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**Mendacious Innocents, or, The Modern
Genealogist as Conscientious Intellectual:
Nietzsche, Foucault, Said**

Paul A. Bové

For Daniel O'Hara

*We have never sought ourselves—
how could it happen that we
should ever find ourselves?*

*—Nietzsche, The Genealogy
of Morals*

*And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.
If love be not in the house
there is nothing.*

—Ezra Pound, Canto 116

So many poets, philosophers, and critics have dealt with genealogical figures in their writing, that one must doubt seriously if another essay on the subject can hope either to contribute, even modestly, to the subject or to represent adequately the range and complexity of the issues already developed with such subtlety by so many others.¹ Indeed, one cannot even hope to present a descriptive chronicle of the archive on genealogy let alone a serious, developed, and demonstrative critique of its various subdivisions and crosslistings. For it is the peculiar nature of the most sophisticated writing on genealogy that it is always, as Jacques Derrida might say, a double-writing: supremely self-reflexive and self-aware, always simultaneously keeping two eyes both on its subject matter and on the irony of following on in a tradition of speculation about following-on. It seems as if writing about genealogy and writing which is the recording of genealogical research are unique sites for the detailed enactment of the sublime epistemological self-consciousness of the most avant-garde humanist intellectuals. And how wonderfully seductive are the attractions of doubling these sublime stakes in a discourse exponentially more playful and self-aware in its re-presentation of the dilemma of influence! In the hands of a sufficiently talented *Ecrivain*, such as Derrida in *Glas* or, perhaps more to the point, Geoffrey Hartman in his lovingly mad review of *Glas*, "Monsieur Texte,"² such a performance could be entertaining, productive of new versions of old figures, informative about the difficult problems of "theft," "inter-textuality," and "influence," and potentially liberating from the deadening, anti-aesthetic life of the everyday world.

Such performances would seem to have peculiar limits for their production depending upon not only the inventiveness of the writer, but also upon the writer's landscape of scholarly memory. Skeptical, destabilizing wit (is this not a redundancy; for Kierkegaard, irony is a riddle and its solution possessed simultaneously³) combined with immense learning, research skills, and a hypertrophied memory would reserve the energy for such potentially limitless play. One cannot, of course, say that it is limitless play of the "same kind" without indulging in metaphysics—which must, honestly, be announced as such. And, quite obviously, such a gesture would round the writer back to the initial moment of critical self-consciousness. However, such a gesture, in closing this circle represents its self-consciousness in its own closure and marks a further peculiarity: infinite play in a finite series, i.e., the ambiguity of the eternal repetition of the same. But, it is, if you will, only a *formal* closure inversely akin to the New Critics' Hegelian desire to apotheosize the Idea in the complex mosaic of the poem as image.⁴ One might object that such a formal closure is an emptying out of "life" and "meaning"—this Derrida mockingly calls "Rousseauistic nostalgia"⁵—yet one can also see this

formalization as the final, not-so-troubling encircling of the shaded space of cultural production. But, the central point is this: each of these alternatives taken separately and both taken together represent one important aspect of the Modern scholar's cultural location and intellectual conscience. Whether it goes by the name *écriture*, *aporia*, "anxiety of influence," or "worldliness," this closure, by its own tenets, does no more than represent the Modern intellectual's sense of place and power.

II

Canto XIII is a montage of Ezra Pound's figures of history, writing, influence, and creativity.⁶ It is organized primarily by a subterranean figure of power which underlies the poem's superimposed fragments of knowing, love, music, civic order, character, and scholarship. Specifically, Canto XIII is Pound's meditation on the aesthetic urge to wholeness, completeness, and closure. It is also a representation of the imaginative attitude of much of Modern and Postmodern poetry to the burdens of history and the rage to order.

Canto XIII opens with the hieroglyphic foregrounding of the self-aware revisionist Kung against a historically burdened background of cultural and natural precursors:

Kung walked
by the dynastic temple
and into the cedar grove
and then out by the lower river

(p. 58)

This image represents the intuition of all Modern poets and of all Modern intellectuals concerned with matters of genealogy. It indicates the permanent, inescapable relationship between the revisionist and the tradition he revises. Kung's walk marks the choreography of the "Modern" mind defining itself in a dance of difference from the "dynastic" authorities already "there" in the culture. It marks the bonded alterity of this binary relation which paradoxically compels the Modern revisionist to project his own identity in a symbiotic trope of the predecessor.

Canto XIII, however, escapes the melancholy, Bloomian consequences of this allegory of genealogy.⁷ Simply and reductively put, Canto XIII palliates the potential anxiety of influence by refusing the central configuration of power as competition upon which contemporary theories of anxiety rest. Power and authority emerge, rather, as the resignation of the imagination to incompleteness—which is not the same as secondariness—and to the knowledge of the loss of sublimity in the Modern World. Yet, these privatives enable the production of a major poem for they themselves represent an attitude toward the past which

does not, from anxious exhaustion, put an end to poetry itself. For the motive underlying the anxiety of imaginative response is not only an Oedipal fear of castration—this is too broad—but also, in the Modern world, the desire for wholeness, for completion—the aesthetic remnant of the theological and metaphysical will to power in synthesis.

Kung raises and dismisses this spectre of a filial competition to displace dynastic power; the issue, of course, is how the poet should represent himself publicly, that is, whether he should pursue authority and, having announced his own incarnation, become “representative”:

And “we are unknown,” said Kung,
“You will take up charioteering?
Then you will become known,
“Or perhaps I should take up charioteering,
or archery?
“Or the practice of public speaking?

(p. 58)

How to become known. Alternative possibilities spring up in response to this trope of self-identity; they appear in the voices of Kung’s ephebes, as the peaks and valleys of Kung’s own psyche: for Tseu-lou, “I would put the defenses in order;” for Khieu, to put the province “in better order than this;” for Tchi, in “a small mountain temple” to maintain “order in the observances,/with a suitable performance of the ritual;” and, finally, for Tian the lute-player, to sing Haiku-like painted images. These are all turns on being known: the military, i.e., the defensive or anxious; the domestic, i.e., political or economic; the religious, i.e., the conservative and mythic; and the aesthetic, i.e., the apprehensive and fragile:

And Thseng-sie desired to know:
“Which had answered correctly?”
And Kung said, “They have all answered correctly,
“That is to say, each in his nature.”

(p. 58)

In their ambition and their innocent need for approval, each ephebe, each trope on the problem of self-annunciation and self-becoming, competes not only against the predecessors’ authority—which keeps them “unknown—but each trope competes for survival with the others: the sons’ struggle with each other in their battle against “the dynastic temple.” And they demand of the father-poet, Kung, assurance that their own individual schemes, their own central metaphors for their self-identity, are “correct,” that is, legitimate, named, and empowered in the violent battle of cultural transformation.

That Kung refuses to judge among the competitors is of utmost

significance: "And Kung smiles upon all of them equally" (p. 58). He seems to accept the relative value of each trope as the essential and correct expression of a particular role, thereby authorizing each "son" to announce himself along the lines of the centrally empowered figure by which each desires to make himself known. Yet, Kung is *not* justifying and authorizing this near chaotic, individualistic intergenerational and internecine warfare. Rather his statement and gesture, his smile, express another ethos than that of competition.

For the epebes, order and self-creation, that is, becoming "known," emerge only in conflict with the predecessor, a conflict enabled by a central metaphoric ideal—defense, economy, myth, or art—represented as a beneficial displacement of the predecessor and the dynastic. In this model, the power and authority of the dynasty block the epebes' birth in public by dominating cultural and imaginative space. Kung not only does not choose among the various central metaphors which are transumptive responses to his original question about being "known," but he refuses to enter the domain of competition with the dynastic or among the epebes and thereby steps aside from the entire network of cultural or imaginative activity conceived as competition. His smile marks both an understanding of how such competition makes of the epebe merely a replica of the dynasty which beckons him to authority, to enter and seize the temple, and a recognition of how men themselves perpetuate their bondage to a system of maddening repetition. For each of the epebes cultivate merely the newest substitution for an earlier dynastic metaphor represented by the epebes as bankrupt and infertile just so that it can be "legitimately" displaced by their own self-annunciations. Kung, the metaphor of Pound's openness to the pressures and possibilities of the tradition, tolerates and develops all of the competitive alternatives, but without choosing any as a weapon in this dynastic struggle.

Instead, Canto XIII suggests that domestic and political order can be supported only by "character," that is, a power strong enough to cultivate the potentially warring tropes of self-annunciation without choosing one as even a temporary master trope:

If a man have not order within him
He cannot spread order about him;
And if a man not have order within him
His family will not act with due order;
 And if the prince have not order within
 him
He can not put order in his dominions.

(p. 59)

Each epebe's trope is not only one part of a larger whole, but each is also a hypertrophy of one metaphor or trope as a self-definition. Such unilinear

development of an insignia-like designation is unlike Kung's gentle attitude represented by his "walking" and "smiling":

"Anyone can run to excess,
It is easy to shoot past the mark,
It is hard to stand firm in the middle."

(p. 59)

"To stand firm in the middle" is for a man to have "order within him." Taking a stand in the middle means avoiding the central problem of all self-production: excess consists in a competitive *imposition* of a totalizing order based on a guiding and privileged metaphor—an equally dangerous excess for the imagination despite the metaphor's primary sphere of value: military, political, mythic, or aesthetic.

The order Kung suggests a ruler must have to avoid excess depends upon refusing the seduction of authority inherent in the hypertrophy of a trope. His order depends not only upon such a refusal, which implies an openness to all the different tropes present, at least potentially, to the imagination, but also upon the recognition of the important role ignorance, forgetting, privacy, and incompleteness play in sustaining imaginative life. Put another, simpler way, Kung figures power not as competitive displacement, but as a refusal of closure, that is, he transforms the dynastic figuration of power as productive authority into a trope of discontinuous historical narration:

"And even I can remember
A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
I mean for things they didn't know,
But that time seems to be passing."

(p. 60)

The point here is that the ephebe's self-annunciation in and through a central figure is always a dynastic, or canonical, revision of the canon which, thereby, sustains the dynasty somewhat on the model of the family romance. Kung's smiling and refusing to make a selective judgment to authorize a trope for his own and his followers' identity is akin to the last historians' strength to have gaps in their revisions or reconstructions. Their unwillingness to impose a master trope through interpretation, their hesitancy to extend the dynastic organization of power through well-made retelling, suggests an alternative figure of power. They do not merely, as it were, reorganize "the relations of production" by changing the guard in control of power; in other words, by letting the ephebe gain authority in identity, by creating, supposedly, an individual voice and hence, an identity. But, rather, they change the means of production and what is produced.

To gain authority, to achieve identity, that is, a voice and control, the epebe creates two hypostases, or accepts the already given: the canonical self-interpretation of the tradition in the hegemonic present, that represented by "the dynastic temple" and the world of publicity; and, a cohesive self-identity named by and produced by the central trope of his identity. In the contemporary critical sphere, one might consider Harold Bloom to be the paradigm of this type of production. The past is always remade and reified in these transformations of the dynastic and the authority of the remaking depends, of course, upon its cogency and completeness, upon knowledge and continuity. Legitimacy occurs when counter-versions of the late are excluded by the newly dominant interpretation. Yet, the ongoing pursuit of such displacement gives legitimacy above all to this competitive mode of displacement. Changing the mode and product of these productive forms would suspend this competitive model and result in a configuration of power which leaves space for the different interpretations of an imperfectly known and highly mediated past. Moreover, in the spaces of reconstruction, power persists as a surplus freed from competitive patterns. It allows not only for aesthetic activity that has the strength to stand without melancholy in the face of natural change and priority, but also the honest imagination strong enough *not* to reify the moment in pursuit of a mythic Paterean quest for the sublime:⁸

And Kung said, "Without character you will be unable to
play on that instrument
Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
The blossoms of the apricot
blow from the east to the west,
And I have tried to keep them from falling."

(p. 60)

III

I have begun what is essentially a discussion of the figure of the genealogist in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and, to a lesser extent, Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*,⁹ with this allegory of Canto XIII because it poses richly and directly two important issues: can the genealogical revisionist escape the filial problem of the Modern world, i.e., avoid reproducing the structure of that he revises; can genealogy clarify the central issue of much of contemporary scholarly activity: to struggle against power itself or to attempt a new mode of organization of power.

Given what is now common knowledge of Pound's politics, it would seem that as a revisionist he opted for a fascist reorganization of power. Yet, the Kung Canto suggests that, even prior to the defeat of the

Axis in WWII and prior to the appearance of quietistic figures like Francis of Assisi in the later cantos, Pound conceived of the Modern struggle as one against power figured as competition and continuity. That Pound could reinvent his own trope to see in fascism the concrete manifestations of "character" does not deny the sensibility of Canto XIII. It poignantly begs a harder question: how can the imagination deny its own openness in fantasizing Mussolini as the figure of "character." The political answer to this question is available in Pound's individualistic project and period. For the figure of Kung does not represent, among its various echoes, the positive possibility of a community except as an extension of a hierarchical elite, a pseudo-oriental, medieval emanation of order from within the self-aware, balanced, and imaginative leader—a leader whose generosity and tolerance cannot prevent the decline of the state into competition, who can only *try* to prevent the apricot blossoms from falling.

If Pound's poem, and his life, too, pose the difficult question of the Modern intellectual's figure of himself, Nietzsche, Foucault, and Said project certain varied and more or less tentative images of the intellectual conceived as self-conscious, politically aware genealogist. There are certain stable features to this characterization over one hundred years as well as interesting debts and differences in the three versions of this literary figure I intend to examine.

IV

Beginning a consideration of Nietzsche's *Genealogy* with the ending of the text allows us, appropriately, to tell the story of his work in a flashback, as it were. It lets the entire agon of Nietzsche's project stand out clearly and places the final stroke on his portrait of the genealogist, of the modern critical intellectual:

We can no longer conceal from ourselves *what* is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the practical, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—a *will to nothingness*, an aversion (*Widerwillen*) to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *will!* . . . And, to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.—

(*GM*, pp. 162-63)

Genealogical research is, then, essentially a revealing of something begun in the past and continuing into the present. Moreover, it is a revealing which clarifies the "what-ness" of something always present, but unnoticed in its "what-ness." Indeed the genealogist exposes what it is about men's own societal creations which, although essential to self-preservation and self-understanding, they "conceal" from themselves. When such concealment is no longer possible, the genealogist demystifies the "natural" qualities of the omnipresent, unexamined groundings of the fading dynastic organization and, by naming it, furthers its emergence from concealment. In place of the interpretation which declared the "what-ness" off-limits, the genealogist produces a counter-interpretation which, not only discloses this "what-ness" as man-made and treacherous, but also explains its existence and, often, offers an alternative.

Put differently, the genealogist re-reads the surface of cultural activity to find a meaning in it different from that which it seems, itself, to offer and approve. Realignment of the cultural phenomena available publicly discloses the lines of force in a culture organized toward certain ends and proceeding through certain transformations. And genealogical redistribution of surface fragments, not only demystifies the veiling, legitimating ideologies of a system, but produces a new reading which is a more convincing asymptotic approximation of the truth of the matter.

In this essay, however, I am not primarily concerned with these issues, but with the way in which Nietzsche represents himself, or the genealogical intellectual generally. The passage from the conclusion of the *Genealogy* quoted above suggests that, above all, the genealogist concerns himself with the cultural configurations of power, of the possibility and legitimacy of certain tropes and interpretations, and with the concrete human effects of such power structures. Moreover, this same passage suggests the heroic nature of the genealogist who, as it were, alone and for the first time risks or dares a confrontation with the powers of the hegemonic culture in order to demystify them: "let us dare to grasp it. . ." And, furthermore, the powerful daring of the genealogist's demystification renders the previously authoritative hegemonic interpretation inoperative or impotent: "We can no longer conceal from ourselves. . ." Not, that is to say, after Nietzsche's performance in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

I am not concerned with the *truth* of Nietzsche's claim—even though it does seem impossible to resist his analysis. What concerns me is the composite trope of the genealogical intellectual emergent in Nietzsche's text and, partially through it and its successors, disseminated and empowered in the discourse of Modernity. Of course, the truth or irresistibility of Nietzsche's analysis of the ascetic ideal wonderfully validates the image of the isolated, struggling, heroic, oppositional figure rising above and against the treacheries of the past and present. But is it not one of the ironies of Nietzsche's text that his analysis itself is convincing because the marginal role of the oppositional intellectual in a

society in which he is ever more irrelevant is itself attractive and powerful? This is said, not to deny the efficacy of the image as a reactivation of critical intelligence; it is rather to question if this intelligence does not itself belong to an easily defined "counter-tradition" whose own diversion of militant tropes doesn't, in anticipation, proleptically, code the activities of the self-proclaimed, critical heroes whose seductive claims to privilege, courage, and authority we discover conform to an already-given niche in cultural production.

For the essential facet of all Nietzschean activity is its competitive or agonistic character. Nietzsche's rediscovery of the agon's centrality in Western culture is itself achieved in a series of struggles against a metaphysics, theology, and science which deny or conceal the role of conflict in cultural creation:

The two *opposing* values "good and bad," "good and evil" have long been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years; and though the latter value has certainly been on top for a long time, there are still places where the struggle is as yet undecided. One might even say that it has risen even higher and thus become more and more profound and spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "*higher nature*," a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values. (*GM*, p. 52)

Despite the complex defensive ironies involved in this stance toward Darwin, i.e., Nietzsche's troping on Darwin's evolution *toward* the unity of a species as an "evolution" toward ongoing battle, it is clear that the "mark" of a "higher nature," including Nietzsche's own, is the degree of struggle waged in and by that individual against the hegemonic forces of ascetic nihilism. Nietzsche makes clear that one of his goals in this text is to reactivate this struggle so that the temporary victory of Judea ("Good and Evil") can be upset by the next coming of Rome ("Good and Bad") (*GM*, pp. 54-55).

It must be made clear that, in the Modern world, Nietzsche's struggle against the deadening effects of an ascetic, humanistic culture capable of using all productive knowledge for its own nihilistic ends must be supported. Indeed, effective intellectual opposition demands precisely the complex historical research and sophisticated rhetorical demystifications Nietzsche performs under the heading "genealogy." The only way we can come to understand who we are and how we have come to be ourselves is through such self-conscious genealogical research. For such analysis alone reveals how we have made ourselves—as Marx would put it, made ourselves not as we might have liked, but made ourselves

nonetheless.¹⁰ And, moreover, such research suggests that we might remake ourselves, not according to any definite pre-given plan as higher men or overmen, but by realizing that, since all of our societal codes are man-made mediations of nature, experience, and mind—and, hence, are not “natural”—the future, although burdened by the past, is open and not an ever-declining echo of the past.

Genealogical research, for Nietzsche, reactivates the struggle for the future; its reading of the past is potentially liberating in the knowledge, the self-consciousness it produces and makes possible. However, genealogy also exists within a range of epistemological and grammatological problems which taken together as complex irony form a radical skepticism. Such skepticism sometimes threatens paralysis. A limited example in Nietzsche's *Genealogy* of such a potentially paralytic gesture can be found in the third essay, section 25. Nietzsche argues that Modern science is the completion of ascetic nihilism because it destroys man's “former respect for himself.” That is, the demystifying knowledge produced by science functions as an extension of the priests' contempt for the world by demonstrating that man, despite his ambitions for the transcendent and pure, operates in his culture from the basest of motives and ignorance. In other words, science now compels man into nihilism. Nietzsche, thus, problematizes the value of knowledge as well as the value of modern disciplines which produce it: “Presuming that everything man ‘knows’ does not merely fail to satisfy his desires but rather contradicts them and produces a sense of horror, what a divine way out to have the right to seek the responsibility for this not in ‘desire’ but in ‘knowledge!’ ” (*GM*, p. 156).

The paralytic possibility lies in reading this as a self-reflexive passage which inscribes genealogical knowledge in the same nihilistic framework of science. Or, more complexly to see the “desire” which grounds the “interest” of genealogical research as a neutralization of its status as “knowledge” in a battle waged against science from a perspective simultaneously within and outside that framework.

Of course, Nietzsche denies these possibilities any efficacy by putting these abysmal reflexivities or contradictions to work for him. For only in the comic representations of the will to truth resident in the production of knowledge can the genealogist damage that modern asceticism: “the ascetic ideal has at present only *one* kind of real enemy capable of *harming* it: the comedians of this ideal—for they arouse mistrust of it” (*GM*, p. 160). Telling more truth will not damage asceticism or science; only adopting a comic stance toward it can have that effect. Genealogy not only produces a new type of knowledge, but it adopts a parodic, extreme attitude toward other knowledge, the means and desires of its production, and its value. How best to problematize knowledge? By destabilizing the very text which produces “knowledge about knowledge.” That is, by exploding the assumed status of scientific text, truth, and

criticism. In a comedy of duplications, genealogy is not paralyzed but enabled in its goal: to wage a winning battle against the hidden ascetic "behind" previous organizations of knowledge and society:

All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming. . . . And here I again touch on my problem, on our problem, my *unknown* friends (for as yet I *know* of no friend): what meaning would *our* whole being possess if it were not this, that in us the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a problem? (*GM*, p. 161)

The attractiveness of this gesture lies in its openness toward the future, its revelations regarding past mystifications, its promise of successful battles against Modernity's nihilism and oppression, its positive contribution to new self-consciousness about "science," and, above all, in its promise as a means of transferring or reorganizing power away from the ascetics toward those who have an "intellectual conscience." In fact, *On the Genealogy of Morals* is a central text, perhaps even the initiatory one, in a tradition of oppositional criticism. Even though Nietzsche's figures in this text are by no means original in the sense of having no history, they authorize an image of the conscientious intellectual. And, indeed, intellectuals and critics from Nietzsche to Foucault and Said have drawn on, or been inscribed within, this figure of the antagonist of the hegemonic culture's primary means of interpreting and representing itself. Nietzsche lends authority to a certain representation of the intellectual and helps, in this way, to sustain a literary tradition containing the figures necessary for the critic to represent himself, to find his own voice. This is not to imply, perniciously, that such oppositional figures are, as a result, no different in kind or value from those of intellectuals operating within the dynastic canon of hegemony. Such an argument would itself be nihilistic. It might more appropriately be observed that, in this context, it is inappropriate to speak of *one* hegemonic culture since the "counter-culture" of the genealogical intellectual exists—albeit, marginally—"alongside" or "within" the dominant scientific mind.

It is, however, important to realize that the oppositional work done by the genealogists is itself possible only because a well-made tradition of authorized figures representing the legitimacy, importance, and attractiveness of such work exists. That is to say, genealogical activity not only provides knowledge about the history of the present to open the future; but, almost by definition, it puts into play, empowers, a certain set of representations of the value and importance of intellectual work which not only contradicts nihilistic science, but attempts to replace it. Nietzsche's central insight into the agonistic nature of cultural production is central to all genealogical research, that is, genealogy as a

practice and representation of intellectuals and their work gains power as an institution only as it replicates itself in more genealogical production. Although the value of each text depends upon its subject—morals, prisons, Orientalism—much of the effectiveness of these texts lies in the way they realign the intellectual's image, reorganize critical production, and provide an alternative, non-nihilistic cultural institution as a support for self-consciousness. Moreover, these texts are themselves different, i.e., they organize themselves in non-linear, analogical fashion to avoid the reifying tendencies of much "scientific" discourse.

On the Genealogy of Morals offers, as we have seen, a complex representation of the genealogist. What must be stressed, paradoxically, in light of the institutional possibilities just discussed, is the isolation of the genealogist. In the "Preface" of 1887, Nietzsche almost immediately identifies his difference from his age as the enabling factor of his insight and practice:

Because of the scruple peculiar to me that I am loathe to admit to—for it is concerned with *morality*, with all that has hitherto been celebrated on earth as morality—a scruple so entered my life so early, so uninvited, so irresistibly, so much in conflict with my environment, age, precedents, and descent that I might almost have the right to call it my "*a priori*"—my curiosity as well as my suspicions were bound to halt quite soon at the question of where our good and evil really originated. (*GM*, p. 16)

Nietzsche gives us in this passage the scene of instruction of the conscientious intellectual. The violent penetration of consciousness by a "scruple" antagonistic to the shell of public sentiment is the initial weighing of Nietzsche's peculiarity. The cutting edge of this uninvited guest frees the intellectual's curiosity to examine a common phenomenon, morality, in an uncommon light, free of societal preconceptions. In fact, this irresistible scruple guides this curiosity in a struggle against family, nation, and religion—evils which must be overflowed. The genealogist is "born" in a revolt against the given; the sharp edge of the liberating scruple which tears the obscuring veil of the hegemonic figures of morality becomes a pointed weapon not only goading the conscientious intellectual along in his process of research and individuation, but also fracturing the dynastic edifice against which the genealogist defines himself. This originary scruple, this "*a priori*" which enables genealogical research and individuation, is also a measure of success. It is a standard to weigh the value of the self achieved by the single-minded pursuit of the goal set for curiosity. A stable point of reference for the self and its project, it appears over and again as the central metaphor of the genealogist's texts.

But this scruple exists nowhere but in the system of research, individuation, and liberation. It "enters," but from no "outside." Its "entrance" is merely a penetration pricking consciousness, announcing a "choice" of "identity" to be struggled for in the rhetorical and research struggle of the conscientious intellectual against the hegemonic mediation of meaning and value in his culture. No causal or scientific description explains the origin of this type of intellectual: Nietzsche's image suggests a mysterious, precarious, and heroic calling more akin to the deflowering of a virgin than a blissful call from God to the priesthood. But even this metaphor is inadequate unless the engaged couple becomes a hermaphroditic figure capable of self-penetration. For the men of a "higher nature" (*GM*, p. 52), the scene of instruction is self-generated. While Nietzsche's biographies suggest the importance of his father, Pastor Nietzsche, and his early reading, along with visits to his maternal grandfather as moments in his awakening, the *Genealogy* suggests that intellectual conscience is the victory of the critical mode of the psyche over the power of given representations to interpret the world and shape the self. Not the public system for organizing language, but the exact otherness of the psyche's tropes designate the heroic genealogist for his struggle.

While the scruple deposited in the critical mind from the psyche's plethora of tropes is a small thing, like all healthy zygotes it exists to grow. This "*a priori*" becomes a self only if the intellectual allows nothing to escape, for all matters may be relevant to his project and cannot be artificially cut-off from him for disciplinary or other reasons. Hence, Nietzsche's insistence on the relation between philosophy, poetry, music, philology, psychology, and politics. The persistent growth of the zygote means ideas do not change fundamentally: "the ideas themselves are older . . . they have become riper, clearer, stronger, more perfect!" But, Nietzsche is pleased by more than the persistence of a complex of isolated ideas. The intellectual conscience of the genealogist requires that all ideas intersect with each other and, above all, grow out of the integrated life of a philosopher, of the man who lives the scruple of his project. Nietzsche reflects the importance of representing the peculiarity of the conscientious intellectual as just such a harmony of life and thought in the following euphoric version of a Schopenhaurian idea:

That I still cling to them today, however, that they have become in the meantime more and more firmly attached to one another, indeed entwined and interlaced with one another, strengthens my joyful assurance that they might have arisen in me from a common root, from a fundamental will of knowledge, pointing imperiously into the depths, speaking more and more precisely, demanding greater and greater precision. For this alone

is fitting for a philosopher. We have no right to *isolated* acts of any kind: we may not make isolated errors or hit upon isolated truths. Rather do our ideas, our values, our yeas and nays, our ifs and buts, grow out of us with the necessity with which a tree bears fruit—related and each with an affinity to each, and evidence of *one* will, *one* health, *one* soil, *one* seen.—Whether *you* like them, these fruits of ours?—But what is that to the trees! What is that to *us*, to us philosophers! (*GM*, p. 16)

The work's apparent unity strengthens the intuition that the work reflects a unified will generating texts and an identity.

Nietzsche produces a figure of an intellectual with the privilege of responsibility for what Eliot would call "the unified sensibility," in other words, for Nietzsche, a responsibility for culture. It is no accident that genealogical research, as we see it, for example, in Foucault and Said, violates the traditional Modern division of disciplines and is often valuable for precisely this reason. The "fundamental will of knowledge" refuses the limits of the disciplines in its research. One of the more problematic implications of this Nietzschean emphasis on a privileged responsibility is a charge of elitism. He is empowering a representation of the intellectual as a higher being, precisely a self-productive, reproductive, balanced, oppositional figure most accurately designated by the still privileged organic metaphor of wholeness and life.

In this 1887 "Preface," Nietzsche is offering an interpretive strategy. The intellectual's recapitulation of his work finds the "affinity" between "fruits" which "prove" the "common root." Such a strategy is, if nothing else, an expression of a desire to find wholeness. But as the "completion" of an allegory of the intellectual's power and individuation—from scruple to common root—finding the beginning and the end are one—it is an authoritative and attractive figure with which to represent the value and romance of the oppositional figure:

Thereupon I discovered and ventured diverse answers; I distinguished between ages, peoples, degrees of rank among individuals; I departmentalized my problem; out of my answers there grew new questions, inquiries, conjectures, probabilities—until at length I had a country of my own, a soil of my own, an entire discrete, thriving, flourishing world, like a secret garden the existence of which no one suspected.—Oh how *fortunate* we are, we men of knowledge, providing only that we know how to keep silent long enough! (*GM*, p. 17)

The genealogist's creative powers rival those of any poet in this image.

Indeed, it calls to mind not only Sidney's description of the poet as a producer of an alternative nature, but Pater's version of the Wordsworthian sublime as well. This is, as it were, the alternative face of the tedious, non-heroic image genealogical research often presents. A genealogist of morals, Nietzsche tells us, must not gaze into the blue sky for essentialist answers to the problem of the origin of morality. He should turn toward another color: "namely *gray*, that is, what is documented, what can actually be confirmed and has actually existed, in short, the entire long hieroglyphic record, so hard to decipher, of the moral past of mankind!" (*GM*, p. 21).

This is the anonymous, dark commitment of the genealogist to the library and to the endless decoding of texts long covered-over by the "official" history of events. It is often a painful process bringing the researcher too often into contact with the "repellent sight of the ill-constituted, dwarfed, atrophied, and poisoned" (*GM*, p. 43). This Nietzsche can bear only if granted an occasional glance at the perfect, the beautiful. But, fundamentally, the strength and responsibility of the genealogist is to bear much: "distress, want, bad weather, sickness, toil, solitude." Nietzsche offers a paean to the heroism of the sublime conscientious intellectual: "Fundamentally, one can cope with everything . . . born as one is to a subterranean life of struggle; one emerges again and again into the light, one experiences again and again one's golden hour of victory—and then one stands forth as one was born, unbreakable, tensed, ready for new, even harder, remoter things, like a bow that distresses only serves to draw tighter" (*GM*, p. 44). The conscientious intellectual is born in a struggle when "scruple" pierces public perception and lives and grows in battle as well. Each genealogical struggle is more difficult, but each promises the reward of greater strength to commit to new, more trying battles. Self-definition is not only renewal, but extension. For, although the battle is "subterranean," that is, waged out of the public eye as a way of undermining the city's fortifications, it is also "private" or "psychological," that is, waged between the internal aspects of the psyche for the spoils of individuation and self-knowledge. The genealogist's great strength consists not only in being a "higher nature," but in winning the battle of morality for Rome against Judea. This means that knowledge does not master or "produce" the individual, but that through the battles of the library there emerges a man of a different type, oriented toward the remote things of the future with a strength and confidence which promises a victory over the library-record of all that is ugly and poisonous in man.

The genealogist is one version of that Zarathustran figure whose very existence transcends, justifies, and redeems human inadequacy. Even though he achieves no final apotheosis, for he must emerge "again and again into the light," his every victory incarnates and approximates that apotheosis. Indeed, Nietzsche's figure makes clear we have only one

“golden hour of victory” which echoes and repeats itself in each momentary overcoming of struggle. Each rebirth spirals toward perfection; each victory tightens and increases the sinew-like tensile strength of this genealogist who takes aim at more distant goals.

In a curious retelling of the myth of the Fall and of the Odyssean legend of a visit to the underworld, Nietzsche has the Modern hero struggle not only out of the public eye, subversively, if you will, but concretely in a library, in a maze of gray documents where he finds, in language worthy of Jonson’s “Excoriation Upon Vulcan” or Pope’s *Dunciad*, the culmination of the “ill-constituted, dwarfed, atrophied, and poisoned” in “maggot man.” The genealogist returns armed with the knowledge of the future and, in an image surely echoing Odysseus’ battle with the suitors in Ithaca, with the bow of his own victory turned against those who would further sap the cultural strength of man with their ascetic nihilism. One must only recall Athena’s constant aid to Odysseus to recognize the tradition underlying Nietzsche’s representation of the redeeming figure which follows upon the tensed bow image:

But grant me from time to time—if there are divine goddesses in the realm beyond good and evil—grant me the sight, but *one* glance of something perfect, wholly achieved, happy, mighty, triumphant, something still capable of arousing fear! Of a man who justified *man*, of a complementary and redeeming lucky hit on the part of man for the sake of which one may still *believe in man!* (*GM*, p. 44)

This is the Nietzschean response to nihilism which, of course, has its fullest expression in Zarathustra and the Eternal Return: “The sight of man now makes us weary—what is nihilism today if it is not *that?* —We are weary of *man!*” (*GM*, p. 44).

While it is true, of course, that Nietzsche promulgates a transvaluation of all values as the response to ascetic nihilism, I have chosen to give less attention to this project in *On the Genealogy of Morals* than to the figure of the genealogist, himself. For this very transvaluation can only be carried out by those Zarathustran redeemers who appear in Nietzsche’s writings as a variable composite figure of “artist-philosopher-saint.” The genealogist is, as it were, a powerful synecdoche of this composite trope—powerful because he represents the sublime victory of the marginal intellectual over nihilism. That is, the genealogist is a domestic figure in Modernity. Akin in training and values to the leaders of the authorized disciplines of the hegemonic culture, the genealogist is a transformation of his enemy: he problematizes knowledge in a carnival of “truths.” He is not outlandish, but subversive and different. Most importantly, his strength depends on his vision of himself as a predecessor

of the perfect man. The genealogist promises that culture shall be formed once again by the intellectual warfare of ideas which will determine the "evolutionary" course of history. Like John crying in the wilderness, the genealogist pronounces a redeemer whose figure he himself is. If the redeemer is late in arriving and different from him, the point is made only more clearly: for the incarnation "emerges again and again." In Nietzsche's vision, the incarnation occurs *not* in an annunciation of the Word, but in a carnival staged repeatedly as a comic battle against knowledge and truth, and so, against nihilism. The genealogist does not make himself god in his agonistic research; but, in each work's victory over ascetic nihilism, he appears as an emanation of the perfect man—whose intuition fuels the genealogist's warfare to redeem man himself.

For Nietzsche, the genealogist is a central synecdoche and prolepsis of the perfect man, perhaps even his midwife. Certainly, the Nietzschean genealogist has been of maieutic service to later conscientious intellectuals, like Foucault and Said. *On the Genealogy of Morals* has securely encoded a complex composite figure of the oppositional figure in Western Modernity and has provided, not a model to follow, but an etching whose chief features are strong, sharp, and purposeful. It presents a face whose key aspects are like those of the scientist, of the defender of the Modernist ideal of nihilistic asceticism but crinkled with a wise, deadly smile which marks it as a "comedian of this ideal." Seriousness, anger, personal interest—all of these are sublined to produce this comedy. For without the comedy, "genealogy" becomes "science" or pointless hysteria. Only the genealogist's conviction that he is the avatar or emanation of the perfect man authorized this comedy. The success of the comedy in liberating him from a mere repetition of science or self-betraying impotence alone legitimates the "glow" or "intuition" of the "perfect man." Comedy arises in those moments of well-being after illness and danger.

V

Nietzsche's sense of the comedy of science can be illustrated by a brief discussion of his separation of "origin" and "purpose" in the "*Second Essay, 'Guilt, 'Bad Conscience, and the Like.*" Nietzsche takes up the question of how man can be made responsible for the future, that is, how he can remember and forget.

Asceticism is essentially a forced training of the central nervous system which creates memory by darkening the mind and senses to most phenomena and by so indelibly inscribing a "few ideas" that they become "natural" and "omnipresent"—and, thus, perfect targets of the genealogist's subversion. "In a certain sense," Nietzsche writes,

the whole of asceticism belongs here: a few ideas are to

be rendered indistinguishable, ever-present, unforgettable, "fixed," with the aim of hypnotising the entire nervous and intellectual system with these "fixed ideas"—and ascetic procedures and modes of life are means of freeing these ideas from the competition of all other ideas, so as to make them "unforgettable." (*GM*, p. 61)

This is a privileged introduction to Nietzsche's discussion of the difference between "origin" and "purpose." For Nietzsche shows that these "fixed ideas" are inculcated through a politico-legal-biology of the nervous system; in this, he, of course, anticipates Foucault. Most significantly, however, Nietzsche's text not only reminds us of the "purpose" of punishment in the ascetic West, but points out as well the forceful mystification of "origin" and "purpose" which obscures the workings of the penal institution itself. That is, the institutions of punishment compel the intellectual error which prohibits one from seeing the effects of punishment in their central role in culture: identifying "purpose" and "origin" is a "fixed idea" which itself prohibits the perception of how "fixed ideas" "originate." For so long as one confuses the purpose and origin of punishment as the one project, "to correct criminal acts," then one will make no progress in understanding and demystifying "fixed ideas" or "punishment."

Once a thinker enters into this cyclic, parodic "truth-saying" about the relation of punishment, memory, forgetting, and central ideas, one enters, in fact, the comedy of asceticism. One laughs at one's close escape from the nihilistic ambush asceticism sets for the will in the idealization of the origin. Nietzsche expresses the painful human cost of learning these few ideas in a passage which suggests Foucault's "Docile Bodies":

The worse man's memory has been, the more fearful has been the appearance of his customs; the severity of the penal code provides an especially significant measure of the degree of effort needed to overcome forgetfulness and to impose a few primitive demands of social existence as *present realities* upon these slaves of momentary affect and desire. (*GM*, p. 61)

For Nietzsche the "origin" of reason lies in breaking bodies to induce memory and reflection: the wheel, the stake, boiling oil, and stoning shape all remembering:

With the aid of such images and procedures one finally remembers five or six "I will not's," in regard to which

one had given one's *promise* so as to participate in the advantage of society—and it was indeed with the aid of this kind of memory that one at least come “to reason”! Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man: How dearly they have been bought! How much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all “good things!” (GM, p. 62)

To protect its own coercive, minimalist, nihilistic tendencies, Western asceticism obscures the origin of reason in violence by idealizing the origin and by claiming the over-coming of all violence as its own “purpose.” Here we are close to one of the motives of Nietzsche’s comic stance. For asceticism *will* bring all violence to an end since it is a disguised form of racial suicide, of willing self-destructiveness rather than not willing at all. Arresting the ascesis and glancing toward the perfect man requires a heroic laughter which raucously reclaims the violence of origins and all interpretations—a reclamation of violence away from ascesis and for the future, a lynching of reason in a noose of passion, and a rupturing of the linear chain of causal, or even dialectical, explanation.

Nietzsche makes clear that explaining the origin of punishment or of the law by its “purpose” is a theological imposition upon the origin of an interpretation privileged and needed by the dynastic claims of the hegemonic culture. Breaking the circle of identity formed by that imposition reveals its violence under the guise of idealism, restores the violence of the origin, of the difference between interpretations, and of the crucial difference between “origin” and “purpose,” themselves. In this, Nietzsche offers an entire carnival of unmaskings which reveal not the “truth,” but the forgotten mechanisms of struggle by which we remember and forget, take and claim responsibility for our history—which reveal, in short, how painfully we have made, and still can make, our own culture:

there is for historiography of any kind no more important position . . . the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous “meaning” and “purpose” are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. . . . But purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become

master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion. The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* . . . but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. The form is fluid, but the "meaning" is even more so. (*GM*, pp. 77-78)

Culture survives only through such transformations. The very complex process Nietzsche describes has reached a crisis for the victory of the ascetic interpretation spells an end to the entire process. And the grip of the ascetic on the will to power, itself, can be loosened only by the genealogist's heteroclit knowledge and mockery of asceticism's idealizing mask. The ideological justification of all asceticism is that it puts an end to strife and warfare. While behind this humanistic mask, it sacrifices life to its own mean perpetuation and, thereby, consumes life, itself:

A legal order thought of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between power-complexes but as a means of *preventing* all struggle in general . . . would be a principle *hostile to life*, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, an attempt to assassinate the future, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness.— (*GM*, p. 76)

Such a powerful catachresis—peace assassinates life—is the *locus classicus* of the comedy of all ideals. Taken with the previous quotation, it forms the central, authorized product and process of Modern genealogy. The "creation" of "things" in interpretation, the subduing of people by representatives, the complicity of causality and reason with nihilism, the role of chance in the transformational events of history, the conflicts of interpretations, the denial of "proper meaning" to the event as a sign—all these and more, in a Nietzschean sense, make possible Foucault and Said. For their work in *Discipline and Punishment* and *Orientalism* is a revised continuation of the reinterpretation of power-complexes to new ends, and, as such, is, to a degree, a filial extension of the Nietzschean genealogical carnival.

Nietzsche's importance to Foucault and Said is a commonplace of Post-structuralism and so requires no elaborate explanation.¹² Indeed, a good deal of contemporary Nietzsche scholarship owes its perceptions to their genealogical work on power.¹³ The nature of the hermeneutical paradox is such that the work of the successor often illuminates that of the authorizing predecessor.

This is not the place to elaborate the detailed distinctions between Nietzsche, Foucault, and Said; for they are many and valuable. Nor do I intend to suggest that, although Nietzsche predates a good deal of Foucault's and Said's meditations on the power of systems of representation, he in any way preempts them. I do, however, want to make two points, one following from the other: that genealogy is itself a systematic representation of the intellectual and of "objects" of knowledge—even if an ironic subversion of all other systems—and, as a result, that the relation of the individual subject to systems of representation must be reconsidered. On this latter point, there is an apparently important difference between Nietzsche and Foucault, on the one hand, and Said, on the other.

Although Heidegger insists that Nietzsche's reliance on the will to power is a metaphysics,¹⁴ it is nonetheless true that Nietzsche's own antimetaphysical stand led him to reject all permanent "substrata" behind surface appearance, including the subject, itself:

A quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of desire, will, effect—more, it is nothing other than precisely this very driving, willing, effecting, and only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a "subject," can it appear otherwise . . . as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was *free* to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything. (*GM*, p. 45)

It is interesting to note here Nietzsche's translation of David Hume's objections to causality from the sphere of associational psychology to language.¹⁵ This change effectively removes the psyche as a stable entity-in-itself from the account of causality and so not only admits endless change to the system, but removes all analysis of "depths" from an essentialist explanation. Rather than the nature of the mind, knowable by

psychology in its recesses, the historical surface record of language becomes the operative "mis-reading" of "events" in causal sequence. The "subject" is merely one fiction among many resident in metaphysical language.

Nietzsche does not "eliminate" the subject. He refuses the "subject" as an adequate explanation of events because it nihilistically turns consciousness away from "surface" happenings, from the configuration of actions, and toward fruitless preoccupations with other language games which conceal the operations of power. "The deed is everything" means that power creates reason, judgment, individual will, causality—in short, the subject. Foucault's various studies of clinics, prisons, and sex have shown how this has happened. For Nietzsche, then, the "subject" is no more than a sign for a series of events which can be represented and analyzed by means of intellectual history—means of which Said avails himself in *Orientalism*, especially in his brilliant readings of Renan, Massignon, and Gibb. From this it would follow that these three Orientalists are re-creations of *Orientalism* to the degree to which this book subverts the authorized representations of them. This, of course, Said would not deny since his avowed intent is to begin a counter-archive struggling with the dynastic power of the Orientalist disciplines.

Nietzsche's denunciation of the subject leaves room too for Foucault's famous project, announced in *The Order of Things* and continued to *The History of Sexuality*:

Can one speak of science and its history (and therefore of its conditions of existence, its changes, the errors it has perpetrated, the sudden advances that have sent it off on a new course) without reference to the scientist himself—and I am speaking not merely of the concrete individual represented by a proper name, but of his work and the particular form of his thought? Can a valid history of science be attempted that would retrace from beginning to end the whole spontaneous movement of an anonymous body of knowledge? . . . I do not wish to deny the validity of intellectual biographies, or the possibility of a history of theories, concepts, or themes. It is simply that I wonder whether such descriptions are themselves enough, whether they do justice to the immense destiny of scientific discourse, whether there do not exist, outside their customary boundaries, systems of regularities that have a decisive role in the history of the sciences. I should like to know whether the subjects responsible for scientific discourse are not determined in their situation, their function, their perceptive capacity, and their practical possibilities by

conditions that dominate and even overwhelm them.¹⁶

Foucault attempts to develop a mode of research and of writing which reflects and reinforces the death of the subject, of all metaphysical substrata such as "organicism," "causality," and "geneticism." If power-knowledge is anonymous, if as Nietzsche says, "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming," then a new research practice not itself involved in the discourse of the subject must develop to provide access to it. For it is in the nature of hermeneutic activity that a metaphysical research mode, no matter how demystifying, provides access only to what is already known, that is, to the realm of metaphysics thereby strengthening its dynasty—this no matter how "successful" such a project may be in polemical terms.

If the anonymity and ubiquity of power depends, as Nietzsche and Foucault insist, on the dominance of causal (or organic/genetic) and subject-based hermeneutics, then what does an analytic which resists these terms (successfully or not is another matter) look like? Foucault's general project and style have been commented on at length by Edward Said, Hayden White, Jonathan Arac, and Michael Sprinker.¹⁷ I would like to stress merely one or two points already well-known about Foucault to complete my general argument.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault willfully refuses to provide causal explanations for change or organic models of growth. The text also studiously depersonalizes itself avoiding all opportunities to represent the figure of the genealogist directly as Nietzsche does in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. In place of causal explanations or organic models, Foucault offers careful descriptions of differences suggesting, rather concretely, the material truth of Nietzsche's claim that a "thing" or "custom," such as penal judgment, is "a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion" (*GM*, p. 77). This process of adaptation appears in Foucault's text on the level of style as "catachresis," as Hayden White points out, and on the level of "content" as a series of transformations of a custom or thing each of whose appearances can be marked off as an event. In *Discipline and Punish*, this is not an organic or genetic process, but nearly a structuralist one in which no "original" exists, but only a succession of indeterminate transformations of other already-given transformations.

For example, in "The Body of the Condemned," Foucault describes how "a different question of truth is inscribed in the course of the penal judgment" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead of ascertaining guilt and the appropriate law under which to punish the criminal, questions of therapy and rehabilitation become important:

A whole set of assessing, diagnostic, prognostic, narrative judgements concerning the criminal have become lodged in the framework of penal judgment. Another truth has penetrated the truth that was required by the legal machinery; a truth which, entangled with the first, has turned the assertion of guilt into a strange scientifico-juridical complex. (*DP*, p. 19)

Foucault's text dramatically refuses to suggest "how" or "why" such a penetration occurs. He looks into neither the depths nor the blue sky. Instead of speculating on a cause—which might be found in the subject, capitalism, or evolution—he offers an elaboration on a sub-case, on an adjacent issue: "A significant fact is the way in which the question of madness has evolved in penal practice" (*DP*, p. 19). The genealogist moves over the surface of events laterally as well as successively. This is in keeping with the Nietzschean value of the "deed" and of the ubiquity, complexity, and anonymity of power which Foucault repeatedly images in terms of webs, relays, and networks. He is never so happy as when he can present a previously unnoticed "entanglement."

The depersonalization of the figure of the genealogist which Foucault attempts goes hand in hand with the refusal of metaphysical groundings. It also reflects Foucault's clinamen away from one aspect of Nietzsche: that apocalyptic redemptive stress placed on the genealogist as the midwife of the perfect man, as the surety of the future. It is the heroic artistic individual become Zarathustra upon whom Nietzsche rests all his joy and work. The *amor fati* of the heroic man in his solitude, the genealogist in his descent into the "library," returning as guarantor of the future, who can say "yes" to the eternal return of the same—it is this which is absent from Foucault. In its place, he offers a research strategy, a point of view on the history of the modern soul (*DP*, p. 23). The problem is to adopt a strategy not already metaphysical, i.e., not itself produced by the disciplinary society Nietzsche and Foucault both probe: "By studying only the general social forms, as Durkheim did . . . one runs the risk of positing as the principle of greater leniency in punishment processes of individualization that are rather one of the effects of the new tactics of power. . . ." (*DP*, p. 23). Does Foucault refuse the sublime figure of the genealogist in Nietzsche because, as a result of an admittedly complex process of psychological, stylistic struggle, it is itself one of the "products" of the disciplinary society's individualization? Is Nietzsche the figure behind Durkheim here? In any case, Foucault presents a strategy of mapping rather than a heroic struggle as his approach to understanding power: "I simply intend to map on a series of examples some of the essential techniques that most easily spread from one (disciplinary institution) to another. These were always meticulous, often minute, techniques, but they had their importance: because they defined a certain mode of

detailed political investment of the body, a 'new micro-physics' of power. . ." (*DP*, p. 139).

Like Nietzsche and Foucault, and unlike all historians of ideas, Said insists on the materiality of the power of representation; there is nothing "so innocent as an 'idea' of the Orient." Also like Foucault, Said insists on the importance of a point of view on his material which allows the familiar to be seen in a new way: "my hybrid perspective is broadly historical and 'anthropological,' given that I believe all texts to be worldly and circumstantial in (of course) ways that vary from genre to genre, and from historical period to historical period." Yet, Said goes on to say that, unlike Foucault, and largely for empirical reasons, he does "believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism" (*O*, p. 23).

Said's reversal of Foucault on this point is, rather obviously, more than a merely empirical matter. Said's sympathy with Gramsci leads him to quote significantly from *Prison Notebooks* at precisely the moment when he articulates the unavoidable subject of the "personal dimension" of his project: "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory . . . therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory'" (*O*, p. 25). Said is explaining his own stake in doing an inventory of the disciplines which have done much to shape him as an Arab in the West as well as, of course, the West and the Middle-East themselves.

As the quotation from Gramsci makes clear, Said does not reactivate the subject to extend the Nietzschean figure of the perfect man as an apocalyptic or redemptive device. Nor is he reestablishing some metaphysics Foucault hopes to avoid. Rather, by producing an inventory of Orientalism he is cataloguing the history of the humanistic Western intellectual and demystifying its idealistic tendencies. More: he is also demonstrating that the skills of the literary intellectual can be adopted to a confrontation with the worldliness of texts as systems of representation. *Orientalism* is an inventory of how the Western intellectual has come to be in the service of the hegemonic culture and an example of an alternative role. One need only see (*O*, p. 273) how useful T. S. Eliot's notion of tradition and the individual talent and I. A. Richards' metaphor of balanced compasses can be in explaining the role of the intellectual in relation to his discipline to understand Said's stress on the determining influence of the subject. For to the degree that *Orientalism* successfully disseminates a new practice for the literary intellectual Said himself will become such a determining influence on Modern humanistic studies. Of course, such an interpretation suggests that Said's image of the intellectual is not so distant from the heroic Nietzschean figure of the genealogist. For

it is Said's attempt to re-legitimize humanistic intellectuals in the contemporary world which most reminds one of the self-exiled, isolated Nietzsche. Interestingly, both are renegades from a discipline they try to redeem by transcending. Both employ the philological and critical techniques of their own disciplines combined with essential borrowings from related fields to organize an oppositional figure of the intellectual in the West.

Yet, the differences between Nietzsche's and Said's version of this figure are important. While it is crucial, of course, that unlike Nietzsche, but like Foucault, Said remains a member in good standing of his profession—no matter how unappreciatively in certain quarters—perhaps the chief difference between them for my purposes is a discursive one. While Nietzsche's catachretical style and philosophy always turns away from the proximate and authorized figures of his discipline and culture, Said readily adapts them to his own ends. This is an important point and one related to Foucault's stylistic experiments. It becomes an issue precisely because Said makes so telling a case for the need of literary critics to become oppositional rather than remain mandarin figures. Moreover, it becomes a problem because Said makes such a brilliant and powerful case against Orientalism as it existed until quite recently.

The question is a simple one: how complete an oppositional practice does Said represent when he employs the central metaphor of Modern criticism to demystify Orientalism *without*, at the same time, destroying those devices he employs? Are these devices not themselves part of, supports for, the general bankruptcy and nihilism of the West captured so brilliantly by Said? I do not believe this is a point which can be dismissed as jesuitical or refined away by broader "political" considerations. For as Nietzsche makes all too clear, ascetic nihilism constantly extends its hegemony under the guise of respectability, of morality.

Put differently, the question is this: can *Orientalism* be a seriously oppositional text when many of the major devices it unquestioningly employs belong to one of the essential ideological instruments of the hegemonic culture under question? Is this not to reestablish that culture by extending its techniques, its "cultural-psychological" map, as it were? I pose these questions *not* to deny the significance and, at times, the beauty of *Orientalism*, but to confront an inescapable methodological problem and choice: how obliged is the critic to be subversive, or ironical, about the weaponry which makes his project possible? Is it not true that the paradoxically conservative nature of Said's project emerges not in his admiration of Auerbach (*O*, pp. 258-9), but in his attempt to redeem the critical intellectual discipline from the mandarins of refinement by putting to use some of their central tools:¹⁸

Within this field, which no single scholar can create but

which each scholar receives and in which he then finds a place for himself, the individual researcher makes his contribution. . . . Thus each individual contribution first causes changes within the field and then promotes a new stability, in the way that on a surface covered with twenty compasses the introduction of a twenty-first will cause all the others to quiver, then to settle into a new accommodating configuration. (*O*, p. 273)

Said here is arguing that there can be no true representation of anything and that, consequently, discursive fields are formed by this type of unsettling and accommodation.

This is, of course, self-reflexive, i.e., in criticism and Orientalism, Said is like the twenty-first compass. But there is a special type of double irony here too, for the oppositional critic makes a seemingly anti-hegemonic point by utilizing two of the most powerful tropes of two of the most hegemonic figures—Eliot and Richards—and concludes, in so doing, that all disruptions of the unified discursive field can be “accommodated.” In the figure, the critic marks the limits and possibilities of the oppositional intellectual loyal to the procedures of his discipline. It is significant that in this most powerful of revisionist texts, the inability to mark a more than incremental distance, a true difference from the dynastic becomes clear. Said’s text reveals the need and difficulty of thinking through how we are all organized—authorized and molested, as he might put it—by the history of our being, by our “inventory”—especially if we hope to emulate Said in attempting critical projects to reorganize the power structures of our culture.

Some reviewers of *Orientalism* have suggested too simplistically that Said does to Orientalism what Orientalists do to the “Orient,” that is, produce an undifferentiated “object” about which one can unjustifiably generalize.¹⁹ It seems to me that this is an unfair charge as long as it does not recognize two things: the consistency of Orientalism as a discipline and the cultural/epistemological difficulties I have just described. For employing the techniques of criticism against an adjacent discourse, Orientalism, (indeed, they are at times the same!), will reveal precisely the family resemblance these reviews object to. But it is not a resemblance which can be effaced, only qualified, twisted, parodied.

One understands, of course, why Said cannot accept the Nietzschean injunction that comedy is the only enemy of nihilism. The immediate pressures of our historical reality suggest that such comedy is itself mandarin self-indulgence. Said turns the weapons of the West against its own machinery for self-representation and exposes a good deal of the ugliness masked by that machinery. He engages in open warfare for high stakes and is seemingly successful. Yet, one must wonder if *Orientalism* does not generate a degree of contempt for Western man’s sexually driven

need to subjugate the "Other" in the form of the "Orient" and if this contempt does not mark another entanglement of Orientalism with nihilism. "All science," to quote Nietzsche again, "has at present the object of dissuading man from his former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit" (*GM*, pp. 155-56). Not only does Said make clear that the West's self-representation is such a bizarre conceit, but *Orientalism* suggests, in its successes and failures, that the figure of the oppositional critic may be as well. In other words, we arrive at the parodic moment of Nietzschean comedy in any case. Nietzsche would, one must presume, laugh with relief at having escaped the hidden dangers of such an oppositional figure which would assassinate him by drawing him treacherously into the ubiquitous web of a Western tradition of nihilism.

Nietzsche saw fit to end *On the Genealogy of Morals* by repeating his insight that science is nihilistic because it destroys humanity. He was briefly repeating his warning regarding the seductive illusions dangerously buried in intellectual activity. Foucault and Said have been sensitive to the same possibilities and dangers as Nietzsche and in the complex judgments which must be made of their work we see that they are his true heirs. For in the genealogies of all of these intellectuals, life wrestles with and against death. In their various commitments to man and science, one sees the truth of Nietzsche's fundamental paradox: "the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the *preservation of life*" (*GM*, p. 120).

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NOTES

- 1 See, for example, Paul De Man, "Genesis and Genealogy in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*," *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 79-102; Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 139-64; Edward W. Said, *Beginnings* (N. Y.: Basic Books, 1976), 158 f; Jacques Derrida, "Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology," *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), 154-68.
- 2 "Monsieur Texte: On Jacques Derrida, His *Glas*," *Georgia Review*, 29 (1975), 759-97, and *Saving the Text* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 1-32.
- 3 *The Concept of Irony*, trans. Lee M. Capel (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1965), p. 265.
- 4 See Paul A. Bové, *Destructive Poetics* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1980), 93-130.
- 5 *Writing and Difference*, p. 292.
- 6 *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (N. Y.: New Directions, 1979), 58-60, hereafter cited by page number in my text.

- 7 On this, see, of course, Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (N. Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973) and Bové, *Destructive Poetics*, pp. 7-31.
- 8 See *Selected Writings of Walter Pater*, ed. Harold Bloom (N. Y.: Signet Books, 1974), p. 135.
- 9 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufman (N. Y.: Vintage Books, 1969), hereafter cited as *GM*; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (N. Y.: Pantheon Books, 1977), hereafter cited as *DP*; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (N. Y.: Pantheon Books, 1978), hereafter cited as *O*.
- 10 *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, trans. anon. (N. Y.: International Publishers, 1975), p. 15.
- 11 It is true that in the later writings, the "saint" is demoted from this trinity.
- 12 See Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" and Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 131-32, 203-04, 337, 343.
- 13 See, as one example, David B. Allison, ed. *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation* (N. Y.: Delta Books, 1977). Note also Derrida's central role in this new "style" of interpretation: Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979).
- 14 See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Krell (N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1979), esp. pp. 3-6 and 59-66.
- 15 This is, of course, an effective transformation of the Kantian model as well.
- 16 "Foreword to the English Edition," trans. anon. (N. Y.: Vintage, 1973), pp. xviii-xiv.
- 17 Said, "The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions," *Crit. Inq.*, 4 (1978), 673-714; White, "Michel Foucault," *Structuralism and Since*, ed. John Sturrock (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 81-115; Arac, "The Function of Foucault at the Present Time," *Humanities in Society*, 3 (1980), 73-86; Sprinker, "The Use and Abuse of Foucault," *Humanities in Society*, 3 (1980), 1-22.
- 18 For Said's articulation of precisely this project, see "Reflections on Recent American 'Left' Literary Criticism," *boundary 2*, 8 (1979), 11-30.
- 19 See Daniel O'Hara, "The Romance of Interpretation," *boundary 2*, 8 (1980), 259-84 for a discussion of this and other questionable charges made against *Orientalism* by its initial reviewers.