

Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity

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POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AS A CRITICAL ACTIVITY

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INTRODUCTION

The editor of *Political Theory* asked us to respond to the question, 'What is political theory?' This question is as old as political theory or political philosophy. The activity of studying politics, whether it is called science, theory, or philosophy, always brings itself into question. The question does not ask for a single answer, for there are countless ways of studying politics and no universal criteria for adjudicating among them. Rather, the question asks, 'What comparative *difference* does it make to study politics *this* way rather than *that*?' Political theory or philosophy not only spans three millennia of studying politics in innumerable ways but also three millennia of dialogues among practitioners over various approaches, their relative merits, and the contestable criteria for their comparison. Because there is no definitive answer, there is no end to this dialogue. Rather, it is the kind of open-ended dialogue that brings *insight* through the activity of reciprocal elucidation itself. Dialogue partners gain insight into what ruling, being ruled, and contesting rule is through the exchange of questions and answers over different ways of studying politics and different criteria for their assessment in relation to how they throw light on different aspects of the complex worlds of politics—and what counts as the 'different aspects of the complex worlds of politics' is also questioned in the course of the dialogue.¹

With this horizon of the question in mind, I wish to respond by introducing one among many ways of studying politics and to initiate its reciprocal eluci-

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dation by comparing it with others. This practical, critical, and historical approach can be introduced by a sketch of its four defining characteristics.

First, it starts from and grants a certain primacy to practice. It is a form of philosophical reflection on practices of governance in the present that are experienced as oppressive in some way and are called into question by those subject to them. The questionable regime of practices is then taken up as a problem, becoming the locus of contest and negotiation in practice and of reflection and successive solutions and reforms in theory and policy.

Second, the aim is not to develop a normative theory as the solution to the problems of this way of being governed, such as a theory of justice, equality, or democracy, but to disclose the conditions of possibility of this historically singular set of practices of governance and of the range of characteristic problems and solutions to which it gives rise (its form of problematisation). Hence, the approach is not a type of political *theory* (in the sense above) but a species of 'practical philosophy' (politics and ethics), that is, a philosophical way of life oriented toward working on ourselves by working on the practices and problematisations in which we find ourselves.² However, the aim is also not to present an ethnographic thick description that aims at clarification and understanding for its own sake. Rather, it seeks to characterise the conditions of possibility of the problematic form of governance in a redescription (often in a new vocabulary) that transforms the self-understanding of those subject to and struggling within it, enabling them to see its contingent conditions and the possibilities of governing themselves differently. Hence, it is not only an interpretive political philosophy but also a specific genre of critique or critical attitude toward ways of being governed in the present—an attitude of testing and possible transformation.³

Third, this practical and critical objective is achieved in two steps. The first is a critical survey of the languages and practices in which the struggles arise, and various theoretical solutions are proposed and implemented as reforms. This survey explicates which forms of thought, conduct, and subjectivity are taken for granted or given as necessary, and so function as constitutive conditions of the contested practices and their repertoire of problems and solutions. The second step broadens this initial critique by using a history or genealogy of the formation of these specific languages and practices as an object of comparison and contrast. This historical survey has the capacity to free us to some extent from the conditions of possibility uncovered in the first step and so to be able to see the practices and their forms of problematisation as a limited and contingent whole. It is then possible to call these limits into question and open them to a dialogue of comparative evaluation and thus to develop the perspectival ability to consider different possible ways of governing this realm of cooperation.

Fourth, this political philosophy is practical in yet another sense. The hard-won historical and critical relation to the present does not stop at calling a limit into question and engaging in a dialogue over its possible transformation. The approach seeks to establish an ongoing mutual relation with the concrete struggles, negotiations, and implementations of citizens who experiment with modifying the practices of governance on the ground. This is not a matter of prescribing the limits of how they must think, deliberate, and act if they are to be legitimate, but, on the contrary, to offer a disclosive sketch of the arbitrary and unnecessary limits to the ways they are constrained to think, deliberate, and act and of the possible ways of going beyond them in this context. In turn, the experience with negotiation and change in practice and the discontents that arise in response provide a pragmatic test of the critical and historical research and the impetus for another round of critical activity.

These philosophical investigations thus stand in a reciprocal relation to the present, as a kind of permanent critique of the relations of meaning, power, and subjectivity in which we think and act politically and the practices of freedom of thought and action by which we try to test and improve them. Hence the title 'political philosophy as a critical activity'.

Although this type of political philosophy can be interpreted as a tradition that goes back to the Greeks and up through Renaissance humanism and counter-Reformation critical philosophy, I am primarily concerned with its three recent phases: the practice-based political philosophy of the Enlightenment (Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Hegel, Marx, and Mill); the criticisms and reforms of this body of work by Nietzsche, Weber, Heidegger, Gadamer, Arendt, Dewey, Collingwood, Horkheimer, and Adorno; and, third, the reworking of this tradition again in light of new problems by scholars over the past twenty years. On my account, this eclectic family of contemporary scholars includes the historical approach of Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School; the critical and dialogical hermeneutics of Charles Taylor; the extension of Wittgenstein's philosophical methods to political philosophy by Hanna Pitkin, Cressida Heyes, Richard Rorty, and others; the critical histories of the present initiated by Michel Foucault; and the critical studies of Edward Said that apply the critical methods of this tradition beyond and against its Eurocentrism.⁴ In addition, this practical and historical approach oriented to testing and going beyond limits has been shaped by a continuous critical dialogue with a contrasting metaphysical and universal tradition oriented to discovering and prescribing limits. This contrasting approach stems from scholastic natural law and Kant, draws on some of the same philosophical sources, and is carried forward by many neo-Kantian political theorists today, especially the work of Jürgen Habermas.⁵

Over the past two centuries, there have been many attempts to summarize this tradition. The essay by Michel Foucault written in the last years of his life, 'What is Enlightenment?', is among the best. Within this brief text, Foucault presents a remarkable synopsis that can function as a précis of the sketch I have drawn:

The critical ontology of ourselves must be considered not, certainly, as a theory or a doctrine; rather it must be conceived as an attitude, an *ethos*, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them (*de leur franchissement possible*).⁶

I would now like to discuss the four defining characteristics of this philosophical *ethos*.

PRACTICES OF GOVERNANCE

Political philosophy as a critical activity starts from the practices and problems of political life, but it begins by questioning whether the inherited languages of description and reflection are adequate to the task. Over the past two centuries, the main domain of political studies has been the basic languages, structures, and public institutions of the self-contained, representative, democratic, constitutional nation-states and federations of free and equal citizens, political parties, and social movements in an international system of states. The contending philosophical traditions of interpretation of these practices seek to clarify the just organisation of these practices: the ways in which modern subjects (individuals and groups) should be treated as free and equal and cooperate under the immanent and regulative ideals of the rule of law and constitutionalism on one hand and of popular sovereignty and democratic self-determination on the other. Yet, over the same period, six types of critical study have thrown this orthodoxy of practices and form of problematisation into question.

Social-democratic theorists have broadened the range of political philosophy to include struggles over nondemocratic practices of production and consumption, and ecological philosophers have extended the tools of conceptual analysis to our relations to the environment. More recently, feminist political and legal philosophers have drawn attention to a vast array of inequalities and unfreedoms in the relations between men and women beneath formal freedoms and equalities and across the private and public institutions of modern societies. Philosophers of multiculturalism, multinationalism, indigenous

rights, and constitutional pluralism have thrown critical light on struggles over recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity within and across the formally free and equal institutions of constitutional democracies. Theorists of empire, globalisation, globalisation from below, cosmopolitan democracy, immigration, and justice-beyond-borders have questioned the accuracy of the inherited concepts of self-contained, Westphalian representative nation-states in accurately representing the complex, multilayered global regimes of direct and indirect governance of new forms of inequality, exploitation, dispossession, and violence, and the forms of local and global struggles by the governed here and now. Finally, postcolonial and postmodern scholars have drawn attention to the various ways our prevailing logocentric languages of political reflection fail to do justice to the multiplicity of different voices striving for the freedom to have an effective democratic say over the ways they are governed as a new century dawns.⁷

To employ Stanley Cavell's striking analysis, we can see our predicament as somewhat analogous to Nora and Thorvold in Ibsen's play *The Dollhouse*. Nora is trying to say something that is important to her, but the dominant language in which Thorvold listens and responds misrepresents the way she says it, what she is saying, and her understanding of the intersubjective practice in which she speaks. Thorvold takes it as a matter of course that a marriage is a dollhouse, and he recognises, interacts with, and responds to the problems Nora raises always already as if she were a doll, with the limited range of possible conduct this form of subjectivity entails. As a result, Thorvold fails to secure uptake of her speech act as a 'claim of reason', and so a democratic dialogue over the justice of the oppressive relations between them (which compose their practice of marriage) is disqualified from the outset. She is deprived of a voice in her political world. The first question for political philosophy today is, therefore, 'How do we attend to the strange multiplicity of political voices and activities without distorting or disqualifying them in the very way we approach them?'⁸

The six types of critical study enumerated above suggest that we cannot uncritically accept as our starting point the default languages and practices of politics and their rival traditions of interpretation and problem solving inherited from the first Enlightenment, as if they were unquestionably comprehensive, universal, and legitimate, requiring only internal clarification, analysis, theory building, and reform. If we are to develop a political philosophy that has the capacity to bring to light the specific forms of oppression today, we require an Enlightenment critical 'attitude' rather than a doctrine, one that can test and reform dubious aspects of the dominant practices and form of problematisation of politics against a better approach to what is going on in practice.

One way to proceed is to start with a broader and more flexible language of provisional description, one that enables us to take up a dialogical relation to the political problems *as* they are raised in and animate the concrete struggles of the day and then adjust it in the course of the inquiry, as the six types of critical study have begun to do. Combining thirty years of research of Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge school and of Michel Foucault and the Governmentality school, one might take as a provisional field of enquiry 'practices of governance', that is, the forms of reason and organisation through which individuals and groups coordinate their various activities, and the practices of freedom by which they act within these systems, following the rules of the game or striving to modify them.⁹

'Government' and 'governance' in the broad seventeenth-century use of these terms and their cognates refer to the multiple, complex, and overlapping ways of governing individuals and groups. The 'practice of governance' and the corresponding 'form of subjection' of governing armies, navies, churches, teachers and students, families, oneself, poor houses, parishes, ranks, guilds, free cities, populations, trading companies, pirates, consumers, the poor, the economy, nations, states, alliances, colonies, and non-European peoples were seen to have their specific rationality and modes of philosophical analysis. By the generation of Thomas Paine, Kant, Benjamin Constant, and Hegel, the term 'government' (and 'democracy') came to be used primarily in a narrower sense to refer to the formal, public 'practices of governance' of the representative democratic, constitutional nation-state (what might be called capital 'G' Government). Political philosophy came to be restricted to reflection on the just arrangement of this narrow set of governing practices and their problems as if they were sovereign, that is, the foundation from which all others were governed and ordered through a constitutional system of laws (and the remainder could be taken over by other disciplines).

However, practices of governance in the broad sense continued to spread and multiply. The scholars of the second and third phases and the six types of critical study today strongly suggest that we are governed in a multiplicity of ways that do not derive from and cannot be deduced from the inherited traditions of interpretation of the forms of reason and organisation of the public institutions of representative democracy and the rule of law: for example, the ways a host of actors are able to govern our relations to the environment or transnational corporations try to govern their global employees, suppliers, and consumers; the ways we are led to recognise and identify ourselves as members of religions, ethnicities, nations, free and equal democracies, civilizations, and others as nonmembers; the ways of governance accompanying electronic communications, new forms of material and immaterial labour, and the desires, coded behaviour, and 'affects' of individuals and groups

around class, education, gender, and race; the ways a regime of rights can empower some while excluding or assimilating others; the complex forms of indirect rule that have survived and intensified through formal decolonisation in the latter half of the twentieth century. Therefore, if our studies are to be about the real world of government, we need to start with a language of provisional description capable of illuminating practices of governance in both the narrow and broad sense.¹⁰

The study of practices of governance, whether narrow or broad, must proceed from two perspectives: from the side of the forms of government that are put into practice and from the side of the practices of freedom of the governed that are put into practice in response.¹¹ A form of government includes, first, the language games in which both governors and governed are led to recognise each other as partners in the practice, communication, and coordination of their activities; to raise problems and propose solutions; and to renegotiate their form of government, including languages of administration and normative legitimation.

Second, a form of government includes the web of relations of power by which some individuals or groups govern the conduct of other individuals or groups, directly or indirectly, by myriad inequalities, privileges, technologies, and strategies, and who are themselves subject to government by others. Relations of power in this broad sense are relations of governance, as these have developed historically in practices of governance. They are not relations of force that act immediately on unfree and passive bodies and constitute subjects without the mediation of their own thought and action. While coercion and violence can be and are employed as means, they are not to be confused with relations of power. Rather, relations of power are relations of governance that act on free agents: individuals or groups who always have a limited field of possible ways of thinking and acting in response. They are the ensemble of actions by those who exercise power that act on the actions of the governed, working by diverse means to guide and direct them to learn how to conduct themselves in regular and predictable ways—actions that aim to structure the field of the possible actions of others.

Third, as governors and governed participate in the intersubjective and negotiated relations of power and coordinated conduct, they gradually acquire a specific form of subjection or practical identity, a habitual way of thinking and acting within the assignment relations and languages of reciprocal recognition. Again, this form of being 'subject' to the languages and powers of a form of government is not to be construed as a form of identity that determines the self-consciousness and self-formation of the governed down to every detail but, rather, the diverse kinds of relational subjectivity one internalizes and negotiates through participation over time, with their range

of possible conduct and individual variation. Practices of governance are thus also practices of subjectification, as, for example, members of representative democracies become citizens through participation in practices of citizenisation.

Because an intersubjective relation of power or governance is always exercised over an agent who is recognised and treated as a partner who is free, from the perspective of the governed, the exercise of power always opens up a diverse field of potential ways of thinking and acting in response. The ways subjects act on their possibilities are 'practices of freedom', and these range across three general types of case. First, individuals and groups act in accord with the rules of the practices in which they cooperate in the variety of ways of going on as usual. Even in this so-called normal activity, the ongoing conversation and conduct among the partners can modify the practice in often unnoticed and significant ways. Second, subjects raise a problem about a rule of the practice in the languages of communication and legitimation or challenge a relation of governance on the ground, enter into the available procedures of negotiation, deliberation, problem solving, and reform with the aim of modifying the practice (such as an appeal to in-house dispute-resolution procedures, courts, representative institutions, constitutional amendment, international law, or legitimate procedures of protest and ad hoc negotiations).

Third, when these institutions and strategies of problematisation and reform are either unavailable or fail because those who exercise power can subvert or bypass them, it is possible to refuse to be governed by this specific form of government and to resist, either by escape or by confronting, with a strategy of struggle, an oppressive, constitutive relation of power that is not open to challenge, negotiation, and reform (and thus is a relation of 'domination'), such as the patriarchal property relations underpinning Nora's marriage. In struggles of this kind (such as struggles of direct action, liberation, decolonisation, revolt, revolution, globalisation from below), the relations of governance are disrupted and the relatively stable interplay of partners in a practice of governance gives way to the different logic of relations of confrontation among adversaries in strategies of struggle. The powers-that-be aim to reinscribe the old regime, perhaps in a modified form, and to supplement their means of enforcement, and the governed seek to transform it and implement new relations of governance and practices of freedom.

Therefore, although political philosophers have always known that the relationship between governors and governed is some kind of unequal struggle or agonism of mutual subjection, we should be careful to distinguish

among the three complex practices of freedom that are always possible, even in the most settled structures of domination (as South Africa and Eastern Europe illustrate), and that give the history of the ways humans govern themselves its freedom and indeterminacy. As Foucault summarises,

At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom. Rather than speaking of an essential antagonism, it would be better to speak of an 'agonism'—of a relationship that is at the same time mutual incitation and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation that paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation.¹²

Practices of governance imply practices of freedom and vice versa.

The practices of freedom and their institutions of negotiation and reform constitute the 'democratic' side of practices of governance: the extent to which those subject to forms of government can have an effective say and hand in how they are governed and institutionalise effective practices of freedom (using 'democracy' in its narrow and broad senses corresponding to the two senses of 'government'). When subjects not only act in accord with the rules but also stand back and try to call a rule into question and negotiate its modification, they problematise this mode of acting together and its constitutive forms of relational subjectivity. This is the context in which political philosophy as a critical activity begins, especially when these voices of democratic freedom are silenced, ignored, deemed unreasonable, or marginalised.

This provisional language of description of the field of contemporary political philosophy in terms of practices of governance and practices of freedom is the first response to the limitations of our inherited languages of representation. It draws our attention to the languages in which the problems are articulated and the contexts in which the languages are employed without disqualifying new political voices at the outset. This language of description can be used to study the traditional practices and forms of problematisation of modern politics, but within a broader horizon that enables us to see them as a limited whole, as one historically specific ensemble of forms of government and practices of freedom among many, rather than as the comprehensive and quasi-transcendental framework, and so bring doubtful aspects of it into the space of questions. In so doing, this approach also discloses the multiplicity of broader practices of governance and freedom in which we are entangled that are ignored, disqualified, or misrepresented in the predominant approaches. To revert to Cavell's analogy, it frees us from prejudging a problem in a practice of marriage as a problem in a dollhouse.

CONTEMPORARY SURVEYS

As we have seen in the Introduction, the aim of this style of political philosophy is to disclose the conditions of possibility of a historically singular set of problematic practices of governance in the present by means of two methodological steps. The first contemporary, nonhistorical step consists of two critical surveys, first of the languages and then of the practices in which the struggles arise, and various solutions are proposed and implemented or not implemented as reforms. These two surveys enable us to understand critically first the repertoire of problems and solutions in question and second the correlative field of relations of power in contestation.

The task of this first survey is not to present another solution to the problem but to provide a survey of the language games in which the problem and rival practical and theoretical solutions are articulated. There are many methods available in Anglo-American and Continental political philosophy to carry out such a task. The approach I favour draws inspiration from Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, and the development of speech-act theory into a historical and contextual pragmatics of modes of argumentation by Terence Ball, Foucault, Quentin Skinner, Stephen Toulmin, and others.¹³ Speaking and writing are viewed pragmatically and intersubjectively as linguistic activities performed by speakers and writers as participants in language games. Actors in practices of governance and theorists who present rival solutions to a shared political problem are approached as engaged in the intersubjective activities of exchanging reasons and justifications over the contested uses of the descriptive and normative concepts by which the problematic practice and its forms of subjectivity are characterised and disputed. The exchange of reasons in this broad sense of practices of argumentation is both communicative and strategic, involving reason and rhetoric, conviction and persuasion. Participants exchange practical reasons over the contested criteria for the application of concepts in question (sense), including the concepts of 'reason' and 'reasonable', the circumstances that warrant the application of the criteria, the range of reference of the concepts, and their evaluative force, to argue for their solutions and against others.

Why should political philosophers take this pragmatic approach of surveying the various theoretical solutions instead of developing a definitive theory themselves? The answer derives from two famous arguments by Wittgenstein. The first is that understanding general terms—such as freedom, equality, democracy, reason, power, and oppression—is not the theoretical activity of grasping and applying a definition, rule, or theory that states the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of such general terms in any case. The model of applying a rule or theory to particular cases

cannot account for the phenomenon of understanding the meaning of a general term and so of being able to use it and to give reasons and explanations for its use in various contexts.¹⁴

Second, the actual criteria for the application of a general political term are too various, indeterminate, and hence open to unpredictable extension to be explicated in terms of an implicit or transcendental set of rules or theory, no matter how complex. When we look at the uses of a general term what we see is not a determinate set of essential features that could be abstracted from practice and set out in a theory along with rules for their application. We do not find a set of features that make us use the same word for all cases but rather an open-ended family of uses that resemble one another in various ways. We 'see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail' and these 'family resemblances' among uses of a concept change over time in the course of human conversation.¹⁵

The consequence of these two antiessentialist arguments is that understanding political concepts and problems cannot be the theoretical activity of discovering a general and comprehensive rule and then applying it to particular cases, for such a rule is not to be found and understanding does not consist in applying such a rule even if it could be found. The actual use and understanding of political concepts is not the kind of activity that this model of political theory presupposes, that is, of 'operating a calculus according to definite rules'.¹⁶ Rather, Wittgenstein continues, understanding consists in the practical activity of being able to use a general term in various circumstances and being able to give reasons for and against this or that use. This is a form of *practical* reasoning: the manifestation of a repertoire of practical, normative abilities, acquired through practice, to use the general term, as well as to go against customary uses, in actual cases. Such a practical skill, like all practical abilities, cannot be exhaustively described in terms of rules, for the application of the term is not everywhere bounded by rules. A criterion that functions as an intersubjective rule for testing assertions of correct use in some circumstances is itself questioned, reinterpreted, and tested in other circumstances, relative to other criteria that are provisionally held fast.

Understanding a general term thus involves being able to give reasons why it should or should not be used in a particular case, either to provoke or to respond to a dispute, being able to see the strength of the reasons given against this use by one's interlocutors, and then being able to give further reasons, and so on. This is done by describing examples with similar or related aspects, drawing analogies or disanalogies of various kinds, finding precedents, exchanging narratives and redescriptions, drawing attention to intermediate cases so one can pass easily from the familiar to the unfamiliar cases

and see the similarities among them; thereby being both conventional and creative in the use of the criteria that hold our normative vocabulary in place. Wittgenstein illustrates his thesis with the concept of a 'game':

Isn't my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations I could give? That is, in my describing examples of various kinds of game; shewing how all sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these; saying that I should scarcely include this or that among games; and so on.¹⁷

Because the criteria for the application of a term are not determinate, no set of reasons or explanations is definitive. There is always a field of possible reasonable redescrptions: illocutionary acts that evoke another consideration, draw attention to a different analogy or example, uncover another aspect of the situation, and so aim to provoke reconsideration of our considered judgments in this and related cases. These are speech acts that exercise the kind of freedom Nora tries to practice in *The Dollhouse*. Moreover, for the same reasons, the forms of argumentation in which reasons are exchanged are equally complex, and their 'reasonable' forms too are not everywhere bounded by rules but are also open to reasonable disagreement.

Accordingly, understanding and clarifying political concepts, whether by citizens or philosophers, will always be a form of practical reasoning, of entering into and clarifying the ongoing exchange of reasons over the uses of our political vocabulary. It will not be the theoretical activity of abstracting from everyday use and making explicit the context-independent rules for the correct use of our concepts in every case, for the conditions of possibility for such a metacontextual political theory are not available. When political philosophers enter into political discussions and disputes to help clarify the language being used and the appropriate procedures for exchanging reasons, as well as to present reasons of their own, they are not doing anything different in *kind* from the citizens involved in the argumentation, as the picture of political reflection as a theoretical enterprise would lead us to believe. Political philosophy is rather the methodological extension and critical clarification of the already reflective and problematised character of historically situated practices of practical reasoning.¹⁸ Thus, we can now see why the first step should be to start from the ways the concepts we take up are actually used in the practices in which the political difficulties arise. Here we 'bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' to ensure that the work of philosophy starts from 'the rough ground' of struggles with and over words rather than from uncritically accepted forms of representation of them, which may result in 'merely tracing round the frame through which we look at' them.¹⁹

On this view, contemporary political theories are approached, not as rival comprehensive and exclusive theories of the contested concepts, but as limited and often complementary accounts of the complex uses (senses) of the concepts in question and the corresponding aspects of the problematic practice to which these senses refer. They extend and clarify the practical exchange of reasons over the problematic practice of governance by citizens, putting forward a limited range of academic reasons, analogies, and examples for employing criteria in such-and-such a way, for showing why these considerations outweigh those of other theorists, and so on (often of course with the additional claim that these limited uses transcend practice and legislate legitimate use). A theory clarifies one range of uses of the concepts in question and corresponding aspects of the practice of government and puts forward reasons for seeing this as decisive. Yet there is always the possibility of reasonable disagreement, of other theories bringing to attention other senses of the word and other aspects of the situation that any one theory unavoidably overlooks or downplays. Political theories are thus seen to offer conditional perspectives on the whole broad complex of languages, relations of power, forms of subjectivity, and practices of freedom to which they are addressed. None of these theories tells us the whole truth, yet each provides an aspect of the complex picture.²⁰

This first form of survey enables readers (and authors) to understand critically both the problem and the proposed solutions. It enables us to see the reasons and redescriptions on the various sides; to grasp the contested criteria for their application, the circumstances in which they can be applied, and the considerations that justify their different applications, thereby passing freely from one sense of the concept to another and from one aspect of the practice to another; and to appreciate the partial and relative merits of each proposal. To have acquired the complex linguistic abilities to do this is literally to have come to *understand* critically the concepts in question. This enables us to enter into the discussions of the relative merits of the proposed solutions ourselves and present and defend our own views on the matter. To have mastered this dialogical technique is to have acquired the 'burdens of judgment' (in a broader sense than Rawls's use of this phrase is normally interpreted) or what Nietzsche called the ability to reason 'perspectively'.²¹ This form of practical reasoning is also a descendent of the classical humanist view of political philosophy as a practical dialogue. Because it is always possible to invoke a reason and redescribe the accepted application of our political concepts (*paradiastole*), it is always necessary to learn to listen to the other side (*audi alteram partem*), to learn the conditional arguments that support the various sides (*in utramque partem*), and so to be prepared to enter into deliberations with others on how to negotiate an agreeable solution (*negotium*).²²

The second contemporary survey is of the concrete practices—the relations of governance and practices of freedom—in which the problems arise and are fought over. The ways relations of power direct the conduct and shape the identities of those subject to them, and the strategies by which the subjects are able to say ‘enough’ and contest, negotiate, and modify these relations can be analysed in much the same way as language games can. Just as participants in any system of practices of governance think and respond within intersubjective language games, which both enable and constrain what they can do with words, so they act and contest within correlative intersubjective relations of power, which both enable and constrain the extent to which they can modify some of these while others remain immobile background relations of domination, except in struggles of direct confrontation. These surveys include the interplay of governance and freedom, the means by which the structure of governance is held in place (economic control of information, technology, and resources, the threat or use of direct or indirect military power, the organisation of the time and space of the practice, the sciences of persuasion and control, the manufacturing of consent, the techniques for internalising norms of conduct, agenda setting), and the equally diverse means by which subjects are able to resist, organise networks of support, bring the governors to negotiations, and hold them to their agreements. Just as an analytical philosophy of linguistic pragmatics has been developed to survey what can be said, an analytical philosophy of relations of power and practices of freedom has begun to be developed to survey what can be done.²³

HISTORICAL SURVEYS

The first survey enables students of politics to understand critically what can be said and done within a set of practices and problematisation. A genuinely critical political philosophy requires a second type of critique that enables participants to free themselves from the horizons of the practices and problematisation to some extent, to see them as one *form* of practice and one *form* of problematisation that can then be compared critically with others, and so to go on to consider the possibilities of thinking and acting differently. This second, transformative objective is achieved by means of historical or genealogical surveys of the history of the languages and practices that have been explored and understood from the inside through the first two surveys. The transition from contemporary to historical surveys turns on an argument developed in different ways by almost every member of this school of political philosophy.

When problems are raised, solutions discussed, and relations of power contested and negotiated in a problematic practice, there are always some uses of words (grammar) that are not questioned in the course of the disputation and some relations of power that are not challenged in practice. These provisionally taken-for-granted uses of the shared vocabulary function as the intersubjective warrants or grounds for what is problematised and subject to the exchange of reasons and procedures of validation in the language games, just as settled relations of power and institutionalised practices of freedom function as the intersubjective conditions of the contested aspects of governance and novel forms of freedom. The background shared understandings are the conditions of possibility of the specific problematisation. They both enable and constrain the form of problematisation. As Wittgenstein puts it,

All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary or doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the elements in which arguments have their life.²⁴

This loose 'system of judgements' or problematisation is neither universal nor transcendental but provisionally held in place and beyond question by all the disputation within it.²⁵ He calls the inherited agreement in the language in which the testing of problems and solutions takes place (testing of true and false, just and unjust, valid and invalid, reasonable and unreasonable) 'an agreement in form of life' to indicate the extent to which it is anchored in shared ways of acting as well as speaking: 'it is our *acting* which lies at the bottom of the language-game'.²⁶ Analogously, the corresponding uncontested relations of power that govern ways of acting function as the enabling and constraining conditions of possibility of the practice as a whole, its forms of government and contestation.

Freeing ourselves from the problematisations and practices in which we think and act is difficult because participation tends to render their shared patterns of thought and reflection and rule following and rule contesting prereflective and habitual. They come to be experienced as necessary rather than contingent, constitutive rather than regulative, universal rather than partial. As Quentin Skinner writes, 'It is easy to become bewitched into believing that the ways of thinking about them [our normative concepts] bequeathed to us by the mainstream of our intellectual traditions must be *the* ways of thinking about them'.²⁷ While the first two types of contemporary survey begin to disclose the unexamined conventions of the language games and the background relations of domination of the practices, the two parallel

types of historical survey show how these specific forms of problematisation and practices of governance came to be hegemonic and function as the discursive and nondiscursive bounds of political reason and thereby to displace other possibilities. Skinner continues,

The history of philosophy, and perhaps especially of moral, social and political philosophy, is there to prevent us from becoming too readily bewitched. The [historian of political philosophy] can help us to appreciate how far the values embodied in our present way of life, and our present ways of thinking about those values, reflect a series of choices made at different times between different possible worlds. This awareness can help to liberate us from the grip of any one hegemonic account of those values and how they should be interpreted and understood. Equipped with a broader sense of possibility, we can stand back from the intellectual commitments that we have inherited and ask ourselves in a new spirit of enquiry what we should think of them.²⁸

My description of the two types of historical survey can be brief because they proceed in much the same pragmatic way as the two contemporary surveys. In the first, of the hegemonic forms of political thinking about the problems and solutions, the history of their emergence and development are approached in the same manner as contemporary political theories, as responses to problems in practice at the time. Political theorists in the past are seen as questioning, testing, and challenging some of the accepted conventions of *their* age in various ways; arguing for different ways of looking at the problem and of employing the criteria of the concepts in question; showing how a concept can be extended in an unconventional yet reasonable way to solve the problem; and, in response, defending and restating the prevailing conventions in question, perhaps in novel ways. This kind of historical survey of the history of political thought shows how the mainstream system of judgments today was gradually put in place, often over centuries, as the stage setting of reflective disputes and debates, the reasons that were given for and against it, and the alternatives it displaced.

Second, these historical studies of the languages and theories of political thought are related to historical surveys of the corresponding changes in the four main, nondiscursive features of the problematic practices of governance, thereby providing a history of the practices that are the site of struggle in the present. What happens when humans are led to recognise themselves and coordinate their interaction under a new and now conventional sense of, say, 'liberty', 'discipline', or 'identity'?²⁹ What new institutions and relations of power are employed to induce people to acquire the appropriate modes of conduct and forms of subjectivity, and what new practices of freedom emerge and become institutionalised in response? What older practices of gover-

nance are displaced, and how are the new ones rendered legitimate, routine, and self-evident?

These philosophical studies in the history of political thought and practice have two distinct roles. They are contributions to the contextual understanding of texts in the history of political philosophy in their own right, addressed to historians of political thought and practice broadly conceived, and judged by the standards of the field. In addition, these surveys can be offered to the theorists and citizens in the disputes from which we began as further horizon-expanding reasons and redescriptions for their consideration and response. In this dialogical role, they can be employed to acquire and exercise a critical orientation to the background conventions of the contemporary problematisation and practices that were set out in the first surveys. The acquisition and exercise of this critical attitude consists of two steps.³⁰

First, on the basis of the critical understanding acquired by the two contemporary surveys, a political philosopher constructs a plausible interpretation, in a related yet novel vocabulary, of the specific *form* of problematisation and practice of governance, namely, of the specific linguistic and nonlinguistic conditions of possibility of both. This transformative step, or series of intermediate steps, provides a critical distance from the problematisation and practice by providing a new language of self-understanding, one that enables us to move, to some limited and partial extent, beyond the forms of self-understanding we have as participants within the practices and their modes of argumentation.³¹

Second, the historical surveys disclose the formation and historical contingency of this specific form of problematisation and practice and the different potential ways of organising this general kind of practice of governance that were not actualized. These histories of the present thus provide the means to criticise and evaluate the practices and ways of thinking to which we are subject by comparing and contrasting them with possible alternatives.³² They thereby place the current struggles in a much broader field of possible responses, enabling participants to determine if some constitutive feature is the source of their oppression. This is not a critique from the vantage point of a transcendental standard or procedure of judgement, for as we have seen, such standards are internally related to the language games they purport to transcend. Rather, it is a nontranscendental yet transcending critique of the horizons of our practices and forms of thought by means of reciprocal comparison and contrast with other possible ways of being in the world. It is the general type of critique Gadamer called a 'the fusion of horizons': the difficult game of putting one's horizons of thought and action into play relative to others in a question-and-answer dialogue.³³ Contemporary disputes and negotiations are thereby transformed from the limited exchange of practical

reasons over reforms within a practice of governance and its modes of argumentation to a broader exchange of practical reasons over the comparative values of a range of possible practices and the relations of governance, forms of subjectivity, and practices of freedom they institutionalise.

A few examples will illustrate these two steps. Marx's *Capital* enables subjects struggling over various solutions to the problems of the conditions of work to see these struggles and debates as the problematisation of a specific practice of governance, a capitalist mode of production. His historical surveys then enable them to see its contingency and to compare and evaluate its features with other possible ways of governing productive activities (such as feudalism and socialism). Foucault, by recharacterizing the dominant practices and traditions of interpretation of representative constitutional democracy as juridical-discursive institutions and the sovereignty model of problematisation, enables us to see many of our current political struggles and theoretical debates as moves within a historically particular set of practices of governance and mode of problematisation. Then, he contrasts this with another way of describing contemporary practices of governance (in the broad sense) as norm-governed relations of biopower that are obscured by the language of sovereignty. This survey discloses different aspects of our practices and different possible and perhaps more effective practices of freedom for consideration.³⁴

Taylor's *Sources of the Self* recasts our understanding of seemingly comprehensive and mutually exclusive theories of moral and political selfhood as disclosing different aspects of a complex modern organization of identity that moderns have come to acquire historically through participation in different practices of governance. Skinner's *Liberty before Liberalism* leads us to see the dominant way of thinking about and practicing freedom, as either negative noninterference or positive freedom, as historically contingent and partial; to compare and contrast the relative value of ways of life these promote with another form of freedom, as nondomination, that was marginalized by the ascendancy of liberalism; and to reconsider the reasons for its near eclipse.

Finally, as Wollstonecraft illustrates before the letter in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, this kind of philosophical study of Nora and Thorvold's practice of marriage and its limited practices of freedom would disclose the constitutive features of this specific dollhouse form of marriage, to understand its historical formation, and to situate it in a broader field of possible forms of marriage. We would thus be in the position to secure uptake of what Nora is trying to say, to enter into a dialogue over the injustices of its relations of domination and forms of subjectivity, and to consider the concrete practices of freedom by which it could be transformed.³⁵

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Political philosophy as a critical attitude starts from the present struggles and problems of politics and seeks to clarify and transform the normal understanding of them so as to open up the field of possible ways of thinking and acting freely in response. These investigations are addressed to political philosophers and scholars in related disciplines, and they are tested in the multidisciplinary discussions that follow. However, insofar as they do throw critical light on contemporary struggles over oppressive practices of governance, they are addressed to the wider audience of citizens who are engaged in the struggles and seek assistance from university research. This is a communicative relationship of reciprocal elucidation and mutual benefit between political philosophy and public affairs.

On one hand, such studies throw light on the features of the practice in which a problem arises and becomes the site of struggle and negotiation, enabling the participants to become more self-aware of the conditions of their situation and the range of actions available to them. On the other hand, the experiments of the participants in negotiating, implementing, and reviewing concrete changes in practice provide a pragmatic, concrete test of the studies and their limitations. By studying the unanticipated blockages, difficulties, and new problems that arise in the cycle of practices of freedom—of negotiations, implementation, and review—political philosophers can detect the limitations and faults of their initial account, make improvements, and exercise again, on the basis of the new problems, this permanent critical *ethos* of testing the practices in which we are governed.³⁶

To conclude, let me present one final difference it makes to study politics in this way. If political philosophy is approached as the activity of developing comprehensive theories, the questions of politics tend to be taken up as problems of justice, of the just way to recognise free and equal citizens and for them to govern their stable institutions of constitutional, representative democracy. This has been the dominant answer to the question 'what is political theory?' over the past two centuries. The subaltern school I have outlined is respectfully sceptical of this orientation and of the presupposition that there are definitive practices of free governance and theoretical solutions to their problems.

Consequently, this alternative answer to our question is oriented to freedom before justice. The questions of politics are approached as questions of freedom. What are the specific practices of governance in which the problems arise and the practices of freedom by which they are raised? And what are the possible practices of freedom in which free and equal subjects could speak and exchange reasons more freely over how to criticise, negotiate, and

modify their always imperfect practices? This is a permanent task of making sure that the multiplicity of practices of governance in which we act together do not become closed structures of domination under settled forms of justice, but are always open to practices of freedom by which those subject to them have a say and a hand over them.

NOTES

1. An exemplar of this kind of question-and-answer dialogue for both Islamic and Western cultures is Plato's dialogues. For a contemporary reformulation, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 362-81. For the distinction between the logic of a dialogue of questions and answers and one of problems and solutions that I use below, see idem, *Truth and Method*, 376-77. For a history of dialogical political philosophy from Socrates to Hobbes's argument against it and his assertion of an influential style of monological political theory, see Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

2. There are of course many other types of political theory. I am using this specific type as an object of contrast. For the history and renaissance of practical philosophy, see Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1-60; Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

3. For studies in the history of the critical attitude, see Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?" in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997), 23-82; Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001).

4. See James Tully, ed., *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1988); Quentin Skinner, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); James Tully, ed., *Philosophy Is an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ruth Abbey, *Charles Taylor* (Teddington, UK: Acumen, 2000); Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*; Cressida Heyes, ed., *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming); Cressida Heyes, *Line Drawings: Defining Women through Feminist Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Richard Rorty, *Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Gary Gutting, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault*, 3 vols. (New York: New Press, 1994, 1997); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Philosophy in History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), is a landmark text in the 'third phase' of this tradition.

5. For the dialogue between these two traditions, see Samantha Ashenden and David Owen, eds., *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory* (London: Sage, 1999); David Couzens Hoy and Thomas McCarthy, *Critical Theory* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994); Michael Kelly, ed., *Critique and Power: Recasting the*

Foucault/Habermas Debate (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994); Stephen K. White, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

6. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997), 101-34, at 133. The various versions of this article are collected in this volume.

7. For these trends in recent scholarship, see James Tully, "The Unfreedom of the Moderns in Comparison to their Ideals of Constitutional Democracy," *Modern Law Review* (forthcoming, March 2002).

8. Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 101-26. For a helpful commentary, see David Owen, "Cultural Diversity and the Conversation of Justice," *Political Theory* 27, no. 5 (1999): 579-96.

9. For the Governmentality school, see Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999); Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For the Cambridge school, see references at note 4 above.

10. For more on this sketch of practices of governance, see James Tully, "Democracy and Globalization," in *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections*, ed. Ronald Beiner and Wayne Norman (Toronto, Canada: Oxford University Press, 2000), 36-63.

11. See Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 129-30, and his further discussion of practices of governance and practices of freedom in "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Essential Works of Foucault*, vol. 1, 281-302. My sketch of the five features of practices of governance and freedom draws in part on these articles. I have discussed them in relation to other authors in this tradition in "To Think and Act Differently," *Foucault contra Habermas*, 90-142.

12. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *The Essential Works of Foucault*, vol. 3, 326-49, at 342. My presentation of practices of freedom draws on this article, the changes in "The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom". I have discussed this account of freedom in "To Think and Act Differently," 130-39. See also Clarissa Hayward, *Defacing Power* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 161-79; and James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1968); J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1962); Gadamer, *Truth and Method*; Hanna Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-36; Tully, *Meaning and Context*, 29-134, 231-89; Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell Hanson, ed., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1958); Toulmin, *Return to Reason*; John Shotter, *Conversational Realities* (London: Sage, 1993); Douglas Walton, *The New Dialectic: Conversational Contexts of Argument* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Iris Marion Young, *Intersecting Voices* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 38-74.

14. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, secs. 81-85. For this interpretation of Wittgenstein's arguments, see James Tully, "Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy," in *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, ed. Cressida Heyes (forthcoming); and *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 103-15.

15. *Ibid.*, secs. 65-67. For the relation of this line of argument to deconstruction, see Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

16. Ibid., sec. 81.

17. Ibid., sec. 75, compare sec. 71.

18. Compare David Owen, "Orientation and Enlightenment: An Essay on Critique and Genealogy," in *Foucault contra Habermas*, 21-44, and references in note 2.

19. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, secs. 116, 107, 114. It is interesting to note that Isaiah Berlin recommended that political philosophers abandon their abstract analysis and get back to the way words are actually used in the struggles of the day at the very beginning of his famous Oxford lecture in 1958. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977), 118-72, at 118-21. Yet his critical and historical survey of two uses of 'liberty' in twentieth-century struggles has been abstracted from practice and treated as two 'theories' of liberty. For recent pleas to ground the study of freedom in the practices of freedom to which I am indebted, see Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3-29; and Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, 1-14.

20. Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 293.

21. For this broader interpretation of Rawls as a member of this tradition of political philosophy, see Anthony Laden, *Reasonably Radical: Deliberative Liberalism and the Politics of Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). For Nietzsche, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.

22. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, 14-16, 138-80.

23. See Arnold I. Davidson, "Introduction," *Foucault and His Interlocutors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1-20; Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, 1-98; and references in note 12.

24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1974), sec. 105.

25. Ibid., secs. 140-44.

26. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, secs. 240-42; idem, *On Certainty*, sec. 204.

27. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116.

28. Ibid., 116-17. The classic example of this first type of historical survey is Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

29. See, respectively, Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); and Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

30. For a careful analysis of these steps, see David Owen, "Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation," in Heyes, *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*.

31. For example, Foucault's characterisation of classical debates on ethics in terms of a problematisation consisting of four main dimensions enables us to achieve a certain distance from the debates as a whole. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 14-25. For his invention and careful development of the concept of a problematisation and its relation to practices, see idem, *Foucault Live* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1996), 413-14, 421-22, 462-3; and *Fearless Speech*, 74, 171-73.

32. The technique of comparative critique rather than transcendental critique, while familiar to this entire tradition, is reformulated in a novel way by Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, secs. 122, 130-31. For its genesis, see Raymond Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990), 298-327.

33. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 306-7, 374-75. See Richard Rorty, "Being That Can Be Understood Is Language," *London Review of Books* 22, no. 6 (2000): 23-25; and Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 165-81.

34. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; idem, *History of Sexuality: Volume I* (London: Penguin, 1978). See Dean, *Governmentality*, 98-113; and Owen, "Genealogy as Perspicuous Representation." For an extension of this kind of contrast of sovereignty and biopower to the problematisation of globalisation, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). Edward Said's critical studies, especially *Culture and Imperialism*, bring to light the imperial horizons of the literature that has shaped Western sensibilities for two centuries and what has been and is being said and done in response.

35. Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindications*, ed. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 1997).

36. Compare Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 126, 133, and idem, *Essential Works*, vol. 1, 321-28. The evolving reciprocal relationships between many schools of political theory and philosophy (both historical-critical and neo-Kantian) and concrete struggles constitute a complex global network of research and communication. The six types of multidisciplinary critical study mentioned earlier have spearheaded this renaissance of a Socratic relation to the public good broadly conceived. For example, the historical and theoretical knowledge of these scholars has enabled them to throw a broader and more critical light on the forms of oppression in an era of globalisation—inequality, exploitation, domination, racism, deliberative democratic deficits, and rights' abuses—and on the practices of freedom that might be effective in response. I have discussed these relationships further in "Democracy and Globalization" and "The Unfreedom of Moderns."

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