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THE HISTORY OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

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AFTER POSTSTRUCTURALISM: TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

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OUT OF BOUNDS: PHILOSOPHY IN AN AGE OF TRANSITION

Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti

This essay is a joint venture between two thinkers who address philosophy's multiple lives in the period 1980–95, that is to say, the time span covered by this volume, which roughly coincides with the period from which our graduate training came to an end to our mid-career. The authors, trained in philosophy, built quite a philosophical curriculum and full academic careers while always being housed outside the disciplinary quarters – one employed in rhetoric and comparative literature departments and the other in gender studies. From these relatively marginal positions, we will attempt to account for the many shifts in philosophy's excursions towards multiple outsides, by stressing their experimental, transgressive, but also systematic and engaged character.

The essay has accordingly a triple aim. First, we aim to focus on the growth of several kinds of new philosophical practice in the period under scrutiny, by providing a synoptic overview of the most relevant developments. Second, we want to map our continuing involvement with a discipline that institutionally did not welcome the critical theories and theorists of the 1970s and 1980s, but rather tended to exclude or marginalize us. To achieve this goal, we will rely on autobiographical accounts and personal information in order to document the specific shifts of location and contextual conditions that affected the practice of philosophy in this period. As a result, this chapter will mix personal voices and individual accounts with the more standard academic tone. The sections related to the former appear in italics.

Third, we argue that the emergence of new experimental modes and venues of thinking combine to form both creative tensions and contradictions that have left a problematic legacy for future generations of philosophers. Writing about them is a way of making ourselves accountable for this legacy.

I. THE GROWTH OF NEW KINDS OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE

Throughout the 1980s, in response to both external prompts and internal dynamics, the practice of philosophy expanded toward activities that were outside the established institutions of the discipline. We will call these extramural or real-life trajectories "philosophy outside its bounds." Concretely, this way of designating an operation of thought means that throughout the 1980s philosophical concepts burst out of their formal academic setting in modes of concrete engagement with the world, continuing in a new way the activist dispositions of the 1960s and 1970s, but also reflecting the changing conditions of culture, in ways that are both informed by, and informing, the arts and media culture.

The experience of the intense political activism of the 1970s had demonstrated not only that philosophy is capable of taking on a different role in public venues than the one traditionally accorded it within the university, but also that it could find renewed energy and inspiration in doing so. What happens through the 1980s, therefore, is not only a quantitative change in philosophy's expansion toward the outside, but also a qualitative shift. Philosophical practice grows into and out of locations and activities that were not traditionally associated with it, and it does not remain confined to the historical venues and actors linked to political "engagement" and activist social movements. Domains into which this new kind of expansion took place include the media, the corporate world of business management, medical ethics, and popular culture. As a result, philosophy "takes place" in different times and venues, functioning as part of humanitarian efforts, as modes of popular and public culture, and as art practices. It engenders not only informed scholars, but also engaged citizens and discerning consumers.

French philosophers have a long established tradition of intervention in social, cultural, and political life, as public intellectuals, social critics, and activists. The figures of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir stand high in this tradition, lending their support to a variety of crucial causes such as decolonization, socialism and antiracism (Fanon and Césaire), feminism and pacifism. They also founded new journals and publication venues, such as *Les Temps modernes*, *Libération*, and *Questions féministes*. There is, however, a difference in the scale and mode of engagements of the philosophers who come after them. They intervene on questions of justice, human suffering, responsibility, economic and social sustainability, and global belonging, making use of visual culture and media and reflecting on its meaning, and they do so not in the name of an engagement with Marxist or any other ideology, but rather as an end in itself. They prioritize the critical analysis of power relations at both the macro and the micro levels as the main task for philosophers.

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze[1] captured both the spirit of the times and its profound ambivalence when they posited the emergence of a new type of function for the philosopher as public intellectual. If the contrast with the received Hegelian model of the universalistic philosopher as rational guardian of the moral development of mankind (the gender is not a coincidence) is easily drawn, the difference from the engaged or "organic" intellectual of the previous generation of Marxist and existential thinkers requires more cautious phrasing. As Foucault and Deleuze put it:

> At one time, practice was considered an application of theory, a consequence; at other times, it had an opposite sense and it was thought to inspire theory ... In any event, their relationship was understood in terms of a process of totalization. For us, however, the question is seen in a different light. The relationships between theory and practice are far more partial and fragmentary. ... The relationship which holds in the application of a theory is never one of resemblance. ... Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another and theory is a relay from one practice to another. ... A theorizing intellectual, for us, is no longer a subject, a representing or representative consciousness. ... Representation no longer exists; there's only action – theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks.[2]

The main legacy of "high poststructuralist" thought, therefore, is that the political and conceptual contestation of the totalizing power of the discipline of philosophy does not inaugurate a "crisis" for its own sake. It is rather an encouragement to pursue philosophy by all possible means and hence it is a sign of great theoretical vitality. Coherent in their practice, the poststructuralists conjugate philosophy in the plural and move it toward social, political, and ethical concerns. They see themselves as "specific" intellectuals, providers of critical services, analysts of the conditions of possibility of discourse, working with ideas that are also programs for action rather than dogmatic stockpiles of beliefs. This style is "problematizing" in its radical empiricism, or antiuniversalism, and in the awareness of the partiality of all philosophical statements. As a result, the kind of philosophy that emerged in the late 1980s was on the edge of institutionalization, embodying what Foucault called "permanent critique." Because

*1. Foucault and Deleuze are discussed in essays by, respectively, Timothy O'Leary and Daniel W. Smith, in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 6*.

2. See Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," in *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice*, Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (trans.) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 205–7.

of this radical commitment to philosophy and its outsides, training as philosophers while being activists at that point in time actually meant having to ask fundamental questions such as: Why think? How can we connect the practice of thinking to larger social and ethical concerns? How can we resist the negative and oppressive aspects of the present? What is philosophy all about and how can it help us lead politically useful, socially productive, and morally adequate lives?[3] These questions were also our entry-point into the discipline.

What attracted us both to poststructuralism is that it was one of the answers to the decline of modernist utopias, mostly Marxism and various brands of post-Marxist master narratives of politics. It was an attempt to rearticulate a radical sense of materialism, embodiment, and accountability and to redefine the question of praxis in terms of ethical agency. Last but not least it made it not only possible, but also necessary, to connect the task of philosophy to the challenges coming from the new social movements – mostly those associated with feminists, gay and lesbian rights, environmentalists and peace activists, racial and ethnic minorities in the context of postcoloniality. Critical philosophical theory challenges the dominant representation of the subject of knowledge and develops it into a critique of the hidden assumptions about who is entitled to do philosophy and to what ends.

Early formations

JB: *The period of 1980–1995 was one in which I became trained officially as a PhD in philosophy but entered into teaching environments in which I taught the humanities more generally, including social theory. Because I was at Yale University for both my undergraduate and graduate training, and there were some very pronounced tensions between literary studies and philosophy as well as acute conflicts between traditions and styles of philosophical reflection, I was constantly aware of a number of boundaries that had to be negotiated, especially if I was somehow to "succeed" in getting a PhD and a position of employment.[4] It is important to add to this autobiographical sketch my own involvement at the time with the Women's Center in the city of New Haven, where most of the feminists were not involved with the university at all, and my engagement with an emergent movement of lesbian and gay activists, many of whom were in New York. So I did not have a single "track" that I followed, and I was aware at every turn that I would*

3. For an important introduction to the spirit of this philosophical age, see François Laruelle, *Les Philosophies de la différence: Introduction critique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986); published in English as *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy*, Rocco Gangle (trans.) (New York: Continuum 2010).

4. For an earlier consideration of this period, see my "Can the 'Other' of Philosophy Speak?," in *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

have to negotiate certain boundaries and limits if I were to "survive" within the institutional forms that were available to me. Of course, I was in an enormously privileged position as a US academic at one of the most elite schools, but my life did not center there, and I believe that when my name was called out at the graduate ceremonies for my undergraduate degree, no one there knew who I was. So I was constantly escaping: in my apartment, reading; on the train to New York; in the bars, pursuing conversations and political actions outside the academy on sexuality, rights, representation, power, coalitions, social norms, psychic life. These were sites of enormous intellectual intensity, and in many ways they prompted and informed the kinds of questions that I brought into my own academic work, especially my philosophical work.

RB: *Philosophy has always been part of my life and culture. Growing up in Italy in a socialist family committed to anti-fascism, I got accustomed early on to ideas like freedom, justice, and responsibility. Besides, in Italian high schools, just like in France, philosophy was a compulsory subject of study; I delighted in it. When I migrated to Australia at the age of fifteen, I hated having to give up philosophy to embrace whatever the syllabus was in Melbourne inner city high school in the early 1970s – the period just prior to the emergence of Australian multiculturalism. Philosophy came to represent a sort of surrogate home and a vulnerable but resilient feature of my intellectual genealogy.*[5] *I had taken a few of my philosophy books with me; more were sent to me by my maternal uncle, a Catholic priest who worked with Italian migrants in Switzerland. Some were his own, from his school days, and I turned those thin yellowed pages with respect and relish. They were in Italian, of course, and signified some sort of safety and a safeguard of my own cultural identity. In between attending "remedial English" classes for new migrants and doing the normal homework, I made sure to complete the Italian philosophy curriculum. This consisted essentially of the history of philosophy in chronological order, with emphasis on the great classics; Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius were among the favorites. So many of them were foreigners, exiles, displaced people – like Spinoza for instance – I felt we all shared in a radical form of non-belonging. With Pascal I confronted my adolescent self-doubts; from Voltaire I learned the powers of a relentless wit. My diaries of those days are full of references to them. It was years before I got upset by the fact that there was not a woman in sight in this philosophical canon. Because of the intimate relationship to those texts, philosophy became both a permanent feature of my mental landscapes and a private site marked by the oscillation between loss and belonging. It*

5. For an earlier account of this period, see my "Introduction," in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

both confirmed and challenged my sense of identity, of being a European migrant and an Italian-French-speaker. It was a rather classical and old-fashioned idea of European culture, modeled on an Enlightenment-based idea of human progress through the deployment of reason, truth, and justice. Later on I ended up questioning all this, of course, but for many years those philosophy texts were my most trusted friends and loyal companions. I felt we shared a secret.

JB: *In the early 1970s, I discovered philosophy through reading some key texts that I found in the basement of my home – books that my parents had bought for their college education and had shelved there with the expectation that they would never be read again. It was paradoxical that I would go to the basement, lock the door behind me, to secure some distance from my parents only to find myself engrossed by their books. I would put on music, and write some in a diary, but I would also comb those shelves looking for texts that might help me to think about how to live. So as I reached for some of those books – Spinoza's* Ethics *and Kierkegaard's* Either/Or *in particular – I was quite literally reaching for philosophy as a kind of guide, a source of wisdom, as a book that might accompany me in my confused despair and longing in order to find a way. I certainly had not had a course in philosophy, and yet I understood that these books were about the search for wisdom – and I wanted some. I had had some exposure to philosophical thinking at my synagogue, but it wasn't until I took the books down and started reading that I had the experience of needing these books, quite literally, in order to survive. Of course, it was in Plato that one found an explicit set of definitions for philosophy, ones that had to do with learning how to live and, more specifically, how to live or lead the good life. I wanted to be able to survive, and it seemed to me that survival was not possible unless I could secure meaning for life. I also knew that survival was not quite enough, that one had to live well, that one had to somehow identify and pursue a good life. If there was no good life to have, then why live at all?*

I was operating out of a certain adolescent darkness, to be sure, but I was also quite passionate about reading. I read because I was passionate, and did not know what to make of my passions. I also read about the passions, thinking I might finally understand conceptually something about human nature or the human life that would make my own predicaments less singular and personal. So reading about passion made me a passionate reader of philosophy. And both Spinoza and Kierkegaard were nothing without the former's emphasis on desire, and the latter's notion of passion and faith.

First institutional encounters

RB: *In 1973 I enrolled at university and read for a joint degree in literature and philosophy. It was what they called "continental" philosophy, which was marginal*

in Australia, in relation to the dominant British analytic tradition. To me, this was the heart of the matter. I took to phenomenology with great enthusiasm: Merleau-Ponty's insight into embodiment and memory resonated with my experience. I was also fascinated by Freud's psychoanalysis with the emphasis on the instability, but also the stubborn, repetitive structure of identity formations. I will never forget reading Juliet Mitchell's introduction to Lacan: a true revelation! This was the high 1970s in all their impetuous intensity, of course, and I was working on Althusser just as the fast-growing women's movement and the anti-Vietnam moratorium contributed to politicize issues of identity, political subjectivity, and resistance. The Australian scene was dominated by figures of the caliber of Germaine Greer, whose passionate politics shaped both my thinking and the way I wanted to live my life. All of a sudden philosophy was all around me, literally in the streets. It provided both alternative social values and new mental spaces. With my friends the discussions centered on issues of social justice, anticolonialism, women's rights, and nonviolence. I expected philosophy to teach me about responsibility, justice, community, and how to combine theory and practice with coherence and dignity.

I was very fortunate in having as my BA supervisor a great and important teacher, whose influence will continue throughout my adult life: Genevieve Lloyd. She was just getting started then on her landmark volume The Man of Reason *as she taught me the history of philosophy. With a PhD from Oxford, Genny Lloyd was completely acceptable to the analytic philosophers, while her heart was in continental philosophy. A most remarkable intellect, she transmitted her passion for Spinoza while she taught Foucault as part of the basic curriculum. That's how I came to choose to move to Paris in the late 1970s, to study philosophy at the Sorbonne. I did not even wait for the BA graduation ceremony.*

Paris at the time was, philosophically, the most exciting place on earth. While I enrolled for my postgraduate degree in what they called "history of systems of thought," which was related to Foucault's Chair at the Collège de France, I savored everything the city had to offer intellectually. Foucault's magisterial courses on bio-power are forever engraved in my mind, while Irigaray held seminars in makeshift locations after Lacan threw her out of his "École freudienne" for excessive independence of mind. It was not until I started attending Deleuze's seminars at Vincennes that I discovered what great philosophy in the making was all about. Cixous and Lyotard were also teaching there: it was like a whirlpool of activity that took my breath away.[6] I became more and more intrigued by the collective character of philosophical thoughts in general and more particularly of so many utterances and knowledge claims that I had learned to call my own. Thinking seemed to happen in groups, in the company of others. Although it was formatted and framed by reason,

6. See also my "The Way We Were: Some Post-Structuralist Memoirs," *Women's Studies International Forum* 23(6) (November–December 2000).

thinking was an outward-bound, external, and often reactive activity, driven by forces and affects which acted independently of the rational will. I experienced this insight with almost joyful relief and grew suspicious of both claims to liberal individualism from the Right and also of the identity politics that was so central to the Left theories of the time. I was increasingly critical of rigid claims to steady identities and rooted subject positions. I re-routed myself towards more fluid and multilayered understandings of what makes a subject.

JB: *As I grew older, I found out that I could take a college class in this subject called "philosophy," something that I approached with great enthusiasm. I had prepared myself in high school by reading parts of Plato and Aristotle, the tradition of classical political liberalism (some Locke and Montesquieu), and a rather large swath from the legacies of existentialism, including existential theology. At the same time, I was reading texts from the antipsychiatry movement, and starting to read feminism and texts from the Black Power movement (Eldridge Cleaver, especially). I understood myself to be a radical, even a revolutionary, although my thoughts on these subjects were somewhat confused. When I did arrive at my first university course, I could not really understand what kind of philosophy this was. The term "philosophy" became something of a category in crisis. We were reading Plato's* Republic *and John Rawls's early essays on justice, and we were asked to focus on certain kinds of semantic problems and argumentative forms in both texts. Although I learned to do this with some difficulty, I could not see at all how any of this "philosophy" was related to the question of how best to live a life, how to find and know the good life, how to secure those kinds of meanings that might make life seem livable and worthwhile.*

Where was the investment, the sense of quest, the sense of existential urgency? It was one thing to ask "How do I know what the good life is, and how do I go about living it?" That question presumes that the "I" in the sentence is an existing person who has an investment in pursuing the answer to the question posed. That "person" dropped out of the picture in my first encounter with institutionalized philosophy. Instead, we thought about the meaning of the word "good." Now, of course, one cannot simply ask what the good life is without having some sense of what the word "good" is doing in the question. There are several ways in which "good" can be used, and it seems obligatory to parse these various meanings and to offer a justification for the particular usage at issue in the question posed. And there were epistemological problems that compounded the semantic ones: Even if there is a life that we might reasonably call "good," how might we come to know it? And do we have the appropriate cognitive capacity to know it at all? In this context, philosophy turned out to be a reflection on the confused meaning of words (ordinary people use language in a confused way, but philosophers seek to alleviate language of its confusion or to show that the confusions make impossible any substantive progress

on a particular problem). Or philosophy turned out to be a reflection on the limits of what we can know. If we could gain a clear picture ("clear pictures" were very important) of the limits of what we can know, then we would cease to ask certain kinds of highly speculative questions and reconcile ourselves to matters that were decidedly more narrow and workable.

I was, of course, driven into a sense of embarrassment about my own philosophical passions, especially since the questions that I most wanted to ask and pursue were for the most part discredited as worth pursuing in that form. I felt that my own questions were too passionate and too large. I remember learning how to do the kind of analysis that those philosophers required of their students, and I am sure that it helped me to formulate arguments with greater clarity than I otherwise would have. But I did, from the outset of my encounter with the institution of philosophy, understand that I would have to go underground in order to pursue what I meant by "philosophy." It was only later that I came to understand that this is an institutional feature of philosophy: it helps to produce a certain underground even as it discredits the underground that it produces. In addition, it also spends a fair amount of its time showing how the kinds of questions and the modes of thinking that take place in "ordinary" life are in need of an idiomatic reduction, reformulation, simplification, and amplification.

Of course, the question of whether certain modes of philosophy have an idiom is an important one. I made the mistake, for instance, of thinking in my first philosophy course that it made a difference that Plato's Republic *was written in dialogue form. What was the importance of counterposing voices within the text? Of interruptions? Of silences? Of the places where the text breaks off? Did the occasional belching of the interlocutor "say" something in the text? Did it draw attention to the body in the dialogue or to a dimension of language that was articulate in ways that could not be reduced to semantic content? What about the status of fables or stories in philosophical works? Were they simply ways of "illustrating" a set of philosophical points that could just as easily be offered in propositional form? Or were they important ways of sustaining "arguments" in nonpropositional modalities? Were they also ways of calling into question the centrality of argument to philosophy itself? How were we to understand irony, narrative, and voice as philosophical features of the text? Did it really not matter who was talking, and to whom, and whether or not something true was constituted and conveyed in that exchange?*

RB: *The core of my philosophical interest was by now set on questions of identity, responsibility, becoming a subject of both knowledge and transformative politics or praxis.*

The main questions I kept asking were: How can we do justice to experiences that have no recognition in the language and practice of conventional wisdom, common sense, reasonableness? What is the appropriate language in which to

express silences and missing voices? The politics of discourse and the limits of representation became crucial concerns. So much of our collective embodied experience – as women, gays, pacifists, leftists – seemed somehow pitched against what was discursively acceptable or even sayable. Philosophy was as much part of the problem as part of a possible solution; deconstructing it seemed imperative. The existential component of my philosophical work was boosted at this time by another major event: I undertook a long personal psychoanalysis in French, with a brilliant nonaligned psychoanalyst. This was not uncommon at the time: a "slice" (as they called it then) of psychoanalytic treatment was considered an integral part of a philosophical education. Lacan's influence on this generation was immense, of course, and I think beneficial in the long run: he recommended not working with psychoanalytic concepts unless one had actually undergone at least some practice. Lacanian psychoanalysis clearly aspires to gain philosophical credentials by highlighting the structural function of desire and inventing a suitable method to deal with it. Seven years later, I simultaneously chose to stay on in Europe, although not in Paris, and to accept a job in the margins of academia, namely in an interdisciplinary women's studies department, which I had the fortune of founding and directing when I moved to Utrecht in 1988.

The amazing opportunity to be able to start up an entirely new program is a typically Dutch phenomenon: here I was, a relative youngster and a foreigner, and Utrecht put me in charge of creating a new academic program from scratch. In the USA, in the few places where women's studies programs were being created at the time, it was usually senior women scholars who were appointed in virtue of their having "earned" the right to opt out of their disciplines. The reason for this comes down to two main factors: the first is the impetus and the political power of the Dutch Left throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The grass-roots movement was huge and it shared in the spirit of May '68 that declared that we should not trust the older generation (or anybody much over thirty). This made it imperative to appoint a younger person to the job. The second reason was more pragmatic: giving a temporary (tenure came many years afterwards) albeit senior job to a relatively unknown foreign entity bypassed all the local quarrels and made it easier for the institution to assess my work on strictly objective grounds. Thus, everything was indexed on producing results quickly and efficiently. When it became clear that this was the case, the Utrecht women's studies program received wide recognition and I earned my tenure. But that took about ten years.

Working in a feminist academic environment, which means an interdisciplinary, intellectually experimental, and politically progressive – if not downright transgressive – context, had its advantages. It made it possible to combine my feminist political passions with academic work and life, which had not happened until now. The price to pay, however, was to accept my distance from the institutional practice of philosophy. This focus allowed me to liberate my own philosophical

thought from a number of institutional habits. Not the least of these was the respect for the authority of the history of philosophy, and hence also the deferential implementation of ways of thinking that had much more to do with the past than with the actual present: for instance, the idea that philosophy should be self-referential and do justice to its own history, before it even attempts or claims to make a significant impact on that history. That's the first habit I swapped for a renewed sense of social relevance: gender, feminist, and women's studies theories became my favorite location. They functioned like navigational tools between academic practice and its "outsides" and provided much-needed theoretical focus. More importantly even, they kept me motivated to go on thinking, doing philosophy even though I had no authority, nor anybody recognizing my work as of philosophical importance. I was simultaneously on my own in the margins and stunned to see how crowded and theoretically vibrant the margins actually were.

JB: *Because of my oldest interests and my newest questions, my own teaching and writing became interdisciplinary with time. But this did not mean that I "left" philosophy behind. My works engaged feminism, psychoanalysis, anthropology, law, politics, performance studies, sociology, social theory, literature, and literary theory. This range has been very important for me in my adult career; it not only produces all kinds of conversations, but it imposes the task of translating from one domain of thought into another. It also allows one to develop a critical position that belongs to no discipline, but which is quite essential to understanding the task of the university more generally. I would point to these two features of intellectual work – translation and critique – as central to my own current practices. It means that I need to draw on all kinds of work if I am to pursue some of the questions that focus my work: How do unlivable lives become more livable? How do we analyze and transform the situation in which a nation such as my own becomes wildly righteous when it openly murders some populations and madly outraged with horror when it sees other populations being destroyed, or sees itself as vulnerable to injury? The good life: Who defines it? Who controls it? Who has access to it, and what terms do we need in order to enfranchise those who are not recognized as having anything to say or claim?*

Perhaps the issue here has to do with whether we understand philosophy as an enclosed and self-regulating institution that defines itself over and against other forms of knowledge, or whether we actually understand the obligation of philosophy to be open precisely to a wide domain of intellectual activities in order to engage in a knowing way with the world whose truth it claims to know. This would mean that philosophy, to be responsive to its world, has to be a decentered undertaking.

II. A CHANGING CONTEXT

Philosophy meetings in cafes, in conferences, in feminist collectives, gay and lesbian political meetings, antiwar rallies and demonstrations, editorial boards, bars, and film festivals, in transnational contexts, all move beyond the specific "sites" of legitimate institutionalization to produce the possibility of thinking philosophy in the world. This was important to us both as philosophers and feminists and gay and lesbian activists. We form an "intermediary generation"[7] that witnessed some key moments in the history of feminism: respectively the "sex wars" in the USA[8] and the rise of the "feminism of difference" in Paris. We may be the first generation of philosophers who did have the chance to study with great feminist thinkers such as Genevieve Lloyd, Seyla Benhabib, and Luce Irigaray. But this first-hand experience also taught us bitter lessons from the start: some feminist philosophers were traditionally not well received in philosophy departments and had to find other venues for seminar activity and collective discussions. These interrelations were only occasionally supported by institutional "sites": most of the interesting discussions took place elsewhere. And even today, the university sites where philosophy takes place often include interdisciplinary programs outside departments of philosophy: "women's studies," "feminist studies," "media studies," "cultural studies," as well as centers and institutes for "humanities" or "critical theory." As these interdisciplinary programs are more developed in the USA than in Europe, this leaves many European radical philosophers as homeless as before.

The media and the publishing world, of course, have helped. The period 1980–95 saw a real explosion of alternative publication venues often within existing publishers such as Routledge in the US/UK, Suhrkamp in Germany, Éditions de Minuit in France, and Editori Riuniti in Italy.[9] Academic publishing reflected this shift in the institutional settings of philosophy, recognizing the desire to make philosophy popular, and the demand to produce texts that travel in nonphilosophical quarters. Thus, the genre of do-it-yourself or self-help manuals in the teaching of philosophy emerged as a fast-selling sector. These new cultural forms for philosophical engagement go beyond the essay and the book, establishing broader sites of textuality and practical engagements at the same time that they continue certain modes of philosophical inquiry. It is

7. See Rosi Braidotti's chapter on feminism in this volume.

8. See Jane Gallop, *Feminist Accused of Sexual Harassment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

9. In particular, the Routledge series "Thinking Gender," started by philosophy editor Maureen MacGrogan and the cultural studies series supported by Bill Germano should be noted. And Suhrkamp was without question the leading publishing house for philosophical books in Germany in the period 1980–95.

remarkable, as we go through our CVs, to see how many experimental journals we published in and how many brand new – and sometimes very short-lived – publications we actually took the risk of publishing in. We are very aware, however, that taking this sort of risk by publishing in marginal journals and with nonacademic publishers may have directly contributed to many members of our generation actually not getting tenure in "first tier" philosophy departments. Considering how the political climate has changed, it may still constitute a risk today.

RB: *Most of my mid-career in philosophy was built by reading and publishing in challenging and thought-provoking journals such as* Radical Philosophy, L'Autre Journal, *where Deleuze and Lyotard published regularly, and the Italian* MicroMega *and* Aut-Aut.[10] *We were surrounded by brand new journals, magazines and printed material of all kinds:* Questions féministes *(1981),* Sorcières *(1976),* La femme d'en face *(1979). My very first academic publication was in* Hecate *(founded in 1976), the Australian radical feminist journal, where I published a critical review of the anthology* New French Feminism; *the second was in* Penelope, *the feminist history journal founded in 1979 by the Paris VII-Jussieu collective of Michelle Perrot. For years my monthly articles in the feminist magazines* Histoires d'Elles *(1978) and the Italian* Noi Donne *(1948) mattered far more than anything that may have helped me gain academic credibility. If I can name my favorites from those days, they would be the UK-based* M/F *(1978),* Feminist Studies *(1979) and* Women's Studies International Forum *(1978); the newly founded* Signs *(1975) directed by my mentor Kate Stimpson, and the*

10. *Radical Philosophy* is a journal of socialist and feminist philosophy. It was founded in 1972 in response to the widely felt discontent with the sterility of academic philosophy at the time (in Britain completely dominated by the narrowest sort of "ordinary-language" philosophy), with the purpose of providing a forum for the theoretical work that was emerging in the wake of the radical movements of the 1960s, in philosophy and other fields.

    L'Autre Journal is a theory and culture magazine that started publication in December 1984 with Michel Butel as general editor. It quickly acquired cult status among philosophers because of the original and clever manner in which it addressed the main philosophical questions of the day. A second series started up again in May 1990. The title exists now as a blog linked to the website of *Le Monde*.

    MicroMega is a political, cultural, social, and economic magazine, published bimonthly in Italy. Founded in March 1986 by the editors Giorgio Ruffolo and Paolo Flores d'Arcais, it is an elite journal publishing long essays and reports by leading philosophers, scientists, and other personalities.

    Aut-Aut is a leading Italian philosophy journal founded by Enzo Paci in 1951 with a strong phenomenological orientation. Between 1974 and 1976, the philosopher Pier Aldo Rovatti took a leading role in the editorial board and turned the journal into a crucial forum for discussion of Marxism, poststructuralism, and related political and ethical issues. The journal is published today as an independent critical journal.

Belgian-based Cahiers du Grif *(1973), where I worked for many years alongside Françoise Collin. The first acknowledgment of my work came in an interview with Hazel Rowley in another Australian radical feminist magazine:* Refractory Girl *(1972). But I was not alone in this: all around me, everybody was starting up journals, magazines, and alternative publications. This was before the internet multiplied these efforts – we were still very Gutenberg Galaxy then. For instance, Paul Patton and Meaghan Morris produced the first English translations of Foucault, Deleuze, and Irigaray for the Sydney-based* Working Papers *in general philosophy. Colin Gordon, at the same time, was building up* Ideology & Consciousness *to greater heights than ever. Of course, I could not resist the temptation of starting something on my own as well, so together with my friend Alice Jardine we made a brilliant start to what would become a one-issue only hit:* Copyright *was the perfect manifestation of the adventurous interdisciplinary spirit of the time: smart, cutting-edge, highly theoretical, and totally broke! Almost everyone who contributed to that issue went on to an incredible academic career, but the journal did not make it past the first issue.*

JB: *In the US, intellectual excitement revolved around the journal* differences, *established by Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor in 1989, but also the galvanizing work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Joan Wallach Scott. It seemed as if philosophical questions of materialism, experience, identity, and the subject were now being taken up by literary critics and radical historians, and that these philosophical concepts were being probed in order to sharpen a set of critical modes within politics. There were debates happening at the conferences for women historians (the "Berkshire" conference), the Socialist Scholars conference, the Barnard College "Scholar and Feminist" conferences, the Rethinking Marxism conferences, and very often the debates were fierce between those who saw potential in continental theory and those who did not. Rarely did anyone stop to ask whether Marx himself was a continental philosopher. Debates broke out as well in* The New York Times *and the* Nation, *and although the animus was strong against certain modes of "deconstruction," it was also clear that such modes of thought had pervaded not only the academy, but Left intelligentsia. People worried about the end to foundations, the loss of disciplinary boundaries, and the lack of clear norms. But, in fact, all of these concepts were being rethought in light of new historical formations, and the process of change was not easy for many to accept. The experience in the US was that the explosion of new cultural venues for reflection that were contaminated by poststructuralist and other philosophies went hand in hand with a higher degree of specification of the practice of philosophy, which struck a distinctly interdisciplinary note of its own. Some early journals in this vein are:* Critical Inquiry *(started in 1974),* Diacritics *(1977),* boundary 2 *(1970),* Glyph *(1977), and others. A new generation of interdisciplinary journals also comes into being. I am thinking for*

instance of media, film and art theory, and the creation of highly theoretical journals in these fields, such as Camera Obscura *(1976),* October *(1976),* Feminist Review *(1979); sexuality and cultural studies also grew at an explosive rate, with journals such as* Semiotext(e) *(1974),* SubStance *(1971), and* Hypatia *(1986).*

The extent to which the institutional practice of philosophy recognized and accepted interaction with this parallel universe of highly scientific, but transgressive, publications needs to be mapped more carefully than we can do here. Suffice it to say that, whereas the US remained more open to these boundary-breakers, the European university system, traditionally dominated by the disciplines, proved more resistant. The emergence of philosophers within mainstream culture, the arts, and the media is important to read therefore in light of this rejection, as well as a sign of the engagement of philosophers in public politics. Although the figure of the philosopher as public intellectual has deep roots in European culture, it became a more global phenomenon as the US and Australia succumbed to the "theory wars" in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Think, for instance, of the role that philosophers play in human rights struggles, in nongovernmental organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières, in Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Greenpeace. Consider how many poststructuralist thinkers have made significant contributions to human rights discourse in recent years.[11] By extension this means that law has become a site for the reflection on key philosophical categories such as justice, force, futurity, and the imaginary. Legal discourse also gets positively contaminated and a school of critical legal theory emerges with conferences on law, culture, and the humanities as well as journals with the same focus.[12]

The transdisciplinary philosophical impetus is so intense and stimulating that a new classification emerges under the rubric of "critical theory."[13] Bookstores start to make separate sections to accommodate the proliferations of publications in a counter-philosophical philosophy. This counter-philosophy continues certain modes of philosophical inquiry, but in cultural venues and through media that establish philosophy as impure, hybrid, crossing genres and media. Although philosophical films have claims to a certain status in experimental

11. See, for instance, the proceedings from "The Humanities in Human Rights: Critique, Language, and Politics" conference, October 21–2, 2005, published in *PMLA* 121(5) (2006). See also papers published in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103 (2004).
12. A case in point is the conference at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York on "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice" in October 1989, at which Jacques Derrida presented "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundations of Authority.'" Following that conference, Derrida returned to Cardozo on an annual basis.
13. "Critical Theory" here has a broader extension than writings associated with Frankfurt School critical theory, whose "third generation" is discussed by Amy Allen in her essay in this volume.

media (e.g. Jarman on Wittgenstein;[14] the recent film on Iris Murdoch, *Iris*; Cornell West appearing in *The Matrix*; Derrida in *Ghost Dance*; and more recently, Astra Taylor's *Examined Life*, with extended discussions with eight major philosophers), the evolution of the media presence of philosophers and philosophical talk shows and programs in the period 1980–95 is quite striking. Again, the change is in scale and quality, supported also by the restructuring and transformation of the old medium of television in this period. There are some important precedents of mediated philosophy,[15] of course, but the pace definitely picks up in the period we are discussing. This is evidenced by the creation of new televisions channels that carry the French-German ARTE in 1992,[16] the French "Apostrophes" (which ran from 1975 to 1990), and many French radio programs, including "France Culture" (which has at least three ongoing philosophy shows), "RAI Radio Fahrenheit" in Italy, and "Kulturzeit" in Germany.

The undisputed media stars of the period in France are the philosophically undertitillating group known as the "Nouveaux Philosophes," who created the phenomenon of philosopher-writer/TV producer and film-maker Bernard-Henri Lévy. Regularly featured nowadays in the pages of glossy magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, Lévy built a brilliant and controversial career by striking a conservative tone politically, while targeting the previous generation of poststructuralist thinkers for systematic attack.

The situation was no less lively in Germany,[17] where the philosophical media star is Peter Sloterdijk, who has been running his successful talk show since 2002 on a range of interdisciplinary topics.[18] From 1988 to 2000, the German television station Westdeutscher Rundfunk ran a very high quality and ambitious series of features on philosophical topics: "Philosophie heute" (Philosophy

14. Derek Jarman's film *Wittgenstein* (BFI, 1993). See also Derek Jarman and Terry Eagleton, *"Wittgenstein": The Terry Eagleton Script and the Derek Jarman Film* (London: BFI Publishing, 1993).
15. Tamara Chaplin's *Turning on the Mind: French Philosophers on Television* argues that already in the 1950s French television featured regular discussions of philosophy and philosophers. See for instance the program *Lectures pour tous* (1953–58), in which Bachelard and Foucault appeared, and Sartre and Camus were often discussed.
16. ARTE (Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne) is a Franco-German television network started in 1992. It describes itself as a European culture channel and aims to promote quality programming especially in areas of culture and the arts. ARTE is also available in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Canada via cable, and the Australian Special Broadcasting Service translates many ARTE programs into English for broadcast on its own television network.
17. With sincere thanks to Dieter Thomä for this targeted information.
18. Since 2002, Peter Sloterdijk and Rüdiger Safranski have been presenting on the German public television channel Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen a philosophical talk show, similar to "Apostrophes," called "Philosophisches Quartett," which deals with a broad range of social questions.

today).[19] In the US, there are now philosophy talk radio shows and popular venues in which large questions in philosophy and religion are pursued. More recently, both Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Derrida have been the "stars" of feature-length documentaries: Pierre Carles's *La Sociologie est un sport de combat* (2001) and Kirk Dick and Amy Z. Kofman's *Derrida* (2002). The authors of this article, however, are neither immune from nor external to television, video and new media coverage and appearances, and thus the question of assessing the general impact of these mediated forms of philosophical inquiry is more topical than ever. As a generation we watched the rise of this new, alternative media culture and also saw how negatively the university reacted to it – to be a media star was equated then with shallowness and lack of scientific rigor. Thus we have to raise an issue that we find still relevant today: Are philosophers commodified cultural "spectacles" in such instances, or do they appeal to intellectual need through a popular medium? Is it the case that philosophy turns into a fundamentally different activity when it becomes a media event?

III. THE INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

At the same time, however, philosophy as a discipline and a formal institutional space was concerned not to lose its core identity in the midst of such hybridization processes. There were clearly struggles, increasingly sectarian, over what "counts" as philosophy or, minimally, "good philosophy." And institutions house these battles with the presumption that the walls they build will continue to stand.

From 1980 to 1995, the public debate around the critical legacy of the 1970s grew more bitter and contested. The rise of Reagonomics and Thatcherite authoritarianism installed a climate of right-wing political backlash, which could not fail to attack the credibility of European and especially French poststructuralist theories. These were dismissed by the political Right as being both relativistic and a sign of wishy-washy liberalism. The debate was *even more* acrimonious among French philosophers, many of whom turned their backs on their youthful radicalism, especially after François Mitterrand's election to the French presidency. It was disconcerting to say the least, although somehow predictable, to watch the oedipal struggle between the philosophers of the 1960s and the generation that followed. The media-driven *nouveaux philosophes*, mentioned above, turned vehemently against the very home-grown philosophical theories

19. More than a hundred features were produced, including portraits of leading philosophers and documentaries on controversial topics, many of which can be found via the website www.wdr.de. The program producer edited a volume with some of the interviews; see Ulrich Boehm (ed.), *Philosophie heute* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997).

of their teachers and older poststructuralist brothers that we, the foreigners and outsiders, were both reading and drawing such inspiration from. Among a relatively older generation, born in the 1940s, philosophical revisionism set in, offering at best a reappraisal of decent neohumanism[20] or a single-minded critique of the allegedly murderous character of communism,[21] and at worst media-savvy glamour.[22] On the other hand, among people of our generation, born in the 1950s, the reaction was ferocious: Alain Finkielkraut, and Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut indicted without appeal the events of 1968 as a symbol of left-wing authoritarianism and revolutionary violence.[23] Adding insult to injury, they accused all poststructuralist philosophies of complicity with terror and mass murder. This coincided with the media revolution we discussed above and with the new media-cracy turning against both the spirit and the philosophical and political agenda of 1968. The key insights of poststructuralist philosophy survived in exile along the transatlantic axis.

Deleuze was one of the first to comment on this hasty and fallacious historical dismissal of critical radicalism in both politics and philosophy. Targeting the fame-seeking narcissism of the *nouveaux philosophes*, Deleuze stressed the political conservatism that results in the reassertion of the banality of individualistic self-interest.[24] This is constitutive of the neoconservative political liberalism of our era and of the arrogance with which it proclaimed the "end of history."[25] Deleuze stressed instead how critical philosophers have tried to avoid the arrogance of the universalizing posture. Other leading figures of philosophical poststructuralism, such as Lyotard, Dominique Lecourt, and the gay activist Guy Hocquenghem, also took a clear stand against the trivialization and self-serving dismissal of the spirit of radical philosophy.[26]

20. See Tzvetan Todorov, *Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
21. See André Glucksmann, *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes: Essai sur l'État, le marxisme, les camps de concentration* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976).
22. Bernard-Henri Lévy, *La Barbarie à visage humain* (Paris: Grasset, 1977); published in English as *Barbarism with a Human Face*, George Holoch (trans.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).
23. Alain Finkielkraut, *La Défaite de la pensée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987); published in English as *The Defeat of the Mind*, Judith Friedlander (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, *La Pensée 68: Essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); published in English as *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*, Mary Schnackenberg Cattani (trans.) (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).
24. Gilles Deleuze, "On the New Philosophers (Plus a More General Problem)" and "May '68 Didn't Happen," in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006).
25. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).
26. See Jean-François Lyotard and Jacob Rogozinski, "La Police de la pensée," *L'Autre Journal* 10 (1985); Dominique Lecourt, *Les Piètres penseurs* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999); published

On the other hand, some modes of institutionalization have sought to take into account the subversive and transformative reach of new philosophical movements. Thus, at the same time as the backlash set in, new forms of creative institutionalization also started up. These were ways in which the corporate discipline itself both reconfirmed its traditional institutional settings and went on to occupy new and powerful institutional grounds. Examples are firstly the Vincennes University experiment with new structures of thought and scientific investigation, with high degrees of social accountability and a healthy distance from the canonical tradition of the disciplines. This radical pedagogy was supported by and central to the work of Gilles Deleuze.[27] Second, the foundation of the Collège International de Philosophie in 1983 in France.[28] Both authors participated in the Collège activities: one the very year of its foundation and the other in recent years. Organizations such as the International Association of Philosophy and Literature[29] and the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP, founded in 1962)[30] are at once outside disci-

in English as *The Mediocracy: French Philosophy Since the Mid-1970s*, Gregory Elliot (trans.) (London: Verso, 2001); Guy Hocquenghem, *Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passés du col Mao au Rotary* (Marseille: Agone, 1986).

27. See Gilles Deleuze, "Sur la philosophie," in *Pourparlers* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990); published in English as "On Philosophy," in *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, Martin Joughin (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

28. The Collège International de Philosophie (Ciph), located in Paris, was cofounded in 1983 by Jacques Derrida, François Châtelet, Jean-Pierre Faye, and Dominique Lecourt in an attempt to rethink the teaching of philosophy in France, and to liberate it from any institutional authority (most of all from the university). The Collège recognizes that philosophy is better served by being located at "intersections" such as philosophy/science or philosophy/law. Attendance in seminars is open and free, just as in the Collège de France.

29. The International Association for Philosophy and Literature, founded in 1976 and directed since its inception by Hugh Silverman, is, according to its website (www.iapl.info), "dedicated to the exchange of ideas and scholarly research within the humanities. Founded to provide a context for the interplay of Philosophy, Literary Theory, and Cultural/Aesthetic/Textual Studies, the IAPL brings together scholars from the full range of disciplines concerned with philosophical, historical, critical, and theoretical issues."

30. SPEP has its origins as an idea of Harvard University professor John Wild (1902–72) for a new professional society devoted to the examination of recent continental philosophy, and in particular the works of Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre. After Wild left Harvard in 1961 to become Chairperson of the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University, he and an organizational committee including his two Northwestern colleagues, William Earle and James Edie, George Schrader of Yale University, and Calvin Schrag, a former student of Wild's at Harvard, who had recently accepted an appointment at Purdue University, founded SPEP. According to its website (www.spep.org), "SPEP is the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, a professional organization, founded in 1962 and devoted to supporting philosophy inspired by continental European traditions. With a membership of over 2500 people, it is one of the largest American philosophical societies, and strives to encourage work not only in the philosophical traditions of phenomenology and existentialism, but also in all those areas commonly associated with 'continental

plinary settings, but also help to define the discipline on new grounds. Similar organizations formed in Canada (Canadian Society for Hermeneutics and Postmodern Thought, which later became the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy[31]); in Australia (Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy[32]) and in the UK (Society for European Philosophy and Forum for European Philosophy[33]). The emergence of a strong feminist presence in these societies

philosophy,' such as animal studies, critical theory, cultural studies, deconstruction, environmental philosophy, feminism, German idealism, hermeneutics, philosophy of the Americas, post-colonialism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, queer theory and race theory. We foster discussion on all philosophical topics, from art and nature to politics and science, and in the classic philosophical disciplines of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. SPEP is actively committed to philosophical pluralism and to the support of historically underrepresented groups in the philosophical profession."

31. According to its website (www.c-scp.org) "The Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy" was founded in 1984 under the name "Canadian Society for Hermeneutics and Postmodern Thought." Its broad purpose is to promote scholarship in several traditions of continental philosophy by means of an annual conference and other activities. Current members include scholars and graduate students working in such fields as German idealism, existentialism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, feminism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and deconstruction, from various disciplinary approaches within the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts.
32. According to its website (www.ascp.org.au) "The Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy" was established in 1995 as the revamped "Australasian Society for Phenomenology and Social Philosophy," with the aim of becoming the region's premier reference point for people working with continental philosophy. The Society endeavors to promote the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas inspired by the diverse traditions of European thought (such as phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, hermeneutics, feminism, deconstruction, poststructuralism, and so on), and to develop productive links with other international societies and associations that share similar goals and views.
33. Since 2004, the Society for European Philosophy (SEP) and the Forum for European Philosophy (FEP) have held a joint annual meeting. Originating as an idea of Andrew Benjamin, then at the University of Warwick, in response to the unjustly poor performance of nonanalytic departments in the UK Research Assessment Exercise, the SEP held its first meeting in 1998 at Birkbeck College, establishing a venue for philosophers in the UK to present their work in the various traditions of modern European philosophy. Among its principal organizers, in addition to Benjamin (who served as Chair from 1997 to 2001), were Christine Battersby, Andrew Bowie, Howard Caygill, Simon Critchley, Peter Dews, Joanna Hodge, Peter Osborne, and Jonathan Rée. The FEP began in the spring of 1996 out of a desire to promote wider dialogue and exchange between philosophers working within and out of the different European traditions in philosophy. For its first year, the FEP was guided by an *ad hoc* and entirely provisional executive committee chaired by Alan Montefiore and including Lilian Alweiss, Catherine Audard, Nick Bunnin, Simon Critchley, Marian Hobson, Anthony O'Hear, and Jonathan Rée. According to its website (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/forumForEuropeanPhilosophy), the FEP, currently located at the London School of Economics, is an educational charity that organizes and runs a full and varied program of philosophy and interdisciplinary events in the UK. These include seminars, reading groups, public lectures on a range of themes and socially relevant topics, book discussions, public debates on the idea of European philosophy and an annual conference.

has changed the focus of public discourse in recent years, but feminists were also coming together in the 1970s and 1980s in organizations like the International Association of Women Philosophers.[34] And the Radical Philosophy Association[35] and the Society for Women in Philosophy[36] became important venues for philosophers who were thinking and working at the juncture of new social movements and philosophical reflection. Further input came from associations that had specialized in high-profile philosophical events and took a radical turn in this period: for instance, the Cerisy Colloquia,[37] and the critical theory meetings in Dubrovnik and later in Prague.[38]

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34. According to its website (www.iaph.org), the International Association of Women Philosophers is a professional association that aims at counteracting the under-representation of women in philosophy everywhere. It provides a forum for interaction and cooperation among women engaged in teaching and research in all aspects of philosophy, with a particular emphasis on feminist philosophy. Founded in 1974 in Würzburg (Germany) the IAPh has gradually grown into an international organization with 380 members from thirty-five different countries.
35. The Radical Philosophy Association (www.radicalphilosophy.org) was founded in 1982. They define themselves in the following way: "RPA members struggle against capitalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability discrimination, environmental ruin, and all other forms of domination. We also oppose substituting new forms of authoritarianism for the ones we are now fighting. Our efforts are guided by the vision of a society founded on cooperation instead of competition, in which all areas of society are, as far as possible, governed by democratic decision-making. We believe that fundamental change requires broad social upheavals but also opposition to intellectual support for exploitative and dehumanizing social structures. Our members are from many nations and continue a variety of radical traditions including (but not limited to) feminism, phenomenology, Marxism, anarchism, post-structuralism, post-colonial theory and environmentalism."
36. The Society for Women in Philosophy (www.uh.edu/~cfreelan/SWIP) was founded in 1972. Although clearly not an organization devoted to continental feminism, it has nevertheless sponsored important debates and discussions in that area.
37. According to its website (www.ccic-cerisy.asso.fr) The International Cultural Centre of Cerisy-la-Salle was founded as far back as 1952 by the association of the Friends of Pontigny-Cerisy with the aim to support and organize exchanges among intellectuals, scholars, artists and concerned well-read individuals the world over. The centre organizes every year, from June to September, a number of important international conferences. Most of the significant French philosophers have attended events at Cerisy.
38. According to its website (http://www.iuc.hr/#), the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik (IUC) was founded in 1971 at the height of the Cold War and became one of the most important venues for the exchange of ideas by scholars from both the East and West. The IUC is currently an independent international institution for advanced studies. It is a meeting ground for learning and scholarship and is cosponsored by some two hundred member universities and institutions of higher learning around the world. It is maintaining high standards of independent scholarship, but at the same time, it is looking for opportunities in bridge-building in a region of the world that must continue to rededicate itself to pluralism. Its agenda focuses on the social sciences and the humanities, with special emphasis on issues of postcommunism and European integration. The academic programme offers a full curriculum of open postgraduate courses, conferences and symposia, and residencies.

Thus, the practice of philosophy was enriched and innovated by this proliferation of new initiatives, structures and venues that ran and still run alongside the institutional academic practice of professional philosophers. The result is that two almost parallel universes emerged and contacts and cross-references between them became controlled and restricted. Our generation of philosophers and critical thinkers zigzagged in between these separate spheres, trying to connect them, translate from each other and recompose both an agenda and a community across their borders. We had to learn to cultivate and negotiate with complex and internally contradictory modes of multiple belonging.

IV. WHAT IS EUROPEAN ABOUT CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY?

The two authors stood on the opposite shores of what has become known as the great "Trans-Atlantic dis-connection."[39] The 1980–95 period saw the restructuring of the privileged relationship that connects the US to the French cultural and philosophical elites. The landmark date of 1989 stands as a point of reference in this context. This produced two simultaneous effects, which shaped the philosophical debates in the period. First, in the general American academic debate of the day, the discursive equation between "Europe" and "French theory" was challenged by broader, more Europe-wide perspectives. Second, as we argued before, French philosophy came under violent attack from the mainstream of the philosophical profession and the political Right, for being obscure, self-referential, radical, and, in any case, foreign.[40] The late 1980s in Europe was a period of political hope built on the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the rise of great – albeit short-lived – expectations about the future of the European Union. In terms of philosophy, however, the backlash against the critical theories of the 1960s and 1970s gained extra momentum and was no less strong and reductive in Europe than in the US. Considering the relatively higher degree of acceptance of interdisciplinary methods in the North American universities, however, a genuine dissemination of poststructuralist and critical theories did occur there. This took place less through philosophy than comparative literature and English departments, as well as gender, cultural and postcolonial studies. If anything, considering the growth of parallel organizations and associations, more English-speaking philosophers adopted the terminology and the philosophical agenda

39. That expression was coined by Domna Stanton in "Language and Revolution: The Franco-American Dis-connection," in *The Future of Difference*, Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (eds) (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1980). It was subsequently replaced by the idea of "travelling theories," launched by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).
40. See Jeffrey Williams (ed.), *PC Wars: Politics and Theory in the Academy* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

of poststructuralism than their European counterparts. Paradoxically enough, most of the leading French thinkers of the poststructuralist generation were awarded honorary and prestigious Chairs at leading American universities,[41] while their work was either criticized or ignored at home.[42]

The Franco-German philosophical relationship was also restructured significantly in this period. While analytic philosophers continued to make jokes about "the Nothing" – considered to be among the most preposterous of Heideggerian inheritances – some left-wing critics came to associate the difficulty and ostensible obscurantism of German and French philosophy with suspect or weak political positions.[43] Especially vehement was also the criticism and political rejection of the French philosophers on the part of the Frankfurt School and especially by Habermas, who was no less critical of the French than the analytic camp. This Franco-German hostility is also significant because at the same time Habermas's critical theory is engaging and being engaged by Rawls and other analytic political and social theorists. This movement stood in stark contrast to the politically animating force of phenomenology and poststructuralism, including its Nietzschean variants, for feminist theory and radical philosophy in the US. Representative of this anti-poststructuralist trend is also the Institute for Human Sciences,[44] based in Vienna and Boston, which acts as a significant relay-point toward Eastern Europe and strikes a distinctly conservative note both on moral issues and on the idea of Europe.

It was precisely the effort to get beyond certain entrenched identitarian ways of thinking that intellectuals on the Left, especially the feminist Left, turned to poststructuralism. Whereas a dominant trend in US left politics was to stake one's claim in identity and experience, the countertrend sought recourse to

41. Kristeva has been a recurring visitor at Columbia University for years; Derrida and Lyotard held positions at Irvine; and Foucault visited California regularly. Among those who never entered this transatlantic institutional connection, Irigaray and Deleuze stand out.
42. For instance, the feminism of difference was largely ignored as irrelevant in France and sent into exile, as exemplified by the difficult career of Luce Irigaray. For a detailed account of this feminist controversy, see Claire Duchen, *Feminism in France: From May '68 to Mitterrand* (London: Routledge, 1986).
43. The case of Paul de Man is emblematic of this approach, as is the "Heidegger affair," initiated by the publication of Victor Farias's *Heidegger et la nazisme* in 1987.
44. According to its own website (www.iwm.at), the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) is an independent institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences, founded in 1982. Seeking to bring together academics and intellectuals from Eastern and Western Europe, the IWM is linked to its North American affiliate, the Institute for Human Sciences at Boston University, and it contributes to policy and cultural dialogue between Europe and the US and Canada. Research at the institute is currently focused on five fields: "Sources of Inequality/ Social Solidarity"; "Religion and Secularism"; "United Europe – Divided Memory"; Cultures and Institutions: Central and Eastern Europe in a Global Context"; and "The Philosophical Work of Jan Patočka."

poststructuralism to ask how identity categories are constructed, how difference is effaced, and how we might think more critically about how the field of intelligible politics is established and regulated. In this way, poststructuralism offered a way out of identitarian forms of pluralism and toward the possibility of making new political subjectivities.

This transgressive but productive aspect of poststructuralism was felt strongly in Germany, where, after reunification in 1989, new philosophical initiatives flourished. Under the influence of Foucault especially, there was a turn away from sociology and back to philosophy, based on the premise that thinking is not so much about institutions or external constraints, but about interpreting everyday life and being involved as an individual.[45] It renewed possible forms of "engagement" but in a less abstract sense. Since 1981 there has also been a rise of the so-called "Philosophical Praxis"[46] in Germany and Switzerland, which aims at overcoming academic philosophy and turning thinking into "practice" in the social, corporate, and ethical sense of the term. Very significant was also the relaunch of the East German journal *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, which became the most important philosophical journal in the German-speaking world, with Axel Honneth as the *primus inter pares* of the editorial board. The journals *Texte zur Kunst* and *Kunstforum International* also have considerable philosophical ambitions, mainly in the area of postmodern thought.

The shifting philosophical landscape in the aftermath of 1989 allows for the emergence of cross-European perspectives, which alter the terms of the historical Franco-American privileged relationship. Europe emerged as a contested but highly productive forum for discussions.[47] New collaborative initiatives were undertaken, often with the financial backing of the European Commission. Most notable among them are the already mentioned ARTE television, the *European Journal of Women's Studies* (1994), the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (1998), and the journal *Lettre International*, which is as pan-European as any publication could be.[48]

*45. See the chapter by Dieter Thomä in this volume.

46. The leading figures of this movement are Gerd Achenbach (www.achenbach-pp.de) and Wilhelm Schmid (www.wilhelm-schmid.de). Achenbach was involved in the founding of the "Internationale Gesellschaft für philosophische Praxis" in 1982 (www.igpp.org). Schmid has been highly successful with books on the "art of living" and is a popular public lecturer.

*47. For further discussion of this issue, see the essay by Rosi Braidotti in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 8*.

48. According to its website (www.lettre.de/english), *Lettre International* is an international and interdisciplinary publication that was started in France in 1984 and in Germany in 1988. It has a unique format that connects several editorial boards in Europe, rests on a transcultural worldwide network of contributors and contacts, and is published in many languages. It is a high-quality magazine that aims to promote the advancement of world consciousness by bringing together the diverse approaches of economics, politics, art, philosophy, and literature.

Emergent critique, wider worlds

RB: *On the issue of Europe, my existential and the philosophical lines of questioning converged and became almost synchronized. As I said, my first encounter by becoming a migrant was with Europe in exile, Europe in migration. And this was in some way a formative moment, where I became aware not only of the contingent nature of identity, but also the extreme complexity of something that we could call Europe subject positions. I think I became aware of my Europeanness in this moment of distance, of dis-identification, of loss, of taking my departure from the self-evidence of that location. Philosophically, as my work focused more on the project of decentering the subject and the practice of critical theory, I learned a great deal from race and postcolonial philosophical studies. The critique of Eurocentrism evolved as the counterpart of the rejection of the universalizing powers of self-reflexive reason. The self-aggrandizing gesture that positions "Europe" as a concept that mobilizes and enhances the higher human mental faculties has to be deflated, regrounded and held accountable. More specifically it has to be read alongside the devastating historical phenomena that have been central to the alleged civilizing mission of the European "mind": colonialism, racism, fascist denial of Otherness. It was clear to me that recognizing this corrupt historical legacy, while also acknowledging the great aspects and qualities of our culture, was the beginning of wisdom and also of historical lucidity. As Glissant and Balibar argue, it is also the end of a self-replicating sense of ignorance about those "others" who constitute such an integral part of European culture, including philosophy. The early awareness that so many of my favorite philosophers were foreigners, migrants, exiles, grew into the project of returning European critical theory to its specific location. Another Europe is possible, one that rejects the imperial posture and its arrogant pretensions and accepts its new historical role as a significant peripheral. So, becoming accountable for my Europeanness coincided with my becoming aware of the impossibility of being one, in the unitary sense of the term. Becoming nomadic seemed the most appropriate option for an antinationalist, antiracist, non-Eurocentric and Europe-based feminist philosopher. French philosophy remained an existential and cognitive travel companion in this trajectory.*

JB: *It seems clear that we cannot take into account our formations in European philosophy without thinking about the sense of "Europe" we were inheriting and how, politically, it becomes a certain obligation to contest and redefine Europe right now. It wasn't until I started studying philosophy at Yale that I came to understand how conflicted the question of philosophy could become. At that time, the division was between "analytic" and "continental," but that did not really explain very much about why people were so angry, why they wanted other people to lose their jobs, why they were angry enough to move to the other side of the country to get away*

from those with whom they disagreed. But it was then that I also became involved in other sorts of activities, including the reading of literature (which I loved) and certain political activities outside the academy. In literature classes, I could think about all kinds of dimensions of language, including address, ellipsis, metonymy – many of the important contributions of structuralism and poststructuralism. These kinds of readings were difficult and demanding, and they clearly had their own rigor as well; they very often took aim at those philosophical texts that regularly dismissed the ways in which language figured so centrally to their claims of truth. Accordingly, they were dismissed as "nonsense" by some faculty in philosophy. So I also learned quickly that one could not take that kind of analysis into a philosophy course, and I learned to divide myself for the purposes of getting through those programs. Because of my political engagements and an emerging political way of thinking about the world, I had to figure out whether the kinds of questions that were raised in those political contexts could "translate" into a philosophical idiom. And sometimes my concerns made me have to break with the idioms altogether.

If we go back to the heartfelt question I posed in the basement of my parents home (my own version of Plato's cave) – "How do I lead a good life?" – then I would say that the question has not really changed for me, although it has taken on new dimensions that are quite important. The "I" who poses the question – how are we to think about this subject, a subject who can pose a question to itself, capable of reflexivity? And this life? What do we make of Adorno's important supplement to Socrates: how does one lead a good life in a bad life? In other words, if this life is pervaded by forms of power and domination that demean the value of life, and if only certain lives are regarded as valuable, and others not, then how do we rethink in political ways how the "goodness" of life is distributed unequally? How do I live, or how do we live in a context in which "life" itself has been brutally appropriated by reactionary forces ("pro-life") or where certain lives, such as those my government kills in war, are not considered worthy of the name of "life"? This suggests to me that there can be no pursuit of the moral question "How do I live?" without an engagement with a social and political question: what has been made of life, and how do we understand those forms of power that differentiate between lives worth living and sheltering and lives worth neglecting and destroying?

The question of the "I" who would live, or seek to live well, became a permanent problem for my academic work. It seemed that the "I" who could speak, who could query life, could only become audible and only gain standing to the extent that the speaking subject conformed to certain gender norms, and that "the speaking I" was already a profoundly complex matter – politically saturated and textually consequential. The "I" who would speak and pose its question has to be "recognized" within those norms that make the speaking subject visible and audible. But if those norms constrain who may speak by masculinizing the position of the speaking subject, for instance, then we have to be able to ask political questions

about how established enunciatory positions depend on constitutive exclusions. Through what methods and means do we open up the sites of articulation to contest these hegemonic claims? In my early work on gender, I wondered whether there could be an "I" who was not already supported by established gender norms, but this meant only that new formations of subjectivity were crucial in order to disrupt disciplinary power in the domain of sexuality and gender.

V. PHILOSOPHY OUTSIDE ITS BOUNDS

Philosophical works are now varied in their form and argument, and they are part of a shifting landscape of unauthorized explorations that avoid blind loyalty to established institutional norms but also trace modes of belonging that are activated in the context of political and artistic engagement. Philosophy no longer belongs to a single site, but emerges as a mode of intervention that crosses time and space, forming global circuits of community as it goes. It is important to note, however, that these circuits of community are not based on sameness, but on persistent and animating differences. Indeed, "difference" is in some ways the rallying point for both a new and open mode of philosophizing and a form of political solidarity.

RB: *Speaking as a philosopher who defends a materialist theory of becoming, I see my task as the passionate search for alternatives in our ideas and representations of human subjectivity. I believe that philosophy and critical theory have to be something else and possibly more than the protocol of critiques and other rules of reason. Institutional philosophy gets so technical: often little more than an elaborate mechanism of interpreting and footnoting canonical texts, it reduces intellectuals to the status of guardians of the great dead white men of Western culture. I think critical theory can be much more than that. I'm a feminist, I am a philosopher, and this double allegiance makes it imperative to go on looking for new ways of thinking about the kind of subjects we have become: not for the sake of narcissistic self-glorification, but rather for the contrary reason – in order to develop adequate cartographic accounts of the sort of subjects-in-process, in transition and in mutation, that we have already become. There is no question that we are in serious trouble understanding the world we're living in. The deficit of representation is gigantic and it is not due to the fact that we are lazy and fundamentally stupid, but because advanced capitalism is moving so fast, and in such a schizoid manner, as to defy simple interpretations. It is a nonlinear, and fundamentally irrational, system. To make sense of this insanity and of its structural injustice and violence is something that is beyond the forces of one, single individual; therefore theory should be a collective endeavor aiming to draw adequate cartographies of*

the world we're living in. We need to compare notes on how we see these forces moving, make mappings of ideas that can be points of resistance, compare notes on these maps in a very humble, situated, and partial manner. To be aware of the power that we have as Europeans, as Americans, or Westerners, by a world plagued by the "clash of civilizations." Critical theory is about this type of accountability that lends us the courage to go beyond the established habits and the institutional conventions. We should see mental habits even when they're traditions of thought, as forms of legalized addictions that we need to grow out of. We have to cultivate the humble recognition of the collective nature of our utterances, that is to say, of how much we owe, theoretically and existentially, to others.

JB: *My belief is that philosophy takes place any time and every time that a set of assumptions are called into question. And this is central to what we both understand as "critical" philosophy. When we go to the "root" of a problem, we exercise radicalism, which is why philosophy is only doing its job when it is radical. The exercise of critique is not a positive philosophical position, but it is a practice or, indeed, an "attitude," to cite Foucault, that asks after the means by which truth becomes established, and the terms through which truth becomes justified. If disciplinary hermeticism is one means through which a certain regime of truth gets established, then it would only be by opening up the borders that the radical vocation of philosophy might be pursued. This means affirming the necessarily interdisciplinary context for contemporary knowledge, but also maintaining a reference to the world – to life, to lives in the plural – as they are lived and as they die. We can only ask how to live the good life if we understand that that life is shared and if we have the means for translating that complex commonality of living beings (human and nonhuman). And we can only call into question entrenched modes of living and dying (such as those that are most intensely and consequentially executed in war), if we become critical of the very ways in which our knowledge is delimited in advance. This does not mean that anything and everything is permitted as knowledge, but only that we do not take institutional prohibitions as the intrinsically wise. If we ask about how disciplines are made and enforced, we pose a set of critical questions, drawing from a philosophical tradition of critique, but subjecting the institution of philosophy to such critical questions. It is in this sense that critique is the term that calls into question whether philosophy can, or ought to be, fully identified with its institutionalized forms. This suggests as well that the "underground" to philosophy, the "philosophy" that lives and thrives outside philosophy is crucial to making sure that the critical tradition of philosophy remains contemporary and alive.*

RB: *The strength of philosophy as a discipline of thought is that it has codified not only its own discursive rules of argumentative reason, but also forms of profound disagreement. Philosophy is proud of both acknowledging and even rewarding the*

systematic practice of theoretical disobedience and textual disrespect. Rather, this discipline encourages us to conjure up the best way to respect traditions while innovating on it, even by betraying it. Critical theory since Erasmus of Rotterdam has formulated both the rhetorical schemes and the propositional content required to sustain this balancing act. Too much of contemporary philosophy is unable to question the authority of the past and is ever so willing to comply with it. It is as if this discipline has accepted with resignation a sort of archival function, to become a mausoleum of past ideas, a contemplation of inspiration lost.

It is crucial to combine critique with creativity, thinking with affectivity and passion, theory with active social engagement in the world we inhabit. All this is connected to the ethical impulse to really try to make a contribution in a historical time when the sense of the collective community is collapsing. I see the task of philosophy as that of being worthy of our times by accepting complexity and contradiction in a creative mode, so as to insert some positive energy into the public debate. We can do this with Spinoza and Deleuze: invigorate this passion for doing and making it into a collective enterprise. We can also do it with the feminist Emma Goldman, who famously stated that, if it did not make her want to dance, this was no revolution that she cared to be a part of. In this world in which everything is privatized and commodified, and where individualism rules supreme, we need to put the "active" back into activism. This is the sort of affirmative theory that can't be disconnected from the collective task of constructing social horizons of hope. Which I consider as fundamental enough to make me want to take a few chances – for the hell of it, that is to say, for the love of it.