The Ethical Appeal of the Indifferent

Maurice Blanchot and Michel Foucault

Vladimir Biti

Published online: 18 May 2020.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 239

View related articles

View Crossmark data

THE ETHICAL APPEAL OF THE INDIFFERENT

Maurice Blanchot and Michel Foucault

Vladimir Biti

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, People's Republic of China

disjunctive
conjunction

indifferent

the

May '68

residue

revolution

Ever since its emergence, the modern concept of revolution rests on an ambiguity. While it insists on the present's intellectual sovereignty over the past, it cannot get rid of its pre-modern predecessor, re-evolution, which insisted on the present's genetic dependence on the past. From the very beginning of its historical trajectory, this concept inconspicuously interferes with the pre-modern concept of re-evolution as a cyclical return to origins. The cyclical logic never smoothly absorbs the linear one without simultaneously being displaced by its uncanny residue. In turn, the same uncanny leftover operates in the opposite direction, accompanying the putative liquidation of the cyclical logic by the linear one. This disjunctive conjunction of the present and the past characterizes the relationship between the events of May '68 and the theoretical work that followed it, known under the label of l'après-Mai or post-May. Rather than being homely and familiar, the post-May thinkers' present was interrupted by the interventions of the remnants from the colonial past and the Holocaust. This is the point of departure for my interpretation of the ethical appeal of the indifferent in the works of Michel Foucault and Maurice Blanchot.

Ever since its emergence, the modern concept of revolution rests on an ambiguity. While it insists on the present's intellectual sovereignty over the past, it cannot get rid of its pre-modern predecessor, re-evolution, which indicates the present's affective dependence on the past. In her seminal book published on the eve of the '68 protests, Hannah Arendt points out how much the idea of *re-volvere*, the turning back of the historical process toward the restoration of a bygone age, inspired both American and French revolutionaries. Both wanted "to revolve back to an 'early period' when they had been in the possession of rights and liberties of which tyranny and conquest had dispossessed them" (Arendt 1990, 45).

Because of this constitutive equivocality of the concept of revolution, the French revolutionaries' erasure of their adherence to the past strikes us, in retrospect, as a defense maneuvre. Is their presentation of revolution as a definite departure from past customs and laws not significantly unilateral? In this sense, it is interesting that, according to a radical document from 1793, "there is nothing, absolutely nothing in common between the slave of a tyrant and the inhabitant of a free state; the customs of the latter, his principles, his sentiments, his actions, all must be new" (cited in Hunt 1984, 29). The very insistence with which they create their cult of the new as something "outside all forms and all rules" (27) reflects a profound fear of the old (see Starr 1995, 1). This means that the modern concept of revolution, from the very beginning of its historical trajectory, inconspicuously interferes with the pre-modern concept of re-evolution as a cyclical return to origins. Since it proved unable to discard this older concept, "modern theorists and practitioners of revolution" were condemned "to an obsessively repetitive fascination with revolution *as* repetition" (2).

The conservative New Philosophers employed this, as it were, malformation of revolution in their argument that, in Michael Ryan's paraphrase, "whatever alternative is set up in opposition to the Master will be yet another Master" (1982, 76). Since humankind cannot avoid the repetition of the same, in their opinion the idea of the historical progress proves to be obsolete. In opposition to these New Philosophers, liberal thinkers noticed this cyclical logic never smoothly overcomes the linear one without simultaneously being displaced by its uncanny residue. Sigmund Freud defines his concept of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*, which also means "the unhomely") as the unexpected revival of the surmounted mode of thinking (Freud 2005, 232). But the same uncanny leftover certainly operates in the opposite direction, accompanying the putative liquidation of the cyclical logic by the linear one. Arendt has famously argued that in the key declarations of the French Revolution, the apparently universal human rights were spontaneously identified with the restricted national citizen rights, which left stateless populations and individuals without "the right of bearing rights" (1979, 299–300). The

poor, women, workers, and elderly were now all included, but at the cost of excluded foreigners. This is how exclusion, in the linear logic of history, smuggled itself back into the inclusion that was determined to relinquish it.

This disjunctive conjunction of the present and the past characterizes the relationship between the events of May '68 and the theoretical work that followed it, known under the label of *l'après-Mai* or post-May. As in all *post*-relationships, historical events and their after-effects turn out to be simultaneously discontinuous and continuous. On the one hand, the trauma associated with the failure of May '68 separated revolutionary practice and theory from one another; on the other hand, the obligation of theory to rescue the traumatized political energies reconnected them. Since the direct political action of eliminating power relations ended in a structural complicity with the antagonist, the theory replaced its directness and immediacy with the long-term subversion, dislocation, and deconstruction of power. For example, Jacques Derrida (1981, 66, 42) insisted on the displacement of direct repetition through its indistinct leftovers, such as the *pharmakon*, the supplement, or the hymen. Consequently, in the intellectual developments following the May events, the urgent and immediate revolutionary drive that characterized the events of May '68 transformed into a strategic postponement of revolution. What the theory now aimed at was not to abolish the past but to draw attention to its uncanny residues and the way they stubbornly persevered in the present by limiting its sovereignty. Derrida accordingly stated the following: "in a certain way the only thing which interests me is the uncanny" (Derrida et al. 2003, 33–34). Maurice Blanchot, for his part, addressed the obligation to "recollect that which escapes recollection" and which "transforms our possibilities into impossibilities" (1980, 15, 114). Rather than being homely and familiar, the present of post-May thinkers was interrupted by the interventions of the remnants from the colonial past and the Holocaust, and all the more so the more the theorists avoided addressing these traumas directly.

Defining contemporariness as "*that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*," Giorgio Agamben (2011, 11), in retrospect, perfectly captures these thinkers' experience of their post-revolutionary present:

> The contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light but rather its darkness. All eras, for those who experience contemporariness, are obscure. The contemporary is precisely the person who knows how to see this obscurity, who is able to write by dipping his pen in the obscurity of the present. (Agamben 2011, 13)

As we know from Agamben's reading of Aristotle in "Bartleby or On Contingency," the "obscurity" into which the contemporary "dips his pen" is the

present's "pure potentiality" or "zone of indistinction" that precedes all its actual distinctions (Agamben 1999, 243–45). It is the task of philosophy relentlessly to recall this abyss of possibilities in the underground of the actual world, against theology and its incessant attempts to erase its traces from the present memory (249). Staying loyal to this weak messianic mission of uncovering the actual world's contingency, Agamben (2009, 75–76) portrays the present as being saturated with the unresolved "signatures" of the past, signatures that are secretive, imperceptible, and immaterial but which nonetheless confront the present with the demand to recognize, read, and thus redeem them.

This passionate attachment of Agamben's philosophy to a sacrificed past helps us to understand how the appeal of the indifferent came into being in the post-May post-traumatic atmosphere. However, since by definition the concept of indifference refers simultaneously to the attitude of sovereigns and the condition of subordinates, one should note that its effects are at once empowering and disempowering. The subordinates' indifferent condition empowers itself precisely by disempowering the sovereigns' indifferent attitude toward them. Consider the concept of *écriture* as elaborated by Blanchot. In his 1952 book *The Space of Literature*, where he introduces the affiliate concept of *désoeuvrement*, Blanchot (1992, 42–48) describes Stéphane Mallarmé as the first writer to dethrone the sovereign literary author by setting loose the unworking energy of *écriture*. In his 1969 book *The Infinite Conversation*, Blanchot sees *écriture* as a practice of "always going beyond what it seems to contain and affirming nothing but its own outside" (1993, 259) placed "beyond the reach of the one who says it as much as of the one who hears it" (212). Epitomizing the *désoeuvrement* located at the "other scene," it operates beyond the reach of any of its users, continuously disempowering their authorial claims. However, as Agamben has argued in *The Time that Remains* (2005, 88–112), the long messianic tradition inherent in Blanchot's notion of *désoeuvrement* makes the disempowerment of others and the self-empowerment strongly reliant on one another. While disempowering literary authors, *écriture* simultaneously empowers its own authorial capacity.

As such, it threatens to institute itself as a new powerful transcendental that determines all empirical agencies. To avoid such "redoubling of the empirical into the transcendental," Blanchot (1993, 249) makes the transcendental disappear, as it were, before its instalment, thereby taking recourse in Michel Foucault's (1971, 387) famous designation of man in *The Order of Things*. In his essay on Foucault, Blanchot (1987, 76) presents this quasi-transcendental as the "new manner of being which disappearance is," as the state of continuous dispersal, discontinuation, and redoubling. He insists that Foucault's transcendental principle not only determines the empirical agency but also results from this agency as its after-effect. In short, in Foucault's work the

transcendental principle becomes future anterior. This parenthesizes its *a priori* character and weakens its determining force, producing "an impure alloy of an historical *a priori* and a formal *a priori*" or a "flawed transcendentalism" (71–72). With modernity, as Blanchot interprets Foucault, *a disempowering empowerment of the two incompatible terms, the transcendental and the empirical*, arises: the one makes the other simultaneously possible and impossible. "Transcendence is brought down, the empirical rises up, the modern era is ushered in" (Blanchot 1993, 255).

Drawing a number of important consequences from this disabling enablement, Blanchot asks: "What speaks when the voice speaks? It situates itself nowhere … but manifests itself in a space of redoubling, of echo and resonance where it is not someone, but rather this *unknown* space … that speaks without speaking" (1993, 258). Specifying the peculiar profile of the voice, he writes that "anterior to beginning, it indicates itself only as anteriority, always in retreat in relation to what is anterior" (259). In order not to be assimilated into the imperial linguistic order, this simultaneously evasive and invasive leftover retreats into a cry or murmur of a "man in passing": "he cries out in dying; he does not cry out, he is the murmur of this cry" (262; "il crie mourant; il ne crie pas, il est le murmure du cri" [Blanchot 1969, 392]). This is how Blanchot (1993, 259) conceptualizes the reiterative unworking of transcendental writing: "Writing … will constitute itself … as always going beyond what it seems to contain and affirming nothing but its own outside, … affirming itself … in relation to its absence, the absence of (a) work, worklessness" (or, perhaps better, "unworking": "l'absence d'oeuvre ou le désoeuvrement" [Blanchot 1969, 388]). In his redescription of Foucault, the transcendental is exposed to persistent *désoeuvrement* by its empirical "outside," or the "zone of indistinction" that escapes its distinguishing procedures (Agamben 1998, 63, 112, 181). In this way, the hitherto traumatized "outside" henceforth occupies the traumatizing position, circumventing and subverting its appropriation by the transcendental.

Blanchot seems to have taken the concept of unworking from the writings of Alexandre Kojève, the crucial intellectual figure in postwar France. Kojève (1952, 396) designated the idle man of *posthistoire* as a *voyou désoeuvré*, a man in the condition of the eternal Sabbath. However, Blanchot refuses to share Kojève's apocalyptic Hegelianism and its postponement of the Sabbath to the end of history, because he feels that it surreptitiously reintroduces theology into philosophy. The theological synthesis that violently captures the totality of history, renouncing the compromising involvement of the philosopher in its course, had to be unworked. To accomplish this, Blanchot uncouples *désoeuvrement* from philosophy and aligns it with Mallarmé's modern, self-subverting idea of literature. "Literature denies the substance of what it represents," reads the definition of literature's "essence" in Blanchot's 1949 book *The Work of Fire*: "This is its law and its truth" (Blanchot

1995, 310). Literature's permanent unrest becomes the model of unworking: "As soon as something is said, something else needs to be said. Then something different must again be said to resist the tendency of all that has just been said to become definitive … There is no rest," writes Blanchot (22). He thus promotes the Romantic, ceaselessly self-denying idea of literature as the ethical representative of the politically indifferent subalterns. He gives such literature the messianic task of redeeming the subalterns' zones of indistinction. Through his reading of Herman Melville's Bartleby as the "messiah of de-creation," Agamben (1999, 274) silently reaffirms this mission. His Bartleby descends into the underground of the actual world, in which indifference reigns over difference, to keep alive the memory of all the possibilities that were deprived of actualization.

In his essay on Blanchot, Foucault (1987, 13) likewise sides with his friend's claim that the modern age is commanded by literature, which, more than any other discourse, leads us "to the outside in which the speaking subject disappears." Blanchot's insight is crucial because "the being of language only appears for itself with the disappearance of the subject" (Foucault 1987, 15). According to Foucault, Blanchot consistently testifies to this void in language as induced by its master's irrevocable exile. He treats both discourses that he regularly uses, the reflexive one and the fictional one, as being outside of themselves by pushing the reflexive discourse to the edge of fiction and the fictional discourse to the edge of reflection. In the same way that Foucault, according to Blanchot, made the formal and historical *a priori* undecidably confront one another (see Blanchot 1987, 71–72), Blanchot, according to Foucault, makes reflection and fiction enter an interminable dialogue. Neither of the two antagonists can overcome its exilic condition. Moreover, Foucault claims that Blanchot not only displays an emptiness genuine to language (see Foucault 1987, 12), but also contests an "entire tradition wider than philosophy," denying that emptiness by filling it always anew with a particular content (13).

His argument is that Blanchot courageously confronted this powerful tradition because he was desperately attracted, in the dense structure of language, to "an absence that pulls as far away from itself as possible" and "has nothing to offer but the infinite void" (Foucault 1987, 28). This attraction to the disregarded indifferent makes Blanchot negligent of the politically established differential order: "To be susceptible to attraction a person must be negligent," writes Foucault (1987, 28). This negligence is nonetheless extremely dangerous because the inarticulate outside, through its endless withdrawal, gradually removes the human subject from his or her articulation (34), making his or her past, kin, and whole life non-existent (28). In Emmanuel Lévinas's terms, the inarticulate outside tears the human subject out of his or her abode. In his view, this (preconscious, pre-linguistic, pre-present, pre-representative, pre-signifying) locus of alterity "prohibits me with the

original language of its defenseless eyes" (Levinas 1996, 12). Because I cannot take cognizance of an instance haunting and obsessing me in such a traumatizing way, I definitely lose the Other as a comfortable, confirming mirror of my identity. Instead, the relationship with Him "puts me into question, empties me of myself" (Levinas 1986, 350).

As if hinting at the Levinasian retreating, ab-solving, ambiguous face, Foucault describes this spectral outside as "a gaze condemned to death," averting and returning "to the shadow the instant one looks at it" (1987, 28, 41). As soon as its withdrawal from the field of vision occurs, however, its underground voice becomes discernible (47). As Lévinas writes: "To see a face is already to hear 'You shall not kill'" (1990, 8); or: "The manifestation of the face is already discourse" (1969, 66). Reading Blanchot in such a distinctively Levinasian key (without ever mentioning Lévinas), Foucault asks: "Is not this voice – which 'sings blankly' and offers little to be heard – the voice of the Sirens, whose seductiveness resides in the void they open, in the fascinating immobility seizing all who listen?" (1987, 45). For Foucault, Blanchot was powerfully seduced by this lethal void, regardless of the price of denial and solitude he paid for this fascination (see Blanchot 1993, 201). This price is yet another reason for Foucault to interpret Blanchot's "thought from outside" as an *ethical resistance to the politically dominant linguistic order*, resistance in the name of its disregarded outside.

In his reading of Foucault, Blanchot, for his part, stresses the irresistible "appeal of *indifference*" to being subjected to further differentiation (1993, 199). Indifference continuously sets the new horizon for the operations of differentiation. Its "flawed transcendentalism" is on the permanent quasi-empirical move.

> Preventing the sick from dying in the street, the poor from becoming criminals, the debauched from perverting the pious is not at all reprehensible, but is a sign of progress, the point of departure for changes that 'responsible authorities' would approve of. (1987, 65–66)

The ethical task undertaken by Foucault is to let the disregarded, which is located "outside everything visible and everything invisible" (Blanchot 1993, 256), re-enter the articulated order. Foucault's "redoubling" makes a messianic *promise never to be fulfilled but nonetheless forwarded through the postponement*. He is aware that his search for the truth is irrevocably enmeshed in "the myriad configurations of power" (Blanchot 1987, 68) that pervert his imperatives. This is why he used to "proceed to the very limit" of a given discourse and then, starting the same route again, "turned toward other horizons" (69). A "man always on the move," he toyed "with the thought that he might have been, had fate so decided, a statesman (a political advisor) as well as a writer … or a pure philosopher" (68) or, as the

original – but not the translation – continues, "an unqualified worker, that is, nothing or nobody in particular" ("ou un travailleur sans qualification, donc un je ne sais quoi ou un je ne sais qui" [Blanchot 1986, 17]).

At this point, returning to the initial ambiguity of the concept of revolution and its inextricable intermingling of disempowerment and empowerment, one is well advised to recall Lacan's psychoanalysis. In Lacanian terms, Blanchot and Foucault's *je ne sais quoi* ("nothing particular" and at once "something unfathomable") takes the appearance of the "real," the zone of indistinction of the symbolic order (Lacan 1988, 97), which "resists symbolization" (Lacan 1987, 66) or "subsists outside of symbolization" (Lacan 2006, 324). While being dispossessed by the symbolic distinctions and placed below the threshold of their operations, the real at the same time operates as their supreme dispossessor, which in its turn degrades them into a mere "grimace" of the real (Lacan 1987, 17). As if captured by this fundamental equivocality of his concept, Lacan, in his early work, interprets the real as a realm beyond appearances or imagination (see Lacan 2006, 68–69); in his late work, however, the real figures as *the decisive, most powerful instance in the constitution of the human subject*. In this light, Foucault's readiness completely to dissolve his identity, to let his thought pass "through what is called madness," to "withdraw from itself, turn away from a mediating and patient labor … toward a searching that is distracted and astray … without result and without works" (Blanchot 1993, 199), presents itself as surreptitious self-empowerment. This insistent self-*désoeuvrement* repeats the analogous gesture of Blanchot's unworking of his own self, based as it was on the same fascination with the annihilating outside. Gradually and imperceptibly, in both works, the resistance to the imposed transcendental condition turns into a passionate attachment to a new transcendental that puts all modern selves under equal pressure, disregarding their entirely different political conditions. This is the final consequence of the sublime ethical rendering of the indifference as it completely ignores its dispossessing and denigrating political dimension.

What is forgotten here is that to be indifferent toward all political identities is no way reducible to being banished into the political condition of indifference: the first, ethical self-exemption from all identities implies the unlimited mobility of the self, while the second, politically enforced condition of, for example, "boat people" or *sans-papiers* condemns people to deprivation and immobility. As Elizabeth Povinelli (2011, 11) writes: "A gap seems to open between those who reflect on and evaluate ethical substance and those who *are* this ethical substance." Or, again, as Zygmunt Bauman puts it:

> The first travel at will, get much fun from their travel … , are … welcomed with smiles and open arms … The second travel surreptitiously, often illegally, sometimes paying more for the crowded steerage of a stinking unseaworthy boat than others

pay for business-class gilded luxuries – and are frowned upon … arrested and promptly deported, when they arrive. (Bauman 1998, 89)

To be sure, Blanchot and Foucault are not the only post-May intellectuals who follow the ethical imperative of self-*désoeuvrement* by disregarding this imperative's long political shadow. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, defining deterritorialization as a dislocation of a located agency (1983, 322, 1986, 86), also address its two principal faces: the actual one, represented by enforced movements, evacuations, and deportations, and the virtual one, represented by the liberation of an agency's slumbering creative potential (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 55–56). Since actual deterritorializations regularly aim at the reterritorialization of the population in question, Deleuze and Guattari see them as being oppressive and restricted, whereas in their view the virtual ones, insofar as they aim at a permanent emancipation of an agency, operate as the proper carriers of democracy. In a word, the deterritorialization that was set in motion by European modernity is good when it liberates, as in the case of individual agencies, but bad when it coerces, as in the case of dislocated populations.

However, if anything, modernity teaches that, in Arjun Appadurai's words, "one man's imagined community is another man's political prison" (1998, 32). As soon as the deterritorialization of identities entered the East-Central European space after the dissolution of empires, it replaced its West European virtual and liberating face with an actual and coercive one, initiating hitherto unimaginable migrations of populations: "By 1890 close to 40 percent of all Austro-Hungarians had left their original place of *Heimat* and migrated to their current homes from another part of the monarchy" (Judson 2016, 334). Almost four million men and women moved overseas, but hundreds of thousands returned within a few years. "The Fall of the Habsburgs automatically turned the 25 percent of the Viennese population born outside the frontiers of the new Austria into foreigners" (Hobsbawm 1996, 15). After the breakup of the Soviet Union, twenty-five million Russians who had been colonized in various territories across the Empire from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century (Brubaker 1996, 150) suddenly remained outside the Russian Federation (6–7). It goes without saying that such a traumatic reconfiguration of post-imperial Europe's geopolitical circumstances dispossessed the majority of its population of its distinct identities, making it politically "disposable."

Therefore, whoever raises the free mobility of indifferent individual identities to a transcendental principle, disregards the enforced mobility of the politically indifferent masses as the hidden empirical prerogative of this principle and the subterranean basis of its legitimacy. Does the individual ethical self-denial not silently redeem the political dispossession of collectivities? Beyond that, the individuals who empower themselves through such disempowerment

inadvertently reproduce the remedial gesture of collectivities who turn their long-enduring excommunication from the politically acknowledged identities into the source of their aggrandizement. This is, for example, how the dispossessed Jews became the guardians of human universality,[1] and the proletarians took their utter dispossession as the warrant of their future rise to power: "We have been naught, we shall be all." Such a triumphant empowerment of the ethical indifferent that absorbs into its emptiness all seemingly petty political differences – as in the case of Derrida's *différance*, undecidability, or deconstruction – involuntarily blends the elite individuals' refined way of thinking with the deprived collectives' populist logic.

These are some of the uneasy consequences of the post-May thought as they present themselves to its descendants. Yet, stranded as they were in their post-May political circumstances, both Blanchot and Foucault failed to address them. At a distance of some fifty years, however, the political background of their ethical fascination with the indifferent requires our attention and consideration. Instead of being seduced into reproducing this fascination, we ought to scrutinize it by drawing careful political limits on its compensatory rule.

1 For example, Gustav Mahler treats the Jewish triple bereavement of homeland (Beller 1989, 207) as the epitome of human emancipation, and Kraus (1898, 23) gives the same meaning to the Jewish complete dissolution into surrounding cultures. Liska (2017, 127–136) critically reviews a series of more recent attempts to promote Jewish rootlessness to the blueprint of a limitlessly inclusive human identity.

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1999. "Bartleby, or On Contingency." Chap. 15 In *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, translated and edited by Daniel Heller-Roazen, 243–275. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*. Translated by Patricia Dailey. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. *The Signature of All Things: On Method*. Translated by Luca D'Isanto with Kevin Attell. New York: Zone Books.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2011. *Nudities. Translated by David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1998. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Arendt, Hannah. 1979. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.

Arendt, Hannah. 1990. *On Revolution*. London: Penguin.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1998. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity.

Beller, Stephen. 1989. *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1969. *L'Entretien infini*. Paris: Gallimard.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1980. *L'Écriture du désastre*. Paris: Gallimard.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1986. *Michel Foucault tel que je l'imagine*. Saint-Clément: Fata morgana.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1987. "Michel Foucault as I imagine him." In *Foucault/Blanchot*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman and Brian Massumi, 61–109. New York: Zone Books.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1992. *The Space of Literature*. Translated by Ann Smock. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1993. *The Infinite Conversation*. Translated by Susan Hanson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1995. *The Work of Fire*. Translated by Charlotte Mandel. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationalism and the National Question in the*

New Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1986. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1981. *Positions*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, Jacques, Frank Kermode, Toril Moi, and Christopher Norris. 2003. "Following Theory." In *Life.After.Theory*, edited by Michael Payne, and John Schad, 1–51. London: Continuum.

Foucault, Michel. 1971. *The Order of Things*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, Michel, Frank Kermode, Toril Moi, and Christopher Norris. 1987. "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside." In *Foucault/Blanchot*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman, and Brian Massumi, 7–58. New York: Zone.

Freud, Sigmund. 2005. "Das Unheimliche." In *Gesammelte Werke: XII: Werke aus den Jahren 1917–1920*, in cooperation with Marie Bonaparte, edited by Anna Freud, Edward Bibring, Willi Hoffer, Ernst Kris, Otto Isakower, Chap. 6, 229–268. London: Imago.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1996. "The End of Empires." In *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, edited by Karen Barkey, and Mark von Hagen, 12–16. Boulder: Westview Press.

Hunt, Lynn. 1984. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Judson, Pieter. 2016. *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kojève, Alexandre. 1952. "Les romans de la sagesse." *Critique (Clandeboye, Man)* 60: 387–397.

Kraus, Karl. 1898. *Eine Krone für Zion*. Vienna: Frisch.

Lacan, Jacques. 1987. *The Seminar, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954*. Translated by John Forrester and edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 1988. *The Seminar, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*. Translated by Sylvana Tomaselli, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 2006. *Écrits*. Translated by Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg. New York: Norton.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1969. *Totality and Infinity*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1986. "The Trace of the Other." In *Deconstruction in Context*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, G. E. M. Anscombe et al., and edited by Mark C. Taylor, 345–359. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1990. *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*. Translated by Seán Hand. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1996. "Transcendence and Height." Chap. 2 In *Basic Philosophical Writings*, translated by Peter Atterton et al., and edited by Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi, 11–31. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Liska, Vivian. 2017. *German-Jewish Thought and Its Afterlife*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth. 2011. *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ryan, Michael. 1982. *Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Starr, Peter. 1995. *Logics of Failed Revolt: French Theory after May '68*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.