The Body as Social Discourse: A Phenomenological Response to the Social Ontology of Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas

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The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something — because it is always before one's eyes.)
— Ludwig Wittgenstein

Just as there is sleepwalking, there is also sleepthinking.
— José Ortega y Gasset

If we keep on speaking the same language together, we're going to reproduce the same history.
— Luce Iragaray

I. Prologue

This essay addresses the problematic of the body's marginality in contemporary social philosophy. It is inspired by and responds to the two most commanding figures in, as well as the bellwethers of, social philosophy today — Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas — who, while busy in building their philosophical architectonics, fail to recognize and come to grips with the phenomenology of the lived body as the material anchorage of the social world and thus the very fundamental idea of sociality first and foremost as *intercorporeal*. This is most unfortunate with Foucault because despite his life-long preoccupation with the archaeology and genealogy of the body politic (bio-politics) in the most general sense of the term — the medical, incarcerated, and sexual body — he ironically fails to understand the body as active being in the world (i.e., embodiment) which is a gaping conceptual lacuna in his social ontology.(1) As for Habermas, on the other

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(1) See particularly *The Birth of the Clinic*: *An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973); *Madness and Civilization*: *A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). For critical accounts of Foucault's body politic, see particularly Nancy Fraser, "Foucault's Body-Language: A Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric?," *Salmagundi*, No. 61 (1983): 55-70; Judith Butler,

hand, he champions himself as the philosopher of undistorted dialogue and communication who is even willing to reappropriate Husserl's radical phenomenology of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*).[2] Yet he too is ignorant of not only the possibility of intercorporeal communication but also the lived body as the presupposed foundation of all communicative action. This essay, therefore, is a phenomenological response to Foucault's and Habermas's social ontology showing that the body itself *is* social discourse. In other words, it attempts to *show* that the phenomenology of the lived body is the irrefutable precondition for any social ontology whatsoever.

II. Foucault's and Habermas's Critique of Phenomenology

Both Foucault and Habermas allege phenomenology to be a subject-centered philosophy. In the early Foucault, however, there were the influence of Heidegger's *Dasein*-analytics (existential ontology) by way of Ludwig Binswanger and an affinity to Merleau-Ponty when he explored the "birth of the clinic" as "an archaeology of medial perception."[3] Above all, both Husserl and Foucault were relentless *archaeologists*: the one conceived of phenomenology itself as the archaeology of meaning,[4] while

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"Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86 (1989): 601-607; and Ladelle McWhorter, "Culture or Nature? The Function of the Term 'Body' in the Work of Michel Foucault," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86 (1989): 608-614. George Stauth and Bryan S. Turner contend that "Foucault did not appear to have any genuine appreciation of the lived body within the tradition of modern phenomenology.... Foucault did not develop an explicit theory of embodiment." See *Nietzsche's Dance* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 191.

(2) For our analysis here, see particularly *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); Vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); and *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983).

(3) Donald M. Lowe's *History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) is an attempt to integrate Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and Foucault's epistemic paradigm.

(4) It is interesting to note that Dorion Cairns, who was one of the first American students of Husserl, reported about Husserl as having said that "My work is not that of building but of digging, of digging in that which is most obscure and of uncovering problems that have not been seen or if seen have not been solved." See "My Own Life," in *Phenomenology : Continuation and Criticism*, ed. Fred Kersten and Richard Zaner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 10.

the other is an archaeologist of the body politic. In confluence with the French structuralism of Claude Lèvi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, and Louis Althusser, however, Foucault decisively rejected the notion of the human subject. While in *The Savage Mind,* which is a polemic against Jean-Paul Sartre, Lèvi-Strauss enunciated the "dissolution of man,"(5) Foucault wrote the following requiem in the concluding sentence of *The Order of Things*: "Man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."(6) It is in his introductory remarks to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that we find the sharpest reaction to subjectivity which could be construed narrowly as phenomenological or broadly as post-Cartesian:

> If the history of thought could remain the locus of uninterrupted continuities, if it could endlessly forge connexions that no analysis could undo without abstraction, if it could weave, around everything that men say and do, obscure synthesis that anticipate for him, prepare him, and lead him endlessly towards his future, it would provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness. Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject — in the form of historical consciousness — will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalization and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness.(7)

The question of ethics — the ethics of the body politic — has preoccupied Foucault throughout the different stages of his thought. Ethics and politics are for him inseparable. In his early major work, *The Order of Things,* he asserted that "[the] knowledge of man, unlike the sciences of nature, is always linked, even its vaguest form, to ethics or politics."(8) In his 1983 interview in Berkeley he reiterated his interest in "politics as an

(5) Claude Lèvi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* trans. George Weidenfeld (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

(6) Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 387.

(7) Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 12.

(8) *The Order of Things,* p. 328.

ethics"[9] which is, broadly speaking, the ethics of power or power relations. "A society without power relations," Foucault declares, "can only be an abstraction."[10] In his social ontology, power is ubiquitous: it may be said to be the lynchpin of all social relations in connecting everything to everything else. It is embedded in all human events and institutions, not just in what has traditionally been called "government," the "state," or "political institutions." From beginning to end, the thematics of power, of the body politic, have been the *leitmotif* of Foucault's investigation of differing topics. By its ubiquity, power attains an ontological status, as it were, in his thought. It is everywhere and comes from everywhere: it is "always already" in the body politic whether it be the clinic, the prison, the asylum, the school, the church, or the family. The most seminal insight of Foucault is the idea that power or the body politic exists as relations, and this relational mode of investigating power is called by him the *analytics of power.* For power is regarded not as a static substance (*res*) in the Cartesian tradition, but as an ensemble of dynamic relations. Foucault writes:

> Power in the substantive sense, *"le" pouvoir,* doesn't exist. What I mean is this. The idea that there is either located at — or emanating from — a given point something which is a "power" seems to me to be based on a misguided analysis, one which at all events fails to account for a considerable number of phenomena. In reality power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations.[11]

Furthermore, Foucault injected into his interpretive analytics of power and the body politic the idea of "free subjects" and "new forms of subjectivity." This retrieval of the subject or the habilitation of the "new subject" makes his legacy with phenomenology rather tenuous, perhaps more enhancing, and all the more ambivalent. We would be remiss if we failed to notice his 1982 discussion of "The Subject of Power" that attempts to go "beyond structuralism" — the structuralism that dissolves "man" as

(9) Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 375.

(10) Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 222-223.

(11) Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977,* ed. Colin Gordon and trans. Colin Gordon *et al.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 198.

subject. He now attempts to habilitate subjectivity in his analytics of power whose "crash diet" program is linked to freedom as well. As he declares:

> ... [the] political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries. When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men — in the broadest sense of the term — one includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains.(12)

While Foucault's thought may be said to be jesterly and discontinuous by excavating whenever possible the derailment of reason in modernity as "the age of reason," Habermas's theory is priestly and continuous by defending staunchly the tradition of reason, of the Enlightenment. Habermas too comes to repudiate phenomenology as a "philosophy of consciousness" (*Bewusstseinsphilosophie*) particularly in his latest works.(13) In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* Habermas defends modernity as "an unfinished project." It is indeed a sweeping condemnation of the "postmodern" thought particularly of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida for subverting the cherished tradition of modern rationality in the West.(14) Be that as it may, Habermas quickly dismisses — even with the

(12) "Afterword: The Subject and Power," pp. 216 and 212.

(13) Frederick A. Olafson recently observes that in *The Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas fails to anchor intersubjectivity in a philosophical concept of the human subject. See "Habermas as a Philosopher," *Ethics,* 100 (1990): 641-657. Karl Jaspers, who influenced Habermas, develops his philosophy of communication without sacrificing the concept of the human subject. See *Philosophy,* Vol. 2, trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), Chap. 3, pp. 47-103. For Habermas's own discussion of Jaspers, see *Philosophical-Political Profiles,* trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), "Karl Jaspers: The Figures of Truth (1958)," pp. 45-52.

(14) For a critical account of Habermas's work, see John Rajchman, "Habermas's Complaint," *New German Critique,* No. 45 (1988): 163-191 which highlights the conflict between Habermas and Foucault.

unkosher aid of Foucault — the allegedly "dichotomizing," "subjectivist" predicament of phenomenology:

> *History* is projected and made by subjects who find themselves in turn already projected and made in the historical process (Sartre); *society* appears to be an objective network of relations that is either set, as a normative order, above the heads of subjects with their transcendentally prior mutual understandings (Alfred Schutz) or is generated by objectifications (Kojève); the subject either finds itself centered in its *body* (Merleau-Ponty) or is related eccentrically to itself, regarding its body as an object (Plessner). Thought that is tied to the philosophy of the subject cannot bridge over these dichotomies but, as Foucault so acutely diagnosed, oscillates helplessly between one and the other pole.(15)

Furthermore, *The Theory of Communicative Action,* which is thus far his most ambitious and systemic work, is an eclectically interwoven maze of ideas which are indebted to such past sociological giants as Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, George Herbert Mead, and Talcott Parsons. It is — in the concise words of his most seasoned and astute interpreter and translator Thomas McCarthy — "the *determinate* negation of subject-centered reason by reason understood as *communicative* action."(16) It is true that the "solipsism" of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology reaches a dead end in justifying the rationale of social ontology. Alfred Schutz, who impressed Husserl in integrating phenomenology with Weber's sociology and recognized the seminal mind of Mead, acknowledged long ago the limits of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and searched the roots of social ontology in the phenomenology of the life-world as "social reality."(17) Curiously, however, Habermas minimizes the professed goal of Husserl's phenomenology of the life-world as the defense of Western rationality and its incomparable contribution to the critique of scientism as the "decapitation" of philosophical reason. In the end, Habermas skates on thin intellectual ice. In his urge to systematize and universalize the "enlightened" project of modernity, he sacrifices the life-worldly concreteness for the formalized structures of system-construction. With Habermas's *The Theory of Communicative Action,* phenomenology's monopoly on the life-

(15) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 317.

(16) "Introduction," *ibid.*, p. vii.

(17) See Helmut R. Wagner, "Toward an Anthropology of the Life-World: Alfred Schutz's Quest for the Ontological Justification of the Phenomenological Undertaking," *Human Studies,* 6 (1983): 239-246 and "The Limitations of Phenomenology: Alfred Schutz's Critical Dialogue with Edmund Husserl," *Husserl Studies,* 1 (1984): 179-199.

world — good or bad — comes to an end. It comes as no surprise that Habermas is totally blind to the body as the living mediation between the self and the other and deprives the social of its source perchance because the body is seen by him as the negation of the mind as reason.

III. The Body as Social Discourse

Both Foucault and Habermas, as has already been stressed, are ignorant of the body as the living mediation between the self and the other. In the earlier years, Foucault was preoccupied with the refutation of subjectivity; in the later years, his "crash diet" program for a new subjectivity that is compatible with freedom (and power) was too late for the discovery of the body as active, material subject in the world. As he has been an unswerving defender of the mind as reason, Habermas has been totally oblivious to the importance of the body in communicative action. In the end, to be oblivious to the body as active being in the world is to cut off the umbilical cord, as it were, to the social world.(18) While both champion the body politic and dialogue respectively, they are ironically unaware of intercorporeal communication or intersubjectivity as intercorporeal. Dialogue, communication, or intersubjectivity is sapless, if not petrifying, without its roots in the body as active agent. We are reminded here of Henrik Ibsen's play *The Master Builder,* whose main plot is the story of a man who, having dreamt of building a church tower at a dizzy height, plunges into a ghastly, tragic death because he has built too tall a house on too shallow a foundation. Without the body as active agent as their foundation, the construction of the towering theories of society such as Foucault's analytics of power and Habermas's theory of communicative action would be doomed to the same fate. There is, however, a way of constructing social ontology which is not subject-centered but has a place for the *subject as relational.*

1.

The body is not only the material condition of the soul's existence but

(18) John O'Neill, who is the phenomenologist of the lived body par excellence, points out correctly that Habermas's theory of communicative action neglects the phenomenological insights of Merleau-Ponty. See *The Communicative Body* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), p. 4.

also the window, as it were, through which we can peep into the inner condition of our soul. There is indeed an inexorable dialectic between human interiority and exteriority — a "double helix," so to speak. It was Descartes who charted the mistaken course of Western modernity in inventing the disembodied *Cogito* by splitting the world into two segregated classes of substance: *res cogitans* (mind) and *res extensae* (body), reason and emotion, man and woman, man (woman) and nature, and so on. Philosophical certainty for Descartes lodges in the *Cogito* or the mind as a "thinking substance." The problem of the (Cartesian) *Cogito* or the mind as the basis of explaining sociality is at least threefold. First, the *Cogito* is inherently egocentric because it is always and necessarily *ego cogito* (the "I think") — the epitome of an "inner man" in isolation from others. Second, to say that the mind is a thinking substance (*res*) is to say that it needs nothing more than itself to exist, that is, it is in no need of the body. Once the self and the other are viewed as two separate substances, egocentrism or even solipsism is *inevitable*. Third and most importantly, sociality is not merely the meeting of minds, disembodied minds alone but is first and foremost intercorporeal. For there is no "invisible man" (or woman); insofar as a person is his/her body, he/she is visible. As the body is the initial insertion of the self into the world of others, other bodies, intersubjectivity is always and already intercorporeal. And it cannot be otherwise. Thus Erwin S. Straus argues for the "privileged status" of the body for the existential condition of man (woman) as being in the world of other people and other things. The body is directly related to other bodies. The mind, however, is related to one body only. It is not directly related to the world, other bodies, or other minds.[19] By virtue of the body, it may be said that human existence is the fulguration of coexistence. The claim that the body is the presupposed foundation of human coexistence and of everything that is associated with it, it must be stressed, is a negation of neigher rationality nor philosophy. To pun: the body (*soma*) is not the death (*sema*) of the mind. The idea of embodiment only destroys the facile and false dualism of the mental (*res cogitans*) and the physical (*res extensae*) and overcomes physical substantialism that regards the body as substance (*res*). In it rationality stands no longer on its head but rather on its feet.

(19) *Phenomenological Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 211.

2.

Gabriel Marcel, who influenced Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the lived body (*corps propre*), is irrefutable when he affirms the body as "being" in contradistinction to the body as "having" and asserts that "the problem of the reality of the body is shown to be the central problem [of human existence] and upon its solution everything else depends."(20) I *am* my body prior to everything else because to be anything else I first have to make use of my body. The corporeal landscape is the presupposed foundation of all conceptual geography. This is what Merleau-Ponty means by the *primacy* of perception: *perception precedes conception.* Thus it must be pointed out that the Cartesian, rationalist definition of "conception" as categorial abstraction in isolation from the body does not even do justice to its own etymology because the verb "to conceive" is, interestingly, associated with "fertility" (or fecundity) of the body in thinking with language. Etymologically, therefore, reason as con/ception is not only associative but also a markedly feminine category. Ironically, it is "conception" rather than "perception" that has a close affinity with the body, with the language of the body. "The human organism," Elizabeth Sewell declares, "thinks as a whole, and our division of it into mind and body is the result of overemphasis on logic and intellect in near isolation which has led us into so one-sided a view of the activity of thought, so gross an underestimation of the body's forms of thought and knowledge."(21)

(20) *Metaphysical Journal,* trans. Bernard Wall (London: Rockliff, 1952), p. 126. For phenomenological discussions of the lived body, see Richard M. Zaner, *The Problem of Embodiment* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964) and Samuel Todes, *The Human Body as Material Subject of the World* (New York: Garland, 1990).

(21) *The Orphic Voice* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 35-36. Joyce Carol Oates exemplifies the performance of boxing as social text (or carnal hermeneutics) when she writes eloquently: "Because a boxing match is a story without words, this doesn't mean that it has no text or no language, that it is somehow 'brute,' 'primitive,' 'inarticulate,' only that the text is improvised in action; the language of a dialogue between the boxers of the most refined sort (one might say, as much neurological as psychological: a dialogue of split-second reflexes) in a joint response to the mysterious will of the audience which is always that the fight be a worthy one so that the crude paraphernalia of the setting — ring, lights, ropes, stained canvas, the staring onlookers themselves — be erased, forgotten. (As in the theater or the church, settings are erased by way, ideally, of transcendent action.) Ringside announcers give to the wordless spectacle a narrative unity, yet boxing as performance is more clearly akin to dance or music than narrative." *On Boxing* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), p. 11.

In *What Is Called Thinking?,* most interestingly, Heidegger alludes to *embodied thinking.* By linking thinking with the hand, his hermeneutics is anti-ocularcentric, that is to say, it is anti-Cartesian. Heidegger likens thinking to handicraft. The hand signifies the humanity of man (woman) — its abysmal essence, its sociability, its speaking, its thinking. In Heidegger's view, thinking, speaking, and the hand which is always moving while being still, form a filial union. The hand *is* "the piety of thinking." As the hand is tactile, so are thinking and speaking and, above all, doing. Language, body, and thought are not dissociated with one another. There is no subordination of speaking to thinking, either. Only disembodied thought would subordinate the body to thinking where thinking of speaking comes before actually speaking, i.e., the wrongheadedness of "metaphysical" thought.(22) As we walk on two legs, so do we also speak and think with both hands. The "thinking hand" or thinking as a handicraft, of which Heidegger speaks, confers upon us the work of the hand as embodied conduct. As such, the hand is not just an "extension" of the body but is the body incorporated. The hand *is* the lived body; it is an organized "corporation."

For Descartes, on the other hand, thinking is a weighty matter of ideas — "clear and distinct ideas" at that. Philosophy itself as *methesis universalis* is thoroughly compatible with a visual metaphysics. For him, clarity means that objects are present to the mind's eye without mistakes. The idea of distinction simply enhances the notion of clarity in that to be distinct an object must be precise and different from other objects, that is, it contains nothing but what is clear in itself, i.e., distinction is a function of clarity. Therefore, Cartesian metaphysics based on the *Cogito* is identifiable with, and epitomizes, the aristocracy of vision or sight as unambiguous. As a matter of fact, visual metaphysics goes hand in hand with the egocentrism of the *Cogito,* because unlike the other forms of the human sensorium (e.g., hearing), vision is not only isolating or distancing but also anaesthetic in denying the sociability of the senses. There is a fundamental narcissism and social amnesia in all vision. Sound tends to social-

(22) Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?,* trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 16-17. See the author's "Martin Heidegger and the Homecoming of Oral Poetry," *Philosophy Today,* 26 (1982): 148-170 and cf. Martin Jay, "The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," in *The Rhetoric of Interpretation and the Interpretation of Rhetoric,* ed. Paul Hernadi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), pp. 55-74.

ize, unify, and synthesize, whereas sight tends to isolate, divide, and analyze. In other words, there is an identity or isomorphism between the "eye" and the "I". As vision demotes the other senses, so does the *Cogito* as visual thinking "overlook" and "theorize" away the other person. Heidegger maintains that the "I" (or the "eye") of the *Cogito* as thinking sub/stance becomes the center of thought from which the "I-viewpoint" and the subjectivism of modern thought originate. In this Cartesian proposition, the one who posits and thinks is the "I": "the subjectivity of the subject is determined by the 'I-ness' (*Ichheit*) of the 'I think'."(23) For Heidegger, in other words, the "I-viewpoint" of the Cartesian *Cogito* coincides with the modern age as "the age of the world picture" (*Weltbild*). Visual metaphysics and subjectivism are one and the same process, which constitute the problematic of modern epistemology in relation to the human sciences whose epicenter is the concept of sociality.

In this connection, Jeremy Bentham's meticulous, architectural plan in the last quarter of the eighteenth century for the Panopticon or the Inspection House should not be overlooked. For it is a Cartesian plot. Because the Panopticon is literally the prison-house of visualism, it catches Foucault's attention in his discourse on the incarcerated or imprisoned body. Prisoners in the Panopticon who are in perpetual solitude in the "islands" of cells protractedly partitioned by impregnable walls may be likened to the solitary confinement of the *Cogito* or epistemological subject as bodiless substance. Moreover, the Panopticon epitomizes the inextricable link between visualism and the iron-clad *network* of what Foucault calls "disciplinary technoligies."(24) It is, as the term itself implies, the all-encircling prison-house of visualism whose surveillance mechanism or "discipline principle" puts to use the Cartesian oracle of *clarity* and *certainty*: it is the interlocking of the life in perpetual solitude of the "hypnotized" and incarcerated prisoner and the mechanism of total control. Inspection *is* control. In the very words of Bentham himself: "Solitude thus applied, especially if accompanied with darkness and low diet, is torture in effect, without being obnoxious to the name."(25) The grand design of the

(23) Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), especially "The Age of the World Picture," pp. 115-154.

(24) See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-228.

(25) *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 11 vols., reprinted from the Bowering Edition of 1838-1843 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 4: 74.

Cartesian *Cogito* intends to make philosophy or the *prima philosophia* a peculiarly panoptic institution. Indeed, Cartesianism is the panopticism par excellence in which absolute knowledge or knowledge with absolute certainty is a private possession *of* and *by* vision. Indeed, knowing as visual produces the physics of power and makes "man" the "master and possessor of nature."

The *keyword* of the Panopticon principle is *inspection* — the double idea of perpetual vision and vigilance in which the prisoner is never out of the inspector's sight. The idea of inspection is regarded as control by the omnipotent vigilance of "seeing without being seen." To put it slightly differently, the inspector who controls has "the unbounded faculty [and physical facility] of seeing without being seen" and the prisoner is "awed to silence by an invisible eye."(26) Without doubt there is in the Panopticon the dialectical welding of visibility and invisibility, for, as Foucault puts it, it is "a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen."(27) Moreover, panopticism is a network of the spectacular manifestation of discipline as the coercive exercise of power in which "the vigilance of intersecting gazes was soon to render useless both the eagle and the sun."(28) In essence, visibility is a technocratic "trap," whereas invisibility is "a guarantee of order." The seeing inspector and the seen prisoner form a dialectical grid; one cannot function without the other. As an interplay of the force of light and the force of darkness, the invisible eye of the inspector is the visible "I" of the prisoner. The "opticized" prisoner in the Panopticon is a passive and powerless onlooker who is the desubjectivized object of towering observation. In sum, Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural parable of modern man (woman) as the passive "functionary" of the technocratic network. It is also a reminder that we are prisoners of our own *making*. In its brightest moment, the Enlightenment whose tradition Habermas avowedly cherishes and purports to preserve is at best a Pyrrhic victory because, as Foucault points out, it invented the disenchanting system of discipline while discovering the brilliant principle of liberty.(29)

(26) See *ibid.*, pp. 44, 80, and 79, respectively.

(27) *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 201-202.

(28) *Ibid.*, p. 217.

(29) It is worth noting here that vision is typically a masculine sense while touch is typically a feminine sense. To feminize sensibility (and intelligence) is to accent the "feminine"

3.

Human society, which is necessarily embodied, is neither a collection of invisible minds nor a seriality of visible objects. The body is not an object among other objects in the world. Rather, it is an active subject, an agent: as I live my body, I *am* my body or I *exist* as my body. This idea of the lived body or the embodied self as relational rejects the Scylla of egocentricity on the one hand and the Charybdis of anonymity on the other. Both egocentricity and anonymity profoundly misunderstand the true nature of the social: they bring death to the social.(30) Merleau-Ponty contended that intersubjectivity is not a plurality of subjects who are held together by the heroims of the I and in which the Other is seen by the I as a pure negativity.(31) Thus the phenomenological genealogy of the social must reject as untenable both egocentricity and anonymity, that is, both "*I* own meaning" and "*no one* owns meaning." It must instead opt for the

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sense of touch and to decenter or de-panopticize the "masculine" sense of vision in our thinking. By so doing, we loosen up the global visual grip on, and bring the sense of intimacy to, the world — social, natural, and even technological. There are many feminine writers today who hold not only that women speak with a "different voice" but also that femininity is tied to the sense of touch more closely than to that of sight. Concerning the question of masculine vision and feminine touch, see Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine R. Grontkowski, "The Mind's Eye," in *Discovering Reality,* ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983), pp. 207-224. There are no feminine writers today who are more persuasive and eloquent than Luce Irigaray in defense of feminine touch against male vision. See "The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* Section IV, B, 'The Phenomenology of Eros,'" in *Face to Face with Levinas,* ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 231-256; *This Sex Which is Not One,* trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); and *Speculum of the Other Woman,* trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). See also Edith Wychogrod, "Doing Before Hearing: On the Primacy of Touch," in *Textes pour Emmanuel Lèvinas,* ed. Francois Laruelle (Paris: Jean-Michel, 1980), pp. 179-203. There is indeed a stark contrast between the voyeurism of the "mind's seeing" (eye or I) and the intimacy of the "body's touch" (hand or caress). Thus the sense of touch valorizes the feminine. Many contemporary feminists, therefore, contend that vision is a peculiarly phallocentric, patriarchical, matrophobic institution and the logic of voyeurism is uniquely a male logic.

(30) Jean Baudrillard argues that the "hyperconformity" of the silent majorities bring an end to the social. See *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities,* trans. Paul Foss, John Johnston, and Paul Patton (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).

(31) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures of the Dialectic,* trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 205.

middle principle that "*we* own meaning."[32] In the "we," the self and the other are active coproducers of meaning, value and action. Thusly conceived, the "we" *decenters* the (embodied) self. As dialogue is the interplay of speaking and answering (responding), speaking without the response is monologic. Thus the primacy of the response dictates the happening of a dialogue. Speaking of the internal dialogism of the word, the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin writes:

> every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates.... Primacy belongs to the response, as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other.[33]

The face epitomizes the social, and it embodies human presence or copresence as *proximity*. Sartre is brief but profound when he proclaims that "In human societies, faces rule."[34] By proximity, I mean the "neighborhood" in multiple forms of the I (ipseity) and the other (alterity) as equiprimordial in the shared field of time and space. It may be called the "paramount" relationship because it is the basic modus by which all other types of social relatonship are determined and understood.

Foucault's ethics of power and Habermas's theory of communicative action, however, lack an ethics of proximity or, as it were, an ethics with a human face. To put it more forcefully, there *cannot be any* ethics of proximity in them. It cannot be otherwise because their architectonic construction is allergic, albeit in differing degrees, to the subject, while the basic condition of proximity demands the *confirmation* of the self and the other as two *interdependent subjects* who are intercorporeally related.

The ethics of proximity as an embodied phenomenon is characteristic

(32) For a phenomeonology of the decentered subject, see Calvin O. Schrag, *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

(33) Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 280-282. For a dialogical philosophy of language, see also Hans Robert Jauss, *Question and Answer: Forms of Dialogic Understanding*, ed. and trans. Michael Hayes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

(34) *Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, Vol. 2: *Selected Prose*, ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka and trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 67.

uniquely of Emmanuel Levinas's phenomenology of the face (*visage*) which is an ethics of the I who is capable of *facing* (responding to) the other as "you." The face to face with the other may be called — following Levinas himself — an "interface." In Levinas's social ontology, which accents the primacy of the ethical, subjectivity is affirmed never for itself (i.e., never monologic or egocentric) but for another (*pour l'autre*) (i.e., dialogic or heterocentric). Subjectivity comes into being as "heteronomic": "It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I'."(35) Thus the notion of responsibility or answerability that coincides with the ethical or the ethics of proximity is, first and foremost, the confirmation of the I which is what Levinas calls the "meontological version of subjectivity," based on the face as its most basic modus. He writes, therefore, that responsibility is "the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity. For I describe subjectivity in ethical terms. Ethics, here, does not supplement a preceding existential base; the very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility."(36)

Now, for Levinas, the face epitomizes the ethics of proximity. It not only establishes the direct and immediate *contact* with the other but also is solicited by and gravitated to the other. The face to face is, Levinas tells us, "the primordial production of being on which all the possible collocations of the terms are found."(37) The face *is* indeed an ethic, a human ethic: "the epiphany of the face is ethical."(38) As the face speaks (in silence), speaks uniquely from and for each individual, it is an ethical discourse or text. By the same token, its *look* is not and cannot be determined by the objective color of an eye. In the final analysis, the face is an ethical hermeneutic of the body or the human as embodied.

Here Hannah Arendt's phenomenological structuration of human plurality based on what she calls "equality" and "distinction" is also instructive. She has developed a *public philosophy* with a focus on the *specificity of power* as political which influenced the development of the communicative

(35) Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, p. 27.

(36) Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1982), p. 95.

(37) Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 395.

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 199.

ethics of Habermas who calls it "the communications concept of power."(39) While sharing a similar focus on the concept of power, the question of the human subject is what puts Foucault and Arendt a world apart. Arendt offers an answer to Foucault's enigmatic question on the subject of power: the primary subject of power *is* the human, moral subject. Her definition of action and power based on the conception of human plurality provides us with the midworld between individualizing and totalizing tendencies without abandoning the human, moral subject. For Arendt, the faculty of action alone — not the faculties of labor and work — makes man (woman) a political animal. Human plurality is the existential and ethical condition of both power and action. Above all, it is an association (*koinonia*) of equals as humans who are all capable of acting. Foremost, however, it is an association of subjects — that is, in Arendt's language, "distinct and unique persons."

However, Arendt's defense of the human, moral subject in the context of human plurality and politics as polyvocal and polyvalent is not a subjectivist one. For action and isolation are antithetical or mutually exclusive terms. For Arendt, power is human potential "to act in concert" (for the common good) and as such it is impossible in isolation. Thus power is not something in the possession of an individual, a group of individuals, or an organization. True to the existential and phenomenological tradition, on the other hand, Arendt's unwavering defense of the human, moral subject, as is linked to the civility of power, is directed against the undesirable political consequences of the anonymous, faceless One (*das Man*), of "ochlocracy" — to use her own phrase. The exemplar of this "anonymous One" is Adolf Eichmann — the paragon of "thoughtlessness" who appeared to be "terrifyingly normal." It is important to note that Arendt does not argue for the death penalty for Eichmann on the basis of the presence or absence of his *intention to kill*. Her argument against the "banality of evil" rests on the "desubjectivized" ethics of consequences, i.e., on the ethics of responsibility, rather than on the ethics of pure intentions. As Arendt argues, politics is not the nursery, because in it obedience and support are one and the same; and where *all* are deemed or held equally guilty, *nobody* is. For her, in brief, political ethics makes

(39) For Habermans's discussion on the subject of Arendt's theory of power, see *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, "Hannah Arendt; On the Concept of Power (1976)," pp. 171-187. The *magnum opus* of Arendt's political philosophy is *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

sense only when there is the human subject, the specific individual, who must be held responsible for the consequences of his (her) "thoughtless," yet violent crimes.(40)

Arendt's conception of power (and action) as human potential to act in concert for the common good includes, most importantly, the existential, Nietzschean idea of *initium* (the initiative) which signifies the human potential to embark on and inscribe something new at his (her) birth. Being political is metaphorically conceived of as "a second birth." I say "metaphorically" because birth, as the initial insertion of the (embodied) self into the world, is always already a *de facto,* if not *de jure,* political act. To be born and to act politically are two steps in the same act. What is so interesting about Arendt's discussion is the linkage between natality and (political) action. She writes that "Philosophically speaking, to act is the human answer to the condition of natality. Since we all come into the world by virtue of birth, as newcomers and beginnings, we are able to start something new; without the fact of birth we would not even know what novelty is, all 'action' would be either mere behavior or preservation."(41) For Arendt, natality, freedom, and action are the inalienable *birthrights* of men and women as human. Natality is the sacrosanct occasion for a distinct subject — each in his or her own distinct way — to embark on and inscribe something new or novel. By virtue of it, human existence is *invested as freedom.* Nor is politics a zero-sum game between power and freedom. The dialectical complicity of power and freedom tells us that freedom is not the "end of power," and power is not the "end of freedom."

Most significantly, we should not lose sight of *initium* as the human gift in consortium with others to transform rather than just to preserve. The direction of transformation, however, is not predetermined or preordained. In other words, the future course of human action is unpredictable or — as Arendt herself puts it — "incalculable." The reverse side of unpredictability is irreversibility. In terms of the human faculty, they are

(40) See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil,* rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1977). Cf. Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," *Social Research,* 38 (1971): 417-446.

(41) Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 179. Hans Jonas emphasizes the importance of Arendt's notion of natality because she introduced a new category into the philosophical doctrine of man (woman). See "Acting, Knowing, Thinking: Gleanings from Hannah Arendt's Philosophical Works," *Social Research,* 44 (1977): 30.

called the capacity of "promising" and "forgiving," respectively, which marks off human existence from animal life. Arendt goes out of her way to emphasize the "unequaled clarity" of Nietzsche on "the connection between human sovereignty and the faculty of making promises," whose relation to Nietzsche's "will to power" — and his genealogy of morals, I might add — is, according to Arendt, often overlooked by Nietzsche scholars.(42) Be that as it may, Arendt shows the indeterminacy of power as political action in terms of its etymological derivation from Greek, Latin, and German: *dynamis, potentia,* and *Macht.* The following passage from *The Human Condition* sums up the qualities and attributes of power as the essence of political action: "Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities."(43) This is the reason why Arendt's theory is — to use Habermas's characterization — the communications theory of power.

What is sadly missing from Foucault's account of power and lost in Habermas's formalized theory of communicative action is the idea of *initium* as freedom to transform peacefully or nonviolently old realities and create new ones by each subject in concert with others. Being "compatriotic" to power, Foucault's formulation of resistance is ironically — I say "ironically" because his analytics of power in form and tone is agonistic — too undialectional to function effectively as the agent of historical and social change. Without *initium,* resistance, any resistance, loses its critical punch. Foucault's formulation allows no genuine "ethics of ambiguity," that is, the *ambiguity* between power and resistance as truly dialectical or agonistic.(44)

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Speaking of the dialectional ambiguity of power and resistance, the most radical aspect of the body as social discourse (or carnal hermeneutics) is

(42) *The Human Condition,* p. 245, n. 83.

(43) *Ibid.*, p. 200.

(44) In comparing Foucault with Nietzsche, Stauth and Turner contend that "Nietzsche, unlike Foucault, presents a view of the body which is active, reactive and resistant rather than supine and incorporated" and that "For Nietzsche, the understanding of the importance of the body was fundamental to any understanding of resistance." *Nietzsche's Dance,* pp. 17 and 66.

carnival or *corpus ludens* because it serves as a nonviolent technique of social change which is consonant with Arendt's existential formulation of power and action as the civilized manifestation of human plurality.

Carnival is, for its Latin name sake, an incarnation of the festive body or the body at play (and display). It is the carnal politic par excellence which is a communal celebration of festive bodies whose space is filled always with the extravagant display of vestemes and gustemes. Carnival is a parley of people as *homo ludens* (players): it is a specular pageantry. The most distinguishing characteristic of carnival is that it means to be subversive or metamorphic from the ground up *and* intends to preserve and perpetuate intersubjectively shared dialogue at the same time. As a subversive technique, carnivalization breaks up the prosaic, if not oppressive, monopoly of the established hierarchy of power. The protocol that governs the language, mood, and demeanor of carnival as subversive celebration is best described as the feasting of a Babylonian smorgasbord of the following adjectival qualities: festive, joyous, gleeful, colorful, carefree, transient, nonchalant, benign, mindless, unheady, comical ("fooling around"), humerous, laughing, rollicking, clowning, vertiginous, mimetic, uncouth, ungenteel, untidy, disorderly, illogical, anamolous, incongruous, oxymoronic ("off key"), masking, cunning, witty, uncanny, ironical, satirical (menippean), ludicrous, ridiculing, sardonic, vilifying, flippant, uncensoring, licentious, boisterous, opulent, bazaar-like, vestimentary, gluttonous ("pigging out"), flatulent, uninhibitive, braggardly, hyperbolic, basal, grotesque, erotic, dirty, scatological, caricatural, gargantuan, profane, blasphemous, sacrilegious, irreverent, anti-canonical, decomposing, dismantling, mischievous, extemporaneous, and much more. All in all, carnival — like the Latin *humor* — is thoroughly carnal. Moreover, according to the philosophic playwright Luigi Pirandello, the *principium* of humor lies in edifying "the feeling of the opposite" (*negativa*) in what we do and think. By splitting every affirmation into a negation, humor triggers and engenders the "spontaneous birth" (*ingegno*) of things.[45] To put it more politically, humor as *negativa* uncloaks, unmasks, or exposes the "dirty bottom" of the officialdom and established regime.

Carnival is the ludic form of subversion. It is playfully, that is, nonviolently subversive as it intends *both* to *destroy* a "real" world and to

(45) See Luigi Pirandello, *On Humor*, trans. Antonio Illiano and Daniel P. Testa (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 2.

construct a "possible" world at the same time: it indeed nonviolently deconstructs the world. Clowning dethrones the stable and established hierarchy of all kinds. What carnival intends to establish is a "reversible world." In the Bruegelian and Rabelaisian themes of carnival, to carnivalize the world is to dialogize it: in it carnivalization and dialogization go hand in hand. As a protest against the monologic "misrule" of the officialdom, carnivalesque life transgresses and transforms the *canonical* order of truth and the *official* order of reality: it reverses in essence the world from the priestly to the jesterly.(46) As Bakhtin writes, carnival life

> is past millennia's way of sensing the world as one great communal performance. This sense of the world, liberating one from fear, bringing one person maximally close to another (everything is drawn into the zone of free familiar contact), with its joy at change and its joyful relativity, is opposed to that one-sided and gloomy official seriousness which is dogmatic and hostile to evolution and change, which seeks to absolutize a given condition of existence or a given social order. From precisely that sort of seriousness did the carnival sense of the world liberate man. But there is not a grain of nihilism in it, nor a grain of empty frivolity or vulgar bohemian individualism.(47)

Carnival is in brief a celebration of dialogue and community, of humanity's solidarity, it liberates people and brings them together and compels them to participate in communal living. It perpetuates the sense of dialogue, communication, and community whose contexts are without limit, that is to say, in it there is — to emulate the language of Bakhtin — neither a first word nor a last word.

Unlike revolution which is a violent form of subversion, however, carnival as dialogic is the playful body in revolt. In both intent and result, on the other hand, subversion by violence brings death to dialogue whose

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(46) Leszek Kolakowski writes that "The antagonism between a philosophy that perpetuates the absolute and a philosophy that questions accepted absolutes seems incurable.... This is the antagonism between the priest and the jester, and in almost every epoch the philosophy of the priest and the philosophy of the jester are the two most general forms of intellectual culture. The priest is the guardian of the absolute.... The jester's constant effort is to consider all the possible reasons for contradictory ideas. It is thus dialectical by nature — simply the attempt to change what is because it is. He is motivated not by a desire to be perverse but by distrust of a stabilized system." "The Priest and the Jester," in *Toward a Marxist Humanism*, trans. Jane Ziekonko Peel (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 33-34.

(47) Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 160.

epiphany is the other. For it there is no other alternative because it intends to exterminate the opposition. In *Adventures of the Dialectic,* Merleau-Ponty renounces revolutinary dialectics. He uncovers an insidious dilemma or contradiction inherent in the historical and political logic of revolution when he writes:

> Revolution become institution is already decadent if it believes itself to be accomplished... There is no dialectic without opposition or freedom, and in a revolution opposition and freedom do not last for long. It is no accident that all known revolutions have degenerated: it is because as established regimes they can never be what they were as movements; precisely because it succeeded and ended up as an institution, the historical movement is no longer itself: it "betrays" and "disfigures" itself in accomplishing itself. Revolutions are true as movements and false as regimes.(48)

The body in revolt, that is, nonviolence is not merely a reaction to violence, but it attempts to replace violence (revolution) by establishing itself as *the* alternative to the making of history in order to preserve and perpetuate intersubjectively shared dialogue *for* and *in* humanity whose short name is civility. Thus carnival's nonviolence decisively takes the side of Albert Camus's "rebel" or man (woman) in revolt who renunciates calculated violence and eventually the oppressive and totalitarian outcome of dialectical violence that ends opposition and freedom. For rebellion is a "protest against death" as well as against tyranny, brutality, terror, and servitude. Camus writes:

> Dialogue on the level of mankind is less costly than the gospel preached by totalitarian regimes in the form of monologue dictated from the top of a lonely mountain. On the stage as in reality, the monologue precedes death. Every rebel, solely by the movement that sets him in opposition to the oppressor, therefore pleads for life, undertakes to struggle against servitude, falsehood, and terror, and affirms, in a flash, that these three afflictions cuase silence between men, that they obscure them from one another and prevent them from rediscovering themselves in the only value that can save them from nihilism — the long complicity of men at grips with their destiny.(49)

The true rebel is the one who senses and cultivates his/her obligation to human solidarity with no intention of obliterating the Other. His/her rebellion or nonviolent subversion stands tall "midway" between silence and

(48) *Adventures of the Dialectic,* pp. 39 and 207.

(49) Albert Camus, *The Rebel,* trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 283-284.

murder in refusing to accept being what he (she) is. The rebel willingly acknowledges the dialogical interplay between the *ethical* principle of culpability and the *epistemological* principle of fallibility however noble his (her) cause may be, whereas the revolutionary thrives on the monologic absoluteness of inculpability and infallibility. Epistemological dogmatism and moral absolutism have no place in carnival life because they contradict the essence of the dialogical principle that always recognizes the ever-present, porous moment and zone of *ambiguity* that resides in between complete doubt and absolute certainty.

IV. Epilogue

The two incontrovertibly seminal discoveries of phenomenology are the life-world and the lived body. They are intimately related because the life-world as the all-encompassing horizon of socio-cultural reality was, is, and will be inhabited by embodied subjects.(50) Above all, the lived body is the basic grammar of sociality. It is not enough to say that the body is our primordial linkage to the world of other people and other things. It is more correct to say that it is our active mode of *being* (*existing*) in the world: as we live our bodies, we *are* our bodies. But for the lived body, man (woman) would forever remain to be a passive onlooker, a homunculus. Sociality is never the meeting of disembodied and invisible minds but is first and foremost intercorporeal — the "confrontation" of embodied subjects. *While the mind is monologic, the body is by necessity dialogic.* Because of the lived body, man (woman) is indissociably social. In other words, the death of the body is indeed the death of the social.

The lived body or the body-subject is a phenomenological response to Foucault's ethics of the body politic and Habermas's theory of communicative action. On the one hand, Foucault's philosophical contribution lies in his profound insights into the ethics of the body politic — the medical, incarcerated, and sexual body — as power relations. His genealogy of the body politic, however, can be no replacement or substitute for the lived

(50) According to John Wild, "Four different kinds of phenomena are found in the *Lebenswelt*, each of which is now the object of a distinct mode of scientific investigation: man himself, the realm of nature, other men and the realm of human culture, and, finally, the transcendent." "Interrogation of John Wild" (conducted by Henry B. Veatch), in *Philosophical Interrogations*, ed. Sydney and Beatrice Rome (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 177.

body as the anchor of social ontology. On the other hand, Habermas's theory of communicative action is handicapped or, better, handcuffed because it knows no notion of the body as subject. His defense of philosophical modernity is the defense of the mind as disembodied reason which is incapable of justifying social ontology, that is, the theory of communicative action. Habermas's theory of society is still entrapped in the Enlightenment prison-house of disembodied reason.

In the end, carnal hermeneutics or the phenomenology of the body politic, whose centerpiece is the lived body, is a *pharmakon* (remedy) for the modern mind as disembodied reason. It is thoroughly dialogic, communicative, and communal. Inasmuch as disembodied reason has held a hegemonic grip on modernity, carnal hermeneutics is a postmodern project: it deconstructs disembodied reason.(51) The end of disembodied reason is the end of modernity and the beginning of postmodernity.

(51) See G. B. Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) which discusses such topics as "Merleau-Ponty and postmodernity" and the "hermeneutics of the human subject." For a discussion of postmodernity from a Heideggerian perspective, see Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).