>11</sup>

A project of even wider scope that included this study aimed to restore a history of pedagogical ideas. This was the framework in which Etienne Balibar's mother, Renee Balibar, and Dominique Laporte brought out *National French*,<sup>12</sup> and Renee Balibar alone brought out *The Fictive French*. Both books argued that bourgeois schooling perfected a very specific system of language with a specific history from the time of the French Revolution. Althusser's definition of state ideological structures multiplied possible specific research areas that could more broadly elucidate social reality. Certainly, many mechanical applications abounded, **but** for Althusser, SIAs, despite the term "apparatuses," in no way expressed a site or an instrument. "Althusser tried to refer to a certain number of processes that interacted with one

another."<sup>14</sup> So this work was quite clearly moving toward institutional practices and reflected his concern of going from theoretical to practical work.

### Structural-Althusserian Anthropology

Above all else, the Althusserian grid led to trying to reconcile Marxism and structuralism in anthropology. Even before May '68, there was an active current of Marxist anthropologists, which included Claude Meillassoux, Maurice Godelier, Emmanuel Terray, and Pierre-Philippe Rey, among others. For most of them, Althusser offered a theoretical framework for fieldwork. Before 1968, there had been discussions, debates, and colloquiums, but it quickly became necessary to give them some reality by doing fieldwork. "Then came this feeling that if we continued to discuss things on such narrow bases, we would not go forward and, in a certain way, we all decided to undertake fieldwork and widen our experience."<sup>15</sup>

As we have already mentioned, Emmanuel Terray had discovered Levi-Strauss's *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* in 1957, to his great delight. He wanted to incorporate Levi-Strauss's scientific rigor into his own Marxist political commitment, beyond the pale of the official vulgate of the sixties. Terray saw three limits to structuralist thinking that Marxism could overcome. First, structuralism could not eliminate philosophy, and the philosophy underlying Levi-Strauss's work, a Kantianism without any transcendental subject, considered that binary oppositions were part of the structures of the human brain. This Kantianism, Terray said, "hardly beckoned me."<sup>17</sup> Second, the phonological model worked for Levi-Strauss because, according to Terray, he equated society and that which had to do with representation and language. But Terray took issue with this as well. "I was thus able to write that in 1949 he should have called his book *The Elementary Structures of Discourse on Kinship*."<sup>18</sup> Levi-Straussian structuralism therefore did not take the option of looking at action and praxis. Third, by defining society as an exchange of words, goods, and women, Levi-Strauss had eliminated two realms that remained the blind spots of the structural approach: production (reduced to a study of exchange) and all phenomena pertaining to power. "And yet, these are two points on the basis of which, according to Marx, change occurs, which therefore leads me to Marxism. Whence the idea of organizing a peaceful coexistence, a cooperative collaboration."<sup>19</sup>

Terray wanted to reconcile Marxism and contemporary rationality with the structural method, and, conversely, "to dynamize rather than dynamite the structural apparatus with Marxism."<sup>20</sup> In order to do so, he used Claude Meillassoux's fieldwork published in *Economic Anthropology of the Guro of the Ivory Coast*,<sup>21</sup> which he deemed "a turning point in the history of anthropology."<sup>22</sup> He revisited the work using Althusserian categories, particularly the fundamental concepts of historical materials as Balibar had defined them in *Reading Capital*. Meillassoux's project had been to describe the self-sufficient mode of production of the linear and segmentary societies of the Guro, and to study their transition to commercial agriculture. By analyzing work instruments, production techniques, and labor force used, Meillassoux reconstituted the work process and the relations of production in which the work took place. Terray argued that this allowed him to define two forms of cooperation. One resulted from hunting with nets and determined a complex form of cooperation, while the second, simpler form of cooperation was based on agriculture. The first corresponded to the tribal-village system, and the second to the linear system.

In Althusserian terms, Terray distinguished two modes of closely associated production in the socioeconomic formation studied by Meillassoux: on the one hand, complex cooperation in a tribal-village system based on collectively owned means of production and egalitarian distribution, and a weak, alternating, and occasional legal-political power; on the other hand, simple cooperation in the linear system, where ownership was collective, where an individual could represent the group, where the division of production was based on its redistribution, and where power was more solidly constructed and enduring, and held by the elders. Arguing that kinship relationships did not determine all social organization in primitive societies, Terray claimed that their eventual dominance depended on their role as relations of production. "We notice simply that the supremacy of kinship relationships in all social organization in no way characterizes all primitive socioeconomic formations: it is linked to the presence of a limited number of certain modes of production."<sup>23</sup>

Terray felt that Meillassoux had illustrated Althusser's thesis of the autonomy of different organizing structures, and the possible shift between dominance of one particular structure and, ultimately, eco-

conomic determination. This approach also let him take on structuralism's two blind spots of politics and production.

However, Claude Meillassoux had not done his fieldwork using Althusserian categories. His first theoretical article on interpreting economic phenomena in traditional societies was published in 1969, well before Althusser's work was published. Terray's interpretation was gratifying, but he had some reservations. "Of course I was happy that Terray had given so much importance to my work, but he gave it an Althusserian reading that, to a certain degree, obliterated a part of what I had tried to show, in particular the historical and dialectical parts."<sup>24</sup> He did nonetheless acknowledge that Terray had seen clearly that his approach focused on the dissociation of social organization, kinship, and consanguinity, as well as the reorganization of kinship in terms of the necessities of organizing work and production.

In 1965, Marc Auge had also left to do fieldwork under African skies, on the Alladian of the Ivory Coast. Auge was influenced by Althusser and compared his analytic grid with what he found in the field, hoping to find a way to reconcile Levi-Straussian structuralism, his training as an Africanist with Georges Balandier, and his Althusserian Marxism. He also wanted to make structure more dynamic by warning against obliterating the historical dimension of the analyses. Reacting against the vogue for the exotic represented at the time in the image of the Other as the bearer of lost illusions, Auge recalled that "anthropological discourse is all the more guilty for being part of history, the history of others, of course."<sup>25</sup> Auge's Althusserianism was significantly tempered by his literary background, and the encounter between conceptual categories and the reality of the field was consigned to footnotes. The anthropology he defended reconciled notions that until then had opposed meaning and function, and symbol and history. "Anthropological revision can only take place, to my mind, by starting with the two strong points of the most recent work in French anthropology, structuralism and Marxism."<sup>26</sup>

Maurice Godelier's work was theoretically proximate to that of Althusserian anthropologists, even if he did not belong to Althusser's group. Like Claude Meillassoux, he had undertaken a Marxist reading of economic rationalism before having read *Reading Capital*. Godelier, more than other Marxist anthropologists, wanted to achieve a symbiosis between Marxism and structuralism. "We will adopt the structural method when we must advance in the areas Levi-Strauss

has not addressed.<sup>27</sup> For Althusserians, rereading Marx was the basis of Godelier's work, except that he reread Marx through Levi-Strauss. He demonstrated the same anti-Hegelianism as Althusser, made the same references to the notion of break borrowed from Bachelard, which was necessary for moving beyond empiricism to unlock the logic of the social realm. This break was also quite clear in Marx. "Economic science radically separates itself from all ideology, and Marx no longer has anything to do with the young Marx."<sup>28</sup> Maspero's publication of a hefty *collection* of Godelier's articles since 1966, entitled *Horizon: Marxist Pathways in Anthropology*, bore witness to the vitality of this Marxist current in anthropology: 4,950 copies were sold before the paperback version came out in the peM *collection* in 1977 with a print run of ten thousand. Godelier became the *director* of the "Anthropology Library" *collection* published by Maspero alongside Louis Althusser's "Theory" collection.

Godelier was forced to cross swords with official PCF positions, particularly with Lucien Sève, who in 1967 opposed both the structural method and dialectical thinking. In 1970, Godelier responded to these criticisms in the same review, *La Pensee*. But he took a conciliatory approach, and tried to bring structuralism together with a dialectical approach, although this in no way prevented him from criticizing structuralist theses when he had to: "Structural analysis—even though it does not negate history—cannot link arms with it because, from the outset, it has separated the analysis of the form of kinship relationships from that of their functions."<sup>29</sup>

The big question raised by Godelier's theoretical work, and which reiterated that of the Althusserians, was the basis of structural causality: how is it that kinship plays a dominant role in traditional societies, combined with the final determination of the economic factor? In this respect, Godelier shifted the usual vision, which put infra- into superstructures, arguing that primitive societies did not separate economic relationships from kinship relationships. Their particularity was that "kinship relationships functioned like relations of production, which is a political relationship, and an ideological arrangement. Here, kinship is both infrastructure and superstructure."<sup>30</sup> To support his argument, Godelier took an example from the M'Buti pygmies, a hunting society in the Congolese forest. These hunter-gatherers lived with certain internal constraints on their mode of production: the dispersion of groups, the necessity of individual cooperation, and a cer-

tain fluidity between bands ensured that men and resources were harmoniously distributed. The production mode of the M'Buti thus determined a whole system of constraints whose articulations formed "the general structure of the society."<sup>31</sup>

Godelier's positions closely resembled Althusser's, despite certain differences. "Many of Althusser's disciples interpret his hierarchical theory of institutions [and not of functions] and fall into the same positivist error they claim to have gotten beyond once and for all theoretically."<sup>32</sup> Having managed to combine Marxism and structuralism led Godelier to distinguish, in Marx, the use of two different forms of contradiction. One, internal to the very structure of the relation of production, was conceived as an original contradiction; the other opposed two types of structures: relations of production and productive forces. This distinction allowed him to adjust the Marxist approach to traditional societies and to clarify their internal transition. "Analyzing the nature of contradictions, the result of the analysis of structural causality should lead to a true theory about where the contradictions are shifted when a mode of production has been transformed."<sup>33</sup> Here Godelier differed from Levi-Strauss, who reduced historicity to a simple contingency. During a debate with Levi-Strauss and Marc Auge organized by the review *L'Homme* in 1975, Godelier remarked: "In fact, I criticize the tribute you paid history in *From Honey to Ashes* as an irreducible contingency; I think that ultimately it was a definitely negative homage, an homage that worked against history,"<sup>34</sup>

### Althusserian Sociology

Althusser's ideas were spectacularly attractive to many sociologists after May 1968. Thinking about politics and representation in the political arena was changing, nourished by the notion of state ideological institutions. "This article was my Bible for a long time," recalls Pierre Ansart. "The famous SIAs were everywhere. I could never understand how those ideas could be so powerfully seductive."<sup>35</sup>

At the time, Ansart was submerged. He was vainly trying to resist the fashion by systematically criticizing Althusser's article at Paris VII, but students protested and suspected him of deviating from Marxism. Ansart protested against the reproductive schemes that emanated functionally from the state to even the most limited units, such as the family. He argued for notions of contradiction and opposition in the phenomenon of ideological reception and its diversity. "Althusser's

way of describing the process destroyed what I wanted to do. So I had every reason to attack him, but I was preaching to an empty hall."36

Althusser owed his influence in political sociology primarily to Nicos Poulantzas and his 1968 *Political Power and Social Classes*.<sup>37</sup> A sociology professor at Paris VII (Vincennes) after May 1968, Poulantzas proposed a very conceptual approach to sociology to separate it from its empiricism and to make it a scientific theory. "The mode of production constitutes a formal-abstract object that does not exist, in the strong sense, in reality."<sup>38</sup> Loyal to a strict Althusserian orthodoxy somewhat influenced by Gramsci's definition of the state as the bearer of a universal function, Poulantzas considered that there were two misreadings of Marx; the one historical, and the other economist.

Historicism was expressed in two ways. The Hegelian current, represented by Georg Lukacs, Lucien Goldmann, and Herbert Marcuse, viewed the social class as the subject of history. The second current used Marx's functionalist interpretation—represented in France by Pierre Bourdieu—and had the perverse effect of theoretically dissociating the notion of the class-in-itself, defined by its place in the mode of production, and the class-for-itself, aware of its specific interests. By contrast, Poulantzas raised the same argument that Althusser had made against humanism, arguing that the agents of production were simple "bearers of a set of structures."<sup>39</sup>

The other misreading of Marx, as Poulantzas saw it, was an economism reducing social classes to their reality within the relations of production. He was targeting the official vulgate here, and its theory of reflection: "Political or ideological powers are not the simple expression of economic power."<sup>40</sup> Poulantzas proposed a concept of hegemony borrowed from Gramsci, to restore the complexity of the legal-political state institutions. Ideology played a major role for him and was not reduced to masking economic domination but to constructing a positive, coherent discourse with respect to human experience and to occulting not only the economy, but above all the dominant institution.

Poulantzas had the merit of proposing a new way of thinking about power conceived of as a vast and encompassing strategic realm, a far more complex approach than the usual references to a state-class instrument. His approach closely resembled that of Michel Foucault, although he did not question the notion of the center in the operations of power. Poulantzas's work had a tremendous impact at the begin-

ning of the seventies in the highly respected field of political sociology, so much so that the 1971 edition of *Keys to Sociology*" made reference to him more than to any other sociologist. "We were criticized on the four corners of the earth for having given Poulantzas's work so much attention in this book, but at the time it seemed normal."<sup>42</sup> The print runs of the book confirm Rene Lourau's evaluation; 8,200 copies were initially printed and the final print run went to forty thousand, including the paperbacks in the peM edition.

### Althusserian Epistemology

Historical materialism, in its Althusserian version, was not limited to the social sciences. Because of its ambition to reconcile itself with contemporary rationality, the social sciences reviewed the hard sciences once again, essentially at the ENS on the rue d'Ulm in a "philosophy course for scientists." The 1967-68 courses eventually led to a publication that became the breviary of Althusserians involved in scientific research: *On the History of Science*.<sup>v</sup> Michel Pecheux, whom we have already seen define discourse analysis using Althusserian concepts, raised the question of the famous notion of rupture. Using Althusser's breakdown of Marx's work into a before and after the famous epistemological break, Pecheux studied the effects of the Galilean revolution in physics and biology. He wanted to clarify ideology and science in order to show that the conceptions of the world (ideology) were simply ignored "by each branch of physics at the specific level of the break."<sup>44</sup> Michel Fichant problematized the very notion of a history of science: "The history of science should not be taken for granted."<sup>45</sup> He addressed a very Foucauldian question of establishing the site of the theoretical discourse, the public to which it was addressed, and the place it was given. Fichant devoted a good part of the work to criticizing the fundamentally ideological obstacles thwarting the construction of a history of science: the fact that science is considered as a single entity developing in a continuous teleology, and the empiricism to which these notions led. Fichant preferred an "epistemology of recurrence."<sup>46</sup> This notion of recurrence was to constitute the major break with the traditional relationship between the scholar and scientific practice. But, according to Althusserian presuppositions, this recurrence was not a simple regressive, theological analysis assuming a historical continuum, but was supposed to distinguish the properties of reality from those of knowledge.

In this perspective opened up by such French epistemologists as Cavailles, Bachelard, and Canguilhem, the Althusserians defined the field of epistemological thinking. This was the context in which Dominique Lecourt published his *For a Critique of Epistemology?* a work clearly marked by post-May '68 that, while defining the contribution of Foucault's work, reintroduced the primacy of the notion of practice. Of course, Foucault mentioned the pertinence of discursive practices in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, but, according to Lecourt, he did not go far enough. Scientific experimental practices could not be reduced to the study of discursive practices. Furthermore, studying the conditions of the possibility of a discourse did not eliminate the need for a systematic study of the conditions of its production. This occasional conflictual proximity and dialogue between Foucault's and Althusser's work were as we shall see, fundamental in each of their epistemological inflections.

Pierre Raymond, an Althusserian and a mathematician, published a series of works in the mid-seventies examining what made a history of science possible.<sup>v</sup> He looked at the relationship between philosophy and scientific production, which he located at the level of its operational form, to be distinguished from and connected with "the social distribution of scientific forces."<sup>49</sup> Pierre Raymond also tried to do what Michel Fichant had tried to do in 1969: construct a history of science that asked the initial question of scientific production: "This is exactly what a history of science should do: understand the social distribution of productive scientific forces and the (philosophical) relations of production."<sup>50</sup> In Althusserian fashion, Pierre Raymond divided his mathematical object in half for purely functional reasons. He distinguished one level that played a theoretical role—mathematics—and one that represented reality—the mathematized—whose boundaries are constantly shifting. This split was to make it possible to renew the historical approach to mathematized objects and open mathematization to history. A whole perspective based on the efficacy of the break thus generated fruitful epistemological work thanks to Althusserian thinking.

## A Desire for Totalization

In the early seventies, all the social sciences seemed to be adopting Althusserian discourse, which seemed to finally make it possible to consolidate all disciplines and all related fields of knowledge around a sin-

gle theoretical will leading to a possible conceptual totalization. This analytical grid could address the diversity of reality rather than its usual compartmentalized pieces.

*Tel Quel* gave clear signs that it was adopting the Althusserian grid. At the end of 1968, the review had proposed, as we have already seen, to construct a "set theory." Rather than arbitrarily separating two genres—the novel and poetry—Marcelin Pleynet had suggested a new approach that drew its inspiration largely from the three "generalities" laid out by Althusser: "Generality I (abstract) language; Generality II (theory) archiwriting; Generality III (product of work), the text."<sup>51</sup> The *Tel Quel!* dialectizing of theory and practice did not mean reducing one term to another, but defining theory, which Althusser defined as a specific form of practice, an approach making it possible to augur a new science of writing. "The text is both a process of transformation overdetermined by scriptural economy and, according to Althusser's formula, a 'structure of multiple and unequal contradictions.'"<sup>52</sup>

The review *Litterature* was also profoundly influenced by Althusserian positions. When it came time to consider the two blind spots of structuralism in a 1974 issue devoted to the topic "History/Subject," Daniele Sallenave defined the rules for comments, which fundamentally followed Lacanian and Althusserian lines. In examining the way the conceptual triad of formalism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis worked in literary analysis, she considered literature to be an ideological object. As a result, all three approaches were necessary in order to confer a status of scientificity on it. "When historical materialism (HM) and the analysis of formations of the unconscious (AFU) became part of the theory of literary forms, we could theoretically consider the question of reality and of the subject."<sup>53</sup> Dialectical and historical materialism were the very foundation of a general theory as a theory of the production of the symbolic, the condition for including artistic practices within "the symbolizing mode."<sup>54</sup> Using Althusser's terms, Sallenave adapted his notion of Marxist ideas of a historical time preceding the subject, a subjectless process necessary for a materialist orientation.

This concern for totalization also won over a certain number—although fewer—of historians. Regine Robin, a historian who was open to interdisciplinary dialogues with linguistics, recalls her enthusiasm of the mid-sixties when, as a young teacher in a Dijon high school, she read Althusser's articles. "I had the feeling that something

new was happening and that we could not only take Marxism seriously, but we could also imagine its conceptualization."<sup>55</sup> Rare were the historians willing to engage in this perilous adventure; their training made them uncomfortable with the theory and high degree of abstraction used by the Althusserians. This was by definition a complex and hybrid field and Althusser's conceptual grid required sacrificing whole areas of reality to theoretical validity. "We historians were viewed as bad subjects because we always criticized the incompleteness of the concepts."<sup>56</sup> It was, of course, true that Pierre Vilar, professor at the ENS at Ulm, was professionally and personally close to Althusser and shared his belief in a rigorous Marxism. In fact, as a historian, Vilar was invited to speak in Althusser's seminar. But these relationships did not go much further than a critical dialogue with certain of Althusser's ideas that Pierre Vilar engaged in in the paper he wrote for Pierre Nora's *Doing History*.<sup>57</sup> Above all, there were two incommensurable points of view—that of the historian and that of the philosopher.

The desire to totalize was also palpable in the group that in 1973 created the review *Dialectiques*.<sup>P</sup> The project was born immediately after May '68 at Saint-Cloud, where a small group of ENS students met, among them Pierre Jacob, David Kaisergruber, and Marc Abeles, all of whom belonged to all the PCF at the time. The party leadership opposed the journal and summoned them to a meeting with the Political Bureau to explain their position in it. "Just because we had published an article by Desanti on mathematics in Hegel. It had nothing whatsoever to do with politics, but since Desanti had been a party ideologue, they were worried."<sup>59</sup> The founding group was influenced both by Jean-Toussaint Desanti and his desire to concretely explore the different areas of science, and by Althusser and his determination to totalize and articulate different levels of knowledge. The journal's originality lay in its high degree of conceptualization, its militant independence, and its refusal to ally itself with any other views. Immediately successful and, without any editorial funding, it created an efficient distribution network that sold more than ten thousand copies. Claudine Normand, the linguist, was one of the occasional contributors. She had discovered Althusser in the 1960s: all of her work on the Saussurean break sought to verify Althusser's hypothesis of a rupture applied to linguistics. Regine Robin also contributed regularly as a historian/linguist, often from an Althusserian perspective.

Thanks to this theoretical energy, Althusser seemed to be in a position to confederate the social sciences—the hard core of scientificity by virtue of his capacity to link structuralism and Marxism. But this triumphant period would be as ephemeral as it was exciting, for the multiplication of contradictions, the substitution of a complex combination of institutions for the binary game of the dialectic quickly limited the explanatory powers of the Marxist framework, however enriched by Althusser.

## *Seventeen*

# The Althusserian Grid: A Bust

One of the contradictory effects of May '68 was that Althusser's ideas were doing well while the Althusserians were not. They were, in fact, quite aware that events came up against their explanatory framework and that they had to reorient their research toward praxis and concrete reality in order to test its potential. So Althusser undertook a long process of rectification, a self-criticism.

### Self-Criticisms

**In** 1968, on the occasion of a new edition of *Reading Capital* in the Maspero Paperback Collection (PCM), Althusser took his critical distance from what he called his "clear theorist tendency" in his relationship to philosophy.' He saw this theoreticism in the exaggerated rapprochement between Marxism, revisited around the notion of break, and structuralism, to be a source of confusion. "The terminology we used was too close, in a number of ways, to 'structuralist' terminology and thus has created misunderstanding."<sup>2</sup>

What was for the moment still a discreet gesture of taking his distance from a recently celebrated structuralism quickly became the major aspect of an authorized self-criticism, as the title of Althusser's 1974 book, *Elements of a Self-Criticism*,<sup>3</sup> showed. It was a question of a true deviation, then, and not just a simple isolated error. We know that for Marxists, the term "deviation" connoted an unpardonable sin requiring self-flagellation. The theoretist deviation had the effect of

presenting the famous break in terms of an opposition "between Science and Ideology,"! a scenario that placed the issues on strictly rational grounds, opposing ideology in the role of error, and Marxist science in the role of truth. This position implied conceiving of philosophical and political problematization in the same way as the history of science did, and what it borrowed from Bachelard was no longer solely metaphorical, but heuristic. This error in perspective was ostensibly incarnated in three figures: a theory of the difference between science and ideology, as general terms, the concept of theoretical practice, and finally, the notion that the theory of theoretical practice occurred in philosophy. Althusser returned to his reading of *Capital* and declared: "Our 'flirtation' with structuralist terminology certainly went beyond acceptable limits."!

When Althusser simply incriminated the language used in the mid-sixties, he was clearly underemphasizing what was in fact part of an entirely conscious strategy of consolidating different fields of knowledge around a common institutional and theoretical objective. In 1974, he saw structuralism as a particularly French philosophy and philosophical ideology of scholars: the general tendency of structuralism defined this current of thinking as "rational, mechanical, but above all formal."<sup>6</sup> And he saw no relation between the elimination of concrete realities that the structuralist idea/ideal of producing reality from a combination of any given elements assumed, and Marxism, where concepts were defined as abstractions but still sought to elucidate social reality in its most concrete manifestations. Marx "is not a structuralist because he is not a formalist."?

But we know that such an appreciation was ill-founded. Structuralism, at least in its Levi-Straussian incarnation, was never a formalism. Levi-Strauss's criticism of Vladimir Propp in fact confirmed the necessary distinction between these two currents, which Althusser deliberately confused. He simplified structuralism, and missed its point. Above all, he wanted to devalue a paradigm that could no longer unify the social sciences, and pardon himself for ever having been a structuralist: "Although we have not been structuralists, . . . we have been guilty of an equally strong and compromising passion: we have been Spinozists."<sup>8</sup>

A year before this self-criticism, in 1973, on the occasion of his polemic with the English Marxist John Lewis, Althusser had already recognized his theoretical deviation, but he had nonetheless staunchly

maintained his hostility to what was known as bourgeois humanism. In its place, he proposed the theoretical antihumanism of the mature Marx. "History is a process, a subjectless process,"? an idea he had already announced in 1968.<sup>10</sup> But Althusser nevertheless recognized that he had to make his self-criticism on one essential point, namely, the epistemological break in Marx's work, according to which Hegel's philosophical categories of alienation, and of the negation of the negation, were to have completely disappeared following the break, in favor of specifically scientific categories. "J. Lewis answered that this was false. And he was right."<sup>11</sup> His blindness could be explained by his avowedly mistaken theoreticist deviation wherein he had assimilated Marx's philosophical revolution to the type of revolution occurring in science, which meant a real epistemological break. "I therefore conceived philosophy on the model of 'Science.'"<sup>12</sup>

Beyond this self-critical aspect, the *Answer to John Lewis* was a major political event. Emmanuel Terray celebrated it as such for he considered that it put into practice the idea of the great philosophers that philosophy was a matter of theoretically doing politics. The book quite clearly met a real expectation. It sold twenty-five thousand copies, an altogether exceptional sales figure for a book of this type. So philosophy was essentially political, and fundamentally based on furthering political work by other means. Althusser "spoke" openly of politics. His remarks bore on a problem whose solution was in many ways decisive for the future of the French and international workers' movement: how to go forward with a Marxist analysis of the Stalinist period?<sup>13</sup> He attacked the partial, official explanation of the errors of Stalinism that Khrushchev gave at the tribunal of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Errors had been made out to be simply the result of the cult of personality, a purely legal and humanist explanation running in tandem with the economism being applied in the USSR during and after Stalin.

Althusser saw in both Stalinism and the deviation that it represented "something like a form of the posthumous revenge of the Second International, a resurgence of its principal tendency,">' incarnated in the double and complementary figures of humanism and economism. He contrasted the category of "a subjectless trial without End," which could also take the form of a "trial with neither Subject nor Object,"<sup>15</sup> and considered that the category of subject simply belonged to bourgeois philosophy and was invented quite specifically for

ideological domination. This position of negating the subject has more than one terminological affinity with structuralism, in addition to the not inconsiderable paradigmatic resemblances.

The process of self-criticism had only just begun. In 1976, Etienne Balibar learned of an unpublished text that Althusser gave him. At this point, he realized that Althusser was moved by an unspeakable force pushing him to undo and destroy everything he had built up to that point, and to go so far as to remain immured in silence. Althusser confided to Balibar in August 1980: "I will not kill myself, I will do worse. I will destroy what I have done, what I am for others and for myself."<sup>16</sup> Balibar tried to explain this increasingly profound destructive mechanism in several ways. There were reasons of a psychological nature: it was known that Althusser's health was psychologically fragile. Indeed, he had never spent a single academic year teaching at VIM without a long stay in a psychiatric hospital. There were also political reasons having to do with the combined crisis of Marxism, the PCF, and the Communist world in general, which Althusser had vainly tried to resolve. Balibar proposed another quite interesting explanation involving deconstruction, showing how Althusser deconstructed his own philosophical system by the nature of the ideas he put forward. "What Althusser had to say could only be expressed in terms of a denial, a discourse coupled after the fact with its own annulment. In a word, he needed to put into practice what Heidegger and Derrida described in theory: the contradictory unity, in time, of words and their erasure."<sup>17</sup> Balibar emphasized how much Althusser's ideas were already self-critical because they contained their proper negation, which was the case, for example, of the notion of theoretical antihumanism. Althusser's basic project was to construct a science that avoided ideology and implied the ever possible return of repressed ideology in the very realm of science. So there was no possible respite to this internal conflict of a science that had to be promoted, but that also contained within it, non-science, its own disappearing, its own erasure.

### Althusser's Lesson

Althusser's self-criticism left one of the authors of *Reading Capital* unsatisfied. In 1974, Jacques Ranciere published *Althusser's Lesson* in which he radically repudiated the teaching of the master. Ranciere's contribution in 1965 to *Reading Capital*, along with those of Roger Establet and Pierre Macherey, had been eliminated from the 1968

reprint in PCM. Given the book's success, Maspero decided to reprint the complete collection of papers in 1973. Ranciere learned of the project and was invited to rework his text, "The Concept of Critique and the Critique of Political Economy: From the 1844 Manuscripts to *Capital*." But he neither could nor wanted to simply make small changes because 1968 had in fact made him quite critical of Althusser's positions. The break was consummated in 1968-69 when Vincennes was created, where Ranciere taught in the philosophy department. At that point, he unleashed a bitter criticism of his past compromises in the name of Maoist fidelity, and compared the dynamics of the "Cultural Revolution" to the restoration of an epistemological academicism, even if it was Althusserian.

Having felt that his paper had been solicited in 1973 merely to give the impression that the positions of the 1965 group had remained intact, Ranciere offered to preface his piece with a long explanation, both recontextualizing his 1965 positions and describing his critical distance in 1973. "I had the impression that something was starting up again as if nothing had happened and that I had to make it clear that I had some reservations with respect to this return to the Althusserian discourse. But my text was censored."<sup>19</sup> The editor finally decided in 1975 to reprint *Reading Capital* without making any changes, abiding by the contractual terms of 1965.<sup>20</sup>

Ranciere reacted in two ways. In 1973, in *Les Temps modernes*, he published the preface that Maspero had refused to print.<sup>21</sup> In 1974, he published *Althusser's Lesson*. His balance sheet of Althusser's work as very negative, and its originality, lay in the fact that he was one of the earliest and most intimate of the initial Althusserians.

As an instrument for interpreting societies and historical movements, Althusserianism has produced nothing of interest. . . . It has been more a facade for the poverty of the ideas than an enrichment and has truly stifled what has existed since the beginning of the century in Marxist thinking in Germany, Italy, England, and the United States. All of that vanished, leaving only the great authors, the pøF, and us, in other words, a drastically provincial notion.v

When Ranciere wrote his book, Althusser's self-criticism had not yet been published, but when it did come out, it did not satisfy Ranciere, who thought that it was all show, designed to respond to the increasingly numerous criticisms in order to allow virtually unmodified neo-Althusserian work to continue.

Ranciere's criticism was radical, going from rupture to rejection. "Althusserianism died on the barricades of May '68 along with a good number of other ideas from the past."23 Of course, he acknowledged that Althusserianism had had a subjectively positive effect on an entire generation by getting certain disciplines going and into communication with one another. It was, after all, around Althusser that the attempt at synthesizing a critique of canonical disciplines and a new relationship to politics had taken shape. But Ranciere remained quite critical of negating all thinking about the subject, which the Althusserians portrayed as a scarecrow. "We have been hearing about the subject's descent to hell for quite some time now."24 He recalled that in 1973, the entire university had loudly called for the subject's eradication. "As for man, there is not a *hypokhagne* student today who would not blush for referring to him in his papers."25 The other angle, buoyed up by the Maoist positions of the moment, amounted to recalling the basis of the dialectic: the One divides into Two. And Althusser was criticized for having embraced/betrayed Durkheimian sociology when he presented ideology as a phenomenon in itself, an immutable and ahistorical given, invariable, whereas Ranciere considered that any ideology is caught up in class issues and can only be perceived as class ideology.

Their differences had to do with Althusser's theory of ideology more than with accusations of co-optation or antileft offensives to defend the PCF apparatus and academic wisdom. "Ideology, for Althusser, could well have the status that the state is accorded in classical metaphysical thinking. . . . As a result, ideology will not be posited as the site of division but as a unified whole with respect to its referent (all of social reality.)"26 Althusser brought the two together, and with a certain sleight of hand, made the concept of contradiction disappear. Ranciere saw this at the time as nothing other than classical revisionism. Similarly, the fundamental notion of relations of production was ontologized and "appeared to be withdrawn in a beyond of structure."27

The break between Ranciere and Althusser was radical. And when Terray, in *Le Monde*, lauded the merits of *Answer to John Lewis*, considered to be a veritable political bombshell, Ranciere responded, also in *Le Monde*, that Althusser set forth the limits of the new orthodoxy, reconcilable with the PCF apparatus.s" He rejected what he considered to be "an attempt to plaster over and assimilate what has

happened in the meantime, half-confessions that allowed people to continue to believe that we are saying the same things."<sup>29</sup> This break provoked an explosion of media shock waves because it was clearly a symptom of the crises which, since 1968, had been affecting Althusserianism, despite the enthusiasm it had engendered in other areas. Obviously, Althusser perceived and lived the whole experience quite badly, as did those close to him, while nonetheless considering that Ranciere's book was "brilliant."<sup>30</sup>

Today, Etienne Balibar sees this book as expressing a context, that of the Maoists who explained in their newspaper, *La Cause du peuple*, that the bourgeoisie was on the verge of collapse, that power was up for grabs, and that the PCF was the only bulwark keeping the bourgeoisie in power. Since, according to those who called themselves Marxist-Leninists, the workers could not help but love Mao, there had to be someone within the PCF who was a Maoist and who had deceived the working class. That person could only be Althusser, presented as the writer and the great manipulator. "Yet Ranciere was completely lucid about interpreting Althusser's formulas backwards including, for example, that of 'theoretical practice,' which is a way of explaining that theory is itself practice, without having to grant theory absolute privilege, contrary to what he had said."<sup>31</sup> Pierre Macherey was even more emotionally affected by what he thought was a "renunciation in the sense of the Evangelists, a religious act asking to be forgiven for one's errors. . . . It was the principle of the thing that deeply revolted me."<sup>32</sup>

### Sharpshooters Take Aim at Althusser

The mid-seventies reacted to a return in force of the Althusserians with a veritable group attack. Criticism came from every political and theoretical direction. Pierre Fougeyrollas, a Marxist sociologist and former contributor to *Arguments*, published a highly polemical work, *Against Leui-Strauss, Lacan, and Althusser*.<sup>33</sup> After having spent ten years from 1961 to 1971 outside of France, at the University of Dakar, he found that he was rather removed from the reigning excitement in Paris when he returned, even if he had kept up with what was being published. Louis-Vincent Thomas asked him to be on a thesis committee at Paris V. "Althusserianism was the first shock. All the candidates were talking about the three institutions and about symptomatic reading. . . . There was an enormous gap between what they

were saying and what I thought about Marxism! So I had an initial reaction against Althusserianism."<sup>34</sup> For Fougeyrollas, Althusserianism was a direct result of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, within the strictly established and narrow limits of a critique of dogmatism that made no waves in the party apparatus, an approach that led to a return to the sources and to the founding fathers, Lenin and Marx. Given the context, Althusserianism played the role of an ideological euphoria or of a "speculative soothing."<sup>35</sup> Fougeyrollas attacked Althusserian idealism for shifting Marxism from praxis to theory, and in so doing, changing the Marxist perspective of changing the world into changing philosophy. Moreover, he pointed out the borrowed ideas from the various human sciences and, more particularly, from psychoanalysis, which meant that Marxism had become a variant of structuralism, by substituting "a kind of structural topos"<sup>36</sup> for dialectics. Institutional interplay had replaced the historical dialectic, making it necessary to borrow the notion of overdetermination from psychoanalysis. Looking at practice as theoretical practice led to being enclosed within the discursive realm and to reading it symptomatically.

When the *Answer to John Lewis* came out, Daniel Bensaid, a leader of the Communist League, which had just been dissolved by the government in 1973, made a vitriolic attack against Althusser. Bensaid was particularly critical of the notion of Stalinist "deviation," which Althusser defined in a far too timid manner. "In fact, Althusser has all the tricks of a charlatan, the magical abracadabra of a sham scholar. He pretends to flyover history, whereas he is pitifully clinging to its tail."<sup>37</sup> Bensaid concluded that arguing that the basis of the Stalinist "deviation" was purely theoretical, meaning that it began with the influence of economism at the Second International, made it possible to easily eliminate forty years of history of the workers' movement. Since the enemy was no more than a paper tiger or a simple rhetorical figure (the economism-humanism duo), simply correcting the Stalinist "deviation" was enough to get things back on track.

Criticism ran high among Marxist and Trotskyist revolutionaries, even as, in 1976, the PCF seemed to crown Althusser by publishing him in its Editions Sociales. Already in 1970, after the 1969 publication of book 1 of *Capital* by Gamier-Flammarion, with a Foreword by Althusser, Ernest Mandel, a Marxist economist and member of the Belgian section of the Fourth International, had published a long

study on the way in which "Althusser corrects Marx."<sup>38</sup> Beyond some pedagogical advice that Mandel thought useful, the rest had to do with what he perceived to be an erroneous analysis of Marx's intentions and concepts.

Michael Lowy answered Althusser on philosophical grounds, by defending Marx's humanism. "That humanism before Marx was abstract, bourgeois, and so on, in no way means that we should renounce all humanism."<sup>39</sup> If Lowy already considered that the anti-humanist argument in the reading of the mature Marx of *The German Ideology* or of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* was baseless, the same was true for the Marx of *Capital*, which Althusser had, however, elevated to the status of a scientific paradise. Lowy saw the three moments of Marxist humanism unfolding in *Capital*, like an unveiling of the relationship among men behind the reified categories of a capitalist economy, in the criticism of the inhumanity of capitalism, and finally, in the vision of a socialist society wherein humankind could rationally dominate the forces of production. **In** his definition of the two major concepts—the productive forces and the relation of production—Marx still used the notion of humanity. Relations of production were analyzed as "social relationships determined among men, but that took on the phantasmagoric form of a relationship among things."<sup>40</sup> **In** the second place, Lowy refused to separate Marx from ethical considerations and from a moral ambition in his criticism of capitalism. So there were two risks, so far as he could see: seeing *Capital* as nothing more than an "ethical outcry against capitalism (a tendency represented by M. Rubel),"<sup>41</sup> and the denial of any moral dimension in order to see *Capital* as a strictly scientific work. "The question raised is the following: in the name of which moral values did Marx criticize capitalism?"<sup>42</sup> With respect to the socialist future, the issue was not to perpetuate the idea of an eternal man or a transhistorical essence, but rather to establish a new man. **In** this respect, Marxism truly belonged to the humanist family, even if it was not a classical humanism.

Reflecting another school of thought, that of the review *Esprit*, which was constantly engaged in a debate with structuralist thinking, and always in articles that reflected sophisticated theoretical arguments, Jean-Marie Domenach responded to Althusser's *Answer to John Lewis* in 1974 in an article evocatively titled "Marxism in a Void."<sup>43</sup> He saw Althusser as defending a scholasticism that, because it did not correspond to reality, found an escape in abstract theory,

the notion of break, and the absence of a subject, in order to avoid possible contradictions that simple observations of empirical reality might raise.

Domenach saw in Althusser's reading of Marx a structuralist re-interpretation of Marx, and not a simple borrowing of vocabulary. "In fact, what counted here was no longer Marx but Althusser's idea of Marx through a certain structuralism."<sup>44</sup> Domenach challenged the view of Marx's theoretical antihumanism: "Marx took man as his starting point was moving toward an idea of man. To be sure, it was not a question of an abstract essence of humanity such as certain liberal thinkers had distilled, but rather of a 'generic' man understood in the conditions of his existence."<sup>45</sup> In such a hermetic determinist approach, Domenach wondered what became of the masses, caught in the gears of the inexorable wheels of the enormous structural machine, with a role apparently limited to a cameo appearance. His criticism of Althusser coincided with Levi-Strauss's more general criticism in 1963, and later, in 1968, that of Foucault, by invoking the place and status of liberty in the limited realm of necessity. Of course, Althusser had managed to preserve his doctrine for a time insofar as it "could be preserved in a vacuum, but what happens to praxis?"<sup>46</sup>

By complexifying Marx's work, paying the price of a system of rigorous, synthetic thinking that wanted to totalize, Althusser managed to stave off Marxism's decline—a random spark at the turn of a century in which Marxism was to lose itself in its fatal destiny, in the tragedy of totalitarianism. **I**n this context, Althusser's effort was fated to be carried off by the undercurrent of the waning of Marxism, which was to return and strike theory in a kind of boomerang effect even before having spent itself in eliminating a particular future for those societies that proclaimed its principles.

Althusser's undertaking was the most ambitious and totalizing in the gamut of speculative structuralism. Its implosion did not yet affect structuralist research in other more specific areas, particularly in the textual sciences. Moreover, philosophically, this implosion prepared the way for a historicized structuralism, incarnated by Michel Foucault, among others.

## **Part III**

### *Structuralism between Scientism, Ethics, and History*

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## *Eighteen*

# **The Mirage of Formalization**

The protest against the structural paradigm eventually tarnished the term "structuralist." Everyone ardently claimed to have never partaken of the festivities. Researchers presented their work as all the more singular despite the fact that only yesterday they had tried to situate it within the collective current of the structuralist renewal. Some sought even greater formalization in order to access the very essence of structure, whereas others undertook to deconstruct this formalization and give free rein to an increasingly literary inspiration that slowly but surely edged away from the initial, ambitious efforts at codification.

### **The Paris School**

The first response—a formalist one—came in the field of linguistics with the founding of the Paris School, which inevitably recalled the Prague School, and which, moreover, fit into this historical line: "This was the Paris School and not the French School of Semiotics, because Paris is a place where many foreign researchers come and realize that they share a certain number of things."! Born at the International Semiotics Association, the brainchild of Roman Jakobson and Émile Benveniste, drawing its inspiration from the Russian formalists and the work of the Prague, Copenhagen, and Geneva schools, the association was essentially the offspring of European linguists, despite the involvement of the patron of American semiotics, Thomas A. Sebeok.

The association sought, among other things, to give Eastern European researchers the opportunity to leave the Marxist vulgate on the other side of the Iron Curtain and renew intellectual energies of the thirties in Central and Eastern Europe. The selection of Warsaw as the site of the association's second symposium was symbolic in this respect, and the Poles played a decisive role in it. At the same time, this reunion had the ring of an impossible challenge since it took place in the summer of 1968 against the backdrop of Soviet tanks invading Czechoslovakia, hardly a propitious context in which to undertake the establishment of productive ties between East and West. Thomas Sebeock, of Hungarian descent, considered the situation so dangerous that he canceled his trip.

The Paris Semiotic Circle was established a year later. "We talked with Levi-Strauss to decide who might make up the nucleus of the French Semiotics Association. Finally, it was composed of Benveniste, Barthes, Levi-Strauss, and me. Lacan wasn't serious enough for Levi-Strauss, and Foucault seemed frivolous."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Benveniste, who was named president of the circle, did not have time to affect the orientation of its work, because shortly thereafter he suffered a stroke that left him a hemiplegic. His intellectual disappearance and Barthes's growing lack of interest in semiotics—he was leaning more and more clearly toward literature—meant that the activities of the circle depended increasingly on Greimas, who was in the Social Anthropology Laboratory at the College de France, run by Levi-Strauss, "If Benveniste had actually lived longer intellectually, the balance would have been different."! Therefore, Hjelmslevian linguistics, the most formalist of linguistic approaches, carried the day in Paris. During the same year, the association launched the new review *Semiotica*, which was overseen by Julia Kristeva and Josette Rey-Debove. "Benveniste and Jakobson needed someone young and dynamic, and they asked me to take over the secretary-general's duties."<sup>4</sup>

In the first issue, Benveniste recalled the historical origins of the concept of semiotics, borrowed from Locke, and especially from the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), who had wanted to construct a "universal algebra of relationships."<sup>5</sup> But Benveniste did not adopt Peirce's ideas; on the contrary, he found the view that language was everywhere and nowhere to be too loose because, in his view, it ran the serious risk of condemning any meaningful research to the abysses of the infinite. He proposed the Saussurean

legacy: "Somewhere, the universe must acknowledge the difference between the sign and the signified. Every sign must be taken and understood in a system of signs. That is the condition of signification."<sup>6</sup> Thus the Paris School adopted Peirce's notion of semiotics while remaining faithful to Saussure's methodological legacy. Distinguishing between semantic interpretation and a semiotic level was a way of broadening the analysis of the life of signs to the whole of social life. It was a matter of systematizing the Saussurean trajectory, which, starting with language, intended to study the other sign systems: "Language contains society. The interpreting relation, or semiotics, is the opposite of articulation, which is sociological." Language would therefore interpret society, according to two principles that made it possible to place different semiotic systems into relationship with each other: nonredundancy between systems, and the fact that "there is no transsystemic sign."<sup>8</sup>

This semiotic orientation did not as yet include Kristeva's distinction between a symbolic level of language in the linguistic sense of a homogeneous and articulated structure, and a semiotic level, which she understood as an unconscious process, something like a drive, observable in the interstices of language as so many marks of undecidability and heterogeneity. That would come later.

The Paris Semiotic Circle initially presented itself as the meeting place between structural anthropology and Saussurean semiology. Because Levi-Strauss favored the group, he invited his semiotic partners into his Social Anthropology Laboratory at the College de France. But he in no way tolerated Greimas's intention of creating a better symbiosis between Saussure's linguistic legacy and the semiotic study of myths: "This linguistic domination was acceptable for many, including anthropologists, insofar as it remained discrete and offered conceptual tools, but it became intolerable when it became a semiotic enterprise with pretensions of covering many areas." So Levi-Strauss quickly gave his colleagues their leave, and "Greimas was forced to leave the office that he had at the College de France."<sup>10</sup>

As a result, Greimas's influence grew and the school became hermetic in its increasingly rigorous, self-enclosed formalization, drawing its model more than ever from the hard sciences. Ever since he had published *Structural Semantics*, Greimas was convinced that he could reach total meaning and the complete meaning of the structure. In this configuration, the sign became "the transcendental site of the condi-

tion of the possibility of meaning, of signification and of reference." 11 Greimas argued that this site could be reestablished with the semiotic square, a veritable open sesame for any sign system. This dream of formalization took structuralism as its emblem, a crystal whose low temperature prevented the dispersion of molecules and nourished hope that, by reducing humanity to a degree zero, the transcendental keys to the conditions of its possibility could be found. "The structuralist dream would be death by refrigeration." 12

The school produced a number of semiotic studies of literary objects, including Algirdas Julien Greimas's on Maupassant, P Jacques Geninasca's on Gerard de Nerval.<sup>1</sup> Michel Arrivé's work on Alfred Jarry,<sup>15</sup> and Jean-Claude Coquet's work, which had a more general thrust. *Literature for the semiotician*, however, was nothing other than a signifying practice like any other, without any particular valorization: "Literature as an autonomous discourse with its own laws and intrinsic specificity was almost unanimously rejected." 17 "For semiotics, literature does not exist!" 18

Philippe Hamon considered the character of the novel from this angle, pulverizing it from a semiological viewpoint. He worked out a grid of critical analysis of what he considered to be the manifest trace of humanist ideology. When he dissolved the notion of hero, he did so by applying many concepts that made it possible to establish a general theory specifying a semiology of the character and "distinguishing this semiology from the historical, psychological, psychoanalytical, or sociological approach." 19 He defined the character as a sort of morpheme that was doubly articulated by a discontinuous signifier (I, me, to me . . . he, Julien Sorel, the young man/our hero/. . .) and a signified, which was also discontinuous (allomorphs, amalgam, discontinuity, redundancy, etc.). The character's meaning was clear only with respect to the other characters of the utterance, and not by a simple accumulation of characteristics. The study would therefore have to define the pertinent semantic axes and attempt to hierarchize them. "We would thus see classes of distinctive characters, defined by the same number of semantic axes." 20 This enormous construction supposed an immanent approach to the literary text, conceived as a construction, and not as a given. Literary tales were then studied in their literariness, cut off from exogenous determinations and confined within their internal logic. A number of semantic categories, such as isotopy, for example, girded up the analysis. "By isotopy we mean a

redundant set of semantic categories that make a uniform reading of the story possible."<sup>21</sup>

What was clearly an evolution in semiotic analyses of literature between the sixties and the seventies paralleled the changes in linguistics during the same period as it moved from a "linguistics of states to a linguistics of operations," according to Philippe Hamon.<sup>s</sup> Such a shift made it possible to go from a closed conception seeking to point out the specificities of complete systems to a much more open approach to discerning the characteristic constraints of this or that communication situation. As we have seen, this evolution led to taking the utterance into account in different interlocutive situations. But the period was also characterized by a broadening of the semiotic field of analysis, which went beyond the literary terrain to apply to all kinds of texts, including legal, biblical, political, musical, and advertising.<sup>P</sup>

Semiotics was particularly influential in biblical exegesis. The wealth of work in this area doubtless made it possible to resist the general ebb of structuralism in the late seventies. Musical language was one area of predilection for applying the structural approach. "Music alone could have justified the hypothesis of structuralist work."<sup>24</sup> Roland Barthes in particular wrote an article on Robert Schumann's *Kreisleriana* in which he distinguished between a first formal semiology, and a second affective semiology which he believed revealed the way sounds were set into relationship with each other in terms of dissonance and consonance.<sup>v</sup>

Serge Martin, the author of a work on musical semiotics.<sup>w</sup> took a much more Hjelmslevian approach. Unlike Barthes, he wanted to discover how meaning is produced within the system itself, by comparing the major and minor modes, rather than in any external form of scales and their intervals.

For me, the system represents what we might call being in the world, in Heideggerian language. It's a schematization with very deep affective roots . . . . What Heidegger says about Kant's arrangement corresponds completely to the musical system, meaning that the system is a structure in the logical sense of the term. But at bottom this structure points to a deep affective relationship with the world, and that's the reason that music is its expression<sup>P</sup>

Thus it was this absent structure, at once essential and unrevealed, that semiotics hoped to restore in its signification. It was even possible to precisely discern the supreme importance of structure in the creation

of the Viennese School, where no tonal polarization existed any longer. "Contrary to what tonal music meant, musical language is taken here to come first, with its formal rules of transformation."<sup>28</sup> This sketch of the theory of musical language carried the three essential axioms of Hjelmslev's semiotics onto a musical plane.

## Mathemes

In 1970, the term "semiotics" replaced "semiology" and "structuralism." It was also at the beginning of the seventies that Lacan dissociated himself from structural linguistics and looked to formalize his thinking to a larger extent by using topology and mathemes.

It will appear, I think, here that the claim that structuralism can give us a way of understanding the world is one more imputation to the clown that is given us as representing literary history, and that is the issue. But the boredom which it inspired in me, albeit in the most agreeable way because I was in the best of company, is perhaps not what gives me reason to be satisfied.<sup>s?</sup>

Like the other participants at the structural banquet whose company he esteemed, Lacan, who did not want to get caught red-handed, shunned a dubious label. Instead, he turned to mathematics to lead him to higher levels than Saussurean linguistics could reach. At that point, he managed to draw together Levi-Strauss's mytheme, the Greek term *mathema* (meaning knowledge), and the root of the notion of *matherne*, which implied mathematics. Lacan hoped to definitely quit what he henceforth called linguistery, which he considered to be too descriptive, and by means of total formalization reach the pure Signifier, that initial gaping space out of which are formed the knots that, since 1972, he called Borromean. Having temporarily stitched the fate of psychoanalysis to that of the social sciences, Lacan sought out the hard sciences. "The only thing that remained, the sole nourishment for the hermit in the desert, was mathematics.<sup>V?</sup>

Lacan gave more and more seminars on topological figures, including graphs and tori, and on stage he used string and ribbons of paper, which he snipped into smaller and smaller pieces to demonstrate that there was neither inside nor outside in these Borromean knots. The world was fantasy, and sat beyond intraworldly reality; its unity was accessible only through what is missing in languages. "Mathematization alone achieves a reality, a reality that has nothing

to do with what traditional knowledge has sustained, that is not what it thinks it is, not reality but fantasy."<sup>31</sup> Lacan was attempting to conceive of the totality and the interiority of what was lacking in reality, working from within to eliminate the categories of inside and outside, interior and exterior, and of any spherical topology. He tried to use a twist as the basis of his model of the knot that eludes all attempts at centering. Deeply plunged into a universe of pure logic unfolding from the priority granted the symbolic void, "Lacan claimed to escape substantification through recourse to topology."<sup>32</sup> With the quest for a *matheme*, the system of rules and the combinatory belonging to a pure system of logic made it possible, more so than had linguistics, to firmly hold the referent, affect, and lived experience at bay.

Some considered Lacan's use of topological figures to be purely pedagogical, a way of teaching psychoanalysis. "The *matheme* concerned the idea of transmission; it was not a question of making psychoanalysis into physics."<sup>33</sup> But even beyond the possible didactic interest of this topological phase, which frustrated more than one listener, we might imagine that having run into a dead end with linguistics, Lacan refused to totally disseminate his reading of the unconscious, as Derrida had done, because it would have taken psychoanalysis toward an infinite interpretation in which it would have lost itself. He preferred to suggest another direction, with that of the *matheme* and the Borromean knots, ostensibly a metaphor for the need for a basic and as yet undiscovered structure. "Interpretation is not open to every meaning."<sup>34</sup> Closer to structure in the mathematical sense, Lacan took one more step toward abstraction and the idea of a distinct object tied to the operation of specific ideation through which one could deduce the general properties of a group of operations and define the area where demonstrative utterances engendered their properties.

## Modelization

Was this recourse to mathematics and to modelization just a metaphor or was it a heuristic and operational move? Andre Regnier asked about the transition from group theory to *The Savage Mind*.<sup>35</sup> He analyzed Levi-Strauss's use of the concepts of symmetry, inversion, equivalence, homology, and isomorphism, in his *Mythologiques*, concepts that he had borrowed from the logical-mathematical realm of knowledge, and whether the use of such metaphors was not in some way danger-

ous. This, however, was not the case when these ideas, like that of a transformational group, played a central role in Levi-Strauss's scheme of things. "They (totemic institutions) are thus based on the postulate of a homology between *two systems of difference*, one of which occurs in nature and the other in culture."<sup>36</sup>

Levi-Strauss had a very broad notion of transformational class and used the term quite freely, focusing on one or another relationship in the syntagmatic chain depending on the needs of his demonstration. He also claimed "my right to choose myths from various sources, to explain a Chaco myth by means of a variant from Guyana, or a Ge myth by a similar one from Colombia."<sup>37</sup> Regnier questioned the scientific nature of the demonstration, which would mean adopting nonarbitrary codes and justifying the correspondences: "To understand why, if a being is a sign, it has this rather than that meaning. . . . Finally, the 'logics' in question have a rather evanescent existence: they are rules imposed on the links but we do not know what they are."<sup>38</sup> He included Levi-Strauss in this illusory scientificity expressed by a belief in formalization in the human sciences.

Gilles Gaston-Granger, however, did acknowledge the relatively successful use of formalization, for example, as when Levi-Strauss analyzed kinship relationships. His model worked, was pertinent, and let us understand how marriages were structured by prescriptions and proscriptions. "But what I would criticize in Levi-Strauss is his attempt to show us that transformations in the mythic mind create a relationship in the same way that algebraists understand a relationship. I don't believe that to be the case."<sup>39</sup> Levi-Strauss nevertheless continued to firmly defend modelization. From the mathematics of kinship to the logical-mathematical treatment of the units that constitute myths, he reiterated his confidence (in *The Naked Man*, the final volume of *Mythologiques*) in "structuralism [which] proposes an epistemological model for the human sciences that is incomparably more powerful than what they have had until now."<sup>40</sup>

This use of modeling for examining kinship relationships got a second wind with Françoise Heritier's work. A student of Levi-Strauss, she considered herself "lucky to find Claude Levi-Strauss, the director of the Social Anthropology Laboratory."<sup>41</sup> She was able to use a whole range of material gathered on kinship in Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), and she reconstituted the genealogies of the inhabitants of three villages in Samoaland. Modelization and informatics led her to theo-

retical generalizations based on ethnographic material. "The computer became an indispensable means for getting to the realities of the way marriage worked in societies."<sup>42</sup> Informatics aided her in reconstituting how society with semicomplete kinship and marriage structures worked (called the Crow-Omaha system): "Confirming Levi-Strauss's intuition, it seems that a semicomplex system of the Omaha type functions endogamously like the Aranda supersystem, which belongs to a system of elementary marriage structures. The choice of partners takes place in the fourth generation following the common ancestor to two lines of descendants of blood relations."<sup>43</sup> With this thesis and the progress that it made possible in going from the study of elementary to semicomplex kinship structures, Françoise Héritier demonstrated the powerful potential of the structuralist paradigm when applied in a limited field in the social sciences, and proved that beyond the variations of intellectual modes, structuralism did allow for true conceptual progress, even if it was often accompanied by the mirage of the purest formalization, that of mathematical language.

## **From Explosive Literary Mourning to the Pleasure of the Text**

Structuralism drew its inspiration from the most formalized of the hard sciences. But at the same time, it was part of a new literary sensibility trying to redefine traditional novelistic storytelling. With the crisis of the novel as an intangible mode of expression, literary theory and literature drew closer and gave rise to the New Novel. A new literary avant-garde quickly grew up in response and became the criterion of modernity. Boundaries between critical and creative activity were muted so that the true subject-writing and textuality-could unfold indefinitely. As Philippe Hamon wrote, "To consider the concept of literature between 1960 and 1975 is to write the history of a dissolution."! The structuralist theoretical apparatus, and particularly the linguistic approach, would fully participate in the new literary adventure, which took the form of reappropriation of language in its very essence, beyond any boundaries between genres.

### **New Criticism and the New Novel: Symbiosis**

Some structural themes were familiar in the founding principles of the New Novel: the elimination of the subject, with the exclusion of the classical novelistic characters; a preference for a space where observed objects were cast in different configurations; a defiance of dialectical time in favor of a suspended temporality, a slack presence that dissolved as it revealed itself.

In 1950, Nathalie Sarraute published "The Age of Suspicion" in

*Les Temps modernes*, a title that expressed better than anything else the common cast of mind of new literary critics with respect to writers, and which she later took for a major work published by Gallimard in 1956.<sup>2</sup> More generally, it corresponded to the advancement of the critical paradigm among all the social sciences. Sarraute acknowledged the novel's crisis, and the collapse of the credibility of characters. She compared it with artisanal work based on lived experience, à la Michel Tournier, whose ethnological perspective envisaged creation as bricolage, rather than the more classical understanding of mimesis wherein the crush of details draping an inspired author's characters in a certain density made them believable.

Nathalie Sarraute's work quickly came to symbolize the necessary break from the classical novel. Suspicion became the basis for a new relationship with the different forms of writing in this critical age. And yet, Sarraute's break with the psychologizing perspective of the novel was less radical than it appeared. She simply shifted its focus, deconstructing character archetypes and personalities in order to better seize their intimate, underlying beehives of activity. Subconversations and tropisms were conceived of as indefinable movements below the apparent conversational thread, reduced to a pretext in order to reach-via a relationship of psychological immediacy-the ego's infinitely tenuous nature. Although *The Age of Suspicion* announced the shape of the New Novel, it remained heir to Dostoyevsky, Proust, and Joyce, the great innovators of novelistic writing.

The New Novel did nonetheless turn to the social sciences, drawing its inspiration from their decentering of the subject, their protest against Eurocentrism, and a configuration that substituted the figure of the Other for the quest for the Same. Conversely, structuralist researchers working in their specific disciplines were to use their discoveries and research areas to make literature. A whole new sensibility was coming to the fore, and it led one to think that truth was beyond the self and that in order to reach it, all the essential relays of knowledge needed to be destroyed. As a result, psychology and temporality became obstacles to truth and structuralism became the new aesthetic: Mondrian in painting, Pierre Boulez in music, Michel Butor in literature. Structure became a creative method, the fermentation of modernity. Initially outside of creation, structure slowly penetrated into the arcana considered until then to be unfathomable. The tenants of new structural criticism in fact invoked this new aesthetic and discovered

their predecessors in Mallarmé and Valéry, because of their shared concern for the verbal conditions of literary creation. "Literature is and can be nothing other than a sort of extension and application of certain properties of language.">

Literary activity abounded. The Editions de Minuit published Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Marguerite Duras, Claude Simon, and Robert Pinget; the *Tel Quel* group invited Jean Ricardou, the theoretician of the new novel, to join Philippe Soilers, Daniel Roche, and Jean-Pierre Faye. In 1955, when Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* was being heralded, the New Novel was being crowned with literary awards. Robbe-Grillet received the critics' prize for his *The Voyeur*, and two years later Michel Butor won the Renaudot Prize for *The Modification*, which sold more than a hundred thousand copies. In 1958, Claude Ollier won the Medicis Prize for his *Mise en scène*, and the same year, *Esprit* devoted a special issue to the New Novel. Each of these authors obviously had his own style, but they all embodied the desire for a new kind of novelistic writing that rejected the traditional forms of the novel. The wager implied that all writers had to go beyond those monumental literary forebears who seemed to have definitively defined literary limits: Proust, Joyce, and Kafka. Another direction for another generation, anchored in modernity, needed to be found.

The New Novel expressed the profound malaise of having to write after Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. At the same time, it expressed a quest for a solution, which it found by placing literary creation in a *mise en abîme*, in appealing for readerly participation, given the explicit projection of the writer's subjectivity. In Nathalie Sarraute's 1950 article, this new critical perspective was still informal, but when *The Age of Suspicion* came out in paperback in 1964, Sarraute claimed that these articles were a collective manifesto of the avant-garde. "These articles establish some fundamentals for what we call the New Novel today.":'

In 1957, the photographer Mario Dondero captured the image of a debonair group in lively discussion outside the Editions de Minuit. For readers, these figures represented the new novel: Alain Robbe-Grillet, Claude Simon, Claude Mauriac, the publisher Jérôme Lindon, Robert Pinget, Samuel Beckett, Nathalie Sarraute, and Claude Ollier. The classical character had disappeared from literary concerns and the author's attention shifted within the discursive sphere alone. His ob-

servations were the product of an immanent relationship to language, and reality was no longer considered outside language. From Balzac's descriptive mode to Albert Camus's distanced alienation, a further shift led to a reality reduced to the writer's discourse on reality. A symbiosis occurred during the sixties and seventies, during which "the essential thing is not outside of language, it is language itself."> In this, the structuralist orientation, which took phonology as an analytical model and linguistics as its guiding science, was a clear influence.

Rather early on, Alain Robbe-Grillet became aware of this encounter between literature and structuralism, and of the transition from a phenomenological to a structural approach. He adopted Jorge Luis Borges's definition of the difficult exercise of literature: "I am increasingly persuaded that philosophy and literature share the same goals."<sup>6</sup> In 1963, Robbe-Grillet published a collection of articles that he had been writing since 1955, entitled *For a New Novel*,<sup>7</sup> In it, he laid out the principles he abided by as an author in his own novels—*Erasers* in 1953, *The Voyeur* in 1955—and as a literary consultant at the Editions de Minuit, where he had been working since 1955. He proclaimed the reconciliation of criticism and literary creation that, in order to join modernity, had to be nourished on new areas of knowledge. "Critical concerns in no way hamper creation; they can, in fact, propel it."<sup>8</sup> The New Novel was presented both as a school of the look and as a school of the objective novel. It promoted a new sort of realism no longer dependent on nineteenth-century models such as the work of Balzac. It was also a question of a passion for describing, but without describing the intentionality according to which the world *only* exists as a result of the meditation of characters. In this new writing, "gestures and objects are there before being something." Just as Lacan had emphasized the importance of what is suggestive in words and the signifying chains, Robbe-Grillet attacked the myth of depth, preferring the surface of things. Description, the same structuralist rejection of the hermeneutic approach, and the same distinction between meaning and signification were all important.

The novelistic revolution shunned characters as outmoded vestiges of a bourgeois universe. The nineteenth century had naturalized the bourgeois order, but this reign of the once-celebrated individual was now outdated. A new era was upon us, an era of "license plate numbers."!" In this desertification, there was something of the desperation of the period; how could we write and think after Auschwitz? There

was a desire to disengage from the world of being, and the criticism of modern technology. Hope took anchor in the universe of forms, from which humanity was decentered, a simple and ephemeral incarnation of an indefinite game of linguistic folds. The writer no longer was a bearer of values since "there are only values of the past."<sup>11</sup> The writer was to participate in a static and amnesiac present like the universe of the characters from *Last Year at Marienbad*, which unfolded without a past and in which each movement and work contained its own erasure. Structural themes resonated within this problematic exercise of literature: the negation of any search for genesis or origins, a purely synchronic approach whose inner logic was to be discovered. "In the modern tale, we would say that time is cut off from its temporality. . . . The instant negates continuity."<sup>12</sup>

Roland Barthes immediately understood that this new literature, labeled literal, paralleled the principles of the new criticism he wanted to promote. In 1955, he wrote a very positive piece on Robbe-Grillet's *The Voyeur*,<sup>13</sup> systematically using Robbe-Grillet's novels and Brecht's theater to promote the "reader's deconditioning with respect to the essentialist art of the bourgeois novel."<sup>14</sup> *The Voyeur* accomplished this degree zero of literature and history that Barthes had called for as early as 1953; it portrayed a world of objects suspended on the observer's vision, and which constituted a desocialized and demoralized universe proceeding from a "radical formalism."<sup>15</sup> This rapprochement between literary creation and a scientific reflection in language produced a new hybrid, which Barthes called writer-writing.<sup>16</sup> This new type joined the tasks of the writer (who was to absorb the world into the how-to of writing) and those of the writing, which had to be explained, and for which speech was simply an ephemeral material for demonstrating.

Barthes shifted the traditional boundaries and located the New Novel and new criticism both on the side of the writer, and therefore on the side of creation. Thanks to this division, the critic and writer were united in a common effort to probe the phenomenon of writing and the different possibilities of language. Structural literary theory and the practices of the New Novel constantly interacted; for both, the referent, and the various figures of classical humanism, were marginal. The New Novel abandoned sociological verisimilitude in storytelling in order to concentrate on establishing potential tales and their variations.

This symbiosis between a new literary writing, the New Novel, and a new literary criticism would evolve, in the case of the relations between Barthes and Robbe-Grillet, in the direction of a growing distance from formalization and the construction of an objective realism, and a literal literature. Just as Barthes turned toward the pleasure of the text from 1967 onward, Robbe-Grillet shifted from an objective to a subjective realism as the expression of his own subjectivity became increasingly important in his work.<sup>18</sup> He too practiced an infinite game of reflections, the *mise en abyme* of characters, plots, staged autobiographical themes, mixed registers. He even reproached Barthes for having misinterpreted his work in 1955, and, to the contrary, demanded total subjectivity: "I have never spoken of anything other than myself."<sup>18</sup> According to Robbe-Grillet, Barthes was desperately looking for a degree zero of writing, and his work offered its ostensible realization: "My alleged whiteness—which came at the right time to give balast to his discourse. I saw myself crowned as the 'objective novelist,' or, worse yet, one who was trying to be that."<sup>19</sup>

Just as Levi-Strauss considered that a myth was constituted by the whole of its variants, the new novel progressed by repetitions and variations based on which the different laws of the series were played out, but always disturbed by the accident that made the tale lurch forward on the basis of its open structure. This new perspective gave literature a certain autonomy which no longer needed to be demonstrated, committed, or reflected, but that had its value in and of itself. At the same time, according to Barthes, literature could respond to new philosophical questions, by no longer asking the question of whether or not the world had any meaning, but rather the following: "The world is here: is there any meaning in it? . . . An undertaking that, perhaps, no philosophy has managed, and that could therefore truly belong to literature."<sup>20</sup> Thus, literature would replace and serve the function of philosophy; it would be the very consciousness of the irreality of language and a veritable system of meaning, once it had been freed from all instrumentalization.

Michel Butor's work is a particularly good example of this mix of theory and practice. He was very involved in epistemology in the fifties before writing his first novel, *Milan Passage*, in 1954.<sup>21</sup> He was working on an advanced degree in philosophy in 1948, under the guidance of Gaston Bachelard, on the topic "Mathematics and the Idea of Necessity." His doctoral thesis, under Jean Wahl, was entitled

"Aspects of Ambiguity in Literature and the Idea of Signification." When he began writing novels, he gave up neither theory nor philosophy and considered that the novel was research, an attempt at problematization. This was true for his first novel, in which he problematized space based on a seven-story Parisian apartment building. In his second novel, *The Use of Time*,<sup>22</sup> time was the central character. In 1960, he explicitly returned to literary theory with his "Essays on the Novel."<sup>23</sup> In 1962, he published *Mobile*,<sup>24</sup> orienting his deconstruction of the classical novel by introducing different styles into the same story, juxtaposing sentences, quotations, press articles, collages, montages, and capital letters dispersed across the page. Barthes applauded this revolution that attacked the very idea of the book, after having deconstructed classical novelistic narration. He thought that Butor had dared to address essential elements by taking on typographical norms. "Tampering with the material regularity of the work is to take on the very idea of literature."<sup>25</sup>

With *Mobile*, Butor proposed a new aesthetics, that, like a river's flow, overran the banks containing the tale. Beyond the linear development that gave it an ever-increasing but predictable flow, it varied quantitatively. By contrast, he proposed an aesthetics of discontinuity and juxtaposition.

Structuralism and the New Novel shared a concern for writing per se. This was considered the means for developing critical weapons, so much so that Jean Ricardou proposed the term "scripturalism"<sup>26</sup> for this gush of textuality, as the common perspective of the social sciences and literature.

## The Novel of the Human Sciences

Committed structuralists in the social sciences lived this rapprochement with literature so deeply that they took their work to be creative. Deeply moved by a concern for style, the great novels of the period were essentially works in the social sciences. *Tristes Tropiques* was initially a novelistic project and Levi-Strauss was acutely concerned with the formal aspects of his work, conceived as a musical or pictorial enterprise. *Mythologiques* had the form of a musical composition with different motifs profoundly inspired by musical development. Lacan's baroque style was deeply affected by his work at *Le Minotaure*, a surrealist art review in the interwar period where he rubbed shoulders with Eluard, Reverdy, Picasso, Masson, and Dali, among

others, and later was fascinated by the work of Georges Bataille, whose former wife, Sylvia, he married.

Bataille's experiments with the limits of writing and a barely communicable strangeness fascinated Lacan. Bataille was interested in liberating a constant transgression of rational, social taboos, including the figure of the Other, which reveals itself in the erasure of the self and its traps. He was also an important author for Michel Foucault's style: "Blanchot, Artaud, and Bataille were very important for my generation."<sup>27</sup> These authors showed how to shift literary boundaries of thinking, to move beyond limits, and to destabilize common beliefs by finding breaking points. Examining reason by looking at madness, medicine from the perspective of death, the law from the point of view of crimes, the penal code as seen from prison—these reversals were only possible thanks in part to the experiments going on in literature, and, as far as Foucault in particular was concerned, thanks to Maurice Blanchot's work.

As early as 1955, Blanchot defined *The Space of Literature* as that indefinite space within which a work exists in itself, revealing nothing more than its own existence. Like the New Novel, Blanchot rejected the idea of a dialectical relationship with time: "The time of the absence of time is not dialectical. What appears is the fact that nothing appears."<sup>29</sup>

Foucault paid homage to Blanchot in 1966 as the writer of an impersonal literature with which he completely identified, along with the current of structuralist thinking that defended literariness.>? "The breakthrough in the direction of a language in which the subject is excluded . . . is an experiment that is taking place today in a number of different cultural sites."<sup>31</sup> Blanchot's writing of exteriority, which places the reader in an initial emptiness, achieved what Foucault wanted to pursue in philosophy: not to use negation dialectically but to make the object of discourse move outside itself, to the other side of observation, in its interior, in "the trickle and the distress of a language that has always already begun."<sup>32</sup> Blanchot and Foucault's shared critical activity took the form of suspended meaning, absent from its present, perceivable in its lack. It was no longer a question of seeking an ultimate, profound meaning. Both writers often used the rhetorical figure of the oxymoron, whose effect is both critical and aesthetic. We also see the structuralist and formalist givens, the refusal of all instrumentalized and ordinary language. To the contrary, the

work was to try and "accomplish itself in its own experience,"<sup>33</sup> by rejecting the notion of values in order to reach a level where history was abolished and the present was heralded.

Blanchot and Foucault both bespoke Nietzschean influence. Both rejected reigning values and feared being eo-opted. A double negation resulted: negation of values, and negation of the negation, which led to frequent use of the oxymoron: "pregnant emptiness," "placeless space," "unfinished accomplishment," and so on.<sup>34</sup> Textualism sheared of values, common to the new novel and to structuralism, found a source of inspiration and a particular aesthetic here. Like the literary avant-garde, philosophical formalist practice could boast of having no external finality and could thus claim to offer a discourse that reconciled logic and aesthetics. It could also shift the boundaries between literature and rational thinking.

When "the being of literature is nothing other than its technique,"<sup>35</sup> as Barthes put it, nothing separates critical structuralist activity from a writer's creativity. So we can see how structuralist works could be read, despite their author's denials, as novelistic enterprises. But we can also see how certain structuralists, disappointed or wearied by the search for the fundamental structure or the ultimate code, moved toward pluralization, especially after 1968, in order to give freer expression to their literary inspiration.

### Disseminating Philosophical Discourse

As we have already seen, Jacques Derrida had actively questioned the boundaries separating philosophy from fiction. Deconstruction sought to reveal textual polysemism, the equivocation of what was said, using the undecidables that explode the boundary safeguards and make it possible to disseminate a liberated writing. Derrida turned philosophical discourse toward language and oriented it toward a greater and greater aestheticization.

In the sixties, Derrida was interested in hunting down logocentrism and phonologism, especially in the work of those claiming to be structuralists. Over time he became increasingly motivated by the pleasure of writing: "I am trying to find a certain economy of pleasure in what we call philosophy."<sup>36</sup> This was the pleasure of literary inventiveness and it was at the very center of the transgression of limits. In 1972, Derrida put his own textual work beyond the limits of the

canon: "I will say that my texts belong neither to 'philosophy' nor to a 'literary' register." 37

Disseminating philosophical discourse barely distinct from literary writing was particularly palpable in Derrida's 1974 *Glas*.<sup>38</sup> We find the same deconstructive vision of the book as a hermetic universe as in Michel Butor's work, the juxtaposition of different typographies, of parallel columns with different contents. With neither beginning, nor end, nor story, nor characters, *Glas* was primarily a formal search that was joining in the adventure of the New Novel. "The rain chased away the spectators who scatter in all directions. What is the issue, finally? To talk about the Scotch broom for pages and pages-? To interpret or execute it as a piece of music? Whom are we trying to fool?"<sup>40</sup> Derrida also tried to open up Jean Genet's work! by taking the philosophy/literature confrontation as far as it could go in a mosaic of separate texts with words dismantled into a true puzzle—for example, cutting the word *gla* from *viaux* two pages later.<sup>v</sup> Speculative considerations, scientific ideas, and "autobiographical fragments"<sup>43</sup> were dealt out in a sort of self-analysis that took the text as a pretext to destabilize the basic oppositions of Western thought. "A signature maintains nothing of what it signs. Plant a Scotch broom there, the inscription on the tombstone, the funerary monument is a broom plant: who writes, or rather speaks, without an accent . . . 'Your name?' 'Genet.' 'Plantagenet?' 'Genet, I say.' 'And if I want to say Plantagenet, what's it to you?'"<sup>44</sup>

In this new discursive economy, structure was open, plural, and shattered. The notion of difference and Other, which lay at the root of early structuralism and research in structural anthropology, henceforth moved toward disseminating the very idea of structure.

Gilles Deleuze's work made this shift quite palpable in his play on the notion of difference against the Hegelian notion of unity, and he proposed aestheticization in its place: "We find that the history of philosophy should play a rather analogous role to that of a collage in painting."<sup>45</sup> Difference and repetition replaced identity, reversing Hegelianism. Deleuze considered that this demonstrated the advent of the modern world, the world of the simulacrum, the world of a new baroque more attentive to formal invention than to variation in content. A whole rhetoric of pleasure developed and Deleuze, in a writerly way, ceaselessly produced new pleasures, continuing to play on new notions become concepts in his reading of the world. He

wanted above all to escape the history of philosophy, and in this he shared the structuralist sensibility. He denounced structuralism's eminently repressive relationship to creativity, calling it a "properly philosophical Oedipus . . . a sort of fucking [*enculage*] or, which amounts to the same thing, an immaculate conception."<sup>46</sup>

In place of shunned Hegelianism, Deleuze also proposed a pluralization that must run through writing, and thinking at variable intensities that could be cut up any which way. With *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze shifted toward movement in structure: "Treating writing like a flux, not like a code."<sup>47</sup> The impact of May '68 was fundamental in this determination to pluralize in order to give the desiring machines a place in relation to the One, to established thought. Improbability and uncertainties took priority, as they did in Derrida's work, but more radically still was the call for a desiring flux. "Writing is one ebb among others and has no particular privilege with respect to the others and the relationships of current, countercurrent, and collisions with other flows, of shit, of sperm, of words, of acts, of eroticism, of coins, of politics, and so on."<sup>48</sup>

Paradoxically, these flows revealed one of the major aspects of the structuralist paradigm: the absent subject. The idea was a functioning machine, and the ego yielded to the id of the desiring machine, coupled, connected at every point. Codifications and decodifications were made and undone with neither faith nor laws, polymorphous figures, rootless, slippery monads.

The notion of closure and interpretation was violently attacked in 1972 when Deleuze and Felix Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus* (volume 1 of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*), which quickly became the anti-structuralist war machine, helping to speed up the paradigm's deconstruction. Immediately and fabulously successful, *Anti-Oedipus* was symptomatic of the changes afoot and signaled the impending decline. First there was the violent return of the Lacanian repressed. The return of Freud, which Lacan had helped, had privileged the Signifier, and the Symbolic, the notion of an unconscious gutted of its affects. Deleuze and Guattari vehemently challenged this approach, arguing against Lacan's dear Law of the Master and for the necessary liberation of desiring production. All the same, they acknowledged the merit of Lacan's work for having shown how the unconscious was woven of many signifying chains and his breakthrough in imposing the acceptance of a schizophrenic flow that could sub-

vert psychoanalysis, particularly thanks to his *objet petit a*. "The *objet petit a* erupted at the core of the structural equilibrium like an infernal machine, the desiring machine."<sup>49</sup> Lacan, less than his disciples and psychoanalysis in general, was the target. Deleuze and Guattari were as sardonic about psychoanalysis as Michel Foucault and used *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* to set psychoanalysis in a direct line with nineteenth-century psychiatry, which reduced madness to a "parental complex" and considered the figure of avowing guilt, produced by the Oedipus complex, to be important. "So instead of being part of an enterprise of effective liberation, psychoanalysis is part of the most general bourgeois repression, which has meant keeping European humanity under the yoke of Mama and Papa and endlessly having to deal with this problem."<sup>50</sup>

For Deleuze, psychoanalysis was reductive, systematically driving desire back into a closed system of representations. "Psychoanalysis only elevates Oedipus to the square, transfer Oedipus, the Oedipus of Oedipus . . . . It's the invariable turning away of the forces of the unconscious."<sup>51</sup> Deleuze and Guattari differentiated between capitalism, which is enmeshed with psychoanalysis, and revolutionary movements, which make their way alongside schizoanalysis. For them, as for structuralism, there was no Signifying Subject, no specific site for any transcendence whatsoever; there were only processes. To express this opposition, they compared a tree with a rhizome, whose polymorphic character could represent a different mode of thought, an operational idea for promoting a new sort of philosophical writing going in all directions without codification. Recourse to logic became meaningless; this kind of writing was obviously removed from the epistemological considerations of early structuralism, and gave free rein to unarticulated, disruptive thinking, at the whim of poetic inspiration.

Above all, Deleuze and Guattari criticized Levi-Strauss, the father of structuralism, comparing two divergent logics incarnated by the desiring machine and the anorexic structure. "What do we do with the unconscious except explicitly reduce it to an empty form from which desire itself is absent, expelled? Such a form can surely define a pre-conscious, but not the unconscious."<sup>52</sup> Conversely, Levi-Strauss found grace in Deleuze and Guattari's eyes because their definition of schizoanalysis echoed his evaluation of the Oedipus complex. They used the

myth of reference from *The Raw and the Cooked*, in which Levi-Strauss demonstrated that the true guilty party in the incest story between mother and son was the father who, because he had wanted to avenge himself, was punished and killed. The authors concluded that "Oedipus is first of all a notion of adult paranoia, before being a neurotic infantile feeling." 53

Alterity elevated to a mode of thought encountered structuralism's antihistorical inspiration. Instead of history, there was a very special consideration of space, a veritable cartography of structure as an open system: "Each thing has its geography, its cartography, its diagram," 54 whereas time could not be homogeneous, and indicated an inevitable disaggregation for it is trapped in discontinuous processes that establish its contingent wrenches. "Modes of thinking about difference reject history as a simple surface effect." 55 The fact that semiotics at the beginning of the seventies was moving toward textuality and the concept of writing also made it easier to express poetic, creative inspiration freed from any specific model, at a time when Saussureanism, Chomskyism, and pragmatics were facing off.

Philosophical pluralization was in fact contemporary with the multiplication of models and concepts in semiotic projects. The resulting relativization and ever-deferred hope of finding the ultimate key consoled those who had taken the aesthetic path, reinforced by the perceptible crisis since the sixties. "An 'age of suspicion' among semioticians reiterates and reinforces that of the novelists themselves." 56 This crisis opened up writing receptive to those who substituted the pleasure of the text for the desire to codify it.

### A Philosophy of Desire

Roland Barthes adopted this philosophy of desire. For him, the tension had always run deepest in his concern for theory and the expression of affect. With *S/Z* and *The Empire of Signs*, he had already begun to pluralize codes and allow a liberated intuition to express itself in an open system. This new orientation was confirmed and the choice of aesthetics explicitly announced in 1973, with Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*. A page had been turned. Barthes turned his back on *The Semiological Adventure*; the writer Roland Barthes could now free himself from the writing Roland Barthes and reveal his taste for stylistics even further. He could reveal himself to himself without having to hide behind a theoretical discourse.

Barthes thus claimed the writing as space of pure pleasure, as proof of desire and pleasure. He fully assumed his subjectivity as much in the act of writing according to his own system of tastes and distastes as in the system of readerly reactions in which judgment depended on a completely personal textual pleasure. Giving free rein to pleasure was the ultimate means of eliminating what Barthes, since beginning his research, never stopped tracking down: the signified. "What pleasure suspends is the signified value: the (right) cause."<sup>57</sup> Of course, he remained faithful to certain of his major theoretical positions and repeated that the author, the writer, did not exist: "The author is dead."<sup>58</sup> The author had no other function than as a mere plaything, a simple receptacle, a degree zero like the dummy in a bridge game. Binarity was used to show the difference between what Barthes called pleasure texts and texts of *jouissance*. The former fills up and can be spoken, whereas the latter is an experience of loss, for which there are no words. Barthes's important philosophical reference here is the same as Deleuze's: Nietzsche, who is used to explode truths based on stereotypes and old metaphors to liberate the new and the singular.

Barthes compared the foreclosure of pleasure produced by two moralities: stereotypical platitudes of the petite bourgeoisie and the rigor of groups. "Our society seems both to be satisfied and violent, and, in any case, frigid."<sup>59</sup> The pleasure of the text opened onto the infinite, incessant intertwining of a creative opening in which the subject undoes itself by revealing itself. "The Text means Fabric,"<sup>60</sup> not in the sense of having to look for the truth on its reverse side, but as a texture summing up its meaning. In 1975, answering Jacques Chancel on his famous radio program on France-Inter, *Radioscopie*, Barthes recalled that he had started writing because he thought he was participating in a battle, but that he slowly discovered the truth of the act of writing. "We write, finally, because we like doing so, because it gives us pleasure. Finally we write for reasons of *jouissance*."<sup>61</sup>

Barthes was not a pure hedonist; he still had the semiologist in him and pursued his work on textuality. But his aesthetic choice showed a major difference between the 1966 Barthes of euphoric theorizing and the Barthes of 1973. More than a singular itinerary, this break showed that the structuralist program was losing steam, that the crisis of 1967-68 had affected it, and that a solution was being sought. Barthes's new path announced a certain number of returns

which would break the surface beginning in 1975. While waiting, like Hegel's aged Greek who ceaselessly questions the rustling leaves and the shiver of Nature, Barthes reflected on the shiver of meaning "by listening to the rustle of language, this language that is my own nature, a modern man."<sup>62</sup>

## *Twenty*

# **Philosophy and Structure: The Figure of the Other**

Classical philosophy did not do well during the turbulent times of structuralism. During the seventies, those who did theory and epistemology tried to avoid the label of philosopher. Western Reason was yielding to an increasingly passionate quest for a different figure of alterity. Not that philosophy was dead, however; it was simply addressing the social sciences, trying to designate the Other in space (anthropology), the self's Other (psychoanalysis), and the Other in time (historical anthropology).

The post-'68 generation, like that of the fifties, continued to be attracted to and converted to these new and promising disciplines whose success seemed to usurp the role philosophy had played in the classical humanities. But philosophy had not lost its flair, as it was primarily philosophers who spearheaded this reappropriation of the various disciplines in the sciences of man while vigorously criticizing current classifications and disciplinary divisions. Nonetheless, a certain philosophical discourse was in bad shape during this period.

### **The Dialectic of the Same and the Other**

Referring to this period—the seventies—Jacques Bouveresse lamented: "Truth no longer held any interest; we had to replace the question of what was true by what was right, as Althusser said."! Not that he abandoned his own philosophical reflection, which ran against the tide, or refrained from provocation. Indeed, he even dared to ignore

the requisite references of the moment-Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida-preferring instead Rudolf Carnap, Gottlob Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, and Willard Van Orman Quine. In 1973, Bouveresse published *Wittgenstein: Rhyme and Reason*,<sup>2</sup> a reflection on the relationship between science, ethics, and aesthetics. "It was a deliberate provocation since, at the time, it was practically forbidden or altogether incongruous to talk about ethics. There could only be political or psychoanalytical issues."> Bouveresse, however, situated himself elsewhere to escape the theorizing/terrorizing that amounted to tracking down philosophical discourse with two big guns-psychoanalysis and Marxism. "If you objected, you were never answered, really, you were psychoanalyzed, or else your class position became an issue for analysis."<sup>4</sup>

Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx were mobilized in the quest for the Other as the underbelly of Western Reason. They formed a reading grid that continued to challenge philosophy, along with a disciplinary logic for psychoanalysis and anthropology, and to pursue their old rivalry with philosophy in order to legitimate their institutionalization. Hermeneutics, with its interpretative assumption of an ultimate textual verity, became the designated adversary. After having opposed hermeneutics with structural logic-a system of relations made autonomous from its content-infinite interpretation came increasingly to be the rule.

After World War II, Adorno and Horkheimer had already begun to examine the conflictual, dialectic relationship between rationality and myth. In order to establish itself, rationality had had to rip itself from the ancestral terror of myth and progressively master it. But this battle had not really ended in any definitive way; rationality was constantly confronted with its other. "It was a sort of adder nurtured in its own bosom."> But Vincent Descombes underscored the confusion between the two meanings of Other: the other as *other-aliud-and* the other as alter ego, which gave rise to a strategy of suspicion that gripped rationality itself, caught as a stake in a general conflict between different forces, of which it was only momentarily the most powerful. "In order to recognize the gravity of modern conflict, we end up suspecting that rationality has too easily won: no one is right, reason no longer exists anywhere, there are only forces engaged in a power struggle."<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to this sort of deconstruction, the successive deaths of

God, Man, and Metaphysics could be celebrated. Dialectics, with its going beyond, could be contrasted with nihilism and its overflow, which went as far as a stylistics of rupture with the academicism set in the service of philosophical argumentation. The philosopher was to give his place over to the crowd, not of specialists in the social sciences, but of people who are discovering the Other. "Here are today's masters: marginals, experimental, and pop painters, hippies and yuppies, parasites, madmen, hospitalized types. There is more intensity and less intention in an hour of their lives than in three hundred thousand words of a professional philosopher. They are more Nietzschean than the readers of Nietzsche."? The dialectic of the same and the other was omnipresent during a moment that tended to assign all the evils of the paranoid-repressive to the figure of the same, and to see creativity and freedom on the other side of the divide.

Given the freedom that social science researchers were demanding, this interplay partially reproduced the philosophical crisis of legitimacy. Raymond Aron criticized Levi-Strauss's ambivalence toward philosophy and his insistence on the scientific character of his approach after being accused by empirical ethnologists of doing philosophy without establishing the scientificity of his structural analysis. "The answer would require that the epistemological status of structural analysis be laid out, which he refuses to do."<sup>8</sup>

Paul Ricoeur also responded to the structuralist challenge in 1970. He acknowledged the fruitfulness of the approach, but nonetheless considered that it was part of a process of understanding. "The explanatory model called structural does not exhaust all the possibilities with respect to a text."? Ricoeur felt that explanations using linguistics were complementary, whereas it was necessary to open the text so that it could reach the highest stage of interpretation by reappropriating the subject of meaning. Interpretation was an act, an effectuation of meaning with respect to oneself. "The text had only one meaning, which is to say internal relations, a structure. Now it has significance."<sup>10</sup> However, these conciliatory efforts fell on deaf ears as the umbilical cord between the different social sciences and philosophy was being brutally severed.

## **The Other in Space**

A good part of the young generation continued to abandon philosophy in order to throw itself into the adventure of the social sciences

and the fieldwork it seemed to make possible. Philippe Descola was a student at the ENS in Saint-Cloud in 1970, and was planning to do anthropology. At the time, he thought that his work in philosophy would simply be propaedeutic, so much so that his classmates at the École Normale "realized it and called me a featherhead."<sup>11</sup> He read Maurice Godelier's *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics*? with interest, and when Godelier came to give a series of lectures as an alumnus of the ENS, Descola discovered that anthropology was the right way to scientifically analyze different social realities. Having passed the written part of the *agregation* exam, Descola failed the orals. Discouraged at the idea of starting over, "I went to see Claude Levi-Strauss and left to do fieldwork after a year of preparation."<sup>13</sup>

Sylvain Auroux was also a student at Saint-Cloud. He decided to work as a professional linguist, which meant that he had to deviate from the traditional philosophical path. He joined the teaching staff at the ENS in 1967 and headed a group in the social sciences that invited outside lecturers. This was how he met Oswald Ducrot and discovered pragmatics. He had not adopted the scientism and exclusion of the subject of the structuralism of the period, but did nonetheless believe that this scientific ideology had made two decisive and positive advances possible: "On the one hand, it killed, and I think for good, the transcendental philosophical subject. In the second place, it led to asking the question once and for all of whether or not the social sciences were constructed in terms of experience."<sup>14</sup> Once he had passed the *agregation*, Sylvain Auroux was posted to Vernon High School (in the Eure), where he taught philosophy from 1972 to 1974. He was dissatisfied by the utter abstraction of a philosophical knowledge that prevented articulating philosophy and social problems in that it was "totally abstract, restricted to microproblems of historical interpretation. When my students came to ask me what I thought about abortion, I answered that it was not a philosophical problem. We refused to deal with these questions theoretically."<sup>15</sup> This comforted him in the idea that he had to leave the well-trodden paths of classical philosophy to become involved in one particular social science-linguistics-in which he would become an eminent specialist.

The Other of philosophy as an alterity that could be observed outside of Europe, borne by the discipline of anthropology, continued in the seventies to pose a major challenge for philosophy. In 1967, Levi-Strauss declared, "Philosophers, who have enjoyed a kind

of privilege for such a long time because we have recognized their right to talk about everything and at every moment, must now resign themselves to the fact that much research will take place outside of philosophy."<sup>16</sup>

In 1973, Levi-Strauss was elected to Henry de Montherlant's chair at the Académie Française, dramatic evidence of structuralism's unstoppable rise. Another potential candidate, the poor prince Charles Dedeyan, who personified the most classical literary history and who had planned to present his candidacy, wisely decided to abandon the competition. Levi-Strauss was the only candidate, but his election was not that easy. To be sure, he was elected on the first round, but the majority of sixteen votes was narrow, given that the minimum was fourteen. However, the entrance of the specialist on the Bororo and Nambikwara into the Académie Française in 1974 was enough to gauge the distance that he had covered between the beginning of his career in São Paulo in the thirties and the consecration he received in 1974 in entering under the cupola: "By welcoming me into your ranks today, you are admitting, for the first time in your midst, an ethnologist!"

Levi-Strauss did continue to circumvent philosophy in two fields: art and science. He evoked art in the following terms at the time of his election to the Académie Française: "There is a painter and a *bricoleur* in me who take turns. . . . Take *Tristes Tropiques*. . . . In writing it, I felt I was composing it like an opera. The transitions from autobiography to ethnology in it correspond to the difference between recitatives and arias."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, he played his scientific hand by publishing, in the same year as his election, a second collection of articles, *Structural Anthropology*,<sup>19</sup> which covered the period from his famous 1952 text "Race and History" to his latest articles of 1973.

In this work, Levi-Strauss argued for structuralism's scientific capacity by addressing his two favorite areas: kinship structures and myths. He redefined scientific criteria in the social sciences and argued that the linguist and the ethnologist have more to say to researchers in "cerebral neurology or animal ethnology"<sup>20</sup> than to lawyers, economists, or other political scientists. The metamorphosis was thus more to be expected from the hard sciences. Levi-Strauss paid homage to his predecessors who had helped to create a rigorous ethnology—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Marcel Mauss, and Émile Durkheim, and he called for a general humanism that only contemporary ethnology could

bring, by reconciling the human and natural orders, which it favored. "Ethnology is pushing humanism to enter a third stage."<sup>21</sup>

Structural ethnology would succeed philosophy, in an ultimate, democratic, and universal phase that could finally consign philosophical humanism—whether the aristocratic and limited humanism of the Renaissance or a bourgeois market humanism of the nineteenth century—to the past. But this could only happen by eliminating humankind from the center of nature and by putting an end to his historical determination, which Levi-Strauss considered to be the prolongation of a past humanism, responsible for all the major catastrophes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: "All of the tragedies that we have lived through, first that of colonialism, then fascism, and finally the concentration camps, have been inscribed not in opposition to or contradiction with what claims to be humanism in the form we have been practicing it for many centuries, but, I would say, practically as its natural progression."<sup>22</sup>

Levi-Strauss's success in 1973 made it possible to relativize the increasingly severe criticisms of his work. During that same year, Raoul and Laura Makarius collected their articles from 1967 on and published them in a volume with the deliberately provocative title *Structuralism or Ethnology*.<sup>23</sup> They saw structuralism as the life preserver that ethnologists had grabbed in order to escape the decline of the functionalism linking their fate to a defunct colonialism. They criticized the negation of the reality of phenomena in favor of models that operated as if they were transcendent. Structuralism, in their eyes, led to idealism: "The search for explanations in structuralism is eliminated by eliminating everything that has to do with the concrete, empirical nature of facts."<sup>24</sup> The Makariuses correlated kinship relations, the origins of exogamy, and changes in the mode of production during the transition from gathering to hunting, whence a severe criticism of the structural point of view insofar as it presented kinship relations as temporally invariable. They criticized the elimination of lived experience, echoing the already familiar position of Edmund Leach, for whom it was "the absence of structure which normally characterizes a whole set of directly observable empirical givens."<sup>25</sup>

Cracks and variations in anthropological paradigms became apparent in France as of the seventies. In fact, they were sufficiently evident that, as Levi-Strauss was being elected to the Académie Française, Christian Delacampagne was writing an article in *Le Monde*: "We

could also allege that structuralism needed this official consecration. The surprising thing, in any case, is that it came at a time when it is being increasingly challenged on all sides." Criticizing this detachment from the object in the name of radicalizing structural techniques continued, and increased, in the eighties. Thomas Pavel saw in it a simple return to pre-Spinozan practices, to precritical exegetical techniques, which thus represented a regression, including with respect to seventeenth-century humanist philology, which had dissociated mystic reading from historical exegesis. It would be a return to the cabalistic principles of reading the Torah, which allowed a free permutation of phonological or lexical units. "As in Levi-Strauss, the perceptible text is frozen in a mysterious disorder of currents of signification legitimated at a very different level."<sup>26</sup>

### The Other in Oneself

Challenged by the Other of primitive society, the philosopher was also contested by the self's Other-Lacanian psychoanalysis. In 1970, Lacan had just been excluded from VIm, and therefore from the brotherhood of the philosophical elite. He announced his theoretical riposte to those philosophers who had dared to reject him, thereby repeating the gesture of the International Psychoanalytical Association, which had already made him into a rebel. He argued that the site of truth was only to be found in one of the four possible discourses—the psychoanalytic discourse—from which the three others derived: "The unconscious is knowledge, and by definition an unknowing knowledge. Only discourse can articulate the unconscious."<sup>28</sup> We have already seen that Lacan borrowed this notion of discourse from Michel Foucault, but used it against philosophy. The first discourse, that of the master, which is particularly evident in a political context, closes off access to sublimation, directly confronts death, and only retains of the Thing the *objet petit a* while deluding itself about taking action. The discourse that crystallized Lacan's protest was university discourse, which set itself on a moral plane and sought mastery. It is "the gaping hole into which the subject is engulfed for having to suppose a knowledgeable author."<sup>29</sup> The third discourse is that of the hysteric, the man of science: "Science takes its impetus from the hysteric's discourse."<sup>30</sup>

Given all of this, only analytical discourse escaped the desire of mastery and allowed unconscious knowledge to come forth, in place of truth, as the only signifying knowledge. "Lacan is finally led to

identify philosophical and metaphysical discourse,"<sup>31</sup> thereby situating analytical discourse as the discourse of discourses, the site of the truth of these discourses.

In 1970, an order by Francois Wahl almost led to a new reasoned, critical dictionary of psychoanalysis, directed by Charles Melman, which was to be a work and weapon solely for Lacan's Freudian School.

I saw quite clearly that it would be a thankless task. My idea was very simple, and that was that I knew that if there were no collective work of the Freudian School involving each one of the authors, there would be no Freudian School. My idea was to force the hand of destiny because the school was a nebula in which many galaxies were juxtaposed.<sup>P</sup>

But this would-be competitor of the Laplanche and Pontalis *Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis* never came to fruition. Lacan, like Levi-Strauss and Barthes, played both sides, in different registers. On the one hand, he did not think that psychoanalysis could be transmitted by teaching, like science, which made him a man of words rather than a man of the written word, someone who implicated himself constantly in what he said and did not dissociate his discourse from analytical literature. On the other hand, the more subjective he became in his speaking, the more he used mathemes, Borromean knots, and tores in order to divest himself of his pathos and set himself within a scientific perspective transmitted by working transference. "Seminars were a vital investment for Lacan because there is no knowledge without a transference mechanism."<sup>33</sup>

We have already seen how much collective enthusiasm this analytical discourse, with its claims to be the site of truth, inspired among many philosophers, and particularly the Althusserians, who elected to join the psychoanalytical adventure. Even economists, removed though they were from such concerns, were attracted, as Hubert Brochier's 1972 entrance into the Freudian School attested. "Lacan brought many interesting things to psychoanalysis in France, an attentiveness to the unconscious, a way of manipulating people in the noble sense of the term, from their depths."<sup>34</sup> But, as an economics specialist who had chosen the most formalized mathematics possible, Hubert Brochier looked upon Lacanian formalization negatively, if only pedagogically. What was true for economics—this formalization was the

product of academic respectability but contributed nothing in terms of tangible knowledge—was also true for psychoanalysis. For Brochier, the surface of Mobius, Klein's bottle, Borromean knots, and all of Lacan's topological manipulations, laid out with ever greater artful insistence on his seminar blackboard, contributed nothing more to understanding the unconscious than Walras's theory of general equilibrium helped understand how a real economy operated. "We don't always know what it is good for and, when one discusses it with its supporters, they tell you that it has a purely pedagogical value."<sup>35</sup> It was, in any case, symptomatic that certain economists felt the need to set their own concepts against those of psychoanalysis, due largely to Lacan's growing influence, which had put psychoanalysis at the center of rationality in the social sciences.

### The Other in Time

A third figure of the Other, the Other in time, became the privileged object of research during the seventies. This was philosophy's third challenge, and it implied moving beyond a certain number of atemporal philosophical categories in order to confront history, beginning with an anthropological approach. Jean-Pierre Vernant did just that. He had also been in philosophy and in 1948 joined the philosophy commission of the CNRS and became interested in the category of work in the Platonic system. He discovered the relativity of the way we pose problems, since we habitually start from contemporary reality and too often turn our anachronistic mental gear on the past. Vernant realized, in fact, that there was no word in Plato's vocabulary to express the notion of work. He historicized his approach and discovered that going from the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C. meant going from one mental universe to another, which was the subject of his first book."

In searching for the notion of work, Vernant found, above all, the omnipresence of religion. Vernant was a Hellenist and a student and disciple of Louis Gernet, who had written an anthropology of the Greek world, and whose totalizing approach, in the tradition of Marcel Mauss and his "total social fact," would be represented in the ever-present concern for theory in Jean-Pierre Vernant's work. The other major influence on Vernant at the beginning of the fifties was Ignace Meyerson, a professor of historical psychology, whom Vernant had met in 1940 and who influenced his thinking about Greek man, his

conceptual categories, his emotions, his "mental gear," to use one of Lucien Febvre's preferred categories. At the end of the fifties, as we have already seen, after having historicized his object, Vernant structuralized it with his reading of Hesiod's myth of the races.

In 1958, Vernant analyzed Greek myths "on the model proposed by Levi-Strauss and Dumézil, I proceeded, therefore, as a conscious and voluntary structuralist."<sup>37</sup> This first structuralist work on the myth of the races began on a note about Greece in which Dumézil raised the problem of trifunctionality. The Dumézilian line was important for Vernant, who was leaving the Sixth Section of the EPHE to enter the Fifth in 1963. Thanks to Dumézil, he often came into contact with these issues. On the occasion of one of these visits, Vernant, who had already gone down a half-flight of stairs, heard Dumézil call down to him. "He said to me, 'Monsieur Vernant, could you come back up? . . . Have you thought about the College de France? You would do well to think about it and go to see Levi-Strauss, for there are a few of us who have you in mind.' So I went to see Levi-Strauss, who said to me, 'No problem, I will nominate yoU.'"<sup>38</sup>

Presented by Levi-Strauss in 1975, Jean-Pierre Vernant made his entrance into the College de France. With him, historical anthropology rose to the summit of legitimation. But Clio was not in exile with Vernant. He was passionate about movement, the transition from one stage to another, and the psychology/historical anthropology he favored was a science of movement rather than a will to enclose history in any sort of statism, Marx was one of his other major references, and he considered him to be the veritable ancestor of structuralism. Not Althusser's Marx of the postepistemological rupture of the subjectless process, for the subject was Vernant's chief concern. "I have never laughed so much as when I read Althusser's *Answer to John Lewis*. To explain Stalin's crimes by saying that humanism had continued to wreak havoc was completely nuts!"<sup>39</sup>

Vernant looked at the whole of Greek life, rather than detaching any particular category in order to examine its internal and immanent logic. Heir to Louis Gernet's totalizing ambitions, he did not isolate religion, his favorite field of research—to the contrary. He analyzed political organization, something that was relatively absent from structuralist studies, and he studied its rise thanks to the reforms of Cleisthenes in Athens. The territorial principle replaced genetic organization in the city. "The center spatially translated the aspects of ho-

mogeneity and equality, and no longer those aspects of differentiation and hierarchy."<sup>40</sup> This new space established by the polis corresponded to another relationship to time, and to the creation of civic time. This double effort at homogenization to counter the divisions, factions, and rival groupings that were sapping the city lay at the root of a radical shift of Greek mental categories. The rise of Greek philosophy, and of reason, was not due to purely contingent phenomena, as Levi-Strauss thought, but was clearly the "daughter of the city."<sup>41</sup>

A colloquium on Greek myth in Urbino, Italy, in May 1973 compared French structuralism with other interpretations of myths. This gave Vernant the opportunity to clarify his vision of structuralism. The Paris semiotic school was heavily represented, notably by Joseph Courtes and Paul Fabbri. Vernant was there, along with his school of historical anthropology. Marcel Detienne presented a paper titled "Greek Myth and Structural Analysis: Issues and Problems," Jean-Louis Durant on the topic "The Worker Ritual Murder and Myths of the First Sacrifice," and Vernant's lecture was titled "The Promethean Myth in Hesiod." This generated a clash at the top between the Italian school led by Angelo Brelich and the British empiricism of Geoffrey Stephen Kirk. **In** his final remarks, Vernant clearly argued for the coherence of his school's approach and, after having claimed that the case studies that had been presented should calm any misgivings about the elimination of history, he defended the structural program loud and clear:

We don't consider structuralism to be a premade theory, an already constructed truth that we look for elsewhere in order to apply it to Greek data. We note the changes in perspective brought by mythological studies like those of Claude Levi-Strauss in the last years, and we test their validity in our field, but without ever losing sight of the specificity of our working materials.<sup>v</sup>

**In** reaction to the severe criticisms made against Marcel Detienne's paper arguing that Greek sacrifice grew out of hunting rituals, and that the myth of Adonis was born of an ancient gatherer civilization that had previously existed in Greece, Vernant energetically defended the structural approach.

I would like to ask Kirk one question. Is it enough to baptize History as a reconstruction, about which the least we might say is that it is purely hypothetical, in order to find ourselves branded as conserva-

tives and positivists? To locate myths of sacrifice in the whole of the Greek religious context, to compare the many versions of different periods at the heart of the same culture in light of a systematic order: is this more daring than to gaily make one's way from the neolithic age to fifth-century Greece? . . . To my mind, that history belongs at best to science fiction, and at worst to the novel of imagination.<sup>f</sup>

Vernant created a school around himself, and the work of a whole group of researchers was oriented along the lines he laid out, among them Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Marcel Detienne, Nicole Loraux, and Francois Hartog. This anthropological research on historical data led in particular to a collective work published in 1979 under the direction of Marcel Detienne and Vernant, *Sacrificial Cuisine in Greek Lands.*<sup>r</sup> The book raised the question of Greek daily life and culinary questions, in the manner of Levi-Strauss, not out of an interest in exoticism, but in order to better understand Greek society and its use of sacrifice as a way of pacifying and domesticating violence. **I**n this democratic society, sacrifice was the work of all, but limited to citizens, meaning free men. Women were excluded from this rite, just as they were from citizenship. When they did pick up sacrificial instruments, it was to transform them into mortal and castrating weapons. Cutting up meat was, therefore, a man's job, who served his wife. Sacrifice thus offered a privileged perspective on Greek society from within, and Levi-Strauss saw in this work an important analogy with his own observations about American myths. "The work of Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and Marcel Detienne seems to show that in Greek mythology there are certain levels where we find ourselves practically on the same footing as with the American mind."<sup>45</sup>

The passionate discovery of different figures of alterity and of the Other made it possible to create a symbiosis between three different kinds of approaches: structural anthropology, historical anthropology, and psychoanalysis. All worked at understanding the other side of Western rationality; this posed a major challenge to philosophy.

## **The Reconciliation of History and Structure**

Fernand Braudel had already reacted to the structuralist challenge in 1958 when he focused historical discourse on a practically immobile history of the long duration. In this way, he contrasted the legacy of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre's *Annales* with Claude Levi-Strauss. These historians were no strangers to the structuralist effervescence: May '68 had shaken up the antihistoricism of structuralism's early days and broadened the possibilities for history, which had already been renovated by the *Annales*, but reconciled with the structural point of view, with greater attention to permanent features than to changes, more anthropological than factual. For the historians, who had been excluded from the intellectual limelight enjoyed by linguistics, anthropology, and psychoanalysis during the sixties, this was sweet revenge.

It was the beginning of a veritable golden age; readers of works in historical anthropology were avid for new research. The new editorial board to which Braudel handed over the *Annales* was largely responsible for recuperating and adapting the structural paradigm to historical discourse. In 1969, a younger generation of historians (Andre Burguiere, Marc Ferro, Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, and Jacques Revel) turned from economic history to a history more attuned to the study of *mentalites*.

### **The New Alliance**

In 1971, this new team published a special issue on the theme "History and Structure."<sup>1</sup> The title alone clearly expressed a desire to rec-

oncile two apparently contradictory terms, something like the marriage of fire and water. That historians wrote alongside Claude Lévi-Strauss, Maurice Godelier, Dan Sperber, Michel Pecheux, and Christian Metz showed that the battles had come to an end and that the times favored collaboration among historians, anthropologists, and semiologists. At the beginning of the seventies, a vast alliance was thus established in order to promote a common research. The decade was indeed rich in interdisciplinary collaboration. André Burguière, who introduced the special issue, clearly recognized the ebb of structuralism in the aftermath of the upheaval of 1967-68, and that historians should seize the opportunity to take advantage of the situation. He argued on behalf of historians for an open and well-tempered structuralist program that could demonstrate that historians were not content with perceiving manifest reality, as Lévi-Strauss had said in 1958, but that they were also interested in hidden meaning, in unconscious collective practices, as were anthropologists.

Fernand Braudel had already proposed the *tongue duree* as a means for historians to perceive structures, and as a common language of all the social sciences. André Burguière went further. He outlined a general program of cultural history and historical anthropology that could unfold on the very terrain of structural studies, that of the symbolic. This was where the structural method could best and most easily show its effectiveness. In 1971, the *Annates* were arguing for a structuralism for historians. Burguière held the banner high: "A little structuralism leads us away from history, whereas a lot of structuralism brings us back." Anthropologists had indeed challenged historians, but the entente cordiale seemed quite clear at the beginning of the seventies, thanks to the anthropologization of historical discourse. In 1971, Lévi-Strauss was interviewed on the *Annates* radio program *Mondays on History*, along with Fernand Braudel, Raymond Aron, and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. Lévi-Strauss admitted, "I have the feeling that we are doing the same thing: the great book of history is also an ethnographic essay on past societies."!

The historians delved into the delights of slow history, the history of permanences. Historiography, in its turn, privileged the figure of the Other, with respect to the reassuring image of the same. In arguing for a structuralized history, the *Annates* historians hoped to federate the social sciences; this had been Émile Durkheim's goal for sociologists-

by getting on the wavelength of the structural model and making history a nomothetic rather than an idiographic discipline.

The first effect of this cross-pollination was of course to slow down temporality, which became practically stationary. The history of events was rejected as belonging to epiphenomena and episodic stories; there was to be a single focus on that which is repeated and that which is reproduced. "As for the history of events, harmonizing the teaching of Braudel and Labrousse led to pushing back margins, or even ignoring them completely."<sup>4</sup> The approach to temporality favored large stretches of immobile time, and when Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie succeeded Braudel at the College de France, his inaugural lesson was entitled "Immobile History."> According to Le Roy Ladurie, a historian does structuralism consciously or without knowing it. "For almost a half-century, from Marc Bloch to Pierre Goubert, the best French historians were systematic systematizers and knew that they were structuralists, but sometimes they were unwittingly structuralists, but without being able to hide it."<sup>6</sup> Le Roy Ladurie reaffirmed his admiration for Levi-Strauss's use of structural methods applied to kinship laws and to New World mythologies. Although he confined their use to other shores, Le Roy Ladurie nonetheless retained, especially, for the historian, the idea that reality had to be gleaned on the basis of a small number of variables, by constructing models of analysis. Using Roland Barthes's expression, Le Roy Ladurie presented historians as "the rear guard of the avant-garde,"<sup>7</sup> specialists in recuperating the progress made in the other pilot social sciences that they had "shamelessly looted"<sup>8</sup>-an entirely fair observation that described well this second wind of structuralism, transformed and recuperated by historians. The curriculum Le Roy Ladurie described was overarched by the same scientific perspective as structuralism, making history a nomothetic, scientific discipline that revealed a long immobile period stretching from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the eighteenth century, or from 1300 to 1700, according to a stable eodemographic cycle of around twenty million inhabitants on French territory.

Le Roy Ladurie also found a degree zero of history after Jakobson's degree zero of phonology, Levi-Strauss's degree zero of kinship, and Barthes's degree zero of writing. "Zero growth demography"<sup>9</sup> gave historians access to important, stable balances. The historian's new task was not to emphasize historical accelerations and changes,

but the regulatory agents that reproduced existing balances exactly. This was how microbial agents would be highlighted to explain how the ecosystem stabilized. It was "even more deeply in biological facts, far more than in the class struggle, that the motor of massive history has to be sought, at least during the period that I am studying."<sup>10</sup>

Humanity was just as decentered here as in the structural perspective, caught in a net and able only to appropriate the illusion of change. Everything belonging to the important breaks in history was downplayed in favor of the large trends, even if these were part of a history without humanity. U Le Roy Ladurie ended his inaugural lesson on an optimistic note for the discipline that he saw as conquering once again: "History lived for a few decades in semidisgrace, the little Cinderella of the social sciences. Henceforth, it once again finds the eminence it merits. . . . History had simply gone to the other side of the mirror to hunt down the Other in place of the Same."<sup>12</sup> In the school of slow history, some, like Francois Furet, had in fact already found the necessary antidote for their Communist commitment. Structuralizing history and the moment became, in this case, the lever that could disengage Communist historians from Marxism and the dialectic in favor of scientificity, "The history of inertias is not only a good discipline, but it is also a good therapy against a vision of historicity inherited from the philosophy of the Lumieres.<sup>13</sup>

Naturalizing a history of societies that had become static, like Levi-Strauss's immobile societies, with their simple reproductive machines, adopted the structural program against the dominant nineteenth-century historical voluntarism. Faced with the collapse of revolutions as end points and of attempts at restoration, history flowed into immobility, a static present with neither before nor after, juxtaposing the Same and the Other in space. For some, this immobilization of temporality was accompanied by a political conservatism gutted of all projects: "I willingly acknowledge that this type of history (that of long periods, of the ordinary man) is, finally, a history with a conservative vocation."<sup>14</sup>

### Georges Duby and Tripartition

Above all, those who used slow history as an antidote to the philosophy of the Lumieres were those who had used Marxism as a militant war machine, much like the Stalinist vulgate so popular during the fifties and sixties. This was not true for historians who had not been

politically committed and therefore had no need to exorcise past demons. They were not less seduced by structuralism, although they did not view it as an antidote or an alternative to Marxism, quite to the contrary.

Georges Duby, for example, discovered Marxism in 1937 in his philosophy class, but it was never more than an analytical, heuristic tool. In 1980, he recalled its impact on his work and his development: "Marxism had a profound influence on me. I react very violently against those who claim today, following a Parisian fashion, that Marxism did not count for the historians of my generation. It counted considerably for me, and I insist that this be said."<sup>15</sup> Reconciling Marxism and structuralism, Duby could propose an attentive, diachronic reading of structural phenomena. He read the work of the Althusserians closely. "Reading Althusser and Balibar was important because it let me see more clearly that, in the period of my specialization, economics could be secondary to other determinations. I had had a presentiment of this."<sup>16</sup> For Duby, Althusserianism could lend a certain complexity to Marxism.

At the same time, and like his entire generation, Duby keenly felt the challenge that anthropologists had raised for historians. This allowed him to go from economic questions, like the ones he raised in his thesis on the region around Macon during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in which he studied the seignorial revolution in the region around the Cluny monastery, to questions about the imaginary and the symbolic, without ever dissociating these two approaches or playing one off against the other.<sup>17</sup> "I am trying to eliminate the mechanism of causality and am speaking about correlations rather than about causes and effects. This has led me to think that everything is determined by everything and that everything determines everything. This idea of indispensable totality makes me think of that."<sup>18</sup> Rather than the mechanistic values of reflection, Duby proposed the coalescence of social levels in their different material and mental manifestations. And he proposed a new program for historians of a history of mentalities conceived not as a means for getting rid of social history, but as the fine point of social history.

Duby's most structuralist work and the most successful illustration of the adaptation of this method to history is *The Three Orders or the Feudal Imagination*.<sup>v</sup> This important book is the only one that was written without being solicited, and it shows Georges Dumezil's

influence. "I owe an enormous debt to Georges Dumezil. This book would not have been written without him, but he is not a historian—he's a linguist and he is concerned with structure. As a social historian, I wanted to understand how this image operates and is articulated with material reality."<sup>20</sup> Duby adopted Dumezil's trifunctionality of sovereignty, war, and fertility but reversed the argument that this was a peculiarly Indo-European mental structure. Where, for Dumezil, in the beginning was the myth, for Duby structure proposed while history disposed. He shifted the focus toward the emergence of myth in the historical fabric, its more or less profound penetration, and its meaning in the social practices where it was used. Yet the society that he studied was traversed by conflicts, which shifted and engendered representations of the world whose form or nature were adapted to the need to strangle conflicts. **In** this context, ideology did not simply reflect economic domination but produced meaning, and therefore reality, a social order. **In** Althusserian terminology, it even played a dominant role in feudal society by organizing the relations of production. The ideological sphere in this case played the role of the site of absence, the perfect model of imperfection.

Duby redefined the emergence of the trifunctional order in Western Europe as the product of the feudal revolution. **In** the eleventh century, the Carolingian empire had expanded and had come under external pressure. Ideological values were reversed: the military system, established on the borders, moved into the center of the social body. The king no longer incarnated the power to make war, but rather the power to preserve peace. Political power changed and focused on maintaining internal stability and defending holy places, churches, and monasteries. But during the same period, monarchical authority collapsed into a multiplicity of counties and principalities. Temporal power had failed, and it was tempting for the spiritual order—monks and clerics—to take it into hand. The social border shifted, and henceforth arms bearers were opposed to all others. There had to be an ideological consensus so that those who bore the burden of a militarized society could resign, but this consensus remained elusive.

The feudal revolution needed a system of legitimation and a model for distributing social labor and assuring the subservience of the greatest number. It was at this time, around 1025, that two different bishops, Gerard of Cambrai and Aldaberon of Laon, spoke of the

trifunctional social order: "Some pray, others fight, and still others work" (*Oratores, Bellatores, Laboratores*). In the absence of political power, the clerics attempted to restore social balance, and the ternary figure seemed to be the earthly echo of celestial distinctions. Duby made clear that this imaginary model made it possible to justify the monopoly of economic and political power by a small, privileged minority and to hide in a tripartite structure the underlying dualism that threatened the system. Trifunctionality ensured not only the complicity of the first two orders, but also the primacy of clerics over non-clerics in the battle for the locus of monarchical power. This structure remained the word of clerics and had no echo during a latent period lasting until the end of the twelfth century at which point lords and soldiers had to impose the absolute distinction among the three constitutive orders of French society in the face of the rise of an urban bourgeoisie.

This structure of three orders moved from ideology to social reality by an inverse effect, whence its creative power. When Philippe le Bel called a meeting of the States General at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the celestial order became a socioprofessional order: the clergy, the nobility, and third estate, a division that lasted until the French Revolution. By plunging into the operation of the symbolic order, Duby showed that it was impossible to imagine a society based on a simple mechanics of reflection, and that a symbolic structure had to be studied through history. "The perfect model of the three orders, tied to the monarchical ideal and elevating the heads of the armies above the others, is a weapon in a polemic against those arguing for a new order, who included both heretics and the monks of Cluny."<sup>21</sup>

Restored in the conflict that had seen it emerge, structure was not a weapon against history. It offered a possible reconciliation between two approaches that had initially seemed antagonistic.

## *Twenty-two*

# **Foucault and the Deconstruction of History (I): *The Archaeology of Knowledge***

When Michel Foucault was writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in 1968 in Tunisia, he was trying to answer the many objections to the arguments of his very successful *The Order of Things*. In particular, he was trying to answer young Althusserians in the epistemological circle of the rue d'Ulm who had just chosen political involvement and had just broken with the Communist Party leadership. The great upheaval that preceded May '68 and continued after it favored the splintering of structuralism. With this work, Foucault wanted to find a way at once to conceptualize his approach and to distance himself from his previous structuralist positions. He elected quite a singular path, suggesting a surprising new alliance with new history historians, heirs to the *Annales*. He was placing himself on historical grounds in order to work with historians, but engaged in history the way Canguilhem had treated psychology, in order to deconstruct it from within, à la Nietzsche, and his position therefore led to many a misunderstanding.

### **Historicizing Structuralism**

Foucault himself described the inflection in his thinking between his early and his later work. The *History of Madness* had paid too much attention to "the anonymous subject of history"; in *The Birth of the Clinic*, "the frequent recourse to structural analysis threatened to bypass the specificity of the problem presented"; *The Order of Things* had lacked an explicit methodological framework, which made it

possible to conceive of analyses in terms of cultural totalities. This methodological framework became the object of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which initially took the form of a preface to *The Order of Things*. "Canguilhem and Hyppolite were the ones who said to Foucault: don't put it in the preface, you will develop it later."<sup>2</sup> The work thus still bore the mark of the triumphant structuralism of 1966, but between its first version and the 1969 publication, not only did Foucault's thinking change, but so did the intellectual climate of the times. The most spectacular change was that *The Archaeology of Knowledge* abandoned the notion of the episteme that had seemed to organize the breaks operating in *The Order of Things*. Without presenting himself as a historian, Foucault described his approach in terms very proximate to history. This was symptomatic. Defining himself as an archaeologist, he spoke about genealogy and circled around history in order to situate himself outside of it. This explained his at least ambiguous, and often conflictual relationship with the historical corporation.

Those to whom Foucault addressed himself in 1968-69 were in fact second-generation Althusserians, who had not participated in *Reading Capital*. They included Dominique Lecourt, Benny and Tony Lévy, and Robert Linhart, among others, who diverged from early Althusserian thinking in that they were more interested in the political aspect of political commitment than in defining a methodological framework of contemporary rationality. "We considered the team that had written *Reading Capital* to be contaminated by structuralism, and we looked upon that quite critically."<sup>3</sup> For these politically committed militants, who were in the main Maoists, the one unresolved problem was that of praxis, practice. Yet the major innovation in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* was precisely to consider practice, beginning with the notion of discursive practice. This important innovation allowed Foucault to inflect the structural paradigm so that it went beyond the discursive realm alone, thereby bringing it closer to Marxism. This notion of practice "created a decisive dividing line between *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things*."<sup>4</sup> The essential break with structuralism lay in this new affirmation, according to which "discursive relationships are not, as we can see, internal to discourse."<sup>5</sup> Not that Foucault was abandoning discursivity, since it remained a major focus, but he did consider it as a discursive practice limited to discourse: "Discursive relations . . . are not relations exterior to discourse . . . . They are in a sense at the limit of discourse."<sup>6</sup>

Foucault justified this historicization of the structural paradigm by using the path taken by the *Annales* historians, who had radically brought down the three traditional historical idols of biography, events, and politics. His *Archaeology of Knowledge* began by describing the not insignificant interest he felt for the new historical orientation: "For many years now, historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances." This practically immobile history attracted Foucault, and the epistemological turn undertaken in 1929 by the *Annales* became an exergue in his theoretical work.

The marriage between the history of the great immobile anchors of events and Foucault's evolving preference for discontinuities and the powerful enigmatic breaks along the lines of Bachelard and Canguilhem's epistemology of science might seem surprising. It was paradoxical to support the idea of epistemological thresholds on a slow history, but this apparent internal tension was only superficial. Foucault saw a converging evolution between the history of thought, new literary criticism, the history of science that pointed to larger and larger numbers of breaks, and the discernment of discontinuities, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the historical discipline that makes events sink beneath the weight of structures. "In fact, the same problems are being posed in either case, but they provoked opposite surface effects. These problems may be summed up in a word: the questioning of the *document*."<sup>8</sup>

Underlying this was the same transformation of evidence that traditional history had considered a given, but that the new history saw as a construct. New historians took the document and sectioned it, distributing it in series. Its status changed; where the historian of yesteryear was used to transforming monuments into documents, the new historian "transforms *documents* into *monuments*:"<sup>9</sup> The historian thus became an archaeologist, echoing Foucault's archaeology of knowledge project by starting with the constructed series of knowledge, an intrinsic description within them. This led Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie to comment that "the introduction to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is the first definition of serial history."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Foucault announced his program in these same terms: "The problem now is to constitute series."<sup>11</sup> The apparent opposition between the discontinuity at work in the history of science or in new literary criticism and the

historian's predilection and valorization of long periods of immobile time was thus merely superficial. Common conceptions and approaches in fact led serial historians to favor discontinuities: "The notion of discontinuity assumes a major role in the historical disciplines."<sup>12</sup> The historian who must fill the holes and plug up the gaps in order to set them back into continuities from then on gave these discontinuities a heuristic value of a determined operation for defining the level of analysis. With discontinuity, the limits of the object of study could be defined and described based on its thresholds, its breaking points. Finally, rather than a history compressed around a center or a global history, it was a means of constructing "that might be called a *general history*,"<sup>13</sup> which was defined, to the contrary, as a space of dispersion.

Foucault quite explicitly echoed the *Annales* legacy in defining the new task of an archaeology of knowledge: "What Bloch, Febvre, and Braudel have shown for history, we can show, I believe, for the history of ideas."<sup>14</sup> With this new alliance, Foucault could resolve the apparent dichotomy between a structural method and historical evolution, by presenting new history as one of the possible figures for structuralist studies. History cut across problems in linguistics, economics, ethnology, and literary analysis. "We can, if we want, designate these problems under the insignia of structuralism."<sup>15</sup> New history was a privileged ground for setting into motion an open and historicized structuralism; later, this was called poststructuralism in the United States.

This historicizing of structuralism was quite clearly the second period of structuralist history since 1967. "Foucault's archaeology was very clearly distinct from taxonomic structuralism such as that of Lévi-Strauss."<sup>16</sup> Instead of thinking about the structure and the sign, Foucault examined the study of the series and the event. But this shift toward history, perceived as a call to arms by the new historians of the *Annales*, who were to see Foucault as the man who could conceptualize their practice, was in fact only an illusory reinforcement. Foucault remained a philosopher in a Nietzschean-Heideggerian tradition, and he decided to deconstruct the historian's turf. He was interested in the discursive realm and not in the referent, which remained history's privileged object.

In no case did Foucault want to defend any discipline whatsoever of the science of history, however new this history. What interested

him was to open the structures up to temporal discontinuity and shifts that determined the endless game of discursive practices. Deconstructing history was already part of the work of the new historians and involved abandoning the search for continuity or attempts at synthesizing different pieces of reality. On the contrary, this deconstruction offered a perspective of pluralization and atomization. As Habermas wrote, in this configuration of knowledge, hermeneutics was given its leave since understanding was no longer a theoretical objective: "The archaeologist will ensure that the speaking documents once again become silent monuments, objects that needed to be freed from their context in order to be available for a description of the structuralist type."<sup>17</sup> What these new historians were going to see as the best theoretical support for grounding their practice was in fact a systematic destruction of the historical discipline. A veritable *quid pro quo* would be at the bottom of all the misunderstandings in the difficult debates between philosophy and professional historians.

The space of dispersion of Foucauldian archaeology shared some aspects of early structuralism: its protest against the use of overly simple causalities, its use of a relational network spreading in all directions between different discursive practices. Foucault saw this space as possibly bringing these practices together in a coherent, causal whole. The archaeologist would thus also be a relativist since it was impossible to establish anything whatsoever. In this respect, Foucault broke with Althusser's scientism; he remained a historical materialist, and kept his sights set on a science freed of its ideological setting. As a good Nietzschean, Foucault sapped those apparently well-founded beliefs and apparently most legitimate sciences, arguing that nothing can be founded.

By attacking history, after having studied the example of philology, political economy, and biology in *The Order of Things*, Foucault took on a major ancestral realm of knowledge and remained quite faithful to the structuralist tradition. He did not refute history's existence, but deconstructed it from within, a task that, in the Nietzschean early seventies, was far more successful than might have been imagined. Since the bases for knowledge and search for origins could not be discovered, the possibilities were fundamentally descriptive, and Foucault baptized himself a positivist, an infamous epithet for anyone who spoke in the name of a constructed science: "I am happy to be one [a positivist]."<sup>18</sup> His method typically circumvented interpretation

and let discursive practices play out explicitly and implicitly. "It is true that I have never presented archaeology as a science, or even as the beginnings of a future science."<sup>19</sup> The archaeologist worked like a geologist, satisfied with running his fingers over the temporally successive strata of knowledge, pointing out the discontinuities and breaks affecting their sedimentation.

### Foucault Targets Analytical Philosophy

Foucault was not trying to forge a new alliance with the *Annales* historians in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* but to criticize analytical philosophy, the dominant philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon world. While writing the book, he frequently and carefully discussed his ideas with Gerard Deledalle, a French Anglo-Saxon philosophy specialist and director of the philosophy department of the University of Tunis who had invited him to teach in Tunisia in September 1966. His polemical objective of strengthening the positions in *The Order of Things* with criticism in line with the philosophy of language was not explicit in the first reading, and when Dominique Lecourt wrote an article in *La Pensee* on *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault thanked him.<sup>20</sup> He also let him know that he had missed something fundamental. "He said to me, 'You know, there is something that you did not grasp,' without saying anything more. Now I understand what he meant. It was the position of strength that he was trying to impose on analytical philosophy."<sup>21</sup> Was *The Archaeology of Knowledge* a weapon against analytical philosophy? We might suggest this given Foucault's relationship with Gerard Deledalle and Dominique Lecourt's remarks. But we might nonetheless consider that "this resistance to intentionality, meaning, and the referent most certainly concerns phenomenology more, and Foucault is familiar with that tradition. Or, we might simply say that hermeneutics is hostile to structuralism."<sup>22</sup>

In any case, *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* were fundamentally connected. Both were overarched by the structuralist legacy and equally attacked the theory of the subject; for even if Foucault was moving toward historicization, the issue was the subject, as it had been during the earliest days of structuralism. And, in the manner of Heidegger, this subject had to be decentered:

what is being bewailed with such vehemence is not the disappearance of history, but the eclipse of that form of history that was se-

cretly, but entirely related to the synthetic activity of the subject; . . . what is being bewailed is that ideological use of history by which one tries to restore to man everything that has ceaselessly eluded him for over a hundred years.<sup>23</sup>

In the same perspective of *The Order of Things*, Foucault addressed the master of creation-man himself. The archaeology of the social sciences showed that the many narcissistic wounds, from Copernicus to Freud via Darwin, had slowly but surely dispossessed man of any illusory sovereignty. The archaeologist was to take this evolution seriously and avoid restoring a humanistic anthropology since "man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end."<sup>24</sup> Before analytical philosophy and its pragmatic studies with their meaningless language acts, Foucault proposed an autonomous discursive sphere that focused exclusively on the interplay of utterances diffused within discursive formations. "The study of discursive formations requires a reduction of two orders. Not only must the archaeologist make truth an abstract notion . . . but he must also reduce its pretension to meaning to an abstraction."<sup>25</sup>

This work presented the now classical normalization of the signified and of the subject characteristic of structural linguists, which appeared as the necessary condition for addressing language by description alone. Describing the function of utterances and enunciation implied, according to Foucault, an absolute neutrality and exteriority to all enunciations, by contrast with analytical philosophy, which sought out and effaced the meaning. The archaeologist limited himself to describing existing utterances: "The archaeologist does not take utterances seriously."<sup>26</sup>

Above all, rather than trying to frame discursive logic within false continuities, as biographies did, Foucault tried to point out the archaeological slices and shifts from one discursive formation to another, the lags and discordances. He tried to "describe the dispersion of the discontinuities themselves."<sup>27</sup> This concern for description within an autonomous discursive sphere was clearly part of the structural linguistic legacy and its rejection of meaning and the referent. "The archaeologist claims to speak without any concern for comprehensibility."<sup>28</sup> There was, in fact, no signifier for Foucault, neither the speaker's intentionality nor the referential framework nor any occult meaning. He began and returned to the utterance as a moment to be lifted from its atemporality.

The archaeologist's work of decentering the subject led Thomas Pavel to compare Foucault's conceptual layout and that of distributionalists such as Harris and his disciples: "The similarities have to do especially with the rejection of mentalist ideas. . . . The intentional notions Foucault criticized included tradition, disciplines, influence, evolution, mentality, in a word, all the historical forms of coherence and continuity."<sup>29</sup> We can better appreciate the misunderstanding between Foucault and historians who criticized the historical validity of his theses and accused him of using utterances outside of their context and their specific historical issues. For Foucault, the notion of utterance or of discursive formation had no empirical content; his approach was set in the limits of discourse in order to concentrate on the conditions of its possibility rather than on its content or the meaning of the discursive exchange, or the concrete propositions studied by an analytical philosophy that he considered meaningless.

### Archaeology: A Middle Ground

While Foucault focused exclusively on discursive formations, he continued to reject linguistic methods for describing language. The path he defined, that of archaeology, seemed to offer a third option to the techniques of linguistic formalization-semiotics-and philosophical interpretation, or hermeneutics; it was located midway between structuralism, for which it was a theoretical framework, and historical materialism. Gilles Deleuze described this using the musical assessment of Webern's universe: "He created a new dimension, which we might call a diagonal dimension."<sup>30</sup>

Foucault resisted reductionism by systematically setting himself on edges and interstices between genres. Discourse, the central idea of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, lay between structure and event. It contained the rules of language that constitute the linguistic object of predilection, but was not limited to that, because discourse also encompassed speech. By discourse, Foucault meant the structural dimension and the event: "treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements."<sup>31</sup> His was a position of constant tension since he refused both hermetic discourse and its elucidation by elements external to language.

Since discourse did not refer to another order of things, Foucault

emphasized the notion of discursive practice that let him get beyond the sign, but this is no way meant that he abandoned the idea of an autonomous discursive realm: "Discursive relationships remain most important."<sup>32</sup> Foucault thus retained structuralist notions of the initial break between language and its referent; he also held that discourse was the most important object of study. But he studied it as a philosopher and not as a linguist, keeping discourses at a distance, shifting and rotating them to study them at more than just the most immediate level. Beneath the discursive surface, which he took as his starting point, Foucault let different discourses play against each other to discover other potential organizations. Beneath the game of simulacra, he clearly meant to describe the specific rules of discursive practices by loosening the links between words and things, and by avoiding using the contextual circumstances in which the discourse unfolded to explain its background. The archaeologist was not to define thought or representation beneath the discourse, "but those discourses themselves, those discourses as practices obeying certain rules."<sup>33</sup>

Unlike analytical philosophy, archaeology rejected the meaning of language acts and the reference to a subject. But, unlike the linguist who argued for the iterability of schemas belonging to a language system, Foucault took concrete utterances with respect to time. The archaeologist was to measure the degree of validity of a moving body as it evolved over time according to its position in discursive space and the precise moment of its utterance. These shifts and connections between different discursive realms led to questions about the division of sciences, disciplines, and established fields of knowledge and their own corpus and system of scientific rules. Thanks to the archaeologist, a certain dominant transversal discursive mode could be discerned over all the modes of knowledge of a given period.

His basic unit was the utterance, a true thing set in an in-between zone, with language as a system of rules on the one hand, and a corpus of discursive utterances on the other. This utterance is not the enunciation of analytical philosophy, and yet it is not hermetically sealed since "a statement must have substance, a support, a place, and a date."<sup>34</sup> Starting with the stuff of statements, Foucault did not intend to layout a synthesis around a subject, but rather a space of dispersion using the many ways in which enunciation functioned. What established and unified the utterance was no longer its integral unity but a law of distribution, specific constitutive rules where the level of

relationship was the fundamental issue. "I have undertaken then to describe the relations between statements."<sup>35</sup>

Description and not causality was therefore the archaeologist's first task. The rules of utterances were as unconscious as epistemes but were more historicized, referring to a given time and space, a social, geographical, economic, and linguistic zone. Discursive practice had its place more within social realities by virtue of the organic institutional relationship that simultaneously established and limited it. Thus it was up to the archaeologist to discern the set of utterances belonging to the same discursive formation. For Foucault, the enunciative space supposed a certain number of rules. Gilles Deleuze distinguished three successive circles around the utterance: a collateral and adjacent space; a correlative, organizing space that marked sites and viewpoints; and finally, a complementary space of nondiscursive practices: institutions, political events, and economic process.<sup>w</sup> This third space, which was in no way causal for Foucault, represented the essential flexion for getting out of a particular structuralism with its hermetic concept of discourse.

This was also the major personal change for Foucault and for his work until then. He had already replaced the episteme with the notion of discursive practice, and he went even further toward a materialist approach by integrating the relationship between discursive and nondiscursive practices into his work, even if it was only a question of a third circle conceived only as a visual limit. Starting from these three circles constituting the utterance, the archaeologist was to point out the iterative conditions of the utterance: "There must be the same space of distribution, the same distribution of particularities, the same order of places and sites, the same relationship with the established milieu: for the *enonce* all of this constitutes a materiality that allows it to be repeated."<sup>37</sup> Such transitory figures were mortal languages and not universals. Thus Foucault ultimately defied any attempt at adopting any form of historicism or humanism. His conception was something fugitive and polymorphous. Discursive practice did not refer to the activity of a subject but to the rules to which it was subjected. As Deleuze put it, the approach was essentially "topological," and not typological.

The issue was to trace the speaker's status, placements, and positions, referring his or her discourse to a particular point in space. Foucault specifically asked the question of the speaker's place: "Who is

speaking? Who, among the totality of speaking individuals, is accorded the right to use this sort of language? Who is qualified to do SO?"<sup>38</sup> Medical knowledge does not operate chaotically, nor does it refer exclusively to its internal logic. For a doctor to be a doctor supposes criteria of competence. A medical decision or act takes its value from the person who performs it, from the doctor's socially recognized identity and institutional place. Specialist or generalist, intern or extern, doctor or health administrator, each status corresponds to a certain competence or practice in a medical and social hierarchy. "Medical statements cannot come from anybody."<sup>39</sup> Discursive practice is clearly located within nondiscursive practices that should be reintegrated into the archaeologist's perspective.

This was the aspect of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that interested Dominique Lecourt most when he reviewed it in *La Pensee* in August 1970. A Marxist, he saw it as an important step forward and an important departure from *The Order of Things*. Foucault's concept of practice, establishing a theory of discursivity structured by relationships invested in institutions, could not help but remind readers of Althusser and his followers of his shift toward practice. By devoting so much space to Foucault in *La Pensee*, one of the important theoretical publications of the peF, Lecourt wanted to make him better known, contrary to the party's rejection of him. "I liked Foucault enormously as a philosopher and as a man. This article was an attempt to translate what he was saying in his own terms, but in our vocabulary-ideologies, ideological state apparatuses-and to say that we could go farther, as it was fashionable to say at that time."<sup>40</sup>

Lecourt was delighted to see Foucault abandon the episteme, the cornerstone of *The Order of Things* ("Here, Foucault wants to rid himself of the structuralist aspects of the episteme"), and turn toward the idea of discursive practice, and in so doing renew his ties with materialism. Since this idea was based on the materiality of the discursive order and pointed to institutions, it also pointed to Althusser's ideological apparatuses of the state. And yet, Lecourt considered that there was a vanishing point when Foucault strictly limited the archaeologist's task to description, with no hint of theorization: Foucault had stopped midway despite a promise to go further in the direction of a materialist theory of the formation of ideological objects. He stopped before defining the relationship between discursive and nondiscursive practices: "When the essential difficulty of the

'link' between ideology and the relations of production comes up, Foucault goes silent.<sup>42</sup> In Lecourt's Althusserian critique, Foucault's attempt failed because it did not articulate ideological formation and social relations, and remained the blind spot of Foucault's thinking that necessarily pointed to Althusser's concern for reconceptualizing the distinction between science and ideology.

*The Archaeology of Knowledge* came out at a turning point in the structuralist paradigm, and was part of this adaptation of theoretical antihumanism to a new intellectual landscape. An expectant public awaited the successor to *The Order of Things*. It was well received, and sold more than 10,000 copies since 1969 (II,000 copies in its first year, 45,000 copies by 1987). Jean-Michel Palmier, in an article in *Le Monde* titled "The Bell Tolls for Historical Thinking: The Death of the King,"<sup>43</sup> describing Foucault's theoretical development, wrote that he deconstructed the beautiful philosophical dream that claimed to speak the essential things about the world, life, and morality, God and history, and offered in its place a careful and detailed reading of the past with his archaeology. In *La Quinzaine litteraire*, Francois Chatelet hailed the destruction of traditional history.<sup>i</sup> Regine Robin recognized her debt to Foucault for having established the necessary relationship between discursive and nondiscursive practices, to which she was particularly sensitive as a historian receptive to linguistics and who favored a rapprochement between history and linguistics.<sup>v</sup> But this debt of historians was limited because Foucault never articulated the discursive level with the articulated whole of social formation; thus Robin's criticism echoed Lecourt's and that of the Althusserians. Jean Duvignaud was severe, insisting more on the continuity between *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and structuralism, Foucault having wanted "to dissolve self-consciousness in the discourse-object,"<sup>46</sup> which speaks in us and for us but without us, and opens onto a dehumanized universe.

It is true that Foucault held to his antihumanist positions in 1969. His chief objective had been to decenter man, the author, the subject, the speaker. By plunging him into discursive regularities, he announced a new era of faceless writing, a period of pure freedom. "I am no doubt not the only one to write in order not to have a face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write."<sup>47</sup> In 1969, this was a

way of saying that while he continued to wage war against humanism and all theories of the subject, Foucault refused any structuralist recuperation. At a critical moment in the structural paradigm, he sought the means of freeing himself from himself and his past work by defining a third, neostructural path leading to new areas of investigation.

## *Twenty-three*

# **Foucault and the Deconstruction of History (11): *Discipline and Punish'***

Nietzschean deconstruction quickly took precedence for Foucault, whose rapprochement with certain of Althusser's ideas was only very fleeting. Theorizing the failure of the May 1968 clashes, Foucault began to get interested in the periphery, the margins of the system; he therefore became politically active on behalf of the often forgotten social marginals. Rather than a notion of revolutionary theory and practice, he proposed revolt. Nietzsche's influence was quite strong here, for where Foucault had forged a dialectic of discourse and power in his earlier works, he now added a third term, the body. This trilogy functioned in its extremes: the body and power reflected each other like Being and Nonbeing. Freedom faced off against constraint, desire against the law, revolt against the state, the many with the assembled, the schizophrenic with the paranoid. The subject's subjection passed through a third term, and discursivity belonged to the realm of power because it was consubstantial with knowledge.

### **From the *Archaeology* to Genealogy**

The genealogical turn came in 1970-71, and it took three directions. First, on the occasion of an homage paid to Jean Hyppolite, Foucault gave an important lecture on history as genealogy, or as a carnival, taking as his starting point Nietzsche's relationship with history-' He placed genealogy at the hub of the articulation between the body and history, and he proposed concentrating on this body, forgotten by his-

tory and yet its basis. "The body: the surface on which events inscribe themselves (whereas language marks events and ideas dissolve them)."<sup>3</sup> Thus Foucault laid out a veritable political economy of the body, tracing the different forms of its enslavement and unveiling its modes of visibility.

He sought forgotten, repressed, and incarcerated bodies in order to give them voice. In collaboration with others, he created the Prison Information Group (GIP) in 1971 so that his theoretical positions echoed his political practice. But at the beginning of the seventies, Foucault also had to define a curriculum when he became a member of the College de France. This was the topic of his inaugural lesson of December 2, 1970, later published as *The Discursive Order*: His was a hybrid program made up of rules put forth in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* but recast in a genealogical perspective, a noteworthy shift from the archaeologist's vocation. In particular, the question was no longer the relationship between discursive and nondiscursive practices; Foucault again focused solely on discourse, this time articulating it with the body. His genealogical program had always been set on historical terrain, which became the privileged object of his critical analysis. Foucault placed himself clearly and exclusively within the discursive sphere, for which "the character of discourse as an event had to be restored,"<sup>4</sup> by once again questioning the West's search for truth and abandoning the sovereignty of the signifier. The methodological rules previously defined in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* were here in the serialization of discourses, the observation of their regularity, and the conditions of their possibility. This was a turning point for Foucault, who presented his program as a critical program, in the line of the *Archaeology*, and announced his future genealogical work. The two perspectives cohabitated, but one took priority over the other during the course of the decade.

A genealogical orientation inspired the publications of the mid-seventies: *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1975 and 1976). "The genealogist is a diagnostician who looks at the relationships between power, knowledge, and the body in modern society."<sup>6</sup> Foucault fleshed out the initial structural perspective with this corporal dimension, with the confrontation of desire and the law with disciplinary systems. But he continued to deny the validity of historical continuity or of any subject in a game where anonymous strategies of domination began with the body. In the genealogical frame-

work, the subject was neither individually nor collectively pertinent. It could only be the object of many organizations of common centerless forces in social space. Localizing power and knowledge got special treatment in the political technology of the body, which Dreyfus and Rabinow called "biopower,"? From a genealogical viewpoint, knowledge has neither an objective nor a subjective basis, and science should be questioned in order to understand how truth effects are essentially effects of power.

Foucault's program was to track the underside of Western positivities, to find the repressed figure of the Other. To do this, he exhumed the disciplinary procedures veiled by the liberating discourse of the Lumieres, the terror coiled up beneath humanism, the fundamental issues of power lying at the heart of the sciences. Thus he maintained his ascerbic critical stance with regard to Western modernity and the reign of reason, to which he contrasted the carnival of history. The notion of power, dispersed and diluted and yet everywhere present, became an instrument for deconstructing the categories of Western reason. "In Foucault's genealogy, 'power' is first of all a synonym for a purely structuralist function; it has the same position as 'differance' does for Derrida."<sup>8</sup> For Habermas, Foucault contrasted Kantian idealism with a temporalization of the a priori, of power in reversed form. Power no longer depended on truth, but truth underlay power's domination; power was considered a founding and subjectless category. This double meaning of power was at the root of all the misunderstandings with historians, for it was at once a descriptive instrument for the various techniques used to subject the body, and an a priori category that made it possible to establish criticism. Here, Foucault's notion of power clearly included an ontologized structuralist category, irreducible to an empirical reality. "When I say power it is not a matter of spotting an institution that spreads out its network in a fatal fashion, a network that tightens its hold over individuals. Power is a relationship, it is not a thing."<sup>9</sup>

### Problematizing Power

In the seventies, the main shift in Foucault's positions was that he became personally involved in his theoretical object of study. (A similar thing had happened at the same time for Barthes, but in another register.) This involvement was particularly obvious in *Discipline and Punish*, which came out in 1975. As Daniel Defert remarked!" a footnote

in *The History of the Asylum* had already forewarned of his work on prisons in 1961. But this was above all the result of Foucault's commitment to what, in the seventies, were called the secondary fronts, the peripheral battles, for want of having been able to make the center budge.

In February 1971, Daniel Defert and his Maoist comrades asked Foucault to create a commission to hold an inquest on penitentiary conditions. Not only did Foucault agree but he became completely involved in this militant initiative. He became the head of the Prison Information Group (GIP) in 1971, along with Pierre Vidal-Naquet, the classicist, and Jean-Marie Domenach, the editor in chief of the review *Esprit*. The GIP was housed at Foucault's home, where he received the families of prisoners and listened to their stories every Saturday from 4 P.M. on after his visits to prisons. His investment of time and his devotion were absolute, so much so that he put off working out his theoretical project, which would be published only after this militant phase was over. "Foucault's idea had been to have the prisoners talk. He did much more than I did. There was this altogether strange mix in this encounter between Foucauldian structuralism, a post-Marxist '68er in search of revolutionary forces, and an evangelical Christianity that, along with Maoists, provided most of the forces in the GIP."<sup>11</sup> In this climate of discussing prison reforms and then of proliferating prison protests, the GIP came to play an important role. It was joined by many intellectuals, such as the Vincennes group including Jean-Claude Passeron, Robert Castel, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Ranciere, and an unexpected recruit who developed a very deep friendship with Foucault and who also got fully involved in this combat-e-Francois Mauriac's son Claude, a journalist at *Le Figaro* at the time. From 1971 to 1974, Foucault was at every mobilization for prisons and the GIP increased its types of actions: demonstrations, circulating information, personal testimonials, and critical thinking on the repressive practices of power.

*Discipline and Punish* only came out after this militant period. At the crossroad of many paths, it illustrated the ambitions of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* of going beyond discursivity to link discursive and nondiscursive practices. But at the same time, it was a genealogical research program in search of the points where power imposed itself on the body and traced the mode of problematizing prisons at a very specific moment in Western history. For Foucault, prisons were one among many expressions of the exercise of power.

His approach took leave of a Marxist-Leninist notion of instrumentalism and worked toward its pluralization. Power no longer had a center; it circulated, and it determined relationships. "During the structuralist period, we were between Lenin's *The State and Revolution* and Foucault's thinking on power."<sup>12</sup> Foucault made politics recede by broadening the definition of the scope of power, its extension into the furthest reaches of social life. The state disappeared as the nervous center of the social body. This was the antithesis of Hobbes's approach in the seventeenth century, where the state, the Leviathan, was the epicenter. Unlike Hobbes, Foucault wanted to restore the reality of those ignored peripheral bodies, disparaged as mere epiphenomena. This done, he could discover the order and hierarchy of an order beneath an apparently disordered inorganicity.

But Foucault's notions of power diluted the political dimension by dispersing it in all directions. No longer assigned to a particular class, it circulated through a network among individuals, operating in chains, transiting through each one before reassembling into a whole. Without any nodal point there could be no resistance to this omnipresent power that was in everyone and that was therefore nowhere. It was irresistible since there was nothing to resist. Foucault's analysis did not confuse power and the state, but often came at the price of negating the state's existence, to the benefit of a single concern—the body.

A condemned man's body was caught between different meanings of power networks. From expiating his crime during the era of public punishments to correction by a prison term within the panopticon, the process remained circular: increasing knowledge, incarnated by the Lumieres, and increasing power by extending the disciplinary fields. Foucault historicized the carceral procedure by studying the conditions that gave rise to prisons. But beyond this, he targeted a system of confinement that permeated social reality, in schools as well as in the factory, and in the army barracks. This new space of visibility was born at the end of the eighteenth century and became universal through concrete relationships. But Foucault never attributed it to a decision maker or to any particular causal system.

The practice of confinement appeared necessary and only later found justification. It was somewhere between an order of a specific discourse and an averting of the eyes, another mode of visibility. Max Weber had already suggested that modern society was based on the

subject's self-discipline. Foucault tracked down its conditions in the multiplication and extension of the powers of normalization that, as they were multiplied and extended, touched the individual in all social spheres. From a juridical-discursive system where rules and the law were pronounced by a uniform power, another society emerged based on discipline and disciplinary norms. **In** an absolutist society, a crime was an act against the sovereign's person. The criminal's body was therefore punished in order to repair the momentarily weakened body of the Prince. Punishment was thus more political than judicial; the body was at the core of power. "The body, which is questioned as it is punished, constitutes the point at which the punishment is applied and the site from which truth is extracted."<sup>13</sup> The condemned body was in fact the cornerstone of ceremonial public punishment. Execution was linked to the crime: blasphemers' tongues were pierced, the impure were burned, a murderer's hand was cut off. Justice repeated the crime and exorcised it through the offender's stunning punishment and death. The ceremony let the momentarily weakened or wounded ruler recover his sovereignty. "Punishment did not restore justice; it reactivated power."<sup>14</sup>

When royal sovereignty underwent a crisis, the right to punish changed. No longer the means of reactivating the figure of the Prince, it served as social protection. This new approach corresponded to the moment when illegality shifted from being a crime against the body to a misappropriation of goods. A judiciary system came into being in which disciplinary power tended to make itself invisible while the social body, in order to come under scrutiny, had to become visible in the most minute detail. A disciplinary system was set in place, and prisons, schools, and barracks were built. "What took shape was ... a tighter penal quartering of the social body."<sup>15</sup> An omnipresent power that was able to punish any infraction at any moment replaced an impotent power that demonstrated its will to power through the display of corporal punishment. "The right to punish slipped from being the ruler's revenge to being a defense of society."<sup>16</sup> Modernity implied the surveillance of populations by specific institutions conceived for their effectiveness. This was the era of the great enclosure, according to Foucault, and it initially touched marginals: vagabonds, beggars, and madmen. But it also concerned schoolchildren, when the model of the convent became the rule, and soldiers who went from vagabonding to becoming sedentary figures stationed in army barracks.

A whole social system shifted according to a new design of visibility. Jeremy Bentham provided the model of this new disciplinary society with his panopticon, which, in the years 1830 to 1840, became the model for prisons. "It has polyvalent applications; it helps to correct prisoners, but also to heal the sick, to instruct schoolchildren, to guard the mad, to keep an eye on the workers, and to make beggars and the lazy work. It is a way of setting bodies in space."<sup>17</sup> Once this disciplinary society was set in place, things slipped from individualization toward the lower end of the social body. **I**n medieval society, individualization was maximal at the summit, in the ruler's body. **I**n a disciplinary society, on the other hand, visibility was supposed to disclose an entire population's activities. Individualization was in decline, with power becoming an anonymous, functional machine.

Foucault changed things in two ways. First, he no longer perceived power negatively, but positively ("In fact, power produces; it produces reality").<sup>18</sup> Above all, he challenged the progressive vision of history that considered the Lumieres to be a major moment of freedom and emancipation, and that occurred with the advent of modernity. Behind this emancipation and the reign of freedom, Foucault saw a progressive control of bodies, the extension of disciplinary practices, and greater repression in a repressive society: "Historians of ideas generally consider that the philosophers and legal theoreticians of the eighteenth century dreamed of a perfect society, but there was also a military social dream."<sup>19</sup> Foucault thus invited his reader to consider a real reversal of historical perspective. His genealogy focused on the body, on how to approach it, the shifting views of it, and the modalities of its visibility. True to his description of the conditions that gave rise to the birth of the clinic, when he was above all a structuralist, Foucault, to his great credit, took on the challenge of the historical archive itself, of reforms, and of police archives, in his study of the logic of punishment. He therefore had a specific body of work to analyze without addressing the canonical texts of the history of philosophy. He synchronized his analytical sights with discourse and vision in order to better understand the real stakes of the organization and apparatus of power.

His work was phenomenally successful. More than *The History of Madness*, which had had two distinctly successful moments, *Discipline and Punish* corresponded perfectly to the state of mind of a generation that wanted to "get the cop out of its head, "the petty chief,"

and that saw the manifestations of power everywhere—so much so that Foucault's ideas quickly evolved beyond even their author's wishes, and became a vulgate for those fighting different forms of social control. A veritable critical weapon against disciplinary practices, Foucault's theses became instruments for the various sectorial struggles and the many secondary fronts that were opening and closing. Never had a philosopher so echoed the ideals and discomforts of a generation, that of '68. *Discipline and Punish* also echoed the rising numbers of prison revolts and provided a theoretical framework for analyzing the underbelly of modern society. As Jean-Michel Besnier and Jean-Paul Thomas put it, "Drawing the lesson of '68 in the seventies meant renouncing the beautiful simplicity of the struggle against state power without having yet mourned the practices and analyses that were resolutely revolutionary." So it was hardly surprising that such a brilliantly written book meet with such commercial success: 8,000 copies were sold in 1975 and as many as 70,000 in 1987.<sup>21</sup>

### Foucault, a Historian?

As a philosopher, Foucault made significant incursions onto the historian's turf. But he also dialogued with the corporation of historians and even embarked on some common projects with some of them, in particular with Michelle Perrot and Arlette Farge, whose preferred historical object was also persons who had been excluded from traditional history—women and marginals.

Since the days of his thesis on the history of madness, Foucault had encountered—albeit unintentionally—professional historians. Philippe Ariès was his improbable champion, given his right-wing ideology and ultraconservative royalism. But this independent historian, isolated from the history of mentalities, argued for Foucault's thesis at Plan in 1961. The work was enthusiastically received, especially by historians; Robert Mandrou and Fernand Braudel heralded the birth of a great historian. But from the outset, the relationship with historians was thwarted by a misunderstanding since the book was treated as a work of social psychology that magnificently illustrated the concept of the history of mentalities of the *Annales*. But *The History of Madness* was hardly a history of mentalities. Later, historians had the impression of losing one of their best, whereas Foucault's intention had not been to trespass on historical grounds as a specialist of social history, however renovated, but rather to problematize, as a Nietz-

schean philosopher, what he considered to be the carnival of history. With his works of epistemology, a certain barrier of incomprehension arose between Foucault and the historians: "Foucault was sometimes bitter about this. He felt it was a rejection. Before he was elected to the College de France, he had hoped to be at the Ecoles des Hautes Etudes. I don't believe he offered his candidacy, but he did expect to be asked to do so. He was never asked to apply."<sup>22</sup>

Michelle Perrot, on the other hand, appreciated his work. A student of Labrousse with an eye for the long series of history, Perrot was a great specialist in the history of nineteenth-century workers before becoming a feminist historian who was very open to interdisciplinarity. At Paris VII she co-taught a course in the early seventies on the topic "History and Literature" with Gerard Delfau. Active in a feminist group in 1972-73, she taught another course the following year on the question of whether women have a history. She took the opportunity to invite a number of sociologists, including Madeleine Guilbert and Evelyne Sullerot, to speak about the contemporary feminine condition. During these early days of women's history, the first question was to exhume a hidden reality, to do the history of those who had been forgotten, and to bring the repressed to light. We can understand why Perrot and Foucault would find common ground during a period when Foucault was working on giving voice to mute prisoners and she was doing the same for women. When *Discipline and Punish* came out, Michelle Perrot was interested quite precisely in the history of nineteenth-century prisons. "I thought this book was fantastic."<sup>24</sup>

Using "The Historian and the Philosopher," a text by the historian Jean Leonard that was very critical of the Foucauldian method, and Foucault's response, "Dust and Clouds," Michelle Perrot, together with Francois Ewald, organized a roundtable conference between historians and Foucault focusing on these two contradictory texts.

The historians, with the exception of Jacques Revel, who knew Foucault's work very well, and Arlette Farge, who was working with him, asked questions that missed the mark on his thinking. He tried to answer, but there were two parallel discourses. And when Francois Ewald and I were listening to the tape of the session, we said that it was unpublishable as is.<sup>25</sup>

They chose to highlight Foucault's remarks by assembling the different historians' remarks as if they were made by an anonymous histo-

rian in a dialogue following the first two texts. This all became the stuff of the 1980 *Impossible Prison*,<sup>26</sup> "but the dialogue never really happened."<sup>27</sup>

During the debate, Foucault described his approach, and made no effort to attenuate his fundamental differences from historians. His goal was not to undertake a total analysis of society. "My goal had been, from the outset, different from the historians' goal. . . . My general theme was not society, but the True/False discourse."<sup>28</sup> He reiterated that he was working at describing events, but that his aim was not to write social history. His placed his grid on discursive practices, which is what Jean Leonard criticized him for, pointing out his abundant use of pronominal verbs and the personal pronoun "one." The issue was power, strategy, technique, tactics, "but do we know who the actors are: whose power, whose strategy?"<sup>29</sup> Foucault abandoned the roles of different institutions in domesticating and conditioning bodies; different social categories were also left in the cloakroom. Jean Leonard criticized Foucault's kafkaesque universe: "The vocabulary of geometry turns human society into a desert; he speaks about spaces, lines, frameworks, segments, and dispositions."<sup>30</sup> But Foucault responded to the grilling by saying that these were not his concerns. The issue was neither studying French eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society, nor writing a history of prisons between 1760 and 1840, but rather writing "a chapter in the history of the logic of punishment."<sup>31</sup> Dialogue was impossible because Foucault only traversed a few sites of history as a philosopher, whose main purpose was to show that the total reality so dear to historians was a trap that needed to be demystified.

Foucault mourned history. Along with the entire structuralist generation, he asked how, in the very cradle of Western civilization, reason could have given birth to the monsters of Nazism and Stalinist totalitarianism. At the heart of his relationship to history was this trauma, which left him dissatisfied with obvious answers, and always interested in detecting the subjugation behind the proclamations of the Lumieres, the great enclosure behind liberty, the physical slavery behind equality, and the exclusion behind fraternity. This was a dark vision of history, and a radical criticism of modernity. Foucault's historical deconstruction nonetheless led some historians to pay particular attention to the conceptualization and problematization of their object:

For me, this was altogether important. He never stopped shaping my thinking. In *Discipline and Punish*, everything he said about discipline helped me to understand everything that normalization could become in industrial society, and better to see what was called the formation of the working class. What was important in what Foucault said was that discipline was not simply repression; it was also consent, the internalization of values.<sup>v</sup>

Foucault's taste for archives led him to prepare historical files to address how the body could be taken as an issue of power among the many intersecting discourses clammering for it. Legal and medical structures each claimed that they knew how to deal with madmen. Pierre Riviere, a criminal Foucault discovered in *The Annals of Political Hygiene and Medicine* (1836), was therefore at the crossroads between many discourses of various origins and functions. He offered a pretext for battling for a position of power, for a legitimation of their scientificity.

The Pierre Riviere story dated from 1836 and was the subject of a collective file by Foucault and his seminar participants in 1973.<sup>33</sup> In this file, Foucault showed the relationship between a personal history written by Pierre Riviere himself, a farmer of about twenty who had just killed his mother, his sister, and his brother, and the legal documents and three types of medical reports: that of the country doctor, that of a city doctor who ran an asylum, and that of the great names in psychiatry and legal medicine. These juxtapositions around a specific case showed how psychiatric concepts began to be used in penal law. The accused was caught at the center of various tactics facing off in a judicial setting.

Foucault's sensitivity to archives was already quite unusual for a philosopher, and led him to publish several works with historians. After *I, Pierre Riviere*, he and Michelle Perrot came out with a presentation of Bentham's *Panopticon*.<sup>r</sup> He and Arlette Farge worked on royal letters condemning prisoners to the Bastille: "My meeting with Foucault was improbable because we were not at all working along the same lines. It happened around the material itself, and around something we generally ignore-his sensitivity to archives. He was quite affected by the aesthetics of the document."<sup>35</sup> This fascination with archives reversed the relationship between the historian and the philosopher, since it was Arlette Farge who managed to convince Foucault that he should present these documents, whereas Foucault

wanted to publish the letters and let them speak for themselves. "The miracle was that he could be convinced of it, and then he asked me to work with him on these texts."<sup>36</sup>

Foucault had, in fact, discovered these letters much earlier, while writing *The Birth of the Clinic*. He had already thought at the time that he would do something with them and had a very strong affective relationship with this material. "He is the only person to have said to me that it was also possible to work with emotion. He allowed me to see that feelings were no longer feelings in the touchy-feely sense of the word, but an intellectual tool."<sup>37</sup> This was how Foucault came to work with Arlette Farge, a disciple of Mandrou, for two years. She was a historian of mentalities who had only discovered his work in 1975, when *Discipline and Punish* came out, and it influenced her decision to study the phenomena of deviation and marginality. "At the time, we were saying that we were going to let the oppressed speak."<sup>38</sup> This perspective drew her to Foucault's interests and commitments, which, therefore, made this meeting less improbable than Farge suggested. She was also seduced by a form of thinking that contested linearity, that preferred breaking points, that problematized discontinuities, and thus made it possible to counter a top-down view of popular culture: "What interested me considerably at that point was that only the question of how was being asked, without asking the question of why. In a very rustic way, that tied in with the way in which I had continued to work, which amounted to bringing to light the most minute operations in this flux we called social life."<sup>39</sup>

Their fruitful encounter led to a 1982 joint publication entitled *The Disorder of Families*,<sup>40</sup> which showed that the symbol of royal judgment and of the most abhorrent absolutism, which could imprison absolutely anyone without trial, was in fact most often used to satisfy the private ends of fathers who wanted the king to help them resolve disastrous family situations. The hundreds of men and women who, on "the order of the king" were sent to prisons (Bicetre and Salpetriere among others) were essentially the victims of obscure private family affairs, and imprisoned by their own families. This gave Foucault another opportunity to problematize something that had appeared obvious: power relationships circulated further, and were far more complicated, than any simple instrumental relationship incarnated by the king.

According to Farge, Foucault was quite sensitive to what histori-

ans thought of him, "more than sensitive, quite torn."<sup>41</sup> *Discipline and Punish* in fact heralded a real breakthrough with historians, who confirmed what was in fact a rapprochement, since *The Archaeology of Knowledge*-that is, since 1969-with the *Annales* school. This rapprochement occurred thanks largely to Pierre Nora, at Gallimard, and Foucault was a full-fledged participant in the new El Dorado of historians.

## *Twenty-four*

# **The Golden Age of New History**

The *Annales* historians were, after 1968, the big winners of the structuralist vogue of the sixties. They were able to put the ball in their court at a point when it was becoming necessary to reevaluate events and diachrony. The structural paradigm was on the wane, fragmenting and imploding, overrun from within by those who had promoted the idea of an open and slippery structure, whereas from the outside came increasingly deep questions. The structuralist adventure thus continued and changed, borrowing pathways of history.

The historians who until then had felt only negatively concerned by an excitement that sent them back to empiricism, having already slowed down the rhythm of duration, were henceforth to jump on the bandwagon with all the triumphalism of latecomers.

### **From History to Histories**

Michel Foucault's work and his special relationship with Pierre Nora at Gallimard were the essential link by which structuralism would nourish historical research. The title alone of the collection Pierre Nora inaugurated in 1971 - "The Library of Histories" - emphasized the epistemological inflection as well as historians' adoption of deconstruction. The title of the historical collection thrilled Foucault, who was responsible for the Library of the Social Sciences. "It would have been banal to have called it the Library of History. I said to myself that 'Library of Histories' fully corresponded to what I wanted to say, to the fragmentation."<sup>1</sup>

Henceforth, history was written in the plural and with a small "h." And the discipline abandoned the idea of a program that would synthesize in order to better redeploy itself toward the many objects available for its limitless study. This idea of plural histories fully corresponded to Foucault's definition of historical practice in the introduction to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Nora knew the text well because Foucault had asked him to read the manuscript: "He made me reread the first chapter, asking me how I reacted as a historian, and telling me that I was going to rediscover my own positions."? Pierre Nora introduced the collection with a preface that was highly influenced by Foucault's philosophy. He took up the idea of monument, and congratulated himself on it: "We are experiencing History's splitting asunder. New questions, enriched by the proximate social sciences, and a new concern for the entire world rather than the narrow historical consciousness of Europe, have phenomenally amplified the questions that historians ask of the past. . . . History has changed its methods, its way of cutting up time, and its objects." Many new objects and a broadened historical terrain were so many signs of a triumph of history. Nora recalls having had a good laugh with Foucault about this short manifesto on the splintering of history, especially upon learning that Braudel was furious when he read it.

Pierre Nora even wanted to preface his collection with a small, synthetic book-manifesto condensing and promoting the theoretical positions of the new history. He discussed this with Foucault, Francois Furet, and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. "Together we tried to think about what was happening to history. My idea was to point out the problems that were becoming apparent."<sup>3</sup> This initiative took on unexpected propositions. It happened at a time when Jacques Le Goff was joining Gallimard. Since Nora needed support, he slowly delegated this project to Le Goff, who became so involved in it that he transformed the idea of a small manifesto into three thick volumes in the Library of Histories collection, *Making History*,<sup>4</sup> which he co-directed with Pierre Nora; Nora finished the volumes more or less single-handedly because, once Le Goff was elected president of the Sixth Section of EPHE in 1972, he no longer wanted to be intimately linked with Gallimard.

This enormous summa, which appeared in 1974, was a charter for the new history. It was the moment for a counteroffensive, and the historians, after having borne their lot when the young sprouts of the new

social sciences were stealing the show, now planned to appropriate the promising paths of these independent-minded thinkers, assimilating their methods in order to complete the renewal of a discipline that had to abandon its unity in order to broaden its field of experimentation as much as possible. Historians were here responding to a challenge raised by the social sciences in general and by second-generation structuralism: deconstruction. "The field that it [history] alone occupied as a system for explaining societies over time was invaded by the other sciences through poorly defined borders that threatened to absorb and dissolve it."> For the authors of this trilogy, history had to be saved by abandoning its claim to universalism and promoting what Foucault called a general history, the history of a space of dispersion.

This shattering implied calling into question the Hegelian edifice that underlay historical discourse and decentering its unifying principle-humanity, as the subject of history, whether as an individual or as a collective subject. This echoed the structuralist proclamation of the death of man and the insignificance of the subject. Historians, like linguists and anthropologists, could now promote a scientific discourse by marginalizing the least manageable variable for a quantitative history. This was how Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie came to title the fourth part of his *Historian's Territory*, volume I: *History without Men*.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the first generation of the *Annales* which imagined an exclusively human and anthropological history, Le Roy Ladurie began with a concrete historical study of the climate since the year 1000, arguing that "the historian is mutilated if he is only a specialist of humanity,"? Decentering was altogether essential, beyond this particular study, and Le Roy Ladurie considered it a true Copernican revolution in historical science. The historian's viewpoint was enriched by this decentering, thanks to which his scientific vocation could be affirmed.

The prevailing positivism wanted, like Foucault's position, to grasp the how more than the why in a descriptive take on archives. Such proximity to Foucault's ideas did not mean, however, that he had won the historians' trust. "Foucault was passionate about history, and at the same time considered that historians were idiots for not asking themselves enough questions about what they were doing."<sup>8</sup> An upheaval occurred some time later over Pierre Vilar's contribution to *Making History*, in which he violently attacked *The Order of Things*:

In his important works, Foucault generalized a method that makes its vices more visible than its virtues. At the outset, authoritarian

hypotheses. Then, the demonstration, and, on the points where there is some clarity, we discover that dates are mixed up, texts called upon, such enormous gaps in knowledge that one has to believe that they are deliberate, and many historical mistakes."

Pierre Vilar, recalling Althusser's remarks about Michelet and his "delirium," felt that, all things considered, if he had to choose between the two deliriums, he preferred Michelet's. His charge was clearly harsh, and Foucault's reaction was not long in coming.

Unsuspecting, I answered the phone and heard Foucault's icy tones. I had sent him *Making History*. He exploded, saying, "I thought we were on the same wavelength and the first thing you sign insults what I do; it is a declaration of war. In this case, I don't understand why you are my publisher." So I opened the book with trembling hands, and discovered this page that left me speechless, and that had escaped both of us, Le Goff and me.<sup>1</sup>

Foucault demanded that the page be removed from the second edition and threatened to leave Gallimard if he was not heard. Pierre Nora went to see Pierre Vilar. "Nora came to find me and he was completely distraught. . . . Foucault is a great writer, immensely talented, but I deny that he is at all serious from the point of view of historical reconstruction."<sup>11</sup> The story got even more complicated when Pierre Vilar was supposed to have Pierre Nora join the Hautes Etudes, and as the next issue was coming out, Vilar's wife was dying. Nora did not want to bother him, and the story ended there. The first version of the book went unchanged, inasmuch as the passage of time had calmed Foucault's anger.

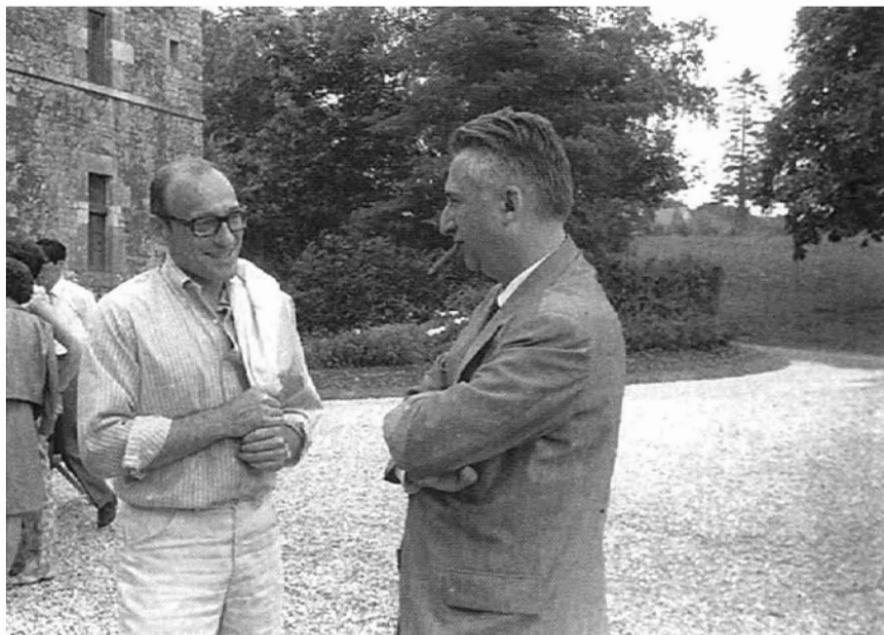
But this argument showed difficulties between Foucault and the historical corporation, even though it had largely adopted his ideas. In the same deconstructive perspective, it was no longer a matter of assembling multiple objects of history in a rational whole. Defining the historical operation, Michel de Certeau observed that history was no longer central, as it had been in the nineteenth century, and "no longer had the totalizing function that amounted to taking up philosophy's role of saying what meaning was."<sup>12</sup> In his introduction of the three volumes of *Making History* in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Pierre Nora admitted a discontinuity between the history written at the time of Bloch, Febvre, and Braudel and that of the seventies. "It is this notion of total history that, it seems to me, raises problems for us today. . . . We are living a fractured, eclectic history, which includes curiosities

that we should not deny ourselves."<sup>13</sup> The pluralizing of heterogeneous temporalities supported by the serial approach to time consigned the idea of globality to a metaphysical past: "Time is no longer homogeneous and no longer has a global meaning."<sup>14</sup> History was not to mourn total history, according to Jacques Revel, for whom the fragmentation of historical knowledge pointed to a new scientific space: "The goal is no longer a total history but the construction of totally articulated objects."<sup>15</sup>

Constructing the historical empire required deconstructing historical practice. This was the period when the computer promised historians access to scientificity because it could count all the possible objects of economic, social, or cultural history: how much wheat was produced, the number of births, marriages, and deaths, the number of times the Virgin was invoked in wills, the number of robberies committed in a given place, and so on. It could trace curves, point to limits, and to points of change. "In the final analysis, . . . the only scientific history is quantifiable history."<sup>16</sup>

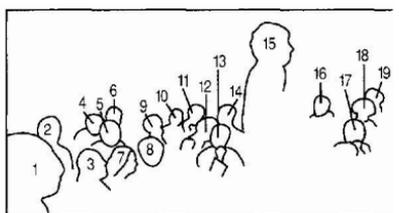
The same year that the Library of Histories began, Seuil published Paul Veyne's *How to Write History*. This work on historical discourse shared a deconstructive perspective, was deeply influenced by Foucault's thinking, and disparaged the illusion of models of consciousness and totality as metaphysical. In Aristotelian fashion, Veyne saw history as belonging to the sublunar world of disorder and chance, which meant that it could claim no nomothetic ambitions. History could only restore the how, the description of what happened, and not an explanation of the why. It knew no limits: "Everything is historical, but there are only partial histories."<sup>17</sup> The historian could only be a positivist since his discipline belonged to idiography. Everything else existed only by false continuities and fallacious reconstitution: "History with a capital H does not exist—there are only 'histories of. . . .'"<sup>18</sup> His ideas were so close to Foucault's that when his book came out in paperback in 1978, Veyne added a long note titled "Foucault Revolutionizes History." As a historian, Veyne showed how useful Foucault's method was: "Foucault is the consummate historian, the consummation of history. This philosopher is one of the very great historians of our time. . . . He is the first completely positivist historian."<sup>19</sup>

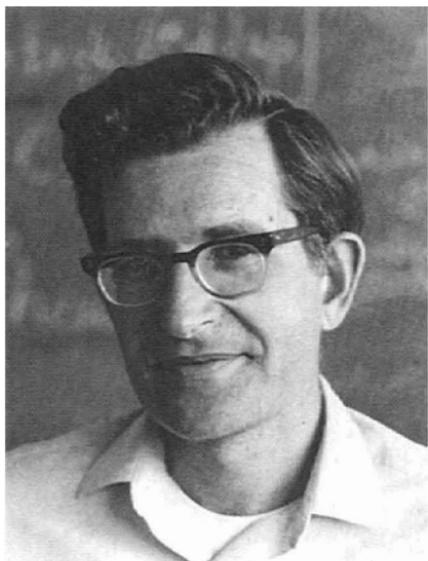
Paul Veyne specialized in ancient history. He used the end of gladiatorial combat during the century of Christian emperors to argue



Cerisy Colloquium, 1969: "The Teaching of Literature." Gerard Genette and Roland Barthes (copyright Archives de Pontigny-Cerisy)

Cerisy Colloquium, 1969: 1. Serge Doubrovsky; 2. Algirdas Julien Greimas; 3. Gilbert Lascault; 4. Daniel Briole; 5. Christian Karden; 6. Jean-Noël Barreau; 7. Françoise Brunet; 8. Mitsou Ronat; 9. unidentified; 10. unidentified; 11. Genevieve Idt; 12. Madame Mettra; 13. Roland Barthes; 14. unidentified; 15. Tzvetan Todorov; 16. Roger Favry; 17. Catherine Clément; 18. Laura Garcin; 19. Suzanne Felman





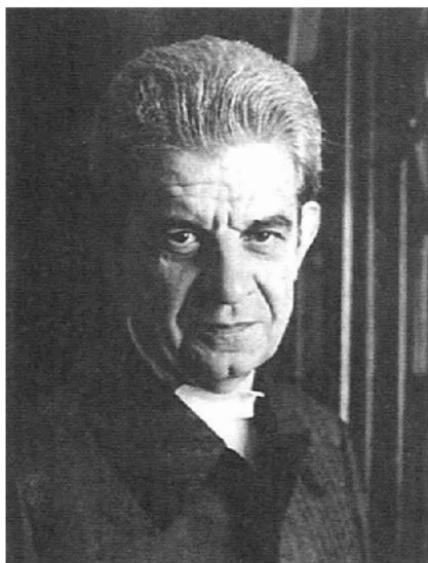
Noam Chomsky (photo courtesy Magnum)



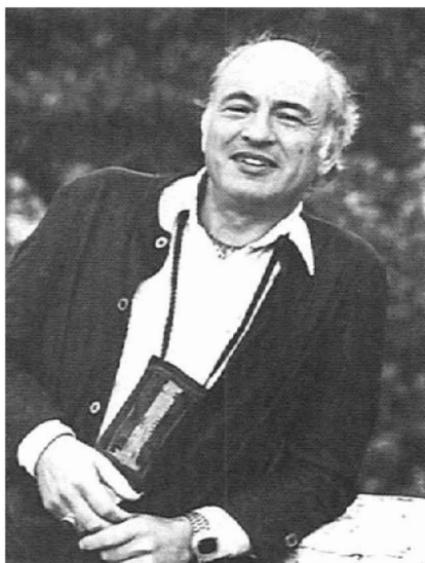
Cerisy Colloquium, 1972: "Toward a Cultural Revolution: Artaud, Baraille."  
Philippe Sollers and Julia Kristeva  
(copyright Archives de Pontigny-Cerisy)



Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, 1968 (photo courtesy Peress/Magnum)



Jacques Lacan (photo by Jerry Bauer/Seuil)



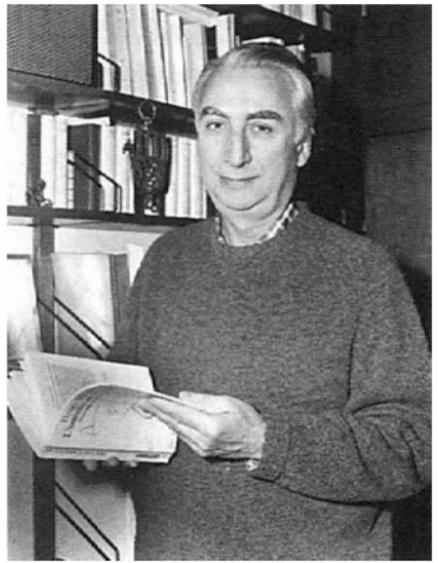
Edgar Morin (photo by Chantal Regnault/Seuil)



Cerisy Colloquium, 1974: "Psychoanalytic Discourse." Serge Leclaire and Catherine Clerment-Backes (copyright Archives de Pontigny-Cerisy)



Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1973 (photo courtesy Universal Photo)



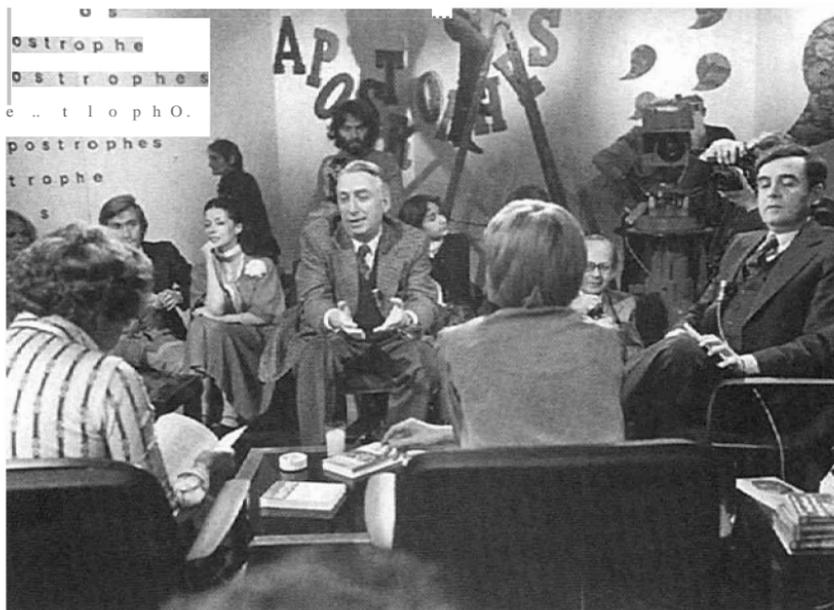
Roland Barthes, 1976 (photo courtesy Universal Photo)



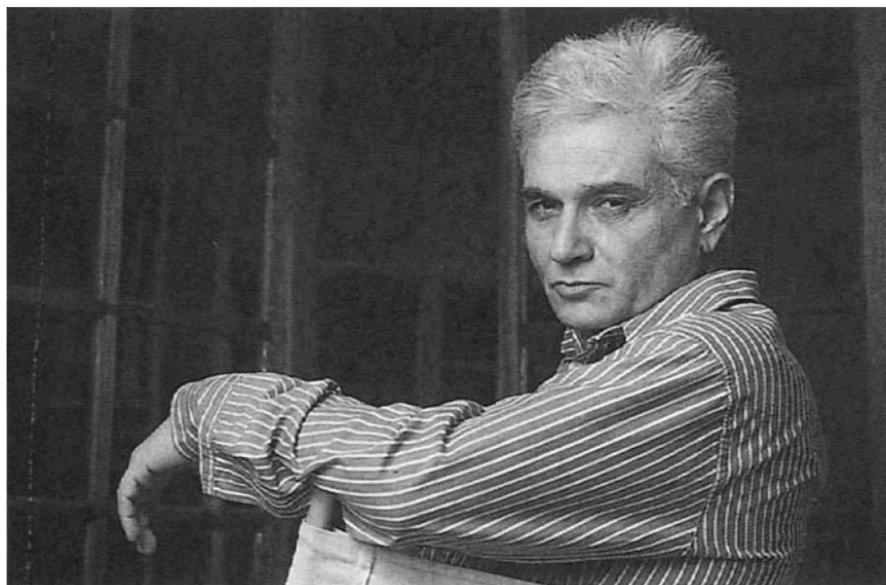
Michel Foucault, 1981 (photo courtesy Universal Photo)



Emmanuel Terray and Louis Althusser (photo by D.R.)



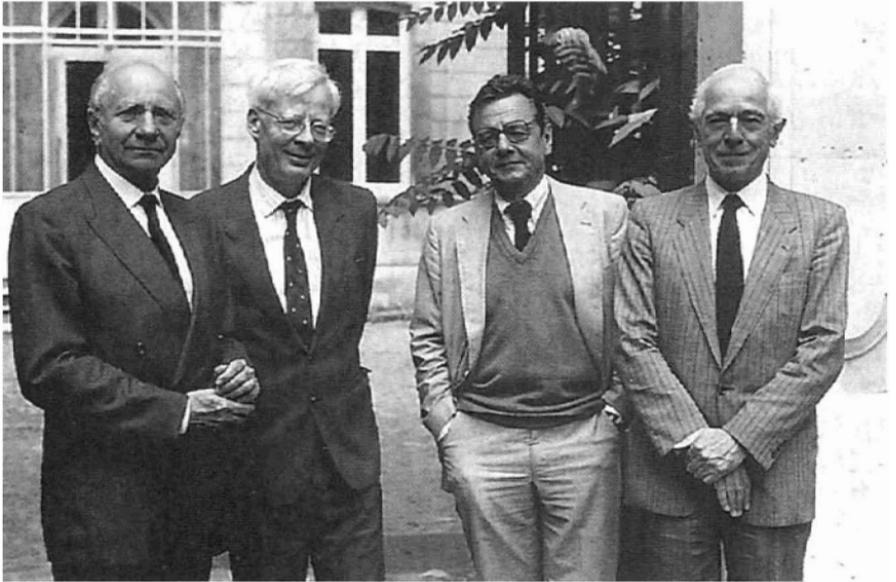
Roland Barthes appearing on *Apostrophes* (photo by jarnes Andanson/Syigma)



Jacques Derrida, 1987 (photo by Ulf Andersen/Gamma)



Cornelius Castoriadis, 1990 (photo by Ulf Andersen/Gamma)



From left to right: Georges Duhy, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Francois Furet, Maurice Agulhon (photo by John Foley/Gamma)



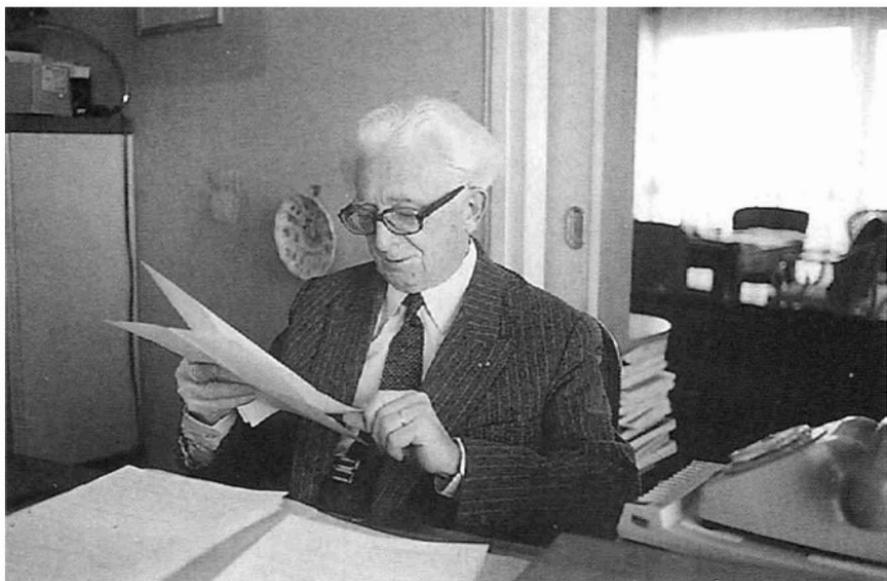
Pierre Bourdieu, T989 (photo by John Foley/Camma)



Jacques Le Goff, 1986 (photo by **VU**  
Andersen /Gamma)



Georges Duby, 1987 (photo by John  
Foley/Gamma)



Fernand Braudel, 1984 (photo by M. Pelletier/Gamma)

against the explanations that claimed that power was humanized, as a result of Christianization. Instead, he took an approach that, as Foucault had advocated, looked at the practice of political power. Emperors had adopted another kind of power, which was becoming paternal and therefore incompatible with gladiatorial existence. Describing these practices shed light on the sources of explanation. "Foucault did not discover something new called 'practice,' which had been heretofore unknown. He took the effort to look at practices of people as they really were: he spoke about nothing other than what all historians speak about, namely, what people do."<sup>20</sup> Foucault's great contribution, according to Veyne, was to show that words trick us, that they make us believe that things are natural. He adopted Nietzsche's use of invariants in order to replace rationalism with genealogy. "It remains that as far as sexuality, Power, the State, madness, and many other things are concerned, there can be neither truth nor error since they do not exist. There is nothing true or false about the centaur's digestion and reproduction."<sup>21</sup> Veyne was drawn to Foucault's structuralism and his sensitivity to the autonomization of discourse, which revealed no reality and which was removed from the referent. This theoretical framework looked above all at relations, the very kernel of structural thinking: "Foucault's philosophy is not a philosophy of discourse, but of relationships. Because 'relationship' is the name for what has been designated as 'structure.'"<sup>22</sup> Veyne concluded his defense of Foucault's method by considering that it was pointless to wonder whether or not Foucault was a historian because, for him, history is a false natural object.

### The Historians Take the Ball and Run

The new history exploded with a vengeance from 1968-69 on and took up where psychoanalytical and anthropological publications had left off. If historical work did not wait until then to be published, the public was enormous and avid from this point on. The 1968-69 figures for publications are edifying. Fayard began its "History without Limits" collection under the guidance of Francois Furet and Denis Richet. Flammarion started three new collections all at the same time: the "Scientific Library" under Fernand Braudel; a "science" collection, which published abridged theses-Pierre Goubert's on Beauvais came out in 1968, and Jean Bouvier's on the Credit Lyonnais (a banking system) and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's on Languedoc in

1969; and finally, "Questions of History," a collection directed by Marc Ferro that raised the issue of history unframed within any particular chronology but by questions relating to the present. At Albin Michel the great classics were reprinted in the "Evolution of Humanity" collection: Marc Bloch's *Feudal Society* and Lucien Febvre's *The Problem of Nonbelief in the Sixteenth Century*.<sup>23</sup> A broad public could therefore read the works of the founding fathers of the *Annales*. Plon started a collection directed by Philippe Ariès and Robert Mandrou called "Civilizations and Mentalities." At Gallimard, Pierre Nora had begun his Library of Histories in 1971, which became one of the most important melting pots for new history writing. In 1974, the number of volumes on history was six times what it had been a decade earlier. The *Annales* writers were in the key positions, particularly with the lead trio of publishing houses—Gallimard, Seuil, and Flammarion—which orchestrated the school's success.

This taste for history in the seventies was in some sense a continuation of the interest in anthropology in the sixties. Discovering the Other was still a concern, but this was no longer others in other lands, but alterity within Western civilization, in the depths of the past. The historical sensibilities of the period leaned toward cultural history, toward the study of mentalities. Events were eliminated in favor of the constant, permanent features of human life, the calendar of repeated, daily human acts whose pulsations were reduced to biological or familial signs of their existence: birth, baptism, marriage, and death. The most spectacular success by scholarly, anthropologized history was Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou, a Village in Southern France*,<sup>24</sup> which came out in 1975 and had a print run of three hundred thousand copies, exceptional for a university historian. Moreover, numerous articles on the history of mentalities came out in the *Annales* during this period.<sup>25</sup> This anthropologizing of historical discourse shifted the focus away from sociographical studies, from the basement to the attic, as it were, and guaranteed the success of works on sexuality (Jean-Louis Flandrin, Jean-Paul Aron), on death (Michel Vovelle, Philippe Ariès, Pierre Chaunu), on the family (Jean-Louis Flandrin, Philippe Ariès), and on fear (Jean Delumeau). This level of the mentalities tended to cover the whole social spectrum, which it adopted and organized around the notion of the permanence of human nature. These were the last vital signs of a structural paradigm that would henceforth undergo an inexorable decline, one that was every bit as spectacular as its success.

## **Part IV**

### *The Decline*

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## *Twenty-five*

### **Lost Illusions (I): The Gulag Effect**

The situation changed in the mid-seventies. Since 1967 there had been many attempts to pluralize and conquer structuralism. This time, the inexorable wane carried the day. This by no means meant a return to ground zero, since a good part of the program had quite simply been thoroughly assimilated and no longer needed the media to become known. There were several shocks, essentially external to structural thinking itself, which together contributed to this decline. The first and most spectacular was political: the shock waves set off by Solzhenitsyn's revelations. To be sure, Solzhenitsyn was not the first to describe the totalitarian reality of the Soviet world. As early as the twenties, Trotsky had already denounced the Stalinist dictatorship, and many accounts came later of the trials and the camps, including Varlma Chalamov's *Tales of Kolyma*, the first, shortened edition of which came out in France in 1969.

There was, however, a particular blindness. This was combined with a parallel effort, particularly by Althusser, to theorize socialism without considering its reality, so that no true reflection on the historical lessons to be drawn from the disastrous Soviet experience could take place. The revolt and rhetoric of May '68 owed a heavy debt to the purest Marxism and in no way allowed all the consequences to be drawn from what was known about totalitarian reality, even though the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia had provided a spectacularly clear example.

## Making Peace with Democratic Values

When the French translation of the *The Gulag Archipelago* came out, the situation was already quite different. In fact, 1974 was an opportune moment for the work to have a resounding impact. Leftism was in complete disarray and the traditional French left was gaining ground, but within a political system with which it had reconciled itself by signing the Common Program of 1972. The first effects of the economic crisis quite quickly came to contradict those who thought the light at the end of the tunnel was within sight. To the contrary, this was the end of the glorious postwar years and the beginning of a long period of stagflation, recession, and restructuring. No more great revolutionary eves or enchanting end-of-crisis dawns. At a time when unemployment was on the rise, revolutionary hopes were evaporating, and the Rome Club foresaw zero growth, the Gulag effect was decisive. In particular, it showed that although Marx could not be held responsible for the Gulag, as some argued (this would be like condemning Jesus for the Inquisition), it was no longer possible to consider Marxism without acknowledging the somber procession of its concrete effects on the history of humanity. The crisis ran deep, and blaming it on any simple cause—the excesses of the personality cult or a simple overabundance of bureaucrats—could not save the system.

Moreover, the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, which had radicalized a large part of the world's youth, provided a favorable context for reconsidering the values of the European democracies. A new binary logic contrasting democracy with totalitarianism began to take root. The Gulag was a final condemnation, even for those who had not waited until 1974 to struggle against this system. This was the case for Claude Lefort and his Socialism or Barbarism group. "A book like that one, . . . a few of us had been waiting for it for a long time."<sup>1</sup>

Little by little, sights were turned to the defense of human rights, which had heretofore tended to be considered formalities. The enormous tome of collective memory gathered by Solzhenitsyn between 1958 and 1967 put an end to this kind of subterfuge. When the West received the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, who was banished from the USSR in February 1974, it put itself in a position to hear voices that had made themselves heard beyond the Iron Curtain only with great difficulty, the dissidents thrown into psychiatric hospitals for having demanded that human rights be respected, among them

Vladimir Bukovsky and Leonid Plyushch. Marxism ebbed to the rhythm of the arrival of these dissidents and the horrors they had experienced. In 1977, the revelations of Pol Pot's Cambodian revolution did not contribute to a convulsion in *tabula rasa* thinking: it was in his name that the systematic extermination of two million men and women, out of a population of nine million, had been carried out!

"We are at the end of the realm of critical consciousness when we can no longer imagine going further."<sup>2</sup> The ebb of Marxism also tolled the bell for an instrument for total historical and social analysis. Structuralism was not immune from this ebb, for, in addition to the structural-Marxist path taken by some, structuralism purported to be the very expression of critical thought and of the critical paradigm. It had long refused to grant any scientific validity to observable, empirical reality in order to better perceive the hidden, total logics. Yet the Gulag effect demonstrated that it was enough to listen, read, or see in order to understand, in stark contrast to a certain conceptual speculation with scientific pretensions that had served as a smoke screen for the real issues of the tragedy that was unfolding, and the objective complicity of those who supported the torturers.

This was fatal for structuralist ideology. The dissidents' message was a message of human rights and of a certain humanism-values that had been marginalized by the structuralist method, whose approach aimed precisely at eliminating the Subject in order to gain access to Science. In this case, it was the East that led to a return of the repressed. Even the most radical were obliged to publicly ask themselves a few questions.

I remember Derrida, at the ENS on the rue d'Ulm, after having been stopped in Czechoslovakia. During his seminar, he said that he had been quite distressed because after having spent his life as a philosopher deconstructing humanism and saying that the idea of the author and of responsibility did not exist, he had one day been stripped naked in Czechoslovakia at a police station. He had to admit that this was a serious infringement of human rights. On that day, Derrida demonstrated his great lucidity by saying that he was in a very bizarre intellectual situation. So he proposed a category of the intellectual baroque, because, according to him, the two levels did not intersect. But we can't remain eternally in the baroque.!

This paradox characterized the new situation in which intellectuals found themselves and many cut the Gordian knot to confront the

new demands of political reality, particularly in the East. This evolution continued to grow throughout the entire decade, which ended with the success of Solidarity in Poland in August 1980, and Jaruzelski's state of war in December 1981. On the basis of this new battle being waged in the name of rights and of democracy, many concluded that it was impossible to maintain two contradictory discourses.

Intellectuals progressively reconciled themselves with a certain number of Western values heretofore deemed mystifying and purely ideological. It became more difficult to be ironic about democratic values and to deconstruct all the apparatuses of this democracy: everything had to be reconsidered. The organic intellectual was already long dead and buried, and it was the turn of the hypercritical intellectual to experience a crisis of regret. It is not surprising that one could speak of a "silence of intellectuals," which became more pronounced after 1981.

This fracture during the seventies produced different reactions. Some, like Roger-Pol Droit, who was in charge of the social sciences section of *Le Monde*, became momentarily aphasic, and headed out to the hinterlands. Overnight, he resigned all of his positions. In 1977, "He left. 'He' dissolved himself."<sup>4</sup> Roger-Pol Droit left *Le Monde* and abandoned "Dialogue," the collection he had launched at Flammarion, and which had already put out three book projects with Roman Jakobson, Noam Chomsky, and Gilles Deleuze. He left behind the work he was planning with Foucault: "I dropped everything." > Roger-Pol Droit showed up at Berck-sur-Mer High School, where for seven years he got deeply involved in teaching students in their last year of high school. During this radical cure, he did not write a single line; he only read books that predated Shakespeare.

I had lived this period of the sixties and seventies as something terrifying. It took me some time to understand (I needed to leave in order to understand) that thinking could be extremely joyful, playful, invigorating, whereas what I had retained from my structuralist battles was that thinking had to be very solid, rigorous, abstract, and cold, that everything that could be carnal was unthinkable.e

Roger-Pol Droit did return to *Le Monde*-at first slowly and from a distance, and later regularly-but he was transformed. Since then, he has continued to address the issue of exclusion of the East from Western thought.

## The "New" Philosophers

The "new philosophers" did not elect the path of flight and solitary meditation. On the contrary, they used the media in a big way in order to play out, before the widest possible public, something of an exorcism of what, for most of them, had been their Maoist involvement in the Proletarian Left (GP). Revolutionary eschatology being moribund, this was the moment when a whole generation rejected its '68 past and took a collective confessional leap to assuage its sins. "These spoiled, overgrown kids wanted the revolution right away. No, it didn't come, so they tapped their feet, impatiently. . . . Poor little lost things,"? lamented Pierre Viansson-Ponte, Those who had idolized Mao-s-Andre Glucksmann, Christian Jambet, Guy Lardreau, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Jean-Paul Dolle-s-champions of mystic fidelity to the "Great Helmsman," terrorized anyone who was lukewarm. Suddenly, they discovered the discreet charms of liberalism. This became a general clamor. Beyond the criticism they elicited quite early on from, among others, Gilles Deleuze, Francois Aubral, and Xavier Delcourt," these voices were clearly a painful symptom of the last throes of the hopes of a generation. The Gulag effect was immediate. In 1975, Andre Glucksmann wrote *The Cook and the Maneater*,<sup>9</sup> which showed that the Gulag was already present in Plato. In 1976, *Les Nouvelles litteraires* had Bernard-Henri Lévy prepare a piece on the "new philosophy," proof that the movement was and wanted to assert itself as the new vulgate. The editorial vein was used to double advantage by such essays as Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Barbarism with a Human Face*,<sup>10</sup> which quickly became a best-seller, and by novels such as *The Unclassed* and *The White Years* by Jean-Francois Bizot.<sup>11</sup>

This new philosophical discourse denounced May '68, which had become the image of Evil hiding the Master. Jean-Pierre Le Dantec had forgotten his sunscreen and henceforth warned against *The Dangerous Sun*,<sup>12</sup> attacking the "gangrene" not only in Marx but in the very idea of revolution and its "congenital propensity toward terrorism."<sup>13</sup> Michel Le Bris, another defrocked Maoist militant, chose self-flagellation: "What finally, was May '68? An insurrection of daddy's boyS."<sup>14</sup> Bernard-Henri Lévy saw in it the colorless dusk of our twentieth century: "We are living the end of history because we are living in the orb of ongoing capitalism."<sup>15</sup> An orphaned generation wailed its confusion and distress, but also prepared its reconciliation with the

values of the society whence it hailed, expressing with particular acuity the fault lines produced by the Gulag effect. Nonetheless, we see equally violent thinking, the same propensity for exaggeration in other directions, as Althusser had counseled, in order to be heard. In this respect, certain vestiges of continuity remained with the structuralist past that had been unceremoniously discarded. Public debate was used even more diligently to legitimate the correctness of one's ideas, and reality was left behind, much as it had been before. It had disappointed, so only discourse remained, but not just any discourse—the discourse of the Master.

Anyone who dissented was accused of all the evils of totalitarianism all the more vociferously in that not long before, Mao Tse-tung Thought had been obligatory. "Any criticism of New Philosophy was an apology for censorship and for the intellectual Gulag."<sup>16</sup> For Jacques Bouveresse, the triumphant period of structuralism led to the New Philosophers, who employed a similar intellectual terrorism, the same sectarianism, and a cynical use of the press and publicity campaigns. Most people held the media responsible for this change, but Bouveresse considered that the root was the very evolution of philosophical discourse; the media was used, but not simply for sociological reasons. He argued that the reason for this was that philosophers in the sixties encouraged "the tendency to reason in terms of power, domination, relationships of force, struggles for influence, strategic opportunity, and efficiency, and above all, not of truth or falseness."<sup>17</sup>

Beyond the vectors of these new philosophical messages, discourse that abandoned all scientific perspective offered refuge: "I say: reality is nothing but discourse."<sup>18</sup> After the Maoist mystique, there was a reconciliation with metaphysics, but it was a godless religion, a belief with no other idol than the lack of being or its placeholder, LACAN: "The century IS Lacanian."<sup>19</sup> The authors of *L'Ange* demanded a clean choice between loan of Arc and Stalin, and they chose loan of Arc and thus received the blessing of Maurice Clavel. The horrors of the world disappointed them and incited them to adopt Christian detachment. Faith continued to guide their steps, but along which path? Francois Maspero, who had little tenderness for these moments of passion, replied: "That was the new right. Ten years ago, they were the Marx and Coca-Cola generation. Today, only Coca-Cola remains."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the New Philosophy was often shallow, a form of thinking in bites expressed by slogans like "Without Marx, there is no

revolution, without Marxism, no camps"<sup>21</sup> and "The Gulag was born in 1844."<sup>22</sup> History cannot be reduced to the mere production of ideas, without reading human history in the most reductive and simplifying manner possible. But the hubris that this vision of the world and its repeated and abrasive action revealed accompanied and accelerated a much deeper consideration of the shifts augured in the East, at the heavy price of a true destruction of all models of analysis. One had gone from deconstruction to dissolution, with no transition.

## **Lost Illusions (11): Extenuated Scientism**

In 1975, *The Structural Revolution!* sketched a panorama of structuralism in all its manifold dimensions and celebrated it as the dawn of modernity. In fact, however, dusk was drawing over this form of thinking, inexorably dragged toward a first-class burial, particularly in its ambition of uniting all the social sciences around a common methodological core. The wane was everywhere, and the troops scattered so chaotically that only a certain eclecticism was left, set against a backdrop of disillusionment. Did this express the failure of a philosophy, of a scientific method? Or, rather, was it the end of the movement of intense socialization in the social sciences, whereby ideological issues were losing their appeal, in order to better establish its scientific positions?

### **Althusserianism Dies a Sudden Death**

Althusserianism had gone furthest in trying to establish a philosophy that encompassed the social sciences, which Althusser had wanted to revisit and reevaluate in the name of historical materialism. This was not a slow decline, however, but a sudden death, as spectacular as its rise. In May '68, Georges Seguy, secretary-general of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), had made his famous remark "Cohn-Bendit? Who's that?" which students repeated after 1975, but this time with reference to Althusser, whereas until then, research had been dominated by Althusserian thinking. This amnesia gave the measure

of the change. At Paris VII, Pierre Ansart was directing Saïl Kartz's thesis on Althusser: "The only truly serious work I supervised on the issue. But when it came time to name a jury, there was no one around. For two or three years, we only talked about SIAs and by the fourth year, it was completely over!"?

In economics at Nanterre, Andre Nicolai confirmed that 1975 was a watershed year. All structural-Marxist thinking, which had been predominantly Althusserian, was washed away by the return of microeconomics, neoclassics, and marginalism. "Nanterre remained quite chaotic until 1975, and from then on, there was a feeling of being fed up with student disruptions, and intellectually, we had had enough of Althusserian dogmatism. . . . By 1975, it was over!"<sup>3</sup>

Emmanuel Terray rated Althusserian structural-Marxism in anthropology as "generally mediocre."<sup>4</sup> First of all, the scientific perspective no longer enjoyed the same prestige as it had during the sixties, and the results were modest. It was true that Marxist structuralists like Godelier had made it possible to change some notions of anthropological economics and to surpass the old antagonism between formalists and substantialists. But anthropology was only partially affected, and such central notions as the mode of production, which should have furthered analytical models of primitive societies, turned out to be disappointing, and to provide little more than a means of classifying or typologizing observed social diversity. "We continued to rely on functionalist explanations, particularly with respect to the relationship between infra- and superstructures."<sup>5</sup> In the second place, Althusserian anthropologists had hoped to link theory and political practice. But the fusion between political commitment and professional practice in the field quickly turned out to be disappointing. As the Althusserian wave ebbed in 1975, it carried with it the hopes for a single, unified science of man.

The demise of this hope also corresponded to a contraction in universities, where certain disciplines were withdrawing into their specific traditions. Theoretical innovation and interdisciplinarity had flourished just after 1968, at a time when young teachers were being recruited for their innovative profiles, but in the mid-seventies, to the contrary, the university was no longer hiring. This period of austerity saw fewer jobs filled, and budgets were being rationalized. This retrenchment contributed to a chilly withdrawal on the level of theory.

Those who aspired to university careers had to adopt a career

profile that was well calibrated to disciplinary canons and the most consensual thesis topics. "I saw young researchers throw themselves into a search for odorless, colorless, and tasteless subjects so as to avoid making any waves, and to avoid any historical or ideological implication."<sup>6</sup> Where an ability to innovate had been a plus for getting a job in the sixties, from 1975 on, adhering to the norm became the recruitment criterion. Those who had endured the structuralist wave could finally lift their heads high; the parenthesis was finally closed and they could shamelessly return to the canonical values of their discipline, values that had been momentarily forgotten.

### The Triumph of Eclecticism

Eclecticism replaced the desire to totalize in an increasingly media-tized society where events had to yield to "news." An entire language aimed at reaching the greatest number, and therefore necessarily immured in universal stereotypes, flooded the media and further serialized society into increasingly isolated individuals "who belonged to nothing," as the psychoanalyst Gerard Mendel put it. This meant that any attempt at totalizing a universe and the means of communication escaped intellectual control. "A Freudian discourse would not work for the media, but what does work is what a Freudian intelligence can program."?

Pierre Nora was particularly lucid about the intellectual reversal even though he had played a seminal role at Gallimard in structuralism's rise. But he knew that a page had been turned. Acknowledging the failure of these efforts at globalization, he launched *Le Debat*, a new review that, in 1980, was a real event in French intellectual life. It made no claims to speak for any particular system of thought or method, but simply to be a meeting place for ideas: "*Le Debat* has no system to impose, no message to deliver, and no ultimate explanations to provide."! *Le Debat* took an open approach, and therefore took its distance from structuralism, replacing it with eclecticism and juxtaposing more far-reaching viewpoints, without giving preference to this or that method of analysis.

Asking "What can intellectuals do?" Nora observed that the shift in the center of gravity from literature to the social sciences was perhaps in the process of reversing itself. Certainly, the social sciences made it possible to understand that we speak a different language from the one we think we speak, and to know that we are unaware of

the motivations for our behavior, and that the initial project often ends up misjudging the final product. In this respect, the results were positive, and the moment demanded a new relationship to knowledge since "the political irresponsibility of intellectuals is well removed and protected from the critical function."?

This new orientation broke radically with the structuralist paradigm and its vocation to be a grid of critical analysis. It also marked the distance between Pierre Nora and Michel Foucault. Structuralism had generated personalities perceived as gurus, but it had not really generated a true school of thought.

Nora clearly saw that Foucault, outside of his own books, had no school. . . . At Gallimard, Foucault felt that nobody gave a damn about him. This was not particularly pointed at Nora, but the fact was that no one ever asked him anything, whereas he had lots of plans and would have liked to be more actively involved in publishing and administration.t?

When Nora chose Marcel Gauchet to head the review, he only reinforced his distance from Foucault, given Gauchet's very critical positions on Foucault's work.

*Le Debat* demonstrated that intellectuals had reconciled themselves with the values of Western society, had reevaluated the democracy of the Lumieres, and had progressively converted to Aronism. The review remarked that models proposed for "going beyond" were exhausted, whether with respect to a future henceforth considered foreclosed, and in mourning for any progressive or revolutionary future, or, scientifically, an ideology-free rigor. The period was one of soft, mobile thinking that revealed the lost illusions of the scientism of the sixties. *Le Debat's* subtitle was, moreover, symptomatic: "History, Politics, Society." In 1980, the disciplines that had played the pilot role during structuralism's hour of glory—anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis—were all in a state of crisis, ebb, and theoretical disarray.

From the Other to the Same:

From the Unconscious to the Conscious

Anthropology, turning its attention to the figure of the Other, no longer answered the needs of Western society, which was now more interested in the figure of the Same, in its own past and values. Moreover, since it had borrowed its modes of demonstration from other

disciplines (from nineteenth-century biology when it conceived society to be an organism, and structural linguistics in the twentieth century), anthropology was at a loss for models when structuralism was on the wane. And it also underscored the undeveloped potential of the structural period, such as politics, for example, which showed the failed early ambition to encompass all fields. As Marc Abélès put it, "Daily life takes its revenge."<sup>11</sup>

Anthropologists were facing new questions about the domination of old people by the young, the relationship between the sexes, slavery, and the institutional and symbolic realities of the mechanisms of political power. Aware of these new challenges, anthropologists underwent a serious conceptual crisis before looking to new models like topology or catastrophe theory. In the meantime, ethnology tended to become ethnography, a simple description with no particular categorical grid. "Anthropology survived by successively adopting different models from other disciplines. These models guided research, in the Bachelardian sense of the term, and were fruitful for a time, but they had to be replaced. This was the kind of crisis we were in."<sup>12</sup>

At each step, the models used had made it possible to move toward new discoveries. Efforts to establish anthropology as a science were thus not in vain. As they waned, there were certainly some advances, even if they were not always successful at definitively transforming anthropology into a hard science, perhaps because "beyond the combinations and formalism, Man was not there."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, structural anthropology would soon be criticized for its cultural relativism, which became an obstacle for reconciling intellectuals with the values of their own society.

In 1973, Robert Castel, who was close to Foucault, denounced "psychoanalysis,"<sup>14</sup> which was also on the wane in the mid-seventies. More and more of Lacan's disciples were leaving the Master and his topology, even before Lacan dissolved his school. This parallel waning of anthropology and of psychoanalysis showed that models of consciousness were again being examined critically; the unconscious was no longer the sole locus of truth, whether for individuals or for collective social practices.

Linguistics no longer drove the social sciences. Indeed, its acquired institutional grip began to loosen. The review *Langages* had had a stable print run of 3,000 to 3,500 copies, but its sales in the eighties dropped palpably, to 1,800 to 2,000. In 1986, Jean Dubois

even wanted to close down the review altogether. This wane in terms both of the editorial attitude and the general intellectual explosion in all of the social sciences was compounded by a shift in the efficacy of the linguistic model toward industrial structures, toward "the language industries."

Linguistics had not lost its power; the center of power had shifted within industrial society, which was responding to the demand for software programs, for artificial speech: "Linguistics was infinitely more powerful than it had been, but this was no longer publishing power, but industrial power."<sup>15</sup> This linguistics of engineers in big research laboratories, like the one directed by Maurice Gross where Jean Dubois worked, implied a different relationship between subjectivity, originality, and realizing a program, a reversal of the prior situation. "Now, neither I nor anyone—not even the laboratory director—can work without accepting the analytical method of the entire laboratory. This is a true science laboratory, and we must follow a methodology that no longer lets us be completely ourselves."<sup>16</sup> A certain form of linguistics had thus found its way to scientific operationality, but had given up its role of modeling hub at the heart of the social sciences. This withdrawal accompanied the general ebb of the structuralist paradigm and led to a new paradox. Linguistics was less concerned with ideology and more concerned about an operational methodology, at a time when scientism seemed to be on the road to exhaustion, after having nourished the most exorbitant ambitions.

## **Lost Illusions (III): The Return of Ethics**

Structuralism had been an attempt to get free of philosophy, whose proximate end was endlessly proclaimed in the name of Science and Theory. Yet, as structuralism waned, philosophy, ostensibly dethroned, regained its prior place, at the center. The 1978 issue of the review *Critique*, entitled "Philosophy after All," announced "The End of the End of Philosophy."! The avoidance of a certain number of properly philosophical questions, by choosing the social sciences, had led people to think that with structuralism, questions on ethics and metaphysics were made obsolete once and for all. Yet, with the major shift under way in the mid-seventies, these were the very questions that were to dominate French intellectual life for quite some time. This ethical quest was, among others, that of a philosopher who had remained true to his materialism and his initial allegiance to Althusser. Andre Comte-Sponville turned toward research on wisdom and the art of living, which he called ethical materialism. Reconciling Althusser's or Levi-Strauss's subjectless thought with Buddhist *anatta*, he seemed to be clearing the path for an egoless ethics of self unencumbered by any unreasonable ambitions to free humanity from its chains.

### **The Ethics of Responsibility**

Whether in making the limits of scientism in the social sciences palpable or in the return to the question of human rights, ethics once again reclaimed a central role. And the nature of the question changed.

"Through the death of structuralism, a new kind of intellectual is being born whose ethic is no longer-to once again use Raymond Aron's categories-that of conviction, but the ethics of responsibility."? Whence the reaffirmation of an imperative for the "concrete analysis of a concrete situation," at the risk of empiricism, but which at least made it possible to consider the ends and the means used to reach them, and to more discerningly evaluate the variability of situations in time and space. From now on, intellectuals wanted to avoid being taken in, as they had with the USSR-which, for many, had incarnated the historical vanguard of humanity-and then by substitute vanguards such as China and Cuba.

We might date the final public convulsion of the ethics of conviction to 1978, when Michel Foucault, who had been sent to Iran for *Le Nouvel Observateur*, described the Iranian revolution. Impressed with the protest against modern Western values, he saw this revolution as a movement that made possible a return to a positive political spirituality: "The situation in Iran seems to be suspended in a great joust between two characters clad in traditional coats of arms: the king and the saint, the armed sovereign and the poor exile. The despot faced with the man raising his naked hands, acclaimed by an entire population."! Today, we know to what degree the Islamic government that Foucault presented as liberating, as the sign of something new, as the incarnation of resistance against oppression, became an even more brutal dictatorship than the regime it overthrew. This type of mistake, which became exceptional and incongruous after 1975, was not so unusual for the period, and can be seen as the result of a hypercriticism of democracy and its institutions.

If intellectuals are to exercise this criticism and avoid a certain number of political follies, democracy cannot be taken so for granted that we ignore what has been gained so as to better exalt some elsewhere or other. "The problem is not that we have produced this type of critical discourse against democracy, but that we haven't made the effort to make it match a declaration of solidarity,"!

The philosophy of suspicion tried to erode the bases of democracy by denouncing its underside. But it quickly reversed itself, giving way to a period of soft ecumenism of beatific naïveté denuded of all critical capacity. The reversal of the seventies led to an equally unsatisfactory attitude, for in both cases, lucidity lost out.

## The Return of Religion

As the constellation of what has been called the New Philosophy emerged, unified and sanctified by Maurice Clavel, we witness a re-legitimation of religion. Although we might have thought that the religious idea was historically past, a re-legitimizing of it was taking place, particularly in the Maoist movements, where some replaced the "Great Helmsman" with God. In 1975, Philippe Némo adopted Lacan's four discourses but shifted their meaning to valorize the position of the discourse of the Master. Although he kept his Lacanian perspective, he did so in order to better transcend it. "Man as a soul is contemporary with the transcendence traversing him; he is the son of God."> The very title of his work, *Structural Man*, signaled his ambition of reconciling structure and transcendence, which should never be sought elsewhere than within structural man.

After the war, the iconoclastic philosopher Vladimir Jankelevitch had established moral obligation as an absolute in terms of rational will, in an effort to root it in immanence and universality- Jankelevitch was rather unknown during the structuralist vogue and had devoted his life to the moral quest and to metaphysical reflection; his efforts were rewarded and his concerns adopted by the entire intellectual world at the very moment of his death in 1985.

Thanks to a philosophy principally concerned with ethics, another philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, then occupied the center of the philosophical stage. He had introduced Husserl in France in the thirties, and remained at a remove from the structuralist fervor, but he returned with the return of the question of the Subject, and of intersubjective relations. Like the structuralists, Levinas was concerned with the basis for our obedience to the Law, but these foundations were located in ethics: "Everything begins with the other's rights and by my infinite obligation with respect to him."? Levinas used phenomenology to situate the radical alterity separating the Same and the Other; ethics was based in their copresence. "My way of understanding the meaning of man does not begin with considering the concern men have for the places where they value being-for-being. Above all, I think about the for-the-other."<sup>8</sup>

Jankelevitch and Levinas were both moved by the revelation of the concentration camps. Both tried to forge a path toward a provisional morality, and toward considering the relationship to the Other.

Levinas augured contemporary thinking about dialogics, based on the concept of interaction that was returning at the very moment of ideological crisis and the awareness of historical disasters occasioned by the creation of totalizing systems: "To imagine a provisional morality, a minor task for Descartes in the project of mastering nature, became a major issue among people today who transform an auxiliary provisional morality into a total project in itself."?

The other sign of the new importance given to ethics was the late but spectacular recognition of the important work of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur had been one of the major detractors of Levi-Strauss's in the 1963 debates in *Esprit* when he argued against Levi-Strauss's general theory of relationships and in favor of a general theory of interpretation. In 1969, he challenged Michel Foucault's candidacy at the Collège de France. Incarnating a hermeneutics with which structuralism, in its heyday, wanted to ensure a radical rupture, Ricoeur was an all the more disturbing adversary in that his philosophical perspective had assimilated and integrated all the advances of the social sciences, thanks to his intangible position of debate and openness. In 1965, he had already published an essay on Freud, *On Interpretation*, in which he attempted a reflexive reconsideration of Freud's work by integrating the psychoanalytic perspective into an archaeology of the subject. In 1969, he published his articles in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, essentially a hermeneutical reflection on language. Ricoeur did not contest the epistemological basis of the semiological approach, but he refused to give the linguistic model any absoluteness, and already imagined surpassing it by showing that beyond taxonomy, language is speaking. He pursued his work on language as well as his debate with structuralist positions, particularly in *The Live Metaphor*,<sup>12</sup> in which he criticized the axiom of the immanence of language.

Although the structuralist heyday was past, we can better appreciate the fundamental impetus of Paul Ricoeur's philosophy today for he was able to preserve the dimensions of the Subject, of action, of the referent, and of ethics, which were out of vogue, while at the same time adopting whatever was positive in semiology. He refused to accept that language is hermetic, and always added the dimension of human action and presented his work as complementing semiology. P He was thus better situated than anyone today for resisting the wave that swept all the thinking of the sixties into the abyss, and for letting

the change come, by being a major player in the current return of ethics. He explored the many dimensions of the Subject, and defined a third path between the idealism of the Cartesian cogito and deconstruction, by reinterpreting the dialectic of the Same and the Other.<sup>18</sup> After having been celebrated in the United States (he teaches in Chicago), Germany, Italy, and Japan, Ricoeur was finally recognized and celebrated in France. A special issue of *Esprit* came out in July-August 1991 on his work, and a colloquium was held at Cerisy.<sup>19</sup> Seuil published three volumes entitled *Readings*, which drew together his various texts: prefaces, commentaries, articles, as well as his trilogy on temporality, which came out in paperback in 1991.<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricoeur was the great contemporary philosopher at the heart of the city.

### The Return to Philosophy

Julien Freund is an example of another, and later, symptom of this return of philosophy and of ethics. One of the persons responsible for introducing Max Weber in France, Freund had left pure philosophy in order to better answer the questions raised by the social sciences.<sup>17</sup> Yet he quit his social investigations in order to return to *Philosophical Philosophy*,<sup>18</sup> in which he called for philosophy to once again take possession of itself as a specific discourse that he considered to be in its death agony since the time of Nietzschean criticism. "We might entitle this work 'Against Nietzsche.'"<sup>19</sup> He also wanted to save sinking morality at a time when the artifice of postmodernism appeared to be triumphing. Freund did not denounce the detour he had taken, and which led him to the social sciences: "This long journey through the social sciences was beneficial from many points of view."<sup>20</sup> But he observed simply that the social sciences could not replace philosophy, and he favored returning to the division, rejected by postmodernism, between the notions of true and false, good and evil, therefore considering that metaphysical questions were fundamental. "Reflecting on essence is not a gratuitous game . . . since it involves the effort of both identifying and differentiating notions, without which we would be sunk in confusion."<sup>21</sup>

The return to philosophy also meant being receptive to foreign influences; analytical philosophy had been barred in France by the structuralist excitement, which did not allow the Subject to be included in the field of investigation. The breakthrough was quite clearly helped along by structuralism's wane, but also by the discovery of Wittgen-

stein's work, particularly thanks to Jacques Bouveresse.<sup>v</sup> In the mid-eighties, Bouveresse criticized the tendency of philosophers to delight in the negation of their identity.<sup>v</sup> He contrasted the Anglo-Saxon practice of philosophy as an argumentative discipline with its literary status in France, which too often led to an indifference to content and argumentation. Bouveresse compared deconstruction or ultra-structuralism with the demand for clarity, which, for Wittgenstein, defined philosophy's specificity, and differentiated philosophy from the spirit of science and from its contemporaneity. "Today, the new Dionysians insist that we must absolutely put an end to the reign of logic, reason, and science."<sup>24</sup> Embracing Frege's and Wittgenstein's positions, Bouveresse also held that moral judgment could not be dispensed with, nor human responsibility denied.

Negating this dimension belonged to what Popper called "naive rnonisrn." "The type of self-revelation that the individual owes to the most remarkable discoveries of the social sciences resolves no ethical or political problem."<sup>25</sup> Thus psychoanalysis, which had gone furthest in this respect, did not cure man any more than did religion or Marxism. And yet the structuralist period characteristically affirmed psychological, sociological, and cultural determinism. It had a tendency to replace rational man with psychological man, a creature both richer and more dangerously unpredictable, according to Bouveresse. As he saw it, Wittgenstein represented the last of the great philosophers whose "ascetic, distant, and implicitly ironic 'realism' had some very real similarities with certain Ancient sages, . . . an attitude that amounted to accepting only minimal dependency and trying to acquire a maximum of freedom from imposed needs and satisfactions."<sup>26</sup>

## *Twenty-eight*

# **From Reproduction to Regulation: Heirs to Keynes and Althusser, and the Crisis**

For economists, 1973 was a decisive year. Until then, the "Thirty Glorious Years" as Jean Fourastier had baptized the decades between the two world wars (and which Jean Chesneaux rebaptized the "Thirty Shameful Years"), were years of spectacular postwar growth for the West. Suddenly, the crisis reversed the situation, belying optimistic projections and standard economic explanations. All efforts to end it proved quite doubtful.

Althusserian notions of reproduction were shaken. Reproduction was so dysfunctional that movement and contradictions had to come into play. Similarly, the crisis struck neoclassical economists, who were forced to question their conception of the perfect market. Although the market it had seemed to function relatively well until then, and had served as their basic analytical paradigm since the fifties, it no longer worked. No general equilibrium existed, and outside elements had to be taken into account. The structuralist orientation shifted the positions in economics, which went progressively from reproduction to *regulation*.

This was also the product of Keynesian thinking. "The Keynesians from the South call themselves structuralists. The CEPAL described a structuralist analysis of inflation, and a structuralist analysis of development."! These ideas had easily taken hold in France because of Durkheim's influence on economists, which could be seen in the necessary construction of an object of analysis, of pure models for analyzing

economic reality using structures that led to the behavior of this or that category of agents, and making their formalization possible.

But the structuralist grid came into the economic sciences through Althusserianism. The regulationists- grew out of this current of structural-Marxist thinking and a simultaneous critical distancing from Althusser's ideas: "We regulationists are something like the rebellious sons of Althusser."<sup>3</sup> Alain Lipietz discovered Marx thanks to Althusser and wrote his doctoral thesis on him in 1972.<sup>4</sup> Faced with the crisis in the mid-seventies, he had to rectify certain of his initial positions in order to understand how the economic situation evolved. He and those who later organized themselves into the regulation school insisted on the contradictory character of social relations of production, which fettered the simple mechanisms of reproduction. They also realized that Althusserianism and its Subjectless process was a dead end.

Regulationists had to deal with the imperious necessity of reintroducing the Subject, its representations, and its strategies within the very mechanisms of reproduction, via established frameworks. Lipietz nonetheless acknowledged Althusser's historical merit of having dealt a decisive blow to an inflexible Marxism and therefore to the "myth of a single contradiction, of the messianic expectation of a revolution by the implacable virtue of the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production, interiorized in a proletariat-bourgeois contradiction."<sup>5</sup> Althusser had upset economist determinism, and advancing the concept of the mode of production as a structure articulated by three instances made it possible to complexify the analytical grid, and, advantageously, to leave the vulgate behind. But Althusserianism was not satisfying for the regulationists when it described an essentially static reality and when, in the name of combating historicism and evolutionism, it ignored transitions and changes.

Althusserians essentially defined the mode of production as the reproduction of places within structure, not in time but on the level of a map with a logic of displacement on it. Regulation theory was essentially based on a critique of these limits. "Rejection of contradiction and of the Subject: this double censorship seemed, for classical Althusserian thinking, to be the ransom for allowing the notion of Reproduction to emerge."<sup>6</sup>

Regulationism, therefore, had to go beyond Althusser in order to

conceptualize the crisis and demonstrate that reproduction cannot be taken for granted and that although it could continue for a period as long as the "Thirty Glorious Years," certain contradictions would ultimately lead to a crisis. But Lipietz recalled his debt to Althusser, who, like Hegel in the past, was too often considered to be a "dead dog." "Unfortunately, those who 'forget' Althusser today in fact 'forget' Marx, the existence of structures of exploitation, and the weight of social relationships."?

In the early seventies, Michel Aglietta went to the United States to study the reasons for efficient growth there at the time. He was particularly interested in what kind of state action could brake the crisis. "For that, I switched camps and went to the United States to do this work."<sup>8</sup>

Aglietta wanted to uncover the modes of intermediate coordination that would show that it was not enough to juxtapose state logic with market logic to be able to see the big structure. He inaugurated what eventually became the great originality of the regulationist school: its search for forms of intermediary, institutional relationships. These relationships masked a reality that Keynesianism had considered from a strictly instrumental viewpoint, and that was rejected as nonpertinent and exogenous by the supporters of general equilibrium.

Aglietta introduced an institutional dimension into the analysis, excluded until then from the initial axiom about the coherence of the economic and social structure: "This was the first requirement. The second was to say that social groups and not only individuals do have some efficacy."<sup>9</sup> Economic thinking, for him, included the rationalities resulting from people's behavior taken as group actions rather than individual actions. There was clearly some coordination, but equally clear were contradictions and conflicts of interest, which meant that there was constant movement within the structure. Aglietta saw that his subject was changing with the 1973 crisis, and when he published his book, he examined both growth and the crisis.<sup>10</sup> At that point, he imagined a regulationist approach that was theoretically close to Althusserianism. Once he had finished his book, "[I showed it] to Althusser and to Balibar. They endorsed it and saw some similarities between their work and this approach."<sup>11</sup> Like Alain Lipietz, Aglietta was influenced by Althusser's epistemological model and had adopted the idea of considering problems in terms of overdetermination, and of seeing structures as articulated wholes. Before leaving for the United

States, in fact, he had worked on a research project on the problems of growth with Philippe Herzog using the Althusserian question grid, adapting the idea of intermediary and nested forms to economics. More generally, the structuralism of the late sixties influenced the orientation of his work because he had also tried to understand how diversity could function in a single structural framework, how regulation processes could be different and complex and still function within a single capitalist system. And this let him suggest different solutions in different national contexts. "We were looking for references that could encompass what all of these societies had in common. So the idea of a social formation was essential, as was an idea that cut across these references."<sup>12</sup>

In placing the singular and the universal into a dialectic, Michel Aglietta had carefully read Georges Dumezil's work, "because he emphasized the essential role of representations,"<sup>13</sup> and thus made it possible to see a single form of ideological legitimacy as the common basis of these societies. Aglietta was also influenced by Foucault, "because he raised questions about institutions and gave answers."<sup>14</sup> What seduced him in particular was Foucault's concern for micropowers, his shift from the center to the peripheral, his pluralization of a polymorphous power that corresponded to the regulationists' desire to reach intermediary institutional bodies. Moreover, Foucault had made it possible to take some distance from "the fundamentalist conception of Marxism,"<sup>15</sup> and to understand that this smooth growth curve depended on a system of conciliation and a concentration of interests. Until then, the antagonism between capitalists and workers was considered irreconcilable. "That is what I tried to show next in the form of compatible progression of real salaries and employment with the progression of the profit rate, on a global macroeconomic level."<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, Michel Aglietta fused different poles of structuralist thought. He had been influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, whose orientation he had appreciated very early on, ever since 1963, when he had attended some lectures by Bourdieu at Polytechnique in which he laid out his approach to the early state. The sociological dimension was by definition part of the goal of regulation, which sought to understand this reconciliation of a priori divergent class interests—whence Aglietta's interest in how social groups were restructured by their integration into the salaried world, in the framework of a state that created social security, provided an educational system, and afforded access to

consumerism. In so doing, it had reshaped these groups, stratifying them by shifting the system of rules itself. These different influences on regulationism appeared to be different, but in fact they converged and were part "of this same family of ideas whose goal was to understand society by seeking its minute structures."!

Economics was the only social science to have managed such far-reaching formalization, and it had been the initial model for the structuralist paradigm. As the structuralist heyday drew to a close, economics benefited from the fallout of the epistemological effervescence of the sixties, and a new and dynamic school could be born. The regulationists made it possible to assimilate a good part of the structural program, although on the condition of dynamizing structures and reintegrating the economic players-human beings.

### History and Actors Come Back into the Picture

The regulation school was at the intersection of three heterodoxies: first as an heir to "Althusserized" Marxism; second, by its link to Keynesian economics, by considering real demand, and by arguing for a conception of money as an institution, and a conception of work as a relationship rather than a market; and finally, as an heir to institutionalism. Robert Boyer, one of the founders of the school, laid out this legacy quite clearly in a brief essay published in 1986.<sup>18</sup> This work had become all the more necessary in that the regulationist school was beginning to become known internationally, while still including members with increasingly divergent positions. There was the "Grenoble school" headed by Gerard Destanne de Bernis and the GREEC,<sup>19</sup> who often espoused positions close to those of the PCF, and the Paris school, around the CEPREMAP.<sup>20</sup> From the outset, Boyer accepted the "mixed" nature of regulationist doctrine, which had to adapt to a new context and a new set of problems, and which differed from other self-regulatory market doctrines by its openness to social and historical elements.

The issue was to discover what lay at the foundation of situations that were stabilized by time. The four major characteristics that Robert Boyer advanced to define the regulationist approach were, first, a certain loyalty to Marxist analysis in its concern for studying social relationships from a holistic view; second, recognizing laws governing tendencies, which implied a certain criticism of structuralism's vision of immobilized time or Paul Boccard's views of monopoly state

capitalism; third, a concern for institutional forms deriving either from a market relationship or from the relationship between capital and labor; and finally, an interest in Kalackian macroeconomics, which was part of a process of capital accumulation.

Taking the five institutions considered particularly important for the study-money, forms of competition, the relationship of salaried workers, the state, the mode of insertion into a world economy-all of which were as variable in time as in space, the modes of regulation combined into types of accumulation and also defined this particular development.

This very ambitious approach focused on the interaction between economics and the social order, by starting with concrete situations and by reinstating them in a dynamic perspective, making it possible to "study the transformation of social relationships that create new economic and noneconomic forms organized in structures and reproducing a determinant structure, the mode of reproduction."<sup>21</sup>

Early Althusserianism, with its notions of mode of production, instances, and overdetermination, was confronted with historicity, with long- and medium-term history, which explained that it was possible to abandon structuralism for dialogue and an interest in the work of historians, particularly that of Fernand Braudel. "Braudel's work is useful for economists who argue that historical material is necessary for developing the science of economics."<sup>22</sup> This was true for the regulation school, where a holistic and anthropological conception of economic mechanisms meant considering historicity as one of the interpretative tools in conceptual analysis. Its concern was to break the ossified, mechanical systems, for example, the predetermined stages of the Marxist vulgate based exclusively on the state of the forces of production. But the regulationists also attacked the idea that these mechanisms were permanent, the basis of a strictly structuralist approach. "Referring to different orders of accumulation avoids making invariants, which are so often invoked in structuralist-inspired Marxist literature."<sup>23</sup>

The second great opening of the regulationists lay in the awareness of the difference between a social logic of the whole and the strategies used by social groups. Starting from the notion of a coherent whole, they argued that it should not occult "the necessity of explaining the mediations that determine collective and individual behavior."<sup>24</sup> They therefore made possible a return to the Subject,

although without in any way making themselves the apostles of a methodological individualism of microeconomics, altogether foreign to their concerns. The issue was not formalization or setting individual behavior into equations, but to reintroduce actors in terms of groups and social categories, actors who were to become central to the analysis, particularly by inflecting the relationship of salaried workers, which became the most important instance in the long-term transformation of modes of development.

The relationship to salary underlay regulatory mechanisms, and would reveal the new pauses in accumulation. In 1974, in his thesis, Michel Aglietta showed how American postwar growth depended on generalizing the Fordist system, a type of intensive accumulation based on mass production and consumption and on the accession of salaried workers to the American Way of Life.<sup>25</sup> The Taylorism of the interwar period gave way to the better regulated system of Fordism, which would undergo a decisive crisis in its turn, at the end of the sixties, a crisis made all the more palpable by the slowing down of gains in productivity.

Aglietta's thesis played a seminal role when Althusserian structural-Marxism thinking was on the wane. "In 1975-76, Michel Aglietta organized the discussion of his thesis during a long seminar that would inspire the work of the CEPREMAP team."<sup>26</sup> The regulationists would become the best path-breakers for analyzing crisis factors, because they could give a multidimensional explanation centered on the crisis of the salaried relationship.<sup>s?</sup> They also revisited money. Aglietta and Alain Lipietz criticized traditional Marxism's underestimation of the importance of money, and Althusser's negation of the contradictory nature of market relationships. "In the market exchange and in the salaried relationship, the issue is allocated work time, and the overtime that must be dragged out of workers."<sup>28</sup>

Aglietta managed another shift in the approach in order to understand money not only as one mode of regulation among others, but as an irreducible and necessary phenomenon. "Economic science does not ask questions about the nature of monetary phenomena."<sup>29</sup> He argued against the theory of use value and exchange value, which he felt hid the disorder, violence, arbitrariness, power, and compromise that money establishes.

We were working downstream, but when it came to money, I could not continue; we were at the heart of the matter once we had defined

money as the basic economic institution and determined that this institution was inconceivable on the basis of market logic. That led me to raise the question of the socialization of separate relationships based on something other than the logic of value, since money had become the founding relationship.t?

Reestablishing the role of money implied a critical rereading of the use postwar neo-Keynesianism had made of it. The Keynesians saw the state as able to regulate flows of money at will with a central guide rail. Aglietta and Andre Orlean equally rejected the liberal tradition of, in Jacques Rueff's terms, "silent money," the important mute voice in the endogenous laws of the market.

This double dissatisfaction led them to develop "a qualitative theory of money."<sup>31</sup> Thus arose the possibility of a structuralist approach called the theory of monetary circulation. The authors acknowledged that this theory was more advanced than a naturalist viewpoint, but they emphasized its major drawback: it assumed that institutions were givens and therefore was concerned solely with describing their immutable reproduction. "Structuralism saw each type of social organization as entirely defined by its rules and tending only toward its own preservation."<sup>32</sup>

Money, with its duality and ambivalence, allowed the regulationists to get at the tension between the different logics of individual affirmation and of systemic coordination. "We might say that we escape structuralism in a certain way by somehow considering this tension to be unavoidable."<sup>33</sup> While shifting theoretical stances, the authors discovered Rene Girard's work, "which made it possible to bring out the general character of violence and its foundations. We could therefore draw a certain number of enlightening parallels between the market and sacrificial orders."<sup>34</sup> The analysis of money was incorporated into a general anthropological perspective that saw having as the metonymy for being, in a ternary relationship that put the subject, the object, and the rival into conflict, according to Girard's mimetic layout. Thus, Aglietta could reintroduce conflict and contradiction into the market relationship without adopting methodological individualism.

### Administrative Renewal and University Marginality

The Althussero-structuralist legacy that had given birth to regulation theory had one characteristic that clearly set it apart from the other social sciences. It only marginally affected the university but was mas-

sively present within the upper echelons of the civil service. Taking up from the postwar "developmentalists" who had begun French planning in a neo-Keynesian accounting context, these economist-engineer graduates of the "grandes ecoles" (Polytechnique, Mines, Ponts et Chaussées) decided to work in the civil service rather than go into private business or industry. "I said that we were the rebellious sons of Althusser, but also of Pierre Masse, the great chief of the Plan of the sixties."<sup>35</sup> Most of the regulationists were Polytechnicians—Michel Aglietta, Hugues Bertrand, Robert Boyer, Alain Lipietz, Jacques Mistral—and they worked at INSEE, at the CEPREMAP, at the commissariat for the Plan, and in the administration.

Because they were marginal to the fundamental poles of intellectual life, regulationists were somewhat removed from interdisciplinary dialogue and dialogue with other disciplines, and the opening toward the latter owed more to an autodidactic ambition than to transversal structures. This explains how Michel Aglietta discovered René Girard's work when he was in his forties, and could then incorporate the notion of violence into his discussion of money. Marc Guillaume, who was also a Polytechnician, was dissatisfied with his training: "An engineer's training in France is on a good scientific and technical level, and is somewhat encyclopedic, but it crams a brain that has no social knowledge. In this respect, our lack of culture is absolute."<sup>36</sup> Later, Guillaume was trained as an economist, and passed the economics *agregation* in 1968. It was only then that he became aware of and interested in the ambient excitement over structuralist ideas, the Frankfurt School, and Herbert Marcuse.

Contracts with the CORDES multiplied among consultants. And yet Althusserian Marxism was particularly present in these teams, in their desire to reconcile Marx and Keynes by working on econometric models. Moreover, "Althusserianism, like structuralism, was ideal for ensuring that Marxism make its way in the administration, which was very highly policed, and polished."<sup>37</sup> This was how Bernard Guibert at the INSEE wrote his fresco on French economics, which became the official line of an entire section of the administration.<sup>V</sup> So it was around the present and future necessities of the Plan, under the state's impetus, that thinking about types of regulation took root within the French administration. "That led us in 1966-68 to the limits of the model of interpretation of these practices,"<sup>39</sup> because the juxtaposition of econometric models imported from the Anglo-Saxon world

into a sectorial plan, applied to state action as an action on structures, was considered inadequate by researchers like Robert Boyer, Michel Aglietta, and Philippe Herzog. "This was the beginning of some thinking that raised structuralist-type problems,"<sup>40</sup> rejecting the traditional dichotomy between an underground that belonged to the market and an aboveground of state actions appropriate to great changes. The goal, to the contrary, was to understand the interactions between these two levels. This type of analysis was born at the very heart of the problems raised in the administration, the ultimate product of the structuralist breakthrough.

Economists did not come to structuralism because of any university influence, where acknowledging a full-fledged independence of the economic sciences and the rupture with those in literature had led to slowdowns, sluggishness, and occasionally indigent thinking. "We only began to teach Keynes in the university at the beginning of the sixties; he was still unknown in the fifties."<sup>41</sup> Innovation and modernity were alien to university cadres and their orthodoxy, and only some independent thinkers like Francois Perroux of ISEA kept his work alive.<sup>f</sup>

Only with the post-'68 generation did the French university begin to benefit from any of the impact of theoretical work done elsewhere and witness the arrival of enough technically competent staff to rival Anglo-Saxon training. This would strengthen the domination of marginalists in the French university, or, for a small minority among them, would help enrich the regulationists' work, thanks to new blood.

University economists wanted a hard, formalizable science. Since mathematics was the criterion of scientificity, it was not particularly valorizing to be interdisciplinary. Moreover, unlike in America, where political science was important and studied power strategies in a very theorized and narrow way, linked to economics, economics and political sciences were not linked in France. "Notions of political regimes seen as modes of regulation on the basis of concepts adopted from political science were developed in the United States. These concepts included compromise, strategy, and accepted rules. . . . I used this literature a lot."<sup>43</sup>

Some heterodox professors managed to gain some influence, albeit marginal, but as structuralism waned around 1975, they too lost their power base. Neomarginalism carried the day everywhere and left only crumbs to the other currents.

Henri Brochier, who considered that economics could not be completely separated from the other social sciences, was a professor at Dauphine in 1969, where he began teaching a seminar on Baudrillard and Barthes. Using econometric models, he compared the study of coefficients of correlation between income levels and types of consumption, and price levels and consumption, and demonstrated the necessity for considering social groups and categories as well as other variables such as home and ideology. But Brochier quite quickly realized that he was completely wrong to have imagined that Dauphine was a good place for the social sciences; it soon became a successful business school, a practical "grande école." "The important ideological disengagement between 1965 and 1975 having diminished somewhat, I got interested in the epistemology of economics."<sup>44</sup>

The department of political economy at Vincennes, headed by Michel Beaud, was another place for nonmainstream economists. But, as we have already seen, this department did not award second-year diplomas (*Licence*) and its curriculum complemented what the other departments were doing. From the outset, it had only a limited impact.

The few freethinkers in the university system had in fact already addressed the question of regulation. Thus Henri Bartoli had subdivided his 1960-61 "Systems and Structures" course into a part on structures and a second part on regulation. Andre Nicolai, who had created the political economy department at Vincennes, although he stayed at Nanterre, and who had planned to define the foundations of a general economic anthropology, wrote an article for the *Revue économique* in 1962 titled "Inflation as Regulation"<sup>45</sup> in which he showed how roles reproduce themselves through inflationary processes. He directly adopted his approach from structural anthropology, which led him to raise the question of the reality of the inflationist phenomenon as a reproduction machine and not only as the simple expression of systemic dysfunction. "It was certainly here that Levi-Strauss's influence on my work was the strongest, in this reproduction of roles through the regulation processes."<sup>46</sup> Andre Nicolai looked upon the regulationists somewhat regretfully since his ideas had resembled theirs, but his ideas fell on deaf ears when he expressed them: "Regulationists are a little like a posthumous revenge."<sup>47</sup> After 1968, he saw the university reject Keynes and Marx, and return to pure economics completely dominated by neomarginalism. "Every structural

dimension had been jettisoned; we imagined a perfect market."<sup>48</sup> Nicolai could not gain a hearing at the time, since he was caught between those who held to a neoclassical formalized and hermetic economics, and those who held to an ultradeterminist Marxism. There was no place for a middle ground.

As of 1975, the theory of general equilibrium became the central paradigm of academic economic science, against the backdrop of waning structural-Marxism. The heterodox researchers tried to express themselves outside traditional institutions. Some of them met on the editorial board of the review *Critiques de l'économie politique*, published by Maspero (Alain Azouvi, Hugues Bertrand, Robert Boyer, Bernard Guibert, Pierre Salama, Bruno Theret, among others). Others, somewhat later, collaborated on the *Bulletin du MAUSS*.<sup>49</sup> This was particularly true for an economist from Paris I named Jérôme Lallement who, having defended Althusserian ideas, later felt that they led to dead ends and had finally "crumbled to dust."<sup>50</sup> He gave up structural-Marxism, but between 1969 and 1974 was particularly inspired by Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* to rethink the evolution of economic thinking in terms of simultaneity and epistemes. "This idea of episteme was truly a source of inspiration that made me work a lot."<sup>51</sup> Lallement reread the evolution of economic science around the notion of the sign, along the Saussurean model. He observed a major shift in political economy, contemporary with Saussure and Proust, which gave rise to a change of episteme in the way Foucault defined it. "This episteme of the sign functioned like what Saussure did using the signifier/signified distinction. In economics, the signifier was the price and the signified the use, or the signifier was the market and the signified the individual."<sup>52</sup> From the 1870s on, political economy shifted toward an economy of the sign and began to resemble semiology, and no longer addressed reality itself, the referent. Lallement concluded his thesis by explaining that economists could never understand reality since it was always outside their realm, by the very definition of the epistemology of their science. He argued for an archaeological approach against traditional histories of thought, and compared the positions of Foucault and Thomas S. Kuhn: "Both are relativists, both refuse the idea of an immutable and definitive truth that would wait silently to be slowly unveiled."<sup>53</sup> But he preferred Foucault's paradigm because it addressed the social sciences

and did not, as Kuhn did, stop at a sociology of the scientific community. Rather, it targeted the very act of knowing.

A certain number of these heterodox players worked in the university, but they were increasingly marginal and increasingly lost among the marginalists.

## *Twenty-nine*

# **A Middle Path: The Habitus**

In 1975, at the very moment when structuralism seemed to have dissolved in the air of a new era, Pierre Bourdieu began a new review of which he was editor in chief, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, which continued to present work consonant with the scientific aspirations of the structuralist program. "Scientific discourse can only appear disenchanting to those who have an enchanted vision of the social world."! Bourdieu had adopted the structuralist legacy and his work until that point had been largely inspired by it. But he also began to shift his approach and move away from the paradigm. He bitterly criticized Althusserian structural-Marxism by attacking its philosophical elitism and its total negation of the role of social players, who were reduced to the application of systems of rules. "I wanted to reintroduce agents in a certain way; Levi-Strauss and the structuralists, and particularly Althusser, tended to abolish them by making them simple epiphenomena of structure."<sup>2</sup>

In 1975, Bourdieu's target in *Actes* was Etienne Balibar, and he was clearly settling accounts with the entire Althusserian current. Bourdieu remained true to Durkheimian positions and concerns for unifying the social sciences in a sociology freed from philosophical tutelage. He violently attacked Balibar's intention to establish himself as "the guardian of the authenticity of the [Marxist] message."! Beyond that, he attacked the philosopher's claim to speak in the name of science by calling his theoretical practice scientific and by eliminating,

by annexation or exclusion, the social sciences from the competition. For Bourdieu, this was a purely corporatist defense of the privileges linked to the old legitimation of philosophical discourse, which let it continue to make its claim to be the judge of the criteria of scientificity and the guardian of the temple, denouncing all forms of deviation or relapse: "The priesthood establishes catalogs of sins.":' Bourdieu denounced the Althusserians' quasi-metaphysical a priori, and their claim to deduce the event from the essence as an ontologized vision of the social world leading to the construction of a "theodicy of the theologian."> Fifteen years later, Etienne Balibar viewed this acerbic polemic as, more than anything else, an illustration of the logic of the academic world that Bourdieu himself would study in detail in *Homo academicus*. "Does he realize to what degree this applies to him?"<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu's Durkheimian ambition was not new, in fact, but dated back to the sixties.

## Structuralism, or a Way Out

The structuralist paradigm was worn out. This was apparent in the critical inflection of Bourdieu's theses on structural reproduction and his determination to make a place for the subject within the narrow limits of what conditioned it. He rejected Althusser's hierarchy of infra- and superstructural institutions of the mode of production. He also differed from Levi-Strauss, his essential source of inspiration. Thus he developed a whole analytical apparatus around the notions of the habitus, practical sense, and strategy, hoping to demonstrate that action was not the simple and automatic enforcement of a rule. Thanks to these changes, Bourdieu hoped to open up some of the dead ends of the structuralist tradition. "Levi-Strauss, forever enclosed in the alternative of subjectivity and objectivity, cannot see the attempts to surpass this alternative as anything but a regression toward subjectivity." Bourdieu used the changes in linguistics since the late sixties to support his arguments.

He had always kept on top of everything going on outside his own field, and in that he was faithful to structuralism's interdisciplinarity and totalization. The Chomskyan rupture as it was understood in France essentially confused generative grammar and genetic ideas that indicated a process of transformation, a genesis. Bourdieu adopted this rupture and could therefore define his approach or express his determination "to work out a genetic structuralism,"<sup>8</sup> or establish a "new"

orientation, not on the basis of the work of men like Jean Piaget or Lucien Goldmann going back to the early days of structuralism, but by using Chomsky's more recent contribution. In 1972, Bourdieu had opened his *Sketch of a Theory of Practice* by quoting Chomsky, Pierre Encreve, a Chomskyan sociolinguist, played a fundamental role for Bourdieu. Their collaboration led to a common and complementary paradigm. Encreve developed Chomsky's orientation using the Bourdieusian ideas of field and of habitus. Bourdieu hoped to avoid the gaps of early Saussurean structuralism by differentiating Chomsky's equation between models of competence and performance with his idea of habitus, by which he meant a system of acquired, socially inculcated attitudes, a "matrix of perceptions, evaluations, and actions."<sup>10</sup> With the habitus, competence and performance could be set in a dialectic by making it possible to externalize the interior, to restore the mechanisms of reproduction, but also to imagine strategies borne by players in the system that varied according to time and place. Like the model of competence and practice, the habitus therefore generated a system of performances. "I wanted to react against Saussurean structuralism's mechanistic orientation. In that, I was sympathetic to Chomsky, in whom I found the same concern for paying careful and imaginative attention to practice."<sup>11</sup>

As a sociologist, Bourdieu attributed competence to attitudes acquired by social experience rather than to ontological or biological innateness. Structure remained fundamentally sociological, a here and now incarnated and incorporated within a practice of social representations. In this sense, Bourdieu's appropriation of Chomsky was based on a reading that shared little with Chomsky's orientation, which was more asociological.<sup>P</sup>

Analytical philosophy also helped Bourdieu to escape the objectivity of early structuralism. He could give a place to a subject that was something other than the subject of traditional metaphysics, by reflecting on speech acts, and not only on the rules of language governing them. "If you really read Austin, doubtless one of the philosophers I admire the most, you would understand that the core of what I tried to reintroduce into the debate on performatives had already been said or suggested by him."<sup>13</sup> By analyzing speech acts, Bourdieu could reintroduce the referent, the concrete social situation that Saussure had marginalized, as well as speech, which had been eliminated in favor of a concern for language-specific rules.

Bourdieu's paradigm was also influenced by Wittgenstein and his concern for the realm of necessity and the institutionalized world of rules. Wittgenstein's response, according to which necessity was not based on the adequation between established rules and a natural reality, but corresponded to all human practices and was therefore rooted in the human institution itself, allowed Bourdieu to construct his theory of the habitus, with which he hoped to respond to the dual need to conceptualize the subject's practice as such, and as having an origin that lay outside it. We also find Wittgenstein's concerns for the pragmatic dimension of human activities, of knowing what happens when an individual follows a rule. The notion of habitus was his answer to this fundamental question.

This was an ancient idea taken from Aristotle, revived by Saint Thomas Aquinas, and later by the sociological current of Weber and Durkheim. But Bourdieu gave it another twist. Where the Aristotelian tradition assigned the habitus to consciousness, making it a variable notion depending on human ambition, Bourdieu redefined it as a paradigm that avoided the opposition between conscious and unconscious. It made it possible to speak of strategies, but in the sense of intentionless intentionalities. Bourdieu thus examined the conditions of possibility of practices more than the study of practices themselves, without taking a historical approach: "Without falling back onto the anecdotal history of events with neither beginning nor end."<sup>14</sup> He was loyal in this to early structuralist synchronism and the priority of structuring entities over practices, and to its nomothetic vocation. Contrary to Levi-Strauss's criticism that Bourdieu brought back subjectivity and irrationality, and in so doing abandoned the structuralist scientific program, Bourdieu's subject was not free to choose its strategy, and shared little with the Cartesian subject. This subject was at the crossroads of different causal series that played with it and through it. "The subject is not the instant ego of a singular cogito, but the individual trace of an entire collective history."<sup>15</sup> Objective structures, even if they were internalized, were therefore totally independent of conscious individual minds. However, externalizing them gave them their full efficacy.

Contrary to Levi-Strauss's criticism of subjectivism, Raymond Boudon criticized the culmination of Bourdieu's purely functionalist and organicist representation of social reproduction in an auto-

mous subject as purely illusory. "So, it is not an autonomy at all, since the individual has only the autonomy of creating illusions for itself." 16 Bourdieu postulated constraints; Boudon considered that "we are falling back into a vicious circle type of reasoning. The constraints are exaggerated, and there is also the absurd idea that they come from the social whole and the desires this totality has to reproduce itself. All of this is completely phantasmagoric." 17

By trying to escape objectivity and subjectivity, Bourdieu was locked into a permanent tension between these two dangers and vulnerable to structuralists like Levi-Strauss and supporters of methodological individualism like Boudon. He had very little room to maneuver in order to reconcile the structuralist legacy and individual practices. "Between the system of objective regularities and the system of directly observable behavior there is always a necessary mediation, which is only the habitus, the geometric space of determinisms and of a determination of the probabilities and experienced hopes of individuals, of an objective future, and of the project of the subject." 18 Bourdieu did not forsake methodological determinism; it was the principle of *The Sociologist's Profession* 19 and required that he look beyond human practices. But he reinjected the experience of perceptions and strategies into an analytical model that had eliminated them: "This is the role that fell to the concept of habitus, bringing an answer to the problem of the status of the subject." 20

In 1982, Bourdieu joined the brotherhood of supreme legitimation, the College de France, quite clearly the sanctuary for structural innovators such as Benveniste, Dumezil, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Foucault, Duby, and Vernant.

We should not give our inaugural Lesson without asking ourselves, "by what right?" The institution is there to eliminate these questions and the anxiety linked to the arbitrariness of beginnings. A ritual of the *agregation* and of investiture, the inaugural Lesson symbolically enacts the denial at the end of which the new master is authorized to pronounce a legitimate discourse for whomever."

Bourdieu took the opportunity to pose the question of the scholar's position, committed by a logic he does not master and that fully belongs to an institutional logic. He was reiterating Foucault's concern for the link between knowledge and power and the necessity of situating discursive sites.

## A Sociologist of Aesthetics

Three years after entering the College de France, Bourdieu published a vast work on the social criticism of judgment, *Distinction*.<sup>1</sup> Starting with a detailed study of tastes and cultural representation, he confirmed the turn his work was taking since the mid-seventies in illustrating the concrete habitus. He argued for a more active notion of the role of social agents than he had in *Reproduction*.<sup>2</sup> But although the interplay of pluralized strategies was more complex in this work, Bourdieu also attacked an even stricter taboo than that of educational institutions, by moving into an essentially private realm, that "of tastes and colors," which are not subject to discussion, and of cultural creation, considered to be beyond sociological determination. "Here, sociology is entering an area that is the denial of the social realm par excellence."<sup>3</sup> Yet Bourdieu tried to demonstrate how cultural tastes were part of the way in which the ruling class imposed its vision and legitimated its tastes through a scholarly arrangement of distinctions. All of culture, in the broadest, ethnological sense of the word, including every individual's uses and habits, therefore became a class issue, a means of establishing a power relationship and dominating others, particularly when considered in terms of social contiguity. Bourdieu took up the key Marxist notion of capital, but this time applied it to the cultural and symbolic realms rather than limiting it to economic activities. Class struggle became a classification struggle in which the operator was the distinction of cultural judgment among different social agents, all competing to win scarce goods.

Bourdieu undertook a detailed and revelatory classification of social hierarchies and cultural goods, conceived from the point of view of their ability to be "classifying." His sweeping study on the diversity of taste and distaste brought to light the processes of class legitimation and domination, thereby providing an answer to and a criticism of Kant's position on aesthetics in his *Critique of Judgment*. Bourdieu explicitly continued to pit sociology against philosophy, since he considered his position to be better founded by its use of scientific, statistical materials. The sociologist-king, to use Jacques Ranciere's expression, believed that he could go beyond the traditional approach to the work of art as a purely and specifically aesthetic invention. Bourdieu considered that an analysis based on the essence of the aesthetic position "refused to restore its only reason for being, in other words the

historical reason establishing the arbitrary necessity of the institution. "25 The work of art was considered strictly in terms of its classifying function. All notions of beauty were banished to "the natural expression of the professional ideology of those who like to call themselves 'creators.'"26 He considered all aesthetic characterization of artistic values to be simply a form of denial of the social relationship incorporated within the established mode for classifying tastes.

For Bourdieu, Petula Clark's songs thus had no more value than Stravinsky's works, *Hamlet* had no greater aesthetic quality than a boulevard comedy, Bach's Goldberg Variations no more importance than popular songs. The only distinctive criterion was that which divided the class habitus and let some assign value to a socially legitimated and therefore superior cultural capital unsupported by aesthetic criteria.

Bourdieu enlarged the notion of class, which he considered to extend beyond the question of ownership of the means of production to include the symbolic universe where the violence of domination was every bit as present. But because it was entirely invisible and operated by negating the conditioning processes, this violence facilitated their domination.

His notion of habitus as the generating principle of objectively classifiable practices let Bourdieu help a tired structural-Marxism venture onto unexplored cultural ground: "a structuring structure that organizes practices and the perception of practices."27 He saw two principles of hierarchization within the dominant class, depending on whether the capital was economic or cultural, and argued that this principle organized capital into two mirror structures "according to a structural chiasmus."28 The richest were divided into cultural capital owners and owners of essentially economic capital-intellectuals at one end of the spectrum and business leaders at the other. A different relationship evolved toward culture therefore as two habitus inversely proportional in terms of cultural and economic capital. Bourdieu used a detailed statistical apparatus, but also altogether pertinent ethnological descriptions of the material culture of French society. For example, he contrasted popular eating habits with bourgeois eating habits, the asceticism of professors with the luxurious tastes of the liberal professions, the use of Kleenex in urban areas, where a certain delicacy is required, with the use of cloth handkerchiefs into which the rural user snorts loudly.

Bourdieu's critical sense of perception was accompanied by a literary sensibility, an almost Proustian sense of minutiae, a lucid causticity, as, for example, when he considered "the petit bourgeois is a proletarian who wants to go unnoticed in order to become bourgeois."<sup>29</sup> But this study of the social conditions of judgment was reductive; he completely eliminated the way in which artistic creations break with absolutely everything around them, since for him they did little more than serve a social function of distinction.

Functionally reducing culture left Bourdieu open to serious criticisms. "It would seem that behind his refinement is the gesticulating ghost of a new look Zhdanovism."<sup>30</sup> Broadening the definition of the social class as a being in itself to a perceived being meant reifying the work of art, reducing it to a simple question of ideological dimensions. This revealed the limits of Bourdieu's attempt to get beyond the structuralist paradigm, since his critical analysis relied on negating the basis of aesthetic autonomy in order to establish its classifying systems and bringing a coherent hierarchization to light. Once again, this synchronic game of determining the positions of each of the categories in social space negated the referent-art in this case—in its specificity and its principles, a very structuralist move.

Stylistically, *Distinction* shared some of the literary concerns of the New Novel: linear storytelling gave way to multiple voices. Bourdieu fundamentally changed the traditional, sociological form of storytelling with the specialist-teller at a good remove from his object. He juxtaposed theoretical commentaries in direct or indirect discourse with the raw material of interviews, photographs, and statistical tables. All this material, which was heterogeneous in form and located on different registers, was interwoven and organized in a carefully worked out polyphony by Bourdieu: "For me, the most interesting thing in *Distinction* was the formal innovation. . . . This was a stylistically avant-garde book, meaning that it combined five or six normally incompatible languages."<sup>31</sup> Interweaving experience and ideas made it possible to write a literary sociological work and once again demonstrated Bourdieu's difficult semimourning of literature, along with that of the entire structuralist generation, as well as a shared desire to write a literary work via the social sciences.

Bourdieu constantly referred to Gustave Flaubert or Marcel Proust and clouded generic distinctions by illustrating one of the major contributions of structural criticism—the equation between form and

content. Stylistically, writing was the essential tool for thinking a constructed reality.

When *Distinction* came out in 1979, *Le Monde* reviewed it in a two-page spread. Thomas Ferenczi saw in Bourdieu's analysis a "decisive break"; Pierre Encreve wrote that it had a "liberating effect" comparable to that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with whom he saw a parallel and similar objectives, a militant philosophy concerned with freeing humanity of its chains: "Rousseau wrote that philosophers of all ages have a common mania of denying what is and explaining what is not. *Distinction* is constructed on this enterprise of negating reality."<sup>32</sup> The general thrust of all the articles was particularly laudatory, except for two that were critical: Jacques Laurent's "A Society Cut Off from Its History" and Francois Chatelet's, which asked the question "Where Is It a Matter of Art?" Chatelet made the pertinent observation that after such an enormous sociological work, something was missing: "It is going uphill, in terms of sociological and historical understanding, and not downhill, in terms of sociological classifications, that we can reformulate the questions raised about art."<sup>33</sup>

Despite the limits of his approach to aesthetics, Bourdieu continued to work on complexification in order to avoid a mechanistic or teleological philosophy. His notion of habitus differed from the Althusserians' notion of apparatus, which referred to a vertical conception of infra- and superstructures. Bourdieu's idea led to a richer reality, woven of habits, needs, practices, and inclinations, and yet articulated within a three-dimensional space: the vertical axis was the evaluation of economic, educational, and cultural capital; the structural axis was the examination of what opposed economic and cultural capital in the same field; and finally, the dimension of the trajectory made it possible to reintroduce movement into the structure and to translate seniority in the possession of this economic/cultural capital. The coalescing of these three dimensions defined the habitus.

## Practice and Its Meaning

Just after this empirical study, Bourdieu published *Practical Sense*, which became its theoretical framework. He theoretically reiterated his criticism of the structuralist paradigm, and especially its disregard for the context of utterances, along with its banishment or reduction of speech to a simple execution of the rules of language. "We will have no trouble demonstrating that all the presuppositions-and all ensu-

ing difficulties-of all the structuralisms flow from this sort of originary division between language and its realization in speech, which is to say, in practice."34 Consequently, the scholar was strictly outside his object, whereas for Bourdieu, the analyst-subject of science is an organic part of its object. The classifier can be classified; it is illusory to deny his position in the name of a model in which he would occupy "the position of a Leibnizian god possessing in act an objective sense of practice."35

Bourdieu criticized those who had drifted from the initial structural model by importing new elements and opening it to the context in order to account for the observable variations and exceptions to the rule, as he himself had done in Kabylia, Algeria, but who had, in so doing, "avoided calling into question objectivist thinking."36

So he proposed a radical critique of this view in order to avoid beginning with a pure, ethereal, rootless subject disconnected from any conditioning system. The concept of practical sense, in this respect, was opposed to structuralist panlogism as much as to intuitionism based solely on the world of representations: "This theory of practice, or better yet, of practical sense, is defined above all against the philosophy of the subject and of the world as representation."37 Instead of rules, Bourdieu used practical sense; Levi-Strauss's kinship rules became matrimonial strategies and social uses of kinship. He clearly wanted to introduce a more active role for social actors, but kept the structuralist postulate of cultural arbitrariness and of a symbolic universe, which allowed him to reduce this dimension to its social level alone. His idea of aesthetics here retained the structural perspective of transposing tastes, indefinitely reversed and inverted according to the diverse modes of regulation of the different schemas.

The metaphor of play served as the instrument that allowed Bourdieu to escape the subjective/objective alternative and to concentrate on practice. "The habitus as the meaning of the game is the incorporated social game become nature."38 Making a virtue of necessity, the habitus made it possible to make the necessary adequate to the desirable, and to mourn collective history and the dream of great revolutionary dawns. **I**t was "really the equivalent of Freud's Oedipus complex."39

According to Alain Caille, Bourdieu's subject, the product of the habitus, implicitly supposed a work of mourning perfectly proportional to the incompleteness of social recognition. **I**t donned the form

of a double economic and cultural capital; therefore, "the subject would be nothing other than the sum of its renunciations."<sup>40</sup> In other words, this subject was entirely reduced to the external constraints playing on him—a reversal of Sartre's subject. Moreover, Jacques Rancière was disappointed by the results of the fieldwork done for *Distinction* since they only confirmed "what the sociologist already knew."<sup>41</sup> The aesthetic universe became a problem of distance, meaning to judgment in terms of tastes in order to distinguish itself from popular *ethos*. The sociologist kept a simple logic of places by reducing the content of aesthetics like the content of intellectual debates in *Homo academicus*.<sup>t</sup> This work, devoted to the sociological study of university professors, is strictly circumscribed by ruptures with its history, subjects taught, and the political and social environment, permitting the distinction between different habitus, which were both conflictual and imbricated.

The inner logics of the field itself determined the system of disciplinary constraints that, according to Bourdieu, elucidated university careers and the work of professors who were thus objectified. Bourdieu worked on his own objectification insofar as he was part of this academic universe. On this terrain, he could certainly work toward a better understanding of himself and the constraints on him, and problematize his own path. But when he published his enormous, six hundred-page *The Nobility of the State* in 1989,<sup>43</sup> giving a scholarly demonstration of how the *Grandes Ecoles* reproduced the nation's elites, there was a sense that a paradigm that had had the merit of seeking, albeit unsuccessfully, a middle ground between objectivity and subjectivity was exhausted. Indeed, Bourdieu did not avoid lapsing into a reproductive schema within which actors circulated like so many ghosts haunting the healthy operation of the structures they served.

## *Thirty*

# **Geography: A Latecomer Discovers Epistemology**

In the great debates of the sixties concerning the structuralist paradigm, one particularly well-established social science was noticeably absent. Geography had even had its hour of glory at the beginning of the century, however, and its absence was all the more striking given the structuralist priority of spatial relations at the expense of historical analysis. Synchrony replaced diachrony; after the search for origins, the cartographic effort came to prevail. Attention shifted and the visual transformation of objects came into focus. So it was all the more surprising not to find geography at the center of this thinking during the sixties.

### **The Long Sleep of an Objectless Discipline**

Geography was slumbering in a deep sleep, deaf to the questions that should have awakened it from its mute and dumb torpor during a particularly talkative period. Several reasons explained this long absence. First, geography in the sixties had continued to be defined as a science of the relationship between nature and culture, between the elements of geomorphology and climatology and those belonging to the human valorization of natural conditions. Consequently, the structuralist ambition of basing the sciences of man solely on culture, modeled by linguistic rules, appeared somewhat foreign to the geographer's concerns for basing disciplinary unity on the corollation between levels of

nature and culture. "Geographers therefore experienced it as something that did not concern them."!

We might even suggest that geographers mistrusted a paradigm that threatened to upset their discipline. While geography was not the only social science to be torn between nature and culture (the same was true for psychology and anthropology), it was the only one during the period to reject a possible partition between the two fields in its domain.

The other reason for geography's absence had to do with the history of the discipline, which had a tendency to ride along through the sixties so confidently on the achievements of its past glory that it was increasingly out of sync. To be sure, geography had its hour of glory, and it was particularly brilliant, following the defeat of 1870, when it answered the national need to reconquer Alsace-Lorraine. Ernest Lavisse's history of national battles was written to legitimate the rights of the French nation; geography became a partner in this history. *The Geographical Tableau of France* by Paul Vidal de La Blache opened Ernest Lavisse's great *History of France*.

Once the war was over and Alsace-Lorraine had been reannexed to France, Vidalian geography became the model, less its patriotic perspective and state oversight. This geography quit politics and took to the fields, rediscovering a gleaming France of welcoming and greatly diverse regions. In the 1920S and 1930S, Vidalian geography devoted itself to regional monographs; it became a historian, and the historian became a geographer. During this golden age of the French school of geography, its influence was felt by all of the social sciences and extended to a community of geographers the world over.

During the International Geographical Congress held in Paris in 1931, triumph was in the air for this French school of geography. Geographers from all corners of the globe acclaimed it. During the opening ceremonies, the Italian delegate, General Vacchelli, declared: "Limiting myself to the work accomplished during the last fifty or sixty years, I would say that the French geographers in particular have made modern ideas penetrate and progress in Europe in terms of morphology; above all, it is in France that human geography has received new directives."<sup>3</sup> The leaders of the school at the time were Albert Demangeon and Emmanuel de Martonne.

But geographers were to see their success eo-opted by historians. Lucien Febvre immediately understood how powerfully these mono-

graphs affected readers and ardently defended Vidal de La Blache against the German geopolitical school of Ratzel and against the challenge of Durkheimian sociologists in 1922.<sup>4</sup> When, with Marc Bloch, Febvre founded the review *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* in 1929, he asked Albert Demangeon to join the editorial board. The new French school of history essentially adopted the Vidalian paradigm.<sup>r</sup> Having linked their future with that of the new historians, geographers looked on as their dynamism was appropriated for the sole benefit of historians.

Following the war and during the sixties, the great regional monographs were written by historians, among them Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Pierre Goubert, and Georges Duby. Even if geography had gained some institutional ground in the fifties and sixties, it remained structurally tied to history and devitalized, doing little more than managing the Vidalian legacy with its naturalism, its emphasis on unchanging qualities, its monographic and contingent aspects, as well as a concern for a literary writing style. The two major angles of French geographical studies remained the regional framework and the study of landscapes. Having failed to fully assess the consequences of the wane of determinism, geographers' practices were essentially a "drawers within drawers" juxtaposition, in the name of an ideal synthesis of the elements of landscape, climate, population, and urban networks. All of this was laid out in monographs that aimed to be exhaustive rather than to raise questions. This traditional geography later reconciled itself with a Marxist approach that made a breakthrough after the war thanks to the influence of a certain number of Communist geographers: Pierre George, Jean Dresch, both elected to the Sorbonne, and Jean Tricart at the University of Strasbourg. These geographers were influenced by traditional geography, however, and were prisoners of its empiricism; as a result, they did not manage to profoundly change their discipline or to promote either an epistemological reconsideration of its foundations or any interdisciplinary, theoretical dialogues. Moreover, the Cold War and Stalinism were not conducive to breaking the isolation of these Communist geographers shut up in the ivory tower of their dual certainty: that of historical materialism on the one hand, and an empirical knowledge based on the great works of the past on the other, not to mention such Zhdanovian traditions as the one Jean Tricart succumbed to when he opposed Marxist geomorphology to the bourgeois geomorphology of his predecessors.<sup>s</sup>

Some hesitant and quickly scuttled attempts at dialogue did occur, such as the colloquium held by Communist geographers at Ivry on June 28-29, 1953.<sup>7</sup> But the epistemological revolution they had hoped to bring about never happened. The generation trained by Pierre George, Bernard Kayser, and Raymond Dugrand was no more successful at moving mountains or bringing geographical know-how out of its regional and peripheral isolation, disdained by university professors and other intellectuals in the sixties.

This discipline ran out of steam. As rural France was modernized, it lost its privileged object. Some geographers, in search of a solution, seized upon the possibility of working abroad to renew their own discipline. "Until 1968, most colleagues were sincerely persuaded that there was no geography outside of France worthy of the name."<sup>8</sup> But finally some contacts were established between French geography and Anglo-Saxon geography, thanks in particular to Swiss, Canadian, and Belgian francophone geographers. In what became known as the new geography, Paul Claval played an important role.?

No longer descriptive like the geography of the preceding generation, this new geography no longer imagined itself to be a literary genre, in order to be legitimated as a science. Geographers turned toward economics and the social sciences, which had gone further in terms of spatial conceptualization. They were just as concerned for their discipline's scientificity and wanted to modernize it, using quantitative material and solid statistical sources drawn from quantitative techniques. "Thus the current neopositivism replaced the positivism of the early twentieth century."<sup>10</sup> Vidalian geography, which focused essentially on rural, agricultural areas, became useless as society evolved. Younger geographers adapted its methods to a quickly changing urban world. Instead of concretely describing visible reality, they insisted on looking at what was implicit, hidden, and unspoken. "No geographer limits himself any longer to the visible dimension of reality."!

This new geography, located squarely within the social sciences, progressively renewed the entire discipline in the seventies. To be sure, since 1960, Pierre Gourou had been part of the structural anthropology enterprise as the tropical geographer on the editorial board of Levi-Strauss's review *L'Homme*. But he was an exception among geographers, who had generally remained aloof from the social sciences, and whose object, eo-opted by the new history, had disappeared. All

that remained was an even more nervous, disoriented discipline, fearful that the slightest challenge could sink the ship.

### A Tardy Awakening

Geography awoke progressively, from the beginning of the decade on. Interest in mathematics slowly raised certain epistemological questions. In 1971, for example, some young geographers from southeastern France decided to pool their knowledge, given their inadequate training in mathematics and computers, and form a working group known as Dupont. Although this group never became as well known as the Bourbaki group, its work on quantification quickly produced theoretical thinking using mathematical formalization. Later, "it slowly became a question of epistemology."<sup>12</sup> The group was rebaptized the Dupont of Avignon, the city where they met, and in 1972, in addition to the first colloquium on mathematics applied to geography, held in Besancon, and the publication of a collective work on geography,<sup>13</sup> a new geographical review came out: *EEspace Geographique.r'* Its title clearly indicated its intention to situate geography among the social sciences thanks to its conception of space.

One sign of this entirely new choice ending the period of uncertainty during which geography was being torn between the natural sciences and the social sciences was Francois Chatelet's 1973 publication of the last volume of his *History of Philosophy*, devoted to *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. He had asked Yves Lacoste to work with him, and had thus made a place for geography alongside psychology, sociology, ethnology, history, and linguistics. "The end of isolation began with Lacoste's excellent article in Chatelet's encyclopedia."<sup>15</sup>

Yves Lacoste did not minimize the crisis affecting traditional geography, its inability to think theoretically, and its stubbornly proud and willfully untheoretical, down-to-earth approach. Lacoste observed that geographical practice no longer corresponded to a common project; some geographers specialized in physical geography while others were involved in human geography, without being concerned about this contradiction that revealed "the fallacious nature of the common geographical project."<sup>16</sup> He humorously and quite pointedly ridiculed the pathetic enumerations resembling mail order catalogs of geographical wisdom, presented as a synthetic view of the issues. Geography was at the crossroads of many disciplines and used their data

without questioning its validity. Lacoste's simple investigation revealed such a complete absence of theoretical thinking that it was even possible to imagine that this discipline that had lost its object and lacked any specific method might disappear altogether. "Geography has entered a period of fracture."<sup>17</sup>

Adding mathematical formalization to geographical knowledge was not enough to change things for Lacoste, who believed that geographers needed to construct their ideas along Bachelard's epistemological model: "We have to think in order to measure, not measure in order to think."<sup>18</sup> He thought that geography could be saved by recontextualizing the methodical study of space within the functions of the state, and reminded his readers that nineteenth-century German geographers had helped establish a geopolitics that Hitler raised to paroxysmal levels and that had contributed to its postwar discredit. Lacoste preferred to define the different scales of conceptualization first, before articulating them, to distinguish space as a real object and as an object of knowledge. Here, as well as on the necessary link between theory and political practice, Althusser served as Lacoste's fundamental and explicit epistemological reference!<sup>19</sup> and was to be the epistemological model for rethinking or thinking space. Geography would thus become the last area to come under the influence of Althusserianism.

Those who wanted to modernize geography continued to work collectively. Rebaptized the Geopoint (and no longer Dupont), the group held its first colloquium at the University of Geneva in 1976 on the topic "Theories and Geography."<sup>20</sup> Some geographers were starting to become active in the seventies. Jacques Lévy recalls being criticized during his *agregation* exam for not having used his map enough or lyrically enough. He only heard mention of the term "structure" within the university for the first time a year later in a seminar reserved for advanced students, taught by marginal professors at Paris VII. For geographers, Paris VII-Jussieu was a second-string university. "The title of the seminar was 'Structures, Systems, and Processes,' and we called it 'Structures and Things' to convey the fact that the questions were abstract and uncontrollable. The course was given by Francois Durand-Dastes and Roger Brunet,"<sup>21</sup> Even more than the currently moribund structuralism, the issue was systemic thinking, popular then among geographers, especially after *Systems Theory*<sup>22</sup> had been translated into French from the German.

The structuralist principle of immanence and the idea of interdependent elements, as well as the necessity of seeing them from an encompassing logic, were all here. By contrast, however, the model had come from the natural sciences rather than the social sciences, and began with the premise of a complex reality and the impossibility of isolating a limited number of variables. All mechanisms had to be considered in relation to each other, using a model of laws resembling that of thermodynamics. Such systemism offered the advantage of making it possible to find interrelationships, actions, and retroactions, and to do more than give the kind of general description that traditional geographers tended to give. It also made it possible to preserve the unity of geography by assuming that everything held together. Among other things, systemism created a certain receptivity to concerns about the ecosystem and ecology. "Geographers were entirely comfortable with that, at least those who thought that nature had something to do with their discipline."<sup>23</sup> But because the model was based on cybernetics, it did not lead to a dynamic analysis any more than structuralism had.

### *Herodote*

This was the receptive climate in which Yves Lacoste made an important breakthrough in 1976 by dynamiting the weakened edifice of academic geography. During the same year, he published *Geography Is Used First of All to Wage War*,<sup>24</sup> and, at Maspero, he started *Herodote.o* a new review significantly subtitled "Strategies, Geographies, and Ideologies." Lacoste attacked the descriptive enumeration of academic geography, and compared it to the effective social and political-military use of space, and the manipulation of those caught in and subjected to strategies without knowing where they led. He wanted essentially to reveal these hidden spatial strategies and to show how a number of different spaces were woven together according to certain logics that were not obvious.

Lacoste observed that the army had been the first to want to understand how to use space, with its headquarters maps. He used this to rehabilitate geopolitics, which had been discredited until then. He was fundamentally critical and began to demystify what later gave rise to a real strategic know-how reappropriated by those who were subjected to different kinds of social domination. Vidalian geography had traditionally ignored this political dimension, which Lacoste con-

sidered essential for geographers if they wanted to understand and analyze critical areas. In this regard, Lacoste contrasted Vidal's concern for permanent features of geography in a non-political landscape with the need to understand the problems introduced by modernization and its acceleration of spatial transformation. In a word, Lacoste was interested in a geography of crisis that looked at the degradation of the biosphere, the degrading of the possibilities for sustaining life, the geography of demographic explosion, of urban density, of growing inequalities, and of the confrontation between powers.

Analyzing these phenomena implied changing the way of looking at local and planetary relationships. It led to a territorial macro-geography that went further than the traditional French regional monographs. Fundamentally political, *Herodote* was no less open to the question of the various articulations of social space. Lacoste wanted to map the networks of multinationals and to analyze the relationship between their production sites and subcontracting zones in order to explain the logic underlying economic exploitation.

Above all, he wanted to infuse new life into what seemed to be a moribund discipline. This project was part of a larger, active collaboration with the other social sciences that would help to develop this new consideration of space. The old discussion group for *Herodote* therefore included geographers, ethnologists, urbanists, philosophers, and journalists. *Herodote* adopted the critical project of the declining structuralist paradigm, and structuralist strategies were revisited so as to decode the third term of the review's subtitle: ideologies.

Althusser's influence was diffuse, but present in this transition toward an epistemological consideration of the foundations of geography. The first issue of the review even included a passionate article on the concept of landscape, full of references to semiotics and to Christian Metz and Algirdas Julien Greimas.<sup>w</sup> Structuralism's other effect on geography had to do with Foucault's influence on the *Herodote* team. Having understood the importance of Foucault's work for observation and for discerning the logic of spatial organization, they invited Foucault to answer the geographers' questions, in the first issue of the review: "Your work and ours share certain things concerning how ideology and spatial strategies work. By examining geography, we have encountered a certain number of ideas: knowledge, power, science, discursive formation, observation, *episteme*, and your archaeology has helped to orient our thinking."<sup>27</sup>

Lacoste, who belonged to this generation of geographers trained by Pierre George, was able to disengage from the Marxist economism of an essentially descriptive geography thanks to the collective context at the post-'68 University of Vincennes with its general structural-Marxism, which made it possible to open up geography to a dialogue with Francois Chatelet, Michel Foucault, and Althusserians from various departments: geography changed.

### *EspacesTemps*

The other symptom of the changes taking place in geography was a joust against traditional geography undertaken by a handful of young geographers in the history-geography section of the ENSET.<sup>28</sup> In a narrower and more peripheral way, they reproduced the battle their elders had waged in 1966-68 at the Sorbonne against the humanities in the name of science. Geographers were once more latecomers to the protests of young researchers who, like their elders in the sixties, wanted greater rigor in their intellectually unsatisfying discipline. Nothing predestined the ENSET at Cachan to become a site of agitation or innovation, but a number of unforeseeable reasons converged to make it the birthplace for *EspacesTemps*, a review that would try to define another kind of geography.

*EspacesTemps* was initially just the history-geography section's bulletin and reflected the general conviviality of geographers who enjoyed working together. But it evolved rather quickly and came to express the dissatisfaction with the way geography was being taught. "Taking the *agregation* with Christian Grataloup, we were disgusted by geography and tried to demonstrate this in one way or another."<sup>29</sup>

The first bulletin came out in October 1975, entitled *Espaces-Temps.t?* It had a greater impact than its initial modest proposal; Maurice Le Lannou wrote a provocatively entitled article in *Le Monde*, "Geographers against Geography."<sup>31</sup> Not that he was glorifying the position of these young iconoclasts; on the contrary, he was outraged by their "outrage," even though he admitted that there was "some truth" in what they said.

This commotion made Albert Plet, who was in charge of the peaceful history-geography section at ENSET, somewhat nervous. He reacted quite harshly to the proposals for the second issue of *Espaces-Temps*, and particularly against the virulent criticism of the *Dictionary of Geography*, which had been published under Pierre George.

Jacques Levy's article, "The Dictionary of a Geography," considered Pierre George's work as characteristic of traditional geography: a learned mixture of anecdotes, erudition, empiricism, and theoretical vacuum:

The abundance of technical or foreign terms in the *Dictionary* is supposed to compensate for its scientific indigence. We cannot decently resent a book or a discipline that will at least have taught you what a 'Miombo' or an 'Igniambrite' are. The general bric a brac characteristic of such a work should be considered an obstacle and a mask. . . . Just as crowds hide many lonely people, this abundant material hides its inner emptiness.V

Afraid of a reaction on the part of institutional geographers, Plet informed the ENSET administration and the issue, which had already been printed, was not allowed to come out. Since the ENSET had blocked it, the only solution was to change the nature of the publication as a house organ. The editorial team collected numerous signatures on a protest petition and received important support from people such as Milton Santos. A compromise was reached and *EspacesTemps* finally came out, no longer as the bulletin of the ENSET section but as an independent review of another type.

A certain line was defined and produced a manifesto in issue 4: "Reconsidering geography, reflecting history, changing teaching, and examining the social sciences."<sup>33</sup> Geography was to participate in the adventure of the social sciences by deepening its notion of social space, which had become the linchpin of the enterprise. "We want the study of social time and space to have its legitimate place in the contemporary movement of the social sciences.">' The authors intended to bring geographical understanding out of its isolation and open it up to the advances made in the proximate social sciences, to set it at the intersection between different disciplines. Doing so required a detour toward epistemological and theoretical considerations: "Since we are interested in philosophy, which has been so removed until now from geography, we want to know what a science is."<sup>35</sup>

This necessary detour helps us better understand the impact of the epistemological questions of the sixties, and, in particular, Althusserian ideas. *EspacesTemps* explicitly used Marxism as "a guide for scientific practice,"<sup>36</sup> which was supposed to free geography from its ideological underpinnings and solidly anchor it as a science. This clearly shows how Althusserians' influence in the sixties helped shift

disciplinary boundaries so that science and theory could emerge, after having made the epistemological break discerned in Marx's work, and which the *EspacesTemps* geographers also hoped to understand within geography. Althusser was important even if he was criticized for his high theorizing. "For me, Althusser was the intermediary for French epistemology: Bachelard, Canguilhem, and even Durkheim."<sup>37</sup> This sense of needing to take a detour with respect to an object to be rigorously constructed inspired these young geographers who later championed interdisciplinarity in which their own discipline was to gain its footing no longer as a mushy interdisciplinarity—a bucket genre, as Lacan called it—with something for every taste. "We used Jaures's formula with regard to patriotism and internationalism. A little bit of interdisciplinarity pushes disciplines away, while a lot brings them back. What's interesting about this is its conflictual nature."<sup>38</sup> Despite Althusser's influence, *EspacesTemps* wanted to do more than "reconsider geography"; it wanted to attempt fieldwork, whereas Althusser had remained a critical philosopher, above it all, who did not truly grant the social sciences a place since he thought they were incapable of realizing any sort of epistemological break within their own disciplines. References to Althusser—whether his own texts or those of Etienne Balibar, Michel Pecheux, Michel Fichant, or Pierre Raymond—abounded in the early theoretical articles as *Espaces-Temps* searched for the appropriate geographical object, defined as a social space that was supposed to become the melting pot for any study in a fundamentally "scientific" perspective, unlike *Herodote* which preferred the category of "knowing how to conceive of space" to that of science.

### Chorematics: Geographical Formalization

The use and practice of graphics in geography also renewed geographic knowledge, and was a more immediate product of the structuralist energies of the sixties. Jacques Bertin, director of the graphics laboratory at the EHESS, spearheaded this essential area of cartography and of the representation of different forms of reality. In the sixties, Bertin had been completely immersed in the social sciences in a sanctuary of structural reflection on different forms of writing; in 1967, he published *Graphic Semiology*.<sup>40</sup> This manifesto viewed graphic representation as the transcription of signs, from which Bertin

deduced that "graphic representation is part of semiology, a science that deals with all sign systems."<sup>41</sup>

Bertin had tried to get geography to play a role in semiological thinking since 1967, but his remarks fell on deaf ears at the time because geography was isolated. He was used above all by historians like Pierre Chaunu and Fernand Braudel. Bertin favored formalized graphic discourse, which meant a strict separation of contents (information) and container (the means of the graphic system). Like literary semioticians, Bertin-as Christian Metz had done for the grand syntagmatic of narrative film-defined eight pertinent variables along two distinct axes; he thought of graphics as a language, and used structural linguistics as a model.

The image was conceived and constructed like a structure. From this reflection emerged a more analytical and less descriptive cartography that operated at the EHESS like the production of services to the social sciences, but that was no longer truly a place where ideas were being generated. Technical processes had gained the upper hand over theory and creation.

Bertin had gone largely unheard in the sixties, but Roger Brunet took up and systematized his positions. In 1980, he developed the notion of choreme, the geographical equivalent of a linguistic phoneme, the smallest distinctive unit for describing graphic language around elementary spatial structures.f- "What we have here is doubtless the culmination of a long period of change in geography which can now link its idiographic side (described social spaces) and its nomethetic side (produce general principles of social, spatial organization)."<sup>43</sup> The range of chorematic maps was as undefined as the grammar of the same name, which lets us take the measure of the vital, albeit tardy, structural formalization adopted by geographers.

## **The Subject; or, The Return of the Repressed**

### Dialogics and Pragmatics

The subject had disappeared from social science concerns, eliminated, among other things, by the ambition to better establish linguistics as a science. But in the seventies, linguistics moved toward the return of the repressed and the discipline's prestige hastened the process of bringing the subject back into focus. We already described Kristeva's 1966 presentation on intertextuality, on dialogics, during her talk on Bakhtin's work in Barthes's seminar.

Another Bulgarian semiologist, Tzvetan Todorov, systematically examined Bakhtin's work at the end of the seventies and his own positions were radically transformed as a result. He had been preparing the publication of Bakhtin's collected work, which was no small task since it was dispersed in disparate translations, which gave an impression of imprecision in French. Todorov's book came out in 1981,<sup>1</sup> and it profoundly changed the sense of reading Bakhtin. Regarding *M. Bakhtin, the Dialogic Principle*, Todorov commented: "I had the very humble ambition of producing an auxiliary text, a sort of introduction to Bakhtin's thinking. But as things went along and I got to understand his work better, I was increasingly influenced by it."? Interestingly enough, Todorov, in reading Bakhtin, repeated Bakhtin's own description of how reading Dostoyevsky implicated and transformed the reader. The interaction between object studied and subject studying—a striking departure from the structuralist distantiation and

normalization of the linguistic object-produced the dialogic. Henceforth, the reader-author dialogue became the maker of meaning; literary and ideological study became much more than simply decoding internal textual coherence. With Bakhtin, Todorov refocused on the content of what was said, and on its reception by the reader. The different ways of making meaning took a back seat.

Only dialogics could elucidate the stakes of meaning. In this, Todorov veered away from his early formalism, largely because he had matured politically, which also encouraged him to reintroduce a reflection on the subject and meaning. In the sixties, his fascination with formalism was basically a rejection of what was going on in his native Bulgaria, where literary history was purely event-oriented and completely external to texts. "In that situation, I felt the need to complete what was most obviously missing and to insist on the blind spot of literary studies."<sup>3</sup> In addition, given the implacable ideological dogmatism of Stalinism that was the obligatory reading grid applied to every piece of literature, Todorov had wanted to free himself by taking refuge within the text itself, its grammatical categories, and its rhythm, and to keep as far as possible from the leaden ideology that was suffocating literary studies.

His desire to escape politics and ideology changed, however, when he arrived in France: he quickly assimilated, adopted French nationality, and adapted to a more democratic context. "Around 1978-80, I began to realize that we could influence the course of events; discovering this new relationship to politics led me to feel that a change of perspective was called for."<sup>4</sup> Although Todorov did not abandon any of the important positions that had allowed him to better read a text and understand how it was constructed, he did put some space between himself and structuralism, which he considered a simple instrument for getting to contents and meaning.

Since the social science researcher is fundamentally implicated by his subject, Todorov from now on considered this implication to be the starting point. His work changed as of the late seventies. Under the influence of Bakhtin's dialogic, he began to study cultural diversity, human unity, and alterity. He published *Conquering America* in 1982 and *Us and the Others* in 1989,<sup>5</sup> in which he began to dialogue with the traditional French literary perception of alterity. In *Conquering America*, he relived the conquest of America. "I want to talk about my discovery of the *other*."<sup>6</sup> The meaning of this conquest could only

be perceived as an intersubjective reality made evident by the Western world's inability to discover native Americans when America was discovered. This had to do both with the revelation and the refusal of otherness. American Indians considered their relationship to the world as the end point of a whole sign system and were more attentive to natural communication than to the interhuman dimension. Their mode of communication "is responsible for the distorted image the Indians had of the Spanish." Todorov argued that the Spanish triumphed above all because they favored interhuman communication, which ensured their superiority. This was a bitter and costly victory, however, in which Western civilization sacrificed its relationship to the world: "By winning, on the one hand, the European lost on the other; by imposing himself around the world with what amounted to his superiority, he destroyed his ability to integrate himself into the world."<sup>8</sup>

Todorov carefully read Cortes's conquest and argued that it had less to do with taking something from someone than it did with understanding the other in order to better dominate and destroy what he represented. By managing to understand Aztec society and its sign systems, Cortes ultimately took control of the greatest empire of Central America with only a handful of conquistadores.

Todorov was not rewriting traditional history; he gave an orthodox reading of signs and semiotics-set, however, within a dialogic and contextual framework. "Semiotics can only be imagined in relationship to the other," His concern was ethical, for he hoped to help put an end to age-old conflicts among men that would make it possible to go beyond the conflictual antagonism between the same and the other, a conflict that was as old as humanity, and to hasten a new era of human communication on the bases of a new harmony. "I am searching-even if it seems pretentious and comical-for a sort of wisdom." To do so, Todorov, as an individual, henceforth insisted on considering the dimension of the "I" in order to better immerse himself in traditional literary and ideological history, in hopes of creating a dialogue that might produce the harmony he desired. Interestingly enough, his radical shift away from his early formalism largely echoed the positions that Paul Ricoeur had adopted in the sixties, and for which he was labeled an opponent of structuralism.

## Literature Regains Ground over Linguistics

Coming from literary criticism, the concept of dialogics gained ground in linguistics and became an operational instrument. A real reversal

was at hand because until then new ideas in literary criticism had come from linguistics. Thus, Oswald Ducrot, a linguist, used dialogics for his pragmatic approach to speech acts: "We can even see a kind of symbiosis between linguistics and literature."! In his *Words of Discourser?* he had already analyzed the role of connectors, small language units leading to a number of argumentative positions that pressure the interlocutor. Similarly, and this time influenced by dialogics, he wrote *Saying and Said*,<sup>13</sup> in which he used Bakhtin's polyphony in a specifically linguistic way.! Unlike Todorov, however, Ducrot did not consider that his pragmatics broke in any way with his Saussurean or structuralist positions: "I have the impression of being completely structuralist in what I am doing . . . . When I am doing integrated pragmatics, I want it to be as structural as the syntax or phonology of the fifties."<sup>15</sup> In this case, pragmatics led to a new realm of research, ignored until then, but still, in principle, a formal abstraction within linguistic conventions.

Enunciation theory, in the Benveniste tradition, took off in the eighties. With it, the subject again became central to linguistic thinking. Michelle Perrot, a historian at Paris VII, who was on Marina Yaguello's linguistics thesis committee on women's language,<sup>P</sup> was surprised and intrigued by the changes in linguistics, and particularly by the way it looked at speech and raised questions of gender and a range of linguistic practices: "I suddenly realized that there was a whole other linguistics that was not at all the one I had known."!

Research that had gone quite far in terms of its formalization, such as Maurice Gross's work, showed that, by systematically observing the properties of French verbs and the probability of their occurrence in a given context, one could conclude from only a hundred possible constructions that none of the eight thousand verbs under consideration was comparable to any of the others. "It was dizzying to realize that our brain can make thousands of verbs in the same syntactic class work even though each of them is unique."<sup>18</sup> Gross's observation shook up the very idea of structure with its notions of class and paradigmatic substitution. Starting with comparative properties led to such heterogeneity that the notion of generalization was called into question.

In their work on syntax, even partisans of Chomskyan generativism such as Nicolas Ruwet agreed that the subject and meaning had to be given their due: "What has bothered me in Chomsky's work for the last ten years is the articulation between formal syntax and the

problems of meaning." 19 For Ruwet, the innate processes of the mind's structures could no longer be called upon to solve syntax problems. "We are faced with much more subtle things that oblige us to consider meaning; these are pragmatic questions." 20

Thus Ruwet addressed problems where the question of the subject was primordial, as with distinguishing the subject of consciousness and the different subjects implied in a proposition, such as the speaking subject and the subject spoken to. For example, the pronoun "with him/it," in the proposition: "Pierre thinks that Mary is in love with him/it," which in this case could not mean that Marie is in love with Pierre:

It has to do with the fact that elements such as "with him/it" cannot refer to the conscious subject, to the subject of the proposition in which we find the pronoun and that express the contents of consciousness. . . . We can't write a grammar for this pronoun without taking this into account. That's been one of the big problems for generative grammar for the last ten years or so. 21

Work on enunciation was so successful that it also penetrated to the hard core of Greimassian semiotics. Although Greimas himself remained unconvinced, enunciation created some fireworks when Jean-Claude Coquet, one of Greimas's loyal disciples, who had been with him since the first days of the Paris school, committed the unpardonable crime of publishing an issue of *Actes semiotiques* in which, while acknowledging Greimas's role in creating an "object" semiology, he praised another semiotics, "in Benveniste's line," which he categorized as "subject" semiology. P As editor in chief of the review, Greimas preferred to cut the issue rather than authorize research that belonged to metaphysics, as far as he was concerned. As a result, the Greimassian group was reduced.

Coquet recalled Greimas and Joseph Courtes's 1979 definition of object semiotics embodied by its emblematic "it/le." 23 According to Greimas, "after the horse, [semiotics is] one of man's greatest victories." 24 In his semiotics, the subject simply operated transformations, whereas "in a 'subject' semiology, every discourse is centered." 25 Benveniste's work thus led to a reconsideration of the actantial layout of object semiotics, if one assumed that every discourse is centered. P Coquet completely revisited Benveniste's contributions, especially his very precocious postwar work addressing the diversification and definitions of the different discursive possibilities and his thinking on the

subject, linked with an action.<sup>27</sup> For Coquet, Benveniste's work was absolutely fundamental for semiotics, and also heralded an important turning point, when he concluded by saying: "Hjelmslev and Greimas worked out sketches of what might be a general semiotic theory. The importance of their work has sidelined all efforts to create a semiotics of discourse. With Benveniste and the slow consideration of his work by researchers, as of 1970, this 'subject' semiotics could-or rather, has been able to-establish itself."<sup>28</sup>

### Intersubjectivity

The dimension of intersubjectivity, of dialogics, made it possible to understand the limits of Martial Gueroult's structural approach in the field of the history of philosophy. Gueroult had constructed a method for reading philosophical texts considered self-sufficient and cut off from their context and all outside interference in order to better lay out their internal architecture and coherence. But Gueroult's approach was reductive, and could lead to serious interpretative errors. Alexis Philonenko, for example, in his analysis of Fichte's *The Doctrine of Science*, accused him of continuing the Hegelian interpretation of Fichte and supporting the inconsistency of his idealism.s? Gueroult, who looked at this work by Fichte as a closed entity, saw a contradiction between the ontological idealism that Fichte claimed in the first theoretical part of the book, in which he reduced the world to the ego, to thought, to all-powerful consciousness, and, in the second, practical part of the book, his understanding of the world as the limits of action, which implied an idea of the world's reality, and therefore of a consciousness based on its exteriority. Gueroult concluded that Fichte was structurally unable to establish the action of practical idealism on its theoretical bases.

Philonenko shifted Gueroult's analysis by showing that the exposition of truth, was not, according to Fichte, the first principle in *The Doctrine of Science*, but rather truth steeped in error. This was the first transcendental illusion that philosophy was to deconstruct in order to reach truth. Different states of consciousness did not, therefore, derive from any illusorily powerful ego, according to Fichte, but, on the contrary, from its deconstruction. Philonenko could have such a different view of Fichte because he rejected Gueroult's principle of textual closure and could therefore read *The Doctrine of Science* through other of Fichte's works and thus discover a general eo-

herence that no longer corresponded to Gueroult's strictly systematic composition.

Textual closure was the issue in both interpretations. Cueroult argued for independent philosophical objects, whereas, in order to understand Fichte's text, a dialogic relationship had to exist with the rest of his writing. In fact, Fichte had argued for this as the basis for his approach:

In his preface to the *The Doctrine of Science*, Fichte wrote that the free exercise of internal intuition was necessary in order to understand this book. We can interpret this in different ways, but it means first of all that reading is neither wholly passive nor purely aesthetic, and that we won't be able to trace the process of validating, deconstructing, and finally reconstructing truth without being changed ourselves at the same time.<sup>t?</sup>

The reader and the historian of philosophy were to reappropriate the truth slowly disclosed on this philosophical path. It is an ever-renewable victory leading to infinite interpretation and to a relationship of community and intersubjectivity.

Joëlle Proust agreed that the structural method had been fruitful, and emphasized its rigor, literarity, and textuality. She considered that the shifts in the philosophy of the history of science thanks to Gueroult, Goldschmidt, Bachelard, and Canguilhem were pertinent and fruitful, but limited with respect to the articulation of the systems among themselves: "When we want to understand what interests a philosopher in another philosophy, we must get somewhat outside of the fact that each system is a hermetic entity with internal meaning."<sup>31</sup> Proust asked about the links in the history of logic slightly differently, suggesting that there are other ways of structuring texts than those that come to light through their structural analysis. This level of articulation revealed questions and transsystematic structurations suggesting that systems communicate among themselves.

When analyzing texts, Proust considered their history and that, for the most part, they referred to the same cognitive reality, the basis for a sort of transtextual reality: "If it makes sense to compare the Beautiful in Plato and the Beautiful in a contemporary philosopher, it's because there is a sort of common underlying structure to these two concepts."<sup>32</sup> In order to reach it, she argued for going beyond Gueroult's idea of closure and of the discontinuity of the epistemology of science to introduce the idea of comparative topics. The first stage

of understanding the formal organization of a philosophical work would lead to a second, interpretative stage, which "involves dealing with the topical conditions of intertextuality,"<sup>33</sup> In such a perspective, texts and systems dialogue with each other in order to set off the particularities and structural commonalities of each, as well as the structural variants that they convey. This also gives rise to a dialogic regarding the search for philosophical truth. "The comparative topic aims ultimately at helping to remind us that the history of philosophy is not a mausoleum."<sup>34</sup>

### Roland Barthes: The Pleasures of the Self

The return of the subject let Roland Barthes shed the theoretical carapace that prevented him from giving free rein to his writing pleasure. He decided to go to the core of the unresolved tension between the writer and the man of science, and clearly elected the man of letters this time. Having defended the pleasure of the text in 1973, he went one step further toward subjectifying his own mode of writing by writing an unorthodox, nonlinear autobiography composed of partial and disparate information. He invented "biographemes" for his new genre, but, while remaining formally faithful to a certain kind of deconstruction, this return to himself with its description of his feelings, his memories, and images of those close to him showed how spectacular the return of the repressed really was. Indeed, it touched one of the most ardent theorists of the nonpertinence of this level of analysis.

Barthes's biographemes also suggested an as yet incompletely assumed romanesque writing style. He had, on another occasion, explained to his readers what a biographical undertaking meant for him: "Every biography is a novel that dare not speak its name."<sup>35</sup> When *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*: came out, Barthes was in it, even if he wrote in the third person, and kept a certain distance between the writer and his object. But he disclosed essential bits of himself, entrusting himself to his readers and to intersubjective communication, a source of love more than of structure. Besides, "Structuralist, who's still a structuralist?"<sup>37</sup> Barthes was not exhaustively confessional, but did talk about his illness, his cure, the sanatorium, and his school years. He wanted to present himself as essentially a language effect more than a reference to any extratextual nature. This subject was to produce a Barthes-effect, a polyphonic, mobile image of multiple compositions and recompositions in which only a few hints were given for

a freely interpretable score. The subject Barthes became visible through photographs and descriptions of corporal experiences-migraines, for example. "Social division occurs via my body: my body itself is social."<sup>38</sup> The body played the role of a "mana-word," slippery, polymorphous, the signifier in the place of every signified. Thanks to the focus on its corporal manifestations, this return hailed a new phase in Barthes's evolution, which he himself described as the four stages of his work-? social mythology, semiology, and textuality, which were all displaced in the years 1973-75 by a Nietzschean morality: "Always think of Nietzsche."<sup>40</sup>

When *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* came out, Maurice Nadaud reinforced the effect of superimposition in order to make the biographemes even less clear by asking Barthes to review his own book in *La Quinzaine litteraire* under the title "Barthes to the third degree."<sup>41</sup> Barthes's book was a real event because it revealed some important characteristics of this most adored and most private structuralist, but it was also, and above all, the symptom of a real turning point that, in 1975, led the intellectual world far from scientific shores and closer to the search for self. *Le Monde* devoted two pages to the book. Jacques Bersani asked, "Where is Barthes at?" and answered, appropriately enough, "He is tending to himself."<sup>42</sup>

The switch to literature and to claims for subjectivity far from the scientific ambitions of the social sciences finally occurred in 1977 when Barthes published *A Lover's Discourse*. It is true that the book grew out of a seminar at the École des Hautes Etudes on the different forms of discursivity around the theme of love, taking Goethe's *Young Werther* as the archetypal love-passion text. But beyond this two-year-long university exercise, it was above all Barthes's own projection of his subjectivity, and the retroactive effect of the object on itself, that interested him: "I even got to the point of confusing the people in my own life with the characters in *Werther*."<sup>44</sup> This personal observation, together with a similar tendency among the seminar participants, led Barthes to abandon the idea of a treatise on amorous discourse in favor of his own book, which would assume the subjectivity of the remarks, a "discourse of an amorous subject. There was a reversal."<sup>45</sup> The subject carried the day, and the issue was quite clearly that of a single subject, none other than Barthes himself. He wrote in the first person this time, even if it was clearly a montage of Barthes alone and clearly bore his mark, as in a novel, but this time Barthes claimed the

voice: "The relationship between the author and the character is novelistic."<sup>46</sup> Barthes did keep to his penchant for fragmented writing and in no way claimed to resume a traditional, linear form of writing to tell a lover's tale.

This turning point was reiterated by his teaching plans. "As for courses, I am going to start teaching specifically literary material again."<sup>47</sup> With this new marriage of the writer and the semiologist came public success, the high point of the love story between Barthes and his readers that made up for his lack of university diplomas. Far beyond academe, Barthes's audience was quite broad, judging by the immediate sellout of the 15,000 initial copies. The book was reprinted seven times in 1977 alone, and sold 79,000 copies, only to hit a record sale of 177,000 copies in 1989, a completely unusual figure in the human and social sciences for books that are not printed in paperback. Barthes had made his entry into literature.

In 1977, Barthes was hailed as a writer and was elected to the Collège de France. His inaugural speech on January 7 was given in a hall where all of fashionable Paris rubbed shoulders. It was from this sanctuary that, as if to remind himself of the critical thrust of his theoretical work, he reiterated his real disgust for the petit-bourgeois social universe, and his nonidentification with any institution, however prestigious. "Language, like the performance of any language, is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascistic, for fascism is not censorship, but rather it is the requirement that we speak."<sup>49</sup> It seemed that Barthes needed to invent this sort of shocking formulation in order to swallow his renunciation of the scientific ambitions of the sixties, as if he had to make his ideological positions more radical in order to compensate for this abandonment. But his public was quite moved, and even expressed a real collective joy for his triumph, the triumph of a marginal. "All his 'families' were present in the hall, several people were tearful, keenly aware that they were witnessing something extraordinary, and the emotion of his friends bore witness to Barthes's human qualities; his joy was being spontaneously shared."<sup>50</sup>

Electing literature and a return to self came somewhat later for Julia Kristeva. In 1990, she published her first novel, *The Samurai*, about the structuralist adventure in the sixties seen from the eyes of one of its principal players. In it, she recalled the existentialist generation and Simone de Beauvoir's 1954 roman à clef, *The Mandarins*, and Kristeva suggested a link between *Les Temps modernes* in post-

war France and *Tel Quel*. But literate Chinese and Japanese warriors were very different. The drama had lost the euphoric glow of existentialist commitment and of intellectuals moved by a sense of combat to give meaning to life until death, a cold-eyed generation disillusioned beneath its passion and that no longer concerned itself with the hell of others but with the personal hell within each individual.

This biographical bent had begun in 1983 with Kristeva's "Mémoire," published in Philippe Sollers's review *L'Infini*, in which Kristeva looked back on herself from the time of her arrival in Paris in 1965, and paid homage to Simone de Beauvoir. But the subject had changed since then. Kristeva, Olga in her novel, lived in a passionate and difficult couple with Philippe Sollers, which could not help but recall the Beauvoir-Sartre duo. But she was also the psychoanalyst Joëlle Cabarus. The subject lost its existential clarity and was now divided, foreign to itself, thinking where it was not, and being where no thinking occurred, a subject transformed by psychoanalysis.

### Affects and Bodily Humors

Psychoanalysis considered the body in its different manifestations. In the mid-seventies, Andre Green left his Lacanian positions even further behind and criticized them in the name of affects, which were, for him, an essential part of analysis. It was during this period that Green met Wilfred Bion, the British psychoanalyst, a heterodox Kleinian and a specialist in psychoses. What Green liked so much in Bion was that emotional experience, rather than the Signifier, came to the fore of the analysis. Of the structural period, Green had maintained his interest in multidisciplinary dialogues among anthropologists, philosophers, and linguists, but in a new perspective articulating body and text. "What interests me today are people like Françoise Héritier-Auge or Hellenists like Nicole Loraux and Marcel Detienne because the body is back in full force. Fluids like blood and sperm can't just be stuck on a graph. We can easily see all the semantic dimensions they carry along."<sup>52</sup>

A fruitful dialogue took place between anthropologists and psychoanalysts about representing corporal materiality and therefore toward a greater connection with the materiality of things. "This was a way of surpassing structuralism toward greater materialism."<sup>53</sup> Whereas the structuralist paradigm had tended to desubstantialize and eliminate content and affect in favor of formal games, affects were back, and

warranted consideration. Today, the issues of content offer many researchers the hope of renewal, a return of anthropological thinking, which can take alternative routes to cognitivism. "Returning the problems of content back to the heart of formal problems seems essential to me, and anthropology is well armed for that." 54

This entire dimension of the body's humors-eliminated in favor of a purified Symbolic-tended once again to become a fundamental concern for individual research about the self and for the human sciences in general. Having considered the implicit, hidden social logic to be uppermost, the shift today goes more in the direction of explicit, observed, ethnographic experience. This new angle did not imply a contradiction between formal models and content so much as it meant that structuralism had come up against a real limit: raw facts are never observed, they are always constructed. Yet, for Marc Auge, it was up to the ethnologist to make explicit the implicit anthropology of the societies being studied where the first symbolization is the body. "Everything starts with a representation of man, and of the human body. These societies have somewhat the same relationship with their anthropology as we have with our medicine, a similar impregnation."<sup>55</sup> Thus the researcher was not supposed to use his observations to support a purely logical system, but to be attentive to specific symbolic propositions from each society. These hypotheses revealed something fundamental about the way the societies being observed found effective means of solving their own questions and implied another relationship between the informant and the analyst, who was to take what was said quite literally in order to restore the importance of transmission, heredity, and exchange observed in the symbolic systems being studied.

Foucault's work amply considers this subjectivity and the different treatments meted out to the human body.

## **Michel Foucault: From Biopower to an Aesthetics of the Self**

Michel Foucault's view of the intellectual's role changed over the course of the seventies, adapting itself to the moment. For him, modernity emerged with the "specific intellectual" who abandoned universals as well as any claim to embodying a universal conscience on behalf of humanity, rights, or even the proletariat. This intellectual spoke about specific issues and all things marginal in his own name. The creation of the GIP in 1971 answered this definition.

Slowly, however, and under the influence of the profound changes of the day, Foucault once again began acting like the complete intellectual cum defender of democratic values. As his thinking and practice changed, he drew closer to Sartre, to whom he had been completely opposed until then. Although it is true that the events in Iran opposed the two, this was a fleeting moment in a general evolution.

### **The Battle for Human Rights**

In the late seventies and early eighties, Foucault embraced the cause of human rights. The battleground was Eastern Europe and the intellectual resistance against Brezhnev. When the Soviet chief made an official visit to Paris in June 1977, Foucault organized a meeting of French intellectuals and Soviet dissidents at the Recarnier Theater. Invitations were signed by Sartre, among others, who came despite the fact that he was ailing. An appeal was made to international public

opinion to react to the violation of human rights in the Soviet Union, the internment in psychiatric hospitals of political dissidents, some of whom attended the meeting: Leonid Plyushch, Andrei Sinyavsky, Andrei Amalrik, Vladirnir Bukovsky.

Foucault campaigned just as strenuously against human rights violations in France. In 1977, when the West German Red Army Faction sympathizer and lawyer Klaus Croissant was extradited, Foucault became completely involved and went immediately to the prison where Croissant was being held (the Sante), accompanied by a small group of protesters, including many celebrities, and called for a demonstration of prominent figures, including, once again, Jean-Paul Sartre. The Croissant affair was a turning point; Foucault demanded only that Croissant's human rights be respected, without in any way defending the terrorism of the Baader-Meinhof gang. His position denoted a critical distancing from his earlier positions. Now, he embraced democratic values and fought in their name, whereas until then he had derided these things as the very expression of mystification.

Foucault's longtime friend Gilles Deleuze understood the importance of this turning point: Foucault was waging new battles, and his commitment assumed a solidarity with the universal principles of human rights. Deleuze and Foucault never saw each other again; it was only at Foucault's burial in 1984 at the Salpetriere, an intensely emotional moment for Deleuze, that he paid his last respects to his friend.

In 1978, Foucault worked alongside Dr. Bernard Kouchner (Human Rights Minister under Francois Mitterrand) in support of the boat people, and once again ran into Sartre during a press conference at the Hotel Lutetia in Paris. When he went to Geneva for another press conference against piracy, he read a statement that made clear his radical conversion to the notion of the universals of human rights: "An international citizenship bears its rights and obligations and commits itself to rising up against every and any abuse of power, no matter who perpetrates them or who suffers from them."<sup>1</sup> Foucault's practical humanism led him to reconcile himself fundamentally with Sartre's conception of the committed intellectual. This was made quite tangible again in 1982 when he went to Poland with Simone Signoret and Bernard Kouchner to lend support to the clandestine battles of Solidarity at a time when the very word "solidarity" was banned.

## The Philosopher Answers the Psychoanalyst

Foucault had always been attentive to the way theory and practice came together in response to the demands of the present. His new pragmatic commitments and philosophical positions implied a change. In 1968, he had shifted from epistemes to discursive practices, but this time, current events led him to call the subject into question, a subject he had always circumscribed and considered so unimportant that he had simply eliminated it from his philosophical considerations. When we recall that, in the sixties, Foucault had assigned to linguistics, anthropology, and psychoanalysis the monumental task of bringing us out of a medieval age into the modern, structural age of the philosophy of the concept by dissolving the subject, we can take the measure of the situation. Not only did the subject return in his theoretical work, but Foucault also addressed a problem that concerned him particularly: sexuality. As of 1976, he took on this vast area, and published the first volume of what became *The History of Sexuality?* Not only was the subject back, but so was Foucault the individual, in the most profound way.

Foucault was drawn to historical issues once more and wanted to demonstrate that the subject could be untethered from its desire and its sexual identity, hoping thereby to demonstrate that we are not what we desire. "What characterizes homosexuality is precisely this separation between the subject and its desire, and the creation of a culture of friendship."<sup>3</sup> Because he was working on sexuality, Foucault returned to psychoanalysis, which, although it had always fascinated him, had never really held his attention. Whereas in *The Order of Things* psychoanalysis was one of the three disciplines that made it possible to claim a new episteme of modernity, it became central in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. He made it a focal point, but no longer considered it a science. Derided, the psychoanalytic couch was linked with the Catholic confessional and Foucault mocked those who rent out their ears. With his *History of Sexuality*, he had two intentions: to react against what his disciple Robert Castel called "psychoanalysis," which had permeated every discipline in the seventies, and to which Foucault reacted as a philosopher; and to rid the Western world of its identification with a certain concern for sexuality, which psychoanalysis reinforced, and to replace it with a strategy that considered homosexuality appropriate for furthering a culture of friendship.

Given this, Foucault had to take on Lacan, who claimed to have triumphed in the battle for domination with his four discourses. "We cannot understand anything in the *History of Sexuality* if we do not see that Foucault is not explaining Lacan, but that he is taking him on."! So even if Lacan is never quoted, we recall that it was thanks to Foucault that the Lacanian department of psychoanalysis had been created at Vincennes in 1969. In studying sexuality, Foucault needed to layout the lines of a purely philosophical program demonstrating that psychoanalysis was not absolutely essential, even in its realm of predilection. Foucault's editor, Pierre Nora, confirmed that the issue was indeed to challenge Lacan:

I remember him tapping his foot in my office: "I don't have an idea, my dear Pierre, I have no ideas. After the battle, I come to sexuality, and I've said everything I have to say." One fine day he brought me a manuscript, saying, "You will see, the only idea that I had was to beat on Lacan by arguing the opposite of what he says."<sup>5</sup>

We have a recognizable Foucault here, characteristically self-deprecating, adopting surprising stances to test the loyalty of those around him, as well as the constancy of public affection. But something else was quite clearly involved in this confrontation, something far more profound.

Foucault's opposition to Lacan, essential for establishing a discourse on sexuality other than that of psychoanalysis, also responded to an existential, institutional dilemma. Francois Ewald did not consider Foucault to be hostile to Lacan, but that his remarks to Nora were just one of his many quips whereby he avoided answering a question: "Foucault's relationship to Lacan was less polemical than commonly believed. He was very sensitive to Lacan's asceticism, which he considered to be parallel to his own, rather than being an alternative."<sup>6</sup> According to Ewald, Foucault was taking on not Lacan but the generalized sexualization of all things and the reductive obsession during the seventies of equating an individual with his or her sexuality. Foucault wanted to free himself from psychoanalysis and to confound the simple equation between identity and desire. "He even agreed with Lacan about ethical questions, which is to say that he would respect psychoanalysis insofar as it established an ethic. And that was what Lacan was looking for. They also shared the concern for demedicalizing psychoanalysis."<sup>7</sup>

## Biopower

Foucault rephrased the hypothesis about repression by using only the discursive realm, on which he now focused exclusively in order to discern its historical elements. As a result, he eliminated practice in order to concentrate on the profuse writings about sexuality. "The history of sexuality—that is, the history of what functioned in the nineteenth century as a specific field of truth—must first be written from the viewpoint of a history of discourses."<sup>8</sup> He disagreed with arguments that claimed that society had become increasingly repressive since the classical age, and showed that we are in no way witness to a progressive rarefaction of discourses on sex, but on the contrary, to increasing verbosity on the subject: "since the end of the sixteenth century, the 'putting into discourse of sex,' far from undergoing a process of restriction, on the contrary has been subjected to a mechanism of increasing incitement."?

In Foucault's view, far from repressing sexuality, the West had placed it at the center of a truth-producing schema. This reversed the hypothesis of repression, and could only hold if it was placed "within a general economy of discourses on sex."<sup>10</sup> Still arguing for ideas similar to those in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault continued his analysis of how power over bodies became established, in an analytics of "biopower," but at the same time he undertook a history of subjectivity, which dissociated Law from Power, and announced another turning point. "Foucault compared the importance of this new form of political rationality with the Galilean revolution in the physical sciences."<sup>11</sup> Biopower, as a coherent technology of power, appeared in the seventeenth century with two poles: political management of humans using new scientific rather than legal categories, and perfecting a corporal technology, through disciplinary practices in which sexuality would become the privileged object for rendering bodies docile. "Sex becomes the edifice through which power links the body's vitality to that of the species. Sexuality and the means with which it is invested then become the primary instrument for expanding biopower."<sup>12</sup>

Foucault's first target was therefore psychoanalysis since it perpetrated the confessional attitude, albeit by putting the sinner on the couch. This was a more refined version of a form of power that had adopted new functions. Under a monarchy, the sovereign could impose death (with sealed letters, a scepter, or torture) or grant subjects

life, whereas bourgeois modernity established a new function for power, that of having the subject's life depend on it, or letting it die; its function was that of "administering life."<sup>13</sup> Far from masking sexuality, the bourgeoisie brandished it as the symbolic equivalent of a blue blood's assertion of his own legitimacy. A whole discourse on sex became the privileged object of a form of managerial power. This was management in the name of controlling numbers of births, the sexuality of children and adolescents, and the psychiatrization of perverse pleasures. Socializing procreative behavior furthered this control and mastery over a population.

A whole system of biopower was thus set up, which served to police society and which "escaped the legal representation of power and went forward under the cover of the law."<sup>14</sup> Foucault looked for ways of getting out of structuralism through a program that, given his book's title, was, explicitly Nietzschean: *La Yolonte de savoir*. On the back cover, six volumes were announced as still to come. *is*

Resolutely nominalist, Foucault became less interested in the practices of power and an institutional approach to it. He had no intention of writing a historical sociology of what was forbidden, but rather "the political history of a production of 'truth.'"<sup>16</sup> Power had already been pluralized in *Discipline and Punish* and was no longer viewed here as a confinement machine or as the site of a repressive strategy. It was the pole from which the production of truth issued and which expressed its limits through its prohibitions. Foucault no longer embraced an entirely negative view of power, and his turning point should be considered in terms of a new relationship to politics at a time when the chances of a successful revolution seemed dim. Not that he had reconciled himself with power, but he was avoiding it and trying to find a path beyond the law and this generalized confessional practice.

His book enjoyed tremendous success: in 1976 alone, 22,000 copies had to be printed in addition to the initial print run of 22,000;<sup>17</sup> by 1989, 100,000 copies had been sold, roughly the equivalent of *The Order of Things*. Reviews were generally favorable, but in the areas close to Foucault, the acclaim was more mitigated, curiously enough in a realm where the antirepressive battle was determinant.

Foucault wanted to surprise his readers, and he did. But he drew completely legitimate criticisms from women engaged in a battle for emancipation, from psychoanalysts defending the scientificity of a

discipline that Foucault had relegated to the peripheral and circumstantial role of furthering the pastoral profession. Other historical works studying *mentalities*, attitudes, and behavior toward death, sex, and cleanliness expressed all the permanent aspects of the repressive regimes. In 1978, Jean-Paul Aron and Roger Kempf countered with *The Penis and the Demoralization of the West*,<sup>18</sup> and by contrast to Foucault, argued that the values in whose name the bourgeoisie had taken power were in fact imbued with the old aristocratic model of birth and honor, a line that established the bourgeois class's defense of a ferocious repression. "Its own honor will be morality and virtue."<sup>19</sup> The book presented the bourgeoisie as accumulating and preserving capital and sperm, whence the obsession with onanism and its negative effects, as well as the exaggerated medicalization of sexuality.

This divergence between the historian's approach and Foucault's thesis had to do with the underpinnings of the genealogical approach, which was limited to discursivity. In addition to a fundamentally impossible dialogue and to the hostile reactions, there was also Jean Baudrillard's little book, which claimed to go even farther in engaging the referent by claiming that sex, like men and society, has a single season, and that it was coming to a close. Foucault's depiction was certainly admirable, but it conjured a world on the wane. To Baudrillard's provocative title, *Forgetting Foucault*,<sup>20</sup> Foucault's acerbic answer was, "I'd see the problem as being rather one of remembering Baudrillard."<sup>21</sup> Observing the mounting criticism and uncomfortable reticences of his friends regarding his arguments about sexuality, Foucault was deeply hurt, so much so that he abandoned his entire project, which was already waiting on his desk. He published the second volume in 1984, after seven years of silence, and on an entirely new footing. "Foucault felt the bitterness of having been misread, misunderstood, and badly loved, perhaps. 'Do you know why we write?' he had asked Francine Pariente, his assistant at Clermont-Ferrand. 'To be loved.'<sup>22</sup>

This profound personal crisis pushed Michel Foucault to what inhabited him most deeply and he devoted himself to a confrontation between sexuality and ethics, rather than between sexuality and power. He was forced once again to emphasize the turning point toward a historical ontology of the subject in its relationship with morality, and toward the answer that had awaited his historical inves-

tigation of the questions he asked himself: Michel Foucault with respect to himself.

## Self-Government

Slowly forsaking his initial program, Foucault sketched a new vision. He gave up the perspective of biopower, that of the subjected subject, and took on the subject itself. Initially, from 1978 on, this took place in his work on governmentality, and then on self-government. Foucault emphasized this general return to the subject, as indicated by his fascination for Japan, similar to Barthes's which he visited in 1978 with Daniel Defert. He stayed in a Zen monastery and engaged in spiritual exercises, "with great intensity and tension."<sup>23</sup> Like Barthes, he was seduced by a culture and a religion that eliminated the signified and identification with contents in order to give free rein to the Signifier and to favor doing over being.

His course titles at the College de France also bespoke the radicalness of his shift, even if nothing appeared in print before 1984: in 1980-81, "Subjectivity and Truth," the next year, "Hermeneutics of the Subject," and in 1982-83, "Governing the Self and Others." This return to himself had to do with his relationship to politics as well as to a personal need: he knew that he had AIDS. Paul Veyne was quite close to Foucault during his last years and helped him to explore the Greco-Roman world. Veyne remarked, "He knew quite early on what he had and that it was an absolutely fatal illness. . . . His last books on ethics were spiritual exercises in the Christian or Stoic sense of the term."<sup>24</sup> But Foucault hid the fact that he had AIDS from his friends, and even from himself, writing in his diary in November 1983, according to Paul Veyne, that he knew he had AIDS but that his hysteria allowed him to forget it.

When the second volume of *The History of Sexuality* came out, Foucault was quite loquacious about having been silent, and at the same time responded to the criticism of the first volume. He only explained his approach in order to better veil his deeper motivation, which in no way reduced his intellectual pertinence. He only gave half an explanation when he linked his latest publications to what had always characterized his work—the search, albeit halting and unsteady, for a history of truth. So he considered that his demonstration, announced in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* as a study of biopower from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, to have run

up against an aporia. "I realized that it didn't work; an important problem remained: why had we turned sexuality into a moral experience?"<sup>25</sup> His question implied a detour in order to understand the pre-Christian roots of sexuality lived as a moral experience. The viewpoint had shifted. It was possible "to free oneself of oneself."<sup>26</sup>

Raising the question of governing others led to the question of governing oneself. Foucault analyzed the ways in which the subject was constituted as a subject. We see the continuity between *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* and his two prior books in this constant refusal to consider practices and historical representation, prescriptive codes and prohibitions. "I never meant to reconstitute a history of sexual behavior and practices."<sup>27</sup>

Foucault therefore considered historians' criticisms once again to be baseless, for they missed the point of his project of constructing a hermeneutics of desire, "a history of thought, in contrast to the history of behavior or of representations."<sup>28</sup> To those who had objected to the permanence and effectiveness of repressive codes, he answered that he had been led "to replace a history of moral systems, based on interdictions, with a history that looked at ethics starting from personal practices."<sup>29</sup> This was how he defined the coherence of all of his work, from madness to ethics.

### An Ethics of Self

What was new, however, was the subject's relationship to ethics. In this very classical area of philosophy, Foucault once again reversed the traditional perspective by dissociating morality and ethics. The question was no longer one of locating oneself in terms of prescriptive and externally imposed systems and opposing subject-desire with repressive codes, but of understanding the subject's modes of production in the way it made its very existence a problem through an ethics and aesthetics of the self. Foucault was not arguing for a substantial or universal subject; he was setting it in the specificity of its experience, which was "problematization itself. Based on the living material of needs and desire, it's the fact of creating forms through which this matter can be lived and conceived, albeit dominated, of course, but this no longer means oppressed."<sup>30</sup>

Foucault had already upset the traditional view of power as a locus of control and repression in order to show how it was in fact a site of production. Here, he was detaching the art of self from any sys-

tern of moral legislation. Although he postulated a relative independence of the two, he no longer hoped to resolve all ethical questions by starting a revolution against moral codes and eliminating their prohibitions. There was therefore a definite continuity with his initial project, which he revealed in 1984 as "a history of the different modes of subjectivation of the human being in our culture."<sup>31</sup> Thus Foucault studied power in order to better understand the practices constituting the subject, and just as he wanted to be a philosopher of the present from which he chose his objects, he demanded in the 1980s, in a completely veiled manner, the right to an autobiographical relationship with philosophical questions. "Each time I tried to write a theoretical work, it was based on elements from my own experience."<sup>32</sup>

The philosopher was to orient his intervention by his subjective perception of systematic crises or errors. The issue was never to withdraw into oneself, as Pierre Macherey has shown.<sup>V</sup> but to imagine the possible conditions for the exercise of freedom within a structure. Thinking therefore meant situating oneself at the edges of a system of thought in order to shift those edges. This leads back to the personal tragedy of Foucault, who was in the grip of the ravages of death's work on his own body. "In *The Use of Pleasure*, I tried to show that there was a growing tension between pleasure and health."<sup>34</sup> The remarks quite clearly reflect the autobiographical turn that, by way of philosophical problematization, allowed Foucault to work on himself, to react to his illness, which also reinforced, to a practically unbearable degree, the marginality of homosexuality, by virtue of "a post-conventional morality."<sup>35</sup> He was interested in the foundations of this morality beyond the pale of Christian imperatives to interiorize, and in the ethics of the ancient world understood as an aesthetics of existence and therefore as a lesson for "fashioning one's life into a work."<sup>36</sup>

## Aphrodisia

Foucault had essentially worked until then in archives and had willingly abandoned classical texts on the history of thought for manuscripts linked to social practices, such as Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*. But in his voyage to the heart of the ancient world, Foucault read the great authors whose writings became his archives. Once again he shifted the terms, and gave up working on the episteme of a period on the basis of a middle archive. This was almost certainly his expression

of the desire for a dialogical relationship between himself and the best-known philosophers of antiquity.

Foucault replaced the vision of a lawless, faithless, tabooless pagan, Dionysian antiquity with a Greco-Roman antiquity in which sexual practice belonged to an often quite constrained ascetic, a forerunner of Christian ascetics. But it was hard to find the connection between the two, for the themes they addressed embodied few common values. The prescriptive Christian code claimed universality, whereas the morality of antiquity had no pretensions to being a generalizable code, even for its own culture. For the Greeks, the main opposition between the *aphrodisia* had to do with active/passive distinctions: women were passive, like boys and slaves. In this case, homosexuality was not punished so long as one was active with one's partner.

This distinction shaped ethics in a society based on virility. Free men had to be virtuous in pleasure, meaning mastering the body and its drives. The distinction was between moderation and incontinence, between hubris and *diké*, or between the absence of measure and equilibrium, much more than between one or another type of sexuality. In addition to the virile value of self-mastery, "temperance is in its fullest sense a man's virtue."<sup>37</sup> Dominating, or better yet, eliminating pleasure was a way of establishing oneself and remaining a free man, avoiding becoming its slave. Marriage in Greece did not limit the partners to sexual monogamy; reflections on marriage were linked to the household, or *oikos*. Xenophon dramatized the two complementary roles of the man who labors outside and the woman whose space is domestic, and the fidelity to which he invites the husband does not imply sexual fidelity. As for what is often taken as a sign of debauchery by the modern moral code, the love of boys, this ran counter to the central concern of the *aphrodisia*. Contrary to the most widely held view, Foucault argued that the Greeks "formulated the most austere, rigorous demands about *aphrodisia*."<sup>38</sup> Sexual activity was therefore caught between a veritable aesthetics of existence, reserved of course for that privileged minority of Greeks-free adult males.

Pierre Hadot disagreed with this vision emphasizing the relationship with self. He reiterated Seneca, who discovered joy "in the best part of oneself," but linked it to a tension toward transcendence, toward moving beyond individual singularity, rather than in the limited harmony of a process of individuation.<sup>t?</sup> The sense of belonging to a Whole remained essential for Stoic and Platonic thinkers, and exer-

cises of self-mastery made sense because they participated in the cosmic Whole. Hadot agreed with Foucault's description of practices of the self, and of ripping away everything foreign to the subject in order to ensure his self-mastery, but "this movement of interiorization cannot be separated from another movement whereby one elevates oneself to a higher psychic level in which one finds another type of exteriorization."<sup>40</sup>

For Maria Daraki, a historian of antiquity, Foucault confused two different models: the model citizen who was to acquire self-mastery because the isonomic society required him to participate as a foot soldier in defense of the City, and the figure of Ancient Greece, of the pure man who renounces and is "divine." "Keeping that which, by temperament, was the right to pleasure, he added the superiority in which only the Abstainer can delect."<sup>41</sup>

For Daraki, when Foucault applied the serial method that he himself had theorized in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he tended to read the ancient Greek world too much through the single lens of sexual man, thereby exaggerating this dimension, which he transformed into the key for understanding the period. She saw the issues underlying sexual behavior as being fundamentally linked to religion and politics, which became particularly clear when Foucault argued that the concerns during the Greek age that eventually led to withdrawal into the self had to do with making sexuality pathological. Daraki argued the reverse: this would be one of the rare liberations that the collapse of the civic universe had made possible.

### A Stylistics of Self

In the third volume of *The History of Sexuality, The Concern for Self*, Foucault saw, in the second century A.D., a new stage in this clear inflection of ethical thinking toward intensified codes, linked with a crisis of subjectivization in the Roman world, which was no longer circumscribed by civic needs as it had been in the fourth century B.C. As the title showed, self-mastery also became an end in itself. The subject fully constituted itself as such and a "more intense problematization of the *aphrodisia*"<sup>42</sup> was obviously reflected by more sophisticated self-mastery against the backdrop of a growing mistrust of the dangers surrounding pleasures. Consequently, marriage was valorized, and conjugal obligations became more strict. This more austere ethics was not rooted in an intensification of the moral code, but in the

growing concern for self. This did not lead to isolation, however, but turned, rather, toward socializing practices, to an ethics appealing to Rome's entire ruling class to conform to corporal and spiritual ascetic rituals. Strict dietary laws were observed, as were physical exercise, meditation, reading, and the remembrance of what had been gained. "Taking care of oneself was not a sinecure."<sup>43</sup> Foucault wanted to go beyond appearances, which might invite hasty comparisons with Christian practices, and was bent, therefore, on discovering the specificity of the Roman world. When he spoke about examining one's conscience, he was careful not to assimilate this practice to any desire to inculcate guilt, but as part of a quest for wisdom.

In *The Concern for Self*, the increasingly anxious problematization of the self was set more and more into relationship with social and political problems in the Roman Empire. The decline of the city-states, which were superseded by Greek monarchies and then by the Roman Empire, did not extinguish local political life. But power was exercised under increasingly complex conditions and administrations became omnipotent, throughout an empire that had become very extended. Although delegated responsibilities did confer a certain power, these were at the discretion of the Prince, and revocable. In this new political game, the ruling class had a more precarious grasp on its power and it became harder to discern the space between the real exercise of power and this role of transmitting a message from a distant central power through the administrative machine: "Constituting oneself as the ethical subject of one's own actions became more problematic."<sup>44</sup> Governing others, therefore, meant governing oneself, as Plutarch explained. The precariousness of positions of power led to a destabilized self requiring in turn that the ascetic code be reinforced.

The new stylistics of existence were above all manifest in the doctrine of monogamous marriage; sexual relations were to lead to procreation in the context of a purely conjugal ethics of existence. In this reversal, the love of boys continued in practice, but became secondary to marital relations. "In fact, pederastic attachment was considered illicit."<sup>45</sup>

For Foucault, this ethical turning point was not a simple reflection of social and political changes, as had often been argued, but part of working out the concern for self, leading to new practices in a problematic context. "We should think rather of a crisis of the subject or of subjectivization: of a difficulty in the way in which an individual can

constitute itself as the moral subject of its behavior and of the efforts for finding how the subject can subject itself to rules and give meaning to its existence, in applying these to itself."<sup>46</sup> Thus it was only within the subject that its relationship with itself and others could be grasped, a subject that was not a simple container of external changes. Using this autonomization, which had the merit of radically breaking with the impoverished theory of reflection, Foucault wanted above all to show how every system is arbitrary, whether Greek, Roman, or other. Describing them did not retrace their history, but was a pretext for the true goal of the enterprise, which was to free the subject from its desire and from all forms of guilt in this realm so that it could be reconciled with itself.

Making the body progressively pathological, together with a growing guilt culminating in Christian patristics, the fear creeping into sexual practices and nudging them toward monogamy—an entire context of crisis leads us back to Foucault's concerns from his discovery of his own homosexuality. The detour via Rome and Greece had largely to do with what went unspoken for Foucault the individual, and his desperately urgent quest for an ethics, for a compensatory spiritual asceticism for what would soon be a detachment from his body, a liberation from the mortifying guilt that inhabited him, and finally a reconciliation with himself. The subject was back.

## *Thirty-three*

### **An Autonomous Subject**

From the mid-seventies onward, Barthes, Todorov, and Foucault were all increasingly concerned with the subject. Their individual paths were part of a profound movement that was leading the social sciences far afield from the structure on which they had anchored their scientificity. The grand return of the repressed subject proved to be unavoidable. Individuals, actors, and agents, by different names and from different disciplines, all retained attention at a time when structures were fading from the theoretical horizon.

The most spectacular change occurred in sociology. In France, this was in some measure a reaction against Enlightenment philosophy. For Robert A. Nisbet, sociology did not descend from Rousseau, Montesquieu, or Hobbes, but from Burke, Maistre, and Bonald, who preferred the broadened social structures of a hierarchical village community to the individualistic ideology of the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Auguste Comte and Durkheim discerned the sociological object by going beyond the notion of the individual, which for them belonged to metaphysics rather than science. For Comte, the positive spirit only infused the scientist when he initially considered social reality moved by endogenous laws. The individual was the most difficult of obstacles for constructing the positivist mind. Durkheim, the founder of the new sociological science in France, considered that it existed only insofar as it was an integral part of the social Being, which belonged to an independent reality that could not be perceived individually.

## Methodological Individualism

Methodological individualism defined itself against this holistic orientation that was apparently constitutive of the basic rules of the sociological method. Raymond Boudon in particular developed this approach in France in the mid-seventies. His school, based on a radical critique of two holistic paradigms in rapid decline—Marxism and structuralism—was spectacularly successful; the times favored its success. Boudon exhumed sociology's German ancestors from the turn of the century, and cited Max Weber at the beginning of his *Critical Dictionary of Sociology*: "Sociology can only move forward by considering the actions of one, some, or many separate individuals. That is why it should adopt strictly 'individualistic' methods." The term "individualism" had neither an ethical dimension nor even a more general sense of individual autonomy in a society, but was a methodological term contrasting with the alternative, holistic method. "To explain any social phenomenon whatever, . . . the motivations of the concerned individuals must be reconstructed, . . . and we must also perceive the phenomenon as the result of a number of individual behaviors dictated by these motivations."<sup>3</sup>

Boudon more recently introduced Georg Simmel, a second German predecessor of his method whose *Sociology and Epistemology* he published and whose *Problems of the Philosophy of History* he translated in 1985. In the lively polemic opposing Simmel and Durkheim, Boudon made Simmel's positions—known until then only through the critique of the French school of sociology, essentially for their psychologism. Simmel had distinguished between the interpretation of historical data that happens when major tendencies are discerned, and the explanations attributing these data to individual causes set within a context that only allows for partial conclusions rather than generalizations, and which must therefore be illusory. Simmel thus suggested considering individual motivations: "Perfect understanding requires that we acknowledge that there is nothing but individuals."<sup>4</sup>

Methodological individualism, as Simmel invited sociologists to practice it, abandoned any attempt to discover general laws that claimed to be universal. Boudon disagreed with any essentialist perspective that gave more weight to the constraints or determinisms that weigh on the individual. To the contrary, he began by studying individual behavior in order to explain every social phenomenon. But this

reversal could not resolve the problem of how to go from the particular to the general, from the individual to the collective.

Methodological individualism adopted Simmel's idea that a social phenomenon can only be conceived as the sum of individual interests and behaviors. The sociologist could not be satisfied with describing, but also had to construct "ideal types" based on modelizing the possible and real sums of individuals. In constructing the object, methodological individualism "is radically opposed to any structural inspiration."<sup>5</sup> By paying attention to individual behavior and actions, individual choices could be examined and hypotheses made by presupposing a wide range of freedom among social actors/subjects.

This method was particularly popular in the United States in the seventies and eighties, especially for the paradigm of *Homo economicus*. Furthermore, it allowed the sociologist to identify with the economist and, like him, formalize the rational action of social agents based on ideal types. But for Boudon, methodological individualism was not to be assimilated to this orientation; he adopted Pareto's critique and argued that *Homo sociologicus* should be seen as the overtaking of *Homo economicus*, although he did not adopt Pareto's distinction between logical and nonlogical actions.

Social practices could be restored by analyzing the system of interaction.<sup>v</sup> This method involved a "sociology of the singular"<sup>7</sup> that preferred contextual situations in which the sociologist analyzed social logic, and excluded abstract and holistic notions of "society," of "nation," and even of "class." This last notion was not even included among the concepts inventoried in the *Critical Dictionary of Sociology*. The paradigm's success must be considered in terms of the unprecedented social crisis of holistic points of reference: individuals belonged to no group and were isolated. Moreover, the mounting interest in liberal ideas was also theoretically implicit in a method that hypothesized the "superiority of liberal ideology."<sup>8</sup>

## Ego Games

Ego games replaced structural games. Everywhere, in every discipline, the way an individual belonged to the group or was implied in the object of study became the focus; this was sometimes nothing more than the "I" examining "the I's emotions." Philippe Lejeune, a structuralist linguist, became interested in enunciation theory as Benveniste had defined it, and defined the autobiographical pact as a promise of hon-

esty and transparency. He therefore moved toward the pleasurable memory of the ego and elected to work on autobiography, of others as well as his own: "You don't escape yourself. Y'v

Lejeune was not the only one to undertake this new exercise of a return to self. Emmanuel Terray, an eminent representative of Althusserian structuralist-Marxist anthropology, had explained his professional and militant commitments as the product of a lifelong struggle, with the figure of the traitor incarnated by his father, who had been an important member of the Vichy government." In 1946, when he was eleven years old, he felt profoundly uneasy in the boarding school where his parents had sent him and where patriotic fervor ran high: "I felt excluded from this enthusiasm; being a part of it would have meant repudiating my father."<sup>12</sup> With his scrupulous and ever-present sense of probity, Terray established a necessary link between the way he considered his life, modeled on a rigorous and limpidly meaningful book, and his own existential anxiety, which led him back to a past that he could not renounce, because it would have meant "renouncing self-affirmation in my singularity."<sup>13</sup>

Terray never denied what he embraced-Sartre, Levi-Strauss, Althusser-even if he was sometimes contradictory. Although he had to confront the figure of the traitor, he was never a traitor to the cause he defended. Ethnology was, for him, the battle his father never fought, and he devoted himself to it energetically, with detailed fieldwork, theoretical debates, and militant anticolonialism. If he is not a key player in the current return to Enlightenment optimism, it is because "this optimism died in the death camps of Auschwitz and beneath the ruins of Hiroshima, and any effort to resuscitate it could be nothing but derision and insult."<sup>14</sup> His autobiography reveals a life story woven of threads of a personal and collective history and explains some of the sources of its author's integrity.

The return to the self became a collective phenomenon with which Pierre Nora experimented in the corporation of historians. In 1985, he saw a new genre emerging in a new age of historical consciousness: ego-history. The historian therefore fully assumed his situation as a subject invested in the present and no longer hid behind "scientific" neutrality. "Rather than taking us away from a serene investigation, clarifying or analyzing existential investment becomes the instrument and trigger for understanding."<sup>15</sup> The delights of the ego gave rise to a work for which Nora wrote the preface and which

brought together a number of historians who applied to themselves a method that had been largely tested on others, in order to explain, "as historians, the link between the history you make and the history that made you."<sup>16</sup> This concern for the self did not, however, become an "ego-history" but made it possible to consider the important topoi of a particular generation's historical consciousness. These stories were open and articulated around membership in a scholarly community, and to a mode of problematizing time. They made it possible to understand the range of individual answers given in response to similar situations.

### The Biographical Idol

Biography, believed to have been definitively buried by the Durkheimian school, also made its return among sociologists in revolt. This looked *like* "the mechanical effect of a generation of sociologists whose apprenticeship owed as much to militancy as to university training."<sup>17</sup> However, these new recruits had come to sociology from the latter half of the seventies onward; the conversion of the political left to a counterculture left and the disenchantment with ineffectual structural-Marxist models led to other shores of experience, to "true stories" of "people like us." As *Libération* wrote in the seventies, everyone spilled their guts and there was a proliferation of collections of voices, of individual stories: "Witness," "Personal Accounts," "Bearing Witness," "Themselves," "Live." "I was one of the sociologists working on personal stories, meaning that we listened to ordinary people tell us their life story, in their own words, of course."<sup>18</sup>

The biographical idol also made its comeback among historians, although it had not disappeared entirely from certain traditional histories that had been able to retain a large public. But even more surprising was that in the eighties it seduced the historical school—the *Annales*—that had theorized the death of this genre. It was thus no surprise that one of the eminent *Annales* historians, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, the historian of "immobile history," sketched the story of the kings who had built the house of France in Hachette's *History of France* in 1987. Biographical psychologism won the upper hand and Le Roy Ladurie could plumb "the depths of the heart" of Henry II,<sup>19</sup> and consider that, in sum, these heroes had been generally positive for the nation. Marc Ferro, another member of the editorial board

of *Annates*, published a major biography of Petain in 1987.<sup>20</sup> Ferro was a profoundly loyal disciple of Braudel, and dedicated the book to him, even though it bore no traces of the master's teachings. He spared no spicy detail about Marshal Petain's moods as he coursed through the documents around which he wove his history. In so doing, Ferro wrote in the most traditional biographical style, which was not true for all biographies. Georges Duby and Yves Sassier conceived theirs as veritable X rays of the Middle Ages."

This return was spectacular. In 1989, Ferro recalled that only somewhat earlier an important international colloquium on the Revolution of 1905 had taken place during which none of the thirty participants suggested giving a talk on Nicholas II. The same was true for another colloquium on the Vichy government, which made no mention of Petain. "These two colloquiums had been organized by the Sorbonne and the National Foundation of Political Science."<sup>22</sup> Both examples show how thoroughly biography had been banished from historical research, other than for the *Annales* group, and relegated to the minor role of the pulp novel. The Durkheimian tradition, brandished by the *Annales*, thus managed to push biography back within the pale of serious and scientific writing. But today, Marc Ferro has become an advocate for the genre. "Ignoring this face of historical analysis would be facile."<sup>23</sup>

Subjectivity also made its comeback among ethnologists. Marc Auge set the stage for a new genre with his *Crossing Luxembourg.e'* an ethn novel in which the ethnologist is the observed rather than the observer in a tale of daily life.

Along less literary lines, and initially inspired by the interactionists influenced by Erving Goffman's work, ethnomethodology appeared in the United States during the sixties, and in the eighties in France. Its founding work had been written in 1967 by Harold Garfinkel, who wanted to analyze how social actors produce a social situation. Communication between social actors lay at the heart of this paradigm, and the idea of facts took on a certain dynamic in the infinite process of considering how people adopt behaviors. Ethnosociology would have to completely involve itself in a study of these social practices in order to restore their dynamic. "It was a complete reversal. With ethnomethodology, there are only people, actors who invent their ethnomethods daily. For them, it is total subversion by the invention of daily life, on a permanent basis."<sup>26</sup> At Paris VIII,

Georges Lapassade, among others, was a fervent partisan of this kind of research.<sup>F</sup>

## Humanist Geography

Even in geography, the return of the subject was palpable in a still marginal branch, which also came from the American West Coast: what the Anglo-Saxons called "humanist geography." This current was represented notably by a few Swiss Francophones such as Claude Raffestin, professor at the University of Geneva, or Jean-Bernard Racine, professor at the University of Lausanne. They held that geography should be particularly concerned with the realm of representation—considered, in fact, the specific object of geographical science, which should free itself from the natural sciences and better define its object, which included affective phenomena and the values that organize human facts.

Geography during the sixties, they claimed, had been wrong to adopt economics as its principal theoretical reference and to base its model on *Homo economicus* alone: "The space that geography studies does not simply translate every society's vital project of subsistence, self-protection, and survival, but also translates its aspirations, beliefs, and the most profound depths of its culture."<sup>28</sup> Unlike the way in which other disciplines had evolved away from semiological considerations during the structuralist phase, this latecomer discipline turned to semiology and used Barthes to valorize the sphere of representations.

Acknowledging that its objects could be semantized, this kind of geography, which liked to compare itself to a palimpsest, "is also quite clearly a semantide, as Jacques Ruffe put it."<sup>29</sup> Thus opened up a vast enterprise that looked at a subject in its space, that of the geography of forms, and of representations articulated with a relational geography of experience. Claude Raffestin even tried to define geographical ontology to avoid drifting into a chopped-up and ancillary discipline and proposed a possible theory of "geographicity," which meant changing the paradigm and revisiting space, using geography as a mode of human existence and of its destiny. "But we risk making the same errors if we refuse to spend the energy to define a geographical ontology."<sup>30</sup>

## The Social Agent

The return of the agent that was taking place absolutely everywhere should not, however, make us forget Alain Touraine, who had been an

innovator at a time when geography was hardly in fashion. He had courageously expressed ideas that assigned more importance to the social agent at a time when structuralism reigned in Paris, and when it was considered good taste to disparage this level of analysis as being neither pertinent nor scientific. In the sixties, at structuralism's apogee, Touraine theorized his first case studies, in order to define the sociological object in terms of social action and social movements.<sup>t</sup> "The progress that has been made in the last century was directly tied to the discovery of sociology's own object."<sup>32</sup>

Touraine's paradigm was articulated on the social changes that had forced a shift from an industrial to a postindustrial state, the basis for the transition from an essentially economic paradigm to a socio-cultural paradigm integrating the meaning that social actors gave to their practices. This even specified the object of sociology, which included people, and paid special attention to social dynamics, in contrast to the static aspect of structuralism and the phenomena of reproduction it valorized.

Where the structural approach tended to deny the pertinence of history and became incapable of considering transformational processes, Touraine put historicity-without any element of historical teleology-back at the center of his analysis. He saw historicity as a concept that made it possible to see how a society acted on itself, beginning with its conflictual reality. He saw clearly opposed dominators and dominated whose historicity was the issue. But this antagonism could not be reduced simply to the positions of social agents within relations of production in a postindustrial context.

The essential resistance to technocratic domination took place on a cultural level. Here, sociology could help shore up different forms of dispossession and ensuing passivity, and could participate in a renaissance of the social actor.<sup>v</sup>

Few were receptive to Touraine during the structuralist era; he walked a middle ground between the agent and the system, equally rejecting the absolutization of structures and the absolutization of subjects. He considered the battle between holists and individualists to be artificial since the true task was to set the agent and the system in which he acted and was acted upon in contact with each other. This voice of the middle ground, however, as is too often the case in France, had some trouble making itself heard.

## Humanism and Individualism

The structural era had been dominated by a Spinozist approach to texts that obliterated the subject, and established an abstract universal with a subjectless enunciation. It was not the truth of the text that was being examined, but what was in the text, and nothing else. "That Spinozist phase is in the process of drawing to a close."<sup>34</sup> The new return to meaning, and the fact that since the seventies the focus was no longer exclusively on the instruments of meaning, meant that the subject once again found a central place. Meaning could no longer be reduced to the sign, nor the author to the scriptor, without returning to the cult of a Supreme Subject reigning in absolute sovereignty. The new trend did not, however, imply a deification of man; but rather a rethinking of the subject in a world affected by the discoveries of the unconscious and of historical and social determination. "No one could suggest any longer a noumenal subject, transcending history, perfectly transparent to itself, and perfectly mastering its thoughts and actions."<sup>35</sup>

Derrida's criticism of humanism was based on his conviction that it was an essentialism. In this sense, it resembled Nazism, with its ideology of a human essence incarnated by the Aryan. "However, humanism is not necessarily a reflection on essence. This is a complete misconception."<sup>36</sup>

If the humanist philosophers valorized man's humanity, they also asserted, quite to the contrary, that if there was something specific to man, unlike animals or things, it was precisely that he had no essence. We might recall Sartre's famous demonstration in *Being and Nothingness* when he defined existentialism as a humanism and contrasted the paper cutter with man, with the waiter, thereby demonstrating that existence preceded essence. Sartre thus adopted in his own way the long tradition of humanism: "There is a beautiful remark by Fichte. 'The animal is what he is, only man is nothing.' Similarly, Kant had remarked, 'Man only becomes man through education.'"<sup>37</sup>

Alain Renaut's humanism valorized autonomy and responsibility, which he contrasted with the individual who valorized independence. Individualism was not, therefore, the goal of modern humanism, but simply one of its historical moments. Whereas these two concepts were generally set on the same level, an individualism that asserts the omnipotence of the ego in fact destroys the foundations of the specifi-

cally humanist autonomy. For Renault, the modern view of individualism was born with Leibniz: "The truly inaugural and decisive moment can be unequivocally established in the Leibnizian monadology,"<sup>38</sup> from which a whole philosophy of the individual developed and progressively dissolved the subject and its autonomy. Hegel, and after him Heidegger, took this shift as the basis of modern philosophy.

Nietzsche carried this thinking to its limits, believing that he was breaking with the age of monadologies. But "he was only in fact revealing the true meaning: as the principle of subjectivities and values of autonomy were exhausted, he accompanied the profound shift that had occurred at the heart of modernity."<sup>39</sup> Nietzsche amplified this movement of a completely independent individual beyond any social constraint. This search led the individual to smash the idea of universal truth and to consider that the modern reign of reason blocked the affirmation of individual difference or singularity. Alain Renault, by contrast, considered that the subject should be rethought, starting with the principle of autonomy, which implied "no regression with respect to the major givens of contemporary thought."<sup>40</sup> This humanism, based on an autonomous subject, denied neither alterity nor difference, nor did it exacerbate difference by making it absolute, which would amount to "enclosing people in their culture."<sup>41</sup> It sought to consider differences set against the identities from which they revealed themselves. This humanism was linked with the ambitions of early structuralism incarnated by Levi-Strauss, a search for the general behind the particular, the transparency of human existence derived not from some supposed essence but underlying the diversity of its irreducible modalities.

For Louis Dumont, however, this irreducibility was the basis of the opposition he perceived between holistic Indian and Western individualistic societies, which he saw as polar opposites with mutually exclusive terms. Holism in individual society and individualism in a holistic society could only exist as something like the expression of a death drive. In 1948, Dumont first worked on an anthropological study of Indian civilization, which he defined as *Homo hierarchicus*.<sup>v</sup> A holist ideology subordinating the individual to a social group, it corresponded to the principle of a hierarchical society based on material renunciation and on human interdependence incarnated by the caste system.

In 1977, Dumont drew attention to the dark side of the Indian

mirror. Western civilization was an ideology that could be contrasted on a term-for-term basis with Indian values. In *Homo aequalistr* he described the modern invention of the Western individual freed from the ontological primacy of the social and collective order, as well as its hold on particular individuals. This emancipation was the corollary of the birth of economics as a category distinct from politics and religion. Sacralizing worldly wealth freed up ancestral traditions and allowed the individual to define himself as the subject of his own historicity, free from tradition and rediscovering the social realm through an egalitarian idealistic lens. This emphasis on anthropological, individualistic roots establishing the singularity of Western modernity theoretically complemented what had been happening socially since 1975: a return to the private sphere, an ebb of all collectivist eschatologies, and the triumph of the *Era of Emptiness.v'*

In the Indian case, as well as that of the West, society evolved as the result of a strong ideological structure that organized social coherence: in the West, this was an ideology of the individual in the world; in the East, it was that of the individual outside the world. The transition from one to the other was the product of a long genesis, which Louis Dumont developed.<sup>s></sup> Stoic detachment gave way to Christian dualism, which exalted the infinite value of the individual and devalued the world, thereby making it possible to relativize the negation of this earthly world and permitting a "remarkable degree of latitude in most of the affairs of the world."<sup>46</sup> Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the fourth century, and then the Byzantium schism in the eighth century, reinforced the commitment of Christians in the world. This process culminated in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and Calvinism in particular: individual destiny no longer depended on the church, since the Elect belonged for all eternity in a direct relationship with an all-powerful God unmediated by any institution. "With Calvin, the church encompassing the state disappeared as a holistic institution."<sup>47</sup> The 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man was the consummation of this ideological shift that established a new order on the basis of individual values: the Promethean project of the individual as master of nature.

### A Historically Determined Split Subject

Triumphant individualism found its most extreme expression in the postmodern thinking of the eighties, which delighted in ephemera and

emphasized the monadological character of the individual, by considering him as a simple particle tied to networks, as in Baudrillard's work: "There is only one sort of relay. But the individual does not exist. He is a kind of a compensatory hallucinatory resurgence. But that corresponds perhaps really to a functional mechanism: people function like atoms in molecules, like particles."<sup>48</sup> Baudrillard described this victorious individual as the negation of the subject, which had lost all autonomy and responsibility and whose only pertinence derived from the networks that set it in motion. A simple site of synthesis, the individual was no more than a prosthesis self-regulated by a system based on simulacrum. "We can call that culture, but it is no longer a culture of action, it is a culture of operation."<sup>49</sup>

Alain Renaut's distinction between the subject and the individual made it possible to understand to what degree postmodernism belonged to this tradition of thinking about individualism altogether opposed to a conception of the subject. But the different forms of conditioning to which the subject was subjected could not be ignored. This had been Freud's legacy, revisited by Lacan, implying that the subject could no longer be seen as a seamless and entirely self-knowable whole, but on the contrary, a split, opaque reality. **I**n this, Lacan's contribution was fundamental. "The problem of the subject is already at the core of his dialectic of desire."<sup>50</sup> The subject was fundamentally subjected to the Signifier. "Anyone who says 'The Subject? the Subject?' the way de Gaulle used to say 'Europe! Europe!' mocking Lecanuet, seemed ridiculous to me because this is a totally unthinkable remark."<sup>51</sup> Francois Wahl disputed anyone who would base his or her return to the subject on the assumption of a full noumenal conception of the subject, which ignored its fundamental division or cleft structure. "The subject's future is not, as some would have us believe (once again), at the Ministry of the Interior."<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, the subject could only have been conceived in the historical context that determined it. As Jean-Pierre Vernant recalled, with regard to the Hellenic world, in his polemic with Didier Anzieu:<sup>t</sup> "the stuff of tragedy was not the dream set outside social reality, but rather an exact and polysemic emanation of social thought in the Greek city-state of the fifth century B.C. Vernant disagreed with Anzieu's rereading of Greek mythology through the oedipal phantasmatic as reflecting the meaning of Greek tragedy. "The Hellenist no longer recognizes

the familiar legends. They have lost their shape and pertinent features, their particular character and specific realm of application." 54

Vernant thought that an analytical reading could clarify things, provided that it was correlated with a Hellenist's understanding. "I am simply saying that there is no psychoanalytic reading of tragedy, as I say there is no Marxist reading of tragedy. Understanding tragedy can be facilitated or obliterated by intellectual opinions." 55

The proximity of Vernant's field of specialization with psychoanalysis could not help but provoke repercussions, despite the momentary lull in the debate. And the discussion has recently been pursued less polemically, between Vernant and Pierre Kahn, a former student of his at the Sorbonne in the sixties. Kahn had become a psychoanalyst, and had put some distance between himself and Vernant during the Algerian War, when the PCF treated Vernant like a leper and assigned its young militants—Philippe Robrieux, Jean Schalit, Pierre Kahn—to quarantine him and refuse to let him speak at the Sorbonne. But the days of excommunication were over. Everyone had long since left the paternal house; even Pierre Kahn discovered, upon reading Vernant's *With Death in His Eyes*,<sup>56</sup> that the author had always been quite close to psychoanalysis. He thus decided to write him and ask him to explain why he thought there was still some distance between the historical anthropology approach and the psychoanalytical approach. Vernant answered the questionnaire Kahn sent him.<sup>57</sup>

Vernant pointed out that the historian cannot build an interpretative model from archetypes, but has to adapt his model to each case, using the various documentary elements he has in order to articulate them "into a meaningful whole."<sup>58</sup> An anachronistic conception of the individual is not a starting point for this relativization, but a conception of the civilization being studied is. The subject in ancient Greece was not the modern subject. "Self-experience is not oriented toward the interior, but toward the exterior. The individual seeks himself and finds himself in others."<sup>59</sup> Greek self-awareness was not born through introspection, but from outside the subject: the understanding of a "He" and not yet of an "I." The subject could only be studied by using transhistorical categories, which had to be made relative each time, for meaning changed with the historical context. Vernant's work, like that of the structural period in general, showed the fallacy of simply returning to a noumenal subject that ignored its historical conditioning.

Ludwig Wittgenstein also contributed a notion of the subject that could be reconciled with the givens of the social sciences insofar as he considered that "for having the right to use a notion of the subject, we are not obliged to have a philosophical theory that justifies it."<sup>60</sup> Wittgenstein gave the social sciences no particular status, yet he made it possible to reconcile their positions by arguing that there is no specifically philosophical problem, but only philosophical difficulties that could be solved, particularly by peeling away the layers of misunderstandings and errors of ordinary language.

## *Thirty-four*

### History Returns

As of the mid-seventies, history was no longer a wanted criminal, as it had been in the structuralist heyday. Pierre Vilar still remembers Nicos Poulantzas criticizing him for "falling into historicism. I said, 'I don't need to fall, I'm already in it and it's O.K. with me to be here.'"<sup>1</sup> But Vilar was an exceptional historian at the time for having agreed to dialogue with structuralism, without giving up anything concerning the priority of historical change. Even more spectacular was the return of historicity at the heart of the discipline that had cast aside its pertinence: linguistics and semiotics. **It** is not insignificant that Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, which had been the manual for the ambitious structuralist program in *Communications* 8 in 1966, was only partially translated and published in France. **It** took eighteen years, from 1965, when the first half was published, until 1983, when the second half of the original study came out, under the significant title *The Historical Roots of Supernatural Tales*. Published in the USSR as early as 1946, the second and more historical half of the work had simply been ignored during historicism's exile.

Obliterating the historical dimension of Propp's work was all the more surprising in that it had been central to a number of polemics and an entire generation's model for studying storytelling. Moreover, Propp had imagined his morphology as the prelude to an important work that would examine the temporal dimension of the development of the Russian tale. There was even an evolutionist tinge to Propp's

history. "Propp's thesis is above all drenched in evolutionist dogma."<sup>2</sup> Whatever the legitimate criticisms that can be levied against his second work, including the inevitable concessions he had to make to the reading grid being used at the time in the Soviet Union, it remains entirely incredible that the French intellectual community could evaluate such an important work on the basis of just one piece of it and had to wait until 1983 in order to make a well-founded judgment.

Not that this historical perspective meant a return to prestructuralist history. Just as the subject could no longer resemble the earlier one, so too this new historicity coincided with a crisis of the meaning of history defined as progress. Ever since the structuralist conquests, humanity could no longer be conceived of using the prior schema of progressive stages leading it to higher degrees of realization. Structuralist thinking definitively imposed the notion of an unchanged human race for the duration of its existence. There was no going back on this, but the price for having come to this position was the radical break with any idea of historicity. This was the return that relativized the contribution of synchronic models.

### A Thirst for History

Sylvain Auroux reintroduced the diachronic dimension and the search for filiations, along with the definition of a system. When he wrote *The Semiotics of Encyclopedia Writers*,<sup>3</sup> he began by defining what he called historical relativism, which he used to raise the question of knowing how a system moved. Consequently, Auroux became increasingly interested in historical semiotics, historical linguistics, and philosophy.

Claudine Normand organized a colloquium at Nanterre in 1980 on the history of science: "The Social Sciences: Which History?" She was quite aware that the past effervescence needed to be evaluated—a need dating back to the seventies—and that this meant taking a historical approach. "I had prepared a conference in the name of a work group that went back to 1976, with lots of philosophers."<sup>4</sup>

An interdisciplinary enterprise took off in the eighties thanks to the energies of some EHESS sociologists. Bernard-Pierre Lecuyer and Benjamin Matalon created the French Society for the History of the Sciences of Man, which brought together many representatives from every discipline of this wide area of research in the social sciences around their common concern for history.

Poetics also turned to history. Philippe Hamon, for example, while firmly holding his initial structuralist ambitions, turned to the necessary historicization of the descriptive techniques of storytelling. Hamon demonstrated that description was structurally constrained to create a character observer who could stop the action and observe the world in order to describe it.> Hamon supported his argument by showing that during certain periods, description could not exist because it assumed an individual singularity that did not exist. Hamon rediscovered the discoveries of the history of *mentalités* which considered the slow evolution of individuation beginning in the modern period and flowering in the nineteenth century, the most prolix century for technical description, incarnated by the realist novel.

Still in the realm of poetics and of literal literature, Gerard Genette also examined the historical dimension of texts by adopting the notion of "transtextuality," defined as everything that puts one text into a relationship with others, whether manifest or secret.f Trans-textuality implied the broadest sense of history, even if it was limited to literature. In defining these types of relationships, Genette went further than Julia Kristeva had during the sixties when she defined intertextuality as the copresence of many texts in a single text. He proposed several other types of relationships, such as architextuality, the most implicitly mute relationship between an earlier and a later text, which he baptized the hypotext. This relationship need not even be tangible quotations or paratextuality, for example, since it defined that link with all prior texts that might have contributed to the birth of a new text. In this respect, he encompassed all of literary history, which once again became important, resuscitated as it were from its prior banishment. "There is no literary work that, to some degree or other, and depending on the reading, does not evoke some other work. In this respect, all works are hypertextual."?

Gerard Genette created a new field with architextuality, which was both the legacy of structuralism and a shift in its orientation, by recuperating a certain number of categories that, in the sixties, were considered nonpertinent.f Architextuality always expressed the literariness of literature, but it also incorporated such ideas as discursive types, modes of enunciation, and literary genres that defined any particular text. With architextuality, therefore, the critic's work shifted from structural description to the quest for models, types of discourse, and argumentation. This modelization was used to examine the his-

torical variation of genres; history was back. This renewed interest in genre meant rediscovering classical rhetoric. On more than one occasion, Genette used Aristotle to define this new field and to set his research in the Western poetic tradition, which, since Plato and Aristotle, had tried to establish a series of categories in a unified system encompassing literary phenomena. "Plato and Aristotle already distinguished the three fundamental genres, according to their 'mode of mimesis.'"<sup>9</sup>

Tzvetan Todorov was even more radically receptive to history. A companion of Genette, he not only incorporated history into his vision of literature, but also went beyond literature to consider ideologies. Todorov also became the champion of transtextuality, which he adopted from Bakhtin, and which let him go beyond the Russian formalist notion of a purely autotelic poetic language cut off from practical language and from any but an endogenous and completely abstract notion of historical conditioning. Todorov brought back the communication function of literature, and its particular strength for generalizing values and worldviews. "That literature is not the reflection of an external ideology does not disprove its relationship to ideology: it does not reflect ideology, it is an ideology."<sup>10</sup>

### Genetic Criticism

The genetic dimension put forth by those who, like Lucien Goldmann, refused to abandon a historical perspective, finally, and tardily, took hold in the eighties. In 1982, the ITEM (Institute for Modern Texts and Manuscripts) was created, and attracted an increasingly solid team of literary specialists. It concentrated on what was called an internal and external genetic criticism of literary texts.

Louis Hay, a Germanist who had been actively involved in structuralist activities in the sixties in Besançon, in linguistics, was the prime mover. He had come to history rather accidentally. "I was quite simply doing a thesis on the German poet Heinrich Heine when I had the good fortune to discover most of his manuscripts dispersed everywhere throughout the world.!" Hay petitioned the French government and managed to convince General de Gaulle to buy these documents. When they arrived at the National Library, no German conservator was on hand to classify them so Hay was given what became a full-time job. He had to take a sabbatical from the Sorbonne to join the CNRS in 1968.

From then on he created a small team, and a new direction in research took off, the product of a literary historian's fascination with original manuscripts discovered at the National Library. But this historical inflection was also due to the period during which "a certain exhaustion of purely formal structuralism"<sup>12</sup> was apparent. Genetic criticism belonged to and yet diverged from structuralism. Because it considered transformation, variations, and history, it brought a different perspective to the most formal and hermetic structuralism. The continuity lay in its relationship to another major aspect of structuralism, however, which consisted in giving a more objective status to literary studies, particularly by emphasizing the notion of text. "Replacing man and his work by the study of the text, considered as the scientific object of study, was the ambition from whence we came."<sup>13</sup> Louis Hay created a school that attracted those who had infused new life into literary studies in the sixties, including Jean Bellemin-Noel, Jean Levaillant, Henri Mitterand, Raymonde Debray-Genette.

In 1974, two groups were set up to work on Proust and Zola, which became the CAM (Center for Modern Manuscript Analysis). "This was a small event insofar as Germanists and Gallicists joined together in a common project."<sup>14</sup> Other groups of specialists came to this new institution, which worked on a half dozen authors including Nerval, Flaubert, Zola, Valery, Proust, Joyce, and Sartre, whose works were studied on the basis of their genesis and structure. In 1976, Louis Aragon learned of this work and willed his manuscripts and those of Elsa Triollet to the CAM, which became the ITEM in 1982.

This CNRS institution functioned like a multistage missile. Textual genetics worked on restoring a "third dimension" of the printed text, the process of its development and the specific dynamics of writing, implying the study of completely concrete texts, drafts, and references and classifying them according to certain indices. This "codicological" level of analysis meant analyzing the materials and tools of writing. Ink was clinically examined and beta X rays analyzed filigree. Computers made it possible to deal with large bodies of works, and to structure and formalize the deductions. On the top floor of the building, critical editions were prepared in order to make these discoveries available to the public. On the third floor, literary theoretical renewal and theoretical problems of publishing were addressed. In 1979, Louis Hay published a programmatic work, *Essays on Genetic Criticism*,<sup>15</sup> in which he brought a whole series of specialists to bear on a

manuscript: poets, psychoanalysts, sociocritics. "Meanwhile, things had been slightly inverted since the object began to generate an independent theoretical thinking that had echoes in other disciplines and creative activities."<sup>16</sup> Research went beyond the framework of literary studies to include questions about the very fact of writing, which involved neurologists, neuropsychologists, cognitivists, and paleographers. This determination to bring literary criticism out of isolation and have it communicate with other, often unexpected, disciplines was the second aspect between the link of these research groups and the structuralist period. "We had not given a second's thought to neurology when we began to study literature."<sup>17</sup> Genetic criticism made possible a renewal of the reading of texts by restoring the processes through which they were written. It was thus part of this major shift that the structuralist rupture had provoked when it tried to disclose nonlinear logics at work in a text.

### The Return of Literary History

The return of a historical perspective was everywhere apparent among literary types. Anne Roche and Gerard Delfau defined the project in their 1974 article "History and Literature: A Project."<sup>18</sup> Equally dissatisfied with classical literary history à la Gustave Lanson and "the myopic focus on the text alone," they suggested that "history be taken as a plumb line."<sup>19</sup> This was not the comeback of reflection theory, which would make history and literature (discourse) little more than a barely misshapen mirror of history (historical reality). Rather, the authors favored constructing a theory of mediations, which Genevieve Idt defined some years later.<sup>20</sup> This theory implied taking the linguistic notion of situational context, the material conditions of discursive production and reception, the institutions that conditioned discursive practices, the interlocutors, the public of the literary message—in other words, linking it with social and cultural history by studying the hierarchization of message codes during the period in question, as well as their implicit and explicit references to prior messages. There was no question of rejecting structuralism's achievements, but of articulating them with history to open up reflection to form, materials, and content. "Our basic hypothesis, which always correlated with history, might appear paradoxical since it insists on the importance of forms. Yet tradition demands that historical and formalist approaches be opposed."<sup>21</sup>

Literary criticism also found historicity by going behind the mirror of writing and bringing reading into its purview. Today we ask more and more questions about the aesthetics of literary reception and are interested in what determines the reader's horizon of expectations or reading hypotheses, in a perspective that remains structuralist and that pursues the lines of research defined by Umberto Eco in 1965 in his *Open Book*.<sup>22</sup> Historians and literary critics could therefore advance hand in hand, as Roger Chartier did with Philippe Lejeune, for example. Reception aesthetics was to articulate the possible modelizations of reading/writing with the configuration of the mixed field of social history.

Aside from taking chronology into account, the change was above all that referential validity was acknowledged whereas the referent had been obliterated when linguistics had become the science of signs. "The return of the referent must take place."<sup>23</sup> There were two dimensions to this referent: sociological and measurable, and existential and felt. This double dimension, long the object of opprobrium since the triumph of immanence and of textual self-enclosure, returned with the rehistoricization under way in literary criticism.

The most spectacular example of this return of historicity in the approach to literature was the assault against the famous Lagarde and Michard literary manuals published by Bordas. The stakes were considerable because these manuals, used in high schools throughout France, gave a century by century "the best of" French literature in chronological excerpts. Lagarde and Michard conditioned entire generations' approach to literature.

Born in 1948, these guides to French literature had familiarized all young French students somewhat superficially with the "great" literary works and the "great" authors. They had stood the test of time, except for a slight change in 1985; in 1988, they still dominated nearly 60 percent of the market.>' This influence had been somewhat eclipsed, especially at the height of structuralism when they were most often shelved alongside antiquities, since the revolt of the sixties and its scientific program attacked precisely this conception of the man and his work, as well as the principle of studying selected excerpts, everything these manuals embodied.

This old war horse's return to center stage was therefore symptomatic of the wane of the structural paradigm and the return of historicity. Did modernized literature programs fail completely? If we

look at the editorial competitors of Lagarde and Michard who attempted to capture the market, traditional literary history had clearly not returned to square one; the version that did return was broadly marked by the structuralism of the sixties.<sup>e</sup>

Clearly, those responsible for these new manuals had to jettison many of their highly defined theoretical positions, particularly their war on excerpts and the pertinence of biographical and chronological presentations. Magnard had tried to organize its manual alphabetically in 1983 but gave up, having observed that most students "didn't know where to put Corneille or Racine on a time line."<sup>26</sup> As for the selection, "there are practically all the great texts that the professors expect."<sup>27</sup>

But the institution represented by Lagarde and Michard could not be felled with a single blow. In this respect, the laurels go to Henri Mitterand for his work at Nathan: five volumes and some 3,200 pages. We recall that Mitterand was one of the structuralists of the sixties and that the work he directed was clearly stamped with this mark. It is true that classicism won the day, but it was a classicism punctuated by structural modernity: witness its constant concern to create a dialogue between the canon and the texts that had remained marginal. "We tried to show that within a given literary period, different registers and stages can be discerned."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, each chapter ended with a page offering the viewpoint of new criticism on the question: the texts were flagged throughout with texts by Barthes, Todorov, Greimas, Genette, Starobinski, and Cixous. "Since there are 120 chapters, there are 120 pages of modern criticism and theory."<sup>29</sup> The specifically linguistic contribution was made in the didactic texts, where rhetorical problems were quite present. Henri Mitterand also saw the structuralist legacy in the general pyramidal architecture of the work. "It is a pedagogical structuralism."<sup>30</sup> This last remark might elicit a certain skepticism, because although the project director for these 3,200 pages doubtless had a general vision, it was probably less obvious to high-school students opening up the encyclopedia even if it was conceived as a magnificent functional machine.

Alain Boissinot, a member of the very modernist French Association of Teachers of French (AFEF), which grew out of the rejection of traditional manuals following May '68, contributed to the last volume of Xavier Darcos's manuals at Hachette on the twentieth century. This also revealed the desire to keep what structuralism had con-

tributed theoretically while at the same time responding to the need for classical works. Here again, modernity and tradition were used, each in its turn, in an essentially methodological perspective that adopted structuralist thinking in order to better differentiate literary genres. The structural concern with objectifying the act of writing could be seen here. "The goal of democratic teaching is not to play with cultural complicity, but to objectify a field of knowledge and its dissemination."<sup>31</sup>

## Events Return

In addition to linguistics and the approach to literature, all of the social sciences also rediscovered historicity, the importance of events, and the underlying disorder of these years. The natural sciences, which had served as the model for the structural paradigm, once again played a major role in inflecting the paradigm of the social sciences through their discoveries.

*Communications* issue 18 was devoted to events. Edgar Morin noticed that they were making a comeback. There was, for example, the hypothesis of the big bang in astronomy, which changed the view of the history of the universe by hypothesizing an original explosion occurring fifteen billion years ago and producing a constantly evolving and expanding universe. "The cosmos seems to be both universe and event."<sup>32</sup> History had been repressed as ascientific but returned, paradoxically, via the hard sciences, around notions of irreversibility, of the possible rationality of disorder, and of unforeseeability. Similarly, during the seventies, genetics, information theory, artificial intelligence techniques, and certain mathematical theories such as that of Rene Thorn all evolved. Thorn's major work, *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis*,<sup>33</sup> initially went unnoticed in France when it came out in 1972, but its ideas began to be known and to influence the human science paradigm when *Mathematical Models of Morphogenesis* came out in paperback in 1974.<sup>34</sup>

In their concern for scientific modeling, the social sciences had eliminated disorder as a disturbance; with the advent of the evolution of mathematical theory worked out by Rene Thorn and known as catastrophe theory, the Comtian postulate had to be entirely revisited. Thorn's work in differential topology had led to working out a mathematics of critical phenomena and a qualitative method for interpreting natural forms, which he called catastrophe theory and which

made it possible to gather a wide range of observed phenomena in optics, thermodynamics, and hydrodynamics within the same theoretical framework. A descriptive tool for unforeseen phenomena, catastrophe theory was quickly adapted in the social sciences. This theory defined an accident in the evolution of a system as the most pertinent level since it invalidated the current description of the system and forced its rethinking.

In 1979, Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers published *The New Alliance*,<sup>35</sup> which was even more successful among nonspecialists. Their definition of thermodynamics as irreversible processes helped to rehabilitate movement, discontinuity, and historicity. Since the most modern sciences recognized the fundamental contribution of events, the social sciences could no longer ignore them. These discoveries eventually made the structuralist paradigm, with its priorities of synchrony, permanence, and the elimination of events, defunct. Historicity would thus reinvest the field of the social sciences the way the regulation school did for a certain sector of economists.

In 1978, Marc Guillaume, a polytechnician economist, published *In Praise of Disorder*.<sup>v</sup> In reaction against what he saw as the orderly imagination in Levi-Strauss, he constructed a model inspired by Georges Bataille's view that the destiny of the world is subjected to the principle of an excessive production of energy. Bataille considered that traditional societies must dissipate this excess in small quantities in order to preserve their order. Modern society, however, shifts and no longer dissipates its excess energy but accumulates and crystallizes it, thereby creating increasingly violent crises in a tragic destiny punctuated by wars, and increasingly devastating destruction. "Using this apocalyptic vision, I said to myself, while working on bureaucracy, that we could see disorder as a formidable means of dissipating and slowing down certain inevitable events. . . . Disorder thus understood can be seen as a positive transition."<sup>37</sup>

The return to historical discourse brought with it a stylistic choice of literary readability. Elisabeth Roudinesco, well known for her particularly hermetic Lacano-Althusserian style, underwent a spectacular conversion. When her *The Hundred Year Battle: The History of Psychoanalysis in France* came out, it was doubly eventful. Roudinesco broke with her master Lacan's ahistoricism. "This history was written against Lacan, in order to show that a history was possible and that at the same time it was possible to restore Lacan's history, whereas

he had spent his life dehistoricizing himself. That was the wager."<sup>39</sup> This history did not of course forget the past, but made Lacan into a veritable hero. She borrowed a good bit from Canguilhem and Foucault. "The first volume is the history of sciences in the style of Canguilhem."<sup>40</sup> Moreover, her style had considerably changed, and she wrote a classical narration with colorful and quasi-romanesque characters. "I made portraits of characters, and there I borrowed from literature."<sup>41</sup> Borrowing from the history of science and from literature demonstrated the constant tension of the social sciences between these two poles. But most significant was, once again, the pleasure of writing, the pleasure of the text, and Roudinesco's concern for historicizing an area that had, until then, avoided this type of intellectual construction.

In another register, but still on psychoanalytical turf, Gerard Mendel revisited Freud, examining his theoretical proposals in their specific historical context. This was how Mendel demonstrated that Freud had based his theory on two biological tenets—the theory of inherited psychic characters and that of a sexual chemistry that is manifest from birth. Today, these are looked upon as aberrations belonging to an outmoded historical conception. "Freudian biology thus combines two anachronisms: a psychic neo-Lamarckism and a sexual neovitalism."<sup>42</sup> Revisiting Freud did not mean diminishing the importance of his discovery, but it opened up an infinite refoundation, constantly correlating the man with society and with science.

This return to historicity and of thinking about different temporalities and discontinuities also ensured the golden age of the *Annales* school's historians, as we have seen. But at the same time, the return of the event led to a crisis in the structuralist-Durkheimian paradigm of this historical school, and even went so far as to cast doubt on its founding principles. Recognizing that the history-social science relationship was at a "critical turning point,"<sup>44</sup> the editorial in the *Annales* issue devoted to this theme tolled the bell for the past, indicating a serious identity crisis, despite a spectacular richness. Immobilizing time and searching for invariables no longer corresponded to contemporary sensibilities. As Georges Duby observed in 1987, "We are at the end of something. . . . I have the feeling of having run out of breath."<sup>45</sup> The times were for dispersing Braudel's heirs. Some, like Pierre Chaunu, elected an apocalyptic vision, while others, like Francois Furet, considered the conceptual and political perspectives of history.

Pierre Nora wrote *The Sites of Memory*<sup>46</sup> on historical representation. Others rediscovered the delights of a *History of France*, the return of the house of France, a posthumous victory of the old master, Lavis, the historical vision of Lagarde and Michard. Because of this fragmentation, the *Annales*, nourished by the structuralist paradigm, remarked: "Today, the attention brought to events and the return of a certain historicism implies that the initial intuition is about to exhaust its effects."<sup>47</sup> The heirs of the *longue durée* recognized that processes producing newness could be forgotten. A waning structuralist paradigm led to a serious crisis in the historical discourse nourished by its progress, tolling the bell for historians who had relayed anthropologists onto the structural track. It was a paradoxical moment, for history in its turn had enriched the discourse of the other social sciences. This tango tempted historians and those in literature alike with the easy solution of redonning traditional garb.

## *Thirty-five*

### **The Master Thinkers Die**

The early eighties also tolled the bell for the master thinkers of the sixties. Adulated, they were often at the height of their glory when several of them died. Their work and messages went unfinished. An orphaned generation that had already had to bind the wounds of its lost illusions now had to undertake the necessary mourning work for those who had incarnated the most demanding, rigorous thinking. A funeral procession accompanying yesterday's heroes to their final repose replaced the ambitious program that was to have moved mountains.

It was not, however, these deaths coming one after the other that extinguished the paradigm. The decline had already begun in 1975 and from that date on, the structuralist heroes were moving further and further away from the original ambitions of the program of the sixties. Their deaths sped up this process.

#### **Barthes**

On October 25, 1977, Roland Barthes lost his mother, the event he had so feared. Henriette had been his veritable lifelong companion and he had never really left her. His friend Greimas was in New York at the time. Reading of her death, he wrote Barthes, "Roland, what is going to become of you now?"<sup>1</sup> Her death was a real catastrophe, which brutally sapped Barthes's desire to write, and to live: "What I lost was not a Figure (the Mother), but a being. And not a being, but a quality, a soul, not something that was indispensable, but irreplace-

able. I could live without the Mother (we all do, sooner or later), but what life I had left would certainly be, from then until its end, unqualifiable (without any character)."<sup>2</sup>

Barthes suffered a profound existential crisis of desire at a time when, after the public success of his *A Lover's Discourse*, he was at the pinnacle of his fame. This was a less propitious context than the one during which he had engaged in a polemic with Picard, and he had to withstand another assault by Sorbonne professor René Pommier, who published a particularly violent *Enough Decoding*.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Barthes was the central figure in a funnier and less nasty pastiche, *Roland Barthes Made Easy*,<sup>4</sup> whose authors proposed to decrypt Barthes-speak in the form of a foreign-language manual.

A range of conversational examples, summaries, exercises, and rules, as well as a textual gymnastics for thinking directly in R. B. and "translating" him into French, were provided: "1. How do you enunciate yourself? French: What's your name? . . . 3. What 'stipulation' screws shut, closes, organizes, articulates the economy of your pragmatics as the occultation and/or the exploitation of your ek-sistence? French: What do you do in life? 4. (I) expulse little bits of code. French: I am a typist."<sup>5</sup> We can laugh now, and many laughed at the time, sympathetically, but Barthes was deeply affected. Not that he had lost his sense of humor, but this came at a bad time. With little inclination to laugh, he saw these publications as the sign of an unfinished battle that had to be fought at a time when he no longer had the heart.

Yet, he did find the wherewithal to visit Jean Daniel, the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and ask him for a column. He was warmly received, and wrote a column from December 1978 to March 1979. But the column disappointed a loyal public; the acid edge of his *Mythologiques* was gone and the times had changed. The critical paradigm was ebbing more and more with every passing year. In this crisis of desire, no true wellspring inspired his writing, which he described in an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* four days before his fatal accident. In answer to the question of what pushed him to write, Barthes replied, "It is simply a means of struggling, of dominating the feeling of death and of complete annihilation."<sup>6</sup>

After dining with François Mitterrand, Jack Lang, Jacques Berque, Danièle Delorme, Pierre Henry, and Rolf Liberman, Barthes was crossing the rue des Écoles when he was run down by a laundry truck. He was immediately hospitalized at the Salpêtrière; an Agence France-

Presse story was rather reassuring and indicated that the writer's condition was stable. Yet Barthes seemed to have lost his vital energy, or any will to win this final battle against death. "He wasn't too badly hurt, just a slight head trauma, but he let himself die at the hospital." The examining doctor who certified his death on March 26, 1980, concluded that although the accident had not been the direct cause of his death, it had provoked pulmonary complications in an already weakened organism. Medical reasons? Psychological causes? No one really knows, but these reasons did not help fill the loss of the best-loved hero of the structuralist period.

He left many disciples, but no real school. The "Barthes system," as his biographer Louis-jean Calvet called it, belonged more to looking than to theory. Structuralism was more a vehicle for Barthes to defend his literary intuitions than something lived as a scientific finality. It was above all the man, his emotions, and his particular way of looking at the world that were irreplaceable. "An original voice is now silenced, one that could best bring something I have never heard elsewhere, and the world seems definitively flat. There will be no more Barthes remarks on any subject whatsoever."<sup>8</sup>

## Lacan Disputed

The year 1980 also saw the passing of another great guru of the period, Jacques Lacan. But in his case, psychoanalysis, and a school based on the master, also died a certain death, for both were to become extremely turbulent. Having based his return to Freud on Saussurean linguistics in the fifties, Lacan himself had moved away from linguistics and increasingly toward topology, knots, and torus as structuralism ebbed.

In December 1972, in a seminar on Jakobson, Lacan distinguished between what belonged to linguistics, the special reserve of linguists, and "linguistry," a neologism that no longer sought to establish the scientificity of analytic discourse, as had been the case of his Rome speech. "My remark, that the unconscious is structured like a language, does not belong to linguistics."<sup>9</sup>

This move toward topology confused a good number of intellectuals who had been fascinated until then by Lacan and his ability to put psychoanalysis at the center of the humanities and the great theoretical debates, by challenging philosophy on its own terrain, reflection on the Subject. As of the mid-seventies, numerous radical protests

had also helped shake Lacan's well-built edifice. In 1972, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus*,<sup>10</sup> and in 1976 Foucault published *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*; both challenged Lacan's theoretical foundations. The growing chasm with philosophers was clear.

But a more disquieting event unfolded within Lacan's own school, the *École Freudienne de Paris* (EFP). When Francois Roustang published *Such a Tragic Destiny*, he radically condemned psychoanalysis for "threatening to become a religion, the only religion possible today in the West."<sup>11</sup> As a scientific construction, the Symbolic-Imaginary-Real trilogy, according to Roustang, referred to the trinitary theology, from the Name of the Father to Christ, and the use of Scripture in Christian tradition. Roustang saw this religiosity in action in the transference relationship, one of the important moments of an analysis. If, in Freud, the analytic relationship was clearly based on transference, Freud's goal was to free himself of it, whereas Lacan toyed with prolonging transference. He kept his disciples completely dependent—a relationship evoked by the theorization of the work on transference and the practices of his review *Scilicet*, in which only the master could sign his articles. "*Such a Tragic Destiny* created a real stir on the stage at the EFP, via *Confrontation*, while its author enjoyed a real triumph. Of course, we have to say that it embodied a nascent crisis that had already been prepared by the matheme."<sup>12</sup>

In *Ornicar?*, the review of the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*, Charles Melman counterattacked in the name of the master against what he considered to be a "dishonest festival."<sup>13</sup> He criticized Roustang for having confused design and destiny by basing himself on a typo in the *Ecrits*. Derrida answered by calling Melman a mailman: "In English, *facteur* is mailman."<sup>14</sup>

Somewhat later, the culmination of a didactic analysis leading to the consecration of an able analyst, one of the basic practices at the EFP, became the eye of an internal storm in the school. In January 1978 at Deauville, several days were devoted to this practice. Lacan was there, and silent for the most part, but he concluded by acknowledging that *la passe*, as the rite of passage was called, had failed totally. "I took a critical position on *la passe*, but certainly not as much as Lacan did when he himself said at Deauville that *la passe* was a complete failure."<sup>15</sup> *La passe* had been created to evaluate a didactic analysis, but in fact, the purely decorative jury was relieved of its re-

sponsibilities since the candidates generally explained their pedagogy rather than summed up their problems. Thus everything that was said was completely biased and missed the point. "They dethroned neither analyst nor jury, of course. That made it a rather artificial exercise." 16 This crisis of practice that got tangled up in knots allowed Jacques-Alain Miller, who was well connected and anchored at Vincennes, to replace the Lacanian old guard. "The road to power was opened up to another generation of Lacanians and the most well established member of the stable-Jacques-Alain Miller." 17

In the late seventies, the Lacanian school was in the throes of internal struggles and theoretical disorder. Mathemes provided an escape route. A battle for a successor ensued in the master's shadow, and with disastrous results. This was the climate in which the young philosopher Francois George published his pamphlet *L'Effet 'yau de poele* deriding Lacanianism as one of the great mystifications of the century.<sup>18</sup> Like *Ro/and Barthes Made Easy*, this book parodied Lacanian language, which had become the most generally accepted expression of snobism, as hermetic and self-referential as a certain Marxism had been. George lambasted the guru's manipulations ("Lacan, in fact, presents himself as an illusionist" *Tt?* and returned the master's words to the sender, in reverse, in a horsehair glove, respecting the rules of the word game so dear to the Lacanian school.

The book did not analyze doctrine. George took Lacan at his word, as, for example, when he presented an elephant to his stupefied seminar audience by simply saying, elephant. "Show an elephant in its absence, that is what rather well defines his art, it is true, about which we might say, so as to remain true to the style, that it is the art of trumpetry."<sup>20</sup> George echoed Roustang's sarcasm by emphasizing Lacan's elimination of humanity for a religious essence removed from the body and its humors. Affectivity, for Lacan, was vulgar, and the body was nothing more than "a residue."<sup>21</sup> As for the barred subject,  $\mathfrak{S}$ , it evoked the dollar and the earthworm halved by the gardner's spade for the patient, a gesture that was repeated by the *sujet suppose sauoirt?* when he practiced scansion, and invited his client to end the session by enjoining him to "split."<sup>23</sup> Lacan's famous *objet petit a* was, according to Francois George, no more mysterious than a little pile of excrement, a banal empirical shit. "This *objet petit a* or this big package came to include everything linked to the body."<sup>24</sup> Eliminating the body and adoring the Signifier that never answered since no one

was home at that number of the absolute Other, Lacan tried to create a new religion by "replacing the myth of the Cross with the myth of the Bar."<sup>25</sup> George gave Lacan a heavy lambasting, and his book's success equaled the humorist's punning talent, a familiar Lacanian trope. This book was to Lacanian thinking what the comic is to politics—it ignored the real contributions, but that was not its point. Its popularity exemplified the crisis and the discredit that were beginning to bring down the house of Lacan.

Roland Jaccard lauded Francois George's book in *Le Monde*: "Lacan, whose seminar has long attracted snobs, gulls, and easy marks . . . Hoping to preserve French psychoanalysis from the medicalization stalking it and from the mediocrity in which it was stagnating, he managed in the space of a few years a real tour de force of lowering its prestige clinically—with the suicidal practice of sessions reduced to a few minutes—as well as intellectually."<sup>26</sup> This viewpoint was not, however, universally shared and many indignant letters and reactions were sent to *Le Monde*, better known for its reserve than for polemical passion. Excerpts from some of these were printed. Serge Leclaire was given an entire page for his "The Movement Led by Jacques Lacan," a good part of his talk at the October 1979 Colloquium on the Unconscious in Tbilisi.<sup>F</sup> Leclaire recalled Lacan's renewal of psychoanalysis. But the explosive character of Francois George's essay was not quelled and, at the end of October 1979, Jean-Paul Enthoven praised his book in a provocatively entitled article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*: "For a Final Homage to Comrade Lacan."<sup>28</sup> Enthoven considered this satire only fair; Lacan's predilection for tropes and his disdain for guts ridiculed the institution and paved the way for a master who had every right to fill the lack that he had put in the driver's seat of his discourse. "He became, in a certain way, the exchange value of the 'lack,' which circulated like paper money among the Lacanians."<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, some well-targeted criticisms encouraged a general rejection of psychoanalysis and ignored Lacan's specific contributions. The baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater, as they say, but this was the risk that led Serge Leclaire to severely judge the enterprise. "There's a whiff of fascism in the fresh air he claims to bring."<sup>30</sup>

Not that Leclaire claimed to be the temple's keeper, and his Lacanianism was quite independent. He acknowledged the obstacles along the path laid out by Lacan and found the topological evolution of the

school increasingly objectionable, which he openly criticized in 1977 in a text that stuck in Jacques-Alain Miller's craw, titled *The Empire of Dead Words*: "It would be preferable if the matheme, having lost its measured dignity, were to give free rein to its graffiti value."<sup>31</sup> Leclaire worked on a plan for a seminar with Antoinette Fouque in the context of the *École Freudienne de Paris*, and sent it to Lacan for approval. The response was censorship. "There is no question of your giving the seminar, which Simatos told me about, at EFP."<sup>32</sup>

So Leclaire decided to coauthor a satiric response with Antoinette Fouque on the occasion of a birthday party for the *École Freudienne* held in Lille. The satire took the form of a theatrical sketch of characters from *The School for Women* entitled *Pas de deux*, staged at the beginning of the celebration. It ended with, "Here, truth, I forbid."<sup>33</sup>

Leclaire agreed with Lacan's emphasis on the signifier, and the symbolic, but he rejected the changes taking place (which would continue after the death of the master), in which the hegemony of the signifier relegated the imaginary to a demonic dimension. "That led to a totalitarianism by the signifier's hegemony, which controlled everything. There is something I cannot agree with and that paves the way for the return of religion."<sup>34</sup> However, eliminating the imaginary raised a serious problem for the analyst because, although the signifier helped him see how his patient hid or avoided reality, the patient's imaginary is the basis for the analyst's own working hypotheses. On the other hand, in addition to spoken language, the analyst's job was to make coherent what never comes through language. From the beginning, however, Lacan had considered this dimension to be essential, particularly in the Mirror Stage, but he increasingly moved toward a formalizable, scientific analytic discourse, and consequently minimized it.

When Lacan made his theory of knots, I think that it was largely in reaction against his students, who tended to consider that the imaginary and affects were a sort of epiphenomenon of the structure of language, an epiphenomenon of no interest. Setting the imaginary in a special knot was a way of marking the specific autonomy of imaginary structures."

## The Talking Cure

Contradictory currents shook the EFP in 1979, during a period of crisis and spectacular defections, like that of Françoise Dolto. Lacan had

cancer, and was more and more a shadow of his former self, prey to factional battles he no longer mastered. This was the context in which he announced the dissolution of the EFP on January 5, 1980.

Just as de Gaulle withdrew from his political party (the Rassemblement du Peuple Français), Lacan gave up his "thing," an authoritative if not authoritarian gesture that set the seal on Jacques-Alain Miller's victory. According to Solange Falade, it was in fact Miller who wrote the famous letter announcing the talking cure. "Lacan couldn't write any longer. It had been decided that Miller would write the letter and Lacan would correct it."<sup>36</sup>

**In** it, Lacan recalled his school's failure in order to justify its dissolution.

I no longer have a school. I raised it from its resting point (always Archimedes), which I took from the grain of sand of my enunciation. Now I have a pile, a pile of people who want me to take them. I'm not going to make them a whole. Not at all. . . . Therefore, I have to innovate since I blew this school.<sup>37</sup>

His decision violated all the rules of the institution. Moreover, this ukase required a new act of fealty to the master; the disciples were to demonstrate their desire to continue under his authority by writing individual letters.

Using the French 1901 law on the creation of associations, the ukase was immediately called into question by EFP members, twenty-eight of whom wanted Lacan judged in a summary procedure.<sup>P</sup> But the legal battle was lost before it ever began, given an institution that never really established its legal legitimacy but was based on its leader's charisma. Jacques-Alain Miller, a former Maoist and well versed in the practice of denouncing the formal character of democratic principles, had already answered the protesters of November 10, 1970: "The *École Freudienne* was created by Lacan and Lacan alone, solely on the basis of his teaching. . . . Lacan's position does not emanate from our group and its votes; it is, rather, our practice that emanates from his."<sup>39</sup> Miller had essentially remained loyal to the teachings of proletarian democracy, whose legitimacy did not emanate from Stalin.

So Lacan and Lacan alone was responsible for the fate of the dispersed troops of his school. Approximately one thousand letters were written by candidates ready to embark on the adventure with him, and of these, three hundred came from the EFP. Reinforced and legiti-

mated by this referendum, which exceeded his hopes, Lacan created the *Cause freudienne* in February. "The letter to the thousand was soon called 'Thousands err,' by those who disagreed, who were branded by their enemies as 'referendards,' 'enlightened gutter sweepers,' and hangers-on who didn't want to let go."<sup>40</sup> What had begun with apparently the most serious aspirations to scientificity finished in derision, and led inexorably toward a collective shipwreck.

This derision reached its paroxysm when Louis Althusser, the great leader of the Marxist structural renewal and responsible for interesting PCF members in Lacan, came to a meeting of the EFP called by those wanting to dissolve it, on March 15, 1980. Thirty-eight members duly armed with invitations were there when Althusser introduced himself to the door guards at the Onyx Room of the Hotel PLM Saint-jacques, who did not know who he was. "When we asked him for his invitation, he spontaneously replied: "I was summoned, yes, in fact, by the libido and the Holy Ghost. And everyone has known for some time that the Holy Ghost is the libido. So, I will tell you the truth, the Holy Ghost does not give a shit about it."<sup>41</sup> Lacan greeted his partisans by announcing the Big News: he had finally reached the realm of the Signifier, the "Lacan Label," but he reminded those in the audience that "Lady Lacan" can only give what she has to give. Once the speech was over, Althusser got up. "He described the master as a magnificent and pitiful harlequin, reciting his single-note speech. He emphasized that analysts were mired in a confused discourse like a woman sorting lentils *while* the war is raging around her."<sup>42</sup>

Althusser was also in crisis in 1980, having destroyed what he adored. In the middle of a period of dissolution, he scrapped yesterday's words, and his rejection of Lacan seemed to belong to this self-negation, along with the denial of what he represented for others. This movement had been set in motion in 1980, the tragic year of his self-criticism.

## To Hell in a Handbasket

The shipwreck became a disaster when the master thinkers were borne away. Lacan died on September 9, 1981, from the complications of an abdominal tumor, at the age of eighty. Everyone considered his death to be a major event, announced in a front-page article in *Le Monde*. Christian Delacampagne wrote that few thinkers of the

century had enjoyed such celebrity and that the lesson to be learned from Lacan's message had to do with the essential teaching, that a theory-less practice is blind but that a theory removed from practice was nothing more than "an empty discourse and swollen jargon. Lacan himself, we might recall, never knew how to separate one from the other. And that's what will make his work enduringly interesting."<sup>43</sup> Lacan's death, which resulted in the death of the sole One, carried off another part of the structuralist program and left disoriented disciples who were soon to experience a veritable diaspora.

The master had designated his son-in-law, Jacques-Alain Miller, as his heir. Thus empowered, Miller became the executor of the will and the only person allowed to publish Lacan's lectures. As Charles Melman, who knew Miller well from having been his analyst, sarcastically put it, "That's a nice word, executor of the will. He executed."<sup>44</sup>

Fervently faithful to Lacan's thinking, which he considered to be the most explosive and liberating work of the period, Charles Melman despaired "to see it transformed into a gristmill to oppress a certain number of people, to make them subjected disciples who go around in circles and repeat, kneeling before the great priest who is supposed to reincarnate the master; . . . and it works!"<sup>45</sup> The seminar could henceforth say to itself "The That's Miller," after the death of the man of words.

On the one hand, the Lacanians were tremendously dispersed and most of the barons reconquered their own independence. On the other hand, Jacques-Alain Miller recruited for the *Ecole de la Cause Freudienne* (ECF) and threw himself into actively promoting Lacan. This avant-garde proselytism sought massive recruitment, and benefited from the *savoir faire* of the days of the Proletarian Left.

Psychoanalytic colonization progressed apace, along the Maoist model of conquering the countryside in order to encircle the center. Latin America was a special, but not exclusive, target since the strategy was global. "They spoke about jet professors, and now there are jet analysts who go to the four corners of France and everywhere in the world to spread their good word. They are veritable traveling salesmen of psychoanalysis."<sup>46</sup> They left behind them city heads and local representatives quickly pressed into the ranks in hotel corridors of the counters of the Empire. Institutional structures had to respect the laws of the market if they were to endure, with video clips and a quick rotation of men, merchandise, and ideas.

As for the barons of Lacanian thinking, they had for the most part elected to make their way beyond this institution in which they no longer recognized Lacan's teaching. In the mid-eighties, Elisabeth Roudinesco counted no fewer than thirteen different groups born of the general crisis of 1980-81, without counting the personalities that had come out of it but were unaffiliated with any group, such as Françoise Dolto, Jenny Aubry, Michele Montrelay, Serge Leclaire, and Pierre Legendre. "I cannot subscribe to the type of institution that the Cause is, but its creation, historically, makes it my natural habitat."<sup>47</sup> Another of the Lacanian barons, Moustafa Safouan continued his work alongside Jacques-Alain Miller in *Delenda*, but ran into differences with him rather quickly and decided to break. "I did not appreciate the powerful destruction created by the loss of the head; I had hoped that there would be another path; but it was not taken."<sup>48</sup> Jean Clavreul, another lieutenant who had never broken with Lacan and who, in the fall of 1979, still dined weekly with him, was overtly hostile to Jacques-Alain Miller since the dissolution of January 1981. Claude Dumezil and Claude Conte also *left* the institution, which, in their eyes, no longer represented the teaching of their master.

A thousand intellectual and affective reasons led to these breaks, and they provoked a serious crisis of collective identity. And behind the fractures of the most dynamic psychoanalytic institution, psychoanalytic discourse withdrew from the intellectual horizon, whereas in the sixties it had been at the heart of all work in the social sciences.

### Althusser Dies a Double Death

Even before the shaman Lacan died, tragedy struck Louis Althusser, another great master of the period and the shaper of an entire generation of philosophers, and who had played a pivotal role in structuralism by shifting the epicenter from linguistics to philosophy, set up as judge of the degree of scientificity of the social sciences.

On November 16, 1980, in the apartment of the École Normale where they had lived since the war, Althusser's wife Helene was found strangled to death. Althusser confessed to having strangled her and the autopsy confirmed this. He was immediately transferred to Saint-Anne, a psychiatric hospital in central Paris, in a state such that not even the judge, Guy Joly, could bring a verdict of voluntary homicide. The psychiatric evaluation produced a no-cause order on January 12,

1981, given the state of madness that led to the judgment that Louis Althusser could not be held responsible for his own act.

Althusser's mental health had always been fragile. A manic-depressive, he had regularly missed classes at the ENS. He had undergone electroshock and had been in analysis and on psychotropic drugs for twelve years. When he killed his wife, the limits of this type of psychiatric treatment—rather than, as some would have it, the result of the epistemological break—became tragically clear. His friend K. S. Karol recalls that, at the beginning of July 1980, Althusser had once again, but more seriously than before, gone into a depression. The departure of the Althussers for central France in October did not bring about a recovery. "He saw no one, read nothing, spoke little, and considered going back to the clinic. His situation had worsened just before the last weekend, so much so that Helene decided to cancel the appointments she had made for him."<sup>49</sup> In November 1980, Althusser died to the living for the next ten years. He became a living zombie from then on, quarantined, and condemned to survive, removed from the world, with a small group of faithful friends.

Although this tragedy and the fate of Althusserian thinking were not necessarily linked, we cannot help but acknowledge that beyond the personal destinies, the Althusserians were in a state of confusion. Some elected extreme solutions, including suicide. "It's surprising that there were not more deaths,"<sup>50</sup> remarked Pierre Macherey, who blamed these tragedies on the violent anti-Marxism that swept through the Parisian intellectual milieu with the same speed that this milieu had greeted the Althusserian effort to modernize Marxism in the sixties. Yesterday's heroes and their companions were branded with what was, for some of them, an unbearable stamp of infamy. This rejection and suspicion were not, however, the only causes; there was also the profound identity crisis of those who had lost the reference points that established their intellectual identities. These tragedies affected such well-known Althusserians as Nicos Poulantzas, a sociologist and professor at Vincennes, who defenestrated himself in 1981. "That was the moment when anti-Marxism began to take hold. He had found it unbearable, and was undermined by it."<sup>51</sup> Alain Touraine's explanations are of another order. According to him, Poulantzas, whom he often saw during this period, could no longer stand Vincennes. "He had asked me to invite him to the EHESS. He transformed his bad

conscience into self-destruction, which was also somewhat true for Althusser." 52

Michel Pecheux, an Althusserian linguist, killed himself in 1982. Claudine Normand, who knew and liked Pecheux, observed that, "among other reasons, there was certainly the awareness of a theoretical impasse and an immense political disappointment. These were people who had believed so completely in the omnipotence of theory that they could not recover." 53

On October 22, 1990, ten years after the tragedy that had reduced Althusser to silence, he died a second time of heart failure at the geriatric center of La Verriere, at the age of seventy-two. A last homage was paid him by the crowd of his former students. In *Le Monde*, Andre Comte-Sponville saluted "The Broken Master" ("It is too early to judge. The Master has left too great a mark on US"), 54 whereas Christian Delacampagne placed Althusser's work in the line of Marx and Spinoza. Etienne Balibar paid his last respects at Althusser's funeral on October 25, 1990, paying homage to his unique ability to be heard and to involve others in his work. "That's why, along with a whole generation who has learned, if not from him, then thanks to him, I find the word Master inappropriate." 55 Marxism was therefore comatose, and while the homages of the man, the teacher, and the friend proliferated, the failure of his renewal remained patent. But how could it have been otherwise? The enterprise had been carried on with the greatest rigor and honesty, but, along with Robert Maggiori, we can ask if "in trying to make Marxism into a science, and to kill humanism by ignoring ethical exigencies, he did not help but kill off Marxism while attempting to save it." 56 Another ruse of reason, the posthumous revenge of dialectics against the notion of epistemological break.

## The Disappearance of Foucault

The eighties were a cruel decade for the structuralist heroes. Michel Foucault died on June 25, 1984, at fifty-seven, struck down brutally by AIDS while writing *The History of Sexuality*. The news came as a shock.

When Foucault died, so did the incarnation of the political hopes and theoretical ambitions of an entire generation. He was neither the head of a school nor the guardian of any disciplinary boundaries, but he was far more, the brilliant embodiment of his period: a structuralist

in the sixties, an individualist in the eighties. Foucault's exceptionally piercing power of observation slipped from the intellectual landscape. He had always been at the very heart of current problems, able to adapt to a new mode of problematization that attempted to get beyond the shortcomings of the structuralist program, in which he remained, despite his protestations, a central figure. A peerless critic of prejudice and clichés, he also left behind a crowd of followers without a voice, all the more in that they belonged to no brotherhood.

The news of Foucault's death was an event up to the scale of the man, even before the press knew what had killed him. *Le Monde* gave him a big front-page headline and two full pages. Pierre Bourdieu paid homage to him for having been able to share "the pleasure of knowing."<sup>57</sup> Roger-Pol Droit expressed his emotions at the death of an absolute relativist à la Nietzsche, who played with classifications, and whose paradoxical work escaped all classification thanks to the constant rebounds that made it burst out where it was least expected, and that ended by seeing its face effaced from its discursive detours. Bertrand Poirot-Delpech saw "an asceticism of wandering." Paul Veyne, Roland Jaccard, Philippe Boucher, and Georges Kiejman recalled the trajectory of Foucault's militancy and civic commitment, the symbol of all resistance against machines of internment.

*Liberation* published a front-page photo of Foucault with the neutral title one found everywhere, but that best expressed the contained emotion: "Foucault is dead." An irreplaceable companion had died. The paper's editor, Serge July, paid homage to "this defuser of tomorrows"<sup>58</sup> and saluted the man who had known how to perceive changes in modes of thought and how to prepare the future. Robert Maggiori commented on the macabre irony that made Foucault's death coincide with his last books, in which he argued for a new use of pleasure and invited others to make their lives into works of art. *Liberation*, for which Foucault had written many articles, devoted a special series of articles to him shortly after his death.<sup>59</sup> In these, Francois Ewald, Andre Glucksmann, Robert Maggiori, Roger Chartier, Gerard Fromanger, and Francoise-Edmonde Morin paid their last respects by recalling the richness and diversity of Foucault's activities.

Jean Daniel, the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, devoted his editorial to "M. Foucault's Passion. Y?" and Georges Dumezil wrote that this "happy man" left him bereft "not only of the ornaments of life, but of its very substance."<sup>61</sup> Roger Chartier recalled Foucault's work

in history, and Pierre Nora, his editor, wrote of "Our Foucault Years." "Foucault is dead: every intellectual in this country feels touched by these words, in his mind and in his soul. . . . This death is also ours a little bit, and like the bell that tolls for what we lived through with him."<sup>62</sup>

Pierre Nora saw the mark of closure in Foucault's death. Indeed, it was an important moment in the history of thought that ended one morning in June 1984 in the courtyard of the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, where a small crowd listened religiously to Gilles Deleuze as he read from the preface of *The Use of Pleasure*. Deleuze, the prodigal friend, thus gave the last homage to Foucault.

## *Thirty-six*

# **The Crisis of Universalist Models and Disciplinary Retrenchment**

Universalism especially was discredited in the mid-seventies, and this led to the collapse of both structuralism and Marxism. "I can say with a certain derision that I am the last Marxist."! Each discipline tended to retrench, and to regain balance by rediscovering its traditions and the fundamentals of its theoretical and institutional identity. With the renunciation of universalism came a disciplinary explosion and a waning of multidisciplinary that had characterized the structural era. Disciplinary boundaries became heavily guarded. Experiments with extreme limits, the ne plus ultra of modernity in the sixties, became increasingly proscribed for they ran counter to the self-containment that was taking hold.

A double conjuncture—one historical: the reality of lost illusions; the other sociological: the lack of jobs and reduced university budgets—also contributed significantly to this general wane. "What disappeared was our generation's historical illusion, the idea that tools of thought could also be weapons of criticism. Thinking about reality and transforming it came together in the same historical movement. The idea fell apart, the cultivated narcissistic illusions were over; it was painful because some had devoted their lives to it."? Some new questions made it possible to restore the levels of pertinence and to measure the limits of a scientific perspective purged of the absolutes and myths that had flourished in the sixties. But it also led to an eclecticism or a simple juxtaposition of viewpoints, paradigms, and

objects, with no attempt to establish a significant correlation among them.

### The Waning of Marxism and Structuralism

In 1976, a book by Claude Meillassoux provoked a lively polemic between structuralists and Marxists, even though neither camp realized that the two paradigms were both slipping into decline." Meillassoux saw a fundamental social entity that perpetuated itself in different modes of production. He called it "domestic community." He argued that this domestic community ensured various forms of reproduction, from which it derived kinship relationships in traditional African societies. "The production and reproduction of relationships appeared as the substratum of legal-ideological kinship relationships."<sup>4</sup> Making the incest taboo and elementary kinship structures, which Levi-Strauss had studied, relative rather than central, provoked a particularly virulent reaction from Alfred Adler, who published an article titled "Ethno-Marxism: Toward a New Obscurantism?" in Levi-Strauss's *L'Homme*. Another article, equally radical, by Pierre Bonte, a structural-Marxist anthropologist, aligned itself with Godelier's positions.>

Adler reacted strongly to questioning the universality of the incest taboo. He claimed that Meillassoux saw it as a moral notion emanating from an ideology linked with mastering the mechanisms of reproduction in domestic societies. He distinguished between hunter-gatherer societies and agricultural economies. "After having invented an eco-politico-fiction, he spends most of his time making kinship, customs, beliefs, religion, magic, and I don't know what else depend on it, in the most confused and chaotic manner."<sup>6</sup>

The polemic intensified in the next issue of *L'Homme*, in which Meillassoux answered his critics in an article provocatively entitled, "Fahrenheit 450.5" and mused about what would happen to books that questioned the established dogmas when right thinkers brandished torches instead of pens for a final critique. Adler responded: "I can reassure him that no incendiary torch threatened his book, which would warrant, at best, a brisk sweep of the broom. With time, his historical materialism will gather a bit of dust, perhaps."?

This confrontation in fact raised the question of the commensurability of the Marxist and structuralist paradigms. Both were totalizing, but they used different models and hypotheses. Beyond this polemic,

the issue was the possibility of any universal method, which was slowly being removed from the theoretical horizon.

In 1986, *L'Homme* drew up a balance sheet of anthropology." As Jean Pouillon showed, the issue was not to do an inventory of the kind generally done following a bankruptcy, since anthropology was still alive and productive even if it was no longer the melting pot for the social sciences. The discipline was exploding, as much because many more anthropologists were being trained as because anthropological methods were proliferating. Many of the contributors-Nicole Sindzinger, Carmen Bernard, and Jean-Pierre Digard-observed that the field was splitting up and that this dispersion was linked with the range of problems belonging to each of the fields of investigation. Although still vital, anthropology no longer had pretensions to be the model for all the other disciplines. It was no longer optimistic about a rapid scientific trimming around its modeling system, and the theoretical diversity offered a lesson in modesty, implying the return to specific ethnographic field description without having abandoned the theoretical dimension. As Pouillon reminded his readers, "The general is to be found in the specific,"? Anthropology withdrew into itself in order to take stock of its paradigms and objects, which meant reexamining its disciplinary history, the central concern of *Gradhiva*, a review begun in 1986 that focused on anthropological history and archives.<sup>1?</sup>

### Philosophy Freed from the Social Sciences

Philosophy was even more clearly involved in discipline-specific issues. Francine Le Bret, a philosophy teacher at Jacques Prevert High School in Boulogne-Billancourt, a working-class suburb of southwestern Paris, considered the changes regressive, and observed with some concern the return to tradition: "It's clearly a disengagement. By being concerned about eternity, we stop ourselves from taking care of what's going on today. To want to cut philosophy off from the social sciences and from the sciences in general is yet another withdrawal. Philosophy is tending to become what it was during the Third Republic."! Therefore, philosophy accompanied the retreat of the social sciences into their regionalization as they abandoned their triumphant challenge of the sixties by withdrawing behind their disciplinary boundaries.

Threatened by the Haby reform of the school curriculum and *baccalaureat* examination, philosophers banded together under Jacques Derrida and in 1975 created the GREPH, or Research Group on the

Teaching of Philosophy. In high schools, teaching philosophy depended largely on the type of questions students would have to answer on the *baccalaureat* exams. One could observe a palpable shift in the choice of exam subjects, and a new narrowness. The Nietzsche-Marx-Freud triad was in retreat; few subjects required students to be familiar with psychoanalysis. A philosophy of consciousness, however, was gaining ground. The social sciences in general were cavalierly eliminated as nonphilosophical. Instructions for the general exam that selects the subjects to be dealt with encouraged reading Bergson rather than Freud, Hobbes rather than Marx, Alain rather than Bachelard. The school manuals for the final year of high school were eclectic and tipped their hats to modernity by including texts by Foucault and Levi-Strauss, but what counted in these vast encyclopedias was what would be used as exam subjects. In this respect, the situation had clearly reversed itself.

From 1972 to 1980, the *baccalaureat* questions dealing with science went from 19.8 percent of the exam to 12.6 percent; and at the same time, the authors dealing with epistemology and natural sciences went from 10.6 percent to 1.1 percent of the exam, and those who belonged to the sciences of man went from 7.4 percent to 2.2 percent. Last but not least, twentieth-century authors went from 32.9 percent to 18.1 percent of those covered by the exam.<sup>12</sup>

Pushing the social sciences and epistemological considerations to the rear guard was a clear departure from structuralist priorities. Levi-Strauss's work, from which four texts had been used on the 1972 exam, disappeared entirely. The Marx-Freud-Levi-Strauss trio, which accounted for 6.6 percent on the 1972 exam and 9 percent of the texts on the 1975 exam, dropped to 3.7 percent in 1978 and to 1.2 percent in 1987. By contrast, the classical authors got more coverage: Plato-Descartes-Kant went from 12.3 percent of the texts on the 1972 exam to 17.1 percent in 1975, 17.3 percent in 1985, and reached 25.3 percent in 1987.<sup>13</sup>

Francine Le Bret, who in the mid-eighties had attended the PAF (the academic training plan) meetings about using the social sciences in teaching philosophy, bore witness to these reconfigurations: "I observed a discussion at one of these meetings where someone said that a course on the unconscious could be easily taught without having to speak about Freud, or even without reading anything by him."<sup>14</sup> Teachers were advised to ignore Freud and to read French neo-Kantians such as Pierre Janet in giving courses on the unconscious.

This disciplinary retraction therefore implied serious risks of regression once teachers were convinced that philosophy could be reduced to a limited number of questions drawn from perennial philosophy, and to a reduced corpus of canonized authors. This was even truer in that many high-school teachers confessed their *mea culpa*, believing that they had gotten lost in nonphilosophical problems and had sinned through positivism. Whence the heightened risk of a pure and simple return to tradition, circumventing any renewal, as if nothing had happened. "Today, the major tendency is to eliminate the social sciences from philosophy classes. People have been persuaded that this is not philosophy."<sup>15</sup> Philosophy seemed to rediscover its original purity over the presumed dead bodies of Marx and Freud, beyond all external parasites; a new plan was proclaimed for doing the housecleaning that was necessary to complete this renaissance among the humanities.

Sylvain Auroux, who had launched an immense, encyclopedic work on philosophical notions and on the history of linguistic ideas, reacted against this tendency.<sup>16</sup> He saw this limited philosophy as a mutilation and preferred new philosophical givens that tried to preserve the unity of the field while allowing the philosopher to reflect upon the foundations of the scientific discoveries of the modernity to which he belonged.

Auroux, as we have already seen, left classical philosophy in order to become a professional epistemologist of the sciences of language. He came to this field as a philosopher, at the intersection of a philosophical problematization and technical know-how, and warned against the idea of a break between a philosophy that would return to its roots and the field of science in general conceived as external to philosophy. "It would be senseless to want to reconsider the philosophical enterprise at its roots. Rivers never flow to their headwaters. Still, they can include stagnant waters. Wisdom bids us dry these."<sup>17</sup>

The return to a philosophical philosophy thus represented a certain number of dangers of occultations and risks of regression. But it was in other respects the manifestation of the artificiality of the proclamations made during the structural years about the proximate end of philosophy, which would soon give way to questions beyond philosophy. **In** this respect, the problem demonstrated not only that a program with universal ambitions had failed, but also that its ambitions had been overblown. "What strikes me is that poststructuralism

is characterized by a return to philosophy, a return to what can be practiced in the philosophical approach after or beyond the approach of the deconstructors."<sup>18</sup>

### The Risk of Disciplinary Isolation

During the eighties, other disciplines joined philosophy in its retrenchment and renunciation of transversal approaches. Pierre Ansart, sociology professor at Paris VII, lamented these disciplinary islands and the absence of questions about the legitimacy of the prevailing divisions. Where, in the sixties, students had tried to discover something through interdisciplinarity, which they experienced as productive, "Now, these little clans appear like security zones. As president of the National University Committee for sociology, I can easily see how hiring decisions reflect this."<sup>19</sup>

Parcelization, the absence of a totalizing ambition and of a concern to universalize, had another perverse effect for students: languages were so compartmentalized that students studying them could not communicate with each other. After three years of courses, they had acquired different vocabularies but no language. "Some students have a certain technical know-how, but as for interpretation, that's another thing. They have a completely mixed baggage."<sup>20</sup> Pierre Ansart, who had criticized the structuralist paradigm, regretted the strict empiricism of current work, denuded of all epistemological reflection. He considered it tragic that young students were completely unfamiliar with the work of Levi-Strauss. "They know absolutely nothing about Levi-Strauss, I speak about him with my fourth-year students and I have to start from scratch. It's painful."<sup>21</sup>

We have already seen that those in literature withdrew into their own field after having concentrated on textuality involving all forms of writing. Historians rediscovered the discrete charms of Lavissian history, the purely event-studded tale that made no effort to connect with any causal system or structure.

These returns characterized the identity crisis plaguing the social sciences as they abandoned their ambition of establishing their universality on scientific discourse and theory, which the structuralist program had embodied. All of these disciplines were profoundly affected by structuralism; it would be a shame to forget the jewels underneath the artifice.

## **Structural Naturalism**

Although the potential of the structural paradigm declined as a potentially universal semiology, it nonetheless found the means to perpetuate itself by forging a new alliance. Levi-Strauss's ambition during the fifties to belong to the natural sciences became a program during structuralism's second phase; biology replaced linguistics. The internal tension in the social sciences caught between the humanities and the so-called hard sciences expressed itself as a rigorous method that, in the grid applied to reality, claimed to be structural.

### **Natural Structure**

During this second period, there seemed to be a clear shift. Structure was no longer just a methodical approach for restoring meaning but also belonged to nature. The hope was to reach beyond the nature/culture dyad by penetrating to the heart of mental structures in order to discover a natural reality. A method of the same name would simply be its cultural extension.

This evolution was particularly clear in the work of the father of structuralism in its most scientific ambitions in France: Levi-Strauss. Today, some of his ambitions, such as discovering how the human mind works via a structural social anthropology, have been abandoned. Although he believes that anthropology's contribution was partial and important, he willingly recognizes that anthropologists "are not the only ones and certainly not the ones who hold a key to

the problem. It's the neurologist who holds the key,"! Biology and genetics would disclose the basic answers to the questions he raised in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* and make it possible to erase the boundary between the human and natural sciences, beyond which Levi-Strauss had tried to move from the outset. Since anthropology functioned by importing paradigms from other disciplines, Levi-Strauss imported the phonological model into anthropological analysis. Henceforth, however, the advances made in cognitivism and by Rene Thom's catastrophe theory became more attractive because they offered conceptual leaps that would help him reorient his structuralism toward a naturalist philosophy for which "the model is already inscribed in the body, meaning in the genetic code."?

In his late work, Levi-Strauss drew closer to Goethe's theories of scientific observation of natural phenomena. Goethe had perfected a theory of colors and a theory of plant structure, postulating an underlying model that conditioned the diversity of perceptions found everywhere but that existed nowhere in reality. In his research on the nature of color, Goethe refuted Newton's interpretation. "Contrary to Newton's experiment, Goethe claimed that every perception of color is the product of an interaction between physical phenomena and the eye."?

At the time, Levi-Strauss's structuralism tended to become ontological, a complete structural realism. It was using this framework that he defined his inventory of American mythology in 1983: "Myths are reflected in each other, and we could make the list of these axes. To account for this, we must suppose mental operations that obey laws like those we speak about concerning the laws of the physical world."<sup>4</sup> He also addressed the traditional metaphysical ideal/real, abstract/concrete dualism and proposed setting the givens of consciousness half-way between these poles, "already coded by the sense organs and by the brain."<sup>5</sup> He supposed an isomorphy between chemical-physical processes on which the operations of coding are based, and the decoding procedures the mind follows.

As Levi-Strauss saw it, structuralism, in its most extreme advances toward formalization, did no more than rediscover profound natural laws. It allowed reason to reconstitute the original mechanisms of the body by renewing ties to a radical materialism that alone could be reconciled with scientific knowledge. In his later work, Levi-Strauss made reality and structure completely consonant since structure expressed reality and was homological to it. This naturalist thrust was present as

early as *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, but here Levi-Strauss emphasized the methodological and epistemological aspects of his structuralism. This naturalism was more apparent in the influence of Rene Thorn and his disciples. "This 'second' structuralism-the 'first' no longer seemed instrumental-turns out to be basically comparable, given its wager that a hidden reality exists (structures, homologies of the mind, of the body, and of things), with the troubling 'semiophysics' of Rene Thorn or another Thomian, Jean Petitot-Cocorda, . . . and refers to the identity of their logo-substratum."<sup>6</sup>

Jean Petitot-Cocorda showed that all the major structuralists were realists who saw structure as an integral part of reality, and who claimed an identity between knower and knowable." Petitot-Cocorda was a disciple of Thorn, but he reiterated Levi-Strauss's goal of "hardening" the "soft" science of anthropology; Petitot-Cocorda wanted to "soften" the "hard" sciences. Both hoped to create a synergy that would make it possible to go beyond the dualism that persists even today between social sciences and hard sciences.

### Structural Naturalism/Cultural Differentialism

Levi-Strauss's emphasis on naturalized structuralism was accompanied by something that seemed to be its opposite-an embrace of cultural differentialism. This was evident as early as 1971 when Levi-Strauss gave a new lecture on the topic "Race and Culture,"<sup>8</sup> an elaboration of his 1952 *Race and History*, but from a different perspective. Initially, he had considered that only culture was pertinent, but to the great surprise of UNESCO directors who criticized him for letting the fox into the chicken coop, Levi-Strauss took into account "the arrival of population genetics on the anthropological stage"<sup>9</sup> as something that could fundamentally reverse many theoretical implications. By naturalizing cultural attitudes, he acknowledged that one society could consider itself superior to another and could lock itself within its own value system. "This incommensurability . . . can even be the price to pay for preserving value systems for each spiritual family or community."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, cultural differentialism was not to be combated, since it could form the basis for potential cultural development. Moreover, cultural arms could not win antiracist battles because genetics was the basic key. It was in this sense that Levi-Strauss called for "a positive collaboration between geneticists and ethnologists."<sup>11</sup> He did not deny

the necessity of intercultural communication and claimed to have maintained his earlier stance. "In fact, in *Race and History*, I said both these things, but only half of what I said was retained. I felt the need to draw attention to the dark side of the moon. In *Race and History* I speak about this optimal diversity that is so necessary for human societies."<sup>12</sup> But we cannot ignore the slippage between the two texts, which led to naturalizing the structural paradigm. As Pierre-Andre Taguieff remarked, we have every right to fear the possible effects of this position of considering ethnocentric attitudes to be consubstantial with the human race, as universal entities and veritable a priori of the human condition. "By 'naturalizing' collective attitudes and inclinations such as hermeticism, self-preference, and opposition to others, the ethnologist basically legitimates ethnocentrism and xenophobia."<sup>13</sup>

The essential continuity between the early and the late Levi-Strauss lay essentially in his loyalty to a theoretical antihumanism, a basic tenet of the structural paradigm, which denounced the inability of Western humanism to establish humanity. Levi-Strauss proposed a naturalist approach, "that of man as a living being,"<sup>14</sup> by contrast to man as a moral, ethical being. In this, Levi-Strauss remained loyal to the ethnological tradition, preferring difference to universality, rootedness to uprootedness. "There are traces of two types of different universalisms in Levi-Strauss, He willingly accepts one—the biopsychological identity of the species. . . . On the other hand, the bad, or rather the false, universalism resists recognizing difference and amounts to a determined-and, unavoidably, a unifying-project."<sup>15</sup> His choice came from considering naturalism to be the only scientific level able to claim universality: it existed, but only biologically and genetically. It was already clear in Levi-Strauss's early work that his structural aim was to rediscover the bases of human culture on the basis of its physical-chemical substratum. Cognitive material was more appropriate than the phonological model for realizing this goal.

### Cognitivism: A Radical Naturalism

Dan Sperber's work went beyond Levi-Strauss in naturalizing the structural paradigm. In 1968, he had already considered only part of Levi-Strauss's work to be scientific, the part that targeted the mental structures of the human mind; he thus rejoined Chomskyan generativism in a rereading of Levi-Strauss. For Sperber, Chomsky's work meant that structuralist models were relegated to a prior stage of re-

search, too simplistic to be workable and overblown in their ambition to be adopted in every discipline. "No one is going to argue for structuralist models in linguistics anymore. As a theory, it's definitively over."<sup>16</sup>

Sperber favored radically dissociating the empirical or literary aspect of the anthropologist's work from his scientific work. "Two very different disciplines cohabitate in the term 'anthropology,' and they were in no way predisposed to a monogamous union.I"? On the one hand, Sperber wanted to see ethnography recover its independence as an interpretative genre and an idiographic discipline like history, as an approach to the specific; on the other hand, he wanted to see anthropology become a true science with human nature as its real object.

For anthropology's scientific character to be girded, according to Sperber, generativism and cognitivism had to come together. Fundamentally naturalist, Sperber believed that the issue was not one of shifting the social sciences to the core of the natural sciences such as they were, but rather broadening the realm of the natural sciences and changing their character. "When biology joined physics, the natural sciences were no longer quite the same."<sup>18</sup>

Sperber was sensitive to the development of the cognitive sciences, considered to be "the great postwar intellectual movement."<sup>19</sup> He hoped that a renewal springing from psychology, neurology, and robot theory would allow the social sciences to acquire the status of scientificity. But this assumed a radically materialist stance that rejected all but natural causes.

Analysis begins with the One, which is material reality. "There is structure in the brain, and much more than Levi-Strauss believes, in my opinion. This structure is fundamental, and imposes a very real constraint on the content of cultures."<sup>20</sup> The other-Popperian-hypothesis was to consider that any scientific theory had to be as explicit as possible, and thus must be able to test its hypotheses. Here, in order to avoid all forms of mechanical reductionism, Sperber added: "Mental constraints do not engender cultures, but the populations of millions of brains in a complex environment do."<sup>21</sup> Seen this way, Levi-Strauss had taken a step toward rational materialism by considering that the structure of symbolic systems was determined by universal human aptitudes and that the study of myths led to a more profound understanding of the human mind. But Sperber criticized him for not crossing the Rubicon since he remained attached to the idea

that myths carried meaning with them. "Paradoxically, we can argue that one of his great merits is to have freed the study of myths from the concern for establishing their meaning."<sup>22</sup> Sperber thus applauded one particular aspect of Levi-Strauss's structuralism—the ontological, naturalist dimension—but criticized its methodological, semiological aspect, which, as he saw it, belonged to literature.

Like generativism, cognitivism came from the other side of the Atlantic, and Sperber hoped to harden anthropological science with this new paradigm. "All the true scientific acquisitions are located within the framework of a materialist ontology."<sup>23</sup> This paradigm arose not from an empirical discovery, but from a purely logical one. In 1936, Alan Turing had made it possible to understand how matter could think and with this, the boundaries between the sciences of man and the natural sciences would finally be destroyed. Naturalizing the social science paradigm meant redefining the notion of representation on the basis of cognitivism. At the time, anthropology was essentially psychology, and Dan Sperber advocated "desemiologizing Levi-Strauss's approach,"<sup>24</sup> by breaking it down into two parts. The first would use neuroscientific discoveries that allowed one to gain access to mental phenomena, and the second would analyze socio-cultural facts using the model of "an epidemiology of representations,"<sup>25</sup> whose object would be not the representations themselves, which belonged to the first level, but their distribution. Explaining the processes of links and transformations would depend on both psychological and ecological factors.

However, we might wonder, as Lucien Scubla did, if social reality could really be accounted for on the basis of this exclusive recourse to mental structures, since many significations, representations, and rules escaped this level of explanation. Scubla saw at least two reasons for refusing to identify cultural anthropology with the study of mental structures and cognitive processes." First, symbolization was autonomous and could not be based on mental representations. Second, this analysis did not work for the technical dimension of cultural phenomena.

The cognitivist paradigm, which regrouped a constellation of various disciplines (including artificial intelligence, the psychology that developed in the United States in the sixties as a reaction against behaviorism, the neurosciences), also grew out of the changes in linguistics. Noam Chomsky had a direct and important influence on the

emergence and development of the cognitive sciences, in his search for deep structure, and the dissociation of the model of competence and the model of performance. Generativist linguists like Dan Sperber also looked to cognitivism for their scientific status, and rejected description as unscientific, concentrating instead on the ontological question of human nature. "Marxism and structuralism managed by arming themselves with a program of simple description."<sup>27</sup>

According to the Chomskyans, the new scientific imperative disqualified Saussure's distinctions: "Saussure's ideas are not worth much anymore."<sup>28</sup> Thus the signifier/signified duo and the fact of considering metaphor paradigmatically, or even the syntagm/paradigm pair, played only a very limited, if not completely meaningless, role in contemporary linguistics, as Nicolas Ruwet saw it. By contrast, what did help shed light on a metaphor was putting it into relation with a chain of complex operations. Since comparative grammar, already considered most proximate to the natural sciences because of its rigor, linguistics was particularly well positioned among the cognitive sciences.

The CREA (Center for Research on Applied Epistemology) at the *École Polytechnique* was one of the major research centers for the cognitive sciences in France. Its director, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, favored an interdisciplinary approach and offered a new system as a common framework of modelization to the various pioneering fronts of modern science." He directed the work of an entire team of researchers, including Dan Sperber, Daniel Andler, Francois Recanati, and Pierre Jacob, Dupuy rejected reductionism, and proposed irreducible complexity and the priority of narrow relationships between reality and disorder, rather than invariability. "One of the most important chapters of contemporary physics is the study of disordered systems."<sup>30</sup> According to Dupuy, a completely new dynamic allowed physicists of complex systems to get involved in biology, neurobiology, and artificial intelligence. This investigation lent value to the idea of autonomy, which seemed antiscientific until then, but which was not to be confused with the notion of mastery. "This autonomy is in synergy with what can always destroy it, and which has traditionally been called heteronomy."<sup>31</sup> For CREA researchers, structuralism led to a dead end; the social sciences had to be naturalized on the basis of cognitivism, which represented more than a third of the CREA researchers (twelve out of the thirty). "My idea was that we had to get the social sciences going again by using the advances of the natural and liv-

ing sciences, and Edgar Morin saw this before I did."<sup>32</sup> It was thus work in quantum mechanics, thermodynamics beyond the equilibrium thresholds, cybernetics, and the information sciences that generated fresh thinking on the subject, rather than a simple return to traditional or behaviorist psychology. "We can no longer affirm man, but we can look for his trace."<sup>33</sup>

This center had been founded in early 1981 by Jean-Marie Domenach under the name of Center for Research on Epistemology and Autonomy. Autonomy meant that social science research was conceived of as research on the human capacity for self-determination, without denying some form of determinism. But the risk of confusing the term with political autonomy at a time when "autonomous" anarchists were smashing windows and cars during street demonstrations led to renaming the center.

Domenach saw structuralism as an end point of the nineteenth-century intuition that all sciences should be reduced to a single science, the ambition that linked August Comte, Durkheim, and Levi-Strauss. "In my view, structuralism marked the end point, and therefore the end of this utopia."<sup>34</sup> Yet cognitivism basically assumed this goal by adopting and importing natural science concepts into the social sciences. In this sense, the determination to bridge the natural and social worlds persisted. But, unlike structuralism, which eliminated the break between nature and culture, Domenach placed himself within a self-referential dialectic. "Culture starts things going by permeating man with nature and nature with man. But one question continues to haunt me: how is it that the world increasingly resembles our preferred concepts? A world that is diasporizing, lebanonizing, and balkanizing corresponds in fact to these themes of complexity."<sup>35</sup> Seen this way, the binary model and structural duality were being routed. Paradoxical thinking took up where binary thinking stopped and better accounted for increasing complexity, "because it can sustain opposites at different levels."<sup>36</sup>

Cognitivism's success also carried along a whole philosophical current—an essentially Anglo-Saxon, analytical philosophy that had long been interested in mental grammars—which could rub shoulders with scientists in common research projects. This was something radically new in France. The CREA thus became a propitious context for this type of research—which was still rare in France. The philosopher Joelle Proust worked there and considered it a "sanctuary of analyti-

cal philosophy in France."3? She complained that French philosophy was primarily concerned with the history of philosophy and marginalized this activity, which also meant that "we are missing the development of living philosophy."38

The CNRS had undertaken a survey of the new cognitive disciplines. In July 1989, Jean-Pierre Changeux handed in his report to the Ministry of Research, which agreed to make a major effort to help develop cognitive sciences. But France still lagged significantly behind the Anglo-Saxon world.

Analytical philosophy resurrected the subject, which had been repressed by the structural paradigm. This was not the subject of traditional psychology, a stronghold of non science and freedom in which meaning flourished protected from systems of objectivization. To the contrary, this subject was naturalized, with the initial materialist hypotheses conceived of as the site of rules to be clarified. "Today, passionate work is being done on vision, language, the concept, and reasoning, which provides tremendous amounts of information about the computational aspect of mental activity."39

The connection between work on artificial intelligence and philosophy even looked for its predecessors. Hubert Dreyfus suggested that Kant's philosophy paved the way for artificial intelligence.i? joelle Proust also recognized that the work on the conditions making symbolic activity possible was a remake of Kant's project: "Kant's transcendental quest gave us the first example of this."<sup>41</sup> Paul Ricoeur had already said of Levi-Strauss in the sixties that he represented Kantianism without a transcendental subject. Although using manifestly different materials, an equally manifest continuity existed between the ambitions of the structural and cognitive projects.

## Neuronal Man?

During the first structural phase, this naturalization of thought had tried to use essentially cultural material and language rules as ballast. Now, it relied on important, recent progress in the neurosciences, represented at the College de France and at the molecular neurobiology laboratory at the Institut Pasteur by its director, Jean-Pierre Changeux, one of France's best-known scientists thanks to his 1983 *Neuronal Man*.<sup>42</sup> Changeux was a neurobiologist who saw all mental activities, reflexive as well as emotional, as the simple product of nervous impulses. In order to understand mental activity, a major epistemological

reversal had to occur whereby nature would no longer be conceived of as transformed by the human mind, a prisoner of its perceptual grids, but rather the human mind would be considered as nothing more than the simple expression of natural laws. "The cerebral machine is a mass of neurons and our problem amounts to looking for the cellular mechanisms that allow it to go from one level to another."<sup>43</sup> Complicated psychological activities could therefore be reduced and explained through the brain's neuronal architecture. Each of the ten billion neurons is connected with a hundred thousand others; a whole network circulates and provokes dendritic ecstasy, axonal orgasms, cortical explosions, bionic accelerations, and biochemical quakes. Of course this outline is both complicated and infinite in its possible associations, but Changeux nonetheless hoped to associate a singular mental object with each network of neuronal connections. He saw himself as the bearer of a science that had the potential to resolve the enigma of consciousness and of thought in general and which would be no more, as he said to the mathematician Alain Connes who contradicted him, than "the expression of a particular state of matter."<sup>44</sup>

We can understand the importance of this challenge for the social sciences, which were constructed at the interface between nature and culture in a refusal of all biological reductionism. These, like the many currents of psychology and psychoanalysis more than the other social sciences, were directly challenged by Changeux's conclusions that "man has nothing to do at all with the mind; it's enough to be a neuronal man."<sup>45</sup> Reinterpreting mental activities through their physical basis presented a challenge to materialist ontology, and psychoanalysts were particularly hostile to this physicalist and reductionist vision. The psychoanalyst Andre Green, for example, absolutely rejected Changeux's ideas as "completely unacceptable."<sup>46</sup> He did not deny the importance of neuronal activity, but preferred the ideas developed by Jean-Didier Vincent, a neuroendocrinologist who argued that endocrine glands secreted hormones that affect individual growth and basic needs.<sup>f</sup> Vincent considered that these hormones determined or affected even human passions and humors. Yet, "he never claimed that love was a hormonal product alone."<sup>48</sup>

Andre Green argued that with Changeux, "it was a way of staying in structuralism."<sup>49</sup> There were the familiar ambitions of reducing complex reality to a simple system with a limited number of variables that only needed to be hooked together and assembled, with the ad-

vantage in the case of the neurosciences of manipulating tangible and demonstrable entities from which human homogeneity could be deduced, "whereas the question of complexity and of heterogeneity required that we consider several communication and diffusion systems. There are systems that operate by neuronal contiguity, and others that work on the basis of hormonal diffusion. It's not the same thing. **In** addition, there is the complication of chemical mediators through synapses."<sup>50</sup> Green continued to believe in the construction of an autonomous psychoanalysis resistant to all reductionism, whether it be Lacan's elimination of affects in reducing the unconscious to the games of language or this attempt to naturalize the unconscious by reducing it to a neuronal game.

The social sciences certainly encountered obstacles in defending their specificity and independence as they were periodically caught in the reductive vise of scientific enterprises. Structural naturalism claimed to finally dissolve man in matter, and in this respect gave no definitive answer to the complexity of psychic activity that can only come from considering the "heterogeneity of the signifier."<sup>51</sup>

## *Thirty-eight*

### **Assimilating the Program**

Structuralism had been fading from theoretical perspectives since 1975. But even if it cast a duller media glow, it was not comatose. The structural paradigm continued to evolve and undergo profound changes. Unrealistic ambitions were no longer the order of the day, but modesty was. Necessary new alliances were forged to react to a new historical context.

But certain essentials remained unshakable. In order to appreciate them, we have to differentiate circumstantial responses from the substantial changes made thanks to the theoretical energies of the structuralist period. Like the history of any individual, the history of a triumphant paradigm hugs the contours of the period, propelling it to heights before it enters a new era of diminishing returns, and ultimately embarks on the calmer course of silent, slow history. The energies had not been vainly spent, the fireworks had simply glittered before the gorgeous artifice sputtered.

#### **An Enduring State of Mind**

This immensely rich, productive period left an enduring legacy in our changed vision of the world and our reading grid. Not simply sensationalism, this legacy has to do with the "digestive" functions of the growth of the social sciences. Seen this way, the return to structuralism should avoid what Althusser, faithful to Lenin's advice, counseled: think at the edges. Indeed, alternating only between structures alone,

and the individual alone, unfortunately missed the essential issue of the interaction between the two. An imprecise and unclear period unfolded; the earlier progress was deliberately forgotten to allow for a new beginning but in a different direction accompanied by the same intellectual terrorism.

This is why we must hope, along with Marc Guillaume, for a return "to the geological era of the social sciences, to which the hard sciences are accustomed."<sup>1</sup> According to this point of view, the social sciences would have known, with structuralism, the first stratum since Auguste Comte, which would not be so bad! Probing beyond the media effects of the structuralism of the eighties, we can in fact see that it continued to inspire much work in many disciplines and was, as Marcel Gauchet put it, a "multilevel phenomenon."<sup>2</sup>

One must differentiate in the phenomenon between the fascination for a program that promised to unify the social sciences and the specific methodologies that transmitted this hope to each of the disciplines with their specific objects of study and their particular situation with regard to the university and research, and given disciplinary competition, battles for a leadership role, ephemeral hegemonies, pilot positions, and tactical alliances that set fire to the university as the humanities and social sciences, modernity and tradition, waged their battles. Structuralism embodied a battle that identified it with all of French intellectual life in the latter half of the twentieth century. "There is a structuralist spirit that I believe is an enduring acquisition, and that, for me, is mixed with the century's advances. It has nothing to do with the local defeat or exhaustion of structuralist models as they operated in specific disciplines."<sup>3</sup>

In a diffuse yet profound way, all contemporary intellectual work became concerned with rigor and the determination to perceive meaningful wholes, and this was the tangible proof of the undeniable assimilation of structuralism's demands, even for those who needed to reject this period and proclaim its definitive death. This was also true for a new generation that, although it did not know the meaning of the term "structuralism," like the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, did structuralism without knowing it. Although Marcel Gauchet strongly criticized what structuralism represented, he did agree that "no one today reads any kind of text in the same way as before because a new kind of structural exigency has been introduced. Work has been done in every area on signifying ensembles with the idea of reconstituting coherence."<sup>4</sup>

Edgar Morin had also disputed structuralism's success from the beginning, and argued that its unreasonable pretensions of dissolving man in ostensibly scientific categories were misguided. But he admitted the merit of the structural-epistemic paradigm at certain levels, and credited it with three contributions: an emphasis on the idea of structure, a radical critique of the Western logos, and establishing the priority of symbolic.: This was how styles changed, but structuralism long remained, for many, a major theoretical perspective.

The psychoanalyst Jean Allouch saw a continuity where many believed structuralism to be dead and buried: "I don't see how we could be anything other than structuralists. I remain absolutely a structuralist because we can only conceive of the subject from a psychoanalytic point of view. If the subject has no structure, there is no possible treatment."<sup>6</sup>

Structuralism's practical dimension also explains why linguistics plays such an important role today in the growth of the "language industries"-information science and expert systems. Here, the transition from traditional humanistic university training to training engineers who work at IBM gives some insight into the real sense of the battles of the sixties under the banner of structural modernity.

Literature students could become operational scientists in the most advanced of modern technologies; structuralism had met the challenge. Sylvain Auroux even thought that more mathematical formalization was needed and that the mathematics and human sciences track (MAS) created at the university was appropriate, even if it has not yet met expectations. After the period of reversing traditional humanities, characterized by a determination to destroy old methods and an insatiable appetite for theory, came the pragmatic period of using new methods and operational systems. "Real problems are being raised now, such as 'Create a dictionary with a spell check for a secretary.' You wonder how you should structure the words."? There was a generational divide; the new generation felt that the battles of the sixties were over to the extent that it perceived tradition as having been abolished once and for all. Research was possible, armed with goals that were both new and integrated within modern technologies.

Some structuralist aspirations were abandoned, however. The most scientific of the structuralisms-Greimassian semiotics, which wanted to discover the truth of meaning in every language on the basis of the semiotic square alone-is today a marginal branch of linguistic

activity at the edges of the semiotics of religious discourse. The science that semiotics wanted to become cohabits well with religious exegesis. "No pastor in France is unfamiliar with semiotics since these people still have some faith and accept the rules of the game of not speaking about the referent."<sup>8</sup> In Quebec, for example, the only group to survive the wane of semiotic thinking analyzes evangelical texts.

Paul Valadier, the former director of the Jesuit journal *Etudes*, recognizes that one of structuralism's great merits was to have introduced "a new interpretation of biblical texts." Deconstructing Scripture was fully integrated into the structural vogue of 1960-65. Valadier recalls attending a convention of moralist and exegetical theologians on the semiotic approach to Scripture during this period. As in other disciplinary research, the historical model seemed to have flagged in its systematic search for setting the text in a specific cultural milieu defined in time and space. This tended to mechanistically reduce a text to its origins. "Structuralism helped us consider the fact of having a tale that was worth something as SUCH."<sup>10</sup> This attention to storytelling made it possible to restore creativity, along with the multiple variations of similar episodes in the life of Christ as told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But Valadier observed that the model was slightly worn, and tended to be repetitive. Structural semiotics in biblical matters continues, nonetheless, in a work group led by Louis Panier at the Catholic University of Lyons.<sup>11</sup>

### Francoise Heritier-Auge: Beyond Levi-Strauss

"A must read, henceforth," was the way *Le Monde* entitled the article announcing the publication of Levi-Strauss's *View from Afar* when it came out in 1983.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the waning of the structuralist model did not carry away with it the master and initiator of this current of thought. Levi-Strauss's method continued to inspire a good number of anthropologists, and a good part of the discipline. The Laboratory of Social Anthropology continued its scientific work in Levi-Strauss's tracks. Young anthropologists adopted his procedures, methods, and inspiration, even if theirs was a modernized version closer to cognitive anthropology, a tendency clearly corresponding to Levi-Strauss's own evolution toward naturalist structuralism.

Francoise Heritier-Auge, an extremely talented successor to Levi-Strauss, took over at the Laboratory of Social Anthropology in 1982. In 1984, she was named to the chair of comparative study of African

societies at the College de France. Her work on kinship rules, marriage, and filiation in the Omaha systems descends directly from Levi-Strauss's structuralism.<sup>P</sup>

Her inaugural lesson at the College de France did, however, show that she wanted to do more than simply manage the legacy, and work to enrich it by going in new directions and taking on new problems that reemphasized the scientific interest of the work. This was why she disregarded the opposition between structural immobility and the contingency of historical changes. "Every system, however articulated, manages openings, equivocal fringes, and weaknesses that let innovation take hold as a result of historical shocks.">' In addition, she saw society as a whole and not only as an ensemble of cultural entities, all the more so since African societies inextricably link three orders—meteorological, biological, and social—forged into a single signifying whole.

Heritier-Auge remained loyal to the spirit of Levi-Strauss when she contrasted two opposing modes of anthropological thinking. The first refers the incommunicable diversity of human cultures back to universals in which this diversity dissolves. The second mode, to which she subscribed, "associates the variable phenomenological given of societies to a few invariable, underlying mechanisms that order and assign meaning to this given."<sup>15</sup>

The most important departure from Levi-Strauss had to do with the body. For Francoise Heritier-Auge, the body and its humors played a central role in the study of symbolic representation. She was neither a culturalist nor a relativist, but set her research within a structural perspective in order to highlight the invariants that characterized the human mind and could restore a universal grammar. Not that she favored neuronal ideas, but she wanted to find out how the mind worked, beyond social and cultural differences, using the ancient themata inscribed in the body, and sexual difference. "I think that there is a unity in the human mind, that there are limited possibilities, and that the human mind is part of observation."<sup>16</sup> The grammar she planned to restore had claims to universality. This was part of her desire to surpass the Levi-Straussian framework, which, especially in *Mythologiques*, essentially focused on the Amerindian cultural zone.

The second difference was to start with the specific human body, and to derive all representational systems from it. Yet, "the most elementary thing of all, and against which human intelligence bangs its

head, is the difference between the sexes."<sup>17</sup> This opposition lets us understand that not all kinship possibilities have been realized, since certain systems that exist nowhere would introduce the superiority of women over men in the basic brother/sister couple. "Thus there is a constant in all human societies everywhere, which is masculine domination."<sup>18</sup> This is what Françoise Heritier-Auge called the differential valence of the sexes, which helps explain the choice of certain kinship systems and their rootedness in the body, in the articulation of the biological and the social.

Heritier-Auge encountered an incongruous kinship system in her work on the Samo in Burkina Faso. "I began by looking at this the way a hen looks at a knife,"<sup>19</sup> before realizing that she was in fact observing classical rules of semicomplex marriage systems. She carefully studied a series of Samo villages in which she collected genealogies by cross-referencing many sources of information. In addition, her informers helped her construct a kinship system and its conceivable marriages, by imagining all possible solutions to kinship. This participatory fieldwork was complicated since "the most experienced person in the world cannot immediately answer the question, 'What do you call the daughter of the daughter of the sister of the father of your mother, and can you marry her?'" First, you have to represent this in a diagram.<sup>20</sup> So she invented some simple ways to symbolize and went on to construct diagrams of from eight to ten generations, using little shells for women, stones or bits of glass for men, matches for the relationships and filiations. She could define the possibilities as well as the limits and transitions between the different zones.

In the second stage of the analysis, the information was entered into a database, which made it possible to characterize these practices as similar to the Omaha system, which declares that two individuals of the same sex born of the same couple are identical, but that if they are of different sexes, their difference is absolute. The differential valence between the sexes played a major role, and if the child born of a couple considered that the brother of his father was also his father and the sister of his mother was also his mother, by contrast, a sister is always considered—whether she is older or younger—to be the daughter of her brother. "She belongs to the next generation; so that the first travelers to discover the Indians in America and who saw ninety-year-old men calling a five-year-old girl their mother thought that they

really were dealing with savages who could not distinguish between their mothers and these children."21

Starting with this kinship area, Françoise Heritier-Auge began to examine all the bodily humors in their relationship with the social realm, and see some general structural coherence among the thought systems, irrespective of particularities of any given society. She looked for a universal grammar applicable to anthropology, starting with the body and the questions about the fertility-sterility opposition. Since the human mind worked by association, Heritier-Auge borrowed a biological metaphor of self-structured chains. "If you think about fertility, you automatically think about sterility. If you contrast fertility with sterility, you think about sexuality, which leads you to think about the body's humors: milk, sperm, blood. The idea is that these concepts function in self-structuring chains."22 In general, all of the links in the chain are present, even if some are missing or certain ones function as a hub leading in many potential directions or to particular conclusions. "This lets us describe anamorphoses as well as tomographies, which is to say clean cuts, and allows us to consider a conceptual field as the whole of potential choices."23

Levi-Straussian structural fertility thus continued to bear fruit, as it were, despite different themes expressing what had been initially repressed-s-Françoise Heritier-Auge's corporeal referent, and the natural referent in Philippe Descola's work. In the thesis he defended in 1983 and later published, Descola explored the symbolism and practice in Ashuar ecology, a jivaro group living in Equatorial Amazonia whose different forms of socializing nature he examined.>'

Like Levi-Strauss, he wanted to go beyond the nature/culture, real/symbolic, mythological/technological dyads, His comparisons of the forms of socializing nature and systems of natural representation shifted Levi-Strauss's viewpoint "by questioning the extremely heuristically fruitful idea in *Mythologiques* of an absolute nature/culture distinction."25 Analyzing a specific jivaro society showed that the distinctions varied and were not systematically organized around a man/nature opposition.

Nature returned to the fore, where for Levi-Strauss it had been an accessory in the lexicon of natural objects from which human groups select a limited number of signifying elements. Nature was a receptacle, a passive referent held at bay. "In this case, nature plays a very secondary role, whereas human nature, the structure of language and

of the mind, and therefore the structure of the brain is the hose directed toward nature."<sup>26</sup> Domesticated nature and the body returned, clearly demonstrating how much ground had been covered since the initial postulates paring away the referential context, and relegating it to a zone beyond the sign.

### New Semiological Vitality

The semiological program today is certainly less ambitious than it was in 1966, but it perseveres and even gains ground that seemed to resist it in the past. Philippe Hamon's work focused on description, ignored and undefined until then, leading it out of its "methodological degree zero."<sup>27</sup> Hamon appropriated different descriptive forms (chronography, topography, prosopography, ethopeia, prosopopoeia) in order to analyze their historical evolution. Until the Middle Ages, description "generally belonged to the epideictic genre, which demanded systematic description, especially in the form of praise, of certain people, places, moments in the year, monuments, or socially privileged objects."<sup>28</sup> Literature was to avoid description, which threatened the homogeneity of the literary work, and keep to its strictly social function of expressing an activity with a specific goal.

It was only at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth that the descriptive genre became independent of other textual practices. A new aesthetics was born around the character/decor/reader triad "description becoming this sort of tonal operator orienting the reader's consumption of the text at the heart of a general aesthetics of homogeneity."<sup>29</sup> Hamon looked at the formal range of literary possibilities of expression not only for its internal structure, but as part of a particular episteme that needed to be historicized. Assimilating the structuralist program also meant readdressing the referential framework, which clearly pointed to a historical ethic bearing an aesthetics undergoing change.

For many, Saussure's distinctions, the phonological work of the Prague Circle, of Jakobson, and of Trubetzkoy were the sine qua non for producing scientific linguistic work. Even if Bernard Laks considered Chomsky's work to be the veritable expression of science in the discipline, he still believed that the structuralist paradigm needed to persevere and that its legacy had to have its place within the most powerfully scientific paradigm. He and others assimilated the foundations of structuralism; they concurred that the ancestors and initiators

had played a major role, even if they were convinced that certain of the positions of the period were no longer valid.

Remarking on the prematurity of the hopes of a collaboration between linguists and literature types, Nicolas Ruwet argued that Roman Jakobson's ambitions incarnated the most unbounded hopes and were therefore somewhat responsible for the disappointment. Ruwet found the program that Jakobson defined in *Linguistics and Poetics* to be reasonable, but "the way in which Jakobson formulated it probably led to some confusion,"<sup>30</sup> for four reasons. First, Jakobson's style did not distinguish between hypotheses that were in fact affirmations, and arguments serving as demonstrations. Second, he defined the linguistic aspects of poetics, considered the "goal . . . of the message as such, and emphasizing the message for its own sake,"<sup>31</sup> which gave rise to every possible confusion around the nature of the message: was it content or was it form? And this led to the absurd idea that poetic language was its own referent. Ruwet thought that Jakobson wrongly used tropes to reduce poetry to a binary opposition wherein "he assimilated metaphor to the principle of equivalence and metonymy to contiguity."<sup>32</sup> Third, Jakobson had underestimated the role of syntax, the spinal column of poetic language, and the Chomskyan realm of predilection. Finally, Ruwet saw a certain lag between Jakobson's theoretical propositions and their practical applications. "Practice is often one jump ahead of theory, and concrete descriptions are richer than explicit theoretical propositions. . . . If I were to exaggerate slightly, I'd say that for Jakobson, the reverse is true, at least in poetics."<sup>33</sup>

In cinema, Christian Metz's work opened up whole new realms of cinematic semiology. To be sure, it attracted less attention than the critics' weekly film reviews, and no longer harbored the same hope as it had in the sixties. But it was nonetheless important for analyzing cinematic production. There was also a clear evolution in this area, particularly since the assimilation of the structural grid. Marc Vernet, for example, could claim that signification was structurally organized, but also that the stories told in films had an ideological dimension that had to be considered in order for the structure to function for the film spectator. "The pathos, the hook, comes essentially from conflicts in values, much more than from sentimentality."<sup>34</sup>

Whereas traditional criticism tended to see cinema reinvent itself with every new filmmaker and express specific and active historical

situations, Vernet looked more to the permanent aspects. For him, American cinema was an enduring myth, consumed by Americans who invested it with an ideology deeply rooted in the religion that produced their enduring value system. A similar tension ran through American film narratives of different genres, underscoring the contrast between the concern for homogeneity and the reality of a young federal nation of immigrants. Cinema operated as a "founding myth for the American nation," to use Éliane Marienstras's term.<sup>36</sup> It made the differences between eras relative and brought to the screen the concern for successful social cohesion in a territory the size of a continent. It thus made it possible to integrate a population that sensed its exclusion or eccentricity from the active poles of American culture—New York, Chicago, San Francisco. "That's why I do not see any difference between westerns and detective films."<sup>36</sup>

In both cases, the same kind of tension and different divisions of power between local and federal levels were played out. Westerns dramatized the conflict between a general system organized around the railroads and the logic of the coherence of local groups. Detective films contrasted the private eye with the FBI and raised the problem of the necessary articulation between these two protective logics: protecting the neighborhood, and defending and maintaining law and order on a national scale. "I am blown away by the permanence of forms, the permanence of structures. When Americans say that Hollywood did not change a bit between 1917 and 1960, I agree completely."<sup>37</sup>

Such an approach kept to structuralist givens, and ignored the connection between the work and the filmmaker. That is why such analyses ran counter to the biographical approach of contemporary cinematic discourse. In fact it appeared easier to understand a filmmaker's entire oeuvre; "there is this very fetishistic feeling among cinephiles of possessing the object as a book, whereas he generally feels that he is losing it, that it is inaccessible, which in fact is part of its charm."<sup>38</sup>

Even if it made less of a splash, cinematic semiology continued, albeit less visibly and with less of a concern for power. It no longer hoped to cover all ground or believed that it was a superb machine that could deal with everything like a superrobot that could produce the ultimate meaning given all the right ingredients. This semiology had to introduce the referent, whether in the form of ideology, as in Marc Vernet's work, or of psychoanalysis, in Christian Metz's later

work, which went from studying cinematic narrative structures to the metapsychology of the spectator. "I went from the message to the receiver."<sup>39</sup> Removed from styles, semiological research enriched cinematographic readings and made it possible to diffuse a certain number of analytical tools, which were then assimilated by criticism. Today, everyone agrees that films are coded, even if there is no systematic study of each individual film, whereas "ten years ago, this idea was much less accepted, and in fact, was barely accepted at all."<sup>40</sup>

### Francois Ewald and Foucault's Legacy

Foucault left no school or orthodoxy behind him, but he so marked an entire generation that many felt inspired by his work without having any hagiographic relationship with it. This was the spirit in which, on May 31, 1986, thirty academics who had worked with Michel Foucault created an association that eventually produced the Michel Foucault Center. Its president was Francois Ewald. This center aspired to be a meeting place for work on or inspired by Foucault, and to bring together the most complete collection possible of available archives.<sup>f</sup> An international colloquium was organized January 9-11, 1988, at the Rond-Point Theater, where talks were given by more than thirty international researchers (later published by Seuil).<sup>42</sup> The colloquium demonstrated how many ways there were to elucidate Foucault's work, and made it possible to set these into the context of the history of philosophy, with praise or criticism for their ethical and political consequences.

Foucauldian insights continued to affect dynamic thinking and they found an heir in Francois Ewald, whose work on law was quite clearly inspired by Foucault's deconstruction. Author of *The Providence State*,<sup>43</sup> Ewald targeted the philosophy of law and its evidence just as Foucault had attacked psychiatric discourse.

Ewald contrasted the philosophy of law with the idea that law exists only through legal practices. Current concepts merely reflected these practices, whose genealogy remained unwritten. Applying Foucauldian historicization to law, he demystified the myth of legal unity, which he saw operating as a plurality within the space of dispersion. "Reducing or generalizing something is always false. Philosophies of law always work by assimilation."<sup>44</sup>

As Ewald saw it, law, which is essentially civil law, was not really based on the fact of punishing, but on the fact of dividing sums of

money. This was to be understood concretely rather than through its repressive nature. "Another completely Foucauldian problem is the way in which objectivity is established, whether as a science or knowledge that passes for being true."<sup>45</sup>

In law, Ewald encountered the dialectization between power and knowledge that ran throughout Foucault's work and that had immense heuristic value here. What characterizes a legal judgment is that its validity stems from its objectivity, not arbitrary decisions. This objectivity evolves and needed to be historicized, as Foucault had done. "Law is a very Foucauldian object since it is also simultaneously an entirely historical object."<sup>46</sup>

Law evolves continuously. The Civil Code is generally thought to have gone unchanged since 1804, but barely a single article has remained the same as when it was written. The researcher must painstakingly correlate the multitude of legal practices, by historicizing them. Once again, we hear overtones of Foucault, for whom "law is a technique."<sup>47</sup> Instead of viewing law as starting with a basic axiom from which legal practices derive, the reverse approach was to be taken, revealing the diversity of these practices and the partitions that confine each legal expert to a particular area. "Legal practitioners never have anything to do with the law in their practices."<sup>48</sup> Insurance lawyers generally know their area and no other, whereas the constitutional expert knows nothing about civil law. As much by his object of investigation as by his methodology, Francois Ewald demonstrated the ongoing productivity of Foucault's insights.

### The Epistemological Line

Foucault's nomination at the College de France to the chair of comparative epistemology, which was shepherded by Gilles Gaston-Granger, as we saw in volume 1, also bore witness to the continuity of the concern for epistemology that dominated the period of triumphant structuralism. Gaston-Granger saw his work going from his master, Gueroult, to Foucault, via Hyppolite. And yet he did not go as far as Hyppolite had in terms of historicizing knowledge. His choice of the name of the chair reveals this: the term "history" is absent. "The philosophy of science, as I have already tried to practice it for many years, does not emphasize history."<sup>49</sup> He took a less relativistic view than Foucault had, and, like Kuhn, distinguished between two kinds of evolution of knowledge: socialization, in which different paradigms

compete with each other (the protoscience stage, still strongly influenced by ideology), and a second mode involving a rupture based on which knowledge becomes truly scientific. In keeping with Bachelard and Foucault, Gaston-Granger gave priority to discontinuities ("The essential epistemological fact is rupture"),<sup>50</sup> but this observation did not imply that there was no cumulative scientific progress or the use of knowledge prior to the new scientific language. "These successive explosions of theoretical systems make true progress possible."<sup>51</sup>

There were continuities, therefore, rather than enigmatic reversals of weightless epistemic bases that might obscure the underlying progress. For Gaston-Granger, the epistemologist must distinguish two kinds of relationships between knowledge and its external factors: the first protoscientific stage during which the context plays a major role, and established scientific knowledge, after the epistemological break, in the course of which "exogenous determinations stop playing the role of setting its internal development into motion."<sup>52</sup>

Gaston-Granger rejected the false alternatives of continuity and discontinuity; the epistemologist's work was to spot dynamic imbalances that alone can help reconcile the creative invention of science and the framework of prior activity in which it is set.

### The Liberal Filiation

The liberal branch, essentially represented by Jean-Marie Benoist, author of *The Structural Revolution*,<sup>53</sup> was another aspect of structuralism's assimilation. Benoist essentially took his inspiration from structuralism, and his work evolved in many directions. The nature of the collection he directed at PUF until his death in July 1990 was expressed by its title, "Crossroads,"<sup>54</sup> which already suggested its interdisciplinarity and fundamentally epistemological concerns. Gerald Holton's *The Scientific Invention*,<sup>55</sup> which Benoist published in 1982, also belonged to the new thinking opened up by Bachelard and structuralism. A physicist and historian of science, Holton emphasized the fundamental role of themata-theoretical images that underlie a scientific activity that is not reducible to empirical observation-in scientific creativity. In another register and in the same collection, John Rajchman's *Foucault or the Freedom to Know*<sup>56</sup> demonstrated how fruitful the structuralist transition was, and its ongoing polemic against all forms of positivism. "It's a search for the fundamental imaginary structures and epistemes, of what is rich in epistemological configura-

tions before they have been rationalized or purified by a positivist superego. That's what I owe to structural intelligence." 57

Benoist did not limit himself to epistemology. He also saw structuralism as a very productive heuristic tool in political philosophy. In *The Tools of Freedom*,<sup>58</sup> he proposed to base the free city and civil society on the social contract and the separation of powers in order to establish a "guarantor state" that holds a managerial state at bay. His primary inspiration for working out what he presented as a critique of liberal reason was Kantianism minus its transcendental subject. The issue was to consider the multipolar whole of civil society in which the libertarian and the liberal dialogue with one other. "Structuralism helped us better think about the questions of the political unconscious, of overdetermination of a certain number of schemas, of entities to be 'deideologized' and 'deontologized.'"<sup>59</sup>

At the end of his life, Jean-Marie Benoist extended structural intelligibility to studies on polemology, defense, and strategy, by making the notion of front relative using essentially symbolic procedures called indirect strategies. Since the supreme art of warfare consisted in making the enemy give up without fighting, it was important to see the theory of dissuasion as a set of interdependencies and to place this theory "in its structural richness."<sup>60</sup>

## The Marxist Filiation

Marxism also continued to draw inspiration from the structural method. Maurice Godelier's effort to reconcile the two offers a good example. Proximate yet distant from Althusserian ideas, Godelier never argued for a mechanistic Marxism but saw an increasingly muted boundary between material and ideal. "Some piece of the ideal is at the heart of man's material relationship with nature."<sup>61</sup>

He broke with the simple causality characteristic of Marxist thinking at the time, and made anthropology receptive to economics and to social relations of production, something that Levi-Straussian structuralism had not done. Godelier rediscovered Marx in the idea of social totality, the dynamics of reproduction, and the concern to discover "a hierarchy of constraints and functions that allow this reproduction."<sup>62</sup> Environment, for him, was not a simple repertory of constraints and techniques but was also defined by its imaginary dimensions. His idea of productive forces included the structural perspective on the mind and language, which he considered essential.

Levi-Strauss's work on kinship structures and the symbolic thus led Marxist anthropology, as Godelier conceived it, to look at the importance of the ideal in reality, its fundamental role in behavior norms, in value judgments that no longer simply reflected reality, but were active interpretations in its reproduction.

Even if the revolution was basically over, the diverse uses of the structural method in very different disciplines by researchers totally opposed to each other ideologically show that despite the highly proclaimed burial of structuralism, it continued to infuse new disciplines with new thinking.

### The Systemic Extension

The many rapprochements taking place around the idea of system and of a science of systems using theories of self-organization have something to do with the structuralism of the sixties, despite the perceptible shifts in the new paradigm. First, like structuralism, systemism was defined above all by its project rather than its object. We find the same articulation around the most modern scientific progress, the same concern for multidimensionality and pluridisciplinary that redrew disciplinary boundaries. The troika of structuralism-linguistics/anthropology/psychoanalysis-which wanted to dissolve man, was replaced by a whole constellation of communication sciences: information science, computation science, cognitive science, and organizational science. In both cases, the cybernetics model-with its notion of systemic self-regulation and then the connection between natural and artificial systems and concepts of functional black boxes, behaviors, and finalized subsystems-played a major role. Defined in 1948 by the mathematician Norbert Wiener, cybernetics could invest and modelize biology, electronics, economics, and psychology. From structuralism to systemism, one found the same globalist postulate according to which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the same concern for universals. The science of systems could be seen partly as the offspring of two founding paradigms: cybernetics and structuralism.O

And yet, because of a certain number of fundamental shifts, the science of systems could not be reduced to a simple adoption of the structuralist legacy. During the structuralist period, order, its reproduction, and invariability took precedence, but these slowly yielded to theories about the emergence and order born of noise and disorder. These neither objectified man nor reduced him to a dead body about

to be autopsied, but rather made it possible to conceive of such essential notions as independence, interaction, and dialogics among the different levels-biological, anthropological, and social. Joel de Rosnay saw the systemic revolution as the advent of a new cultures" that included a new concept: after the microscope for the infinitely small, and the telescope for the infinitely large, there was the macroscope for the infinitely complex. This macroscope could filter details and amplify different instances of reality. "There is a common approach that allows us to better understand and describe organized complexity."<sup>65</sup> Scholarly work in fact plunged us into a hot universe of events, irreversibility, and smoke, a far cry from the crystalline ambitions of structuralism and its immobile temporality.

Comte, Durkheim, and then structuralism all posited a reified observer, a negated subjectivity, a local closure of analysis using variables belonging to the model, the use of laws as the products of its constants, and nothing else. Today, all of this has been seriously shaken by discoveries that emphasize unforeseeable and irreversible processes of emergence of structured apparatuses. Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, worked out a theory of "dissipative structures" that let us understand the creation of order based on disorder. "One of the fundamental discoveries of the last decades is precisely that of the instability of elementary particles."<sup>66</sup> Classical physics gains in levels, and the aleatory plays an increasingly important role.

In this new approach to matter, temporality, which had been perceived as disruptive to the scientific spirit, reclaimed its place at the center of the dialogic process between science, culture, and society. "Yesterday, science spoke to us of eternal laws. Today, it speaks to us about the history of the universe or of matter, whence a clear rapprochement with the social sciences."<sup>67</sup> The first theory of self-organizing systems had been worked out in the fifties around Heinz von Foerster and was adopted and applied to living systems in 1972 and largely disseminated by Henri Atlan, a biologist and philosopher.s" Atlan popularized the idea of chance as an organizing principle in the form of order through noise.

The other big departure from structuralism was the return of the Subject in this systemic constellation. The observer was completely integrated and invested in his observation. For Edgar Morin, this was essential but did not mean abandoning all forms of objectivity. It did mean abandoning the various scientist illusions. The scholar was

firmly rooted in the field he modeled, and the science he favored was indissociable from consciousness." Bernard d'Espagnat, a physicist, went farthest in this reintroduction of the Subject. He considered, in fact, that no universe could be conceived independently of the person studying it, given the most recent discoveries. "As I see it, there is a true objectivity, but it is weak. That is what I call intersubjectivity."<sup>70</sup>

The return of the Subject, of historicity, of meaning? The so-called hard sciences were softening and offering very new and different directions for the social sciences than those of the grand structural era. These same hard sciences had been heuristically used to sweep those elements from the social sciences. Today, they are the basis for its rehabilitation with an eye to constructing an all-embracing science of man.

## Part V

### *Time, Space, the Dialogic*

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## *Thirty-nine*

### **Clio in Exile**

Structuralism temporarily orphaned Clio, the muse of history, so as to break with classical philosophy and its essentially historical and etymological preoccupations. When synchrony was given priority, it corresponded to a search for language's inner logic, especially since Saussure's work had furthered linguistic description and eventually helped to rekindle interest in living, spoken languages. Until then, linguists had worked on historically verifiable written texts of dead languages, which is to say on states of language that could be situated within comparative, diachronic studies.

This historical uprooting was the price linguistics was forced to pay to become a method able to deal with contemporary European vernaculars, dialects, regional languages, and other spoken languages of the colonized world, and in particular of Africa. The radical, productive break later became a model for establishing the scientificity of the social sciences.

As the twentieth century opened and turned away from the historicism of the nineteenth century, a real crisis in thinking about time occurred. Various disciplines studying man were swept along by this crisis. This was all the more true in that the upheavals of twentieth-century history reinforced the withdrawal from historicity, which was further encouraged by disillusionment with world events, a disillusionment that deepened at each stage.

## The End of History?

Science replaced the philosophy of history as the measure of modernity, with the double play of the natural and the social sciences. Some believed that Hegel's analysis and pronouncement of the end of history had been realized. "That didn't mean that history had stopped, but that we had entered into the long process of the end of history, which could last for millenia."<sup>1</sup> Taking immobile time unfolding within an infinite present as a measure, structuralism simply expressed this state of historical weightlessness, beyond its creation of a method better suited to synchrony than to diachrony. Thus it was natural that linguistic structuralism met with such a resounding response in speculative structuralism, for, alongside all the disciplines of the social sciences, it implicated philosophical thinking. We might see a relationship between a form of thought that preferred invariants and a society in which rupture no longer belonged to a possible, or even desirable, future. "I don't see what else could happen other than what the French Revolution and German idealism called for: equality and fraternity for all men on earth."<sup>2</sup> All of the events of the twentieth century seemed to belong to this heritage, without contributing anything significantly new to these founding principles. The century offered little beyond a deluge of cataclysms that ever more deeply fissured the rational optimism incarnated in nineteenth-century history, and destroyed all teleology, whether conservative or revolutionary.

It was no longer possible to believe that the historical process could be axiologically oriented. Given the traumas of the twentieth century, structuralist thinking generated no teleology of decadence with which to replace nineteenth-century faith in progress. Knowledge no longer justified any sense of history for those structuralists who looked to Spinoza on this point, since he had refused any idea of meaning in history. "Althusser's reasons for admiring Spinoza seem excellent to me. The greatest reason for being a Spinozist was that there is no meaning in history."<sup>3</sup> Levi-Strauss discernibly negated historicity and felt that it progressively degenerated in the ongoing erosion of the true links and intermediary networks of social life.

This political and heuristically generated crisis of history nourished a current of thinking that favored stability, immutability, the search for invariants, and the rapid evolution beyond what initially seemed to be a simple analytical method about the vision of the world.

History was frozen in a structural crystal in the early days of structuralism. But as it evolved, having radically eliminated the meaning of history for the fixedness of its object, history was taken into account, but only to better deconstruct it from within. This was Foucault's objective, from a Nietzschean perspective, and Derrida's, from a Heideggerian point of view. For Levi-Strauss in anthropology and Piaget in psychology, structuralism was an instrument of emancipation from philosophy, a globalizing discourse that diluted the singularity and autonomy of their own fields of scientific experimentation. But philosophers quickly caught up with them, responding to the challenge in order to recuperate their program by changing their epistemological positions and making them into a philosophy. Seen until then as the field of possibilities, history was experienced as the closure if not the slow forgetting of Being, in a Heideggerian perspective.

### The Comtism of the Social Sciences

Clio bowed to the ambitions of the social sciences to be a middle-ground discourse between the humanities and the natural sciences. They thus followed in Auguste Comte's path, as forerunners of a new positive era for which progress, philosophically speaking, meant only the progress of order. Consequently, any element of disorder that might disturb balances elicited mistrust. The cold society thus incarnated the ideal object, just as myth, by definition, could not be modified. Of course, for Levi-Strauss, this reference to the opposition between cold and warm-or traditional and modern-societies had provoked many a misunderstanding. "These are notions without any heuristic value. There is a lot of cold in the warm and warm in the cold, in all places and at all times. In the second place, these properties are not intrinsic to societies but were distinctions referring to the manner in which these societies conceive of themselves."<sup>4</sup> Yet the structure being sought was indeed this canonical hierarchization that immobilized time, suspending its movement in its reproduction.

Caught between mirror and smoke, in Henri Atlan's expression, the social sciences chose the mirror-structure-rather than smoke, or nonstructure. Like biologists caught between the ghost and the corpse in their microscopic study of living cells, the sciences of man chose to study a dead and dissected body, whereas man really was closer to a moving and ungraspable ghost. "There is a delightful expression by

George Steiner, 'A tree has roots, man has legs.' There's the whole problem in a nutshell."<sup>5</sup>

And yet, the structural object of predilection was determined by small and hermetic societies like the Bororos, eternally frozen according to Levi-Strauss's description, having set a very complicated machinery into motion to prevent change, rejecting all forms of heteronomy, and living in utter independence. This type of society incontrovertibly served as a paradigm to define the anthropological approach, and at the same time enabled a whole generation to abandon Marxist teleology.

This vision of a reposed time fully corresponded with the linguistic rejection of diachrony in favor of synchrony. "I denied history. From the moment you start dealing with synchronic structures, that's what dominates."<sup>6</sup> Antihistoricism was thus a fundamental part of the structural paradigm, which rejoined Karl Popper's remarks along other paths ("Our approach seeks to refute historicism"),<sup>7</sup> Popper also proposed freeing the social sciences from historical tutelage by denying any possibility of theoretical history.

This negation could destabilize a certain number of genetic and somewhat mechanical causalities because it opened up the complex synchronic organizations and made it possible to go beyond simple description. In this respect, nineteenth-century historicism was beneficial, so long as the sense of movement and mobility of structure were recuperated, after the break.

### Lacanian Antihistoricism

Freud, as he was revisited by Lacan, was somewhat relieved of his historical dimension in order to ensure that psychoanalysis be elevated to the ranks of a science. For Lacan, history was "this thing that I detest for the best reasons."<sup>8</sup> Yet, in 1945 he had undertaken to consider history while still influenced by Kojève's Hegel-inspired teaching. The *Écrits* were marked by this thinking, as, for example, in Lacan's 1945 article "Logical Time and of the Assertion of Anticipated Certitude."

Lacan restored time's essential value using the fable of the three prisoners. A prison director decides to have three prize prisoners plead before him. He will free the most logical prisoner. Holding five disks—three white and two black—the prison director places one disk on each of the prisoners' backs. The first prisoner to logically deduce the color of the disk on his back would be freed. Lacan compared the logi-

cal hypotheses that the prisoners could make, and observed the prevalence of "the temporal rather than the spatial structure of the logical process."? In a very Hegelian manner, Lacan saw that time was structured in three successive modulated moments: a time for looking, a time for understanding, and the moment for concluding. Temporality was decisive here in two ways. First, as the necessary succession of moments:

Looking is quickly over, as Lacan says, it's synchronic, that's the structure. The second moment is the one that in Aristotle corresponds to deliberation, and already allows for considering the other moments, without it being the time of the others. In order to come to a decision, there must be a break, an anticipated decision, since it is urgent and the others are there.<sup>1</sup>

Next, temporality is present as the determining cause of the urgency of the subject's precipitated action since he must anticipate his certainty, "because of the temporal tension for which he is subjectively responsible."<sup>11</sup>

Going quickly from Hegel to Heidegger and from dialectics to phonology, reinforced by Levi-Straussian structuralism, Lacan rejected his earlier position on historicity. Above all, he refused to acknowledge that history had any kind of meaning whatsoever. This was paradoxical, to say the least, for an analyst whose object of study, the unconscious, "implies history."<sup>12</sup> As a test of reality, analytic practice is shot through with historicity and dates certain events as meaningful for the subject. The structure of the historical world as Lacan conceived it was defined by four existential modes or discourses whose logic implied a revolution, in the literal sense of the word. Yet these discourses were essentially extracted from their contexts. The discourse of the Master was metaphysical, and by definition had no history. Hysterical discourse, or the discourse of science, considered history to be an illusion. University discourse, philosophical or hermeneutic discourse, "again denied history by considering that at the beginning there was fullness, at best reproduced each time by a great author, and at worst lost in an irreversible decadence."<sup>13</sup> Only the fourth, analytic discourse, could give voice to the unconscious. It could be historical as an act, but on the condition that it submit "the discourses which it sets to the synchrony of the spoken word."<sup>14</sup> It referred only to a pure, dehistoricized Signifier.

If there is any temporality at all in Lacan, it has more to do with a tragic, Heideggerian notion of historicity of the loss of the object, as an always more profound loss of Being in being, or of the Subject of desire with respect to the first Signifier. This temporality has less to do with the particular history of the subject than with an original lack, specific to the human species, an unconscious of language or of topological figures whose reality is transindividual. This was how Lacan parted ways from Levi-Strauss's initial position on mental structures as disincarnated combinations. Such a position, of course, made it possible to reject a certain psychologism and to more solidly establish the bases of psychoanalysis, so long as the future was open. However, the Lacanian subject, enclosed within its structure, could hope for little more in the future than the simple repetition of its past in a synchronic universe. "There is an empty and purely abstract time, without any efficacy."<sup>15</sup>

Once a fervent Lacanian, Elisabeth Roudinesco defected from Lacan partly because of his denial of history. The model of the four circular discourses made it possible "to prevent the historicization of Lacan's ideas, presented as a whole."<sup>16</sup> Dehistoricization made the return to Freud possible starting from Lacan's ideas. Lacanians could invert the march of history by looking for the theory of the Signifier or the Real/Symbolic/Imaginary trilogy in Freud. In her *History of Psychoanalysis*, Elisabeth Roudinesco reacted against this tendency to consider psychoanalysis outside of its context, which made it possible to understand how, in 1936, Lacan was not the same Lacan as he was in 1950 or in 1970. The reader could also better situate the flow of paradigms from one discipline to another, and evaluate the contribution of concepts presented as atemporal once the subject-Lacan became the privileged site of passage.

Rene Major disclosed the very circumstantial and unspoken events, which referred quite precisely to the lived experience of Freudian thinking and to Lacan's position in the history of psychoanalysis. He did this by arguing for an analogy between *The Seminar on the Purloined Letter* (1955) and *The Direction of the Cure* (1953). In both cases, Lacan excluded, or neutralized, the narrator's position, about which Derrida had already developed his critique in "The Truth Factor" (1975).<sup>17</sup>

Just as Lacan put the interpreter in Dupin's position in *The Purloined Letter*, he put the analyst in a position of exteriority in *The Di-*

*rection of the Cure*. On the one hand, Major considered that Lacan was led in fact to identify with one of the protagonists of Poe's tale, and that no domination was possible from whatever position: "I tried to show that the interpreter could only successively interpret the different places, by identifying with each of the protagonists and by unidentifying with himself. . . . I spoke about the dislocation of the tale, and of the narrator's or the interpreter's position."<sup>18</sup>

Major reintroduced the historical context that had been so important for working out the theory.<sup>19</sup> Lacan's structuralism had been used to veil the real issues underlying the letter's circulation. But at the same time as it veiled it also unveiled the analogy that Major's deconstruction of Lacan's text brought to light when he argued that something made it possible for Dupin to find the letter despite everything. The key was the women between him and the minister D, just as there was a woman in the commentary on Freud's work between Lacan and Nacht in the fifties-Marie Bonaparte, officially designated as the recipient of the Freudian letter and the only person in France to interpret his work. "The analogy between the events of real life, a series of lectures *en abîme*, and a theory about the analytic cure is perhaps the most 'analogical' thinking about Edgar Poe's writing and the three tales."<sup>20</sup>

Major thus demonstrated that deconstruction could recuperate what the structural grid had eliminated. He brought out the hidden signified beneath the resisting bar that separated it from the signifying chain, by historicizing the textual approach. What Lacan in fact wanted to signify when he said that the letter-even intercepted-always reached its destination was that Freudian teaching could rise from the ashes that were suffocating it, which is to say from under Marie Bonaparte's mortifying authority.

### A Nonteleological Historicity

History became necessary, but not nineteenth-century historicism since it could no longer be teleological after the structural rupture, and had to maintain its universalism. Structuralism had clearly showed the limits of historicism and the impossibility of thinking old categories in the old ways. Recognizing alterity made it possible to relativize scientific knowledge and to situate it historically. But in order to avoid all pure relativism, reality still needed to be anchored in order to imagine a scientific approach, which meant the return of the referent.

Consequently, Sylvain Auroux defined the task of the historical epistemology of the sciences of language as that of establishing "a true theory of correct data."<sup>21</sup> This would not be successive descriptions, but a reconstruction of complex networks of hypotheses and the definition of propositions with some truth value, assignable to specific disciplines. A synchronic study of systems and their connections was quite clearly going to be the first stage in a historicized form of structuralized thinking: "Studying systems seems to be a forerunner to the study of their transformations. As long as we limit ourselves to this, however, we will not have any very exact ideas about the production of knowledge."<sup>22</sup> These two moments made it possible to avoid the false alternative of teleological continuity and relativist discontinuity.

The static aspect of early structuralism and neostructuralist discontinuity could also be countered by preserving the contributions of the structural method and endogenous and exogenous logics, which worked at transforming systems and would help create something new, thanks to a qualitative leap, while preserving a good part of the old system in the new organization. Patrick Tort argued for this position in his critique of *Classificatory Reason*,<sup>23</sup> when he examined scientific evolution, the inherent ruptures of its innovations, and the necessary connection with external phenomena that call equilibriums into question.

Tort argued for a heuristic model that could restore historical dynamism, claiming that the issue was central and linked with various antagonistic strategies. Unlike Foucault, who saw immobile discursive anchors, Tort thus located periods of discursive crises that revealed internal incompatibilities and tensions belonging to the contradictions of discursive units invested in external issues: "Agassiz's crisis of fixism, the crisis of distinction in the 'human reign' in De Quatrefages, a 'transformnationist' subversion of the grand taxonomical project in Adanson's 'natural method,' the external conflict and internal inconsistencies in Comte's and Spencer's scientific classifications, the conflict of the Hegelian and Darwinian models in Schleicher's linguistic evolutionism . . ." <sup>24</sup>

### From Suspended Time to Time Regained

History, seen from this point of view, could not be reduced to the role of simple external contingency, as Levi-Strauss had done when he suggested that the transition from mythology to philosophy in Greece

could have happened anywhere, and was therefore simply the result of a fortuitous miracle. Jean-Pierre Vernant's school of anthropology clearly demonstrated, on the contrary, that this break shed light on the homologies between the birth of philosophical discourse and the formation of the world of the city of equals, where a civic norm broke radically with the gentile tradition. Negating history or reducing it to pure contingency therefore missed some of the essential coherence of different levels. And yet, this negation was necessary, as Maurice Godelier saw it, for breaking with nineteenth-century historicism and the search for origins—of the family, of the state, of property. The trap had to be broken out of: "We cannot put genesis before structure. The classical scientific method begins by studying the structure of objects before understanding their origins."<sup>25</sup> This was only the beginning of an approach that had to understand the creative and innovative capacity of change as well as the adaptations that often served to keep the structure in place. For things to remain the same and the structure to repeat itself, constant change was necessary. Mathematicians, physicists, and biologists increasingly integrated temporal variability into their analyses and equations, as we have seen. Today, the high point of knowledge in the United States is represented by the most refined mathematical-logical-symbolic heavy informatics bases known as chaosology, the decoding of chaos seen as the principal figure of the universe. A dynamic interpretation of things is tending to replace the structural static vision, something Georges Balandier congratulated himself on since he had always argued for dynamic anthropology and sociology.<sup>P</sup> It is in fact symptomatic to read in Philippe Kourilsky, a biologist, something which could have applied just as easily to recent changes in the social sciences: "The fact is that today molecular biology uses static representations above all. I think they will give way to dynamic representations."<sup>27</sup>

Some, such as Cerard Genette, saw history's exclusion from structuralism in the social sciences and humanities in the seventies as "temporarily putting things in parentheses, a methodical suspension."<sup>28</sup> Genette favored the approach which considered historicity without arguing for a return to traditional historicism. He distinguished the history of literature as the simple succession of monographs, and literary history as Gustave Lanson had defined it at the turn of the century: restoring the social conditions of literary production and reception. Although this program was never realized, it was staunchly

defended later on by Lucien Febvre in 1941, and then by Roland Barthes in 1960.

A third form of literary history studied works as historical documents that illustrated period sensibilities. Lucien Goldmann is the best-known practitioner of this type of literary history. Gerard Genette, however, criticized its very classical notion of reflection and extra-literariness. He preferred another form of historicity that "would have literature as its primary and ultimate object: a history of literature taken in and for itself."<sup>29</sup> The work and the author were both rejected as being too singular; this kind of history was not conceived of as a science of successive changes but as a science of transformations. Genette thus remained a structuralist by considering the object of predilection for this new history of literature to be variations of forms: rhetorical codes, narrative techniques, and poetic structures. "This history essentially still needs to be written."<sup>30</sup>

This meant going beyond the incompatibility of synchronic and diachronic analyses. Genette defended "structural history" as the only true history. It was only later that its analysis could be meaningfully correlated with general history.

## **A Topo-Logic**

The gap between structuralism and history offered the possibility of undertaking synchronic studies. Throughout the period, there were clearly big changes afoot, from an initial preference for the dialectic of temporalities, the search for origins, to a spatial logic with its multiple games of positions. It became increasingly important to delineate the limits of possible spatial relationships.

The abundance of geographical terminology for referring to inside, outside, horizons, limits, boundaries, and borders spawned a whole quasi-theatrical scenography that Roland Barthes used magnificently in analyzing Racinian theater.' But the structuralist landscape was not a pale copy of the geographer's. By definition, it was void of content and meaning. According to Levi-Strauss, this landscape concerned nothing more than the position of the elements coming together to compose its structure. Such a purely abstract universe, empty of concrete sites, was in fact "properly structural, which is to say, topological."<sup>2</sup>

jacques Lacan, more so than Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Claude Levi-Strauss, adopted the combinations of geographical discourse when he combined spatial logics into a more mathematical logic inspired by Frege. Lacan aspired to a psychoanalytic science, by manipulating the Mobius strip, for example, or by using differential topography. He was influenced by that branch of mathematics, growing out of Riemann's work, that sought to establish notions of limits

and continuities by studying the properties of invariable geometric figures.

### The Place of the Lack

Structuralist topology cut the nerves of transcendent spatial contents cold. A logic of ties and their possible combinations replaced them and gutted structural elements of any specific meaning, except as the product of the interplay of combinations. Structuralism had imposed a change; from observation the issue had become the conditions that made observation possible. What indeed were the conditions of this possibility whose meaningful logic had to be reconstructed without ever have been visible or reducible to a particular object? Structure was this lack of being, this gaping hole or Thing, this original Signifier, this ever invisible degree zero, this Being that eludes being, a simple virtuality. Substituting a structural Kantian noumenality for phenor-nality, structuralism looked for its logic not in the vertical depths of an impossible genesis, but in the horizontality of the many possibilities organized by a certain number of operators of generalized exchange: phonemes, incest taboos, the *objet petit a*. This was the space wherein structural logic was constructed, yet "spacing means nothing, nothing which is, no present to set at a distance; it is the index of an irreducible outside and, at the time time, the index of a movement, a shift indicated by an irreducible alterity,"<sup>3</sup>

Structuralism's space was the space of the outside, of an elsewhere irreducible to its realization, a womb to be differentiated; only its secondary effects could be perceived. We can thus understand the appeal of the unconscious, in its linguistic, anthropological, and psycho-analytical versions, during the structuralist heyday. Conceived in its original non-differentiation, the unconscious was the basis from which structural logics unfolded. The quest for structural causality was legitimated in Althusser, metonymic causality in Jacques-Alain Miller, and the causality of a binary system of differences in Jakobson or Levi-Strauss. "Structures are unconscious."<sup>4</sup> This ungraspable lack, this Derridean difference, was suddenly catapulted to the center of structural space.

As we have seen, "there is no structuralism without this degree zero,"<sup>5</sup> whether it be the degree zero of phonology, kinship, myth, or the symbolic. Structural analysis started with this zero position and,

because it never identified itself with any particular identity, conditioned the very possibility of the unfolding of structuralism's serial logic.

From this initial void would develop a conception of space with its limits, folds, and connections, linking structure and its realization no longer as the transition from one structure to another, or from one moment to another. "From now on, we can only think in the void of vanished man. For this void neither emphasizes nor describes a lack to be filled. It is no more and no less than the unfolding of a space in which, finally, it once more becomes possible to think."<sup>6</sup> From this space voided of all initial content, the search for original meaning has no pertinence whatsoever. What remains are the infinite logics of the sign.

### Foucauldian Geology: A Visual Art

For the first issue of Yves Lacoste's geography journal, *Herodote*, Michel Foucault was invited to answer the questions of the editorial board's geographers. This was not insignificant. We can appreciate the strategic interest of a discipline often presented as the degree zero of thought in aligning Foucault's authority with it. But the encounter happened above all because geographiciry, in the largest sense of the term, was recognized in Foucault's work. Certain of his major concepts extended the inquiry to geopolitics. *Herodote* observed the profusion of spatial metaphors in Foucault's work (positions, shifts, site, field), as well as his use of specifically geographical terms (territory, domain, horizon, archipelago, native soil, geopolitics, region, landscape), and expressed surprise that, in referring to a cultural area, Foucault did not really specifically justify or determine these.

For fear of being eo-opted, Foucault was initially somewhat defensive. He emphasized that the concepts in question had more to do with legal-political, economic-legal, and military spheres, but he willingly acknowledged that his work was quite influenced by spatial metaphors. "I have been sufficiently criticized for these spatial obsessions, and indeed, I have been obsessed by them."<sup>7</sup> Foucault explained that he was part of the current protest against the primacy of time because it referred to individual consciousness, whereas spatial terms made it possible to eliminate the subject and look at power relationships without mentioning intentionality. The analysis could focus on the tangible effects of power in discursive space.

A journal like *Herodote*, which wanted to promote geopolitics,

ignored until then by geographers, could only congratulate itself that a philosopher like Foucault would do more than simply use geographical concepts as metaphors, and instead use them as real tools—his use of Bentham's Panopticon as a social model in *Discipline and Punish*, for example: "You even mention a 'geopolitical imagination' of the carceral city, in your conclusion."<sup>8</sup> Foucault had always emphasized the dialectic of knowledge and power based on notions of strategies and tactics. The meeting with geographers who emphasized that geography "is used first of all for making war" could only be fruitful, and disciplinary boundaries fell away once again when Foucault agreed. "I realize that the problems you raise with respect to geography are essential for me. . . . Geography should be at the center of what I am dealing with."?

By privileging observation, Foucault resembled a geologist who was attentive to discerning discordances, lacunae, and differences between the stratigraphic levels, analyzed beginning with horizontal cuts. The foundations of Foucauldian archaeology seemed to lie in discursive geology, for just as a geologist studies how topography is organized, Foucault considered the conditions that made his objects of study possible. Thus, the clinic, the prison, madness, and sexuality were not objects whose historicity and organization had to be laid out, but were means for understanding the conditions allowing these objects to be conceptualized, not by using some transcendental depth, but by questioning the way in which visible and invisible were initially established, "at the level of language."<sup>10</sup> Foucault elucidated the different distributions of the relationship between the signifier and the signified.

Medicine, as the interplay of space and observation, shifted its interest from symptoms to organs. "Clinical experience arms itself to explore a new space: the tangible space of bodies."<sup>11</sup> Bichat, and the radical transformation of methods of medical observation, reversed the forms of visibility. "What was fundamentally invisible suddenly became clearly visible."<sup>12</sup> Clinical anatomy was born, and illness was detached from the metaphysics of evil. This was still the interplay of visible and invisible, which fundamentally determined spatial organization in the penitentiary, which became a social model for all disciplinary practices. Prisons were born of this concern for scrutinizing social space imagined as transparent. Disciplinary power was imposed "on those whom it subjects to the principle of obligatory visibility."<sup>13</sup>

Where under the ancien regime, the greatest degree of individualization and visibility were located at the heights of power (the king embodied his own power, as it were, by providing the spectacle of putting a condemned man to death), the modern era configured things differently: individualization and visibility were descending. Power became functional as it became anonymous and invisible. The Panopticon let the prison keeper see everything from the central tower without being seen, and therefore had many applications. "It is a type of implantation of bodies in space."<sup>14</sup> Foucault had already used *Las Meninas* in *The Order of Things* to demonstrate the importance of looking as well as the infinite reversal of the spectator and the model, of the subject and of the object. Everything happened on the surface of the painting, in a simple game of folding and enfolding shapes within finite space.

A stratigrapher of discursivity and its discontinuities, Foucault also borrowed geological vocabulary. *The Order of Things* raised the question of erosion, of layers, shocks, tables, and levels. "We return the breaks to our silent and naively immobile soil, its instability, and its faults. Our soil worries beneath our feet."<sup>15</sup> The very notion of episteme, conceived as a vast transversal anchor that could only shift rather than evolve beneath the quakes, or give way to another layer that would superpose itself on the first and become sediment, found its parallel in the geologist's approach. Moreover, we might recall that in *Tristes Tropiques* Levi-Strauss had written that his "three mistresses" were Marx, Freud, and geology. For Foucault, however, there was no question of naturalizing culture, but of substituting a horizontal, synchronic, spatial orientation for a genetic, historical approach.

### Inside and Outside

The interplay of inside and outside and the combination of the various spatial sites were also an issue for Jean-Pierre Vernant. Vernant defined Greek space as a tension between two poles: *Hestia*, inside, the enclosure of the human group on itself, and *Hermes*, outside, mobility, and receptivity. This spatial bipolarity also determined masculine/feminine roles and made it possible to conceive of the division of labor along these two poles. *Hestia* represented autarkic, endogamous values, and, "regarding economic activities, women represent thesaurization and men represent acquisition."<sup>16</sup>

Racinian anthropology, as Roland Barthes defined it, was essen-

tially spatial. In Racinian theater, Barthes saw a topographical logic articulated around a center, the periphery, and an offstage, or outside. Historical space was offstage, whereas the tragedy unfolded in visible space. "The Outside . . . includes three spaces: death, flight, and the Event."<sup>17</sup> The tragic unities of time and space were spatially limited by the very contours of what the spectators could see directly of the tragedy. Even the definition of the tragic hero was to be enclosed in this scenic space: "He who cannot leave without dying: his limit is his privilege, and captivity his distinction."<sup>18</sup>

Historical events happened backstage, outside. They were felt onstage through language. Held at a distance, they lost their effect, allowing the inexorable tragic logic of the battle between the shadows and the light to be played out in an essentially spatial framework. "The tragic conflict is a spatial crisis."<sup>19</sup> This closure made the weight of history relative, and time immobile. Temporality could only be grasped in a repetition compulsion, for no dialectic can find a way out of the tragic universe, understood in this spatial closure. For Barthes, tragedy was an antimythic scenography, and tended to reduce all mythic mediation in order to maintain the brutal dimension of the conflict.

Similarly, Barthes was fascinated by the spatial dimension of Robbe-Grillet's writing where vision alone engendered aesthetics. "Robbe-Grillet's writing gives no alibi and has neither depth nor breadth: it remains on the surface of its object."<sup>20</sup> Vision alone was real for Robbe-Grillet, who adopted the Heideggerian distinction between the "being there," which was fundamental, and the "being something," which was to disappear. His objects could only exist as "spatial and situational, but in no case analogical."<sup>21</sup> The New Novel was based on the surface of things so as to better repress the idea of interiority, and to let the logic of the spatial circulation of objects better develop.

Levi-Strauss had already given this topo-logic a certain priority and it was widely used in structuralist work. Elementary kinship structures were inscribed in the spatial layout of primitive societies, and when Levi-Strauss looked at and resituated the village organization of the Bororo in *Tristes Tropiques*, he was especially attentive to the highly elaborate village organization that divided the population along both sides of a diameter splitting it between the Cera and the Tugare. This division determined kinship relationships since an indi-

vidual always belonged to the same moiety as his mother and could only marry a member of the other moiety. "If my mother is Cera then I will be Cera and my wife will be Tugare."<sup>22</sup> Everything was organized along the lines of this binary structure in the Bororo population.

Levi-Strauss's approach to mythology involved the same closure. The puzzle metaphor-s used for the meaning of this long investigation in *Mythologiques* expressed this spatial priority. Whatever the cultural area being examined, Levi-Strauss considered that myths expressed the same thing, which is what he meant when he said that "the mythological earth is round."<sup>24</sup> Indeed, he argued for a double originary unity to be found amid the diversity of social communities: the unity of the system and that of the message.

### The Neuronal Topos

The prevalence Levi-Strauss gave to transversal, synchronic slices and topoi corresponded to his determination to naturalize culture. Structuralism's main ambition lay essentially in this concern for reconciling the sensible and the intelligible, which became progressively dissociated as Western thinking evolved. By refusing this divorce, Levi-Strauss eventually had to break with philosophy, his first discipline, and look to anthropology for the means to demonstrate the arbitrariness of this division of the world. He set himself on the nature/culture cusp. "Structuralism . . . reconciles the physical and the moral, nature and man, the world and the spirit."<sup>25</sup>

This was the boundary-this passage between nature and culture--upon which Levi-Strauss saw the emergence of a binary logic coinciding with the first forms of symbolization. Totemism expressed this transition, and for Levi-Strauss the totemic use of natural species--animal as well as vegetable--expressed elaborate choices as a function of their ability to be thought-provoking. He even went so far as to hypothesize a "structural homology between human thought in action and the human action to which it applies itself."<sup>26</sup> This homology made it possible to establish structuralism.

Borne along by the recent evolution of the natural sciences and by the progress of the cognitive sciences, Levi-Strauss moved closer and closer to naturalizing the structural grid. Today, he considers the brain's internal topology to hold the key. Biology would seem to respond to the enigma raised by the rise of the social sciences, and to resolve the tension running through all of Levi-Strauss's work, between a struc-

tural method as a reading grid superimposed on the world, and the hoped-for perspective of finally understanding the structural laws of nature. By a strange ruse of reason, Levi-Straussian structuralism, with its initial program of denaturalizing culture and of taking its distance from physical anthropology, reverses itself, by naturalizing culture, whose ultimate key would belong to the neuronal topos.

## **For a Dialogic**

The subject, the repressed of structuralism, made a striking comeback. For twenty years, it had seemed totally dispensable, caught between divinity and dissolution. Strung between independence and the networks of dependency that conditioned it, this subject could not be easily reintegrated into a complex field of thinking. Confronted with the false alternative of an omnipotent or dead subject long presented as utterly insurmountable, a whole branch of contemporary thinking developed around the dialogic paradigm. Dialogics offered a real path of freedom as both a social project and a productive social science paradigm.

### **From Intertextuality to the Dialogic**

We recall that Julia Kristeva and Tzvetan Todorov had already used Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic in literary criticism, and had argued for the priority of intertextuality and a dialogue among texts. Thanks to this new orientation, the author, initially deemed irrelevant, slowly came back to life. Normalizing and objectifying the literary creator, who had become little more than a simple object of procedures and methods, had ultimately obscured a fundamental dimension of the writer as a subject engaged in a process of social communication, without which his work was meaningless.

In the early eighties, Todorov's critical work was directly inspired by Bakhtin. He saw the dialogic as a fundamental intermediary be-

tween an initial phase of analysis that consisted primarily in establishing the givens, and a final phase establishing a correlation with sociological and psychological mechanisms. Between these two "is located the most specific and most important activity of the social science critic and researcher, which is interpretation as dialogue."!

Not only did dialogics offer a new method of literary criticism that replaced an exclusive concern for writing procedures, but it also focused on human freedom and its exercise through interpretation, essential for determining the specificity of the social sciences with respect to the natural sciences. Amid the polyphony of voices-author, reader, and critic-this freedom could be exercised not by speaking about works, "but with them."?

Gerard Genette also generated a dialogue with his notion of trans-textuality, which assumed a correlation between the text and the broad cultural context that encompasses it, contiguously and diachronously. The text is then nourished by all the texts that preceded it. There was a rather quick transition between an approach that looked for the traces of intertextual effects to a more suggestive, intuitive approach in which the reader brought his or her own questions and sentiments to the reading. Genette's most recent work still displays this tension; he does not renounce the structural program but gives it a new, dialogical thrust.

This initially literary notion of the dialogic had other applications, in other fields. In linguistics, the approach was appropriated by the French pragmatic school, modeled on the Anglo-Saxon. With it, a philosophy of language, which had until then been ignored, could develop in France. Francis jacques, for example, hoped to renew the notion of dialogue, a notion as old as philosophy itself, since Plato had already exalted the use of teaching in philosophy.<sup>t</sup> Far from resurrecting an approach that would ignore the progress of contemporary thought, however, Jacques began with polycentrism, and the definitive questioning of any invariable category of universality, which the experience of difference and incommensurability had belied. But he criticized the postmodern exaltation of detached archipelagos, which could only lead to new gilded cages, and suggested that "the idea of a linguistic and communicational rationality for an era that has lost the conviction of a single logos"<sup>4</sup> be substituted for them.

Along more specifically linguistic lines, Claude Hagege, a disciple of Benveniste, Jakobson, and Martinet, and professor at the College

de France, defined his theoretical project as "an interactive concept that we shall call dialogal."<sup>5</sup> According to Hagege, the formalists had found linguistics fascinating to the point of eliminating history and society and of transforming humanity into a meaningless abstraction. He hoped that dialogal man would liberate linguistics from its hermeticism, something he considered necessary: "An ever-renewed project of a dialectic of constraints with as yet unforeseen future forms and freedoms whose importance will depend on its response to the challenges it encounters, dialogal man suggests by his very nature some points of a discourse that can speak about him as a whole, and not about the masks he dons."<sup>6</sup> Hagege discovered the importance of this dialogical dimension of language through his fieldwork: "It came to me from the field. It seemed to me that if we did not put what happened at a gut level in an interdialogal relationship placed at the center of things, we were missing 80 percent of language."<sup>7</sup> If, according to Hagege, there were universals, they were not so many formal abstractions, which can nonetheless be useful as propitious conditions for the development of linguistics; true universals, as the experience of primitive children shows, are "the dialogal moments."<sup>8</sup> Hagege contextualized the study of language and defended a sociolinguistics that criticized closure, particularly Chomskyan closure, to society.

A linguist was not supposed to discover a natural universal order in any model of competence, as Chomsky had done. He was to become a historian who understood the stages of a language's structure. Not that this return to history implied readopting a theory of reflection. It is worth recalling what Hagege called "the principle of double structuration": "on the one hand, languages that in speaking the world reinvented it by creating categories by abstraction; on the other, languages that organized themselves in their synchrony. This internal phase of structuration "organized languages, at many levels, into networks of solidarity."<sup>10</sup> This double structuration shaped the autonomy of languages as meaning-generated models. "That's what makes them work as conceptual reservoirs of classifying principles. And this is the function that draws an epistemological boundary between linguistics and the natural sciences."<sup>11</sup>

Although he was a structuralist, Hagege was a student of Martinet and Benveniste and was skeptical about Saussure's initial division of language and speech as the condition of the scientificity of linguistics. Eliminating contingency and therefore speech let the linguist con-

centrate on the universals of language. Hagege took issue with the bases of this distinction and its false alternatives. "By too stringently isolating language from speech, as did the classical structuralists who favored the one extreme, and the pragmaticians who favored the other, we misunderstand both the constraints imposed by language and the dialogal relationship that speech establishes."<sup>12</sup> The subject was at stake here; what conditioned it and what established its piece of liberty were the two issues requiring an answer. No longer omnipotent, this subject was a forerunner, its construction the product of a dialectic between constraint and freedom binding it to language. Starting from this dialectization between structural necessity and human liberty, which varied according to the moment and the diversity of messages, contextual variation could be established. Intertextuality gave access to this hidden meaning. "The master of penumbraI textual encoding, and the master decipherer as well, was the psychosocial forerunner, the determined cryptologist."<sup>13</sup> Hagege brought the subject back to a linguistics that carefully preserved what structuralism had gained, and thus made it possible to reconcile the terms of two long-standing antinomies: structure and movement, history and invariability. Social temporality and linguistic temporality were not always coordinated, of course, and we must recall that "variation is inherent in language."<sup>14</sup> The subject and history were both back, and the dialogic offered a paradigm that broke with, but did not reject, the structuralist moment.

The dialogal paradigm was fruitful not only for professional linguists, but for philosophers as well. The current heir to the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas, professor at the Goethe Institute in Frankfurt, criticized postmodernist theses and their underlying nihilism. Habermas did not regret an omnipotent subject, but described the possible paths of a communicational rationality as the basis for a social theory.<sup>15</sup> It was up to the philosopher to find the means of reconstructing social ties, of avoiding the growing dissociation between individual and system, between the control of scientific activities and the democratic will. This was possible if democratic ambitions were rekindled and authentic communication rationally reestablished between members of a society. Reconciling universal reason and democratic ideals required rediscovering the ambitions of the Lumieres and the ideals of the French Revolution, which, for two hundred years, had been drained from German philosophy. Modern thinking was

therefore to reconsider a universal morality discovered in mutual cultural and individual understanding and difference, no longer based on an illusory, fully conscious, self-mastering subject. "Norms should also be able to fundamentally gather the rationally motivated consent of all interested parties, under conditions that neutralize any but a cooperative search for truth."<sup>16</sup>

The dialogical paradigm could only appeal to Edgar Morin, a French sociologist who was from the first an adversary of structuralism and who was always concerned with constructing a method that would make possible communication between all apparently disparate things. For him communication neither reduced nor unified a common science federating biology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Morin considered that reality was not made up of independent bits and pieces, but that all of its complex pieces had to be made to communicate. Dialogics was therefore a particularly appropriate instrument for thinking about this articulation, at the same time as it was a worldview that made it possible to avoid all reductionism. "The universe can be constructed, developed, destroyed, and evolve through this dialogic."<sup>17</sup> More than this, Morin considered that dialogics had the advantage of playing on the complementarity of contradictory elements rather than setting them into lethal combat. "This concept came to me so that I could avoid the term 'dialectic.'"! With dialogics, he could pursue his work on contradiction without thinking of how to necessarily go beyond it, using a fractured unity. Morin's initial hypothesis was that unity could flow from duality as the union of two properly different principles.

Rejecting the distinction between the natural sciences and the social sciences, Morin looked for ways to bridge the two in order to understand their articulation. This refusal of compartmentalization and of reductionism with a few formalized variables extracted from reality somewhere between the biological and social sciences were encouraged, during the post-May '68 period, by Morin's participation, at the invitation of Dr. Jacques Robin, in "the group of ten," which included cyberneticians, biologists, and doctors. In 1969, the Salt Institute of Biological Studies invited Morin to the Department for Human Affairs headed by Jacob Bronowski. There, he understood the tremendous social importance of biology. The issue was not to criticize the celebrated dissolution of man in the name of some divinization, but to consider, at a time when the polycentric and complicated world was

being moved by disorder and incessant change, how to produce "the humanist inscription in the unfinished process of hominization."<sup>19</sup>

## Sense and Sign

As Paul Ricoeur has shown,<sup>20</sup> the history of thought has always been dominated by the tension and interplay between theories of meaning and sign theories. Already in the *Cratylus*, Plato had contrasted Hermogenes, for whom the origin of words was a convention, and Cratylus, who believed that their meaning had to do with some natural link. Both were disciples of Heracleitus.

Structuralism was a reaction against Husserl's phenomenology, in which the use of signs depended on the logics of meaning. This dependency was definitively reversed, and in this respect, structuralism belonged to the old Aristotelian tradition, which had given priority to forms and had won out during the Middle Ages with the development of rhetoric, logic, nominalism, and later, with the grammar of Port-Royal. Chomsky quite explicitly evoked this legacy for his work.

As the structuralist paradigm dissipated, meaning returned with a vengeance. George Steiner's successful *Real Presences-1* characterized a new era avid for meaning, and ready to definitively turn its back on semiology and new criticism and to rediscover the paths of direct access to the work of art and emotions. This swing revealed the dawn of a new era, but it also threatened an extraordinary regression if this change were to come at the price of negating all earlier work. Although George Steiner clearly voiced the dissatisfaction provoked by so many attempts at formalizing creation and shoving all reference to content and meaning aside in order to better allow the unconscious logics of the sign to unfold, his dreams of a city "from which the critic would be banished,"<sup>22</sup> and which would proscribe all commentary on works that suffice by themselves, should give us pause. "The tree dies under the weight of greedy ivy."<sup>23</sup>

The elitism taking its leave here from the democratic contract that structuralism wanted to bear forth is quite palpable. Steiner preferred to leave the masses to watch television series or play the lottery while an elite savored Aeschylus in the original, in an immediacy that it alone could enjoy. If meaning had to return, and if certain criticisms about the confusion between logical mathematics and art were justified, it is unfortunate to see excessive swings of the pendulum that utterly deny what has preceded.

Only the dialogic relationship between what Paul Ricoeur defined as the explanatory level of meaning, of the internal game of structural textual dependence, and the interpretative level, which by definition remains open to the reference to meaning and to an outside of language, preserves all the important structuralist contributions and keeps criticism from sinking below the waves of the five senses. However, these two levels, semiology and interpretation, as Cerard Genette had already imagined in the sixties, were not mutually exclusive, but were, on the contrary, complementary.

Interpretation or hermeneutics left open the possibility of critical work. New energies were encouraged and manifested themselves each time in intersubjectivity, beyond spatial and temporal distance. Hermeneutics promoted dialogical communication between worlds that refused isolation. Dialogue as a mode of living the universal during an era of relativity, the dialogic as an expression of rationality when fundamentalism was back in force—this social, scientific program should provide an exit from structuralism, without forgetting that structuralism has taught us, once and for all, that communication is never entirely transparent to itself. To forget this would be the best way of preparing *Fahrenheit 451*.

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## Appendix: List of Interviewees

(Paris universities are listed as Paris I-Paris X.)

Marc Abeles, anthropologist, researcher at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, EHESS.

Alfred Adler, anthropologist, researcher at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, EHESS.

Michel Aglietta, economist, professor of economics at Paris X.

Jean Allouch, psychoanalyst, director of the review *Littoral*.

Pierre Ansart, sociology professor at Paris VII.

Michel Arrive, linguistics professor at Paris X.

Marc Auge, anthropologist, director of studies at the EHESS, president of the EHESS.

Sylvain Auroux, philosopher and linguist, director of research at the CNRS.

Kostas Axelos, philosopher, former editor in chief of the review *Arguments*, teaches at the Sorbonne.

Georges Balandier, anthropologist, professor at the Sorbonne, director of studies at the EHESS.

Etienne Balibar, philosopher, lecturer at Paris I.

Henri Bartoli, economist, professor at Paris I.

Michel Beaud, economist, professor at Paris VIII.

Daniel Becquemont, anthropologist and professor of English at the Universite de Lille.

- Jean-Marie Benoist, philosopher, assistant director to the history of modern civilization chair at the College de France, deceased in 1990.
- Alain Boissinot, literature professor, teaches advanced classes at Louis-le-Grand High School.
- Raymond Boudon, sociologist, professor at Paris IV, director of the Groupe d'Etudes des Methodes de l'Analyse Sociologique (GEMAS).
- Jacques Bouveresse, philosopher, professor at Paris I.
- Claude Bremond, linguist, director of studies at the EHESS.
- Hubert Brochier, economist, professor at Paris I.
- Louis-Jean Calvet, linguist, professor at the Sorbonne.
- jean-Claude Chevalier, linguist, professor at Paris VII, general director of the review *Langue [rancaise]*.
- Jean Clavreul, psychoanalyst.
- Claude Conte, psychoanalyst, former head of the clinic at the Paris Medical School.
- jean-Claude Coquet, linguist, professor at Paris VIII.
- Maria Daraki, historian, professor at Paris VIII.
- jean-Toussaint Desanti, philosopher, taught at Paris I and at the École Normale Superieure in Saint-Cloud.
- Philippe Descola, anthropologist, associate director of the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale.
- Vincent Descombes, philosopher, professor at Johns Hopkins University.
- jean-Marie Domenach, philosopher, former director of the review *Esprit*, founder of the CREA.
- joel Dor, psychoanalyst, director of the review *Esquisses psychanalytiques*, professor at Paris VII.
- Daniel Dory, geographer, CNRS and Paris I.
- Roger-Pol Droit, philosopher, editorialist at *Le Monde*.
- Jean Dubois, linguist, professor at Paris X, on the editorial board of the review *Langages*.
- Georges Duby, historian, professor at the College de France.
- Oswald Ducrot, linguist, director of studies at the EHESS.
- Claude Dumezil, psychoanalyst.
- Jean Duvignaud, sociologist, professor at Paris VII.
- Roger Establet, sociologist, member of the CERCOM (EHESS).
- Francois Ewald, philosopher, president of the Association for the Michel Foucault Center.

- Arlette Farge, historian, director of research at the EHESS.
- Jean-Pierre Faye, philosopher, linguist, professor at the Université Philosophique Européenne.
- Pierre Fougeyrollas, sociology professor at Paris VII.
- Francoise Gadet, linguistics professor at Paris X.
- Gilles Gaston-Granger, philosopher, professor at the Collège de France.
- Marcel Gauchet, historian, editor in chief of the review *Le Debat*.
- Gerard Genette, linguist, semiologist, director of studies at the EHESS.
- Jean-Christophe Goddard, philosopher, professor for Hautes Etudes Commerciales preparatory courses.
- Maurice Godelier, anthropologist, scientific director at the CNRS, director of studies at the EHESS.
- Wladimir Granoff, psychoanalyst, head physician at the the medical-psychology center in Nanterre.
- Andre Green, psychoanalyst, former head of the Institut de Psychanalyse in Paris.
- Algirdas Julien Greimas, linguist, honorary director of studies at the EHESS.
- Marc Guillaume, economist, professor at the Université Paris-Dauphine, lecturer at the École Polytechnique, director of the journal *IRIS*.
- Claude Hagege, linguist, professor at the Collège de France.
- Philippe Hamon, linguist, professor at Paris III.
- Andre-Georges Haudricourt, anthropologist and linguist.
- Louis Hay, literature professor, researcher at the CNRS.
- Paul Henry, linguist, researcher at the CNRS.
- Francoise Heritier-Auge, anthropologist, professor at the Collège de France, head of the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale.
- Jacques Hoarau, philosopher, professor at the Centre de Formation des Professeurs in Molligon.
- Michel Izard, anthropologist, director of research at the CNRS, co-director of the review *Gradhiva*.
- Jean-Luc Jamard, anthropologist, researcher at the CNRS.
- Jean Jamin, anthropologist, researcher at the ethnology laboratory of the Musée de l'Homme, co-director of the review *Gradhiva*.
- Julia Kristeva, linguist, professor at Paris VII.
- Bernard Laks, linguist, researcher at the CNRS.
- Jerome Lallement, economist, lecturer at Paris I.
- Jean Laplanche, psychoanalyst, professor at Paris VII, director of the review *Psychanalyse à l'Université*.

- Francine Le Bret, philosopher, professor at Jacques Prevert High School in Boulougne-Billancourt.
- Serge Leclaire, psychoanalyst.
- Dominique Lecourt, philosophy professor at Paris **VII**.
- Henri Lefebvre, philosopher, former professor at the Universities of Strasbourg, Nanterre, and Paris **VIII**.
- Pierre Legendre, philosopher, professor at Paris I.
- Gennie Lemoine, psychoanalyst.
- Claude Levi-Strauss, anthropologist, professor at the College de France.
- Jacques Lévy, geographer, researcher at the CNRS, codirector of the review *Espaces/Temps*.
- Alain Lipietz, economist, associate researcher at the CNRS and at the CEPREMAP.
- Rene Lourau, sociology professor at Paris **VIII**.
- Pierre Macherey, philosopher, lecturer at Paris I.
- Rene Major, psychoanalyst, teaches at the College International de Philosophie, director of *Cahiers Confrontations*.
- Serge Martin, philosopher, professor at Pontoise High School.
- Andre Martinet, linguist, professor emeritus at the Universite Rene-Descartes, and in the Fourth Section of the EPHE.
- Claude Meillassoux, anthropologist, director of research at the CNRS.
- Charles Melman, psychoanalyst, director of the review *Discours psychanalytique*.
- Gerard Mendel, psychoanalyst, former intern at the Hopital Psychiatrique de la Seine.
- Henri Mitterand, linguist, professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle.
- Juan-David Nasio, psychoanalyst, leads the Seminaire de Psychanalyse de Paris.
- Andre Nicolai, economist, professor at Paris X.
- Pierre Nora, historian, director of studies at the EHESS, director of the review *Le Debat*, editor at Gallimard.
- Claudine Normand, linguist, professor at Paris X.
- Bertrand Ogilvie, philosopher, professor at the École Normale at Cergy-Pontoise (as of 1992, Ecole Normale schools, which are teacher-training institutions, have become Institut Universitaire de la Formation des Maitres).
- Michelle Perrot, historian, professor at Paris **VII**.
- Marcelin Pleynet, writer, former secretary of the review *Tel Que/*.

- Jean Pouillon, philosopher and anthropologist, researcher at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, EHESS.
- joelle Proust, philosopher, research group on cognition, CNRS.
- Jacques Ranciere, philosopher, teacher at Paris VIII.
- Alain Renaut, philosopher, professor at the Universite de Caen, founder of the College de Philosophie.
- Olivier Revault d'Allonnes, philosopher, professor at Paris I.
- Elisabeth Roudinesco, writer and psychoanalyst.
- Nicolas Ruwet, linguist, professor at Paris VIII.
- Moustafa Safouan, psychoanalyst.
- Georges-Elia Sarfati, linguist, teacher at Paris **III**.
- Bernard Sichere, philosopher, professor at the Universite de Caen, former member of the team of the review *Tel Quel!*.
- Dan Sperber, anthropologist, researcher at the CNRS.
- Joseph Sumpf, sociologist and linguist, professor at Paris VIII.
- Emmanuel Terray, anthropologist, director of studies at the EHESS.
- Tzvetan Todorov, linguist, semiologist, researcher at the CNRS.
- Alain Touraine, sociologist, director of research at the EHESS.
- Paul Valadier, philosopher, former editor in chief of the review *Etudes*, professor at the Centre Sevres in Paris.
- jean-Pierre Vernant, classicist, honorary professor at the College de France.
- Marc Vernet, semiologist of cinema, professor at Paris **III**.
- Serge Videman, psychoanalyst, medical doctor.
- Pierre Vilar, historian, honorary professor at the Sorbonne.
- Francois Wahl, philosopher, editor at Seuil.
- Marina Yaguello, linguistics professor at Paris VII.

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# Notes

## One. Chomskyism-New Frontiers?

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23. Jacques Hoarau, interview with the author.

24. Jiirgen Habermas, *Le Discours philosophique de la modernite* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988 (1985)), p. 226.

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29. Sara Kofman, *Lectures de Derrida* (Paris: Galilee, 1984), p. 39.

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33. Michel Foucault, *Folie et deraison*, Translated by Richard Howard as *Madness and Civilization* (New York: Random House, 1965).

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40. Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969). Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith as *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Random House, 1972).
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42. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

## Twelve. Lacan: Structures Have Taken to the Streets!

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2. René Lourau, interview with the author.
3. Jean Duvignaud, interview with the author.
4. Michèle Perrot, in *Mai 68 et les sciences sociales*, Cahiers IHTP, no. 11 (April 1989): 62.
5. Olivier Mongin, in *ibid.*, p. 22.

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7. Roger Pol-Droit, "Curriculum vitae et cogitatorum," *La Liberte de l'esprit*, no. 17 (winter 1988): 18.
8. Ibid.
9. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" p. 7.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 14.
12. Ibid., p. 18.
13. Lacan, in *ibid.*, p. 31.
14. Jacques Lacan, seminar: "D'un Autre à l'autre," February 1969; quoted by Jean Allouch, "Les trois petits points du retour a...;" *Littoral*, no. 9 (June 1983): 35.
15. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 543.
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17. Elisabeth Roudinesco, interview with the author.
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20. Bernard Sichere, interview with the author.
21. Marcel Gauchet, interview with the author.
22. Alain Touraine, interview with the author.
23. Pierre Daix, *Structuralisme et revolution culturelle* (Paris: Casterman, 1971).
24. Herve Le Bras, *Le Debat* (May-August 1988): 63.
25. Jean-Claude Chevalier and Pierre Encreve, *Langue française* (September 1984): 101.
26. Juan-David Nasio, interview with the author.
27. Marc Abeles, interview with the author.
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29. Marc Vernet, interview with the author.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Philippe Hamon, "Pour un statut semiologique du personnage," *Litteraire*, no. 6 (May 1972).
33. Jacques Lacan, "Du regard comme objet a," in *Seminaire, Livre XI: Les quatres concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (1963-1964) (Paris: Seuil, 1973).
34. Marc Vernet, interview with the author.
35. Jean Clavreul, interview with the author.
36. Jacques Lacan, quoted by Herve Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération II* (Paris: Seuil, 1988), p. 182.
37. Manfred Frank, *Qu'est-ce que le neo-structuralisme?* (Paris: Cerf, 1989), p. 28.

### Thirteen. Institutional Victory: The University Conquered

1. Jean Dubois, interview with the author.
2. Ibid.
3. Claudine Normand, interview with the author.
4. Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi, *Le Congres de Tours* (Le Pavillon Roger Maria, 1971).
5. "Linguistique et société," *Langue française*, no. 9 (February 1971).

6. "Le discours politique, *Langages*, no. 23 (September 1971).
7. Lucile Courdresses, in "Linguistique et société."
8. Regine Robin and Denis Slatka, in *ibid.*
9. John 1. Austin defines speech acts as having three parts: the act of locution (the combination of sounds), the illocutionary act (the act of pronouncing the sentence), and the perlocutionary act (the most distant consequences and effects of the utterance).
10. Françoise Gadet, in "Linguistique et société."
11. Denise Maldidier, *Langages*, no. 23 (September 1971).
12. Antoine Prost, *Vocabulaire des proclamations électorales de 1881, 1885 et 1889* (Paris: PUF, 1974).
13. Pierre Ansart, interview with the author.
14. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 552.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 553.
16. Jean Laplanche, interview with the author.
17. Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), pp. 227-31.
18. Michel Foucault, *Titres et Travaux* (Titles and Oeuvres), pamphlet edited for his candidature at the Collège de France (1969), p. 9.
19. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, p. 232.
20. Michel Foucault, unpublished text quoted in Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, p. 104.
21. Roger-Pol Droit, interview with the author.
22. Alain Touraine, interview with the author.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Gérard Mendel, interview with the author.

## Fourteen. Vincennes: The Structuralist University

1. Built for 7,500 students with grounds of 30,000 square meters planned, the center had 8,200 students in 1969-70 on 16,000 square meters of grounds, or two square meters per capita.
2. Jean Dubois, interview with the author.
3. Georges Lapassade, in *Université ouverte: Les dossiers de Vincennes*, introduced by Michel Debeauvais (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires Dossiers de Grenoble, 1976), p. 219.
4. Bernard Laks, interview with the author.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Elisabeth Roudinesco, interview with the author.
7. Jean Bouvier recounted this example to François Dosse.
8. Nicolas Ruwet, interview with the author.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Lucette Finas, recounted by Bernard Laks in an interview with the author.
13. Bernard Laks, interview with the author.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Bernard Laks, "Le champ de la sociolinguistique française de 1968 à 1983," *Langue française*, no. 63 (September 1984).
16. Lapassade, *Université ouverte*, p. II6.
17. Serge Leclair, interview with the author.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*

20. Claude Dumezil, interview with the author.
21. Jacques Lacan, seminar, December 3, 1969, Vincennes, excerpts from a report by Bernard Marigot, in Lapassade, *Université ouverte*, p. 267.
22. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 561.
23. Lacan, seminar, December 3, 1969, p. 271.
24. Claude Dumezil, interview with the author.
25. Ibid.
26. Roger-Pol Droit, interview with the author.
27. Roger-Pol Droit, *Le Monde*, November 15, 1974.
28. Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard, leaflet distributed in December 1974; reprinted in Lapassade, *Université ouverte*, p. 272.
29. André Nicolaï, interview with the author.
30. Michel Beaud, interview with the author.
31. Ibid.
32. Marc Vernet, interview with the author.
33. Leaflet distributed in March 1976, signed PCC, Jacques Prevert, Groupe Foudre intervention culturelle, March 4, 1976; reprinted in Lapassade, *L'Université ouverte*, pp. 275-76.

## Fifteen. Journals: Still Going Strong

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2. Jean-Claude Chevalier, in Jean-Claude Chevalier and Pierre Encreve, *Langue française*, no. 63 (September 1984): 98.
3. Tzvetan Todorov, "Poétique," in *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme?* (Paris: Seuil, 1968; Points-Seuil, 1973).
4. Tzvetan Todorov, interview with the author.
5. Philippe Hamon, interview with the author.
6. Collection "Poétique": André Jolles, *Formes simples*; Roman Jakobson, *Questions de poétique*; Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature [antastique]*.
7. *Langue française*, no. 3 (1969), "La stylistique"; "La description linguistique des textes littéraires" (September 1970); *Langages*, no. 12, "Linguistique et littérature" (articles by Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, Nicolas Ruwet, Tzvetan Todorov, and Julia Kristeva) (1969); no. 13, "Linguistique du discours" (1969).
8. *Littérature*, no. 1, editorial board: Jean Bellernin-Noël, Claude Duchet, Pierre Kuentz, Jean Levaillant, Henri Mitterand; secretary-general: Henri Mitterand.
9. Henri Mitterand, interview with the author.
10. "Histoire/Sujet," *Littérature*, no. 13 (February 1974), with articles by Daniele Sallenave, Anne Roche and Gérard Delfau, Étienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey, Fabian Sfez, Jean Jaffre, Georges Benrekassa, Marcelle Marini, Pierre Albouy, and Jean Levaillant.
11. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 533.
12. Philippe Sollers, "Écriture et révolution," in *Tel Quel: Théorie d'ensemble* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 72.
13. Philippe Sollers, *Logiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1968).

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18. Sollers, "Le reflexe de réduction," p. 298.
19. Marcelin Pleyne, interview with the author.
20. Julia Kristeva, "Le bon plaisir," *France-Culture*, June 23, 1990.
21. Bernard Sichere, interview with the author.
22. Ibid.
23. Jean-Pierre Fay, interview with the author.
24. *Change*, no. 1 (1968). Collective: Jean-Pierre Faye, Jean-Claude Montel, Jean Paris, Leon Robe!, Maurice Roche, Jacques Roubaud, Jean-Noel Vuarnet.
25. "Liminaire," *Change*, no. 1 (1968).
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29. Jean-Pierre Fay, *Langages totalitaires* (Paris: Hermann, 1972).
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31. *Esprit*, May 1968, pp. 850-74.
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33. Ibid., p. 858.
34. Ibid., p. 860.
35. Ibid., p. 871.
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37. Julia Kristeva, *Semiotik», recherches pour une semanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969; Points-Seuil, 1978).
38. Claude Levi-Strauss, interview with Carherine Backes-Clement, *La Nouvelle Critique*, no. 61 (February 1973): 27-36.
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## Sixteen. The Althusserian Grid: A Must

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4. Saul Karsz, *Theorie et politique: Louis Althusser* (Paris: Fayard, 1974).
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6. Louis Althusser, "Ideologie et appareils ideologiques d'Etat," *La Pensee*, no. 151 (June 1970); reprinted in *Positions* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1967), pp. 67-125.
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13. Renee Balibar, *Les Francais fictifs* (Paris: Maspero, 1973).
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28. Maurice Godelier, "Systeme, structure et contradiction dans *Le Capital*," *Les Temps modernes*, November 1966; reprinted in *Horizon: trajets marxistes en anthropologie*, vol. 2 (Paris: Maspero, 1977 [1973]), p. 97.
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30. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 51.
31. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 120.
32. Ibid., p. 160 n. 30.
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36. Ibid.
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39. Ibid., p. 63.
40. Ibid., p. 121.
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45. Michel Fichant, in *ibid.*, p. 54.
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47. Dominique Lecourt, *Pour une critique de l'epistemologie* (Paris: Maspero 1972).
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15. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

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30. Description given by Pierre Macherey and Etienne Balibar, interviews with the author.
31. Etienne Balibar, interview with the author.
32. Pierre Macherey, interview with the author.
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36. Ibid., p. 155.
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39. Michael Lowy, "L'humanisme historiciste de Marx ou reire *Le Capital*," *L'Homme et la Société* (July 1970): 112.
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41. Lowy, "L'humanisme historiciste de Marx ou relire *Le Capital*," p. 117.
42. Ibid.
43. Jean-Marie Domenach, "Un marxisme sous vide," *Esprit* (January 1974): 111-25.
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45. Ibid., p. 118.
46. Ibid., p. 124.

## Eighteen. The Mirage of Formalization

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3. Jean-Claude Coquet, interview with the author.
4. Julia Kristeva, interview with the author.
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## Nineteen. From Explosive Literary Mourning to the Pleasure of the Text

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