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THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF KRISTEVA'S THOUGHT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BPP* (1920) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, PFL 11, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984
- Desire* (1984) 'Julia Kristeva in Conversation with Rosalind Coward', in *Desire*, ICA Documents 1, London
- Diff* G.W.F. Hegel (1801) *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1977
- E* J. Lacan (1966) *Ecrits: A Selection*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1977
- EP* J. Kristeva (1973) 'L'expérience et la pratique', in *Polylogue*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977
- IBWL* J. Kristeva (1984) *In the Beginning was Love. Psychoanalysis and Faith*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987
- MSD* J. Kristeva (1971) 'Matière, sens, dialectique', in *Polylogue*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977
- PH* J. Kristeva (1980) *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982
- Phen.* G.W.F. Hegel (1807) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977
(References are made to the paragraph numbering in Miller's translation, e.g. '#60'.)
- Prol.* I. Kant (1783) *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1977
- RPL* J. Kristeva (1974) *Revolution in Poetic Language*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984
- SK* J.G. Fichte (1794) *Science of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press 1982
- SL* G.W.F. Hegel (1812, 1931), *Science of Logic*, New York: Humanities Press, 1976

- SO J. Kristeva (1988) *Strangers to Ourselves*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991
- SP J. Kristeva (1973) 'Le sujet en procès', in *Polylogue*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977
- NN J. Kristeva (1993) *Nations without Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press
- TL J. Kristeva (1983) *Tales of Love*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987

SUMMARY

The critical reception of Kristeva's writings has largely been in the field of feminist thought, literary studies and social theory. Her thought has been appreciated or abandoned on the grounds of its argument that the concepts and practices of 'psychoanalysis' and 'literature' present the truth of modern social and political relations - in distinction from and criticism of philosophical 'system'. The thesis implicitly challenges this general reception of Kristeva's thought. It presents a systematic reading of Kristeva's writings and discloses the Hegelian ambition of her analysis of the 'subject' in social and political relations.

The main object of the thesis is to establish the philosophical foundations of Kristeva's 'return to Freud' in the philosophy of law from Kant to Hegel. The thesis presents the significance and limitation of her engagement with German idealism, and the consequences of that limited engagement for the ambition of Kristeva's *oeuvre*. The meaning of the speculative philosophy of law is recovered from its premature reduction in the developments of, and departures from, her thought in contemporary critical engagements with French and German philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

The thesis argues that Kristeva's founding distinction between the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' has opened up psychoanalysis to the philosophy of law from Kant to Hegel, but that this encounter is held off by the fixation of Kristeva's 'materialist' concepts. The concepts cannot be unfrozen without sublating the primacy of the founding distinction.

The theory of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' facilitates Kristeva's claim that the 'speaking subject' known to psychoanalysis puts the 'subject' back into its concrete history, recognizing it as a unity of drives (nature) and language (culture). However, the avoidance of German idealism as a whole undermines both Kristeva's Copernican claim for 'reason since Freud', and the comprehension of social and political relations derived from the knowledge of psychoanalysis.

Kristeva's 'return to Freud' contains an explicit and an implicit return to Hegel. The explicit return to Hegelian dialectic is a condition of Kristeva's thesis that Freud's discovery of the 'unconscious' not only favours, but is inseparable from a materialist dialectic of the subject in social and political relations. The implicit return to Hegel lies in Kristeva's departure from the Hegelian 'system', where her sublation of 'Hegelian totality' in a materialist concept of 'infinity' returns her to the debates of German idealism, and specifically to Hegel's criticisms of Kant and Fichte's political philosophy. (See Appendix)

First: the explicit return to Hegel. Three of Kristeva's untranslated early essays (1971-3) are recovered in chapter 1 for their significance for the reception of Kristeva's thought. They reveal that the Kristevan *oeuvre*, best known for its reformulation of

the Lacanian 'symbolic' and for its practical concept of 'poetic language', begins as a return to Hegelian logic and dialectic. The explicit return to Hegel deploys the 'idealist dialectic' to argue the unity of the Freudian 'unconscious', the meaning of 'art', and the value of materialist social and political thought. Kristeva's fundamental claims for the knowledge and practice of psychoanalysis and literature are impossible without the 'sublation' of the Hegelian 'concept'.

The reformulation of the Lacanian 'symbolic' into a theory of the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' in Kristeva's doctoral thesis (1974) is recapitulated in chapter 2. The reformulation of Lacan founds Kristeva's key argument: that the psychoanalytic concept of the 'signifier', once revised through a return to the theory of the drives, overcomes the limits of philosophical reason and places the 'subject' in its concrete and historical relations; and, further, that the concept of the 'semiotic' discloses the meaning of 'art' and significance of the emergence of avant-garde and modern literature. 'Psychoanalysis' is not only a theory of culture in this argument (after Lacan), but is held to be a knowledge of the practical through which 'literature' is revealed as a socio-historical practice. Kristeva's arguments are worked out in an engagement with selected configurations of consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and claim a 'materialist' reformulation of Hegelian 'negation'.

Kristeva's argument in her doctoral thesis that the theory of the 'subject' derived from psychoanalysis complements and fills the gaps in Marxist thought (Lenin, Mao) is the object of chapter 3. The reformed Maoist dialectic holds out the possibility of the transformation of modern, abstract and 'speciously universal' human law (legality and morality). This

possibility is proposed on the basis of the reversal of moments in the Hegelian 'system'.

The significance of Kristeva's abandonment of the Maoist dialectic and turn to a deeper engagement with psychoanalysis is demonstrated in chapter 4. The turn to psychoanalysis sustains the fundamental concepts of the early work: the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic'; and the materialist notion of 'rejection' which stands as the 'negative force' in Kristeva's logic and in her estimation of critical discourses. Kristeva's later writings (1980-84) elaborate the content of the concepts of 'negativity', 'infinity' and 'practice' which received a more formal and logical treatment in the early writings. The discontinuities between the early and later works are addressed, here, but the emphasis remains on the necessity of Kristeva's construal of 'speculative philosophy' for her use of 'reason since Freud' as the basis for a social and political theory.

After the abandonment of Maoism and the elaboration of an 'ethics of psychoanalysis', Kristeva seeks in her latest works (1991-93) to determine the relation between the 'ethics' and the 'politics' it implies. Chapter 5 shows the importance for her treatment of social and political relations of Kristeva's endeavour to specify the boundary of '(psycho)analysis', and hence transcend it. A critical enquiry is made into her recent evaluation of French and German political philosophy for the task of elaborating a 'politics' after Freud, and the criticisms are substantiated on the grounds of the limitations of Kristeva's Hegelian ambition.

The implicit return to Hegel, and the failure to recognize it either within the Kristevan *oeuvre* or in its reception, lies in the construction of Kristeva's fundamental concepts. The 'Intertext', placed between Parts I and II of the thesis, brings into focus the

implicit return to Hegel sustained through Kristeva's abandonment of the 'revolutionary' standpoint and reassessment of the 'semiotic' in the later writings. Kristeva's failure to reinterrogate the concept of the 'symbolic' returns her thought to Hegel's engagement with Kant's critical philosophy and with subjective and objective idealism (Fichte and Schelling).

Kristeva departs from Hegel before comprehending either the meaning of Hegelian 'necessity' and 'speculative exposition' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, or the structure of the *Science of Logic* and its relation to the standpoint and progression of the earlier text. The departure determines the fall into a pre-Hegelian methodological position, and its consequent dichotomies. The implicit return to the aporiae of transcendental practical philosophy returns Kristeva's thought to Hegel's comprehension of the forms of philosophy in Kant, Fichte and Schelling.

The aporiae of Kristeva's thought stem from the presupposition of philosophy in her theory of culture. The relation sustained between psychoanalysis and philosophy throughout the *oeuvre* is insufficient to the task of establishing a genealogy of culture; it undermines the scope claimed for the subject-law relation known to psychoanalysis in the re-cognition of social and political relations. The theses reveals the dependence of Kristeva's thought on the Hegelian dialectic, and expounds the premature departures from speculative philosophy. It identifies the limitations of her endeavour as an outcome of the avoidance of Hegelian mediation.

CHAPTER ONE 'UNKNOWN TO MYSELF': AFTER HEGEL

Introduction

The purpose of the return to Kristeva's early writings is to show that her elaboration of the concept of 'poetic language' begins as a return to Hegel, and therefore that the meaning and estimation of 'literature' in her thought presupposes a construal of speculative philosophy. The deployment of Hegelian 'logic' in the early essays illuminates the consistency throughout her *oeuvre* of Kristeva's claim to surpass the 'system' and to present the terrain on which the problematic of the 'subject' in modern social and political relations can be thought. It is a claim which this thesis is concerned to lay open, and to question - notably in its construction of 'speculative thinking'.

The early essays are evidence of Kristeva's encounter with philosophy and demonstrate an explicit return to Hegelian dialectic after historical materialism. Although Kristeva will abandon the Hegelian 'system', Hegelian dialectic remains crucial, and appears in her thought as the extreme limit of philosophy's capacity to grasp the *production* of 'signifying practices'. The theory of 'poetic language' locates the enactment and presentation of this production in modern literature.

Hegelian philosophy is not only foregrounded as the necessary 'passage' for the exposition of the concept of poetic language; the Hegelian 'concept' is itself the passage to grasping the 'truth' of poetic language as 'signifying practice'. This substantial claim for a return to Hegel in Kristeva's writings opens the way for an assessment of the Kristevan deployment of the Hegelian dialectic; not simply of her negotiation of Hegel as such, but of the specific encounter with Hegel which leads to a supposed 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*) of the system.

The endeavour in these early essays to specify a 'materialist dialectical logic' claims the inseparability of 'logic' and 'politics'. It argues that the source for the disclosure of this inseparability lies in the 'idealist dialectic', and that the relation of logic and politics can now be expounded thanks to the Freudian discovery of the 'unconscious'. This early emphasis on the inseparability of logic and politics and on the role of history in their relation (that is to say, Kristeva's 'rediscovery' of Hegelian dialectic recalls - implicitly - the debates of German idealism, and Hegel's response to the philosophies of Kant and Fichte.² However, the endeavour to specify a materialist dialectical logic leads Kristeva to make an abstract beginning in Hegel's *Science of Logic*

The essays of the late 1960s and early 1970s work through Hegelian concepts: both dialectical contraries ('universal and particular', 'identity and non-identity', 'finite and infinite') and philosophical categories ('becoming', 'determination', 'negation', 'sublation'). The following discussion of three of those essays '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' (1971), '*Le sujet en procès*' (1973) and '*L'expérience et la pratique*' (1973) explores the dependence of Kristeva's theory of 'poetic language' on a construction of Hegelian 'negativity' on an explicit return to Hegel).³

The immediate deployment of logical categories nevertheless restricts the elaboration in this chapter of the *implicit* return to Hegel that lies in Kristeva's passage out of 'idealist dialectical logic'. Her abstract beginning demands a premature and over brief account of Hegel's criticism of Kant and Fichte's practical philosophy.

Kristeva's reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is also constrained by the difficulties which arise from her extraction of a concept of 'negativity' from the *Science of Logic*. However, it will be evident that the materialist 'inversion' of Hegel substitutes a genealogy of culture for Hegel's philosophy of history. The encounter with philosophy in the early writings forms the background to the reformulation, expounded in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, of Lacan's 'symbolic' into 'the semiotic and the symbolic'. The later employment of psychoanalytic concepts from Freud, Lacan and Klein presents an account of 'symbolization' which overcomes the difficulties arising from the earlier direct approach to logical categories. The account of symbolization comes to ground the genealogy of culture outlined in the early essays, but will consolidate Kristeva's claim that her concept of 'infinity' sublates Hegelian 'totality'.

It will be argued here that the 'sublation' of Hegel misrecognizes speculative thought precisely where it contributes most to the problematic Kristeva addresses: the subject 'in' modern social and political relations. In order to propose her own estimation of 'philosophy' and 'literature' (their respective powers to present the contradictions in social and political relations) Kristeva must reduce the complexity of Hegelian reason and misrecognize the meaning of 'speculative thinking'.

This chapter will therefore rehearse Kristeva's 'passage' through Hegel, in anticipation of the argument to be developed: that her problematic both begins and remains Hegelian, in other words that there is an explicit and an implicit return to Hegel in Kristeva's writings.

*

Of the two major sections in this chapter, section A will present the significance of Hegelian dialectic as

a point of departure for the concept of 'poetic language'. Kristeva's rediscovery of 'negativity' in the dialectic - after Marxism - proceeds to a synthesis of Hegel and Freud. This synthesis is expounded as a sublation of Hegelian 'negativity' in the concept of 'infinity' to be derived from an analysis of modern 'literature', an analysis that is informed by the turn to language in Lacan's dialectical return to Freud.

Section B presents the concept of 'rejection' which is substituted for Hegelian 'negativity' as the negative force of the materialist dialectic. The concept of rejection forms the basis both of the claim to go beyond Hegelian dialectic with Freud's 'science of the subject', and of Kristeva's estimation of 'poetic language' as a post-Hegelian practice. The section will argue that the synthesis of Hegel and Freud, and the problematic claim to go 'beyond' Hegel, and philosophy as such, is informed by the inconsistencies which present themselves in the interpretation of Hegelian logic. The Kristevan 'subject', which is presented as an inversion of Hegelian 'self-consciousness' (specifically by way of Bataille's relation to Hegel), suffers from the manner in which Kristeva's concept of 'infinity' arises.

A. The Return to Hegelian Negativity

In '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' (1971) Kristeva outlines a genealogy of culture based on a synthesis of Hegelian dialectic, dialectical materialism, and the Freudian theory of the unconscious (after Lacan). Kristeva's 'materialist dialectical logic' requires a return to and passage through Hegel's 'idealist dialectical logic'. Hegelian science is fundamental to Kristeva's concept of dialectic, for it is taken to have come closest to discovering the materialist dialectic (in her sense, as informed by the Freudian 'unconscious'), and is the thought 'sublated' in Kristeva's synthesis.

It is Kristeva's view here, as throughout her writings, that the Freudian theory of the unconscious introduces a 'cut' in the subject, and it is this which overcomes the obstacles to thinking the materialist dialectic:

the unconscious: a hinge which permits method (theory) to think the engendering of the subject as one of the moments (determinations, contradictions) of matter and/or of the eclipse of the (conscious) subject and as struggle of contraries. (*MSD*, p. 282)

On this view, only a materialist dialectic informed by the Freudian theory of the unconscious can present the 'concrete' history of the subject in social and political relations, avoiding, on the one hand, either a transcendentalism or a one-sided mechanistic thinking of history - neither of which can think the 'subject'; and on the other, the restriction of the dialectic attributed to the 'system', which is held to unfold the dialectic as a totality.⁴ The discovery of the 'unconscious' saves dialectical materialism both from the residual effects of the 'overturning' of Hegel - a universal, uninvestigated, subject of history - and from falling back into the idealist 'system' itself:

It is concrete history, a precise series of transferences, with its precise conditions, which drives material contradiction to become a signifying determination..... But this becoming, far from being that of a pure linearity, as a mechanistic conception of the subject would let us suppose, is a *translation* that theory can henceforth think thanks to the cut [*coupe*] in the subject which the unconscious introduced. (*MSD*, p. 282).

Whatever the 'fate' attributed to Hegel's rediscovery of the dialectic (its subjection to the 'system' conceived as exposition in/as a 'totality'), idealist dialectical logic is the *sine qua non* for articulating the 'production' at work in the materialist dialectic. In Kristeva's thought Hegel's logic renders possible what the Freudian discovery realized.

Kristeva's estimation and employment of Hegel in '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' turns on three 'moments' taken from the system. They are deployed in the three stages which present Kristeva's 'inversion' of Hegel and its result. These stages are: the 'production of determination' (Hegelian logic), 'language at work' (the logic of the signifier), and 'the scission of the sphere of meaning' (the logic of matter). My designation of these stages is taken from the following statement:

Our reasoning will therefore take the following course: (i) the discovery of contradiction as unrepresentable production of syntax and/or of formal thought; (ii) the realisation of this contradiction in the modern text as *preservation* of the contradiction, without seeking its solution/suppression; (iii) the ex-position of this contradiction outside the 'sphere of meaning'. (*MSD*, p.271).

The three 'moments' from Hegel's system mobilized in these stages are the dialectic of 'determinate being' (taken from the *Science of Logic*), the 'speculative proposition' (taken from the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*), and the 'absolute idea' (from

the *Science of Logic*). In the first case, Kristeva uses the logical development of the category of 'determinate being' to establish the problematic of the finite-infinite relation. In the second case, the 'speculative proposition' is brought in to aid the sublation of the 'language' object (language *qua* object of linguistics). In the third case, Kristeva finds the idealist dialectic's 'return to the real' out of which dialectical materialism has found a new basis, 'matter' (*MSD*, p. 280).

The essay as a whole develops within the aim

to question the status of the *object* and, more generally, of the *objectivity* in the isolation of the object 'language' as formal, syntactic grid. (*MSD*, p. 272)

The sublation of the object 'language' is the advance to Kristeva's concept of infinity. Infinity 'in' language is, further, specified in distinction from 'philosophical infinity'. Hegel's speculative thinking, therefore, while an aid to the sublation of 'language' as object, is itself sublated in the advance to Kristeva's concept of infinity. Sections 1 and 2, which follow, present the first two stages of Kristeva's 'inversion' of Hegel. Section 2 discusses Kristeva's concept of infinity 'in' language (the Kristevan 'signifier'). It demonstrates the conflation of Hegel's criticism of the fixed categories of the understanding, on the one hand, and Kristeva's criticism of the fixation of language *qua* object of linguistics; and shows that this conflation permits the substitution of 'language at work' for speculative exposition. 'Language at work' is held to realize the 'infinity' that the Hegelian concept cannot comprehend. The response, here, to Kristevan 'infinity' proposes that the turn to language cannot advance to Hegel's concept of infinity, and is what preempts a proper grasp of speculative exposition.

1. Finite and Infinite: the Production of Determination

Kristeva interprets Hegel's logic of 'determinate being' as presenting the 'production of determination'. Her argument is that, if idealist dialectical logic is the self-presentation of the concept in its self-constitution, it cannot be defined or employed as a method. Rather, the *Logic* presents the 'negativity' which gives the Marxist analysis of class struggle its impetus, and whose occlusion lies behind the dogmatic fate of that analysis. The *Logic's* presentation of 'negativity' is what gives dialectical logic its revolutionary value. The return to the *Logic* is therefore the way out of dogmatic Marxism. It will also, however, come to be the way out of Hegel. On the one hand, Kristeva contends that the return to 'Hegelian negativity' is necessary if the *social and political* significance of the Freudian account of the 'subject' is to be fully explicated. On the other, this synthesis of Hegel and Freud brings with it the substitution of the concept of 're-jection' for Hegelian 'negativity'.⁵

It is *by way of* the unconscious - realm of pure contradiction - that the Hegelian *foundation* finds its objectification and its reality... We will return to this punctuality of contradiction which the unconscious is, destroying the Cartesian subject and leading it back to proximity with material contradiction; let us say: to its zero with its body and its death. (*MSD*, p. 280)

Kristeva endorses the *Logic* as a logic of the self-constitution of the concept: 'the scission of itself through itself' (*MSD*, p. 274). The exposition of the concept has a twofold value for Kristeva. First, dialectical logic extracts reason from the conceptions of formal thought (from the subsumptive activity of representational thinking). Furthermore, with idealist dialectical logic, 'idealism' relinquishes the presupposition of the 'absolute I' as foundation of

reality and of formal thought. This is because Hegel shows, in Kristeva's words, that 'the true generative necessity is not that of an act... but that of a dialectic' (*MSD*, p. 271).

Implicit in Kristeva's commendation of Hegelian dialectic is the sublation of the relation of reason and being in Fichte's system. In Fichte's philosophy the principle of the 'absolute I' gives rise to a one-sided relation of positing (*Setzen*) and being(-posited) (*Gesetztsein*). The reference in Kristeva's essay to a letter of Hölderlin's, criticizing Fichte to Hegel, suggests an intimation of the Hegel-Fichte relation. Nevertheless, Kristeva commends Hölderlin's position on Fichte not only as a criticism of the absolute subject, but as an early attempt to seek out the logic of matter 'after' Hegel (*MSD*, p. 279, n.2). This claim is dependent on her construal of the progression of the 'concept'.

The unity of the *Logic* is 'the progression of the concept towards the exposition of itself' (*SL*, p. 122). The result of the understanding's concept of infinity is the abstraction of the progression into a 'double result'. Kristeva herself turns the unity of the *Logic* into a 'double result':

The Hegelian logic, in its objective - but also subjective - part thus interests us here - being a genetic exposé of the concept and positing the latter, on the one hand as a *becoming* (of which Being and Essence are only moments) and, on the other hand, 'not only as subjective presupposition but as absolute basis' (inasmuch as *it has made itself basis*). (*MSD*, pp. 271-2)

The separation of what Kristeva intends to hold together - the progression of the *Logic* as a whole, and the result - is manifest in her assertion that the progression is a 'becoming'. This definition restricts Kristeva's grasp of Hegelian logic because it inherits the concept of progression as it is posited in the

sphere of 'being' - in the first book only of the *Logic* as a whole. The dialectic of 'determinate being' (*Dasein*) falls in the first of the two books of the Objective Logic - comprising the 'doctrine of being' and the 'doctrine of essence'. Kristeva's materialist rethinking of the finite/infinite relation derives from and is counterposed to the concept of infinity which unfolds in the sphere of 'being' - despite her claim to embrace the subjective *and* objective parts of the *Logic* (*MSD*, p. 271).

The restriction is consequential for the move beyond 'language' to 'poetic language': what Kristeva's concept of infinity goes beyond is the finite/infinite relation as grasped by the understanding. This undermines her claim that 'poetic language' advances to, or realizes, 'infinity', since this concept of infinity arises in a release from Hegelian 'totality'.

The definition of the progression of the *Logic* as a 'becoming' is also the source of Kristeva's emphasis on contradiction as the motor of the dialectic. It is this emphasis which leads Kristeva to credit 'idealist dialectical logic' with a 'revolutionary value'. On her account, the dialectic discovers determination as 'contradiction', or 'production of determination'. Dialectical logic not only demonstrates how:

formal thought conceives of determination as an elementary and fundamental relation for the constitution of signification and/or syntax, and considers it in this perspective only in the framework of identity and of the positing of the same [*le même*]. (*MSD*, p. 272)

but renders:

the production of the *determination* whose strategic role in syntax we have underlined.... Hegel restores to *determination* its *negative* essence. (*ibid.*)

Idealist dialectical logic overcomes the formal conception of determination. It recognizes

determination as contradiction but does not remain in the resolution of the contradiction in the 'nothing' (the result for representation). Determination, conceived as contradiction, is the negation which - Kristeva cites Hegel - 'does not go beyond the resolution of the contradiction in the nothing without its positive side being recognized - that by which it presents itself as absolute activity and foundation or absolute reason' (*MSD*, p. 273).

Kristeva's reconstruction of negation in the sphere of determinate being, of 'something and other', recognizes that Hegel's concept of determination is mobilized against formal thought's fixation of 'abstract identity' separated from difference: 'it is a matter of an *identity* posited as such in the sole measure in which it is (and is it) for the other, thus through "the multiplication and diversification of its relations with the other"' (*MSD*, p. 272). Kristeva's citation from the *Logic* implies a grasp of Hegelian self-identity as it proceeds dialectically out of two determinations of qualitative being: first, the concept of indifferent exteriority; second, the concept of the infinite as 'absolute' exteriority.

Nevertheless, Kristeva's grasp of the dialectic becomes inconsistent at this point, since she restricts the Hegelian concept within the dialectic of the 'limit' (*Grenze*). The dialectic of determinate being proceeds to the concept of limit, but this is not its final determination. The transition in the *Logic* from 'limit' to 'limitation' (*Schranke*) and thence to the 'ought' (*Sollen*) expounds the moments of Kant's distinction between pure theoretical and pure practical reason, and of Fichte's foundation of theoretical in practical reason. The fixations of 'limit', 'limitation', and the 'ought' in Kantian and Fichtean philosophy is the object of Hegel's criticism.

Aspects of the dialectic of '*Grenze*' and '*Schranke*' reemerge in Kristeva's reconstruction of Hegelian logic:

The 'something' and the 'other' being the *same thing* are nevertheless *posited* with precision, thus already determined (through a negation), which is what constitutes the *limit* differentiating the one from the other. Nevertheless, enclosed in this *limit*, the 'something' determined is pushed by contradiction to disquiet and to the passing of the limit, in order to form its unity (zero) with the other - the 'something' is pushed into movement, let us say into the struggle. (*MSD*, p. 272)

This passage refers first to limit as *Grenze* ('differentiating the one from the other') and then to limit as *Schranke* ('the passing of the limit'). Kristeva adopts 'absolute activity' as it presents itself in the passage from *Grenze* to *Schranke* in the logic of 'being', and discovers there the revolutionary value of the dialectic: the necessity which compels 'the something' into 'the struggle'. This way of casting the outcome of this dialectic shows that the transition to the 'ought', that Hegel presented as the highest point of contradiction proceeding from the concept of limit, has not been followed through. As a consequence, Kristeva comes to take the relation in which the 'ought' consists as the very principle of the Hegelian 'system'. Such a construal of the *Logic* both freezes the dialectic and fails to account for Hegelian 'necessity'.

What Kristeva clearly endorses in the concept of *Grenze* is that it is a transition, by way of contradiction, from abstract identity, the indifferent exteriority of 'something' and 'other'. Hegel remarks that:

We must observe the development of the concept, which manifests itself, however, rather as an entanglement and contradiction. (*SL*, p. 126)

The commendation of 'contradiction' as the 'revolutionary value' of Hegelian logic is at odds with the latter's development of the concept of limit. The necessity of the moment of *Grenze* is well understood by Kristeva but her account conflates Kantian and Hegelian 'limit'. Hegel shows that the Kantian conception of 'limit' as 'enclosure' (of reason) has its truth in limit as 'separation' of 'something' and 'other'. The enclosed and the enclosure in Kant are disclosed in Hegel as an abstract opposition whose truth is the self-movement of qualitative distinction in which the relation to other is a 'middle', the limit: 'Limit is the *middle between* the two of them in which they cease' (SL, p. 127). There is no 'limit' except as the movement of separation of 'something' and 'other', and therefore 'something' is not enclosed by a limit.

Separation is how the 'limit' - in Kant of 'reason' and its 'surroundings' - looks when it is seen that the relation of 'something' and 'other' is the negation of the negation which takes place *on each side*. This movement of negation on both sides is the negation of simple or indifferent exteriority: 'there is a single determinateness of both' (SL, p. 126) in which 'something' and 'other' remain independent but inseparable, 'both something and other'. The 'limit' manifests the aspect of separation in the sublation of simple exteriority:

in the limit the *non-being-for-other* becomes prominent, the qualitative negation of the other, which is thereby kept apart from the something which is reflected into itself. (SL, p. 126)

Kant's statement on the *Grenze* in the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* posits the limit of theoretical reason:

Bounds [*Grenzen*] (in extended beings) always presuppose a space existing outside a certain definite place and enclosing it. (*Prol.*, p. 101)

Hegel shows that practical reason in Kant is subject to the same *Grenze* because although 'duty' refers outside the *Grenze* to the 'surroundings' (to the 'space for knowledge of things-in-themselves' of which 'we can never have definite concepts'),⁶ the *Grenze* reappears in the 'as if' structure of 'duty', although now as 'limitation' (*Schranke*): 'Duty is an ought directed against the particular will' (*SL*, p. 136). Directed against the particular will, duty remains in a one-sided relation to determinate being: 'it is held up as an ought to the will insofar as this has the capacity to isolate itself from the true' (*ibid.*). Infinite and finite are opposed.

The movement from the concept of *Grenze* to the concept of *Schranke* is the movement from the limits of Kantian theoretical reason to the Fichtean *Sollen*. In Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* theoretical reason is 'grounded' in practical reason.⁷ The *Sollen* explicates the 'passing of limits' which is demanded in the 'ought' both of Kantian duty and of Fichtean knowledge of the practical. But Fichte's exposition of the conception of limitation implicit in Kant's practical reason represents Kant's own concept of *Schranke* in the *Prolegomena*:

Bounds [*Grenzen*] (in extended beings) always presuppose a space existing outside a certain definite place and enclosing it. Limits [*Schranke*] do not require this, but are mere negations which affect a quantity so far as it is not absolutely complete. (*Prolog.*, p.101)

The problem of the 'not absolutely complete' will reemerge, as the Hegelian dialectic shows, within the Kantian and Fichtean 'ought', since the *Sollen* contains a *Nicht-Sollen*: the Kantian and Fichtean conceptions of infinity demand that infinity not be reached.

This infinite has the fixed determination of a *beyond* which cannot be reached for the very reason it *it is not meant to be reached* [*nicht erreicht werden soll*]. (*SL*, p. 142)

Hegel's point is that, not only is the *Sollen* a 'formalism of possibility' which implies an impossibility (*SL*, p. 133), but it is a direct self-contradiction since it contains a *Nicht-Sollen*. Kristeva has an intimation only of 'impossibility' and not 'possibility' when she considers this finite/infinite relation, and hence does not make the transition from 'contradiction' to 'absolute contradiction'; does not discover that the highest point of contradiction is co-extensive with absolute finitude.

The understanding is satisfied that it has reconciled these two [finite and infinite], but the truth is that it is entangled in unreconciled, unresolved, absolute contradiction... The contradiction occurs as a direct result of the circumstance that the finite remains as a determinate being opposed to the infinite, so that there are *two* determinatenesses; *there are* two worlds, one infinite and one finite, and in their relationship the infinite is only the *limit* of the finite and is thus only a determinate infinite, an *infinite which is itself finite*. (*SL*, p. 139)

The inconsistency in Kristeva's reconstruction of Hegel is the attempt to extract 'contradiction' as the motor of the dialectic from the standpoint which clings to finitude, from the standpoint she attributes to the Hegelian 'system' while preserving 'negativity' as contradiction with a 'revolutionary value'.

For Kristeva, 'determination is movement, at the same time as being or because it is a limitation'. For Hegel, absolute contradiction fixes the limitation: determination is no longer a movement but an alternating determination [*Wechselbestimmung*], a 'bad infinity' in which the movement from finite to infinite and back again manifests and makes absolute the repetition of the 'same'. This is to say that the bad infinity makes absolute the 'simple qualitative being'

from which reason was first extracted by determination as the movement of contradiction.

Nevertheless, the bad infinity or double result is the 'external realization' of the concept of infinity that it does not advance to. It is therefore not a return to 'something' as indifferent exteriority, or to the abstraction which is formal thought's conception of identity. It has passed through the concept of *Schranke* and so posited the unity of 'something' and 'other': 'the infinite itself attains affirmative being only *by means of* negation, as the negation of the negation.' Bad infinity is therefore a 'result' (even if *double*):

when this its affirmation is taken as merely simple qualitative being, the negation contained in it is reduced to a simple immediate negation and thus to a determinateness and limit. (*SL*, p. 141)

The 'limit', or contradiction, which extracted reason from simple immediacy, is what leads to the bad infinity if it is itself fixed by reason. Kristeva grasps the first movement:

Conceived as a contradiction, the *determination extracts* the reasoning that posits it as such from the principle of identity as affirmation of the same (*MSD*, p. 273; my emphasis)

but fails to draw the consequences of the concept of limit; does not grasp the movement in which the logic unfolds what takes place in the 'bad infinity' - the 'return' to immediacy. Kristeva attributes to Hegel - and philosophy in general - only a vague presentiment of the significance of the 'void' philosophical reason posits and which will creep up on its mastery.

Hegel's *Logic*, however, confronts the void. The return (*Rückkehr*) to the moment of simple qualitative being in the dialectic of 'finite and infinite' is only possible because the indeterminate 'something' is sublated. The repetition means, therefore, that

'infinity' is not only indeterminate, but a *void* - 'although the *in-itself* of the finite, nevertheless a beyond in the dim, inaccessible distance, *outside* of which the finite is and remains' (SL, p. 140). The void belongs to the infinite 'in its *simple determination*, affirmative as negation of the finite' (SL, p. 137).

When Kristeva fixes the dialectic in the movement of *Grenze* and *Schranke*, she turns 'negation of the negation' into affirmative negation: 'the negative affirmation or the affirmative negativity which constitutes all dialectical determination' (MSD, p. 27). Hegel shows that negative affirmation is the *Sollen* which contains a *Nicht-Sollen*: 'a beyond which cannot be reached, for the very reason that *it is not meant* to be reached, because the determinateness of the beyond, of the *affirmative* negation is not let go' (SL, p. 142).

It is not simply a question of Kristeva having presented Kantian and Fichteian practical reason under the guise of Hegelian reason. It is a question of what happens when she 'lets go' of the affirmative negation without having thought it through. Her departure from the 'system' starts out from the finite/infinite relation as it is posited by the understanding. Consequently the concept of the 'system' re-presents reason 'posited' in its 'enclosure':

it is the series finitude-unity-sphericity-totality which *saturates this system* (despite its fundamental movement), assigning it its power (and not struggle), and its bounds [*bornes*]. (MSD, pp. 273-4)

This departure from the *Logic* will affect the ensuing concept of infinity 'in' language.

2. Infinity 'in' Language: the Logic of the Signifier

The union (impossible for the concept which *originates* despite everything from the

understanding, whatever be its *becoming*) of finite (determined) and infinite (its negative affirmation) is realised in this logic which Hegel renders thinkable without for all that approaching it, and which is at work in poetic language: *the logic of the signifier*. (MSD, pp. 276-7)

Kristeva's departure from Hegel rests on the assertion that the 'impossible union' of finite and infinite structures the idealist dialectical logic and proscribes its scope. The *Logic* cannot move from a discovery of the movement of 'contradiction' to a grasp and presentation of its fundamental moment. The fundamental moment is the 'scission of matter', 'heterogeneous contradiction; its presentation is possible by way of 'the logic (law) of the signifier':

contradiction reveals itself as the basic matrix of all *signifiante* or, if one wishes, of all signifying practice. The specificity of 'poetic language' within these signifying practices consists in the fact that contradiction goes so far as to *represent* itself there as *law* of its functioning. (MSD, p. 276)

Even though Kristeva's position on the 'origination' of the Hegelian concept from the understanding is a critical one, the logic of the signifier is itself approached by way of Hegel's 'speculative proposition'.

this '*relation* represented by the simple copula' in the proposition, a subjective relation which 'from the grammatical point of view...(is) founded on the indifferent exteriority of subject and predicate' is thus, in a *logic of genesis*, a *contradiction* which *presents* itself as *determination*. This is what the generation of the concept demonstrates to grammar, thereby suspending syntactic articulation, or at least opening it onto the abyss - for whoever wants to think this contradiction. (MSD, p. 275)

Kristeva aligns the hindrance to representational thinking brought about by the speculative proposition with a displacement of the object of linguistics. What is checked by Hegel's 'speculative proposition' is the

movement of representational thinking when it confronts the normal, external, relation of subject and predicate. Representational thinking moves across the content (accidents or predicates) and returns to the 'passive' subject which serves as the 'basis upon which the movement runs back and forth' (*Phen.* #60). Since this is a passive and empty basis without the predicates, the movement of representational thinking runs through and out of the determination as a whole; it 'roams at will' (*ibid.*). When representational thinking loses the solid and empty ground of the 'subject', because the relation of subject and predicate is not an external connection, its free roaming is hindered:

Picture-thinking [*das vorstellende Denken*], whose nature it is to run through the accidents or predicates and which, because they are nothing more than predicates and accidents, rightly goes beyond them, is checked in its progress, since that which has the form of a predicate in the proposition is the substance itself. It suffers, as we might put it, a counter-thrust [*Gegenstoss*]. (*ibid.*)

The connection of subject and predicate which permits the free roaming of 'thought' is, for Kristeva, the syntax of the understanding, object of linguistics. Linguistics 'has given itself as its object language as expression of the understanding' (*MSD*, p. 275). The 'hindrance to thought' in the speculative proposition and the logic at work in poetic language, the 'text', are comparable insofar as they are activities excluding the syntax of the understanding: 'representative thought is checked in its course "when what has the form of a predicate in the proposition, is substance itself"' (*MSD*, p. 277) As a 'result', for Kristeva, speculative thinking 'introduces a production/generation that the act of the understanding doesn't show' (*MSD*, p.281).

Kristeva's criticism of the Hegelian concept ('which originates, despite everything, from the understanding') is inconsistent with her acknowledgment that the act of the understanding is both obstacle to and function of the dialectic: Hegel

conceives the genesis or production of determination as being the *affirmation* of a negation which draws (the individual) into the negative movement of the understanding. (MSD, p. 272)

Implicit here is the move through Fichte in Hegelian dialectic. External reflection fixes, without recognizing, the constitutive act of reason (*absolute Setzen*). Fichte disclosed a transcendental logic behind the principles of formal logic: the principles of identity and non-contradiction are themselves 'abstractions from' transcendental logic, from the activity of reason.⁸ Hegel showed that the Fichtean absolute fixed, without recognizing, the principle of absolute opposition - whose moments were discussed in section 1 above.

Kristeva notes that external reflection turns away from the movement of determination because it holds fast to the abstraction from the activity of the understanding which leads to the formal conception of determination: the external relation of subject and predicate. She therefore both acknowledges and denounces the necessity of the Fichtean moment in Hegelian logic. Denouncing the 'origination' of the concept from the understanding is an inconsistency analogous to the one exposed above: the extraction of 'negativity' (contradiction) from the dialectic, and its preservation in the face of the 'absolute finitude' from which it is inseparable. Kristeva confines the 'concept' to absolute finitude: 'Hegel thus discovers a logic which is at work in the genesis of the concept and which the concept itself *does not represent*, even if it constitutes itself in it'

(MSD, p. 274-5). 'Negativity' (genesis) is then developed into her own notion of 'generation'.

The denunciation and abandonment of the Hegelian concept; the notion of 'generation'; and the assertion that the 'text' can represent 'contradiction' - all proceed by way of a *return* to external reflection and its grasp of the relation between subject and predicate. That is to say, Kristeva sees the reintroduction of *Vorstellung* as the way out of Hegel's system, since it is what Hegelian philosophy 'rigorously excludes'. The evidence for this comes from the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

philosophical exposition would obtain a plasticity only when rigorously excluding the ordinary type of relation between the parts of a proposition. (cited in MSD, p. 278, n.1)

The 'text' realizes infinity, and contradiction 'represents itself there' because poetic language 'sublates' and does not 'exclude' the ordinary proposition: it is 'language at work'.

Kristeva asks of Hegel's distinction between the ordinary and the speculative proposition: 'But would this be a philosophy? And won't "plasticity" always leave a place necessary to a discourse for representing it, and which would be this "ordinary syntax" that Port-Royal and the Encyclopaedia had already posited?' (ibid.). Kristeva fears that the relation between the speculative and ordinary proposition is a '*Wechselbestimmung*', an alternating determination. She will therefore substitute poetic language for philosophy as what 'can' unify these two moments. Hegelian philosophy is deemed unable to, because - as has been shown - the concept and its movement ('production/generation') have been separated into finite opposed to infinite. By contrast, in poetic language:

The terms (signifieds) determined (by the signified), thus 'finite', are put into relation through the aid of the *signifier* (contiguity, phonic resemblance) which substitutes itself for the *copula* (*is*) realising the relation in the judgement and, thereby, in the sentence. (*MSD*, p. 277)

Kristeva derives an intimation of this in Hegel from the latter's analogy between the speculative proposition and rhythm:

The conflict of the form of a proposition in general and of the unity of the concept which destroys this form is analagous to that which takes place in rhythm between meter and accent. The rhythm results from the balancing between the two and from their unification. Likewise, in the philosophical proposition the identity of the subject and predicate musn't destroy their difference which the form of the proposition expresses, but their unity must flash out like a harmony. The form of the proposition is the manifestation of determined meaning, or the accent which distinguishes the content in it; but the fact that the predicate expresses the substance and that the subject itself falls into the universal, is the *unity* into which this accent expires. (cited in *MSD*, p. 277, n.3)

Kristeva fails to draw the conclusions for the Hegelian 'concept' that this passage expounds; that is to say, she fails to grasp that speculative thought not only 'hinders' the subject-object relations of formal thought, but that this 'hindrance' comes about through the subject-substance relation whose unfolding is speculative exposition. Instead, Kristeva asks: 'but would this be a philosophy?'; and remarks that: 'Even in Hegel, if in the discrete fashion to be found recurrently since Freud, there is an indication that the dialectical logic in language would be that of poetic language' (*MSD*, p. 268). She proposes, further, that the 'comparison to a prosody' (all that is discerned of the analogy between the speculative proposition and 'rhythm' in the above passage) is Hegel's only way of 'showing' what cannot be represented by philosophy: the 'unheard of syntax

baffling [*déroutant*] the syntax of the sentence' This 'unheard of' syntax is 'the logic of the signifier'.

The logic of the signifier is the logic of 'language at work: the 'text'. 'Work, substituting itself for the *act* opens on to a linguistic functioning where the relating of contradictory terms constitutes the *law* superimposing itself on the *syntactic law* articulating the signifying *act*, and comes (as in Mallarmé's *Un coup de dès*) to prevent it from completing itself in a phrastic whole' (*MSD*, p. 279). The relating of contradictory terms constitutes a *law*: this is the 'realization' of Kristeva's (positive) infinity. Its 'superimposition' on the syntactic law establishes the union of poetic (connotative) and formal (denotative) language, since it works out of, but prevents the completion of, the formal proposition (phrastic whole). The latter's 'rigorous exclusion' by Hegel would, in Kristeva's view, permit its return in the form of a 'discourse for representing' speculative philosophy.

Moreover the 'text' makes a significant advance on transcendental philosophy: 'In the same gesture - for the text - the status of what is not meaning or language finds itself modified: this "outside" is maintained as non-transcendental "object", not a beyond of the subject, but its contrary, producing it' (*MSD*, p. 279).⁹ The claim to the modified outside - 'heterogeneous contradiction' - presents the 'materialism' of Kristeva's 'infinity'. Yet it retains the nature of a negative affirmation. That is to say, Kristevan infinity - in Hegel's terms - is as much an infinite 'in its simple determination' as the Fichtean absolute she contrasts it with.

Here it is equally the I [*Moi*] which returns to its other - infinite, independent of it, its contrary which affirms it in negating it. The sphere (of the understanding, of subjectivity, of objectivity) is perforated in this return, and it is in heterogeneity - *radical exteriority of meaning* - that the

text which works on contradiction emerges.
(MSD, p. 278; my emphasis)

Heterogeneity, the 'radical exteriority of meaning' expresses the logic of matter which Kristeva counters to Hegelian 'system'. It is the so-called 'sublation' of 'Hegelian totality', and therefore the third and final stage in Kristeva's inversion of Hegel.

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The discussion of Kristeva's adoption and adaptation of Hegel's logic of determinate being has established that Kristeva's 'heterogeneous contradiction', understood as a *law*, derives from her extraction from the dialectic of 'Hegelian contradiction', posited as the 'law' of the dialectic. It has been shown that this is the 'law' of Kantian and Fichtean practical philosophy. The following section will show how this retention of the 'law' of contradiction, however it is reformulated, affects the concept of re-jection - the 'sublation' of Hegelian 'negativity'; and how it brings about the division of Kristeva's subject 'in' social and political relations.

B. The Reformulation of Negativity: Rejection

1. The Advance to the Concept of Matter

At this paroxysm of idealism, the latter inverts into its contrary and it is there that Marx, Engels, Lenin seized it in order to make of this former summit - the Absolute Idea - a new base: matter. (MSD, p. 280)

Kristeva proposes a twofold significance for the transition to the 'absolute idea' in the *Science of Logic*: the significance for idealism - reclosure (subjective or structural); and the significance for materialism - transition to 'matter'. The latter significance is there for materialist thought because the 'Absolute Idea' is the moment in which the logical genesis of the concept 'returns to the real'. As a result of this understanding of the *Logic* two conceptions of becoming are posited: the becoming of the concept and the becoming of matter. This means for Kristeva that the 'field' of signification (the subject, the concept, meaning) can be opened up to 'heterogeneous contradiction' (the 'field' of socio-historical contradiction).

These two 'fields' are implicitly contrasted with the Kantian and Fichtean finite/infinite relation when Kristeva distinguishes between the infinite as 'one of two' and the infinite as 'the other of one' (Kristeva's *heteros*). The latter is reached via the absolute idea and makes of it the 'summit' of the Hegelian system and the 'possibility' of materialist thought: a 'revision' of the 'process of causality'. It is this revision which establishes the relation in Kristeva's thought between Hegelian dialectic and Lacan's return to Freud. This is the explicit return to Hegel, and it leads to the claim that Lacan's dialectical interpretation of Freud contains a reminder to historical materialism:

it is a psychoanalyst, and one since Freud, who was the first to posit the necessity of

recognising the principle of *heterogeneity* as the first stage in the revision of the process of causality, writing notably: 'It is strange that materialist thought seems to forget that it is from this recourse to heterogeneity that it took its impetus.' (MSD, p. 280; citation from 'La chose freudienne', *Écrits*)

The assertion that Lacan was the *first* to posit the necessity of recognizing the principle of heterogeneity subjects the Freudian 'discovery' to an inversion analogous to the materialist inversion of Hegel. The return to *Hegel* is justified by the importance of recognizing the connection between the 'discovery' of the unconscious and materialist social and political thought. It justifies Kristeva's hypothesis that a return to Hegel might suggest an 'inversion' of Freudian thought too, insofar as it did not proceed to that recognition: the drives are the fundamental moment in the new terrain opened up by psychoanalysis for thinking the subject; and the 'unconscious' is rendered anew as a 'middle' in the becoming of matter - a 'becoming' which is therefore formed by 'meaning', and is historical.

The return to and inversion of Hegel's thought in general, taken to be the thought of the Absolute Idea, will permit the 'positing' of the principle of heterogeneity: the relation of meaning and matter can only be posited *by way of* the Hegelian concept, since the latter produces matter as its 'contrary' but fails to grasp the significance of this outcome of its dialectic.

The Hegelian relation inverted: not return of meaning to the real, but designation, through meaning, of the irreducibility which opposes it to a matter in contradiction whence, and in opposition to which, it posits itself. (MSD, p. 282)

The Hegelian concept (the dialectic of the 'unitary notion of the *thinking subject*') designates, and thus

engenders its contrary: matter as 'subject' (*MSD*, p. 281). For Kristeva, Lacan's recognition of the principle of heterogeneity goes by way of and beyond Marxism, Hegel, and the 'primacy' of the unconscious, since to posit the principle is to open the field of meaning (including the 'processes called psychoanalytic') to the field of socio-historical contradiction. Kristeva's concept of 'matter' establishes her claim to have opened up a materialist social and political thinking 'with' the subject:

matter is not a beyond of the subject nor its transcendence: it is its heterogene, the contrary of this 'something' which it is and which, thus, determines it while determining itself in the contradiction which posits them.¹⁰

The claim to grasp the concrete history of the subject in its social and political relations, by inverting idealist contradiction into heterogeneous contradiction, establishes Kristeva's finite/infinite relation: 'other of one' (producing it) and not 'one of two'. 'One of two' would, in Kristeva's view, correspond to the idealist finite/infinite (absolute finitude: Hegel's 'there are two worlds'), although she has not followed through the moments the *Sollen*.

For Kristeva, Hegelian philosophy has exposed and Lacanian psychoanalysis has articulated two ways in which the subject may 'escape' the encounter with heterogeneous contradiction. The first is by way of the transcendental alternative; and failing that, by way of the 'channel of objectal investment' (*MSD*, p. 283).¹¹ The latter is articulated in Lacan's concept of the 'imaginary':

Freud demonstrated how the *outside* takes the place of an *object* introduced into the *imaginary* of the subject by the bias of narcissism. Lacan: 'The imaginary function is that which Freud formulated to govern the investment of the object as narcissism. It is to this point that we have ourselves returned

in demonstrating that the specular image is the channel which the transfusion of bodily libido takes towards the object'. (*MSD*, p. 283, n.1; citation from 'Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir', *Écrits*, p. 282)12

Kristeva's designation of the 'outside' as heterogeneous contradiction raises the question whether

through its relationship [*parenté*] with Hegel, the Freudian discovery is susceptible to an 'inversion' analogous to that which materialism carries out in the Hegelian system, that is to say to a scission of the signifying sphere and to an affirmation of its heterogeneous outside (in this case, to an opening of the processes called psychoanalytic towards the field of socio-historical contradictions). (*MSD*, p. 280)

Although the unconscious - 'realm of pure contradiction' - is the passage through which the Absolute Idea is 'put back on its feet', the Freudian treatment of the unconscious remains in the 'field' of signification. For Kristeva, the concept of the 'imaginary' comprehends the post-Hegelian 'escape' for the subject lacking the transcendental alternative, and opens up the question of the 'relation to heterogeneity'. On Kristeva's reading, it is the recognition of heterogeneity (or rather, the positing of its *necessity*, by Lacan), and of the 'imaginary' as an escape, which expands the significance of psychoanalysis as a theory of civilization. The social and political significance of the psychoanalytic articulation of the 'imaginary' pertains to its knowledge of psychosis as a 'structure': 'a "psychotic" structure of the subject of which psychoanalysis, with Lacan, has had the merit of giving us the truth - as being the structure of a monotheist (which is to say homogenizing) civilization' (*MSD*, p. 285).

A homogenizing civilization must 'redouble' itself in order to secure its stability. Monotheism shores up homogeneity via its double - the *objet petit a*, 'presenting death'. As a structure of the 'subject',

psychosis re-presents monotheism's 'escape from heterogeneity'. This account of 'homogenizing civilization' not only rejects post-Hegelian thought which returns to a pre-Hegelian position, 'for which matter is a transcendence' (*MSD*, p. 284). It is also supposed to apply to the Hegelian 'system', which is held to withdraw (at the 'summit' of the absolute idea) from the 'irreducible positing of the heterogeneous'; and to succumb to a subjective reclosure; which is to say, to the redoubled but homogeneous structure where 'all objectality is presented in the form of "*objet petit a*"' (*MSD*, pp. 284-5).

The 'cold universality' of philosophical exposition, which frustrates desire and phantasm (see note 12), is itself the downfall of philosophy since, at the 'summit' of the becoming of the concept, it proceeds to a twofold reclosure. First, subjective reclosure: 'the dialectical reflection emanating from the I is not led to its suppression in the heterogene where I finds its foundation'. Second, the structural reclosure: since the I 'plays the totalizing role', the transition to the real - which Hegel's 'absolute idea' represents in this 'inversion' - binds the real in a 'relational systematicity' (*MSD*, p. 281). Philosophical exposition (idealist dialectic) fails to approach and posit the heterogeneity which shows up at the summit of the system.

The account of 'monotheist civilization' in '*L'expérience et la pratique*' throws light on the claim which opens the transition from idealist to materialist dialectical logic presented in '*Matière, sens, dialectique*'. Kristeva asserts, drawing on Sollers, that 'materialism can only be expounded as a twofold unity'. Positing heterogeneity is not only an outcome of the confrontation of idealism and historical materialism. It surpasses this confrontation, as its cause. 'The materialist dialectical logic is thus the

logic of dialectical materialism, i.e the logic of the *cause* of the materialism/idealism confrontation, as well as the logic of the *method* as subject of a process without subject'.¹³

In the developed materialist revision of the process of causality - developed 'with' Freud and modern literature - heterogeneous contradiction is known to engender and exceed the 'symbolic order'. It is not only idealist philosophy but also Marxist discourse which re-presents this order, since the Marxist subject of practice is 'a tenacious "I" armed with ideological and theoretical assurance' (*EP*, p. 134). Not knowing the 'negativity' at its basis, its fate is to *block* the process of practice: 'Fixing an opaque real in an atomic and null subjectivity' (*ibid.*). For Kristeva, this failure is due to the fate of Hegel's 'practical concept' in Marxism.¹⁴ Only the turn first to (Bataille) 'fiction', and then subsequently to Maoist practice, shows the way out of the mechanical repetition which withholds Marxist theory and practice from the 'real, material and signifying, objective and subjective device/organization (*dispositif*)' (*ibid.*).

The 'inversions' of Hegel and Freud, and the discovery of the 'cause' of the idealism/materialism confrontation is coextensive with Kristeva's position on 'subjective' and 'social' change in modern social and political relations: the site of change is 'relation to heterogeneity'. 'Beyond' the objectal investment is the seizure of the monotheist structure - and possible transformation of 'monotheist civilization':

If one alters this structure by way of relation to its heterogene, which engenders it and constantly insists on it, one is in the presence of an 'other' subjectal configuration that certain signifying practices bring on the scene. In these practices, where the subject *says*, matter, far from 'presenting' itself as '*objet a*' or

as complement in a redoubled but homogeneous structure, contra-dicts it as *infinite outside of the signifying double* (redoubling of the subject, relation of the subject to the signifier), and forms the constant and radical contradiction which *determines* these other contradictions (or relations) internal to the homogeneous domain of meaning.

'Signifying practice' is the concept of the presentation of contradictions in social and political relations (political experience), *qua* relation of social and political relations to their 'principal contradiction': matter in contradiction. The latter posits the subject (and meaning) as one of its moments. The logic of this 'saying' (presentation) is the logic of the signifier. The relation to the infinite (presentation and not representation of political experience) is 'poetic language'. It produces the connection (*liaison, Logos*) between the logic of the concept (the subject, meaning) and matter (posited as heterogeneous outside). Kristeva's logic of the signifier, relating and (re)producing matter and concept is not only presented by way of the Hegelian concept, but the latter is its substantial, historical, element.

2. Matter in Contradiction

The Kristevan finite/infinite relation designates her absolute ('matter'), but expresses the non-relation of finite (meaning) and infinite (matter) since 'outside' meaning refers to the absolute impossibility of the relation of meaning to matter (matter posits meaning as one of its moments, meaning *says* matter - as ungraspable).

Poetic language is the relation to matter *qua* 'outside', as it is posited by meaning. This logic of matter intimates another *Grenze* (absolute limit) within the movement of *Schranke* (passing the limit): meaning posits matter 'as an outside of its limit, as the

infinite that its limit releases and of which meaning is *one* of the determinations - which it is, besides, the only one to determine' (*MSD*, p. 282).

If matter 'engenders' meaning as one of its moments, nevertheless meaning's relation to the infinite is fixed in the moment of the *Grenze*: of the 'release' of infinity. This one-sided relation of finite and infinite is expressed by Kristeva as 'the Hegelian relation inverted: not return of meaning to the real, but designation, through meaning of the irreducibility which opposes it to a matter in contradiction whence, and in opposition to which, it posits itself' (*MSD*, p. 282). This irreducibility, as we shall see, subsequently informs the founding distinction of 'semiotic' and 'symbolic', and can be referred here to a moment in Hegel's dialectic of finite and infinite, i.e. to the moment of 'falsifying the double unity' of finite and infinite:

taking the infinite in one of the two unities not as negated, but rather as the in itself, in which, therefore, determinateness and limitation are not to be explicitly present [*nicht gesetzt werden sollen - should not be posited*], for these would debase and ruin it. (*SL*, p. 145)

The one-sided relation of finite and infinite is revealed in the account of symbolization in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where the 'semiotic', in which Kristeva seeks a pre-symbolic law is posited as regulated but without law: as the 'chora', in which 'determinateness and limitation should not be posited'.

Poetic language is therefore the relation to matter as it is determined by posited meaning, to the 'outside'. It is therefore both a renewal of and dependent upon the finite: an infinite process. Given the 'irreducibility' which opposes meaning to a matter in contradiction the possibility of language as poetic language, the 'saying' of matter, is a difficulty: 'if

it is not remainder, loss, hasardous object, complement, can *matter* be said as *heterogeneity* in discourse?' (*MSD*, p. 285).

Kristeva asserts the following. 'Theoretically', heterogeneity is spoken as dialectic of nature. 'For the "subject"', its paths were traced by Freud as 'beyond the pleasure principle' (*ibid.*). Kristeva makes the 'drives' in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* bear the 'social and political' conflict. This is achieved by stressing the moment of heterogeneity - 'transition' - in the theory of the drives. Where Freud conjectures 'in addition to the conservative instincts which impel towards repetition there may be others which push forward towards progress and the production of new forms' (*BPP*, p. 309), Kristeva affirms the 'external disturbing forces' (source of the 'detours' of the death drive) as socio-historical contradiction, and therefore divests the drives of their 'dualism'.¹⁵

With respect to the possibility of 'poetic language', therefore, the texts presenting matter are designated as those which 'feel' the paths traced by Freud. Only they can

feel the disquieting limits which define them as texts: in a movement of becoming out of matter and history across the unconscious; thus in a determining contradiction with them, and practising at the same time their own contradictions. (*MSD*, p. 285; my emphasis)

The unconscious, the middle of the movement of becoming, belongs therefore to the 'logic of the signifier'. The Freudian discovery displaces Hegelian logic: it is the logic of the '"scission" of the subject in the signifier' (*MSD*, p. 271). It does not itself present the logic of history (matter), but is a psychoanalytic logic 'in the sense in which Freud heard the hysteric's body speak'.

The significance of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* therefore lies outside the realm of the signifier 'as such', in the paths of heterogeneity it traces, 'for the "subject"'. The logic of positing, or theory of symbolization, which articulates the transition from the drive to the signifier is set out in *Revolution in Poetic Language*. This logic discloses the signifier as site of the relation to heterogeneity (release from the *Grenze*) which makes poetic language the practice of 'subjectal' transfiguration and the surpassing of the Hegelian system. The logic of the signifier at work in poetic language realizes a contradiction of the signifieds, which is:

no longer that of a *totality* (sentence, subject, concept, judgement, syllogism) but - the unlimited signifier having supplanted the copula (being) - that of an *infinity*. The concept thus returns to its foundation and contradicts itself there in becoming text. (MSD, p. 277)

Texts 'feel the disquieting limits which define them as texts: in a movement of becoming out of matter and history across the unconscious' (MSD, p. 285). Kristevan matter is thought 'as historical, i.e. in becoming' (MSD, p. 284). The advance to the concept of matter is therefore a synthesis of the 'concept' and 'drives', an 'inversion' of Hegel and Freud which reforms dialectical materialism.

The remainder of this chapter will outline Kristeva's move from the *Science of Logic* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and continue to mark the premature exits from the Hegelian text. These are marked in order to approach a statement, in the final section of the chapter, of what is at stake in the crucial and sustained Kristevan problematic: the division of the 'poetic' and 'social' subject which arises from the primacy of the subject in process as a 'split' subject.

Kristeva's attention goes to specific configurations of consciousness in the *Phenomenology* in order to present Bataille as the first to respond to the difficulty of the 'saying' of matter.¹⁶ The theme of the essay '*L'expérience et la pratique*' is the possibility of the literary function as a practice which does not avoid the socio-historical moment.

3. Unknown to myself via the Janus-face of desire

since the bourgeois Revolution, the essential adventure of literature has been to take up, to dissolve, to displace Christian ideology and the art from which it is inseparable. (EP, p. 107)

The appreciation of Bataillean 'experience', 'desire' and 'fiction' contra Hegelian *Erfahrung*, *Begierde* and philosophical exposition expounds Kristeva's investigation into the 'power' of literature. It is a question of literature's power to attack the 'reserves of social power' in our society, and the 'monotheist' instance of our civilization, the latter designated as the significance which the 'absolute idea' has for idealism. The analysis of the 'failure' of (late nineteenth-century) avant-garde literature in its attack on Christian ideology and its art is assessed in terms of the transformed notion of 'Hegelian' negativity which has been outlined above.¹⁷

The diagnosis of this failure supports Kristeva's deployment of Bataille and Lacan *contra* Hegel - whose philosophy is held to have 'explicated' Christian idealism. Bataillean 'fiction', outreaching both avant-garde literature and philosophical exposition, knows the necessity of a 'thetic' moment in the affirmation of heterogeneity (since, as shown, the Kristevan infinity of the signifier is a release from and re-posing of finitude). The failure of the avant-garde's attack on 'the humanist, substantialist, or directly transcendental instance' lies in the avoidance of the

thetic moment. Its attempt at explosion, dissolution, and death accentuate the negation immanent to and sublimated in Christianity. It is therefore confined to the 'inverse' of this sublimation - to the negativist fetish:

the sole arrest that this course towards dislocation gives itself is the desire captured by an object which is either a bodily fragment or a fragment of language. The fetishization of the fragmented body or of the verbal components, indeed of the 'text', is thus the inverse bound up with a negativism which attacks the unity of the subject but which does not go out of it into the natural and social process. (*EP*, p. 108)

Avant-garde literature takes the 'second' path in the escape from heterogeneity. The relation to heterogeneity ('going out into the natural and social process') demands in contrast to the 'funereal, macabre' problematic a passage through the finite as the condition of the renewal of the process of negativity.

The process of negativity unfolds, but doesn't want to know that a *thetic moment*, a *stasis*, an ephemeral arrest is the condition of its renewal. As if the affirmative moment daunted the process of negativity and as if, rather than attacking it, this negativity preferred to leave it in suspense, intact, elsewhere, to others. (*EP*, p. 107)

Kristeva finds confirmation of her position on the avant-garde problematic - the pure accentuation of Christianity's sublimated negation - in Bataille's position on 'poetry'. She derives support for the affirmation of the thetic moment as condition of the 'essential adventure of literature' from the passage in Bataillean experience through the 'subject' (affirmation and expenditure of the thetic moment). This possibility of *saying* the heterogeneity of matter in discourse (i.e the possibility of poetic language) was raised in '*Matière, sens, dialectic*', where Bataillean '*expérience*' was merited as 'first' on the

path of the negation of the signifying subject and of the *objets petit a* which 'betray' it, i.e. on the path of affirmation of 'a heterogene' (*MSD*, p. 285).

'*L'expérience et la pratique*' explores Bataillean experience as the threefold problem of 'saying' prediscursive materiality, of 'leading into' heterogeneity, and of having it 'pass into a problematic community'. The first calls on Bataillean 'fiction' against the Hegelian absolute knowledge that 'constitutes itself precisely in the assumption of heterogeneity in an opaque-atomic subject' (*EP*, p. 110). As has been shown, once knowledge (*savoir*) has been defined thus as systematicity, it is 'a limit' (*Grenze*) 'to be cleared' (*Schranke*). Thus Kristeva's emphasis on the Bataille-Hegel relation, and her turn to Bataillean 'desire' for the second aspect of her problematic. The Bataillean 'minor sovereign', desire, is absorbed into the problematic of clearing the limit of (modern) reason - of leading into heterogeneity, since Bataille runs the relation of desire and self-consciousness in idealist dialectic against the grain (*à rebours*), disclosing the 'repressed' moment of experience in Hegelian knowledge.¹⁸

Bataillean experience is therefore the process of the constitution of self-consciousness 'in reverse' (from 'unary' subject via desire to the unknown).¹⁹ 'Unknown to myself' is not deemed to be the 'result', but instead the movement '*à rebours*' which embraces the 'unknown' as a moment reveals that the truth of 'self-consciousness' is symbolization. *Expérience* is 'after' Hegel in the sense that it is a *practice* (transformative of the symbolic). The 'reversal' of the process of symbolization proceeds by way of the discovery of *expérience* beneath the Hegelian *Erfahrung* that is 'always' an experience of knowledge (*savoir*). In Kristeva Bataille's 'eroticism' therefore becomes a Janus-face unearthed from Hegelian phenomenology -

where it 'constitutes' self-consciousness (the 'unary' subject) as a paranoid subject. The moments of this self-constitution, when run 'against the grain', show the 'repressed moment' of Hegelian phenomenology: *Begierde* points to the schizoid rupture where Bataillean experience is elaborated. *Expérience* rehearses immediate 'sense-certainty' which the phenomenological process, dialectic 'of self-consciousness', definitively leaves behind.

Bataillean experience avoids 'absolute knowledge' and the 'discursive real' (Christianity's confusion of discourse *with* experience, *EP*, p. 111) and is on the path to heterogeneity by way of the heterogeneous 'operations' which pass through language. 'Laughter' and 'eroticism' are 'Bataille's' traversal (affirmation and expenditure) of thethetic-affirmative moment. They are Kristeva's response to the problem of leading the speaking subject to the pre-discursive movement, to the 'flux' of extra-discursive negativity 'circulating in nature and society (the society of others)'.

Kristeva's criticism of the subjectivism of avant-garde literature is that it 'leaves to others' the affirmative moment, which is the subjective and social moment in the process of negativity: the moment of 'the process of signifiante that makes of the subject a subject of knowledge [*savoir*] and a social subject' (*EP*, p. 109). This is what Bataille does not 'abdicate': the relation to others, the group, the social community. The avant-garde's failure of thethetic moment 'leaves to others' the relation to others since thethetic moment is the 'threshold' of relation to the group. 'Subjective and forcefully elitist' the avant-garde text leaves to metaphysics the relation to others, thus leaving metaphysics to 'reconstitute itself':

it is precisely on this threshold that metaphysics reconstitutes itself, that the

combatted unity reinstalls itself and that subjects, however lucid they have become about their internal mechanism (thanks to psychoanalysis and to the negativist-fetishist avant-garde), become opaque again, servers of the oppressive law, of technical reproduction, of the positivist saturation and even of social conformism. (*EP*, p. 109)

Bataille's reversal of 'Hegel' does not abdicate the subject (*moi*) but makes of the combatted unity 'only vertigo, "foyer", dance, where knowledge is not, but where the heterogeneous breaks loose' (*EP*, p. 109). Kristeva reassumes the 'Hegelian' logic of determination and finds a way out of external determinacy (indifferent externality) in her way through Bataille's 'I wanted only to rediscover cohesion in the diversity of described facts' (*EP*, p. 110). The advance from the logic of the concept to the logic of matter explicates Bataille's utterance in *Eroticism*: 'I have sacrificed everything to the search for a point of view whence the unity of the human spirit comes out again' (cited in *EP*, p. 110).

The shapes which lead the subject's 'lucidity' up to the movement preceding discouse are 'laughter' ('at every stasis assumed and traversed') and 'eroticism' ('the affirmation of life as far as into death') (*EP*, p. 112). These 'middles' on the path to heterogeneity presuppose and 'expend' the unary subject and therefore attack the latter's metaphysical fixation. Kristeva calls this presupposition and expenditure 'stasis, ephemeral arrest', discovering such a procedure specifically in Bataille's position on 'reproduction', quoting from *Eroticism*: 'the fundamental meaning of reproduction is no less the key to eroticism' (*EP*, p. 112). Bataillean desire is the passage Kristeva seeks since 'eroticism' figures the struggle (contradiction) of the symbolic (reproduction-filiation) and heterogeneity (death):

That death is invisible, outside reproduction and filiation, that their struggle is the

truth of the social relation, this is what Bataille has appear across the mechanical monotony of social reproduction. (*EP*, p. 112)

'Fusion' in Bataille is the introduction of separation into the procreation that society 'advocates in order to perpetuate its continuity'. It is therefore not continuity vis-à-vis discontinuity (the symbolic, signification) but their contradiction: 'union across separation and discontinuity' (*ibid.*). By emphasizing the importance to Bataille of reproduction as 'the linkage which resists violence and death, the logical principle assuring "the passage of continuity and discontinuity" without which there is no contradiction' (*ibid.*), Kristeva takes Bataillean experience into the genealogical reformulation of Lacan, the attempt to breach the symbolic without re-positing the 'atomic' subject of Marxism:

[Bataille] rehabilitates the sensible human activity of the *I* [*moi*] but in order to denounce its illusion. He insists on the unity of the human spirit (*Eroticism*), but in order to discover there the 'I-for-death'. He proclaims love and fusion, but as deaths. (*EP*, p. 109)

Bataille is therefore presented against the backdrop of elitist and fetishist literature, for his social and political thought:

what is aimed at is not the abolition of filiation, of the *One* or of mastery, it is their recognition [*reconnaissance*] as moments indispensable to a putting into play which surpasses them, in order to discover through [*à travers*] them the subject's adequation with the *movement* (the 'flux', the 'flame') of nature and society. (*EP*, p. 112)

Bataille's significance for Kristeva lies precisely in the 'relation to heterogeneity' which his reversal of Hegel enacts, in three moments. (1) Bataille's text acknowledges - passes through - the 'thetic moment' (the unary subject). (2) It presents desire ('minor sovereign') as the passage for the speaking subject.

(3) It goes back to immediate sense-certainty in Hegel, overcoming *Erfahrung* as the experience of self-consciousness since returning to the radical moment in experience, which takes place for Hegelian consciousness 'behind its back'. These conditions have no hierarchical order, although for Kristeva the first is what saves Bataillean fiction from missing its mark.

4. Constitutive and Consummating Desire

A reading of Hegel and Bataille demonstrates how, for philosophy, desire arises on the path of the constitution of unity, while for Bataille it is, in reverse [*à rebours*], the path of its consummation, its annihilation. (EP, p.113)

Kristeva's textual reading of the dialectic of desire in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is discreditable for mistaking the outset of the dialectic for its outcome. The significance drawn from the dialectic - 'desire is the essence of self-consciousness' - makes a nonsense of Hegelian *Erfahrung*, in which 'desire discovers that self-consciousness is not the essence of desire', and thereby fetishizes moments of the Hegelian text. Nevertheless, a premature challenge to Kristeva's way out of Hegel through Bataille would succumb to a self-defeating external return to Hegel. The import of Kristeva's reformulation of Lacan for the explicit and implicit returns to Hegel must be discovered by way of her presupposition of the 'achieved dialectic':

In Hegel, desire (*Begierde*) is a moment in the constitution of *self-consciousness*: it is thus a particularisation and a concretisation of negativity, a representation of its at once most differentiated and most suppressed movement, it is an *achieved* dialectic. (EP, p. 113)

The analysis of *Begierde* underlies both the interpretation of Hegelian 'experience', 'force', and 'negation', and the assertion that speculative exposition resubmits not only to the 'theological'

unitary subject but to modern philosophy's justification of the subject's 'juridical corollary, the State' (*EP*, p. 115). Kristeva's reading of the dialectic of desire is a crux of her estimation of reason and practice after Freud. In Kristeva's thought *Begierde* is the most 'open' configuration of Hegelian phenomenology. Its moments expose philosophy to the discoveries of psychoanalysis. They portray the 'essence' of the monotheist subject - for the materialist thinker who will come to read the dialectic against the grain (*à rebours*) in order to put philosophy's exposure to the discoveries of psychoanalysis into effect as a materialist practice: Bataille.

Bataillean 'operations' exceed the limit of avant-garde experience - subject to Hegel's criticism of the 'flight from the finite' - because the return to Hegel engages the theological instance, and displaces the inverse of it that is engendered in the sublimation of heterogeneity (fetish, *objet petit a*). The disclosure of heterogeneity therefore goes by way of the transformation of Hegelian 'desire', arising 'on the path of the constitution of unity' (*ibid.*).

In Kristeva's account, Hegelian dialectic is not only the explication of Christian idealism, but the site where the 'flux' of negativity exceeding discourse and judgement breaks through into philosophical thought. The philosophical project - having always been on the path of 'the One' - shows the trace of heterogeneity once idealism reaches its summit in Hegel, *as dialectical exposition*.

The appraisal of *Begierde* as a homogenizing but inherently divided trajectory rehearsing that of Life, the 'fluidity of the differences', in the element of the *unity* of certainty and of consciousness (*EP*, p.

113) is taken from the following passage in the *Phenomenology*.

The simple I [*Moi*] is this genus or the simple universal, for which the differences are *nothing* [*néant*], but it is this only when it is the negative essence of the independent moments which have formed themselves. Thus, self-consciousness is certain of itself only by superseding this other which presents itself to it as independent life; it is *desire, certain of the nullity of this other*, it posits this nothingness *for it* [*pour moi*] as proper truth, *annuls the independent object* and so gives itself the certainty of itself as *true certainty* which has therefore come to be for it [*pour elle*] in an objective form.²⁰

'We note', states Kristeva, 'the "paranoid mark" in the path of desire: self-consciousness constitutes itself through the supersession of the other, or of the Other, and desire is this supersession itself' (*EP*, p. 113).²¹ Kristeva apprehends the movement of supersession of the object which is Hegelian desire and, having presupposed self-certainty as the outcome of the movement, takes this movement to be the 'essence' of self-consciousness: 'The movement of scission continues and is the very essence of self-consciousness, corresponding to desire'. Hegelian self-consciousness is consequently taken to be a 'paranoid' unity because its essence (path) is the movement of scission. This is why the dialectic can be approved as a chink in philosophy which Lacan extends into the articulation of what is glimpsed there; which, in turn, begins to be a practice in Bataille.

Kristeva's move between Lacan and Bataille's 'post-Hegelianisms' can be witnessed in the following passage from '*L'expérience et la pratique*', which I have divided accordingly. With respect to Lacan:

Hegel states a truth about the subject that Lacan will make explicit: the subject is only paranoid under *the impulse of desire which sublimates and unifies the schizoid rupture*

in a quest for objects; paranoia is thereby not only the precondition of every subject - one becomes a subject only by accepting, be it provisionally, the paranoid unity which supersedes the [heterogeneous] other - but dwells in immediate proximity to the fragmenting [*morcellement*] that can be called schizoid, camouflaging its secret even while drawing on its energy. (*EP*, p. 113; my emphasis)

With respect to Bataille:

Although the 'fluidity of the differences' constitutes the *unity* of self-consciousness, it menaces it too, for, in this fluidity alone there is no more room for any *unity* of self-consciousness, any desire, or subjection (*Unterwerfung*) to life; on the contrary, what determines this division is death, the inorganic, rupture and differentiation with no unifying fluidity. (*EP*, p. 113)

The 'consummation' of unity is a process which breaches the 'paranoid' unity constituted by way of desire *qua* the reiterated process of supersession of the other. The Bataillean process translates law, unity into desire: 'thethetic-affirmative *phase* opened onto the heterogeneity which dissolves it is no longer law, commandment, unity; it is called desire' (*EP*, p. 112). Desire is 'no longer law'. In Kristeva's account Bataille's sovereign subject is a 'trans-Oedipus', 'knowing' the Oedipus complex as a limit. Kristeva's psychoanalysis of monotheism therefore opens up the pre-Oedipal 'subject' as a 'refusal of the new law through a new fiction' (*EP*, p. 123). This convergence of the thethetic-affirmative phase, *qua* process installing the Oedipal law, and *qua* Hegelian constitution of self-consciousness, is a reading of the dialectic of desire which presupposes the 'self-consciousness' which the movement of *Begierde* discovers is *not* the essence of its movement.

Lacan's reading of Hegel lies behind the emphasis on the presence of Hegel in Bataille's theoretical writings; and on the rendering of Bataillean 'fiction'

as the expenditure of Hegelian self-consciousness. Kristeva accepts from Lacan, first, that phenomenological experience is teleological, an experience 'of knowledge' from the beginning.²² Second, and consequently, she accepts the concept of desire ('desire divides the subject from itself') as a strictly psychoanalytic discovery.

5. *Expérience*, out of *Erfahrung*

If it is possible for others, for Orientals whose imagination doesn't burn at the names of Theresa, Heloïse, Isolde, to abandon themselves to empty infinity with no other desire, we cannot conceive of ultimate collapse in a way other than love. At this price alone, it seems to me, I get access to the extreme limit of what is possible and if not, something is missing from the path in which I can't help but burn everything - right up to the exhaustion of human strength.
(Bataille, *L'expérience intérieure*, p. 154)

The expenditure of the 'achieved I' orients Bataillean 'experience' (and desire) through Hegelian desire (and experience) because the passage through desire is a condition of western society: 'Bataille takes up this unified consciousness and leads it backwards (*à rebours*) through desire and without a "middle" term, to the moment of experience it has forgotten' (*EP*, p. 115).

The 'Hegelian' unity of certainty and self-consciousness on whose path desire arises involves a 'mystery' for the experience of consciousness, and - in Kristeva - for the philosophical knowledge which 'rests' on it. Hegel's 'Introduction' to the *Phenomenology* states the 'void', for consciousness, in the movement of experience: the necessity of the transition to a new configuration takes place for consciousness 'behind its back'. Kristeva hypostatizes this void in the transition from immediate sense-certainty to self-consciousness.²³

in the whole of its trajectory the Hegelian dialectic starts by dissolving the *immediate* unity, given to sense-certainty; but, having noted the moments of its division, of its doubling and its mediation with respect to the other, the dialectic comes back to the same, fills it with the other and consolidates it.... This is the ambiguousness of the idealist dialectic; it posits division, movement and process [*procès*] but discards them in the same move, in the name of a higher metaphysical and repressive truth, which will be 'self-consciousness' and its juridical corollary - the State. (*EP*, pp. 114-5)

Bataille's experience (consummation of unity) is located in this 'void', not in immediate sense-certainty as such, but at the Hegelian point of discarding it in the constitution of self-consciousness. It is therefore a 'refusal' of mediation and a breaching of the accomplishment of the reasoning subject, one which must therefore go by way of its - Occidental - essence: 'it is to an achieved "I" [*moi*] that the heterogeneous appears as desire and eroticism in the moment when desire exhausts the "I"' (*EP*, p. 115).

This reading of Hegel situates the transition out of immediate sense-certainty in the configuration of 'desire'. The negation of the 'simple and independent substance' - 'foundation' of sense-certainty - is clinched with the negation of 'independent life', producing an insistence on self-consciousness as 'the negation of the object in its alterity' and 'its introduction into the knowing subject' (*EP*, p. 113).

Hegel's dialectic is held to reveal the essential moments in the constitution of subject, law, State. It is desire, not as mediation but - because of mediation - as reversal that explodes the 'lure' of unity: unseating 'power in our society' (*ibid.*). Bataille's 'negativity' encounters the social and familial interdict, whose traversal by desire is a return to

immediate experience. *Expérience* is a destruction of western reason and its political corollaries 'right up to the exhaustion of human strength', including, therefore the stasis or ephemeral arrest - *ipse*, the initial and conditional affirmation of the subject, 'lost in the unknown' (*EP*, p. 116).

in fusion neither *ipse* nor the whole subsists, it is the annihilation of everything which is not the final 'unknown', the abyss where one founders.

(*L'expérience intérieure*, p. 148)

In Kristeva's theory of symbolization, and therefore her genealogy of civilization, Bataillean 'sovereignty' corresponds to the introduction of the heterogeneous. It presents the supersession of 'Hegelian' negativity by way of Freud: re-jection as the expenditure of stasis traversed through desire.

6. The 'Subject in Process'

At this point it is necessary to recall and reintroduce the unitary, relational and social manner Marxism inherited from Feuerbach in order to think the subject; thus, to take up once more the subject which calls itself 'I' [*moi*] and which struggles in a social community - out of its social position; to seize this discourse and the historico-social contradiction it represents, and to renew in each of its representations the heterogeneous contradiction that 'class consciousness' had suspended and of which the poets had made themselves the explorers. It is not a 'joining' of two sides, prior to constituting some ideal totality: it is a question of their throwing light on one another and so restoring to the subject its internal/external motility, and thus *jouissance*, through/across [*à travers*] the risk of its social combat which gives it its liberty in the implacable logical constraints of its political struggle. (*SP*, pp. 103-4)

The last of Kristeva's early essays under discussion, '*Le sujet en procès*' (many passages of which contribute to the middle Sections of *Revolution in*

Poetic Language, those on 'Rejection' and 'Heterogeneity'), sets out the problematic informing all her writings. I shall argue that the 'two sides' of Kristeva's 'subject', which emerge clearly in the above passage, involves a Hegelian problematic which underlies both the revolutionary emphasis in the early work and the negotiation of 'law' in the later writings. This is also to say that the 'abandonment' of Maoism (by Kristeva along with the *Tel Quel* collective as a whole) and the turn to psychoanalysis is quite consistent with the mapping out of the question of the subjective and socio-historical process (*procès*) in the early 1970s: both the commendation of Maoist theory and practice and then the articulation of psychoanalytic theory and practice are responses to this 'mapping'.

The impression that Kristeva's work abandons 'revolution' for 'reformation' or even 'quietism', must be led back to the sustained enquiry into the '*sujet en procès*'. Kristeva's treatments of the subject-in-process show the search for a 'site' which is not 'some ideal totality' constituted on the joining of the split subject; but is a 'site' on which the sides may 'throw light on each other'.

The problematic of this 'site' derives from Kristeva's relation to Hegel. The two inversions of Hegel presented in this chapter - the Marxist and the Freudian - produce the divided subject in question. While the encounter, via Hegel, of Marx and Freud does interrogate 'the subject-object relation', this is the 'weak' side of Kristeva's thesis, which posits Hegelian self-consciousness as 'negation of the object in its alterity'. It is the 'explicit' return to Hegel in Kristeva's writings. The problematic of Kristeva's divided subject contains the implicit return to Hegel, since it is here that her problematic is closest to Hegelian subject-substance, even if her position has

emerged from and at the cost of a premature exit from Hegel.

The division of Kristeva's 'subject' thus presents first, the Marxist subject, the subject who struggles in a social community, out of its social position; and second, the Freudian 'split' subject 'beyond the pleasure principle' out of which the relation to heterogeneity emerges.

This means that Kristeva's embracing of psychoanalysis in no way abandons the discourse of historical materialism, but argues precisely for a focus on its themes: 'to renew in each of its representations the heterogeneous contradiction that "class consciousness" had suspended and of which the poets had made themselves the explorers' (*SP*, p. 105).

Kristeva's appreciation of Bataille's 'fiction' derives precisely from the intricacy of her concept of 'socio-historical process'. This concept is critical of the Marxist conception of the subject, but aims to dispel the 'mechanical' historicity which is its fate rather than the root of that fate: the notion of determination by the relations of production from which emerges the subject's 'struggle' out of its social position.

Kristeva discovers in Bataille a response to her problematic in part because Bataille knows the problem of the 'suspension' of heterogeneous contradiction in 'class consciousness'. More importantly, his non-abdication of thethetic-affirmative moment acknowledges the socio-historical contradiction which Marxist discourse represents. Bataille's *fiction* is in full knowledge of the limitation of avant-garde literature and the poet 'explorers', but does not revert to a mechanistic conception of history with its 'atomic' subject. The 'sovereign subject' therefore formulates what the 'writer' is, beyond the latter's 'subjective-elitist' fate:

the writer is not only the sole subject in our culture for whom language is a heterogeneous contradiction that the social censure has not repressed, he is also the sole subject for whom the 'signifieds', the 'ideational contents', the 'themes' are also heterogeneous contradictions and it is for this reason that they bear a truth that symbolic and/or social censure has not been able to repress. (*EP*, p. 120)

For Kristeva, therefore, Bataille's text is a response to her problematic because it 'bears on' the thetic-affirmative moment in the process of *signifiante*. My intention has been to make it clear that this is a distinctly socio-political difficulty, most clearly expressed in the presentation of the 'Marxist' and 'Freudian' subjects.

The complexity which faces Kristeva's thesis on the power of literature to attack the seats of power in our society (on post-avantgarde 'cultural revolution') is clearly outlined in the 'Prolegomenon' to *Revolution in Poetic Language*:

The text is a practice that could be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces into society. The history and political experience of the twentieth century have demonstrated that one cannot be transformed without the other. (*RPL*, p. 17)

This statement expresses the separation of 'political' and 'cultural' (poetic) revolution, and corresponds to the duality of the subject (the subject in social relations, whose historico-social contradiction 'class consciousness' suspends; and the Freudian 'subject' explored by the poets). Kristeva is enquiring after the site of 'transformation' of subject and society, given the difficulty of avoiding the 'escapes' from heterogeneity without suppressing in a new manner either the historico-social contradiction or the drive-related 'subject'. She is determined not to underestimate the task of avoiding a resubmission to

the 'metaphysical' and 'monotheist' separation out of the unity of the subjective and the social. Bataille is, for Kristeva, the first to attempt an operation on this 'site':

It is in and through this splitting [of knowledge and jouissance] that power is installed as oppressive force: the subject who knows... exercises a power which is confused with state power and, more and more, tends to substitute itself for it; as for jouissance, one preserves for it dark rooms, alcoves or recesses in religion. The operation Bataille attempts effaces this *splitting* and makes a *contradiction* of it: for jouissance to be that of a subject, it must contain the instance of knowledge [*savoir*] where the subject is accomplished; and, bound up with this - in order that knowledge be not an exercise of power, but the operation of a subject - it must discover in its logic the jouissance that constitutes it. (*EP*, p. 119)

Bataille's achievement is the disclosure of the 'unity' of the subject of knowledge and jouissance by turning the separation of 'state' and 'religion' into a contradiction. Such a disclosure or 'operation' therefore aims at the seats of power which institute and sustain the separation, because it aims at the 'I' whose contradictions are suspended and whose 'power' comes to be identified with state power.

In *Revolution and Poetic Language* Kristeva will point to a limitation of the Batailleian 'operation' in the conditions of advanced capitalism, whose ramification 'makes it almost impossible for the signifying process to attack material and social obstacles, objective constraints, oppressive entities directly' (*RPL*, p. 105). There is an intimation of Bataille's limitation in the earlier essay: 'Linguistic subversion can join with ideological subversion, as in Joyce. Bataille does not always touch the verbal substance: it is perhaps a limitation of his experience which nevertheless has the advantage of facilitating its communicability' (*EP*, p.

120). The crucial claim of *Revolution in Poetic Language* is the necessity of an attack on the 'signifying structures' (linguistic subversion). This estimation of Bataille, which delimits the force of the attack on the 'seats of power', is intrinsic to the focus on symbolization in *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Only the theory of 'symbolization' puts poetic language onto a terrain on which the stages in cultural revolution can be analysed and evaluated.

I suggested above that the 'prematurity' within Kristeva's genealogy of culture of her focus on the *Science of Logic* was 'remedied' in the doctoral thesis by her theory of 'symbolization'. Two difficulties arise in this 'turn to language'. The first is that it retains the problem of the 'limit' discussed above, arising from Kristeva's departure from the *Science of Logic* before the exposition of the Kantian and Fichtean *Sollen*. The second is that it tends to obscure the profounder relation to Hegel, which presents itself in the thesis of the separation of the 'subject', as the subject 'who knows', who is in a social struggle, and who is 'split' by the drives. The avoidance of the subject-substance relation in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is cemented by Kristeva's arrival at the 'separated' subject through an inversion of Hegel. The 'inversion' of Hegel in the early writings is inseparable from their revolutionary standpoint; and yet it is never questioned, even when that standpoint is abandoned.

Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 1 has established that the passage through and inversion of 'Hegelian' negativity and 'self-consciousness' produces the three stages of Kristevan logic (the logic of determination, of the signifier, and of matter in contradiction). The stages proceed from a construction of the Hegelian 'system' which represents Hegel's unfolding of Kant and Fichte's practical philosophy. The salient critical points to emerge from the above analysis of the place of Hegel in Kristeva's early texts are the following:

(1) The logic of the concept, designated as the *law* of signification, relies on the failure to grasp Hegel's 're-cognition' of the Kantian *Grenze*.

(2) The logic of the signifier, affirmed as release from totality and 'union' of finite and infinite, 'passing' the limit, retains an aspect of the concept of *Schranke*. The release is 'always' from this finite (meaning as homogeneous, the 'thinking subject', 'the One').

(3) The logic of matter, the 'other of one', is meant to counter the idealist *Sollen*, but it bypasses its dialectic and retains the moment of absolute opposition. As a result the 'logic' of the signifier does not step out of Hegel's unfolding of the *Sollen* in Kant and Fichte's practical philosophy. It does not step out of the concept of infinity which posits a 'double result', since there is both a claim to the union of finite and infinite and an endless projection of that union owing to the absolute contradiction of finite and infinite. The logic of matter (matter in contradiction) presents an 'irreducible' opposition of 'meaning' and 'matter', and retains 'matter' as an 'in itself'. Kristeva's materialist dialectical logic suffers from the transcendental pitfall which results from 'taking the infinite in one of the two unities as

the in itself'. The logic of production thus maintains an 'in itself' whose problematic is that of the relation to the 'law' (symbolic) it would transform.

The transformation of the 'symbolic' is the crux of Kristeva's claim that modern literature is a signifying *practice*. The insistence on the notion of the 'text' has led to an uneasy opposition between the history of western monotheism (and western 'thought') and an open typology of poetic language, a typology which nevertheless presents advances in the disclosure of the fundamental structures of western civilization. This opposition reinforces the 'refusal' of Hegelian philosophy of history, even though Kristeva's problematic begins as and remains Hegelian. It begins as Hegelian because the explicit return to Hegel contributes to Kristeva's determination of the meaning and value of 'literature'; and because this meaning and value is expounded as the inseparability of 'logic' and 'politics'. It remains as Hegelian because Kristeva's construal of and departure from the 'system' represents the unfolding of Kant and Fichte's practical philosophy in the *Science of Logic*. Hegelian 'necessity', reduced by Kristeva to a 'law' of contradiction which could not account for the movement of the dialectic, is never approached. The comprehension of the meaning of 'necessity' in Hegel requires a comprehension of the moments of the *Sollen* as an absolute contradiction, and not only as the 'formalism' of (im)possibility' which remains the starting-point for Kristeva's materialist rethinking of transcendental philosophy.

Kristeva's claim to have determined and rethought the 'revolutionary value' of Hegelian logic leads to the appearance of historical *stages* in the 'practice' of poetic language (the avant-garde, Bataille, Joyce, Céline). It is the concept of infinity, held to be 'concrete' in the logic of the signifier, that

underlies the claim to transitions in poetic 'practice', and hence to Kristeva's estimation of 'art' as the site of critique in modern social and political relations (as the presentation of their contradictions). The details of the 'sublation' of Hegel, however, show that the claim for 'art' is insecure, and that Kristeva's 'infinite' leads to a difficulty in assessing the differences between the *stages* in poetic 'practice' which have been proposed.

It will be seen in chapters 2 and 3 that the founding distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' - Kristeva's reformulation of Freud and Lacan - clarifies the two unities of finite and infinite by expounding the moments of 'symbolization'. The difficulty of Kristeva's 'infinite' - how it is related to the 'law' it would transform - emerges more clearly as the failure to recognize mediation in what is to be transformed. Part I below will recapitulate Kristeva's theory of symbolization, and the 'Intertext' which then follows returns to the philosophical problem, showing how Hegel's early engagement with the Fichtean and Schellingean systems expounded the pitfalls of subjective and objective idealism that Kristeva's concept of 'practice' does not overcome.

PART ONE
RENEWAL OF VIOLENCE: ON HUMAN LAW

Introduction to Part I

The following discussion of Kristeva's doctoral thesis considers its treatment of the connection between the social subject and the subject known to psychoanalysis. The relation proposed between these 'subjects' presents the condition for the historical impact of the practice of 'poetic language', and hence of practice in Kristeva's full sense. *Revolution in Poetic Language* thus focusses the problematic outlined in the conclusion to chapter 1 above - the claim that 'literature' is a socio-historical *practice*; and expounds the moments of the logic of the signifier by way of a theory of symbolization which arises from the reformulation of the Lacanian 'symbolic'.

The reformulation of the Lacanian symbolic into the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' provides an account of the engendering of the latter: a theory of symbolization that is informed by Klein's elaboration of the pre-Oedipal stages of child development, and which returns to Freud's theory of the drives for the materialist determination of the intrasymbolic 'semiotic' functioning. The reformulation of Lacan's concepts of the 'symbolic' and the 'imaginary' nevertheless maintains the former as a founding event: the entrance into language. The theory of symbolization and the genealogy of culture which rests on it are therefore based on a foundation distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic'.

The recapitulation of Kristeva's thesis roughly follows the development of its theoretical part, in order to demonstrate that the 'political' problematic is fundamental to her theory of symbolization.¹ Part I recapitulates, first, the criticism of the philosophical and Marxist response to what is diagnosed as the 'crisis in our sociality'; second, the rethinking of 'negativity' on the terrain of

psychoanalysis (of the 'subject', 'struggle', 'freedom'); and finally, the return to the notion of a 'social' moment of practice.

The early theory of the 'semiotic' expounds a materialist logic of negativity (drive re-jection) which accounts for the bifurcation of the 'subject' of revolution. The objective, here, is to show that the consequences of the division of Kristeva's 'subject' into a 'poetic' and a 'social' subject stems from the primacy of the 'split' subject known to psychoanalysis. The separation which holds between an implicit process and a moment of social action is crucial for the different approach to the meaning of the 'semiotic' in the later writings. The later works foreground how the retrieval of the 'semiotic' affects our evaluation of the 'imaginary's' function and effects in existing social and political relations. This change in focus on the implications of the 'semiotic' corresponds to Kristeva's transition from a Maoist politics to an ethics of psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER TWO
REVOLUTION IN POETIC LANGUAGE: THE 'SEMIOTIC' AND THE
'SYMBOLIC'

Introduction

The chapter will establish how the account of symbolization developed in Kristeva's doctoral thesis is called to resolve the difficulties encountered in the early essays, difficulties which arose as a result of the direct approach to Hegel's *Science of Logic*. The attempt to overcome the philosophical abstraction Kristeva perceived in all idealist treatment of the 'subject' led, in the early essays, to an abstract analysis of the concept of the 'limit'. The relation between the philosophical categories of finite/infinite and the literary functioning of the semiotic did not step out of this abstraction.

The elaboration of symbolization, Kristeva's 'thetic phase', provides an account of the 'producible' positing subject. The theory of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' attributes to idealist philosophy in general the theoretical and practical contradictions that result from the notion of an absolute 'positing subject'. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Husserl stands for philosophical idealism, and represents Hegel's 'phenomenological descendant' (RPL, p. 116). Kristeva's 'thetic phase' is a solution to the practical contradictions which result from placing the formal 'positing subject' as origin of the determination of objective existence; and to the theoretical agnosticism this subject represents when it leaves on one side the irreducible fact of the external world. Kristeva's 'thetic phase' reconfigures the 'thetic moment' attributed to Husserl's phenomenology within a concept of production which does not posit an absolute 'origin'. The theory of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' expounds the possibility of the *producible* positing subject.

The 'thetic phase' also accounts for the transformative potential of poetic language. The relation between the emergence of the capitalist mode of production and the emergence of literature as poetic language, together with the problematic of the conditions required for the fulfilment of literature's transformative potential, is presented by Kristeva as a cycle of determination which avoids posing any of the terms as a cause or origin.

The following chapter will first address Kristeva's diagnosis of a 'crisis in our sociality' induced by the capitalist mode of production, in order to bring to light the socio-historical dimension of the concept of poetic language expounded in the early essays. It will recapitulate her presentation of the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic', the account of 'symbolization', by way of its conceptual emergence in the passage from Husserl's philosophy and through Lacan's return to Freud.

A. *Poetic Language in the Capitalist Mode of Production*

Revolution in Poetic Language presents Kristeva's notion of the 'signifying process' (*signifiante*), a practical concept which arises from the reformulation of the Lacanian symbolic, and which clarifies the 'logic of the signifier' elaborated in her early essays. The doctoral thesis situates the notion of the 'signifying process' in a complex relationship to the development of capitalist society and the modern state (the latter referred to as capitalism's 'ideological systems', *RPL*, p. 210). It therefore illuminates the socio-historical dimension of Kristeva's concept of 'poetic language' by presenting the 'place' of avant-garde and modern literature in, respectively, early and post-industrial capitalist society.

My first chapter has argued that Kristeva developed a radical materialism out of a reformulation, through Freud's theory of the drives, of the Marxist inversion of Hegel. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* the concept of 'poetic language' is addressed more profoundly in social and political terms. Here, the turn to a radical materialism arises from the perceived failures of liberal and Marxist political thought in the face of the power of capitalism to renew itself. Kristeva's question is twofold: what has the potential to countervail the power of capitalism to renew itself?; and what are the conditions for the fulfilment of this potential as the 'transformation' of those conditions?

First, Kristeva diagnoses the emergence of avant-garde literature in the late nineteenth-century as an effect of the development of the capitalist mode of production. She then argues for the potential of 'poetic language' to transform the conditions of its own appearance. Subsequently, she assesses the power of avant-garde, and then modern, literature to fulfil its potential in the face of 'capitalism's' power to

marginalize and exploit the results of literature's work of negativity. Thus 'poetic language' owes its realization, and limitations, to the capitalist mode of production: first, because the latter is the condition of the 'appearance' of poetic language (determination of the 'subject'); second, because these 'objective conditions', including the social and political relations they reinforce, are the object of literature's transformative work (determination of the 'object'); but third, 'capitalism' itself proscribes the 'power' of its offspring, exploiting that power for its own regeneration.

For Kristeva, the 'crisis of our sociality', which can be expounded by analysing the relation between 'capitalism' and 'poetic language', is based in the appropriative operations of a capitalist culture vis-à-vis the forms of 'negativity' it allows to emerge. The significance of the development of the capitalist mode of production for the two major modalities of 'signifying practice' discussed in *Revolution in Poetic Language* is therefore double-edged; both for the avant-garde 'poetic language' (represented by Lautréamont and Mallarmé), and for the modern (sometimes 'postmodern') 'poetic language' (exemplified for Kristeva by Artaud, Bataille, Joyce and Céline).²

The substantial point at issue in Kristeva's discussion of the capitalist culture of late nineteenth-century France is the 'spectacular nature' of the effects of the capitalist mode of production on the 'subject', on 'reason', and on 'art'. For Kristeva, these effects are incomparable with regard to those of previous transitions in the mode of production:

this crisis represents a new phenomenon. For the capitalist mode of production produces and marginalizes, but simultaneously exploits for its own regeneration, one of the most spectacular shatterings of discourse. (*RPL*, p. 15)

I will address the effect of this 'shattering of discourse' on the subject, reason and art in turn.

1. The 'Subject' in the Modern State

At the end of the nineteenth-century, the deep dissatisfactions of the working classes - from the peasantry to the petty bourgeoisie - impoverished by the bourgeois State's accumulation of capital, erupted in a series of revolutions from 1848 to the 1871 Commune. (RPL, p. 210)

Kristeva argues for a crisis - a 'shattering' - of the subject which takes place at this period owing to the emergence of the capitalist mode of production and the complicity between political revolution and political consolidation. The 'subject' here is the political subject ('bearer' of rights) and the social subject (in relations of production and reproduction). The intractability of the concept (for Kristeva, 'ideology') of right - fundament of the bourgeois political structures (for Kristeva, 'ideological systems') - leaves the subject 'shattered'. 'Right' in Kristeva's thesis does not only express the duplicity of 'rights and duties' in which the individual's relation to the state may be compromised by a 'bad' state. The crisis of the subject lies specifically in the import of 'capitalism', first, for the subject of rights and duties (for it permits the subject, beyond its 'duties', the right to revolt), and second, for the state (it permits the state, 'beyond' its duties, to subdue and consolidate revolt). The capitalist mode of production is therefore held to determine a complicity between political revolution and political consolidation in France in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Capitalism leaves the subject the right to revolt, preserving for itself the right to suppress that revolt. The ideological systems capitalism proposes, however, subdue, unify, and consolidate that revolt, bringing it back

within the field of unity (that of the subject and the State). (*RPL*, p. 210)

In Kristeva's view neither the 'political' subject of liberal thought nor the 'revolutionary' subject of Marxist thought can think itself in the face of the capitalist mode of production: each denies its shattered nature - and is therefore 'ideological'. The political subject misrecognizes both itself and its institutions as integral, while the 'revolutionary' subject misrecognizes the 'truth' of its negativity (its revolutionary 'agency'). Such a misrecognition takes place when revolutionary discourse confines 'negativity' to objective contradictions, to which it then ascribes a 'bearer' for the 'moment' of practice: 'Since it is not a theory of the subject, Marxist theory does not deal with this moment of practice' (*RPL*, p. 202).

Kristeva's demand for a rethinking of the modern political and the revolutionary subject rests on the 'misrecognition' which is structural to the attempt both to consolidate and to overturn the bourgeois state. Kristeva's own response to the aftermath of the French Revolution - the 'series of revolutions' and their political outcome - is to discover the source for rethinking the 'subject' in the transition from 'political' to 'cultural' revolution (the 'avant-garde' transformation in literature).

When objective conditions were not such that this state of tension could be resolved through revolution, rejection became symbolized in the avant-garde texts of the nineteenth century where the repressed truth of a shattered subject was then confined. (*RPL*, p. 211)

The avant-garde literature of the period is the source for this rethinking of the subject because it displays - symbolically - the 'truth' of the modern, liberal, political subject and its institutions, and also of the revolutionary subject. The 'truth' of the subject,

Kristeva proposes, is repressed both by the late nineteenth-century 'ideological systems' and by the theoretical articulations of the dissatisfactions they reproduce (the mystic positivism of Comte; Marx; the utopians; the French anarchists, *RPL*, p. 210).

The repressed is *confined* to the avant-garde not only as a result of the 'ideological' representations of the subject, but because the capitalist mode of production in its primitive state fails to undermine the rearticulations of the subject of right (including the right to revolt). Kristeva's notion of the 'repressed truth' of the subject argues that it is manifest in avant-garde literature and attains its scientific 'discovery' in Freud's theory of the unconscious (*RPL*, p. 81).

The 'possibility' of a functioning of this repressed 'truth' within the symbolic order is articulated by means of a reformulation of Lacan which results in a 'drive'-based theory of symbolization. Semiotic 'functioning' in the symbolic is the 'return' of the process of production of the symbolic. The 'unity' of the semiotic and the symbolic or reproduction of the semiotic functioning is called the 'signifying process' (*signifiance*) (*RPL*, p. 24). The latter is the repressed and unrecognized 'truth' of the political subject and of revolutionary discourse.

The materialist amplification of 'Hegelian' negativity, which leads to Kristeva's economic concept of 'rejection', articulates the mode of activity of the signifying process. These concepts, 'rejection' and 'signifying process' will be fully treated in the later sections of this chapter and in chapter 3. For the present, my object is to highlight the social and political analysis informing Kristeva's thought in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

Kristeva's demand to rethink the 'subject' embraces the thought of the subject in the Marxist response to 'bourgeois ideology'. Kristeva sees no potential in a political science or dialectical materialism which ignores the significance (for thinking 'negativity': the 'subject', 'struggle', social transformation) of the avant-garde 'cultural revolution'. The nineteenth-century avant-garde is held to be the manifestation, or 'symbolization', of what liberal and revolutionary discourse cannot grasp: the truth of the 'shattered' subject.

Revolution in Poetic Language therefore argues that it is only by combining an analysis of the cultural revolution represented by the avant-garde *with* the Marxist comprehension of the objective determinations of political revolution that the 'true' determinations of Marxist 'practice' can be assessed. In default of a recognition of the import of the avant-garde for the 'crisis in our sociality' instituted by the capitalist mode of production, the Marxist dialectic will remain enclosed within the philosophical idealism it claims to have overturned. Marxism has failed to provide a materialist theory of the 'subject'.

2. The Effect on 'Reason': Science and its Objects

The archivistic, archaeological, and necrophilic methods on which the scientific imperative was founded - the building of arguments on the basis of empirical evidence, a systematizable given, and an observable object - in this case language - are an embarrassment when applied to modern or contemporary phenomena. The methods show that the capitalist mode of production has stratified language into idiolects and divided it into self-contained, isolated islands - heteroclitite spaces existing in different temporal modes (as relics or projections), and oblivious of one another. (RPL, pp. 13-14)

The emergence of the capitalist mode of production has an effect on 'thought' in general, out of which emerges the determination of the avant-garde as a locus of the symbolization of *signifiante*. The 'fragmenting' effect of capitalism holds not only for the social and political 'subject' but also for the sciences and their objects, amongst which linguistics with its formalized object (discussed in chapter 1 above), is exemplary.

the thinking subject; the Cartesian subject *who defines his being through thought or language*, subsumes within that being and the operations which supposedly structure it, all trans-linguistic practice - a practice in which language and the subject are merely moments. From this perspective, the philosophy of language and the 'human sciences' that stem from it emerge as reflections on moments. ('Prolegomenon', *RPL*, p. 14; my emphasis)

In the 'theoretical section' of Kristeva's doctoral thesis the turn to a radical 'materialism' develops out of structural linguistics and philosophies of language and meaning (Saussure, Chomsky, Benveniste, Husserl, Hjelmslev, Frege). The 'privileging' of the object 'language' means that it is not merely one case in the diagnosis of the fragmented sciences and their objects. The same cannot be said, however - despite the combination 'thought or language' in the passage last quoted - for 'thought'. Thought, for Kristeva, is always the 'Cartesian thinking subject'. This has profound consequences for her deployment of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the rest of her book.

It is 'language' which has not only an exemplary but also a substantial - essential - position in the rethinking of the subject undertaken in *Revolution in Poetic Language* and throughout Kristeva's writings. Language is where the 'signifying process' - repressed, confined or exploited by the modern state and 'capitalism' - takes place. This is of course entirely consistent with Kristeva's identification of the entry

into language with the constitution of the subject in social relations (the 'symbolic order'). The contemporary sciences of language - out of structural linguistics, to semiotics, structural anthropology and psychoanalysis - have been able to 'reveal' the Cartesian subject's subsumption of all 'trans-linguistic practice' (*RPL*, p. 14). It is therefore to these sciences, and above all psychoanalysis, that Kristeva goes for her rethinking of the 'subject' in modern social and political relations.

We will make constant use of notions and concepts borrowed from Freudian psychoanalytic theory and its various recent developments in order to give the advances of *dialectical logic a materialist foundation* - a theory of signification based on the subject, his formation, and his corporeal, linguistic, and social dialectic. (*RPL*, pp. 14-15).

The founding distinction between the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' which emerges from this deployment of psychoanalysis is discussed below. Kristeva's analysis of the development of the capitalist mode of production and its political structures presents the reformulation of Lacanian psychoanalysis in its historical and socio-political dimension; that is to say, it expounds the conception of a 'shattering of discourse' determined by the capitalist mode of production.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Lacan's language-based theory of the unconscious represents a crucial step in the emergence from the positivism of the sciences, and from their attempt to bring intelligibility into separate domains without recognizing 'how' their objects have been determined as indifferent to one another. Kristeva will build on Lacan's extension of psychoanalysis into a theory of culture, by way of his recognition of the function of language in the unconscious. She will argue that the discoveries of psychoanalysis enable a disclosure of the tendency in

the 'textual activity' of avant-garde and modern literature to confront capitalist culture.

3. The Determination of 'Art'

The capitalist mode of production has a twofold consequence for 'art' - initially for the 'avant-garde', and subsequently for 'modern literature'. First, 'capitalism' produces out of its general effect (the 'shattering of discourse') the locus in which the truth of discourse, the signifying process, is manifest (determination of the subject: avant-garde literature). The 'shattering of discourse' permits the emergence of a 'place' for the manifestation of the 'signifying process' underlying discourse. This is to say that 'capitalism' is the condition of the possibility of the appearance of the 'avant-garde': it produces a 'transformation in literature' (one of the meanings of 'revolution' in the title of Kristeva's book).³

The second consequence relates to the primitive stage of the development of the capitalist mode of production in the late nineteenth-century. The restricted nature of the forces and relations of production confines the 'signifying process' to a limited realm, to a 'cultural' revolution. Thus, simultaneously with its 'production' of the manifestation of *signifiante* in literature, 'capitalism' confines the 'power' of the signifying process to the avant-garde, an 'esoteric' practice. This limitation of the avant-garde was mentioned in my first chapter when discussing Kristeva's contrast between the late nineteenth-century 'literary adventure' and Bataille's negotiation of the 'thetic moment'. The avant-garde fails to negotiate the political developments attendant on the socio-economic changes of the period.

Kristeva's diagnosis of the condition of the 'avant-garde' is therefore in brief the following: in the late

nineteenth-century, consequent upon the developing capitalist mode of production, literature 'manifests' the 'process' constitutive of signifying systems, including the (political, bourgeois) subject and his institutions (*RPL*, p. 17); the ('signifying') process is nevertheless prevented from attacking the political structures owing to the primitive development of the forces and relations of production which first permitted the process to become 'manifest'. The avant-garde, necessarily - and not simply because of the personal disposition of its representatives - neglects the political. Conversely, the restricted ambitions of avant-garde literature confines the 'signifying process' to a subjective realm.

Kristeva deploys Hegel's 'flight from the finite' to express the limitation of the re-formation of the 'subject' which the avant-garde represents in her thesis. The avant-garde is a 'cultural' revolution, and therefore - I here follow Hegel myself - only the re-formation of subjective disposition in a limited realm.⁴

The text therefore signifies an experience of heterogeneous contradiction rather than a practice, which, by contrast, is always social. The proof may be seen in Mallarmé's refusal to consider the possibility of a political activity that would be simultaneous to textual activity, whatever his well-founded reasons for criticizing anarchist or social commitment. (*RPL*, p. 195)

The subsequent assessment of the role of 'capitalism' in the emergence of modern literature is similar in form but substantially different in content and import to the assessment of the avant-garde.

First of all, the advance from early to post-industrial capitalism brings about the transition from the avant-garde 'cultural revolution' to the signifying practice of 'modern' literature. Second, the power of 'capitalism' to exploit the work of this 'practice'

counters the potential social and historical impact of 'modern' literature. This is consistent with the determination of the avant-garde (subjective and objective genitive). The 'fulfilment' of this potential for a 'determination of the object' is the *Sollen* in Kristeva's 'concept' of poetic language. Formally, however, 'poetic language' expresses one modality of *art* as a signifying practice - albeit its 'achieved' modality:

the modern *text* exhibits that which has always been the disguised mainspring of 'art', hidden behind the appearances of phantasmatic formations or of exquisite differentiations in the signifying material. (RPL, p. 211)

This realization of art - thus also the emergence of Kristeva's *concept* of poetic language - permits a retrospective analysis of art as a 'signifying practice' throughout the history of western and monotheist civilization. Kristeva pursues these analyses in other works.⁵ *Revolution in Poetic Language* expounds the realization of 'art' in avant-garde and modern literature: 'the modern *text* already situates itself outside "art" through "art"' (ibid.).

In Kristeva's thesis the advance to post-industrial capitalism brings about a renewed modality of 'poetic language': 'modern' literature. Nevertheless, 'capitalism' once again restricts the process whose manifestation in literature it has realized. The powerful operations of 'capitalism' specific to the modern period, their source lying in the development of science and technology in the means of production (RPL, p. 16), raise difficulties for the socio-historical impact of modern literature. These difficulties are of a nature quite different to the limitations of the avant-garde.

Kristeva presents a more complex structure of the 'determination' of poetic language in its modern form,

one which resonates throughout her book as the question of the social efficacy of the 'practice' of poetic language, or of a 'textual activity' that can correspond with 'political activity'. This leads - as I will show - to the Maoism of the later part of the book, where a 'social' moment, and agent, distinct from the 'poetic' moment, emerges within Kristeva's notion of practice.⁶ Kristeva's Maoism retraverses the criticism - contained in the presentation of the 'subject in process/on trial' (*sujet-en-procès*) - of the 'atomistic subject' of Marxist theory. It *reintroduces* a subject of action, whose agency - she claims - is thrown into a new light by the '*sujet-en-procès*'.

Kristeva's Maoism bears witness to the difficulty of showing that 'modern literature' both sustains the practical vocation of the avant-garde cultural revolution and overcomes its limitations, for the problematic of modern literary 'practice' achieving a historical impact is not conceived in terms of the 'flight from the finite'. Mallarmé and Lautréamont represent the production and presentation of a revolution in the 'subject', but were unable even more than unwilling to adopt a political direction, neglecting the attack on modern political ideology and institutions. However, it is not this 'flight from the finite' which is remedied in modern literature. If modern literature is the potential for a 'determination of the object', the object has itself undergone a transition in the conditions of post-industrial capitalism. The object literature contends with is not simply, or directly, the 'finite' understood as capitalism's 'ideological systems' ('the subject, the State'). The 'shattering effect' of the capitalist mode of production has itself outreached the 'finite' systems (which is not to say that it no longer 'proposes' them). The object of the transformative potential of 'poetic language' cannot be the elements

('linguistic and ideological norms') of modern political 'systems'.

the capitalist mode of production, having attained a highly developed means of production through science and technology, no longer need remain strictly within linguistic and ideological norms, but can also integrate their *process qua process*. (RPL, p. 16)

'Poetic language' in its 'modern' form has to be aware of and negotiate a significantly more intractable object, the capitalist 'operations' of fragmentation and integration themselves. Its object is not simply the 'finite' because the undermining of social and linguistic norms is itself an effect of the capitalist mode of production in its late form.

The problem is thus one of introducing the struggle of signifiacnce - its process - no longer just into 'individual experience' - where, in any case, it already is, since it is always destroying that experience - but also into the *objective process* of contemporary science, technology and social relations. (RPL, p. 213, my emphasis)

Nevertheless, the level of the 'shattering of discourse' in post-industrial capitalism brings literature as a 'signifying practice' much closer to its revolutionary potential. It has permitted the formulation and statement of the second of the following questions:

at what historical moment does social exchange tolerate or necessitate the manifestation of the signifying process in its 'poetic' or 'esoteric' form? Under what conditions does this 'esoterism', in displacing boundaries of socially established signifying practices, correspond to socioeconomic change? (RPL, p. 16)

Literature, for Kristeva, is less 'esoteric' in its modern manifestation. However, there is a third aspect to the question she poses:

And under what conditions does it remain a blind alley, a harmless bonus offered by a

social order which uses this 'esoterism' to expand, become flexible, and thrive? (ibid.)

Throughout Kristeva's writings the 'theoretical' response to this question is necessarily in abeyance. The answer is inseparable from the realization of those conditions, since Kristeva does not emerge from the the problematic of determination as a dialectic between 'capitalism' and the 'signifying process' which is enacted in works of literature.

The capitalist mode of production, then, both fragments *and* totalizes, brings about both the shattering of discourse *and* the integration of the process whose manifestation its shattering 'produces'. This poses the question, for Kristeva's diagnosis, of the extricability of the 'signifying process' from the power of capital to renew itself at the expense of the process.

There must, in Kristeva's thesis, be a 'deeper-seated' element in the 'economy' of the signifying process if poetic language is not simply to present this process where capital's operations permit (on the 'margins'), and then submit to capitalism's renewed exploitation of that work. If the 'signifying process' is appropriable from the integrative and exploitative operations of capital (from capitalism's regeneration by way of its repeated process of shattering, fragmentation, marginalization, integration, and exploitation) two questions arise:

(i) what 'element' in the 'signifying process' gives it the necessary margin of escape from capitalism's recuperative self-renewal?

(ii) what is specific to literature if it is, as Kristeva proposes, the 'site' of a renewal of the 'signifying process' and potentially an undermining of capitalist culture?

These questions embrace Kristeva's interrogation of the possibility of social transformation in modern social and political relations. They encompass, in the first case, Kristeva's estimation of the discoveries of psychoanalysis and, in the second, her estimation of 'art' *qua* poetic language (most significantly in contrast to 'thought').

The motivation of the complexity of Kristeva's posing of the question, and of the abstractness of her concepts ('fragmentation', 'shattering', 'integration'), resides in her disillusionment with liberal and Marxist social and political thought. The disillusionment, in turn, rests on Kristeva's discernment of the poverty of the thinking of the subject in these traditions, which remain indebted - as she sees it - to the philosophical tradition in general, and in particular to a failure in the Marxist 'overturning' of Hegel. *Revolution in Poetic Language* demands a rethinking of the possibility of social transformation beyond the liberal and socialist notions of the subject: of the 'political' subject ('bearer' of rights and duties) or the Marxist subject ('bearer' of objective forces and contradictions). The '*sujet-en-procès*', whose articulation is indebted to psychoanalysis, is not a 'bearer' but is itself in process. Kristeva's 'subject in process' is therefore a response to the perceived atavism of these essentialist notions of a 'bearer' in the face of the flexibility of capitalism - of its power to fragment, and to renew itself.

Her own response to the philosophical tradition, to Marxist theory, and to the question of what has the power to countervail the fragmenting and integrating effects of capitalism, is (as shown in chapter 1) a dialectical materialism re-formed by Freud's theory of the drives. *Revolution in Poetic Language* makes it clearer why she has turned to this radical

'materialism'. The emphasis in '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' on the logic of matter as fundamental to the engendering of the 'subject', 'discourse', 'ideology', of 'norms' and 'institutions', and of 'thought' - through to the supposed culmination of philosophical reason in Hegel's 'system' - stresses the drive-based ('infinite') element of *signifiante*. The basis of *signifiante* in an economy of 'matter' distinguishes it from the capitalist economy and - in Kristeva's view - from the development of science and technology in the capitalist mode of production. It is an

unlimited and unbounded generating process, this unceasing operation of the drives toward, in and through language: toward, in and through the exchange system and its protagonists - the subject and his institutions. (RPL, p. 17)

For those who detect a 'biologism' in Kristeva's route through Freud's theory of the drives, the relation proposed between the economy of *signifiante* and capitalism's power of self-regeneration is perhaps unconvincing. The 'biologism' of Kristeva's infinite is a theme in Kristeva criticism (for example, Culler 1974). Her own thesis claims, however, that the functioning of the drives is always 'ultimately' socially and historically determined (*passim*). It is the coherence of this argument for a doubly founded 'practice' aiming at socio-historical transformation which is in question in this chapter. The reduction of Kristeva's negotiation of the socio-political problematic to the dimension of its 'biologism' would pre-empt an interrogation of the implicit return to Hegel.

B. *The Philosophical and Psychoanalytical 'Bridges' to the Semiotic: Husserl and Lacan*

1. The Philosophical Limit: Limit of Matter

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* Kristeva solicits Husserlian phenomenology for the philosophical presentation of the 'positing' subject. Husserl belongs within one of two 'trends' in linguistic theory analysed by Kristeva for their attempt to work out of the positivist sciences of language and their formalized object. These trends interrogate what - from the perspective of the sciences of 'language' - is an 'extra'-linguistic moment (*RPL*, p. 21). Husserl investigates an 'act' of the understanding in signification and an 'intuition' of matter (*hyle*). While *hyle* comprises 'sensory contents' which include 'impulses' (*RPL*, p. 33), it is nevertheless - Kristeva argues - enclosed within the act of the understanding ('omnipresent Meaning and Intention', *RPL*, p. 31).

The other trend owes its impetus to psychoanalysis and presents the relation between 'signifier' and 'signified' as not arbitrary but motivated (*RPL*, p. 22). These two trends exemplify the attempt to emerge from positivist linguistic theory and are taken by Kristeva to represent stages on the way to a theory of language based on a radical materialism indebted to psychoanalysis. Kristeva therefore addresses the substance of this second 'trend' - the discoveries of psychoanalysis - rather than its specific manifestations in theories of language. It is the first trend, Husserl's philosophy foremost, which is approached as the 'bridge' to the discoveries of psychoanalysis.

Kristeva's diagnosis of the 'shattering of discourse' in the capitalist mode of production has necessitated this route through linguistics and phenomenology: her own theory of the 'semiotic' finds its intellectual

trajectory in the passage from the transcendental ego in Husserl's philosophy of meaning and signification to the analysis of the speaking subject which emerges from the psychoanalytic discovery of the unconscious. This trajectory is therefore a historical presentation of the passage from the shattering of the philosophical 'subject' (transcendental ego) to the 'subject in process' based on the psychoanalytic 'subject'.

In Kristeva's trajectory Benveniste and Husserl are held to have opened up linguistics to philosophy through their concept of the 'subject of enunciation'. She will accept and displace the subject of enunciation in Husserlian phenomenology, arguing for the necessity - in a theory of intersubjective relations - of positing the ego 'constitutive' of language acts (*RPL*, p. 32), but then following the Lacanian route out of ego-psychology in order to show that 'communication with others' is in its turn based on another relation. Husserl is taken to have 'theologized' the speaking being by making syntactic competence the product of a transcendental - 'conscious and intentional' - ego (*RPL*, p. 31). Thus, for Kristeva, the transcendental ego in Husserl's phenomenology represents the 'limit' of theoretical reason.

The linguistic turn in the work of Husserl and in that of Lacan leads, respectively, to a theory of language based on the transcendental ego and a theory of language based on the subject-Other relation. Lacan's return to Freud bases the Husserlian relation of subject, being and meaning (in which the subject is a 'positing' subject) on the subject-Other relation (in which the subject is 'posited' by the symbolic) (*RPL*, p. 41). Husserl's function in this trajectory is to show how linguistics was opened up to a 'trans'-linguistic moment by philosophy - by the phenomenological inquiry into categorial intuition.

This *subject of enunciation*, which comes directly from Husserl and Benveniste, introduces, through categorial intuition, both *semantic fields* and *logical* - but also intersubjective - *relations*, which prove to be both intra- and trans-linguistic (RPL, p. 23)

Husserl's investigation into categorial intuition draws the science of linguistics out of the hypostatization of the object 'language' which had led to an analysis of signification purely in terms of syntactic position and predicative relation. The discussion of Husserl's theory of meaning in *Revolution in Poetic Language* addresses his philosophical enquiry into the 'thetic' or 'positing' moment in signification, i.e. into the *establishment* of the 'positionality' necessary to predication and syntax. It therefore corresponds to Kristeva's earlier discussion of the constitutive activity of the understanding in the 'language act'.

The discussion of Husserl occupies the place of the earlier discussion of Hegel's treatment of the 'understanding' and 'formal proposition'. This substitution has the advantage of facilitating Kristeva's route to the Lacanian 'symbolic', since the 'linguistic turn' in the thought of both Husserl and Lacan establishes a correspondence between them. Husserlian phenomenology is a more fitting 'bridge' to Lacanian psychoanalysis than Hegel's 'speculative proposition', since - although the Cartesianism informing Kristeva's treatment of 'thought' prevents her from making the distinction - Hegel is concerned not with the fixation of the 'object' language but with the movement of the 'speculative proposition' and its effect on external reflection, that is to say with the inhibition 'of thought'.

Husserl's 'introduction' of semantic fields and intersubjective relations into linguistic theory is criticized in *Revolution in Poetic Language* for the 'limit' which a philosophical approach to

'consciousness' posits. In Kristeva's view, Husserl's account of intentional consciousness reduces 'intuition' to intention, and consequently fixes the 'translinguistic', turning it into an origin, a transcendental ego. She nevertheless discovers in Husserl's concept of *hyle* an attempt to articulate a moment beyond the Cartesian subject's subsumptive relation to Being, a moment independent from ('heterogeneous' to) intentional consciousness. However, *hyle* is then denounced as a mere 'projection' of the positionality of consciousness (*RPL*, p. 32).

A correlation is made between the *hyle* ('matter') and the noema: the latter consists of an 'object', a 'what', a *Meaning*, and a 'content', a 'development and conceptual apprehension' forming 'a definite system of *predicates* - either formal or material, determined... or left "indeterminate" but always determinable - of a *Signification*. The positing of the glance never loses for a second its grasp (*Meinung*) on the always already detached object for an always already present subject. (*RPL*, p. 34)7

For Kristeva, the 'noema' establishes a realm of signification. The realm of signification 'is always that of proposition or judgment, a realm of *positions*' (*RPL*, p. 43). Husserl's philosophy of meaning discovers the condition of the positionality of all 'signification'. Kristeva's argument with Husserl's philosophy of meaning and concept of *hyle* is that both are deduced from 'signification' - resulting in a circle of 'projection' which makes thethetic character of 'judgement' absolute. Consequently the investigation into the 'thetic character' of meaning will indicate an origin, a positing 'I' (*RPL*, p. 36) correlative to the operations of consciousness. The moment of heterogeneity - intention 'and' intuition - is lost because the *hyle* is enclosed within meaning. It is a 'projection of the subject's positionality' (*RPL*, p. 32).

There is, further, no 'gap' in consciousness because meaning is itself a projection. Kristeva's Husserl introduces intersubjective relations into signification, but ultimately derives matter and meaning from signification. The thought of thesis (naming) and synthesis (predication) attributes both 'activities' to a transcendental ego, an ego which simply re-presents and unifies the theses within signifying operations: 'thesis of Being, thesis of the object, thesis of the ego'.⁸

Husserl therefore never deviates from a Cartesian framework. Restricting the functioning of language to sign and syntax, he fails the investigation of the thetic moment.

The positing of the subject of understanding as subject of the sign and of syntax (of meaning and signification, which is that of a proposition [Satz], in Husserl's terms) determines the positing of a *hyle* or a noesis, and hence of a nature which has been set aside but returns as 'such' in what has been posited. The Ego and the object's evasion of each other, which then unfolds on the terrain of this meaning as matter, nucleus, or content, is preserved within *projections's specular enclosure* but does not in any sense represent a gap in the actual or collective unified individual and implies no eventual loss of object or Ego. (RPL, p. 35)

The perceived failure to investigate the thetic moment collapses Husserl's attempt to introduce 'intra'- and 'inter'-subjective relations into linguistic theory. His 'matter' is not heterogeneous but a moment of an apprehending consciousness. Husserl thus forfeits a possible route out of 'idealism' to a radical materialism.

Kristeva's own gesture towards a rethinking of the positing ego 'on another - dialectical and psychoanalytic - horizon' (RPL, p. 32) turns Husserl's 'translinguistic' moment into the 'liminary moment' of the signifying process. Husserl's restriction of the

thetic moment to a mere limit (*Grenze*) does not proceed to a recognition that it is the liminary moment of a 'process' (limitation, *Schranke*), and consequently reinforces his confinement of linguistic functioning to 'meaning and signification'. The phenomenological bracketing (*Einklammerung*) thus led to a *Reflexionsbestimmung*, an identification of the thetic moment with the subject's positionality: 'The positing of the glance never loses for a second its grasp (*Meinung*) on the always already detached object for an always already present subject'.

2. The Lacanian Limit: Limit of the 'Subject'

There is, in Kristeva's view, no account of 'separation' in consciousness in Husserl's philosophy. Kristeva's transition from Husserl to Lacan therefore makes the Lacanian return to Freud into an 'overturning' of the operating consciousness which remains fundamental to Husserl's transcendental theory of language. Lacan proposes that

it was necessary to question oneself regarding the function that supports the subject of the unconscious, to grasp that it is difficult to designate that subject anywhere as subject of a statement, and therefore as the articulator, when he does not know that he is speaking. (*E*, p. 314)

Husserl's attempt to open up theories of language to a 'translinguistic' moment is therefore substantiated in the Lacanian thesis of the subject-Other relation. In the context of Husserlian philosophy, Lacan responds to Kristeva's demand for an investigation of the 'producible thetic and subject' (p. 36, my emphasis). The 'thetic' and the 'subject' are no longer identified in Lacan as they are in the *Reflexionsbestimmung* of Husserl's transcendental ego.

The 'subject' is now considered as the 'posited' subject: the subject posited - as absent from the sign

- 'by' the symbolic. The 'absence' or absencing of the subject at the moment of its constitution, on the 'entry into language', holds both for the diachronic structuration of the subject and for the synchronic structuration of signification: it is a truth of the 'entry into language' whether the latter is viewed as the transition from the mirror stage to the discovery of castration, or as 'enunciation' within the symbolic (the order of language).

Kristeva's argument with Lacan arises from the latter's realignment of the relation of dominance in which the subject is situated. While drawing the lessons for the concept of the subject of enunciation from Freud's discovery of the unconscious, Lacan simply inverts the relation of mastery which held between subject and meaning/being, leaving the subject subordinated to the symbolic (the place of the Other). Her own route out of the Lacanian symbolic, establishing the concept of the 'semiotic', is taken through a 'second' return to Freud, supplementing the return to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (the discovery of unconscious processes in the 'dream logic') with a return to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (the theory of the drives).

Kristeva's aim is thus not 'simply' to follow the Lacanian return to the Freudian 'unconscious' which, Lacan recalled, is:

that part of the concrete discourse, insofar as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of this conscious discourse.
(E, p. 49)

For the separation out of the moment of the 'subject' and 'thethetic' which arises thanks to Lacan's concept of the symbolic also opens the way to Kristeva's relativization of the mastery of the 'symbolic'. She will reformulate the thetic moment in Husserl as a two-stage 'thetic break', which simultaneously turns

Lacan's 'imaginary' and 'symbolic' into a 'thetic phase' (*RPL*, p. 43). The dependence of the 'thetic' on a pre-thetic network of drives and their ordering (the 'semiotic chora') is what permits Lacan's 'imaginary' and 'symbolic' to be articulated as a phase or engendering of the 'symbolic', as will be shown.

It is Lacan's division of the constitution of the subject into the 'mirror stage' and the 'Oedipus complex' (discovery of castration) which separates out the thetic or 'positing' and the 'subject' as such. The 'mirror stage' is the moment of the establishment of *space* (of 'positionality').

the mirror stage produces the 'spatial intuition' which is found at the heart of the functioning of signification - in signs and in sentences. (*RPL*, p. 46)

The discovery of the 'mirror stage' reveals that the production of 'positionality' is pre-linguistic in the sense of pre-sign. The argument that the thetic phase - mirror stage and castration - 'produce' the subject reverses the relation between subject and positing, and overturns Husserl's deduction of a positing subject from the theses in signification. Synchronically, this production is a 'break' in the signifying process (the latter encompassing the semiotic and symbolic modalities) through which the identification of subject and object are established 'as preconditions of propositionality' (*RPL*, p. 43). The thetic moment in enunciation - the 'identification' - requires the production of space:

the subject must separate from and through his image, from and through his objects. This image and objects must first be posited in a space that becomes symbolic because it connects the two separated positions. (*RPL*, p. 43)

There are three moments: the 'production' of space; the two separated positions ('identification' of subject

and object); and space as - 'topological' - connection, or signification (emergence of the symbolic). The 'relation between' positions is not produced by a positing subject, but through a separation, and this attributes the possibility of 'connection' (predication) to a pre-symbolic (pre-linguistic) stage. Kristeva's deployment of psychoanalysis discovers the 'producibility' of the subject in the thetic phase of mirror stage and castration. While the question of the producibility of the 'thetic' will require a turn to the theory of the drives, the debt to Lacan lies in Kristeva's elucidation of the producibility of the subject.

Positing the imaged ego leads to the positing of the object, which is, likewise, separate and signifiable.

Thus the two separations that prepare the way for the sign are set in place. The sign can be conceived as the voice that is projected from the agitated body (from the semiotic *chora*) onto the facing *imago* or onto the object, which simultaneously detach from the surrounding continuity. (*RPL*, pp. 46-7)

Kristeva's mirror stage articulates the separation from and of semiotic motility in which the *corps morcelé* is set up before the *imago*. The connection instituted thereby - 'captation of' and 'drive investment in' the image - is the prototype for the institution of the 'sign', since the separation of a not-yet-body and a not-yet-object is the condition for the constitution of objects (*RPL*, p. 46). The 'mirror stage' therefore designates the path to signifiability (to subject, object, and sign). It is a prelinguistic 'separation' without which there could be no 'symbolic'.⁹

In Lacan's doctrine the mirror stage proposes a fundamental and irreducible alienation in subjectivity: 'the imaginary alienation of the ego' (Seminar II, xix, p. 247). The ego is constructed through a separation, thus instituting a primary

narcissism in which the constitutive factor is an image or 'form':

the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, *before its social determination*, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone. (E, p. 2)

In Kristeva's thesis the mirror stage is a process of 'detachment' from semiotic motility, which both institutes primary narcissism and lays the ground for the entry into language. The second point in Lacanian theory where Kristeva locates the 'thetic phase' is therefore the discovery of castration which structures the subject as a subject of 'lack'.

Castration puts the finishing touches on the process of separation that posits the subject as signifiable, which is to say separate, always confronted by an other: *imago* in the mirror (signified) and semiotic process (signifier). (RPL, p. 47)

The inversion of Husserl which appears in Kristeva's deployment of Lacan therefore divides the 'transcendental ego' into a *process* of separation and an entry into separation, which latter institutes the subject as absent from the sign - 'always confronted by an other'. The entry into language divides the subject out from the thetic phase, and posits it as absent from the latter, which is itself now posited (it is Lacan's 'place (*lieu*) of the Other'). The distinction between the 'subject' posited by the symbolic and the 'thetic phase' turns Husserl's 'transcendental ego' into a limit, something dependent on another relation, the 'relation to the Other'.

The two 'elements' of language taken from structural linguistics - signified and signifier - are the trace in language of the process of its formation. The signifier is the trace of semiotic motility, and therefore the subject is posited as absent from the

signifier. The signified is the trace of the not-yet-object - the imago - and therefore where the 'ego' is posited.

For there to be enunciation, the *ego* must be posited in the signified, but it must do so as a function of the *subject* lacking in the signifier; a system of finite positions (signification) can only function when it is supported by a subject and on the condition that his subject is a want-to-be [*manque-à-être*]. Signification exists precisely because there is no subject in signification. (RPL, p. 48)

The entry into language is the structuring moment in which, '*après coup*', the ego is posited through the positing of the subject as 'lacking': definitive separation of the subject from semiotic motility (posited in the signifier); thethetic 'moment' posits the subject as absent from the - place of - the signifier.

The subject conceived as absent, as a subject of 'lack' (*manque-à-être*) is the basis for the key Lacanian thesis that the subject is divided from itself. Lacan's attention to the gap in language between signifier and signified therefore receives in Kristeva's thesis a precise correlation with the stages of child development, in order to show how the 'subject' comes to be a subject of lack (absent from the sign):

The gap between the imaged ego and drive motility, between the mother and the demand made on her, is precisely the break that establishes what Lacan calls the place of the Other as the place of the 'signifier'. The subject is hidden 'by an ever purer signifier', this want-to-be confers on an *other* the role of containing the possibility of signification; and this other, who is no longer the mother (from whom the child ultimately separates through the mirror stage and castration), presents itself as the place of the signifier that Lacan will call 'the Other'. (RPL, p. 48)

The subject of lack is hence a desiring subject: 'desire divides the subject from itself'. The 'structuration' of the subject institutes the realm of misrecognition in the subject's relations. This is expressed in an early seminar of Lacan's: 'the ego gets confused with the subject and the ego is turned into a reality'.¹⁰ The 'want-to-be' implies this confusion, which itself represents a misrecognition of the subject's desire, or more specifically of the 'place' of desire: 'man's desire is the *désir de l'Autre* (the desire of the Other)... it is *qua* Other that he desires' (*E*, p. 312). The subject misrecognizes where he desires - the place of the Other - in an object of desire: the 'other' which *presents* itself as the place of the Other. Lacan remarks: 'the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other'. This misrecognition in the 'desire for recognition' is the real basis of psychoanalytic experience. Psychoanalysis is the scene of its reenactment in the transference.¹¹

The emphasis on thethetic as a *phase* of separation and identification turns to the pre-Oedipal relations opened up by Klein. Thethetic phase, completed in thethetic or structuring 'moment' of the discovery of castration, is a process of separation from the mother:

As the addressee of every demand, the mother occupies the place of alterity. Her replete body, the receptacle and guarantor of demands, takes the place of all narcissistic, hence imaginary, effects and gratifications; she is, in other words, the phallus. (*RPL*, p. 47)

This interpretation of the 'pre-Oedipal' relation to the mother sees it less as the dyad which the Oedipal complex interrupts than as an imaginary identification within a separation (as 'narcissistic'). The mother's replete body is the phantasmatic guarantor of gratification. The mother is, before the Oedipal complex, the 'phallus', occupying the site of alterity. On this account the 'phallus', as identification-in-

separation, functions prior to the Oedipal complex, at which point this identification-in-separation is transformed into a 'lack' and a 'law': the subject, once constituted, is divided from itself through 'alterity'. The posited subject is a *desiring* subject.

The psychoanalytic concept of desire therefore articulates the establishment of the subject in the symbolic by way of two 'separations' - the mirror stage and the discovery of castration. In the first case, the mother occupies the site of alterity (the phallus); in the second case, the phallic function is the symbolic function: the Other to which the subject is subordinated, the law to which he submits.

Dependence on the mother is severed, and transformed into a symbolic relation to an other; the constitution of the Other is indispensable for communicating with an other. In this way, the signifier/signified break is synonymous with social sanction: 'the first social censorship'. (RPL, p. 48)

Kristeva's questioning of the subject-law relation which the 'symbolic' institutes goes to the 'presymbolic' moment of the thetic phase primarily in order to reconfigure the import of the 'alienation' at the basis of being represented by the 'mirror stage'. Her re-interrogation of the *corps morcelé* in this separation (in the first stage of the 'thetic break') introduces into Lacan's 'imaginary' - situating the agency of the ego 'in a fictional direction' - a connection between the import of the primary processes and that of primary narcissism (the *relation* to - separation from and connection with - the mother, who is, diachronically, the 'first' other). The return to the theory of the drives invests the pre-linguistic stage with a new significance which it does not evidently have in Lacan's writings.

This is where Kristeva's turn to Klein differs from Lacan's. The diachronic account of the signifying

process is indebted in content to Freud's discovery of the primary processes (condensation and displacement), to Klein's focus on the place of the mother in pre-Oedipal object-relations, and to Lacan's correlation of the primary processes with the operations in language disclosed by structural linguistics (metaphor and metonymy). It is Kristeva's return to the theory of the drives which recasts the contributions of Freud, Klein and Lacan in order to provide a way out of the dominance of Lacan's symbolic order. The 'semiotic', constitutive of the 'symbolic', designates not only pre-Oedipal relations, but an articulation, specifically, of the drives in the processes of condensation and displacement. The exposition of the 'drives' gives Kristeva's presymbolic its materialist foundation.

Kristeva thus proceeds from the debt to Lacan to a revision of two elements of the Lacanian doctrine. First, she introduces the 'drives' as a factor in the subject's relation to the signifier. The signified, as the trace in language of the 'mirror image', is where the 'ego' is posited; the signifier, as the trace of the 'semiotic process', is where the drives are posited. The subject is posited as absent from the signifier, and 'is' a *manque-à-être*. However, if the signifier is where the drives are posited the subject-signifier relation (which, for Lacan, means that the subject is 'always' confronted by an other) can become a - 'heterogeneous' - contradiction. Kristeva's subject - contra the Lacanian subject of lack - is, under certain conditions, a subject put in process by the signifier in its 'semiotic' operations.

Second, Kristeva's reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* introduces 'social determination' prior to the symbolic. The two elements of the 'semiotic chora', drive motility and social determination, are in a dialectical relation which would repudiate the charge

that the material 'presupposition' of the semiotic *chora* introduces a fundamental biologism into the thesis that the 'semiotic' generates the 'symbolic'. The presence of 'social determination' in the semiotic implies that both orders are unities of 'semiotic' and 'symbolic'.

The revision of Lacan simultaneously addresses the second question posed in Kristeva's departure from Husserl's subject of enunciation. Kristeva has put a thetic phase (mirror stage and castration) at the heart of the symbolic function, whose exposition articulates the 'precondition of signification' and the 'producibility of the subject'. The semiotic *chora* - the pre-thetic ordering 'of' the drives - is now expounded in response to the question: 'How is the *thetic*, which is a positing of the subject, produced?' (*RPL*, p. 36, my emphasis). The reformulation of Lacan thus elaborates a pre-symbolic (now pre-thetic) realm of drive motility and ordering which sets in process the thetic phase. Kristeva's analysis of pre-Oedipal relations opens up the problematic of the 'producible thetic' as the question of the 'possibility' of separation, which is to say the possibility of space or intuition, which has itself been expounded as the precondition of the positing of subject and object (identification), and hence of predicative judgement.

While Kristeva places repeated emphasis on the Kleinian aspect of the 'semiotic' (notably, *RPL*, pp. 28, 167), the aspect which introduces presymbolic social determination, this emphasis also serves to highlight the differentiation between 'drive charges' and the connections which the relation to the mother sets up: a connection 'to "external" "objects" and "subjects", which are not yet constituted as such' (*RPL*, p. 28).

The 'semiotic' does - always - designate an 'ordering of the drives' from which the drives cannot be

extracted as origin - at one moment a 'rhythmic totality' (*RPL*, p. 40). This provisional 'totality' is crucial in Kristeva's use of the term '*chora*', taken from Plato and, in her view, predominantly expressing a 'receptacle... nourishing and maternal' (*RPL*, p. 26) - not unified but regulated. Nevertheless, Kristeva's elucidation of the place of the drives in condensation and displacement stresses the dependence of the primary processes on the 'splitting of matter'. Matter in scission is a presupposition of the psychosomatic functioning of the drives. Their psychosomatic 'articulation' presupposes, further, the relation to the mother's body. It is the combination of these two, symmetrical, 'presuppositions' which comprises the semiotic *chora*. I will first address the question of the 'social determination' introduced into the presymbolic by the notion of an 'ordering' of drive behaviour, and then draw the link between Kristeva's semiotic/symbolic distinction and her typology of signifying practices. Chapter 3 will present the logic of drive rejection which is what makes Kristeva's notion of negativity (re-rejection) a materialist concept. The success of Kristeva's argument that 'heterogeneous contradiction' is a practical concept is dependent on the negative force claimed for drive rejection in the sphere of social relations, and therefore also on her rendering of the semiotic 'unity' of semiotic and symbolic (the *chora*).

3. The Semiotic *Chora*

The *chora* is a modality of signifiante in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between real and symbolic. We emphasise the regulated aspect of the *chora*: its vocal and gestural organization is subject to what we shall call an objective *ordering* (*ordonnancement*) which is dictated by natural or socio-historical constraints such as the biological difference between the sexes or family structure. We may therefore posit that social organization, always

already symbolic, imprints its constraint in a mediated form which organizes the *chora* not according to a *law* (a term we reserve for the symbolic) but through an *ordering*. What is this mediation? (*RPL*, p. 27)

The major consequence of the diachronic account of the 'signifying process' is that it poses both the relative autonomy and the inseparability of the semiotic from the symbolic. The semiotic is not pre-symbolic in the sense of pre-social: object-relations theory is deployed by Kristeva to reveal the mother's function as 'mediating' a connection with the symbolic 'family and social structures'. It is nevertheless pre-symbolic in the definitive sense for Lacan and Kristeva of the entry into language: 'the linguistic sign is not yet articulated'. It is by means of the elaboration of pre-Oedipal 'object'-relations that Kristeva can argue for the relative autonomy of the 'semiotic'. The *chora* is both pre-symbolic and not pre-symbolic. It designates a 'network' that is both prior to the structuring moment which the 'symbolic' represents (it is pre-symbolic in the sense of pre-sign) and connected with the symbolic - not 'outside' it, given the indirect role in the ordering of the drives of the symbolic *qua* social organization.

Lacan's account of what will become the 'chora' in Kristeva's thesis does not ignore the concept of 'drive' in Freud's theory:

it was necessary to question oneself regarding the function that supports the subject of the unconscious, to grasp that it is difficult to designate that subject anywhere as subject of a statement, and therefore as the articulator, when he does not even know that he is speaking. Hence the concept of drive, in which he is designated by an organic, oral, anal, etc., mapping that satisfies the requirement of being all the farther away from speaking the more he speaks. (*E*, p. 314)

The notion of mapping can be aligned with Kristeva's emphasis on the 'ordering' of the drives in which the mother plays the mediating role: 'The oral and anal drives, both of which are oriented and structured around the mother's body dominate this sensorimotor organization. The mother's body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*' (RPL, p. 27). However, Lacan's notion of the 'function that supports the subject of the unconscious' does not designate a functioning autonomous to the 'symbolic', but one coextensive with it insofar as the 'symbolic' and the 'unconscious' are synonymous in their significance for the subject. He does not propose a presymbolic 'logic' of drive activity which makes the 'sensorimotor organization' an independent factor in the make-up of the speaking subject. The relative autonomy of the semiotic - in which the reformulation of Lacan consists: pre-sign but not pre-social - insists on a dialectic between the drives (energy discharges) and their 'mapping' (orientation and structuring 'around the mother's body'). It is, further, this reformulation which provides the elements necessary for Kristeva's theory of poetic negation.

Kristeva's exposition of the semiotic *chora* first follows Lacan's deployment of structural linguistics in his return to Freud's analysis of 'dream logic'. The claim that the unconscious is structured like a language relates the primary processes to the processes in language - analysed by structural linguistics - of 'metonymy' and 'metaphor'. As is well known, it was - for Lacan, and ironically so - owing to a 'defect of history' that Freud failed to posit what Lacan took upon himself to remind the institution of psychoanalysis of.

'Geneva 1910' [Saussure] and 'Petrograd 1920'
[Jakobson] suffice to explain why Freud
lacked this particular tool.... [T]he

mechanisms described by Freud as those of the 'primary process', in which the unconscious assumes its rule, correspond exactly to the functions that this school believes determines the most radical aspects of the effects of language, namely metaphor and metonymy - in other words, the signifier's effects of substitution and combination on the respectively synchronic and diachronic dimensions in which they appear in discourse. (E, p. 298)

Lacan's reminder to his peers in psychoanalysis bears constantly on 'the agency of the letter in the unconscious':

from the outset I have alerted informed minds to the extent to which the notion that the unconscious is merely the seat of the instincts will have to be rethought. (RPL, p. 41)

Kristeva's return to the function of the *drives* doesn't mitigate her acceptance of this Lacanian lesson. She seeks in the 'signifier's effects of substitution and combination' a motivation which undermines the subject's definitive absence from (subordination to) the signifier. She discovers the source of this motivation in the theory of the drives in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Furthermore, although her return to the theory of the drives introduces a thinking of 'matter' which is alien to Lacanian theory, Kristeva - at one moment in Lacan - glimpses the possibility of such a thinking, and - at another - turns a statement on the drives to her own purposes: 'drives divide the subject from desire'.¹²

In the first case, Kristeva discovers in Lacan's treatment of the signifier a hint of the significance that the drives come to have in her thesis, claiming that

Indeed, even Lacanian theory, although it establishes the signifier as absolute master, makes a distinction between two modalities of the signifier.... On the one hand, the

signifier as 'signifier's treasure,' as distinct from the *code*. (RPL, pp. 244-5)

On the other,

the signifier is not just a 'treasure' or a 'battery' but a *place* [*lieu*]. (RPL, p. 245)

Kristeva's analysis of this moment in Lacan where two 'modalities' of the signifier emerge, detects a categorial error in Lacan's reference to the 'treasure' as the *signifier's* treasure.

One cannot speak of the 'signifier' before the positing or the thesis of the Other, the articulation of which begins only with the mirror stage. But what of the previous processes that are not yet 'a site,' but a *functioning* that the thetic phase will establish as a signifying order (though it will not stop the functioning) and which will return in this order. (ibid; translation amended)

She discovers in the 'signifier's treasure' Lacan's misrecognition of a presymbolic (prethetic) moment - which she calls the 'semiotic' - whose 'functioning' in the symbolic is located in the signifier, a functioning which may be more or less repressed, or more or less dominant. 'Repression' refers here to the integrative capacity of the symbolic vis-à-vis the process of its production: 'the semiotic network... will be more or less integrated as *signifier*' (RPL, p. 47).

The psychoanalytic discovery of the 'more or less' of this integration provides the conceptual framework for Kristeva's theory of poetic language. It supports Kristeva's typology of signifying practices based on the dialectic of semiotic and symbolic in the 'phenotext' and in the 'genotext'. The phenotext denotes language in its communicative function, signification together with either an 'axial' or a 'transcendent' subject (RPL, p. 87); the genotext comprises the semiotic and the thetic moment: 'semiotic

processes but also the advent of the symbolic' (*RPL*, p. 86).

The dialectic of phenotext and genotext bears on the relation to the 'thetic moment' (*advent* of the symbolic). Kristeva's distinction recalls the comparison made in '*L'expérience et la pratique*' between avant-garde writing and Bataille's fiction, where the latter was appreciated for the socio-political dimension of its negotiation of the 'thetic moment', a dimension abdicated in the avant-garde text's 'negativist-fetishist' exploration of the semiotic. The same claim is made in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

in the texts of a Lautréamont or a Mallarmé, heterogeneity... is gathered up within the most condensed discursive structure of a contradiction - the lyric. Or it appears in the experimental evocation of its own emergence as that of the subject within the immobility of death. (p. 189)

the kind of representation Bataille calls 'the onanism of a funereal poem'. (*RPL*, p. 195)

The failure of a signifying practice fully to negotiate the 'advent of the symbolic' means here, as before, that the 'revolutionary potential' is lost, since the thetic moment is the liminary moment of the 'relation to others' (social community).

The four signifying practices outlined in Kristeva's doctoral thesis - narrative, metalanguage, contemplation/*theoria*, the text - are therefore differentiated according to the fate of or relation to the 'thetic moment' in each.

1. 'Narrative' confines the signifying process to family and social structure, permitting psychoanalysis to recognize in 'narrative' a 'display of neurosis': in the confrontation with family structure the phenotext or linguistic 'structure' is dominant, constricting the

drive charges' traversal of the thetic moment. For Kristeva, this is correlative with the function of the 'author' as an axial position: 'a projection of the paternal role in the family' (*RPL*, pp. 91-3). The position of the 'author' places the 'reader' as the addressee, in a position correlative to that of the author, and therefore in a position of identification with the 'axial' subject of narrative.

2. 'Metalanguage' converts the negativity of the drive charge into an affirmation: the axial position becomes a transcendent subject reflected in its addressee, and both are combined in an indifferent fixed totality - 'the State' (*RPL*, pp. 93-5). The traversal of the thetic moment is not renewed.

3. In 'contemplation' the materiality of the drive charges emerges but is not approached:

instinctual dyads are knotted in a nonsynthetic combination in which 'plus' and 'minus' interpenetrate like the ends of a magnetized chain; they close up a ring that has no outside but can be endlessly dissected, split, deeper and deeper, ever boundless and without origin, eternally returning, perpetually trapped. For this ring, materiality is a hole, a lack [*manque*]. (*RPL*, pp. 95-6)

Kristeva's account in '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' of idealist dialectic and its systematic reclosure reappears here as a 'Hegelian' circle of circles, for which the materialist moment takes place 'behind its back'. The system therefore presents an eternal return of the same: 'the identity and difference of opposites, implying the endless excavation of the Idea on the path of self-consciousness' (*RPL*, p. 98).

4. It is poetic language - the 'text' - which enacts the genotext. The 'semiotic' is dominant but the thetic moment is negotiated - traversed rather than failed, arrested or played out in a systematic closure.

To have access to the process would therefore be to break through any given *sign* for the subject, and reconstitute the heterogeneous space of its formation. This practice, a continuous passing beyond the limit, which does not close off signification into a system but instead assumes the infinity of its process, can only come about when, simultaneously, it assumes the laws of this process: the biological-physiological and social laws which allow, *first, for the discovery of their precedents and then for their free realization*. That this practice assumes laws implies that it safeguards boundaries, that it seeks out theses, and that in the process of this search it transforms the law, boundaries and constraints it meets. (*RPL*, pp. 100-101; my emphasis)

The reintroduction of drive charges into the linguistic elements (grammar, syntax, authorship) does not break with the phenotext but puts it (syntax, subject, communication) in process. The transformative potential of poetic language therefore bears on this traversal and rebinding (Kristeva calls it an *Aufhebung*, p. 99) of the advent of the symbolic.

The 'text' may, however, 'seek out theses' and 'discover the precedents' of the laws of the process without approaching their 'free realization', or 'transforming the law'. In this case the traversal and rebinding of the thetic moment bears on the 'subject' but not on social laws. Despite such a restriction, a signifying practice of this type - represented by the avant-garde - is held to comprehend the practice of '*theoria*'. Thus, when Kristeva presents Mallarmé's poem 'Igitur' as an exemplification of the 'discovery of the precedents' of the familial social subject (the poem discloses the 'the underside of the learned family', p. 227), she simultaneously claims that it symbolizes the *Aufhebung* of the subject of absolute knowledge.

The traversal of the thetic moments of 'the subject' is presented in Mallarmé's character 'Igitur', who symbolizes 'logic become madness'. Mallarmé's text

traverses madness without identifying with it; it discloses the real determinations of symbolic transformation.

to 'personify' signifying infinity is an act which, as such, not only includes but also binds *chance*: that 'drop of nothingness lacking in the sea,' the impossibility of completing, circumscribing, harnessing, and assimilating signifying infinity. This is why only the act (by which we mean the poetic act) can bring about the expenditure of infinity through chance and prevent infinity from turning in on itself, knowing itself, making itself logical as an insane *Igitur*. *Igitur* is, then, the truth behind the Hegelian subject of absolute knowledge: madness is what the syllogism stumbles against on its way toward mastering the infinite. (RPL, pp. 226-7)

Mallarmé's symbolization - in the 'person' *Igitur* - of 'logic' and madness is articulated by Kristeva as the 'poetic act' which enacts the limit of philosophy (the subject of absolute knowledge), the passing of the limit (madness), and the binding of this passage. Literature 'reverses' philosophy and the familial social subject by enacting the passage to infinity: 'Mallarmé calls madness useful because it foils the piracy of a certain logic whose order is dependent upon the social order' (RPL, p. 226). This - poetic - 'act' is what philosophy and revolutionary discourse are unable to undertake, for they reproduce the 'piracy' protective of the social order. A revolutionary discourse can only counter this 'piracy' if social practice is met by literature's disclosure of what lies beneath the 'revolutionary subject's' illusion about its place in practice.

The 'avant-garde' text, while it represents an experience of the expenditure of the subject, nevertheless does not fulfil the conditions which bring about a 'practice'. These conditions, outlined in the passage above distinguishing the 'genotext' from the 'phenotext', demand the '*Aufhebung*' not only of the

'subject' but of social laws. Implicit in the account of the 'assumption' (traversal and rebinding or *Aufhebung*) of these laws is the claim that *social* law (the 'social censorship' instituted in the second moment of the thetic phase, in the Oedipal complex) is not a definitive imposition, but a position. The limit (*Grenze*) which social censorship presents for the subject is passable (*Schranke*), not *by* the subject, but by the signifying practice which traverses and re-forms the thetic moments of the subject and the laws to which it is subjected. A 'practice' bears on the social censorship to which the subject submits at the moment of its constitution or 'being-positing', on the moment of entry into the symbolic order. 'Subject' and 'law' are transformable by the genotext since the latter 'sublates' the moment of their 'being-positing' (the thetic moment): their 'position' becomes a 'liminary moment' of the signifying process.

Kristeva's characterization of the traversal of the thetic moment as a mechanism of drive rejection - a reintroduction of drive charges - therefore insists that, as a negotiation of the thetic moment, it both dissolves previous theses (the negative, destructive moment) and 'rebinds' (the positive, thetic moment).

Although the negative, aggressivity, anality and death predominate, they nevertheless pass through all the theses capable of giving them meaning, go beyond them, and in so doing convey positivity in their path. (*RPL*, p. 99)

The semiotic 'in' the symbolic is therefore a functioning of the presymbolic which is both violent *and* sustains a connection with the the object of its destruction. Kristeva's logic of drive rejection has presented the possibility of this transformation as residing in the nature of the 'thetic moment' as a positing of the 'thetic phase'. Her return to the theory of the drives introduced a social determination into the mechanism of their behaviour prior to their

integration on the entry into the symbolic. In the elucidation of the pre-Oedipal relation to the mother, the mother's body appears as 'principle' of the ordering of the drives, mediating family and social structures. The socio-historicizing of the 'external disturbing forces' which results (of the forces which introduce a 'detour' (*Umweg*) into the compulsion of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) places the 'principle' not only of subjective but also of socio-historical transformation on a stage other than that of the appearance of social change.

The insistence on the socio-historical determination of drive 'conflict' is the point at which Kristeva's later writings on love finds their connection with the early revolutionary work at this point: no death drive without libido, no aggression without love, no violence without the 'mediations' of the social moment in which primary narcissism is set up. Nevertheless, the earlier - certainly critical - position on transference in analysis is consistent with both the deployment then of the writings of Klein's 'middle period' and the insistence on the *predominance* of the death drive.¹³

The reappraisal of transference in the later works presents transformative potential as the 'renewal of love'. The key note of the doctoral thesis is the renewal of violence, and its key problematic the possibility of renewal through violence. The parenthesis is a question because, as will be shown in the following chapter, it is dependent on the *Sollen* in Kristeva's thought of 'heterogeneous contradiction', which expounds the correspondence of the poetic and social subject.

Chapter summary and conclusion

Chapter 2 has established that the theory of symbolization is a diachronic account of the 'unity' of drives and social determination in the maturation of the individual. The abstract account of the logic of the signifier in the early essays presented difficulties for understanding the infinite 'in' language. The exposition of 'symbolization' has presented the possibility of the signifier's functioning as the infinite 'in' language, by locating it as the site of drive re-jection. The logic of drive re-jection expounds the negative force which destabilizes and is held to renew the symbolic. Kristeva rewrites the 'mirror stage' and entrance into language as a 'thetic phase' which undermines the structural fixity of the Lacanian concepts.

The return to Freud thus combines a relativization of the subject's subordination to the 'symbolic' with an overturning of the primacy of the subject of the understanding, both as the fundamental moment of the 'speaking subject', and as the basis of 'practice'.

The notion of the 'thetic phase' has, further, expounded the production of 'space' as the separation of the 'subject' from and through his image in the 'mirror stage'. In Kristeva's later writings, where the pre-thetic structure of 'narcissism' is shown to be crucial to the separation of the 'subject', the concept of the 'production' of space is fully elaborated. Furthermore, the concept is introduced as the basis for a way out of the seemingly untranscendable reappearance of the *Grenze* (subjective enclosure) within the *Schranke* (signifying practice). The elaboration of the *infinite* possibility of the renewal of the release from finitude which poetic language enacts, is crucial to Kristeva's thesis, since without it her theory of poetic language will only present the renewal of the

subjective limitation. It will, however, be demonstrated that Kristeva's 'infinity' of the signifier (discussed chapter 4) only makes evident the truth of Kristeva's 'infinite' as it appears from the beginning: the impossibility of the union of finite and infinite owing to the way in which that union is claimed and deferred.

CHAPTER THREE
REVOLUTION IN POETIC LANGUAGE 'AND' IN SOCIETY

Introduction

This chapter will demonstrate how Kristeva's response to her question of what has the potential to counterveil capitalism's reinforcement of dominant political structures, itself undoes the prospect it holds out for social transformation. The question she posed demands a treatment of social practice. However, this treatment remains tied to the logic of drive rejection and to the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction' which, respectively, present the material and social preconditions for 'revolution in poetic language'. The concept of 'practice' in its full sense, combining the 'signifying process' and the subject in social and political relations, presents the moment of transformation of human law as the renewal of violence; but it is not established that the renewal of human law *through* violence is an outcome of Kristevan 'practice'. This is not simply because of the default of the objective conditions necessary for the transformation held out by the theory of 'revolution'. It is because the portrayal of 'heterogeneous contradiction' through which it would take place contains a *Sollen*. The latter can be comprehended as the outcome of a premature departure from Hegel. The exposition of a specific tendency of 'poetic language' to confrontation with capitalist culture posits another world to the world of social and political relations: the *qualitative* change to a renewed 'law' is infinitely deferred, and is construed as a 'leap' on the basis of the economy of drive re-jection. On the one side, there is what is in effect an unknown inner ('matter'), on the other side an endlessly projected transformation (the end of the dominance of 'abstract right' and 'paternal law').

A. *The Material and Social Dimensions of the
'Semiotic'*

1. Positing Rejection

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* language 'at work' is a traversal of the 'advent' of the symbolic, and takes place as the re-jection of language. Re-jection may, and must, include a social moment but it is ultimately a violent negation: an *economic* return of the death drive which makes the logic of the signifier - the 'effects of substitution and displacement', in Lacan's words - dependent on the dominance of a 'destructive wave'. The semiotic *chora*

is on the path of destruction, aggressivity and death. For although drives have been described as disunited or contradictory structures, simul-taneously 'positive' and 'negative,' this doubling is said to generate a dominant 'destructive wave' that is drive's most characteristic trait. (*RPL*, p. 28)

The precondition and prototype of the 'doubling' which characterizes drive activity is found in 'the *objective laws* of living matter' (*RPL*, p. 174). The 'scission and constancy', or repeated splitting, of matter is a precondition of the mechanism of drive rejection in both its presymbolic and its signifying function (even though, as will be seen, these functionings, and hence the operativity of the drives, presuppose the intervention of a 'social' determination). The dominance of the 'death drive' in Kristeva's account of the drives in *Revolution in Poetic Language* is the basis of her emphasis there on the 'violence' of both signifying and political practice.¹ However, the equivocality of the death drive (built into the notion that it is a tendency to take its logic of 'scission' *to the end*) means that it is never the death drive 'as such' which is the condition of practice. The two tendencies of drive rejection in its signifying function as a practice, either its renewal or its

blocking, is thus itself built into and referred by Kristeva to the characteristics of drive rejection's material foundation.

We stress once again that these two opposing tendencies are found in biology, in the way living matter functions: in its division and stoppage and in the principles of multiplication and constancy, the latter ensuring the preservation of the organic cell. Not only does drive rejection follow these objective laws of living matter, they are its indispensable precondition. (*RPL*, pp. 173-4)

While the 'death' and 'life' drives of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* can be referred, respectively, to the biological principles of multiplication and constancy, each contains the dual import of the 'laws' of living matter. Drive behaviour presents not a binary opposition of two forces 'in conflict' but a 'tendency'. On the one hand, the death drive is the principle of 'multiplication' and the 'life' drive is the principle of constancy (ensuring the *preservation* of the organic cell). On the other, the death drive is bent on taking its 'logic of scission to the end' and 'external disturbing forces' are the condition of the productive 'detour'. The tendential nature of the drives makes them 'the doubly differentiated site of conflict and rejection' (*RPL*, p. 171).

Kristeva attributes a clarification of Freud's theory of the drives to modern genetic theory. The latter has presented the mode of 'repetition' of the doubling which characterizes drive behaviour, a mode which can account for the possibility of 'new structures'.² This provides Kristeva's concept of drive re-jection with the prototype for its logic of self-positing: not mechanistic repetition, but 'renewal' (*RPL*, p. 171). Without this prototype, the notion of the dominance of death drive, as the 'most instinctual' drive (*RPL*, p. 28), would seem to posit a univocal and original force

whose 'dominance' over the life drive remains inexplicable.

The perceived shortcoming of genetic theory's clarification of the 'doubling' process of drive behaviour pertains to the moment of 'reversal' in the process of splitting and multiplication. The disclosure of the 'path' from drive behaviour (the path of the 'becoming' of 'desire') to intersubjective relations (identifications as relations of 'desire') makes up for this shortcoming. In Kristeva's terms, genetic theory has failed to account for the *social* mode of determination of drive re-jection. The biological process of self-multiplication is a process of 'displacement' and renewal (*RPL*, p. 171): the renewal of rejection 'displaces boundaries'.

Repeated drives or the shocks from energy discharges create a state of excitation. Because it remains unsatisfied, this excitation produces, through a qualitative leap, a repercussion that delays, momentarily absorbs, and posits that excitation. Repeated *rejection* thus *posits* rejection. (*RPL*, p. 171)

The repercussion or 'countercharge' produced by the accumulation of the attack of drive charges is the principle of qualitative change and simultaneously the 'delay' of drive rejection. Kristeva presents a logic of the 'positing' and 'being-positing' of drive rejection, attributing the condition of the renewal of the destructive force of drive rejection to the second moment:

Although repeated rejection is separation, doubling, scission, and shattering, it is at the same time and afterward accumulation, stoppage, mark, and stasis. In its trajectory, rejection must become positive: rejection engrammatizes, *it marks One* in order to reject it again and divide it in two again. As a step toward the development of the signifier, the engram is rejection's self-defense, *its relative immobilization*, which, in turn, allows the reactivation of

drives: re-jection. (*RPL*, p. 171; my emphasis)

Kristeva's notion that the mechanism of re-jection - the economy of drive behaviour - is a precondition of the differential character of the 'signifier' is signalled here. Nonetheless, the entry into language which posits the signifier requires a precondition complementary to that of drive activity: the presymbolic social determination which, together with the drive economy, sets up the presymbolic as a semiotic 'network'. The reference to language contained in the above passage will therefore be addressed below, where the social determination of Kristeva's presymbolic scene is reapproached in its relation to this *logic* of positing rejection.

Kristeva claims for self-positing 'rejection' the character of a process of renewal, whose 'principle' is the stasis or mark - 'delay' - of rejection: 'The mark is the re- in rejection and is the precondition of its renewal' (*RPL*, p. 169). It is the precondition of the movement of differentiation - of rejection's displacement of boundaries. The relation of the drives, not positive 'and' negative but 'doubly differentiated', attributes dominance to the death drive because the negative posits and is renewed by the positive, generating a 'dominant "destructive wave"' (*RPL*, p. 28).

Drive facilitation, differentiated 'in itself', attacks, which is to say redivides, the stasis that its own 'self-defence' has posited: 'rejection engrammatizes, it marks One in order to reject it again and divide it in two again'. The stasis or mark denotes the stoppage (*arrêt*) or 'delay' of rejection by way of its repercussion or 'countercharge'. The 'engram' then designates a transition from 'delay' to relative immobilization, and the term suggests the role which the 'positive term' plays in the generation of the

symbolic: 'The quantitative accumulation of rejections nevertheless upsets the mark's stability: the mark becomes an unstable engram which ends up being rejected into a *qualitatively* new space, that of the *representamen* or the sign' (RPL, p. 172). This 'ending up' of the engram can only take place under the regulating process of the semiotic, which adds another dimension to the self-positing or 'countercharge' of rejection.

Kristeva's alignment of the signifier with the economy of drive differentiation is therefore consistent with the stress on the primacy of the signifier in Lacan's exposition of the 'place of the Other'. Her foundational distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' is a further attempt to address the aporia emerging from the necessity to posit both the differential nature of the signifier and the connection of signifier and signified without which there would be no fixation, or 'localization', of the differential movement, and hence no signification. The foundational distinction proposes the 'generation' of identity by way of differentiation; and the danger that this may lead her 'to ontologize the unconscious as the precondition of language' is avoided by making a dialectical, and not economic, moment pivotal in the 'process' of generation: 'heterogeneous contradiction'.³

The entire 'sequence' is a logic of doubling as self-positing whose 'principles' are quantitative accumulation of the drive charge and qualitative leap: on the one hand, repeated rejection, on the other its self-defence. The notion of semiotic 'regulation' introduces the second dimension of the process of rejection, that genetic theory's account of drive behaviour fell short of: not only 'doubling' but *heterogeneity* of the drives:

This duality (both heterogeneity *and* the doubling of the drives) allows us to account for a heteronomous conflictual process; without it, we would be unable to situate psychotic experience or any kind of renewable practice. (*RPL*, p. 169)

The second precondition of the generation of the symbolic is, 'ultimately', the symbolic: 'the social apparatus and the social practice in which the subject is led to function' (*RPL*, p. 173). Semiotic regulation, mediation of the socio-symbolic, bears on the positive moment of the 'self-defence'. The principle of *this* determination of drive rejection, of this qualitative leap - which 'doubles' the countercharge (now 'engrammatic and symbolic') - is the mother's body, mediating symbolic structures: 'social organization, always already symbolic, imprints its constraint in a mediated form which organizes the *chora* not according to a *law* (a term we reserve for the symbolic) but through an *ordering*' (*RPL*, p. 27).

It is this 'precondition' of the generation of the symbolic, the pre-Oedipal relation to the mother, which makes the *chora* a pre-linguistic modality of 'signifiante' (*ibid.*), or establishes the connection between the biological and the symbolic by *imprinting* the constraints of the latter on the 'effects' of drive-rejection, on its 'being-positing'.

rejection generatesthetic *heterogeneity*
under very precise biological and social
conditions: 'humanity'. (*RPL*, p. 171)

While the mechanism of drive rejection is the generating principle of the symbolic, generation conceived as renewal (rather than simple constitution) is dependent on the 'heterogeneity' of the positing/being-positing relation. Heterogeneity is determined by the order of being-positing, the symbolic order, that rejection produces. There is no first principle: Kristeva proposes an 'anti'-metaphysical dialectic of the nature/culture relation.

The generation of the semiotic modality of *signifiante*, leading into the 'thetic phase' of mirror stage and castration, is a process of stabilization and destabilization. Its 'final' stage, instituting the 'symbolic', will separate out this tendency to (de)stabilization into an asymmetry whose principle is absence: absence of the subject from the signifier; positing of the real object as a lost object; the 'gap' in the signifier/signified structure of the sign.

[Rejection's] tendency toward death is deferred by this symbolic heterogeneity: the body, as if to prevent its own destruction, *reinscribes* [re-marque] rejection and, through a leap, *represents* it *in absentia* as a sign. (ibid.)

'*In absentia*' designates the qualitative change which takes place in the leap which the 'thetic moment' denotes. Henceforth the thetic phase is the 'place of the Other', the unconscious: the sign understood, not in terms of a metaphysical notion of representation, but as a differential relation which accords primacy to the signifier. Nevertheless, the 'in absentia' produces or posits the subject in a - necessarily - misapprehending relation to the Other. 'Metaphysical' oppositions (subject/object, ego/being) are misrecognitions which aim definitively to stabilize the heterogeneity underlying the asymmetry in which they are inscribed. The precondition of misrecognition, of the oppositional relation of consciousness to otherness, is the differential character of the Other. The 'symbolic' *qua* social structures which are supported by and re-present a logic of opposition and identity (of the 'same'), is therefore exceeded by the differential movement of 'semiotic functioning'. The heterogeneous contradiction of semiotic and symbolic (One: other of one) is then the condition of a renewal of the signifying process as a 'signifying practice'.

'Metaphor and metonymy' owe their significance as the infinite operations of *signifiante* to the 'place' of the primary processes - condensation and displacement: the latter are a 'middle' between the biological and the symbolic. Condensation and displacement are the modes of articulation of drive rejection.

Drive facilitation, temporarily arrested, marks discontinuities in what may be called the various material supports [*matériaux*] susceptible to semiotization: voice, gesture, colors. Phonic (*later phonemic*), kinetic, or chromatic units and differences are the marks of these stases in the drives. Connections or functions are thereby established between these discrete marks which are based on drives and articulated according to their resemblance or opposition, either by slippage or by condensation. *Here we find the principles of metonymy and metaphor indissociable from the drive economy underlying them.* (RPL, p. 28; my emphasis)

Metaphor and metonymy, the infinite operations of 'language', have their material principles in the articulation of the drives. Hence, 'signifying practice' or 'poetic language' denotes the return of the drives into language, or the re-jection of a signifying 'device'.⁴ Re-jection is thus the return of the drives as the redivision of a divided language: not only of signifier/signified, but of signifier/subject. With regard to the latter, therefore, it puts the subject of lack 'in process'; 're-jection' denotes the operation in which 'drives divide the subject from desire'. This operation contains the two preconditions of the transformation of the subject: the 'doubling' of the drives and the 'heterogeneity' which is introduced by the relation to the mother and which turns the process of 'renewal' of rejection into a semiotic *functioning*.

2. Structuring Rejection

when it operates as the signifying function, the mechanism of rejection is situated at a qualitatively different level. It produces

separations and renewed stases, but also brings about heterogeneous relations between *scission and material constancy*, on the one hand, and its *binding* through a leap on the other. Indeed to speak of the scission and stoppage [*arrêt*] that organize the struggle characteristic of rejection, we must consider this logic in its connection with the social milieu in which the *representamen* manifests itself. For identification with the other or suppression of the other are locked within family structures; it is in the family that relations of rejection become intersubjective: they become relations of desire. (RPL, p. 174)

The importance of the discoveries of psychoanalysis, for Kristeva, is that they have shown the manner of emergence of intersubjective relations through separation and self-defence: the (de)stabilization of rejection sets up relations of identification and desire, whose arrangement is determined by family 'structures'. 'Identification' and 'desire' are conditions of intersubjective relations but also represent their fixation.

The identification and subjective unification carried out in opposition to the process depend on the relation to the parent of the *same* sex, who appears as a logicallythetic unity. In a society governed by paternal law, this unity is the Name-of-the-Father, but, practically, it can be assumed by any power-wielding protagonist or structure (father, mother, the family, the State). (RPL, p. 176)

It is this primacy of family structure in the formation of intersubjective relations which lies behind Kristeva's thesis that the late nineteenth-century avant-garde manifests the expenditure of the 'subject'. The writings of Mallarmé and Lautréamont exemplify this self-witting 'textual' transformation. Mallarmé's 'Igitur' discloses the 'underside of the learned family'; Lautréamont's text presents 'a second birth, a self-engendering eliminating the family and usurping all its roles', by means of the complementary opposition of his two texts *Maldoror* and *Poems*.

Maldoror is pseudonymous and dominated by the semiotic, *Poems* is signed by the father's name and dominated by the symbolic. Together, in their 'complementary opposition' they display the 'transition' from semiotic to symbolic: 'the scission in the process of the subject') (*RPL*, p. 220).

The identifications and relations of desire structured by the family is analysed as one of society's 'defensive structures', 'corresponding to the appearance of logicallythetic unity in the 'same'-sex). Avant-garde literature 'expends' the fixation of the symbolic family 'structure'. Nevertheless the re-rejection of the defensive structure may itself remain locked in a 'self-defence'.

The narcissistic moment tends to attach the process of rejection to the unity of the ego, thus preventing rejection's destructive and innovative vigor from going beyond the enclosure of subjectivity and opening up toward a revolutionary ideology capable of transforming the social machine. (*RPL*, p. 186)

Bataille's 'advance' over the avant-garde, presented in chapter 1 above, was his negotiation of the ideology of state power when that power was confused with the 'subject who knows'; Bataille's fiction disclosed the 'unity' of the knowing subject and *jouissance*, and in Kristeva's interpretation this was tantamount to showing that bourgeois ideology fixed the unity of the 'split' subject into an opposition of 'state power' and 'religion'. Notwithstanding this 'advance' Kristeva has also maintained that it is insufficient in the conditions of the spread of capitalist society. The passage above indicates the importance of psychoanalysis in Kristeva's thought, as the science which comprehends the structure in which the process of rejection becomes blocked (narcissism, whose elaboration in the later writings is the core of Kristeva's ethics of psychoanalysis).⁵

The avant-garde 'lacked' the discoveries of psychoanalysis, the scientific exposition of what poetic language practices. It is Klein's work on the psychoanalysis of children which has opened up the potential for comprehending the connection between pre-Oedipal relations of desire (that are not 'identifications' as such) and transformative practices. Quoting from *The Psychoanalysis of Children* ('at this stage of child development children of both sexes believe that it is the body of the mother which contains all that is desirable') Kristeva remarks:

Without 'believing' or 'desiring' any 'object' whatsoever, the subject is in the process of constituting himself vis-à-vis a non-object. He is in the process of separating from this non-object so as to make that non-object 'one' and posit himself as 'other': the mother's body is the not-yet-one that the believing and desiring subject will imagine as a 'receptacle'. (RPL, p. 241, n. 21)

Klein's analysis of 'aggression' and 'super-ego formation' maps out the terrain of a tendency in which transformative practices become restricted to regressive struggles with repressive social structures, and thus only serve to underpin the hold (or 'self-defence') of those structures.

Rejection and sadism, which is its psychological side, return and disturb the symbolic chains put in place by the Oedipal complex. Melanie Klein interprets the 'behaviour disturbances' that result as the organism's 'defenses' against the danger of aggressivity. But she recognizes that 'this defence... is of a *violent* character and differs fundamentally from the later mechanism of repression', which symbolism establishes. These 'defenses' are resistances, *thetic substitutes* for the 'violent' drive process, which, far from having a psychological value of prevention, *arrange* the 'sadistic' drive charge, *articulate* rejection in such a way that it is not assumed by the construction of a superego (as is the case in the Oedipus complex). The distortion of words, the repetition of words

and syntagms, and hyperkinesia or stereotypy reveal that a semiotic *network* - the *chora* - has been established, one that simultaneously defies both verbal symbolization and the formation of a superego patterned after paternal law and sealed by language acquisition. (*RPL*, pp. 151-2)

The moment of 'self-defence' - 'arrangement' of the sadistic drive charge - has a manifold implication for the 'renewal of violence' owing to its situation with regard to the death drive and to the symbolic order. *First*, it represents a self-defence against the violence of the death drive, a 'refuge of the subject's unity' (*RPL*, p. 186). *Second*, it is a condition of separation from the mother and hence of entry into the symbolic: the self-defence is in a relative distinction from 'fusing orality' (the sadistic and oral drives together represent the separation-in-relation of the pre-Oedipal relation to the mother); as the tendency to separation, self-defence is a precedent for 'the subject' posited on the entry into language. *Third*, as presymbolic the 'defence' is prior to Oedipal law. Consequently, and *fourth*, it is a passage for rejection's renewal of violence or attack on symbolic systems. *Fifth*, it represents, by reason agains of it situation, the potential for a foreclosure of rejection in its signifying function - the defiance of 'verbal symbolization'. This is the ambiguity of the functioning of the 'defense': it is the subjective passage for the renewal of violence because of its pre-Oedipal situation, but as presymbolic it represents a pre-empting of the mechanism of rejection in its signifying modality through its fixation within subjective narcissicism.

The avant-garde signifying practice represents a transformation of the subject in conditions where family structure has primacy in intersubjective relations, but locks the signifying process within a subjective enclosure. It enacts the expenditure of the subject, or

is a 'signifying experience' rather than a 'signifying practice' (*RPL*, p. 195). It is, further, an atavistic practice if reproduced in conditions in which family structure's primacy in intersubjective relations has been undermined. The passage through the 'underside of the *learned* family' will then create 'thetic substitutes' for the renewal of the 'violent' drive process.

The notion of *experience* shall be reserved for practices in which heterogeneous contradiction is maintained, sought after, and put into discourse, thereby forming the essential economy of the text, but one in which heterogeneous contradiction invests, during the thetic phase, in a strictly individual, naturalist, or esoteric representation, reducing rejection to the presence of the ego. (*ibid.*)

Midway between, and in a struggle with, both the violence of drive rejection and the repression of symbolic law, subjective narcissism represents a condition *and* foreclosure of social transformation in a society whose structures are patterned on 'paternal law'.⁶

Kristeva views the social configuration in which 'modern' literature has emerged as one in which the primacy of 'family structure' is not sustained, but is 'in the process of dissolving and being overrun by the totality of social relations that exceed it and will even eliminate it' (*RPL*, p. 177). In this configuration the 'identificatory illusion' which the primacy of family structure renders tenacious, that is to say the identifications with and suppressions of the other, is loosened. 'Desire' (understood in terms of the familial identifications which set up intersubjective relations) is now fragile, and hence no longer the affirmative moment (or self-defence) which forms the passage for re-jection.

Rejection acts through a negativity that no longer restrains a desire. This negativity

restrains only the signifying stasis and thesis within the process of practice, that is, only the positing and positive moment, which opens the way to a realization-in-practice, a production: the entire range of social practices, from aesthetics to science and politics. Hence what provides the affirmative moment of rejection and ensures its renewal is not the *object that is produced*, i.e., the metonymic object of desire; it is, instead, the *process of its production* or, let us say, its productivity. Within this process *the object is not a boundary to be reached* [my emphasis] but merely the lower threshold allowing rejection to be articulated as social practice. (RPL, p. 177)

If in the social configuration of capitalism the primacy of family structure is in the process of being overrun, and the metonymic object of desire 'is not a boundary to be reached' but merely a lower threshold, rejection or the dis-placement of boundaries cannot be a direct attack on 'paternal law'. There is thus a suggestion in Kristeva's thought that re-jection as a 'practice' in the conditions of advanced capitalism cannot be the re-jection of the 'Name-of-the-Father' as such, since the latter is only the object of attack - the logicallythetic unity on which relations of identification are dependent - in a society '*governed by paternal law*' (RPL, p. 176).

This is not to say that 'capitalism' no longer proposes political structures patterned on 'paternal law', or that their repression of the 'process' may not represent the assimilation of logicallythetic unity to the 'Name-of-the-Father'. Nevertheless, power-wielding structures may be beyond the re-presentation of strictly 'paternal' law. Thus the substantial elements of Kristeva's theory of social organization are, first, the *structural* basis of power in the 'piracy' of thethetic moment, and second the consequent 'defenses' sustaining that piracy: both the 'defensive structures' of social institutions *and* regressive struggles against

their repression. Her discussions of forms of practice - poetic, feminist, musical, etc. - may suggest an across the board 'plurality' of local practices. However, these forms always relate to specific moments of Kristeva's theory of symbolization, and are subject to historical relevance (thus the exemplifications of poetic language in 'modern' literature never exemplify 'signifying practice' in its full sense as an entire recasting of the 'symbolic').

Kristeva's thesis that the semiotic *chora's* mediated connection with the symbolic introduces heterogeneity into the 'doubling' which characterizes drive activity, will turn 'drive rejection' into an economic notion of - signifiable - negativity. The crux of a signifying practice is the 'heterogeneous contradiction' with a previous signifying device - neither its mere repetition nor a renewed repression of the process. The idea of a signifying practice which has the potential for a historical impact stresses the negotiation of the 'thetic moment' because the latter presents the heterogeneous contradiction out of which social organization develops ('advent' of the symbolic). In the thetic moment - dialectical and not economic - the tendency to (de)stabilization becomes a heterogeneous contradiction in which neither the potential 'drift' of the semiotic (as in psychotic discourse) nor symbolic 'unity' predominates. Neither semiotic nor symbolic works to foreclose the other. Heterogeneous contradiction produces - through a 'leap' - the transformation of subject, object, and signifying device.

It is the success of this claim that is crucial for assessing Kristeva's social and political thought. The theory of poetic language represents Kristeva's endeavour to disclose a site of practice in which the possibility of the undermining of the dominance of 'abstract right' in social and political relations.

However the idea that the 'symbolic order' is posited through a leap means that the moments of 'abstract right' can never be investigated as such. Kristeva's refusal of Hegelian 'mediation', and her concept of heterogeneous contradiction, has as its outcome a conception of 'law' which leaves it as the outcome of a negation which contains an unknowable moment (a 'leap'). Symbolic law thus becomes a sphere of social and political structures without their own mediation. I will go into the detail of this limitation of her thought at the end of this chapter, where it will be shown that her 'sublation' of Hegel re-presents a form of transcendental philosophy whose moments Hegel comprehended. Kristeva's 'advent' of the symbolic cannot present the basis of objective existence as a social *organization* (see Intertext).

Kristeva's analysis of the forms of foreclosure of either semiotic or symbolic presents them as 'relative identities' of the two terms of thethetic moment, a settlement with one of the heterogeneities through the dominance of the other: a 'logicallythetic unity' or repressive law (for example, abstract 'right', 'paternal' law); or an esoteric confinement of the process (the avant-garde); or an immobilization of the ego in its struggle with the law (for example, in Céline's anti-semitism, to be discussed below in section C2), and so on. These relative identities are, on the symbolic level where they take place, fixations which repress the heterogeneous contradiction at the heart of the relation to otherness: for example, 'suppression of the other' or 'identification with the other' in intersubjective relations based on family structure (*RPL*, p. 174).⁷

For this reason, a key proposition of Kristeva's thesis is the claim that 'maintaining heterogeneous contradiction is essential' (*RPL*, p. 189). Heterogeneous contradiction is a condition of drive re-

jection's effectivity, an essential factor in its dual tendency: either arrested movement owing to various forms of its 'blocking' or the reproducing of heterogeneous contradiction. The 'fate' of heterogeneous contradiction - at what point, and how, it is blocked or renewed - thus determines the forms of (mis)recognition at every stage and within every exemplification of 'signifying' and political practice.⁸

The fixation in Kristeva's thought of the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction' has consequences for her formulation and exposition of (mis)recognition, and for the potential added to revolutionary discourse by the contribution of 'poetic language (and, by implication, for her estimation of 'art' and 'philosophy'). The following section recovers the explicit return to Hegel in Kristeva's thought, showing how the deployment of both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic* appears, subsequent to the theory of symbolization which has arisen from the reformulation of Lacan's 'symbolic'.

B. *The 'Reversal' of Hegelian Moments:
Force, Negativity, the Practical*

1. The Reversal of 'Force':
Drive Rejection's Material Basis

In Kristeva's view Hegel's dialectic - in contrast with Husserl's phenomenology - opened up the philosophical treatment of consciousness to a moment of separation in consciousness. Kristeva discovers this moment of separation in the early stages of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and then - repeating the analysis of *Begierde* from the earlier Bataille essay - finds that it succumbs to the 'constitution of self-consciousness'.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, separation in 'consciousness', while dramatized in its 'immediacy' in the dialectic of 'The "This" and "Meaning"', is never in abeyance but intrinsic to consciousness:

Consciousness, however, is explicitly the *concept* of itself. Hence it is something that goes beyond limits, and since these limits are its own, it is something that goes beyond itself. (*Phen.*, #80)

Kristeva, however, posits an 'instant' of separation approached in the first configuration of consciousness, in sense-certainty, but then conflates sense-certainty with 'perception' in order to construe 'direct experience' of the object as an 'apprehending consciousness'. This will permit her to connect Hegelian 'experience' with Maoist experience through their 'common' characteristics: 'immediacy' and 'determination of external being'.

On Kristeva's reading sense-certainty is equivocal, both an apprehending 'consciousness of' the object and containing an 'instant' of separation. It is posited as the 'first moment' of Hegelian experience, upon which a 'second moment' is then appended. The latter is Hegel's 'self-consciousness', construed as the 'moment' in which self-consciousness is 'realized'. The relation to

the object in sense-certainty is configured as a 'direct experience' of the object, an experience on the 'border' of heterogeneity (RPL, p. 201), and one definitively abandoned in the proposed 'second' moment: 'in which immediate certainty will be introduced into the presence of consciousness' (RPL, p. 196). The division of the mediations comprising the movement from 'Consciousness' to 'Self-consciousness' into a 'first' and 'second' moment leads Kristeva to refer to the former as a 'first mysterious movement'. This 'mystery' is where she will place her own concept of experience, drawing out the 'instant' of separation in sense-certainty, and recasting the latter as direct experience 'of the new heterogeneous object' (RPL, p. 201).

This construction of the 'first' configuration of consciousness *collapses* the separation in Hegelian sense-certainty, and is possible only as a result of Kristeva's interpolation into the dialectic of an abstract statement on the experience of consciousness taken from Hegel's 'Introduction'. The statement on an 'uprooting' of consciousness in the movement of experience is deployed against Husserl:

there emerges an instant of 'uprooting' (*Hinausgerissenwerden*) or of 'death' in the Hegelian conception of experience, an instant apprehended by consciousness as the cause producing the immediate *shape* and translating it into a *Notion*. In our view this negativity - the sudden interruption of conscious presence and its finitude - is what makes Hegel's idea of experience radically different from Husserlian phenomenological experience. (RPL, pp. 196-7)

Kristeva uses the statement on 'uprooting' to locate 'true' experience in sense-certainty *versus* the turning back of consciousness upon itself: *versus* a movement which turns 'immediacy' into the 'concept', which designates the advent of thetic consciousness, and supposedly sets up Hegelian experience as the

experience 'of' a realized self-consciousness. The deviation from sense-certainty in which self-consciousness is taken to be 'realized' permits Kristeva's claim that the 'instant' of death is posited as an uninvestigated 'cause'. The instant of 'uprooting' becomes, on the advent of self-consciousness, a void for self-consciousness. On this reading, the *Phenomenology* is held, not to dramatize the experience of the failures to realize the adequation of 'concept' and 'object', but to be the trajectory of that adequation, closing in on 'absolute knowledge' as the successful outcome. Kristeva's view that henceforth Hegelian experience is reduced to 'nothingness' (*RPL*, p. 196) is a truth of her own reading.

The proposed 'constitution' of self-consciousness determines the 'finitude' of Hegelian experience. For Kristeva, therefore, the 'mediations' of the system imply the materialist truth of the Hegelian 'infinite', glimpsed but not approached in the 'instant' of uprooting in sense-certainty. Unapproached, the 'truth' of sense-certainty functions in the restricted manner of a logical ideality: 'negativity', the Hegelian infinite, is the principle of mediation, and unfolds finitude as 'system'. On this account Hegelian mediation only re-presents the subjective reclosure of the infinite which takes place in the transition to 'self-consciousness'. 'Mediation' presents a systematic reclosure of the dialectic within the movement of oppositional differentiation.

Hence it is the opposition of finite (self-presence of consciousness) and infinite (idealist 'negativity') which is taken to permit the mediations Kristeva fails to address. This perceived opposition informs her characterization of the 'circle of circles' which Hegel's 'system' presents: 'the identity and difference of opposites, implying the endless excavation of the

Idea on the path of self-consciousness' (*RPL*, p. 98). Kristeva will discover the moment of the greatest differentiation in the dialectic of 'force'. She will intrigue the repression there - the subsumption under the unity of thought - of the materialist notion of force: biological material rejection.

'Force and the Understanding' is Hegel's presentation of the moment in which consciousness misrecognizes its development hitherto in a 'reflected object' (#132). The configuration of the 'understanding' is this misrecognition of itself *in* the determinations of 'force': 'consciousness shrinks away from what has emerged, and takes it as the essence in the *objective* sense' (#132). Consciousness 'shrinks away' from the failures to turn the separation in its experience into an essential moment over against an inessential moment: into either the singular object of sense-certainty (which 'wants to apprehend the this', #111) or self-identity (the unity of the act of perceiving and the object perceived, universal being #111-16). (It is in the initial movement of 'perception' (#116-17) that pure apprehension of the object - of the 'thing' - is to be found, and not in Hegel's configuration of the experience of the 'object' in 'sense-certainty' (which 'wants to apprehend the this'). Kristeva would assimilate apprehension to sense-certainty by *not* addressing the 'separation' in consciousness which it re-presents and which provokes the movement from sense-certainty to perception.⁹

The failure to address the mediations from 'sense-certainty', through 'perception', and on to the master/slave dialectic permits Kristeva to posit sense-certainty and self-consciousness as 'two' distinct moments, and to expound a mediation from the first to the second which is held to establish Hegelian experience as 'signifying apprehension' (*RPL*, p. 202). 'Signifying apprehension' implies a repression of the

unconscious since it has abandoned the radical moment of 'direct experience' of the object, which - although itself an apprehension - 'includes the border on which the subject may shatter' (*RPL*, p. 202). Kristeva's reading of 'Force and the Understanding' as a configuration of consciousness which stands between her 'two moments' is therefore illuminating for the relation to Hegel informing her concept of 'rejection'. In Hegel's *Darstellung* the 'understanding' is the consciousness which does not recognize its involvement in the outcome of sense-certainty and perception; an outcome which Hegel calls 'the *concept* of the true', implying the untruth of certainty and its object and of perception and its 'thing', the emergence of the 'true' for consciousness, and the (mis)recognition of the 'concept'.

The following paragraphs both recapitulate the configuration of 'force' as expounded by Hegel, and show how Kristeva rewrites the moments of force in order to present the contradictions of the 'play of forces' as the material process of scission or 'doubling' which underlies drive rejection. Hegel presents the emergence of the 'true' for consciousness:

The play of forces is consequently the developed negative; but its truth is the *positive*, viz. the *universal*, the object that, *in itself*, possesses being. The *being* of this object for consciousness is mediated by the movement of *appearance*, in which the *being of perception* and the sensuously objective in general has a merely negative significance. Consciousness, therefore reflects itself out of this movement back into itself as the true; but *qua* consciousness, converts this truth again into an objective *inner*, and distinguishes the reflection of things from its own reflection into itself; just as the movement of mediation is likewise still objective for it.
(#143)

The understanding lets 'the concept of the true' (implying the comprehension of the development

hitherto) 'go its own way', while it 'looks on' (#133). Its repudiation of the 'being of perception' as 'appearance' disowns its involvement in the abstractions of perception, the movement which produces them, and their outcome: the concept of the true. The understanding's 'reflection into self' is therefore the (mis)recognition of the 'true' since the repudiation of perception brings about the conversion of this truth 'into an objective inner'. It fails to grasp itself as the 'true' (as the result) but turns away from 'the concept of the true' to an 'objective' result. The positing of the 'inner' represents the movement of (mis)recognition which consciousness is at this point. Since the 'conversion' into an objective inner is the specific work of the 'understanding' the expression the 'concept of the true' also stands for the understanding's misrecognition.

This inner is, therefore, for consciousness, an extreme over against it; but it is for consciousness the true, since in the inner, as the in itself, it possesses at the same time the certainty of itself, or the moment of its being-for-self. But it is not yet conscious of this ground or basis, for the *being-for-self* which the inner was supposed to possess in its own self would be nothing else but the negative movement. This, however, is for consciousness still the *objective* vanishing appearance, not yet its *own* being-for-self. Consequently, the inner is for it certainly concept, *but it does not yet know the nature of the concept.* (#143)

The understanding's (mis)recognition cannot be abstracted from the movement from sense-certainty to the master-slave dialectic without turning the situation 'for consciousness' - its *possession* of certainty in the concept of *the true* - into the 'truth' of the idealist dialectic; and then extracting - once again - the 'negative movement'. This is Kristeva's position. Her interpretation of 'force' misrecognizes the nature of the dialectic: reading the text normatively, she fails to see that the moment of the

'for itself' is not the self-presence of consciousness but the emergence for consciousness of its own implicit positing and a reconfiguration of that positing (the meaning of Hegel's 'in and for itself'). Since 'in the inner, as the in itself, [consciousness] possesses at the same time the certainty of itself', the sublation of the possession of certainty in the 'objective inner' doesn't introduce certainty 'into the presence of consciousness' and thereby constitute self-consciousness. This would turn the outset of the dialectic into its outcome ('it does not yet know the *nature of the concept*') and would forego the mediations of consciousness in which the relation of truth and certainty takes on further shapes. The 'possession' of certainty implies the acknowledgement of separation (thus the 'necessity' of the movement of the shapes of (mis)recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*).

What, then, takes place in the revision of the dialectic of force which informs Kristeva's concept of 'rejection'? Claiming that 'for the idealist dialectic, the reality of force is ultimately the *thought of it*' (*RPL*, p. 115) she turns Hegelian 'thought' into abstract self-reflection, and posits an 'objective inner' again, one which which reproduces its 'doubling' and reformulates the negative movement purportedly foreclosed by the *Phenomenology* in the 'thought of' force:

the idealist dialectic deprives itself of negativity's powerful moment: the scission that exceeds and precedes the advent of thetic understanding. (*RPL*, p. 115)

Having decided that the treatment of 'force' in Hegel presents - as do all the configurations of consciousness she turns to - the repression of heterogeneity through its conversion into 'difference' subsumed under unity, Kristeva reverts to the 'play of forces' and recategorizes its movement as 'scissions, impulses, collisions, rejections' (*RPL*, p. 116). The

material foundation of the Lacanian 'subject' and 'symbolic', which is simultaneously the basis of her critique of 'monotheist civilization', presents the objective inner of Kristeva's own thought (her concept of *the true*).

In Hegel, the misrecognition of separation in consciousness configured in the 'understanding' leads to an opposition for it: 'on the one side, a universal medium of many subsistent "matters", and on the other side a One reflected into itself' (#135). Kristeva presents such an 'opposition' in the account of symbolization. On one side is the economy of drive rejection, on the other is the constancy and unity of the sign - 'prefigured' in the positive moments of drive re-jection.

The discussion of 'stasis' and 'engram' in *Revolution in Poetic Language* recalls Hegel's presentation of the movement of 'matters' in the dialectic of force. 'Matters' are differences which are both 'superficial *vanishing* moments' (or the negative movement - in Kristeva, 'rejection attacks stases') and '*enduring* being' (in Kristeva the generation of the sign, by way of the 'relative immobilization' of the engram where the *representamen* will 'affix itself', p. 72). Kristeva re-presents the moments of the 'play of forces' as the objective process which the understanding takes it to be, and whose transitional moments are a 'leap'. The 'leap' presents the becoming of desire, in contrast to the mediations in Hegel's *Darstellung*, which provoke the configuration of 'desire'.

The 'return' to the dialectic of force underlies the following criticism of the Hegelian dialectic:

since it does not recognize an objective material agency, one that is structured independently of consciousness, the idealist dialectic *cannot specify* objective, material relations. In a logical sense, the contradictions in those relations are what

generate 'sense-certainty' before the latter becomes an object of knowledge. (RPL, p. 197; the first emphasis is mine)

This criticism may be turned back on to Kristeva's own thought, on to the retention of the notion of the entry into the 'symbolic', whose logic of positing and being-positing returns in and as the process of its production. Kristeva provides an 'economy' of the movement of negativity, but in no way specifies or expounds 'objective, material relations', only retaining the Marxist account of historical materialism.¹⁰ Although she proposes that a revolutionary discourse - the 'narrative' of a revolutionary project with its ideological 'agency' - is 'tested' in the moment of practice, Kristeva provides no exposition of a recasting of a revolutionary discourse through such a 'practice', and only *refers* to the 'existing historical process (the structures of capitalist society, for example)' (RPL, p. 205; my emphasis).

2. The Reversal of 'Negativity': Re-rejection

Kristeva turns from the 'nullity' of experience in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in order to discover Hegel's 'infinite' where it is presented in the *Science of Logic*, and calls it 'the fourth "term" of the dialectic' (RPL, p. 109). The chapter by this title repeats the argument of '*Matière , sens, dialectique*' and again removes 'negativity' from the movement of negation in the first book of the *Logic*. Kristeva's approval of the treatment of 'nothing' in the first sections of this book brings out the *movement* of 'nothing' there. She turns the movement (becoming) into a 'law of contradiction', an unknown and self-referential structuring of mediation. The supposed 'law' of contradiction is therefore fixed as an infinite which is 'not itself negated'.

The extraction of 'Hegelian negativity' from the doctrine of being thus leads to its institution as an 'infinite' vis-à-vis the finitude of self-presence (an infinite that is held to be the principle of the movement of the dialectic, and without which there would be no Hegelian 'experience'). This infinite is in truth derived from the 'in itself' of Kristeva's own thought - drive rejection. The latter then emerges as 'Hegelian' negativity's materialist sublation (rejection is not negativity): 'the Hegelian conception of negativity already prepared the way for the very possibility of thinking a materialist *process*' (RPL, p. 110).

Kristeva's isolation of sense-certainty at the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* proceeds to a tying together of the supposed beginning (immediacy of experience) and completion of the 'Hegelian edifice', in a sweeping avoidance of all mediation. The *Phenomenology* is integrated into a teleological path: 'experience pulls away from externality in order to produce logical unity within consciousness' (RPL, p. 198). With the advent of self-consciousness there is only a 'moving away' from the real. The *Science of Logic* breaks up this integration at the 'summit' of the system: 'the *practical idea* returns to externality by distancing itself from self-knowledge, *without* having reached consciousness per se' (ibid.) . The 'practical idea' is the return to the real (following Lenin's reading of the *Logic*).¹¹

3. The Reversals of 'the Practical': the Subject, Subjectivity, Heterogeneity

'Direct' and 'personal' experience is perhaps stressed here [in 'On Practice'] more than anywhere else in Marxist theory and Mao's emphasis on it tends to bring to the fore a subjectivity that has become the place of the 'highest contradiction' - the subjectivity Hegel calls for in the absolute idea. (RPL, p. 200)

Kristeva's Hegelian Maoism posits an intellectual history of the overturnings of Hegel from Feuerbach to Mao, one corresponding to a history of the 'subject': Hegelian 'unity of consciousness', Feuerbachian humanism, Marxist historical process (and consequently proletarianism), Maoist 'practice'. Each successive 'overturning' of Hegel is said to retrieve more of the dialectical import of Hegel's thought, and more of the import of the 'concept' in the third book of the *Science of Logic*. This section recapitulates the intellectual history of the 'subject', since it is Kristeva's approach, first, to the poetic recognition that 'the subject never *is*' (following Mallarmé's 'nothing will have taken place but the place', p. 215), and second, to the Freudian discoveries illuminating the limitations of poetic practice.

Feuerbach stands as a pre-Hegelian figure whose absolute is 'human' unity: the subject in Feuerbach is 'the man of desire and of lack', the ground of the state that 'realizes' human essence (*RPL*, pp. 37-8). This overturning of the authoritarian state attributed to Hegel by Feuerbach delivers an 'anthropomorphization' of Hegelian negativity, which finds its Marxist determination in the 'proletariat' (*RPL*, p. 138).

Marxism nevertheless recovers the dialectic in Hegel, and specifically the presumed qualification of 'unitary consciousness' at the end of the *Science of Logic*. Finally, with Mao, the limitation of the Marxist-Leninist overturning of Hegel is overcome: Lenin had derived the priority of practice over (theoretical) knowledge from the emergence of the 'practical idea' at the end of the *Science of Logic*; but had failed to negotiate the import of the absolute idea, 'when the *concept* returns within the practical idea' (*RPL*, p. 199). Hegel's absolute idea represents the 'highest

contradiction' in Kristeva's thesis because it does not - as does Husserl, and similarly the path of Hegelian self-consciousness - present the 'object' as a nullity, determinable only within subjective 'apprehension'. The absolute idea posits actuality as 'being in and for itself', and is therefore the basis for a materialist dialectic.

However, the 'absolute idea' is failed in Marxist theory since it makes the 'practical idea' the basis of its overturning of Hegel, and therefore abandons the contradiction of subjective activity (apprehending the object) and actuality ('the activity of the objective concept', p. 198). Hegel's 'highest contradiction' is found to be appropriable for a materialist theory of the objective determinations of 'practice'. Marxist-Leninism, however, while it adopts the overturning of the dominance of 'self-consciousness' which the 'practical idea' represents, and so produces a theory of the primacy of practice in knowledge, does not question the moment of 'practice' because it is not a theory of the subject (RPL, p. 202).

Human relations, and essentially relations of production are, then, what take on the heterogeneity determining this practice.
(RPL, p. 199)

The uninterrogated subject of Marxism is therefore an atomistic subject, a 'bearer' of objective relations. Mao in part overcomes this failure of Marxism by addressing the 'practical concept', returning therefore to the questions of experience and 'knowledge'. He represents an advance towards a materialist thinking of the 'highest contradiction' which embraces knowledge and experience, and implies the 'shattering' of the subject.

While affirming that the *activity of production* determines all practical action, he adds class struggle, political life and scientific and aesthetic activity to the range of possible practices. The moment of

practice is represented according to 'reverse' Hegelian logic: the 'apprehension' of an 'externality' in its 'external' and 'approximate connections'. Only the repetition of phenomena within the objective continuity of social practice produces a *qualitative leap* - the *emergence of the concept establishing internal connections*. (RPL, p. 200)

Kristeva's appreciation of Mao therefore rests on two tendencies in his dialectic: the retrieval of experience - contra Hegelian self-consciousness - as 'direct', and the introduction of knowledge into practice as a moment in the dialectic. Direct experience is the moment of sense-certainty, 'implying *the subject and presence* as its key moments' (RPL, p. 187). Knowledge is a return of *scientific* knowing: it is 'knowledge about' not 'knowledge of' since it represents a distancing from self-knowledge or 'logical unity within consciousness' (RPL, p. 198). The relation posited between practice and knowledge is an 'oscillation' from one to the other.

Mao is therefore taken to have combined the 'beginning' and 'end' of the 'Hegelian edifice' - experience and the 'practical concept'. The qualification of the 'signifying apprehension' of the object (Kristeva's *Phenomenology*) that results turns the moment of apprehension into the apprehension of (Kristeva's) '*new heterogeneous* object', the materialist 'truth' of sense-certainty (RPL, p. 202). The dialectic of the two moments - practice as the *emergence* of the 'true object' and scientific knowledge as the *rendering* of its truth (ibid.) - is attributed to Mao:

He posits a triple process (practice-truth-practice) that implies a different status for the 'apprehended objects' and the 'consciousness' apprehending them in each of these three phases. (ibid.)

The Maoist dialectic outreaches Marxist-Leninism since it not only removes the concept of practice from its

subordination to self-consciousness, but reintroduces the moment of self-reflection, or the 'theoretical element' without losing the 'primacy' of the practical, but indeed recovering the moment of 'experience'.

Practice encloses and brings to knowledge, the *direct experience* of reality - an immediacy Lenin notes only in passing - which incorporates the stage of *Erfahrung* (experience), that of the signifying apprehension of the new heterogeneous object. By *implication* [my emphasis], direct experience includes the border on which the subject may shatter. This shattering is not the same as the impenetrable and atomistic subject of the 'practical concept'; it constitutes instead the *precondition of his renewal*. (ibid.)

This passage expresses the exigency for Kristeva's theory of 'revolution' of a Maoist subject which takes on the 'agency' proposed in revolutionary discourse. The 'shattering' of the subject, a shattering whose economy is drive rejection - and which the 'social' subject does not 'know', indeed represses - is a condition of the renewal of revolutionary discourse, and therefore of the agency in social transformation. This 'social' subject, however, misrecognizes itself in the place it occupies in revolutionary discourse. This is to retain (indeed insist on) an 'atomistic', 'misrecognizing' subject as the precondition for action.

The Maoist moment of 'direct experience' (reformulating Hegel's sense-certainty) is therefore, for Kristeva, an experience that disturbs the unitary consciousness. It implies the 'key moments' of the subject and presence (not self-presence). As *direct experience* of the object this subject is on the border of its 'shattering' in a heterogeneous contradiction; the 'subject' is put in process by a heterogeneous contradiction rooted in objective contradictions: 'the moment of struggle exploding the subject toward heterogeneous materiality' (RPL, p. 25). 'Heterogeneous contradiction' presents

the logic of the connection of social subject (in the risk of a social combat) and poetic subject (signifying process appearing in a signifying practice).

Since the moment of practice is a violence for consciousness, destructive of it, the moment of knowledge - modelled as it still is on 'consciousness' - is situated 'after' the moment of practice, in relation to the new *object* produced. It returns through the 'leap' in which practice renews the object: 'a qualitative leap - the emergence of the concept establishing internal connections' (*RPL*, p. 200). It is therefore the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction' which presents the possibility of the transformation of human law, of the 'symbolic' *qua* social organization.

*C. Heterogeneous Contradiction: the Sollen in
Kristeva's Thought of the Re-jection of Human Law*

1. Heterogeneity and (Mis)recognition

Kristeva has exposed two forms of misrecognition in Marxist theory, each of which takes place in the respective overturnings of Hegel. The overturning of Hegel by way of the 'practical idea' leads Marxist-Leninism to relinquish the 'theoretical element' (there is no self-reflective moment); furthermore, its failure to acknowledge the teleology of the Good implemented by the primacy of the 'practical idea' forces the retention of a Feuerbachian subject, 'the proletariat' (there is no 'theory of the subject'). The 'subject' of Marxism misrecognizes itself in the 'practical idea': the dominance of the unitary consciousness is dissolved, but the consequent articulation of the *objective* determinations of practice makes the subject a 'bearer' of objective relations.

The Maoist overturning of Hegel, by way of the 'practical concept', takes place without questioning further the 'moment' of practice. Maoist 'subjectivity' retains the atomism of the Marxist-Leninist subject. For Kristeva, Maoism implements the subjectivity Hegel is held to have 'called for' at the end of the *Science of Logic* (RPL, p. 200). Nevertheless, this overturning of the 'primacy' of self-consciousness through the 'practical concept' posits a subjectivity which misrecognizes itself in the practical concept: '*une sujétivité qui se connait, mais sous la forme du "concept pratique"*'.¹² Maoist 'subjectivity' remains 'atomistic and impenetrable' as a result of this misrecognition, failing to discover the 'precondition' of the Hegelian practice and experience which it brings together in the three-stage dialectic.

Kristeva has claimed that a 'new light' is thrown on the revolutionary subject, and its concept of social 'practice', by the practice of 'poetic language' whose truth is discovered in psychoanalysis. This claim must proceed to an account of the 'correspondence' of the poetic and social subjects. The final chapters of *Revolution in Poetic Language* expound this correspondence as dependent upon a 'heterogeneous contradiction' between the subject in social and political relations and a 'nonsymbolized outside' rooted in objective contradictions. 'Heterogeneous contradiction' presents the nonsynthetic connection of the signifying process and the 'objective social process'. It is here that the socio-historical dimension of Kristeva's concept of 'revolution' is foregrounded.

the moment of practice *objectifies* the signifying process since it sets drive rejection against material contradictions (class struggle, for example), but *at the same time it introduces these material contradictions into the process of the subject*. Heterogeneous contradiction here lies between the signifying process and the objective social process: it is the excess of one by and through the other. (*RPL*, p. 205)

Kristeva presents a - heterogeneous - contradiction which both puts the subject in process as a *social* subject and sets that process against 'natural and social structures', which is to say, following Kristeva's logic, against previous theses: 'those systems of representation that defer and delay the violence of rejection' (*RPL*, p. 203). The heterogeneous contradiction therefore *determines* 'practice' (pp. 203-4). It is the precondition of the re-jection of the thetic moment which is subject to a fixation by a logic - of the 'same' - dependent on the social order (*RPL*, p. 226). When it lies between the 'signifying process' and the 'objective social process' the former has a

historical impact or, conversely, political practice is *revolutionary* practice.

The 'moment' of practice is broken down as follows. 'Heterogeneous contradiction' first puts 'the subject' in process. The subject is not a 'bearer' but 'in process', a passageway for the productive activity of drive rejection or 'the signifying process'.

Practice is determined by the pulverization of the unity of consciousness by a nonsymbolized outside, on the basis of objective contradictions and, as such, it is the place where the signifying *process* is carried out. Out of these objective contradictions, drive rejection will bring forth the new object whose determinations exist objectively in material externality, which means that this moment of practice is not simply an 'apparition', within the presence of consciousness, of the laws of 'being'. (RPL, pp. 203-4)

The heterogeneous contradiction of social subject and nonsymbolized outside is a precondition of the practice which will in turn re-ject revolutionary discourse and its social 'agency'. This passage reveals the 'in itself' and 'for itself' of *Kristeva's* 'subject': on the one hand, the 'signifying process', repressed truth of the symbolic order; on the other 'signifying practice', the appearance of the subject 'in' the symbolic:

The subject never *is*. The *subject* is only the *signifying process* and appears only as a *signifying practice*, that is, only when he is absent *within the position* out of which social, historical, and signifying activity unfolds. (RPL, p. 215)

'When he is absent', implies the subject in process; when he is absent '*within the position* out of which...', the subject in process is not a negativist-fetishist avoidance of the political relation but traverses thethetic moment. When he is absent within the position 'out of which social, historical and

signifying activity unfolds' then the signifying process (Kristeva's subject 'in itself') appears as a signifying practice in its full sense (the subject 'for itself'). The subject 'for itself' implies an '*entire recasting* of subjective and social structuration' (RPL, p. 205).

Kristeva's distinction between the 'symbolic' and 'signifying practice' (the latter in its full sense, denoting the effectivity of the 'semiotic' as a recasting of 'the' symbolic) corresponds to two orders which take up their place within the logic of positing which unfolds the process of symbolization. The symbolic (comprising social 'structure', 'the' subject, and the object) is an order of 'being-positing' (the *Gesetztsein* of German idealism); and the semiotic (in principle, drive rejection; in effect, the objectification of the signifying process) is an order of 'positing' (*Setzen*).

The 'subjective' moment (textual practice: the return of drive rejection 'for the subject') therefore requires the 'objective' or social moment if the 'poetic act' is to have an historical impact: transformation of the symbolic. The exposition of 'heterogeneous contradiction' presents the 'consummate' stage in Kristeva's concept of revolution. Drive rejection is brought into confrontation with the totality of the 'previous' symbolic thesis, and hence denotes the effect of the signifying process on the social order: '*what then occurs* is the entire recasting of subjective and social structuration'. This claim expresses Kristeva's concept of the transformation of the symbolic order, the 'correspondence' of the poetic and (revolutionary) social subject. The 'correspondence' is set out as a dialectic of renewal dependent on the 'objective social process' or 'nonsymbolized outside'.

The 'realization' of Kristeva's revolution therefore requires the confrontation of drive rejection and the symbolic order. The default of this confrontation is equivalent to the default of signifying practice. Nevertheless, the mediation implied by the 'in itself' and 'for itself' of signifying process and signifying practice actually only takes place within the 'subjective enclosure' of poetic language. The idea of the entire recasting of subjective and social structuration cannot be actually located. The location of signifying practice in its full sense (the subject 'for itself') is in truth held off by the theory of symbolization out of which the concept of 'revolution' emerges. Kristeva's presentation of the moments of 'symbolization' and of 'practice' leave the *object* to be transformed as the consequence of the transformation (symbolic law is always repositated).

This has implications for the distinction Kristeva makes between the 'potential' of poetic language and the 'fulfilment' of this potential. The analysis of Céline's writings presents these implications. Céline can be taken as one of the forms of (mis)recognition in the 'stages' of poetic language; but the insistence with which his writings reappear in Kristeva's thought suggest that there is a difficulty in marking the different stages of the renewal of poetic practice.

2. Céline: 'Obscene Words' and 'Crudely Exhibited Phantasms'

The default of signifying practice began with its manifestation *as* practice in the avant-garde: the political dimension of 'art' is undermined owing to the confinement of the 'process' to a limited realm. The avant-garde is both political (where the signifying process manifests itself) and 'not' political (where the process is *confined*), which is to say, it is 'not' the 'appearance' of the signifying process.

The equivocality of the transformative potential of 'modern' poetic language is most evident in Kristeva's 1975 essay on Céline (*'D'une identité l'autre'*). On the one hand, Céline's poetic language posits or 'releases' the infinite from the finite (from the 'sign'):

Obscene words. Semantically speaking, these pivotal words in the Célinian lexicon exercise a *desemanticization* function analogous to the fragmentation of syntax by rhythm. Far from referring, as all signs do, to an object exterior to discourse and identifiable as such by consciousness, the obscene word is the minimal mark of a situation of desire where the identity of the subject, if not destroyed, is exceeded by a conflict of instinctual drives linking one subject to another.... [The obscene word] is neither object, transcendental signified nor signifier available to a neutralized consciousness: around the object denoted by the obscene word, and that object provides a scanty delineation, more than a simple context asserts itself - the drama of a questioning process heterogeneous to the meaning that precedes and exceeds it.¹³

On the other hand, this 'drama' cannot be addressed separately from the question of Céline's anti-semitic tracts:

A reading of any one of Céline's anti-semitic tracts is sufficient to show the crudely exhibited phantasms of an analysand struggling against a desired, castrating and sodomizing father; sufficient also to understand that *it is not enough to allow what is repressed by the symbolic structure to emerge in a 'musicated' language to avoid its traps.* Rather, we must in addition dissolve its sexual determinations.

Céline represents the persistence of the 'subjective' limitation of poetic language, or the persistence of 'misrecognition' within the (poetic) recognition of the drive-related subject. If the Marxist-Leninist project exemplifies a subject which misrecognizes itself in the 'practical idea' (failing to address the 'teleology of the Good'); and if Maoist practice exemplifies a subjectivity which misrecognizes itself in the

'practical concept' (failing to negotiate the 'unconscious'); Céline's writings stand for a subjectivity which - notwithstanding the exposition of the 'situation of desire' that is 'marked' in the obscene word - misrecognizes itself in the moment of 'defence' and thus stands *opposed* to the 'Law'.

Céline therefore stands for a renewed foreclosure of the 'political' dimension of the signifying process, hence of the subject 'for itself' or signifying practice in Kristeva's full sense. He exemplifies, in Hegelian terms, the 'limit' of poetic language's 'passing of the limit': the *Grenze* within the liminary boundary or *Shranke*. Given that the signifying practice capable of transforming the conditions of its own appearance (the fragmenting power of 'capitalism') *has not appeared*, Céline stands as a question mark not only over the 'fulfilment' of the transformative potential of poetic language, but over its very potential.

Kristeva's discussion of the exemplification of poetic language in the writings of Céline leads to her statement that poetic language may be the 'catharsis' but not the 'working through' of the drive-related subject repressed by the symbolic structure.¹⁴ This appraisal of the Célinian 'text' implies that 'modern' literature involves *misrecognition* and not only the recognition it presents in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, in contrast to the misrecognizing ideological ego of social revolt.

The analysis of Céline might suggest a reenquiry into the separation of 'recognition' and 'misrecognition' that Kristeva's subject-in-process and ideological agency present, and of her abstract reception of the distinction between Hegelian (mis)recognition and knowledge (*anerkennen* and *Wissen*). Instead it leads to a reappraisal of the 'theoretical function', and an argument for the 'knowledge' of psychoanalysis. The

reappraisal starts out in opposition to the 'abstract and pretentiously universal law' of modern political structures - whose logically thetic unity is taken to be justified by 'philosophical' reason when it posits the transcendental limit. The relation to modern abstract law brings about a statement of the necessity 'not to renounce theoretical reason but to compel it to increase its power by giving it an object beyond its limits'.¹⁵ The profound consequences for the subject of the 'self-defence' of capitalism's political structures are to be met by an ethics *beyond* the transcendental 'limit' (the political and philosophical piracy of the thetic moment): 'it is not enough to allow what is repressed by the symbolic structure to emerge in a "musicated" language to avoid its traps. Rather, we *must in addition dissolve its sexual determinations*' (my emphasis). The site of the knowledge which founds this ethics is to be psychoanalysis.¹⁶

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* - where Kristeva's problematic is political in the 'strict' sense - the difficulty which Céline exemplifies brings about a reversion to the question with which her doctoral thesis begins: the question of the 'appearance' of the objective conditions which will bring forth 'signifying practice' in its full sense. There can be no answer to this question, but Kristeva outlines its implicit *Sollen*: the correspondence of a signifying practice with the historical process. It is noteworthy that *Revolution in Poetic Language* closes with a discussion of the avant-garde texts of Lautréamont and Mallarmé. The question that their *oeuvre* brings to the fore still holds:

at what historical moment does social exchange tolerate or *necessitate* the manifestation of the signifying process in its 'poetic' or 'esoteric' form? Under what conditions does this 'esoterism', in displacing boundaries of socially established signifying practices, *correspond* to socioeconomic change? And under what

conditions does it remain a blind alley, a harmless bonus offered by a social order which uses this 'esoterism' to expand, become flexible, and thrive? (*RPL*, p. 16)

This question still holds because Kristeva's concept of the transformative *potential* of poetic language, while it *presents* the *Sollen* in her concept of social transformation as a unity of possibility and impossibility, defers the fulfilment of the potential of poetic language. This implies a failure to grasp the *Sollen* as, in Hegel's terms, a 'formalism of possibility *and* impossibility'. As argued in chapter 1 above, the formalism of possibility implies a direct self-contradiction within the *Sollen* itself: the latter contains a *Nicht-Sollen*. This 'contradiction' can be further unfolded.

3. The *Sollen*: the 'Two Unities' of Semiotic and Symbolic

The diachronic account of symbolization in *Revolution in Poetic Language* has supplemented the synchronic account of 'poetic language' in the early writings. It is now clearer how the treatment of 'finite' and 'infinite' succumbs to a problematic presented in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and addressed prematurely in chapter 1. Kristeva may insist that the 'drive', if constitutive of stases and ultimately of the symbolic, is not an agency or an origin. Nevertheless the drive is an 'in itself' in Kristeva's doctoral thesis.

Kristeva's foundational distinction of the semiotic and symbolic expounds two unities of 'finite and infinite', in one of which the 'infinite' is not negated. The 'semiotic chora' comprises the infinite of drive facilitation and the finite of social organization, not as 'law' but 'mediated' as 'constraint'. The symbolic comprises the finite of (Oedipal and social) law and of signification (communication with others), but also the infinite of a semiotic functioning (repressed or

otherwise): 'poetic language' enacts the release from finitude ('signifying process') in the symbolic order.¹⁷

The distinction between 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' is - as I have claimed - *foundational* because of the different modes in which the unity of finite and infinite function in each 'order'. The passage from the *Logic* on the understanding's 'falsification' of the double unity, quoted in chapter 1 above, finds its place here. The understanding falls into a 'falsification' of the double unity when it does not negotiate the 'absolute contradiction' which informs the concept of the *Sollen*. The 'double result' discussed in chapter 1 above is an outcome of

taking the infinite in one of the two unities not as negated, but rather as the in itself, in which, therefore, determinateness and limitation *should not be posited*, for these would debase and ruin it. (*SL*, p. 145)

Determinateness - as ordering, *chora* - is implicit in Kristeva's 'semiotic' but 'not posited': 'social organization, always already symbolic, imprints its constraint in a mediated form which organizes the *chora* not according to a *law* (a term which we reserve for the symbolic) but through an *ordering*' (*RPL*, p. 27). One of the two unities reserves the infinite as an 'in itself', not negated; the drive attack is functional in transformation but not itself transformed. It is the negative moment of differentiation, an 'objective *inner*' distinguished from the positive moment, initially the 'mark' which 'prefigures the sign's constancy and unity' (*RPL*, p. 172). 'Stasis' is the principle in Kristeva's logic of rejection which, as representing a qualitative change, is taken to distinguish it from negative force from 'a merely mechanical rejection of an undifferentiated "identity"' (*RPL*, p. 171). The other principle, 'repeated drives', however, is merely quantitative and represents a return

of the same moment: biological material rejection - division/stoppage, '*marking One*' (p. 171). Biological material rejection is the 'in itself' of Kristeva's infinite, even if there is no semiotic functioning without the psychosomatic formation ultimately determined by 'familial and social structures'.

Hegel shows that a *Sollen* is contained in the double unity when in one of the unities the infinite is an 'in itself' or not negated; or, conversely, when 'determinateness and limitation should not be posited' in one of the unities. The dialectical relation of Kristeva's two 'unities' - whose condition is 'heterogeneous contradiction', the qualitative leap or the 'thetic moment' - carries the default of negation of the infinite in the first unity (the semiotic *chora*) over to the second (the symbolic order), and reverses it. The 'infinite' in the 'symbolic' unity presents a seeming mediation, a movement from 'in itself' (signifying process) to 'for itself' (signifying practice). However, if drive rejection, the 'infinite' in the semiotic *chora*, sustains an objective inner that is not negated; the 'infinite' in the symbolic unity does not negate: the finite (abstract right, paternal law, 'capitalism's political structures') are not negated. Indeed Kristeva's 'leap' to symbolic law can only be a (re)positing of abstract right and 'paternal' law, since it is never expounded as anything but the confusion of the 'subject who knows' with 'state power'. Many commentators have stressed the default of negation or transformation of the symbolic in Kristeva's writings, although without ever questioning Kristeva's double unity - which would require rethinking, not revising, the concept of the 'symbolic'.¹⁸

Kristeva's second (symbolic) unity comprises a finite (the symbolic *order*) which is infinitized by a process: not negated but put into play. The renewal of violence

in poetic language does not carry with it renewal *through* violence. Kristeva herself is hardly unaware of this limitation, as is evident in *Revolution in Poetic Language* when she comes to the proposition that textual practice must correspond with a revolutionary discourse (*RPL*, p. 191). The revolutionary project may, in turn, block the process - as is consistent with the concept of 'tendency' informing all the dimensions which combine to produce 'practice'. This is why 'heterogeneous contradiction', the dialectical and not economic moment of the process, is crucial as the precondition of 'practice'. She proposes a materialist theory of practice which combines 'cultural' and 'political' transformation, but the 'not yet' of this practice, while acknowledged and presented, represents an infinite deferral of the union of finite and infinite which has already been claimed for 'poetic language'.

The above clarification of Kristeva's foundational concepts of the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' provokes the question whether her thought does not in fact remain 'idealist' in Hegel's sense: subject to the latter's critique of Kant and Fichte, since the 'materialist' sublation of idealist dialectic proposes a logic of 'two worlds' that do not come into the correspondence which would bring about the social transformation whose prospect they hold out. The confrontation of the 'semiotic', enacted in poetic language, and the 'symbolic', the modern social and political relations continually reinforced by the 'operations' of capitalism, is projected into an unthinkable future: 'a *beyond* which cannot be reached for the very reason that *it is not meant* to be reached'.¹⁹ Kristeva does not return to rethink this limitation of the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction' but puts it down to 'objective conditions' (ultimately, to the spread of capitalist society). Nevertheless, her abandonment of the Maoist

dialectic, and the reassessment of the 'theoretical function' on the terrain of psychoanalysis represent her awareness that the materialist dialectical logic has not been able to present a theory of social transformation, even after the exposition of 'symbolization' has endeavoured to overcome some of the difficulties arising from the abstract return to logical categories in the early essays.

The reassessment of the 'theoretical function' on the terrain of psychoanalysis implicitly departs from the methodological position from which the theory of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' is expounded. The moment of 'knowledge' - in contrast to its place in the sequential movement of the Maoist dialectic - is now inseparable from the moment of 'experience'. It is Kristeva's exposition of the 'dynamic' of the transference which will establish this inseparability, and which contains a claim to a renewed concept of the 'infinite' subsequent to the disclosure of the 'ethic' of psychoanalysis, and consequential for sustaining the meaning and value of 'modern literature'.

Summary of and Conclusion to Part I

There are two points to be emphasized in conclusion to the above discussion of Kristeva's doctoral thesis. The first is the success or otherwise of the claim made for 'poetic language' as a 'practice' in modern capitalist societies. The second, from which the former is inseparable, is the difficulty which lies within the construal of social and political relations in terms of symbolic 'law'.

In Kristeva's thesis the spread of capitalist society undermines linguistic and ideological norms, but also favours the reconstitution of modern political structures based on 'abstract and pretentiously universal law'. In these conditions, there is only a 'practice' where it is possible to maintain the 'heterogeneous contradiction' which attacks and renews symbolic law. The primacy in these conditions of the practice of poetic language rests on its capacity to engage with the 'thetic' or structuring moment of the symbolic order (which is inseparable from the entrance into language and 'representation'). The thetic moment is the dialectical moment of the process, and only by way of engagement with it will a 'previous thesis' be overcome. 'Poetic language' thus remains the potential for the renewal and binding of the infinite process that capitalism integrates and appropriates 'qua process'.

Kristeva's presentation of 'stages' of poetic language is crucial to her claim that the truth of 'literature' is a historical materialist 'practice'. The stages present advancing modes of the re-jection of the 'symbolic': the attack on family structure (the avant-garde); the attack on the seats of power (Bataille); the sustained engagement with the very structure of language (Joyce); and the disclosure and recomposition of the 'truth' of monotheism (Céline).

All these stages nevertheless contain and re-present the fundamental moment of what is a *general* theory of transformation, whose possibility derives from the 'reversal' of Hegel's dialectic of force. The inversion of the 'thought of force' repositis the 'objective inner' of matter: an objective material agency structured independently of consciousness. The notion of 'heterogeneous contradiction' explains the possibility of a link between the independent material foundation and the realm of representation (the symbolic order). However, since 'heterogeneous contradiction' is a 'leap' it always presents an unknowable transition.

It therefore remains a difficulty in Kristeva's thought to show just how 'matter', this fixed basis of drive re-jection, could either account for the different *stages* in 'poetic language', or achieve a connection with the systems of representation at all. The difficulty of distinguishing the *advances* in signifying practice becomes evident with the analysis of Céline. His 'fiction' seems to present the highest 'stage' of poetic language because it discloses and recomposes the truth of the most deep-seated power of western civilization: 'monotheism'. Céline's *oeuvre* is the subject of Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (which will be discussed further in chapter 4). It figures there as the strongest example of the narcissistic enclosure, *precisely where* he presents the recognition of the 'truth' of monotheism.

Kristeva holds that Céline's anti-semitism is inseparable from the meaning of his fiction, since it is a direct consequence of his 'practice'. The unity of the two, the political stance and the practice, present the *symptom* of the civilization of western monotheism. Anti-semitism is the outcome when the impact of symbolic power on the speaking being is manifested in a practice; and when, within that practice, the 'ego' is

clung to as a security against the violence entailed in the passage through monotheism's 'strategy' of identity-formations. What is re-jected (monotheism) is reconfigured as a hated object; through the opposition to that object an 'ego' protects itself against the dissolution of 'subject' and 'object' which the death-dealing force of drive re-jection threatens. This will be returned to in chapter 4 below. What is important here, is that even at the 'summits' of signifying practice, poetic language presents a subjective enclosure (the *Grenze* returns within the *Schranke* or release from finitude that literature practices).

The difficulty within Kristeva's theory of transformation of the 'symbolic' is intrinsic to the way in which she has set up what is to be transformed ('Law'), and consequently what is to transform ('signifying practice'). 'Drive re-jection' and 'hegerogeneous contradiction' respectively explain the materialist economy and the founding moment of the 'symbolic'. The logic of the displacement of boundaries, presented in the diachronic account of symbolization, is sustained in the synchronic dimension (where the producible 'subject' is a given). Nevertheless, the 'law' - whose renewal is held out as the *ultimate outcome* of (the qualitative change resulting from) the accumulating displacement of boundaries (of linguistic structures) - is itself incomprehensible. The moment of the foundation of existing 'law', as also the moment of its 'renewal', contains a 'leap' in which the symbolic order is posited, but as a result of which social and political relations cannot be comprehended. The traversal and reaffirmation of the 'thetic moment' can only (re)posit the structure which is the content of existing symbolic law (abstract right, 'paternal' law); and as a *structure* it cannot be known, precisely because it is subject to a purely theoretical analysis alone.

Kristeva treats social and political relations, insofar as they are knowable, as a realm of systems of representation because the positing, and repressive structure, of the 'sign' (suppressing the 'semiotic') is considered to be fundamental to the structure of human 'law'. It is impossible to divest the knowledge of social and political relations from the consequences of the primacy of the 'entrance into language'. What is *posited* in the thetic moment, and what is to be transformed in signifying practice, is always construed in terms of 'systems of representation'.

The point will be made clear in the 'Intertext' below, but it is important to emphasize that it will not be affected by the abandonment of the revolutionary standpoint, but carries over to the 'ethics' of psychoanalysis, since Kristeva never questions the concept of 'symbolic law' or the 'sublation' of Hegel which led to her conception of the finite-infinite relation.

INTERTEXT

'Intertext': this expression is used to suggest that Kristeva's concept of the 'text', given its implications for the knowledge of social and political relations, represents a *loss* of the philosophy of law which developed in the debates of German idealism from Kant to Hegel. Kristeva's identification of all 'forms' of transcendental philosophy is the point of departure for her insistence on the value for social and political theory of psychoanalysis' knowledge of the 'split' subject. The scope attributed to this knowledge gives rise to a concept of 'negation' (re-jection) which posits a fundamental agnostic moment in the comprehension of social and political relations.

'Intertext' therefore suggests that the resources of German idealism for the problematic of the subject in social and political relations *fall out* of Kristeva's concept of the 'text' because of this agnostic moment, and that this preempt an acknowledgement of the implicit return to Hegel in the return to Freud. The placing of the 'Intertext' here, between the discussion of Kristeva's early and that of her later writings, also points the fact that the abandonment of 'Maoism' and 'turn' to psychoanalysis in the later writings represent an acknowledgement of the implications of the use of the theory of the unconscious on social and political terrain, even though the philosophical problematic is not followed through by Kristeva. Part II, below, will present Kristeva's deeper engagement with psychoanalysis, and her substitution of a 'typology of discourses' for system in philosophy. Chapter 5 addresses the difficulties which emerge with the attempt to negotiate the utility of psychoanalytic references beyond the 'boundary' of psychoanalysis on social and political terrain.

1. *Negation unknown*

Part I above has recapitulated Kristeva's reformulation of the Lacanian 'symbolic', and set out the fundamental moments in Kristeva's exposition of 'process' and 'structure' (ultimately drive re-jection and thetic unity). The reversals of Hegelian and Marxist thought, on the basis of the psychoanalytic discovery of the 'split' subject, present a theory of historical transformation whose key features are comparable with the idealist comprehension of subjective and objective spirit. The comparison, undertaken here, exposes the implications of the fundamental agnosticism in Kristeva's thought: Kristeva's 'sublation' of idealist thought poses an opposition between the 'signifying process' and symbolic structures, and places an absolute restriction on the knowledge of social and political relations.

The exposition and thesis of *Revolution in Poetic Language* can be summarized in five points which permit the implicit relation to Hegel to emerge.

First, *Revolution in Poetic Language* expounds the concept of the signifying process and presents the sites of 'signifying practice', and then elaborates the problematic of the 'subjective enclosure' of signifying practices. *Second*, it postulates the 'objective social process'. *Third*, the condition of release from the 'subjective enclosure' of the process is presented as a 'heterogenous contradiction' between the signifying process and the objective social process. *Fourth*, a 'social agent' emerges as condition of the historical impact of the signifying process: 'a module by which the mechanism of rejection in question invades the social realm' (*RPL*, p. 205). The social agent is situated in an 'immediate experience' with the objective social process (with 'objective contradictions'). *Fifth*, and finally, Kristeva presents an ineluctable opposition between that 'immediate'

social experience ('struggle') and the moment of 'knowledge' of the 'new object' which results from the introduction of drive re-jection into the social realm by way of social 'struggle'.

On the one side, there is a 'subjective' totality which is a self-mediation of signifying process and signifying practice; on the other side an objective totality which embraces the unitary subject and society, and the scientific knowledge of their 'laws' ('structures'). The objective totality has no self-mediation: its unity with the 'objective social process' is mediated through the signifying process, ultimately drive re-jection. The 'objective social process', the 'in itself' of the objective totality, is never 'for itself' since consciousness and the structures of a society only 'return renewed' by way of the negative force of the signifying process: drive re-jection posits the 'new object'. Only the latter (the renewed objective totality) and not its 'in itself' (the objective social process) is 'known'.

On the subjective side, therefore, there is the self-mediation of the 'in itself' and 'for itself' of *signifiante*. On the objective side there is an unknowable in itself, an unknowing social agent, and a (re)posited objective totality 'for us'. The 'for us' is the moment of scientific knowledge: 'we intervene, writes Hegel' according to Kristeva (*RPL*, p. 203). The restriction of the meaning of 'scientific knowledge', and its conflation with Hegelian '*Wissen*' is evident.

The double articulation of the 'process' (bio-historical on the subjective side, 'socio-historical' on the objective side) presents a *materialist* comprehension of subjective and objective spirit, and of their mutual pervasion in the 'moment of practice'. Nevertheless, the 'subjective' and the 'objective' *totalities* (process and structure) are radically

divided owing to the 'leap' in the moment of social practice. It is only within its subjective enclosure that subjective spirit is a self-mediation of signifying process (the 'in itself') and signifying practice (the process 'for itself'). It loses self-mediation in the 'moment' of its objectification or historical impact - as a direct consequence of the fact that the objective side (social process and structural totality) is not a self-mediation.

The 'agnostic' core of the historical impact (the 'leap') stems from the fact that in their moment of correspondence the objective side retains the character it has when in *opposition* to the subjective side. It has no 'negativity' of its own but borrows it from the subjective side. Consequently, the subjective side is infected by the non-mediation of the objective side. Its own negativity no longer presents a self-mediation of 'in itself' and 'for itself' but a mysterious (re-)positing of the objective totality: the 'new thesis', the new object 'for us' (*RPL*, p. 204).

Since the force of the negative belongs to the subjective side only, and since the moment of practice inscribes that negativity within an unknowable 'rupture', the 'heterogeneous contradiction' of signifying and social process invests the totality ('unity' of subjective and objective spirit) with a fundamental agnostic moment. 'Heterogeneous contradiction', the correspondence of subjective and objective spirit, turns the 'negating activity' of drive re-jection into a leap into a new objective totality (consciousness, socio-symbolic order and scientific knowledge of their 'laws').

The severance of the 'moments' of subjective and social structuration consequent upon the agnostic core of socio-historical structuration is displayed in Kristeva's description of the social struggle. The

correspondence of the signifying process and the social process, out of which a new object arises, has as its 'middle' the ideological social ego; an agent situated as an 'immediate experience' of objective contradictions (the 'nonobjectifiable' externality).

The new object is a moment of the process whose conflict constitutes the most intense moment of rupture and renewal. Consciousness tends to repress this struggle within heterogeneity, which takes the subject into an 'externality' he rejects only to posit again, renewed. (RPL, p.204)

The social agent (the 'revolutionary') arises in a clash with the objective process, in which the objective is not known but only 'immediately' experienced. The moment of social struggle is a Fichtean *Anstoss*, the unknowable impact of a 'subject' (Kristeva's 'ideological ego') and an unknown outside. Furthermore, this 'subject', in order to act, is cut off from the 'poetic' re-cognition of the violence of drive re-rejection which pervades it; in order to act it wittingly undergoes that violence without needing to know its mechanism (RPL, p. 206). Further again, as subject of an 'immediate' experience of objective contradictions the social agency cannot 'know' the objective contradictions (social process) but only undergoes their violence. The social agent is the unitary subject 'put in process' by objective contradictions and carrying drive re-rejection into the social field.

Practice of whatever kind - but revolutionary practice in its explicit content - knows this moment in which the race toward death - implicit jouissance - is never far behind the contradictions confronted by the subject, since *he supersedes himself there, first as a unity and finally as a living being*, if the objective law of struggle demands it. (RPL, p. 206; my emphasis)

Kristeva's argument against 'idealist' mediation, presents a social 'subject' who is but a sacrifice to the historical process because the latter has no self-mediation. In Kristeva's materialist dialectic the moment of the 'most immediate violence',¹ is elevated into its 'socio-political' moment since 'after' the new thesis there are but new laws or norms of society analysable only theoretically as posits, or 'structures'. The root of this elevation lies in the status of the 'objective social process' as a postulate of thought: an 'in itself' of the objective totality to which 'contradictions', known only from their effects, are attributed.

Despite the Fichtean moment in Kristeva's inversion of Hegel, the materialist dialectic is an attempt to overcome the agnostic moment in subjective idealism and its tyrannous consequences when it expounds a politics and an ethics. Nevertheless, an agnosticism returns into the dialectic of drive re-jection. The 'moment of practice' reconfigures negativity as a moment of 'positing' in which there is an absolutely unknowable term: the socio-historical 'in itself', the very term which is claimed to unite Kristeva's 'independent material agency' (drive) and her idealist moment (a signifying determination). The mediating term is merely postulated. The dialectic is frozen by appending it to an unknowable moment within materialist 'negativity', and consequently fixed to an unsubstatable 'concept' of negativity: 'heterogeneous contradiction'. There is no knowledge of the negation which is claimed for heterogeneous contradiction as an 'entire recasting of subjective and social structurations' (*RPL*, p. 205), and the dialectic remains fixed to that agnosticism from the start. The atomistic subjects of the social order know nothing; the social and poetic subjects are estranged; scientific consciousness is only ever last on the scene and can but analyse the 'result' of the

negation: the objective totality or the laws (*qua* structures) of consciousness and of society.

Even though oppositions of drives/language or nature/symbol are 'sublated' in the notion of the 'split subject', once this 'splitting' is posited as the truth of intersubjectivity, Kristeva's analysis of the subject in social and political relations remains within the dichotomy it starts out from. The opposition of 'drives' and 'language' turns into the opposition of the subjective and the objective. The dichotomy is sustained, and absolutely divides from one another the actors, objects and aims of signifying and social 'process'.

The fundamental agnosticism with which the unknowability of the objective 'in itself' invests the whole of Kristeva's theory of subjective and social transformation is determined by her construal of Hegelian mediation. The 'need' for a theory of the subject demands an overturning of the idealist dialectic, if the subject is to be recognized as a 'unity' of material and symbolic determinations rather than as thethetic 'self-consciousness' of Hegelian 'mediation', supposedly cut off from 'immediacy' from the outset.²

2. *The 'need' for a theory of the subject*

The purpose of the exposition of the 'semiotic' in Kristeva's writings is to retrieve a 'theory of the subject', deemed to be missing from the Marxist dialectic; to be available to a materialist rethinking of the idealist dialectic, but not approached there; and to be lost in the Kantian fate of the Lacanian 'symbolic'.

Kristeva's 'return to Freud' inherits the Lacanian expansion of psychoanalysis as a 'theory of culture',

but the theory of the 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' goes further than Lacan by developing psychoanalysis into a 'knowledge of the practical'. Kristeva presents the distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' both as an 'opposition' necessary for the purposes of theoretical description, and as a recognition of the 'semiotic' dimension of the 'symbolic' without which the practical implications of the Lacanian 'symbolic' cannot be overcome.

the semiotic that 'precedes' symbolization is only a *theoretical supposition* justified by the need for description. It exists in practice only within the symbolic and requires the symbolic break to obtain the complex articulation we associate with it in musical and poetic practices. In other words, symbolization makes possible the complexity of this semiotic combinatorial system, which only theory can isolate as 'preliminary' in order to specify its functioning. Nevertheless, the semiotic is not solely an abstract object produced for the needs of theory. (RPL, p. 68)

The 'theory' of the subject retrieved from Freud, without which the 'knowledge of the practical' cannot be disclosed, leads to the privileging of the diachronic expositions of the 'unity' of semiotic and symbolic in both early and later writings; it 'isolates' the semiotic system as preliminary 'in order to specify its functioning'. *Revolution in Poetic Language* presents the 'thetic phase' in which the subject ('self-consciousness') and 'symbolic' are generated. The later writings present the pre-thetic psychic drama of narcissism that explains the possibility of the 'mirror image' and the Oedipal structure. In both cases, Kristeva is attempting to elaborate a 'separated subject' which retains the Lacanian subject of 'lack' while overturning its practical implications: the subject's subordination to the symbolic. The social and political ambition of Kristeva's thesis lies in the fact that while the

'need' for a theory of the subject leads to diachronic expositions of psychosexual individuation (in order to specify the semiotic functioning), the implication of the 'semiotic' thus expounded is the retrieval of spheres of 'practice' within modern social and political relations.

The basic dichotomy which Kristeva perceives as intrinsic to both modern social and political relations *and* to their sciences (political sciences and modern philosophy) is the dichotomy nature/culture - to be 'sublated' through the intelligibility to psychoanalysis of the unconscious, the unity of 'drives' and 'language'. 'Drive re-rejection' is the negative force in the materialist dialectic and, since it is expounded as a renewing *and* renewable 'negativity', Kristeva claims that the overturning of the idealist dialectic does not replace the primacy of intelligence (Husserl's 'transcendental subject') with a materialist 'absolute'.

'Drive re-rejection' is *expounded* diachronically as a presymbolic process which constitutes the 'subject' ('self-consciousness'). Nevertheless its 'truth' lies in its synchronic status both as the negativity which posits the two orders (posits the 'symbolic', or objective totality plus its semiotic lining, a 'complex combinatorial system'), *and* as the negating activity determined by both orders. As the latter, drive re-rejection puts 'in process' the oppositions of the 'symbolic' consequent upon its being-positing (nature/symbol; body/language; the feminine/'paternal law'). Kristeva's 'negativity' takes up the position of 'how reason *presents itself*' in the following statement from Hegel's *Differenzschrift*:

Reason presents itself as the force of the negative absolute, and hence as negativity that is absolute; and at the same time it presents itself as the force that posits the

opposed objective and subjective totalities.
(*Diff.*, pp. 94-5)

The purported 'truth' of the distinction between 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' is the unity of their identity and difference. The 'signifying process' expresses their identity and the symbolic order their difference - the realm of their 'appearance' as oppositions. The 'moment' of their unity ('negativity') is in Kristeva's view not an abstraction of the understanding, since drive re-jection - as Kristeva's coinage conveys - is itself 'renewable', determined by the opposites it posits. 'Drive re-jection' is the negativity (heterogeneous contradiction) which posits the two orders which determine negativity (drive re-jection). The circle is, at least explicitly, complete, since the 'principle' of the dialectic does not stand outside it. The apparent truth of Kristevan 'process' is not that the infinite posits the finite - (re)constitution of the objective totality - but the positing of the infinite in the finite - (re)structuration of subjective and objective totalities.³

The agnostic core of the 'moment' of heterogeneous contradiction, exposed above, nevertheless affects Kristeva's 'circle'. The distinction *between* negativity as 'drive re-jection' and as 'heterogeneous contradiction' is symptomatic of this problem. The question is not whether the materialist dialectic fails to *complete* itself. The failure of its completion corresponds to Kristeva's caution in not positing a resolution to the aporiae of the subject in modern social and political relations. The 'agnostic moment' in Kristeva's presentation of the heterogeneous contradiction of the subjective and objective totalities corresponds to her care not to turn 'restructuration' into an ideal to be realized. The question is therefore not the 'noncompletion' or

'openness' of the dialectic, but whether or not it gets off its ground. Kristeva's materialist dialectic can therefore be assessed in the light of Hegel's rewriting of the Fichtean and Schellingian systems.

3. 'The need of philosophy'

Hegel's abstract presentation, in the *Differenzschrift*, of 'the need of philosophy' assessed the 'various forms occurring in contemporary philosophy' in the context of the separation of the sciences (the isolated 'knowledges' or *Erkenntnisse* of culture and of nature) (*Diff*, pp. 85-9). The title of his essay, 'The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy', announces Hegel's review of the 'transcendental turn' in philosophy after Kant, and its outcome: a system of 'intelligence' (*Verstand*) on one side and a system of 'nature' on the other. Fichte had presented a transcendental philosophy of the subjective unity of subject and object (the 'subjective subject=object') and Schelling had provided its counterpart, a philosophy of the 'objective subject=object'.

Hegel rewrites the Fichtean and Schellingian 'forms' of philosophy in order to show their 'difference' (relation). He expounds the outcome of the responses to pre-critical dogmatism when transcendental philosophy reduces 'reason' to a reflective position. The reflective or methodological position leads to an absolute opposition between the 'subjective' and the 'objective' in which one side only is a 'unity' of finite and infinite; in which, consequently, that side re-presents a sphere of limitedness while the 'release' from finitude, or force of the negative absolute, is reserved to the other side alone; and in which, therefore, as an absolute identity opposed to the finite, the infinite is reduced to a finite infinite. Despite the sublation of the opposition of the

subjective and the objective on one level, the transcendental turn only raises one side to the 'absolute' standpoint, and therefore leaves it as a 'standpoint'.

In the following passage Hegel lays out the 'relapse' of philosophical reflection into a methodological position which posits an 'absolute' opposition between finite and infinite.

The understanding copies reason's absolute positing, and through this form gives itself the semblance of reason even though what are posited are in themselves opposites, and hence finite. The semblance grows that much stronger when the understanding transforms and fixes reason's negating activity into a product. The infinite, insofar as it gets opposed to the finite, is a thing of this kind, i.e., it is something rational as posited by the understanding. By fixing it, the understanding sets it up in absolute opposition to the finite; and reflection which had risen to the plane of reason when it suspended the finite, now lowers itself again to being understanding because it has fixed reason's activity into an opposing. Moreover, reflection still pretends to be rational, even in its relapse. (*Diff*, p. 90)

Hegel's criticism of the endless 'opposing' to which reason is reduced corresponds to his assessment of the 'relapse' between Fichte's 'grasp' of the absolute and its exposition or system. In 1801 Hegel's main criticisms are addressed to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and are extended into the latter's political and moral philosophy in order to show the consequences of subjective idealism when it comes to elaborate the 'rational' state and the ethical dimension of the individual in such a state.

It is common ground for [Fichte's] *Ethics* and his *Natural Law* alike, that the idea must dominate over drive, that freedom must dominate nature. What distinguishes them is this: in the *Natural Law*, the subservience of free beings to the concept is strictly the absolute end in itself so that the fixed abstraction of the general will must here

subsist apart and far from the individual, and have coercive authority over him. In the *Ethics*, on the other hand, concept and nature must be posited as united in one and the same person. In the State, Right alone is to govern, while in the realm of morality, duty will only have power insofar as the individual's reason acknowledges it as law. (*Diff.*, p. 149)

Hegel's criticisms of Fichte's system embrace the implications of the fundamental distinction between 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason and their respective realms in the critical and transcendental philosophies. Either this distinction leads to relative identities of infinite and finite being posited in their respective realms (Kant); or the attempt to overcome the consequent limitation of the 'infinite' grounds theoretical in practical reason without overcoming the limitation, but only producing an absolute opposition of legality and morality, and drawing out the most tyrannous consequence of their separation (the Fichtean state).

Kristeva's theory of the 'subject' is emphatically distinguished from any concept of the 'will'; but her notion that the actual modern state represents a confusion of the 'subject who knows' with 'state power' belies this apparent dispensation with the concept of the 'will'; it re-presents and sustains the concept of the state understood as a law which subsists 'apart and far from the individual'. Nevertheless, the purpose of her theory of the 'subject' is to show that the psychoanalytic knowledge of the 'split' subject, as unity of 'idea' and 'drive', overcomes the limitations, and effects, of a social and political thought based on the transcendental turn in philosophy. However, the foundational distinction between 'semiotic' and 'symbolic', and the materialist concept of 'negativity', do not step out of the movement of the

'understanding' whose forms Hegel distinguishes and sublates.

Hegel's assessment of Fichte in the *Differenzschrift* addresses the primacy of practical reason as a restriction of 'reason' within the one-sided 'negative absolute', the 'absolute subject'. I will rehearse the elements of this argument in order to draw out the dimensions of the fixation of the 'negative absolute' as they emerged in the debates of German idealism; and subsequently to reinterrogate the residual structuralist distinctions (semiotic/symbolic; synchronic/diachronic) imposed on Kristeva's thought by the fixation of her 'concept' of negativity.

In 1801 Hegel appraises the *proposition* expressing Fichtean reason (the 'I=I') as 'the authentic principle of speculation boldly expressed' (*Diff*, p. 81). He criticizes the fate of Fichte's speculative grasp of 'reason' when it comes to its 'exposition'. The 'subject=object' (unity of identity and difference) is abandoned, and Fichte's system develops in the element of the 'understanding' owing to the primacy of practical reason. It is a system of 'oppositions': 'as soon as speculation steps out of the concept that it establishes of itself and evolves into a system, it abandons itself and its principle and does not come back to it again' (*ibid.*). The 'principle' remains a principle in opposition to the manifold deduced: identity and difference, concept and nature are radically sundered; nature is dominated either by a fixed abstraction of the general will to which individuals, as such, are subordinated; or it is dominated by the 'individual's reason'. The Fichtean natural 'law' of freedom, the self-limiting I, makes an enemy of its source. It is a 'concept that commands' (*Diff*, p. 145). Kristeva's theory of the subject searches out, first, a concept of negativity in which

freedom ('practice') does not present the self-opposition of freedom to nature; and, later, an intrapsychic 'law' of intersubjectivity whose acknowledgement would counter the dominance of Fichtean 'right' and 'ethics'.⁴

The movement of philosophical reflection which produces an absolute opposition between 'identity' and 'difference' in Fichte (on the one side 'intelligence' on the other 'being' or nature) is expounded in Hegel's early essay in the Kantian terms of 'concept' and 'intuition'. These are terms which Fichte himself used in the second of the two 'Introductions' to the (unfinished) *Attempt at a New Presentation of the Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge* (1797). In the 'second' Introduction Fichte turns from the speculative 'truth' of the I=I (subject=object) to the primacy of an intellectual act as the foundation of the system.

Fichte was arguing with the philosophical 'dogmatism' that places a 'thing-in-itself' as the ground of the totality of representations, embracing not only the 'feeling of necessity' but the 'feeling of freedom'. Against and out of this position, repudiated as 'fatalist-materialist', Fichte propounds the subjective foundational 'act' which grounds representation. He calls this act an 'intellectual intuition' in which the 'original procedure of *reason*' is grasped (*SK*, p. 33). Intellectual intuition discovers how self-consciousness and consciousness of something which *for* it is something external *to* it 'are necessarily connected' (*SK*, p. 33). It is an act out of which the unity of self-consciousness and consciousness (the existence for it of an object) arises 'for' consciousness.

The precedence of this 'intellectual' act presents the relapse into the primacy of the 'subjective' moment. The loss of intuition or of the objective moment in reason is discernible within Fichte's account of the

movement of that act, which combines the following moments. There is an activity of the intellect in which it turns back into itself to make itself its own object; and an activity whereby a being arises for it outside of it. These activities are inseparable and out of them arise, simultaneously, both 'self' and 'object'. Nevertheless, the movement of turning back [*Zurückkehren*], which Fichte calls 'intuition', is a modification of consciousness which does not come before it. Only in the opposition to it of the not-self is the original intuiting a comprehending: no self without a not-self.

The self cannot come to be without a being arising for it in opposition to (outside) it, but the condition of their emergence is the 'intuition'. The movement from intuition to consciousness, comprehending, and concept takes place as the movement from the 'in itself' of intuition to the 'for itself' of the *concept* of self *through* the emergence of the object. Consequently, intuition, the possibility of and what will be the 'self' remains unknowable: 'The acting in question is simply the concept of the self, and the concept of the self is the concept of that acting' (*SK*, p. 35). It is *this* movement and what it suppresses that Kristeva criticizes in the supposed transition from Hegelian sense-certainty to self-consciousness, where she argues that the 'immediate unity' of consciousness and object in experience is left behind in the 'constitution' of self-consciousness.

Fichte's genitive, *concept of act* denotes, but cannot comprehend, the movement in which it comes forth - its own history. The movement of becoming - which embraces the leap from intuition to concept - is transformed in the very 'moment' of object- and self-consciousness into an identifying grasp of 'self' and 'acting'. As a consequence an absolute opposition is set up between

the 'self-acting' and 'being'. The subject=object that the Fichtean philosophy intrigues, and that is expressed in the principle 'I=I', is collapsed because the movement in which it is grasped (intuition *and* concept) is sundered into an unknown modification of consciousness and an elevation of the concept of self to an absolute beginning as *act* [*Tathandlung*].

Fichte's system develops out of the absolute opposition of self-consciousness and consciousness because it begins with the 'loss' of intuition. The whole system resides in the realm of being-positing (*Gesetztsein*), the opposition of the subjective and the objective. The system therefore unfolds in abstraction from its 'principle'; the arriving of 'self' and 'object', which Fichte calls *Setzen*, is an absolute 'I' and an absolute unknown, without a history. In Hegel's terms, on the one side there is the abstraction of identity (absolute I) and on the other side there is the realm of opposition of what is posited; both 'self-consciousness' as identity, and 'object' as identity and non-identity or conscious and nonconscious.

In 1801 Hegel is largely appreciative of the Schellingian philosophy of nature, which represents the necessary 'complement' to Fichte's system of intelligence since it readdresses 'intuition' and presents the 'objective subject=object'.

this subjective subject=object needs an objective subject=object to complete it, so that the absolute presents itself in each of the two subject=objects, and finds itself perfected only in both together as the highest synthesis that nullifies both *insofar as they are opposed*. As their point of absolute indifference *the absolute encloses both, gives birth to both and is born of both*. (*Diff.*, p. 155; my emphasis)

Kristeva's recovery of the 'semiotic' makes the philosophical move from Fichte to Schelling. The

materialist dialectic re-cognizes the 'moment' of intuition lost in Fichte's primacy of the practical concept (identity of 'self' and 'act'). It overturns the idealist doctrine of scientific knowledge which had imposed limitations on knowledge. The 'knowledge of the practical' opened up by psychoanalysis permits a science of what in the Fichtean system remained 'unknown'; a science of the determination of the transcendental subject which had been abstracted from its socio-historical dimension; a science of the 'unconscious' (unity of drives and language: the objective subject=object).

Fichte's recovery of the 'practical' had turned thethetic moment into an unknowable act of an absolute subject without a history. Kristeva is thus a critic of the agnosticism fundamental to Fichte's primacy of the practical *concept* as much as she is of the Kantian agnosticism which creeps back into determinist interpretations of Lacan.

The Kantian moment in psychoanalysis, for Kristeva, is the reduction of the meaning of the 'Other' to a subject-Other relation restricted within the consequences of the 'thetic moment' or 'entrance into language'. When Lacan's (re)discovery that 'desire divides the subject from itself' is made into the absolute principle of psychoanalytic theory, the subject is fixed within an ineliminable opposition of 'subject' and 'symbolic', an 'opposition' whose principle is 'lack'. The subject is subordinated to the symbolic:

the negativity characteristic of the Hegelian dialectic which emerged through the analytical theory of *desire*, ends up yielding before a Kantian agnosticism when the subject psychoanalysis has in view proves to be either the subject of Kantian understanding or that of science. More precisely and concretely, the subject's desire is founded on drives ('the psychosomatic articulation')

that remain unsatisfied, no matter what phantasmatic identifications desire may lead to because, unlike desire, drives 'divide the subject from desire'. Desire's basis in drives will thus be dismissed and forgotten so that attention may be focused on *desire itself*, reactivated by the reiteration of castration. (RPL, p. 131)

Kristeva believed that the Hegelian dialectic expounded the *movement* in which self-consciousness is constituted, the determination of the subject's desire by a 'lack' (void) grasped by philosophical consciousness. She inherits Lacan's return to a 'dialectical' Freud. Furthermore, she acknowledges the Hegelianism informing the differentiation between, in her terms, the metonymic object and the metaphoric 'nonobject'; which is to say, between, on the one hand, the structural misrecognition which Lacan called the '*objet petit a*', the metonymy of the impossible quest or desire for recognition 'reactivated by the reiteration of castration'; and, on the other, the relation to the Other. 'The subject's desire is founded on drives', once it is grasped that the 'drives' status as articulation' refers to the 'site of the Other' and repudiates the positivism of biology.⁵ Kristeva then diagnoses Lacan's failure to approach the heterogeneity of drives as the reason behind the Kantian fate of Lacan's 'subject': a fixation of the subject of 'lack'.

The loss of the negativity 'characteristic of the Hegelian dialectic' results in a restriction of the meaning of the 'desire of the Other'. The subject-Other relation is reduced, for the subject, to an absolute opposition between subject and Other. The consequent 'reiteration of castration' is only to be qualified by a retrieval of Hegelian 'negativity', as disclosed within a (Freudian) materialist rethinking of Hegel.

Kristeva's 'return to Freud' *contra* Husserl and the Kantian fate of the Lacanian symbolic aimed to recognize the subjective subject=object as the subject in

process, by way of the 'acting' of its objective moment (the drives' status as articulation). The objective moment is therefore re-cognized as an objective subject=object. The return to Freud aimed, then, to disclose a negative force which prioritized neither the subjective nor the objective moment, and hence to avoid either a return to an absolute subject, or positing an absolute object as 'origin' or founding 'principle' of the dialectic.

Kristeva's implicit criticism of the divided 'Kantian' subject and of the Fichtean 'absolute' subject therefore proposes a negativity 'characteristic' of the Hegelian dialectic and recognized by a materialist recovery of the unity of the material 'and' symbolic foundation of the dialectic. First, there is

the negativity *articulating two orders* and positing the never saturated subject in process/on trial between them - the drives' status as articulation. (RPL, p. 131)

This might prioritize the objective subject=object (the drives' status as articulation) if, second, 'negativity' were not itself determined by the two orders it 'articulates', and operative only by way of the subject in process posited by both orders. 'Negativity' articulates and is renewed by the symbolic and the semiotic, identifiable with neither a material nor a symbolic foundation.

However, as has been shown, there is an agnostic moment at the core of Kristeva's presentation of, in the language of German idealism, the *Indifferenzpunkt* ('heterogeneous contradiction') of the subjective and objective sides of the 'process'. Kristeva's subjective side is a self-mediation of 'in itself' and 'for itself'; but on the objective side the socio-historical 'in itself' is utterly divided from the realm of objective 'appearance'. The 'symbolic order' or objective totality ofthetic unities - self-

consciousness and the laws (structures) of society) - is an isolated realm of opposition. Kristeva's materialist dialectic *presents* an objective subject=object (the drives' status as articulation), but at the point of its 'historical impact', negativity as 'thetic moment' takes on the mantle of Fichte's absolute. Hegel writes:

The subject=object does not get away anymore from difference and reflection. It remains a subjective subject=object to which appearance remains absolutely alien and which does not succeed in intuiting itself in its appearance. (*Diff*, p. 133)

The thetic moment of the signifying process does not succeed in intuiting itself in the objective totality (self-consciousness and societal structures) since it is a 'rupture'; the knowledge of the new thesis is a strictly analytic comprehension of the laws of appearance. There is no 'knowledge' of symbolization, only a theory of it as what makes possible the complex intrasymbolic functioning of the semiotic. Despite Kristeva's references to the unity of biology and culture (the bio-historical on the subjective side, the socio-historical on the objective side), there is no knowledge of the historical 'middle' since all transformation is a leap.

The exposition of 'negativity' *seems* to re-present the abstract formulation in 1801 of the Hegelian absolute: the 'point of absolute indifference' where subjective and objective are nullified 'insofar as they are opposed', and where 'the absolute encloses both, gives birth to both and is born of both'. Kristeva's 'absolute', her materialist 'negativity' *seems* not to be abstracted as a subjective or objective 'principle' of the dialectic, but her very repudiation of 'mediation' undercuts the significance for 'negativity' that she aims at. 'Heterogeneous contradiction' is a reflective determination: the 'thought' of the unity of

semiotic and symbolic which are (re)posited as opposites in the objective totality. In the objective totality the opposition of 'subject' and 'law' is sustained, the latter subsisting 'apart and far from' the individual.

Kristeva's materialist 'negativity' does not re-present Hegelian reason but re-presents, in Hegel's terms, 'the understanding [which] copies reason's absolute positing, and through this form gives itself the semblance [*Schein*] of reason even though what are posited are *in themselves* opposites and hence finite' (*Diff*, p. 90). The semiotic and the symbolic are *in themselves* opposites because of the retention of the drives as an 'objective inner' and of the entrance into language as boundary of the symbolic order which sets it up as a realm of appearance (for the poet, a 'boundary to the infinite'). The concept of the thetic moment, 'heterogeneous contradiction', is a reflective determination of semiotic and symbolic which 'copies reason's absolute positing'; *in themselves* semiotic and symbolic are finite opposites. *Signifiante* is their unity 'in itself', and the dialectic leaps to a further opposition of 'in itself' and appearance (objective totality). The dichotomy, infinite/finite, is always 'the same': drives/socio-symbolic order. While Kristeva's theory of the subject posited the 'unity' of idea and drive, the concept of heterogeneous contradiction sustains a logic of essence: the infinite posits the finite, for the 'boundary to the infinite' is infinitely (re)traversed as the essence of the (same) socio-symbolic order.

When the dialectic of *signifiante* is supplemented with a 'social agent' in order to ensure the correspondence of the signifying process and the objective social process, the absolute opposition of semiotic and symbolic comes to the fore. The dialectic cannot get off the ground, since it collapses at the point of its

historical impact. The 'Maoist dialectic', which is brought in to turn the logic of re-jection into a logic of restructuration rather than the logic of essence which prevails in the 'subjective enclosures' of poetic language, fails and is abandoned. Kristeva's turn to a deeper engagement with psychoanalysis is a consequence of the need to readdress the nature and efficacy of the 'infinite'.

The abandonment of the Maoist dialectic is an abandonment of the problematic of the political dimension of the materialist dialectic. The turn to psychoanalysis does *not*, however, alter Kristeva's fundamental categories: the principle of drive re-jection remains as does the thought of 'heterogeneous contradiction' and its implications for social and political relations. However, the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction', because it is developed in abstraction from the political dimension, changes the significance of Kristeva's 'return to Freud'. The materialist practical 'infinite' based on the 'heteronomy' of the drives no longer presents a 'dialectic' of subjective and objective spirit that sustains a 'politics'; instead it provides the basis for an ethics, one which ultimately requires a 'political sociology' to complete it as practical beyond the 'subjective enclosure' of psychoanalysis.⁶

The following chapter will show how Kristeva's 'ethics' is formulated out of the practice and knowledge of psychoanalysis. The return to Freud for a 'separated' subject (drive-related *and* desiring) argues for a mediated 'subject' *contra* the Lacanian subject of lack. The theory of the mediated subject is derived from the psychoanalytic knowledge of the dynamic of the 'transference': Kristeva presents the 'ethic' of psychoanalysis on the basis of a concept of infinity derived from knowledge of the transference. This concept of 'infinity' reinforces Kristeva's estimation

of literature as the presentation of social and political contradictions, notwithstanding the 'limit' (subjective enclosure) discovered in every form of poetic 'signifying practice' analysed hitherto.

The theory of the mediated subject derived from the knowledge of psychoanalysis also presents an implicit return to Hegel, a return that is nevertheless held off owing to the difficulties which informed Kristeva's thought from the outset, owing to the fixation of the '*Reflexionsbestimmung*' of heterogeneous contradiction.

Part II, below, presents the 'subject' known to psychoanalysis from the dynamic of the transference, and demonstrates that the limitation intrinsic to Kristeva's concept of heterogeneous contradiction necessarily reappears at the point where she endeavours to specify the utility of psychoanalytic concepts beyond the bounds of 'analysis'.

PART TWO

RENEWAL THROUGH LOVE: ON DIVINE LAW

CHAPTER 4

LACAN AND FREUD:
FROM A 'KANTIAN SUBJECT' TO A HEGELIAN 'SELF-
CONSCIOUSNESS'*Introduction*

Kristeva's later writings restrict themselves to the 'transformation in the subject' or 'subjective spirit', retaining only the objective totality from the earlier negotiation of socio-historical transformation, and leaving the question of the social 'in itself' open-ended. Once the reformed Maoist dialectic is abandoned, so is the political dimension of this dialectic (Smith and Elliott note this lack).¹

Nevertheless, the deployment of psychoanalysis in Kristeva's thought remains an attempt to disclose the site and comprehend the nature of 'practice'. The presentation of the 'unity' of the semiotic and the symbolic does not only develop psychoanalysis as a theory of culture (as Lacan had done) but returns to the Freudian theory of the drives and of 'narcissism' for the 'practical' reason contained in the knowledge of psychoanalysis. The turn to a deeper engagement with psychoanalysis claims broad social and political implications for the ethics derived from the 'ethic' of psychoanalysis. Kristeva's later writings therefore remain within the problematic of social transformation, a problematic that was first expounded as a dialectic of subjective and objective spirit.

The science of psychoanalysis provides a theory of the subject. Kristeva's return to Freud for a 'theory of the subject' reveals her estimation of 'theoretical' reason after Freud: the grasp of the 'split' subject as a unity of nature and language. At first sight, the diachronic exposition of the formation and deformation of the 'subject' and of societal structures presents their 'constitution' out of the semiotic (hence its

seeming 'precedence'). However, the diachronic exposition is needed because the intrasymbolic status of the semiotic can only be presented by articulating the role of the symbolic in the semiotic generation of the symbolic.²

The synchronic 'truth' of the unity of semiotic and symbolic presents Kristeva's estimation of 'practical' reason after Freud: the semiotic 'exists in practice only within the symbolic and *requires* the symbolic break to obtain the complex articulation we associate with it in musical and poetic practices' (*RPL*, p. 68).

While Kristeva's diachronic presentation *expounds* the mutual determination of semiotic and symbolic, the truth of this *reciprocity* (*Wechselbestimmung*) is their 'heterogeneous contradiction'. Nevertheless, Kristeva's 'thetic break' does not have the status of the *Indifferenzpunkt* since the 'drives' remain its precondition and the 'thetic moment' stands apart - as 'boundary to the infinite' - from the semiotic on one side and the symbolic 'order' on the other. The thetic moment is isolated, however much it 'returns' in the synchronic perspective within poetic practices. In Hegel's terms this will lead to a system of absolute op-positing, to the primacy of opposition in the exposition. Kristeva sustains the foundational distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' for the sake of opening up a dialectical comprehension of the 'subject', but the nonsublation of semiotic and symbolic lead to a movement of endless 'op-positing'.

The foundational distinction is made in Kristeva's early writings and continues to have effects throughout her *oeuvre*. *Revolution in Poetic Language* comprehended the separation of subjective and objective spirit, and here the 'idea' of the heterogeneous contradiction of signifying process and social process had a critical status: no conclusion is posed to the 'modern'

separation of spirit; the idea is not made into an 'ideal'; but the division of subjective and objective spirit is made absolute.

In the later writings there appears a revised relation between experience and knowledge on the terrain of the psychoanalytic scene. Psychoanalytic practice presents a dialectic of experience and 'provisional interpretation'. The relationship between theory and practice changes in accordance with that revision. The 'theoretical' stance may involve a reflection set apart from the site of its 'object'. However, because that stance emerges out of a new relationship between knowledge and experience on the terrain of analytic practice, theory is to reassess the problematic of 'ethics' and 'politics' in modernity. The theory of the subject recovered in the return to Freud is combined with the proposal of an 'ethics of psychoanalysis' which 'implies a politics' (*SO*, p. 192). The ethics and the implication are consequent upon the knowledge of the practical which emerges in the psychoanalytic scene of 'transference' and 'provisional interpretation' (*TL*, p. 276); it is a knowledge of the 'process of formation and deformation of meaning and the subject' (*TL*, p. 23).

Within the aporetic space of modernity in which the idea of the 'entire recasting of subjective and social structuration' is not to be turned into an 'ideal', Kristeva turns to a deeper engagement with psychoanalysis in order to consider the 'efficacy' of the 'infinite' disclosed in psychoanalytic experience (transference as metaphorical production). This 'ethics', developed without a rethinking of objective spirit (which thus remains standing, as an opposition between a socio-historical 'in itself' and the structures of society) is meant to contain the possibility of a rethinking of the political. The character of the ethics/politics distinction in

Kristeva's thought is determined by the retention of the foundational distinction between 'semiotic' and 'symbolic'.

A. Semanalysis

1. Post-philosophical Method

My prejudice has been that God is analysable.
Infinitely. ('*Mémoire*', *L'infini*, pp. 46-7)

Kristeva's genealogical treatment of the formation and deformation of the 'modern subject' has never been seriously addressed because the philosophical foundations of her argument have never been acknowledged and questioned.

In *Tales of Love* Kristeva proposes an open-ended typology of discourses (theology, mysticism, philosophy, courtly and modern literature) and approaches their elaborations of 'love' as 'stories' (*histoires*) of love, repudiating a dialectical treatment of her 'object' as inappropriate to the subject matter (*TL*, p. 276). The elaborations of 'love' in western thought and literature are discourses whose meaning a dialectical approach would subsume or suppress since they present a meaning 'for the speaking subject' whose drive-relation is suppressed in the subjective and systematic reclosure of the idealist dialectic. The philosophical (Greek) and monotheist (Jewish, Christian) discourses on love are approached as 'diverse images of love' out of which emerge the 'amorous protagonists' to be found in religion and literature: 'Narcissus, Don Juan, Romeo and Juliet, or the Mother with her child of which the Virgin Mary is our prototype' (*TL*, p. 16). Kristeva's text analyses the images of love in western thought and the 'various dynamics affecting the amorous protagonists who emerge out of them' (*ibid.*). As a whole, *Tales of Love* is 'a contribution to the elaboration of a history of subjectivity' (*ibid.*).

'Semanalysis', Kristeva's method, is based on the materialist inversion of the idealist dialectic, and leads to a genealogical treatment of 'western

subjectivity': 'a history of *subjectivity*'. The method with which she approaches the discourses on love in western thought and literature contains a presupposition: that the discoveries of psychoanalysis combined with the concept of 'metaphor' elaborated on the terrain of literature have made it possible to position the history of modern philosophy within the epistemological reduction of the 'subject' to a knowing subject (*cogito ergo sum*). The 'Cartesian' moment in the history of western thought is, for Kristeva, ineliminable within the philosophical thought of the 'subject'. Kristeva puts western thought on a terrain for which the psychoanalytic discovery is 'outrageous'.

The psychoanalytic stance allows one to record a true transformation of Western discourse, in which the metaphor is at stake, accomplished at the expense of the loving subject; it thus determines a position that can only be termed outrageous within the history and typology of interpretative discourse. (*TL*, p. 276)

Kristeva's 'presupposition' lies in the historical significance of and theoretical connection between Cartesian and Freudian reason: between the Cartesian loss of the 'loving subject' in the epistemological treatment of the subject, and the Freudian discovery of 'death's work' within amorous space (and its consequences for civilization). This prioritization of Descartes and Freud within a genealogical grasp of western 'thought' is inseparable from Kristeva's determination of speculative reason: 'Hegel' represents the high point of system in philosophy and turning point to an 'open typology' of discourses. Hegel is thereby positioned on the border of the epistemological reduction; with the idealist dialectic 'Reason' has advanced to:

the Hegelian Negativity - which at the same time restored and systematized, unleashed and bound the power of the Other, against and within the consciousness of the Same. (*SO*, p. 169)

2. The Presupposition in Kristeva's Thought

There are three dimensions to the 'beginning' of an open-ended typology of discourses out of which Kristeva proposes a contribution to the elaboration of a 'history of subjectivity'. These three dimensions inform Kristeva's thought as a whole. *The first* lies in the overemphasis on Freud's historical significance: psychoanalysis is the first science to put the 'subject' onto analysable terrain, because of its expansion of the meaning of sexuality (*IBWL*, pp. 46-7), but also 'because it does not abstract from or neutralize the subject of knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 19). *The second* is Kristeva's interpretation of monotheism as a 'strategy' of identity-formation aiming to secure 'western internality' (religious disposition); and her interpretation of the meaning of the 'death of God' as the 'loss of the One God'. *The third* is a reliance on the significance (for the critique of modernity) of the concept of 'metaphor' as rescued from its determination by metaphysics, notably in the texts of Ricoeur and Derrida (*TL*, pp. 269-70). The 'literary' treatment of metaphor, in combination with the psychoanalytic knowledge of the dynamic of the transference, allows the power of psychoanalysis to be determined: psychoanalysis is the 'positive' complement to the deformation of the subjective internality that western monotheism aimed and failed to secure.

These three aspects of Kristeva's thought determine her cultural interpretation of the modern separation of subjective and objective spirit. They are discussed in turn in the following three sections, and leads into a demonstration that the theory of culture presupposes 'philosophy' and leads to the Hegelian difficulties implicit in the return to Freud.

(i) Psychoanalysis: Freud's historical significance

The first presupposition, on which Kristeva is most insistent, is her claim for the *historical* significance of Freud's science and its object. She claims for psychoanalysis a profound and novel contribution to the problematic of the subject in social and political relations: from 'the tremendous Hegelian continent that gave the impetus to and completed the *thought* of the Other' to 'the political and ethical impact of the Freudian breakthrough':

With Freud indeed, foreignness, an uncanny one, creeps into the tranquility of reason itself, and, without being restricted to madness, beauty, or faith anymore than ethnicity or race, irrigates our very speaking-being, estranged by other logics, including the heterogeneity of biology... Henceforth, we know that we are foreigners to ourselves, and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others. (*SO*, pp. 169-70; ellipsis in original)

This claim for Freud's place in the history of reason rests on Kristeva's genealogical grasp of the discovery of the unconscious:

Psychoanalysis is the most internalized moment of Western historicity. (*TL*, p. 276)

Kristeva's proposition expresses the dialectical relation between the fate of 'western internality' (embracing religious disposition) and the historical appearance of its science. At the point of the crisis - manifest de-formation - of western subjectivity its 'reason' (theory and knowledge) comes on the scene.

One is compelled to note that the aims of psychoanalysis have changed. After psychiatric *semeiology*, Freud had discovered the *symptom* as metaphor, that is, condensation, of fantasy. Now, and thanks to Lacan, one analyzes the symptom as a screen through which one detects the workings of *significance* (the process of formation and de-formation of meaning and the subject). (*TL*, p. 23)

Psychoanalysis emerges and develops in response to the 'modern' crisis for the speaking subject faced with the failure of moral and political discourses to accommodate subjective internality and with the manifest failure of western monotheism to secure it a sphere apart. It emerges and develops in step with the intensification of the symptom and re-cognizes the basis of the symptom.

The dialectical meaning of Kristeva's proposition that 'Psychoanalysis is the most internalized moment of Western historicity' is the following. The theory and knowledge of psychoanalysis is appraised as the most 'internalized' moment of western historicity because it comprehends western internality at the moment of its crisis: the critical moment when western internality not only loses a structuring foundation but when the consequent de-formation of meaning and subjectivity finds no discourse of restructuration. Conversely, psychoanalysis is the most internalized moment of western 'historicity' because its emergence as a science is inseparable from the history or fate - (de-) formation - of 'western subjectivity'.

(ii) Psychoanalysis and monotheism

The dialectical meaning of Kristeva's proposition is inseparable from the understanding of 'religious disposition'. She analyses the 'images of love' in monotheism as presenting strategies of identity-formation, and her interpretation of the 'death of God' poses 'the loss of the One God'. This loss is taken to be coeval with the crisis of western subjectivity: a collapse of intrapsychic space on the order of that of Ovid's 'Narcissus'. The latter, appearing in *Tales of Love* as a 'beginning' of the elaboration of amorous space in western thought, presents the morbidity of a psychic space later opened up, witness Plotinus, in

departure from the *polis*. 'Leaving politics to its laws' (*TL*, p. 119),

the problem to which [Christian, gnostic and neo-Platonic] thinkers had to respond was identical: it involved the emotional disarray of a society whose center was no longer the city (*polis*), but which was becoming a civilized universe (*oikoumene*) that, while cosmopolitan, gave human beings over to what H.-Ch. Puech calls 'ineffable solitude'. (*TL*, p. 118)

'After' the Judaeo-Christian trajectory - (de)formations - of western subjectivity, the contemporary speaking subject is returned to the morbidity, presented by Ovid, at the basis of the (de)formation of western internality. The departure from the laws of the *polis* thus remains a general, but unelaborated, context of Kristeva's contribution to a 'history of western subjectivity'. It is Narcissus' ineluctable 'morbidity', reemerging in full force with the loss of the One God, that is intelligible - at last - to psychoanalysis: 'to think that it has taken such a long time!' (*SO*, p. 182)

The crisis of the 'subject' is, in turn, coeval with the now evident failure of western thought to secure Narcissus against internal and external dangers by means of an ontology (western theology) or epistemology (Hegel) of the good: 'because the guideposts that insured our ascent toward the good have been proven questionable, we have crises of love' (*TL*, p. 7).

The 'crisis' of western internality in modernity is an outcome of the *manifest* failure of the theological and mystical elaborations of love which attempted to secure it. Kristeva views monotheism as a strategy of identity-formation involving an accommodation of the hatred inseparable from the loving subject which reaches its heights in the 'passion of the cross' (St Paul):

Christ's passion brings into play even more primitive layers of the human psyche; it thus reveals a fundamental depression (a narcissistic wound or reversed hatred) that conditions access to human language (*IBWL*, p. 40)

Notwithstanding the complexity of the Christian sublimation, monotheism is addressed as a whole in terms of its misrecognition and suppression of the 'nature' of the subject beloved of God (the drive-related speaking subject). What it 'reveals' is not negotiated; instead, as an elaboration of the 'symbolic and physical importance of the paternal function in human life', Christianity formulates the shaping of male desire: 'Unfortunately the proscription of female sexuality helped to infantilize half the human race by hampering its sexual and intellectual expression' (*IBWL*, p. 43).

The necessity of the failure of monotheism is intelligible to psychoanalysis whose object, 'civilization and its discontents', embraces the illusion of 'religion', and whose practice comes on the scene with the 'death of God'. The failure of monotheism's attempt to secure religious disposition is intelligible as the failure to negotiate 'death's work' in love. Monotheism lacks a negotiation of, and suppresses, the drive-basis of love: the '*heterogeneous* nature of conscious and unconscious representations' (*IBWL*, p. 5).

While psychoanalysis, in its role as renewal of 'psychic space', is not on the order of the discourses it replaces, it can take over from the elaborations of love in western monotheism:

to say that such elaborations soothe and take over from secondary narcissism (perhaps thrusting their affects as far as primary narcissism) is a blunt statement that could check the believer and bother the analyst as he finds himself involved in a discourse to which he is opposed. It remains nevertheless

true that what has been defined as the nonanthropological, nonpsychological aspect of that love could be understood only thanks to recent developments in psychoanalysis: by incorporating psychotic experience and fitting it in at the basis of psychicism they have allowed us to reach its human intelligibility, so human nevertheless, and also, taking things the other way around, permitted us to consider post-theological, secular means of sublimating our sickness of being, which is a sickness of love. (*TL*, p. 171)

Kristeva's argument for the strategic opposition of psychoanalysis to religion is a concern for the 'boundary' of psychoanalytic experience. In the context of psychoanalysis as an experience of love which must not enslave, Kristeva poses a 'strategic' opposition to religion. This opposition arises from the need to safeguard psychoanalytic practice from the political and religious context on which it must not encroach (*IBWL*, p. 57).

Kristeva never qualifies the importance of this opposition, and often contemporary 'religious disposition' appears to be commensurate with the fixation and repetition of the de-formation of western subjectivity: 'the experience of psychoanalysis can lead to renunciation of faith with clear understanding' (*IBWL*, 26). Psychoanalysis is promoted in contrast with and over against the religious disposition that western monotheism elaborates: the analysand 'recognizes that he is caught in the toils of an unconscious logic, even though he can grasp the nature of that logic on a conscious level' (*IBWL*, p. 61). Psychoanalysis, in contrast to religion, contains an 'ethic' for the drive-related speaking being: 'the speaking being opens up to and reposes in the other' (*ibid.*). This ethic forms the basis out of which a nonfoundational ethics can be theorized. (See section B below.)

(iii) Psychoanalysis and literature

The third presupposition of Kristeva's thought, which is inseparable from Kristeva's repudiation or 'sublation' of the teleological reason she perceives as ruling the progress of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (see section 3 below), as it is from her method, is her indebtedness to the concept of 'metaphor' developed on the terrain of literature. The 'tradition' informing her concept of 'metaphoricalness' is praised for having extracted the concept from its determination within the field of metaphysics from Plato to Heidegger (*TL*, pp. 268-9).

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of the two discourses of aesthetics and psychoanalysis, Kristeva's 'choice' of aesthetics as the metadiscourse on modernity is interlinked with her estimation of psychoanalysis through their shared status as sites of the production of metaphoricalness (transference). Kristeva will extend the significance for psychoanalysis of the concept of 'metaphor' taken from literary theory, by adding to its meaning as 'condensation', the meaning of a nonobjectal transference disclosed by psychoanalysis's enquiry into pre-Oedipal relations.

Here the term metaphor should not bring to mind the classical rhetorical trope (*figurative vs plain*), but instead, on the one hand, the modern theories of metaphor that decipher within it an indefinite jamming of semantic features one into the other, a meaning being acted out; and, on the other, the drifting of heterogeneity within a heterogeneous psychic apparatus, going from drives and sensations to signifier and conversely. (*TL*, p. 37)

The former meaning corresponds to the status of the subject as a *speaking being*. The latter meaning corresponds to the dynamic of the 'transference', and to the definition of the 'being who acts' *contra* Hegel's 'historico-social act' (*PH*, pp. 29-3): 'The "being who acts" could exist only for a subject in

symbolic *contact*, that is to say in motion, in *transference* with another' (TL, p. 274). Since the symbolic contact is not an identification with an object, but a preobjectal dynamic that opens up psychic space, psychoanalysis is a site of the production of metaphoricalness.

Transference reenacts the pre-Oedipal structuration of the speaking being on the basis of 'metaphoricalness': specifically, of the 'uni-fication' of the subject (TL, p. 29). With the acknowledgement, since Freud, of death's work in the birth of the 'subject', a discourse based on a metaphorical motion secures psychic space without suppressing death's work in the unity of nature and culture. As a site of the production of metaphoricalness, psychoanalysis (in terms of its ethic) has a knowledge of 'the existence of infinite space', and provides an ethics on this basis. Kristeva takes ethics out of the 'historico-social', to which it can return only via the scene where the heterogeneous relation of conscious and non-conscious representations are recognized. The Hegelian comprehension of the socio-historical 'subject' is only reapproached once the 'subject' is known to be a subject of the 'imaginary': 'a provisional accident, *differently renewed* within the only *infinite* space where we might unfurl our loves, that is the infinity of the signifier' (TL, p, 277).

In the diachronic perspective, presymbolic transference 'to (from)' an imaginary other is a precondition, 'lining', of intersubjectivity. The formation of the 'subject', from nature (autoeroticism) to culture (language), is dependent on the production of metaphoricalness - the existence of infinite space. In the synchronic perspective (once the Other or signifier is *posited*), the heterogeneous relation of drives and language marks the 'subject' as renewable

within the 'infinity of the signifier', the metaphorical object.

The semiotic lining of the love-relation determines the latter as the 'foreignness' of the 'subject', a heterogeneity (unity and difference) of life and death; a love/hatred (for the other) whose uni-fication is determined by 'the existence' of infinite space ('metaphoricalness'). The following proposition expresses that uni-fication:

The object of love is a metaphor for the subject. (*TL*, p. 30)

The movement of the proposition renders the motion and meaning of the transference: no subject without an object, but here 'the object of love' denotes no object prior to love but connotes the motion, 'to (from)', of transference out of which the subject, and object, emerge.

Thus when Kristeva comes to determine the 'dynamic' of the transference intelligible upon a reformulation of the Lacanian imaginary, it carries the dual meaning of 'metaphoricalness': both 'condensation' and the space of metaphorical shifting opened up by the advent of the imaginary 'other'; no 'metaphor' without the opening up of its 'space'. The drives' status as articulation (condensation and displacement) does not precede but requires the opening of the space of transference. The pre-thetic dynamic of the transference also fully explains the 'production' of space formerly discussed in the context of the mirror stage of the thetic phase (chapter 2 above).

Kristeva's explanation of the 'advent' of the imaginary other has the consequence, as will be seen, of making the 'symbolic' the principle of the heterogeneous relations of the imaginary. Nevertheless, the retention of the distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' leaves the status of the drives as a

'postulate' without which Kristeva's 'infinite' (the existence of the 'space' of metaphorical shifting) would fall to the ground, since it represents an 'impossible' harmonization of two terms which, as harmonized, would only represent the domination of one over the other (drives/language = psychosis/concept-or-master signifier).

The shared status of psychoanalysis and modern literature as sites of metaphorical production is intended neither to equate their knowledge and practice nor to repudiate 'metadiscourses' on modernity other than the aesthetic. Although Kristeva's concept of psychoanalysis does claim for analysis the knowledge of the being-forgotten of metaphor production, her claim is not that a philosophical thought (signification or 'interpretive discourse') can be analysed for 'its' forgotten metaphor. The distinction between the experience and knowledge of psychoanalysis which closes the following passage from *Tales of Love* is embraced by the theory of the semiotic and the symbolic: the negativity which articulates two orders and posits the subject in process cannot be 'unearthed' from the sign since it is inseparable from the sign.

Functioning under the same amatory conditions that rule the production of metaphoricalness in poetic discourse, psychoanalysis nevertheless keeps a certain distance from it since it produces, with respect to that discourse, a knowledge effect. Does this mean that it produces its concept? If that were true, it would not be distinguishable from speculative philosophy. Not in disseminating each concept by way of metaphor or asserting that every sign is necessarily a forgotten metaphor that must be brought to the fore in order to dissolve its idealizing conceptual seizing. Rather, it does so by preserving a *typology of discourses* (for instance, the 'poetical' is not the 'philosophical' discourse, which is not the 'analytical'), and setting for itself the regular task of being, on the one hand, a scene of metaphor production (as in the amatory state or in

poetry) and, on the other, a scene of *provisional* interpretation. (TL , p. 276)

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, psychoanalysis was characterized as a 'subset' of practice and the 'transference' operating in poetic language was distinguished by the 'absence of a *represented* focal point of transference' (RPL, p. 209). In *Tales of Love* the elaboration of the 'regulation' of the semiotic *chora* expounds a psychic transference on the same order of nonobjectality. Furthermore, the discussion of the 'cure' expounds the meaning and status of the 'knowledge effect' in psychoanalytic experience. Here, the 'certain distance' of psychoanalysis from the 'infinite' puts knowledge and a direct and immediate experience (the dynamic of the transference) into relation.

Despite Kristeva's emphasis here that this relation holds only within the psychoanalytic 'scene', the concept of negativity which emerges from Kristeva's theory of metaphoricalness (the infinite space of metaphorical shifting) takes up three positions. As 'experience' it is enacted in analysis; the 'knowledge' of it determines the limit and boundary of psychoanalysis;³ the *theory* of metaphoricalness poses a general concept of a 'boundary' between heterogeneous discourses - hence the insistence on a 'typology of discourses'. Kristeva is an uncritical advocate of the conception of 'reason since Freud'.

Kristeva's concept of negativity determines both her characterization of philosophical and theological 'discourse' and her treatment of the subject in modern social and political relations. When Kristeva comes to *situate* psychoanalysis, religion and literature in a mutual relation determined by her conception of 'infinity', she will do so in contrast to the relation that is supposed to hold between Hegelian 'immediacy' and 'mediation'. Dispatching the Hegelian 'system' on

account of the non-relation she perceives as holding between 'immediacy' and 'mediation', her sublation of the idealist dialectic claims to open up a mediated subjectivity; one which simultaneously changes the role of the function of 'lack' in the Lacanian symbolic, and the status of the 'Phallus':

being the magnet for loving idealization causes the *Other* to be understood not as 'pure signifier' but as the very space of metaphorical shifting. (TL, p. 37)

The Kristevan concept of negativity (heterogeneous contradiction, 'going from drives and sensations to signifier and conversely' (TL, p. 37)) informs the typology of discourses: 'the "poetical" is not the "philosophical" discourse, which is not the "analytical"'. While the mention of this typology occurs in reference to what is preserved on the *scene* of analysis, the discussion of heterogeneity determines, above all, the limit of speculative philosophy. Despite Kristeva's awareness of her choice of metadiscourse, her mode of distinguishing 'philosophy', 'theology' and 'literature' posits a typology of discourses in relation to which the concept of negativity stands as their ground. The typology of discourses therefore rests within the agnostic moment in her thought. The 'existence of infinite space' is an absolute which infers the infinite repetition of the creative function of the imaginary. This is enactable in the psychoanalytic scene, but there is no 'knowledge' of a kind which can bring it into the political realm.

3. Psychoanalysis, Theology and Philosophy

All the philosophies of thought, from Plato to Descartes, Kant and Hegel, that have aimed to give the experience of love a strong hold on reality have pruned out of it what is disorderly in order to reduce it to an initiatory voyage drawn toward the supreme Good or the absolute spirit. Theology alone,

and only within its mystical deviations, allows itself to be lured in the trap of a blessed loving madness, from the Song of Songs to Bernard of Clairvaux or Abelard. (TL, p. 8)

The concept of the 'loss of the One God' is inseparable from Kristeva's oscillation between positing a history of western 'thought' and elaborating an open and flexible typology of *histoires*. The analysis of western psychic space on the terrain of psychoanalysis presupposes a 'history' of philosophy in which Plato figures as the outset of western thought, Descartes the pivotal figure, and Kant and Hegel as the site of the manifestation of the limits of modern philosophy.

The passage quoted above illuminates further Kristeva's statement on the historical meaning of psychoanalysis: 'Psychoanalysis is the most internalized moment of western historicity' (TL, p. 276). Its claim for the importance of psychoanalysis is a carefully qualified claim since it is intended to avoid positing psychoanalytic theory and knowledge as the latest stage of 'Reason'. Hegel is thought to have claimed the latest stage of Reason for philosophy: in Kristeva's view, Hegel's philosophy of spirit holds out to consciousness (natural and philosophical) a philosophical grasp of the totality. 'Absolute knowledge' is held to *mean* the philosophical grasp of 'absolute spirit' (comparable with the meaning of psychoanalysis as the theory and knowledge of 'western internality'). Kristeva divests this meaning from the irony of its utterance, and Hegel is criticized for having posited a *telos* for consciousness: absolute knowledge is an ideal held out to the thinking or philosophical consciousness of western 'historicity'. Absolute knowledge 'would' grasp absolute spirit.

In Kristeva's appraisal 'Absolute Knowledge' becomes the *telos* of Hegel's philosophy of spirit rather than the ironic expression of its presupposition. This *telos*

is presentable, in her view, only if the 'the presence of the Absolute in Knowing is *immediately* revealed to the subject' (TL, p. 39). Kristeva's interpretation of Hegel's proposition that 'the absolute is from the outset in and for itself beside us and wants to be beside us' identifies the 'absolute' and the 'immediate' in Hegel (ibid.). This turns absolute knowledge into the 'in itself' or essence of the movement of consciousness taken as a continuous whole, rather than an expression for the speculative recognition of the movement of consciousness, of the 'in itself' and 'for itself' of knowing (*erkennen*).

Contra this reduction of the Hegelian utterance, 'absolute knowledge' acknowledges teleology in 'western thought', and ironically expresses the impossibility for consciousness (natural and philosophical) of grasping the totality. The *Phenomenology* re-cognizes consciousness as a movement in which consciousness' determination of truth opposes, and aims to identify, truth and certainty: 'truth' is the 'in itself' or essence for consciousness; certainty, truth 'for itself', is its aim. Consciousness, for Hegel is - in abstract terms - the movement which tries to unite truth and certainty. Since, in one sense, it is no more than their separation, it is the experience of the failure to posit their unity owing to the failure to acknowledge that as the movement of separation it is their 'unity' (the unity of identity and difference). There is no Hegelian experience of self-consciousness without the 'separation' of consciousness; there is no experience of consciousness without the 'unity' of self-consciousness.

In each configuration consciousness posits an 'in itself' or essence, fails to acknowledge that positing, and moves, through the effects of that failure, to another positing. If 'absolute knowledge' is the final 'position' of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* it is not the

'in itself' by and toward which a continuous movement of consciousness is programmed, but the disclosure of the separation or movement of the 'in itself' and 'for itself' 'for itself'; in other words, for the modern philosophical consciousness in which 'the subject=object does not get away anymore from difference and reflection' (*Diff*, p. 133). This means that the *Phenomenology* is the experience of natural consciousness and the re-education of the philosophical consciousness whose transcendental turn gets 'out of' experience only to fall into it 'unconsciously'. Philosophical reflection re-cognizes its methodological abstraction from and opposition to natural consciousness only by joining the drama it thought to have left behind, and whose (mis)recognitions it repeats. As a pivotal moment between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic*, the irony of 'absolute knowledge' re-educates philosophical consciousness into the 'presupposition' of its conceptual unfolding.

The unfolding of philosophical categories (the *Logic*) may, as a phenomenology, differ from the unfolding of the movement of natural consciousness. However, the logical unfolding of the concept presupposes the labour of the concept, the recognition and misrecognition within the identity and difference of self-consciousness that determines it as a movement: (mis)recognition. 'Absolute knowledge' is neither the *telos* of consciousness nor the absolute presupposition of Hegelian logic. The *Science of Logic* as a whole presupposes the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a whole (the 'result' and the 'way').

The way and the result are not separable without reimposing a methodological position. This is what 'system' means in Hegel: no speculative proposition without a speculative exposition; 'as soon as speculation steps out of the concept that it

establishes of itself [subject=object] and evolves into a system, it abandons itself and its principle and does not come back to it again' (*Diff*, p. 81). Hegel's thought is not a 'tremendous continent that gave the impetus to and *completed* the *thought* of the Other' as Kristeva maintains (*SO*, p. 169), for the 'Other' if only thought 'as such' is a lost continent: a continent which, in Kristeva's view, Freud was the first to discover.

In Kristeva's thought, the Other is an immanent infinite which as a 'heterogeneity' is *not* the immanent presence of the absolute in knowledge - as Hegelian 'immediacy' is understood to be. The Hegelian immediate - here Kristeva follows Heidegger - 'presents itself as the logic of *Absolvenz*, as severance outside of relationship, and constitutes the absoluteness of the absolute' (*TL*, p. 39). Thus understood, immediacy is cut off from the mediation it produces: 'any other "means" of knowledge is no more than a recognition' (*ibid.*). The 'leap' in Kristeva's dialectic is formulated in opposition to the *thought* of the Other in order to overcome the perceived severance of immediacy and mediation at the heart of the Hegelian circle of circles.

However, without the distinction between *erkennen* or (re)cognition and *absolute Wissen* (between the way *and* the result) there would be no Hegelian 'experience', both because it is not an experience of a 'constituted consciousness', and because if Hegelian *self-consciousness* were a constituted, unitary consciousness in Kristeva's sense, there would be no experience for it to have. It is Kristeva who inscribes an ineluctable agnosticism within the 'production' of the dialectic (of recognition and misrecognition). Kristeva's Maoist dialectic introduced an absolute severance of knowledge and experience into *signifiante*, which was thus doomed

to the separation of immediacy and mediation attributed to Hegel.

The repudiation of modern philosophy contained in Kristeva's 'typology of discourses' thus ultimately arrests it within a Cartesian framework. As distinguished from the theory and knowledge of psychoanalysis, the history of philosophy is determined as the 'philosophy of thought'. Hegel emerges as the 'end' of the philosophical mastery of reason and the transition to a typology of discourses. The 'end' of the philosophical mastery of reason is simultaneously the possibility of comprehending the 'psychic' as 'open systems' preserved from that mastery (*TL*, pp. 13-16). If psychoanalysis comprehends 'what is disorderly in love', it also determines a position that is 'outrageous' to philosophical system.

Kristeva proposes that 'what is disorderly in love' is failed at the outset of the elaborations of love in western thought. The Platonic dialogues on love are analysed as an 'initiatory voyage' whose movement presents the mania of 'male' eros and whose end, under the guidance of the wise philosopher, is a peaceful synthesis of possession-love and uniting-love represented by Diotima: 'As if in *Phaedrus* Eros were displayed in its *libidinal economy* while Diotima, in the *Symposium*, presented it more along the lines of an *idealized object relationship* that it takes for granted' (*TL*, p. 72).

Platonic eros, in its economy and in its *telos*, presents a male sexuality because it abstracts from what is 'feminine' in love. Kristeva reads the 'initiatory voyage' which the Platonic dialogues present as a reflective synthesis of terms - 'manic eros' and 'feminine ideal' - which themselves result from an abstraction from what is disorderly in love. The 'disorderly' is determined by a heterogeneous

contradiction of 'feminine' and 'masculine' facets of love. The grasping of Plato's abstraction from what is disorderly in love implies its re-cognition. In Kristeva's semanalysis of *histoires*, the 'image of love' that accommodates the heterogeneous relation is attributed to medieval thought, starting with Plotinus' rehabilitation of Narcissus within a cosmogony of the 'good':

Do not the feminine and the Narcissian, with Plotinus, merge in that image of his early biography, as recalled by Porphyry, which shows the child, already eight years old, still sucking his nurse's breast? The internality illuminated by One good that comes out of it is at any rate gaze and eye, just as the good itself, a soothing haven for narcissistic dichotomies, ecstatic reabsorption of inside/outside, same/other splittings. (*TL*, p. 112)

The pivotal significance of Descartes, for Kristeva, is the turn from an ontological to an epistemological treatment of the 'subject'. In modern philosophy the loving subject of medieval thought is forgotten (*TL*, p. 42). The fate of the experience of love in the modern philosophical treatment of the 'subject' ('pruned of what is disorderly') is most *evident* in Kant and Hegel. For Kristeva, if there is no accommodation of the lover (of the disorder of love and hatred which defines the 'human event' (*TL*, p. 168)), there is no 'relation to the other' in Kant and Hegel. This claim restricts modern philosophy within a Cartesian limitation, whether this is conceived as an epistemological reduction of the existent to an object of thought - to a 'mastering subjectivity' (*IBWL*, p. 59; *TL*, p. 187); or a systematic reclosure of the thought of the Other in the consciousness of the Same (Hegel's system) (*SO*, p. 169).

In contrast, psychoanalysis is the knowledge of what is disorderly in the experience of love, and the theoretical exposition of its historical occlusion.

That history is coextensive with the formation(s) and de-formation(s) of western internality leading to the experience of its crisis: the modern 'crisis' is the crisis of the subject whose maladies are the object of psychoanalysis. This claim for psychoanalysis is inseparable from Kristeva's determination of the history of western thought: 'Might not Universality Be... Our Own Foreignness?' (*SO*, p.169). This chapter title to Kristeva's discussion of Freud's relation to German romanticism and of her own reformulation of Kantian cosmopolitanism after Freud, anticipates her placing of the universal - in the unconscious.

4. Modern Law

In Kristeva's cultural analysis, the 'death of God' conceived as a 'loss of the One God' leads to the critical moment in the formation and de-formation of western subjectivity: a 'critical' moment because both de-formation as crisis and de-formation 'for itself' (known to psychoanalysis). The manifest failure of monotheism to secure subjective internality in a sphere apart from that of legal relations is understood to intensify the 'exile' of the subject from modern legality and morality. Narcissus is an exile and an alien.

Today Narcissus is an exile, deprived of his psychic space, an extraterrestrial with a prehistory bearing, wanting for love. An uneasy child, all scratched up, somewhat disgusting, without a precise body or image, having lost his specificity, an alien in a world of desire and power, he longs only to reinvent love. The ETs are more and more numerous. We are all ETs. (*TL*, pp. 382-3)

Kristeva's notion of the law 'external to the subject', compliance with which depends on the superego (*TL*, p. 209), is indebted to the philosophical recognition of the modern subject (the divided, Kantian, subject). She does not, however, specify the moments and aporiae of

that 'subject', tending instead to locate the problematic of 'externality' within philosophical judgement (*passim*).

Briefly, and to fill in where Kristeva leaves off: the Kantian subject is divided from itself, both a 'legal person' and a 'moral subject', subject to a law imposed from without and to the moral law it gives itself through reason; as moral subject it is both autonomous (a lawgiver) and heteronomous (subject to natural determination).⁴ The Kantian subject is the self-contradiction of legal person, moral subject, and natural being. The philosophical recognition of the modern subject reveals its aporetic nature, as both the starting-point of rational moral judgement and victim of its own testing and giving of laws. The subject is not 'harmonizable' within the modern separation of morality and legality since as 'individual' it represents that separation. All attempts at unification of its conflicting dimensions only reimpose another 'master'. Alternatively, the attempt to harmonize the conflicting dimensions *dissembles* the awareness of separation by way of an unadmitted oscillation: between locating that 'harmony' in human reason and transferring it to a 'holy moral lawgiver' (*Phen.*, #374-83).

Kristeva's response to the modern, Kantian subject focusses on the Cartesian turn from an ontological to an epistemological treatment of the 'subject':

when theology is emptied of its essence and, with Descartes, holds the other in a position of a *causa sive rationem* and seeks the true basis of reason only in the articulation of judgement and no longer in analogy, which, even when preserved, loses its function - we then witness a double banishment. Nascent rationalism brushes aside in the same stroke *analogy*, the scar of metaphoricalness in the specific domain of ontotheology, and its correlative, the *Ego affectus est*: the loving subject. To make possible the advent of *judgment* and the *Ego cogito*. (*TL*, p. 275)

With Descartes as such a pivotal figure in the move from an ontology of the 'good' (Aquinas) to an epistemological treatment of the 'good', Kantian and Hegelian reason and judgement are inscribed within this Cartesian 'loss'. The Kantian difficulty over the harmonization of the moral law and natural being is, for Kristeva, a specifically *philosophical* failure of the 'relation to the other'. The Kantian, and ultimately Hegelian, 'subject' lack 'relation to the other'.

Bernard posited the immanence of God's love in our nature, carnal and greedy as it may be; this is lacking with Kant and causes the loss of what one readily calls the 'unconscious' part of love, at the same time as the loss of amorous happiness as the essential definition of the human event. (TL, p. 168)

Kristeva's objection to the Lacanian fate of psychoanalysis is that the subject of lack ('desire divides the subject from itself') re-presents the Kantian subject, the unnegotiable division of the rational subject, with all its illusions and their consequences - *divided within*, by a moral law (superego) and *divided from* a law imposed from without (societal structures).

Kristeva's elaboration, *contra* the subject of 'lack', of Lacan's statement that 'drives divide the subject from desire' contains her return to the meaning of Hegelian self-consciousness since it contains a recognition of the mediations of the desiring subject. On Freudian terrain, Kristeva articulates a loving and desiring (drive related and symbolic) subject: the Kristevan subject is not divided from itself 'absolutely', but 'separated'.

The diachronic exposition of the formation of the 'subject' discloses formation within de-formation and de-formation within formation. De-formation is

intrinsic to the effects of the pre-Oedipal ternary structuration which opens up the 'space of metaphorical shifting'. This 'unity' of formation and de-formation is grasped on the terrain of psychoanalysis (see section B below). The historical and cultural meaning of the formation and de-formation of subjective internality is succinctly expressed in Kristeva's situating of the 'modern' Narcissus, 'after Religion, Morality, Legality' (*PH*, p. 16). Since Narcissus is in exile, Kristeva's 'after' does not posit the 'end' (*finis*) of religion, morality and legality. It expresses the manifest failure of their *telos*, and the speaking subject's experience of this failure.

The recovery of the 'semiotic' from Freud, and the mediations of the semiotic and the symbolic dimensions of the subject-law relation, mark a transition from the primacy of 'lack' or exile to the intelligibility of the divided subject, and consequent negotiation of the de-formation of psychic space. Kristeva's disclosure of the 'separated' subject takes place in a margin between the acknowledgement of the *failure* of 'self-certainty' to establish itself in the dialectic of desire and the utter restrictions on the subject implicit in Lacanian 'desire'. It marks a transition from Hegelian *Begierde* (the dialectic of the failure of self-certainty to establish itself) to the philosophical concept of self-consciousness, even as Kristeva posits a materialist thinking of the 'suppressed' in Hegel's system.

Kristeva's return to Freud's theory of narcissism for the intrapsychic essence of intersubjective relations, re-cognizes the subject as a unity of love 'and' desire. The Kristevan subject is already an other-relation within the ill-ease, perversity and hostility which the 'exiled' Narcissus lends back to intersubjective relations within the social and political relations which have determined that exile. It is a theory of the recognition of the 'otherness' of

the other within the degeneration of modern social and political relations.

It is through unraveling transference - the major dynamics of otherness, of love/hatred for the other, of the foreign component of our psyche - that, on the basis of the other, I become reconciled with my own otherness-foreignness, that I play on it and live by it. Psychoanalysis is then experienced as a journey into the strangeness of the other and of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable. (*SO*, p. 182)

The notion that 'On the basis of the other, I become reconciled with my own otherness-foreignness' refers to a mediation of the subject of lack. The *division* of intersubjectivity and the division within the Kantian individual (in and through modern legality - the state, and morality - a law of reason opposed to natural being) is re-cognized as the separation of the 'self' through the other; a separation through which I become reconciled with myself as a being of love/hatred irreducible to an identity: 'the loved object is a metaphor for the subject'.

Kristeva's ethics of psychoanalysis derives from the knowledge of 'the imaginary', of the ternary structuration that sets up the 'infinite space' of metaphorical shifting. It responds without utopia to the contemporary symptom of the 'modern Narcissus'. In response to the collapse of the western subject the analyst knows that

the language that tames and makes us love this being uprooted from psychic space remains always imaginary. Music, film, novel. Polyvalent, undecidable, infinite. A permanent crisis. (*TL*, p. 383)

The appreciation in Kristeva commentary of her pluralist estimation of heterogeneous 'practices' (for example, of its 'usefulness' to feminism) has contributed to a reception of her thought which accepts its explicit relation to philosophy.⁵ Kristeva's

situating of the semiotic process within the symbolic code (as pre-Oedipal 'symbolic contact') proposes an 'ethic' of psychoanalysis: the production of the space of the *creative* imaginary. A nonfoundational ethics is to be formulated out of this ethic. Nevertheless, the reformulation of Lacan in the later writings opens up an ethics without a politics and leads to Kristeva's 'demand' for a political sociology to respond to and complement the social theory implied in her estimation of the knowledge and theory of psychoanalysis (*NN*, p. 53). When Kristeva's pluralist notion of 'practice' is uncritically adopted, the implicit philosophy in her writings is ignored; and neither the full ambition of its social and political critique, nor the worried dimension of that critique, is grasped.

'Permanent crisis', then? The acceptance of a pluralist notion of practice lends itself to the reduction of objective spirit in Kristeva's thought: to the affirmation of a crisis turned 'permanent' once recognized in the element of 'metaphoricalness'. As a consequence, the full implications of Kristeva's return to Freud, displayed in her analysis of Céline's writings (see below, section C2) are not negotiated. The problem can only be approached by returning to Kristeva's elaboration of the 'ambiguity' of narcissism as 'both prime mover and barrier for love' (*TL*, p. 124); and to the danger which the 'modern Narcissus' presents on the terrain of social and political thought.

B. *The Theory, Knowledge and Power of Psychoanalysis*

1. The Formation and Deformation of 'Subjective Internality'

(i) Narcissism, a 'ternary structuration'

Kristeva's writings of the 1980s further expound the diachronic presentation of the 'unity' of the semiotic and the symbolic. The return to Freud's theory of the drives in 1974 presented the 'drives' status as articulation' (*TL*, p. 131) rather than as 'origin'. The diachronic treatment of the semiotic *chora* expounded a 'logic' of drive re-rejection which could account for Lacan's 'mirror image' and the entrance into language. It explicated the formation of the symbolic 'subject' as a process of its 'constitution'. However, the postulate of heterogeneous relations in the semiotic was only provisionally explicated as a 'regulation' of the semiotic.

In the 1980s Kristeva returns to Freud's theory of narcissism and expounds the regulation of the semiotic as a psychic drama prior to and formative of the thetic phase: formative of the mirror image and the subject of desire posited by - as absent from - the symbolic. The heterogeneous relations of the semiotic comprise a 'ternary structuration' of narcissism which discloses the latter as the dynamic 'form' of the love-relation.

primary identification, dawn of identity and idealization, where the future speaking being grasps his own image on the basis of the ideal apperception of a form that is external to his needs and desires, and that is not libidinally cathected but has the qualities of both parents. (*TL*, p. 202)

The focus on heterogeneous relations in the semiotic rather than on the logic of the drives reveals how Kristeva's reformulation of the Lacanian 'symbolic' consists largely in a reformulation of the 'imaginary'.

The reaccommodation of the drives makes Kristeva's exposition of imaginary processes logically prior to Lacan's 'mirror stage'. Kristeva's psychoanalysis 'of' the semiotic *and* the symbolic remains, nevertheless, a knowledge of the 'imaginary', the 'symbolic' and the 'real' (Lacan's 'fundamental categories').⁶ Elaborating on Freud's observation that the transition from autoeroticism to narcissism indicates a 'new psychical action', she remarks: .

That observation endows narcissism with an intrasymbolic status, dependent upon a third party but within a disposition that chronologically and logically precedes that of the Oedipal Ego. It prompts one to conceive of an archaic disposition of the paternal function, preceding the Name, the Symbolic, but also preceding the 'mirror stage' whose logical potentiality it would harbour - a disposition that one might call that of the Imaginary Father. (*TL*, p. 22)⁷

Kristeva expounds the 'intrasymbolic' but pre-Oedipal psychic drama by addressing the dynamic ambiguity of narcissism disclosed by Freud. The two complementary texts of the 1980s, *Powers of Horror* and *Tales of Love*, expound the heterogeneous elements of the psychic drama of primary narcissism: 'abjection' and 'idealization', which are figured, respectively in the pre-Oedipal separation from the mother and advent of the imaginary father (*TL*, p. 41). Narcissism is only intelligible as a 'drama' once it is elaborated as a ternary *structuration* (this term stresses the formative significance of narcissism in contrast to the thetic meaning of the triadic Oedipal 'structure'.)

The immediate transference toward the imaginary father, who is such a godsend that you have the impression that it is he who is transferred into you, withstands a process of rejection involving what may have been chaos and is about to become an *abject*. The maternal space can come into being as such, before becoming an object correlative to the Ego's desire, only as an *abject*.

In short, primary identification appears to be a transference *to (from)* [my emphasis]

the imaginary father, correlative to the establishment of the mother as 'ab-jetted'. Narcissism would be that correlation (with the imaginary father and the 'ab-jetted' mother) enacted around the central emptiness of that transference. This emptiness... is apparently the primer of the symbolic function. (*TL*, pp. 41-2)

In *Tales of Love* the exposition of 'narcissism' demonstrates the correlation of abjection and idealization through the primal emptiness of separation first opened up by the 'advent of a third'. The exposition of 'abjection' in *Powers of Horror* portrays it as a struggle out of autoeroticism, one characterized by the violence of the drives and battled out on the field of the mother's body. The advantage of psychoanalytic knowledge of 'the speaking subject' is the intelligibility for it of the violence of separation which marks the 'birth' of the 'subject':

'In the beginning was hatred', Freud said basically (contrary to the well-known biblical and evangelical statement), as he discovered that the human child differentiates from its mother through a rejection affect, through the scream of anger and hatred that accompanies it, and through the "no" sign as prototype of language and of all symbolism. (*NN*, p. 29)

Nevertheless, abjection is *intelligible* only within the ternary structuration or 'heterogeneous relation' of narcissism, as the contrary of idealization. The ambiguity in narcissism - 'both prime mover and barrier for love' (*TL*, p. 124) - discovered by Kristeva within Freud's 'inconsistencies' on the subject (*TL*, p. 24), is explained by the prodigious effects of the heterogeneous contradiction of idealization and abjection.

Kristeva synthesizes the ambiguity through an interrogation of the meaning and 'advent' of the father of individual prehistory (*TL*, p. 33). The synthesis not only explains the formation of the 'ego ideal' on the

basis of a 'preobjectal' relation to a third; it accounts for the 'advent' of the third or, diachronically speaking, its condition of possibility. The presentation of this 'condition of possibility' further expounds the most well-known aspect of Kristeva's thought: the status of the mother's body in the drama of psychosexual individuation; the mother's body as field and site of the pre-Oedipal relations within 'the first separation between what is not yet an *Ego* and what is not yet an *object*' (*TL*, p. 24).

The psychic drama denoted by 'narcissism' therefore remedies the lacunae in the early account of the drive-based semiotic network. The drama of connection with and separation from the mother's body is now presented in terms of the pre-Oedipal functioning of a 'paternal agency': *sine qua non* of the semiotic 'ordering'. Kristeva's exposition of the imaginary father shows that the semiotic *chora* or receptacle, 'nourishing and maternal', is only a *chora* (mobile and provisional articulation) (*RPL*, p. 26), by virtue of the archaic instance of the paternal function. The *chora* is 'receptacle of narcissism' (*PH*, p. 13). The mother's body is the 'principle' of mediation only in unity with *her* position in the order of the symbolic. Her status as 'coagulation of the mother and her desire' (*TL*, p. 41) intrigues a semiotic disposition of the 'paternal agency' preceding the thetic moment instituting the symbolic, and yet opening up the 'site of the Other'. Without the archaic disposition of the paternal function Kristeva's semiotic *chora* is not only unintelligible but without symbolic (and hence practical) implication.

Kristeva proposes that the ambiguity of narcissism (prime mover and barrier for love) lies in the conflict intrinsic to the primal emptiness that the mother's desire gives rise to: on the one hand, the void is the potentiation of subjective individuation; on the other,

the negotiation of the void is threatened by the dominance of the death drive, the 'chaos' that hangs over the gap consequent upon the break from autoeroticism. Primal separation can lead to the eroticization of the void. Furthermore, narcissism's void will take on the fetishism of the mirror image it potentiates. Narcissism's 'protection' against emptiness bears the dangers of its central 'abyss'. As an intrapsychic unity of what will be the 'self' and the 'other', the negotiation of the abyss does not only bear a threat for the ego, but carries over to the 'other', to intersubjective relations. Kristeva's reformulation of the Lacanian imaginary elaborates the function of the drives in the determination of (Kleinian) aggression. It explains the drives' function in fetishization: the 'structure' of the mirror stage is formed through an investment of the *previous* semiotic body in the image (*TL*, p. 33).

While the passage last cited claims no primacy for either abjection or idealization, Kristeva makes it clear that the former represents the primacy of the death drive and is the 'form' of world-relation. The abjection of the mother ('a process of rejection involving what may have been chaos') places the psychic 'rebound' against the death drive, the *reversed hatred*, at the core of psychic space.⁸ Kristeva places 'mysogeny' as the border onto and minimal psychic security against the chaos of hatred and death.

More than insane, empty, that lining of our projection and representation devices is yet another defense of the living being. When he succeeds in eroticizing it, when he allows the nonobject-oriented, prenarcissistic violence of the drive directed toward an object to run wild, then death triumphs in that strange path. (*PH*, p. 49)

In default of idealization (which 'withstands a process of rejection involving what may have been chaos and is

about to become an *abject*') ab-jection remains 'the only *violent* link to the world' (*PH*, p. 47).

An ego, wounded to the point of annulment, barricaded and untouchable, cowers somewhere, nowhere, at no other place than the one that cannot be found. Where objects are concerned he delegates phantoms, ghosts, 'false cards'; a stream of spurious egos that confront undesirable objects. Separation exists, and so does language, even brilliantly at times, with apparently remarkable intellectual realizations. But no current flows - it is a pure and simple splitting, an abyss without any possible means of conveyance between its two edges. No subject, no object: petrification on one side, falsehood on the other. (*PH*, p. 47)

In contrast, idealization as the 'ideal apperception of a *form*' is condition of the subject as relation to the other. The inseparability of idealization and abjection lend to the love-relation, as prototype (heterogeneous semiotic lining) of the relation to the other, the intricate unity of love and hatred.

Narcissism, their 'correlation', is thus the psychic drama of relation and separation played out around the central emptiness intrigued by the relation to a *third*. The drama of narcissism demonstrates the unity of love and hatred (which Kristeva will formulate as 'lovehate' - '(*hainamoration*) on condition of a *third*: 'without that disposition of the psyche, the child and the mother do not constitute "two"' (*TL*, p. 40). The emptiness which the advent of the relation to a third opens up, and which is central to narcissism as correlation of abjection and idealization, determines the 'fragility' of narcissism. 'Primer of the symbolic function', it nevertheless contains within it the tendency to dissolution of the psychic space it forms: de-formation out of formation.

A conflictual negotiation of primal emptiness, narcissism bears the tendency to repulsion or assimilation of the other. As a resource for the

speaking subject it protects against the dissolution of internal boundaries under the threat of the death drive. In the Lacanian terms deployed in the 1980s, narcissism surrounds and wards off 'engulfment in the real'. Founded in a primal loss, it determines the speaking subject's imaginary as creative and abyssal.

If narcissism is a defense against the emptiness of separation, then the whole contrivance of imagery, representations, identifications, and projections that accompany it on the way toward strengthening the Ego and the Subject is a means of exorcising that emptiness. Separation is our opportunity to become narcissists or narcissistic, at any rate subjects of representation. The emptiness it opens up is nevertheless also the barely covered abyss where our identities, images, and words run the risk of being engulfed. (*TL*, p. 42)

Kristeva's analysis of narcissism, with its borders on the drives, the mirror image, and desire, informs her insistence on the actuality of 'borderline cases'. The problematic of primary narcissism is that of a protection against the collapse of psychic space, but a protection which determines the subject in a melancholic direction. If, as has been stressed (Smith and Rose), Kristeva's ethics of the 'imaginary' reintroduces 'the individual as value' into social and political theory, it does not simply demand a rehabilitation of the 'individual' in social and political thinking.⁹ Melancholy has to be recognized for the danger it presents. It is a border onto hatred and death. The drive-related and desiring speaking subject 'is not innocent'.

the habitual and increasingly explicit attempt to fabricate a scapegoat victim as foundress of a society or countersociety may be replaced by the analysis of the potentialities of *victim/executioner* which characterize each identity, each subject, each sex.¹⁰

(ii) The living and loving father: the symbolic in the semiotic

In Kristeva's reformulation of Lacan, the processes of idealization and abjection herald dangers for the speaking subject if they are divested of that correlation whose condition is an interconnection with the 'symbolic'. Kristeva's appraisal of the dynamic that narcissism represents proposes (diachronically speaking) an 'originary' pre-Oedipal integration of imaginary processes which (synchronically speaking) are imaginary *resources* for the speaking subject: love and hatred, psychic counterpart to the drives, represent the creative as well as destructive potential of the imaginary.

Kristeva's 'imaginary', therefore, elaborates the difficult and contradictory path from autoeroticism to thetic phase:

love in the feminine, against which mystical experiences stumble, coils up around the mother-child's tight embrace, the blurr of images prior to the 'mirror stage'. A swallowing up of the imagination by the real, the emergence of the imaginary under the aegis of the symbolic, the beginning and absolute of the ideal - this feminine facet of love is perhaps the most subtle sublimation of the secret, psychotic ground of hysteria. (TL, pp. 112-13)

The dangers implicit in narcissism are consequent upon its transitional status as formation of psychic space: its processes, as psychic counterpart to the drives, take on their dominant destructive wave ('swallowing up of the imagination by the real'); as 'potential' of the mirror stage the processes adopt the structure of the mirror image as determinant of fetishization. The fragility of the heterogeneous *relation* (owed to the third party) of idealization and abjection potentiates also the *opposition* of love and hatred, with proliferating consequences for intersubjective relations. First tenuous sublimation of the drives, and

potential of the mirror image, the qualities of narcissism emerge in the aggressive and self-protective conflicts of the subject as a relation to the other.

The prime significance of the relation to a third which is indispensable to the correlation of idealization and abjection is that it represents an archaic disposition of the symbolic. The 'emergence of the imaginary *under the aegis* of the symbolic' therefore expresses the significance of narcissism as a whole, its meaning as intrasymbolic.

Freud inscribed narcissism - which for him is basically and absolutely libidinal - within the dependency of a 'new psychic action', which turns out to be an archaic instance of symbolic fatherhood as magnet for primary identifications and requirement for the Ego Ideal. Having thus recognized the original, libidinal foundation of narcissistic seeming, Freud, in the same stroke, strengthened his conception of the libido and the Ego by defining them as dependent, beyond autoeroticism, on what Lacan calls the Other. (TL, p. 123)

(iii) 'Not-I': primal void as mediated 'essence'

Without a doubt, Kristeva's recovery of the semiotic figures idealization as the 'essence' of Oedipal identification. The diachronic presentation of the 'stages' of separation is a presentation of the constitution of the subject of desire through a process deemed 'mimetic' (since direct and immediate - following Freud).¹¹ The concept of 'desire', for Kristeva, presupposes a structuration of the psyche in which the infans takes the 'third' for itself:

that archaic vortex of idealization is immediately an *other* who gives rise to a powerful, already psychic transference of the previous semiotic body in the process of becoming a narcissistic Ego. Its very existence and my being able to take myself for it - that is what already moves us away from the primal maternal satisfaction and situates us within the hysterical universe of loving idealization. (TL, pp. 33-4)

Idealization, or the formation of the ego ideal, is the essence of the thetic phase (process of individuation), and in turn of the Oedipal structure of exclusion and identification. Nevertheless, the semiotic processes are not the absolute principle of intersubjective relations, since they themselves are determined by the symbolic (the mother's body *and* her desire are the principle of idealization).

In 1974 Kristeva proposed that the 'mother's body' is what mediates 'the symbolic law ordering social relations' (*RPL*, p. 27). As the ordering principle of the semiotic chora the mother's body is the principle of the drives' status as articulation. This proposition is supplemented in the 1980s. The semiotic is an order of heterogeneous *relations* only if the 'principle' of mediation is a unity of the mother's body *and* her desire. There is a functioning of lack (fundamental character of the symbolic) prior to the discovery of lack which marks the entry into language.

The condition of possibility or 'advent' of the imaginary father is the mother's relation to another (than the child). The mother's *symbolic* significance as a unity of nature (in terms of autoeroticism) and culture (her position in the symbolic order) is thus brought to the fore in the later writings. She is a unity, in Kristeva's words, of nurse and assistant (*TL*, p. 48). Her symbolic status, as 'incomplete', that is to say her *desire* 'for the Father's Phallus', intrigues the advent of the imaginary *father*. The central meaning of the status of the mother in Kristeva's reformulation of Lacan is the argument, not that 'she' is the *chora*, but that psychosexual individuation is determined by the symbolic instance.

Kristeva's account of the 'rescue' from the dyadic mother-child relation (in which, without a third, they do not constitute 'two') draws away from the classical

configuration in which the condition or advent of the third is the intervention of a 'stern' paternal law. Kristeva's archaic disposition of the paternal function redefines the paternal function as twofold, releasing both 'father' and 'subject' from the burden of the Oedipus complex, and turning the role of the paternal agency - the 'not dead Father but living Father... non-desiring but loving father' - into the intriguing of psychic space, or internal boundaries (TL, p. 30).

The mother's desire for another impresses on the infans a negation or 'primal repression': the 'not I'.

The imaginary father would thus be the indication that the mother is not complete but that she wants... Who? What? The question has no answer other than the one that uncovers narcissistic emptiness; 'At any rate, not I.' (TL, p. 41; ellipsis in original)

The 'not I' is both a crisis for the infans (the emptiness central to separation) and the potentiation of the 'subject': not the opposite of 'I' but its condition of possibility. If the mother's desire is turned not to another but to the child, the latter is positioned as fantasmatic object of her quest for the Other. The infans is locked in a struggle with the mother over the refusal of the 'gift' (TL, p. 40).

Within the psychoanalytic knowledge of the abjection of the mother, abjection is recognized as a necessary dimension in the process of psychosexual individuation - conditional, that is, upon its *heterogeneous* relation with idealization of the 'father'. Furthermore, the importance of idealization of the father is not intended as the revaluation it seems to harbour of 'paternal agency' over maternal nurturing. The mother's 'assistance', and not paternal law, is the principle of individuation: her 'desire' intrigues the advent of the father of individual prehistory. The third 'term' of the semiotic ternary structuration is the imaginary

father ('object' of idealization), but the 'advent' of the third is the imaginary *mother*. Kristeva's 'feminism' could be formulated by extending Lacan's doctrine: 'There is no Other of the Other... thanks to the (m)Other.'

The intricacy of Kristeva's presentation of the advent of the imaginary father will eventually lead her to propose an abstract logical formulation for the advent and significance of the imaginary. The abstraction is intended to overcome the residual difficulties which accrue to Kristeva's account of the 'heterogeneous relation' of narcissism owing to the gendered terms of that relation. These difficulties have led commentators to judge either that the mother's status as the unity of nature and culture endows her with the full significance of the semiotic or that the emphasis on the mother's 'lack' harbours a revaluation of the 'Name of the Father'.¹²

In response to the doubts over the success of her recovery of the semiotic voiced at the ICA in 1984, Kristeva claimed:

I think I understand your preoccupation. It's true that feminism has been very much against these sharp distinctions. I have two things to say. Firstly, for me it's not necessary to call them mother or father - what is necessary is to have three terms, if you prefer call them X and Y, why not? But I'm not sure that changes very much. What is necessary for what I call the psychic space to accede to language is the existence of this distance and I cannot imagine another organization than the one of three terms. ('Desire', pp. 22-3)

(iv) The desire of the mother is the desire of the
Other

It is the mother's symbolic status as unity of semiotic and symbolic which endows her with the semiotic status of being the principle of the formation of the

'narcissan' subject. She is a principle of *mediation*. While Kristeva does make a provisional theoretical distinction between 'narcissan' and 'narcissistic' in order to clarify the positive significance of narcissism, she will not sustain the terminological distinction owing to the unity of formation and deformation.

The mother's status as principle of the advent of the imaginary father is also her status as the 'imaginary' mother. The archaic or semiotic parents (whose status as a conglomerate is expressed in terms of '*the advent of the father of individual prehistory*') are a combination which sets in process the formation of psychic space out of the crisis of primal separation. This is not an Oedipal crisis. Kristeva expands on Freud's notion of 'a direct and immediate' identification.

If there is an *immediacy* of the child's identification with *that desire* (of the Father's Phallus), it probably comes from the child not having to elaborate it; rather, he receives it, mimics it, or even sustains it through the mother who offers it to him (or refuses it) as a gift. In a way, such an identification with the father-mother conglomerate, as Freud would have it, or with what we have just called the maternal desire for the Phallus, comes as a *godsend* [my emphasis]. (TL, p. 40)

When the child stands in for the mother's ideal, the non-correspondence of metonymic recession of the object (*petit a*) and the prototype (the Other) represents the foreclosure of the symbolic. Their 'non-correspondence' is equivalent to the possession of an idea of the *existence* of the 'ideal', in abstraction from the existence of 'infinite space' which is the meaning of the 'site of the Other'. Once the infans is precociously situated as an 'I', as ideal object, through misrecognition of the site of the mother's desire, the advent of the 'not I' is endangered. This

danger and its implications for intersubjectivity are withstood only by the mother's turn to a third party. The *semiotic meaning* of her 'desire for the Father's Phallus' is desire for a third as such. It presents 'the desire of the Other' and hence intrigues the 'site of the Other'. The mother is principle of the semiotic unity of the semiotic and the symbolic only as 'subject' of the symbolic in addition to field of autoeroticism.

Freud's famous 'what does a woman want?' is perhaps only an echo of the more fundamental 'What does a mother want?' It runs up against the same impossibility, bordered on one side by the imaginary father, on the other by a 'not I' And it is out of this 'not I' (see Beckett's play with that title) that an ego painfully attempts to come into being... (*TL*, p. 41; ellipsis in original)

The mother's desire for a third *in the symbolic order* is 'the desire of the Other' (Lacan's subjective genitive) *in the semiotic 'order'*. Before the subject is posited it is loved. The intrapsychic lining of the 'subject' is the beloved. The mother's gift holds off the consequences for the infans of being made the object of the metonymic quest which does not correspond to its metaphoric prototype (*TL*, p. 36). The mother's 'incompleteness' may reintroduce the primacy of Lacanian lack into the semiotic (itself recovered to forestall that primacy), but the unity of semiotic and symbolic restores mediation to symbolic lack. The mother's incompleteness is, for the infans, 'the very place from which he is seen and heard' (*TL*, p. 22): the mediation of lack, or the semiotic unity of semiotic and symbolic is a *godsend*.

The unity of the semiotic (prelinguistic) and the symbolic (positing or 'thesis' of the Other) is not opposed to Lacan's notion of the site of the Other, but to the fate of the concept of lack. The symbolic in the semiotic recovers for Lacan's 'Other' the dynamic it

loses when the significance of lack for intersubjective relations is reduced to the meaning and consequences of its 'discovery'. Kristeva's foundational distinction recovers the mediation of this moment: the significance of lack for the 'subject' is separation in rather than externality to the Other: 'the loved object is a metaphor for the subject'.

(v) The 'cure'

Kristeva's elaboration of narcissism qualifies the judgement on the cure made in *Revolution in Poetic Language*. In 1974 the transference was considered in its significance as a reorientation of the subject to 'identification' and hence to the norms of social relations. Qualified by the meaning of the semiotic dynamic this - formerly negative because 'normalizing' - significance of the cure is now crucial to the efficacy of psychoanalysis on its own terrain. If the 'transference' has, recognized in its semiotic dimension, a dynamic value missing from the fixities of symbolic identification, its instability delimits the curative power of that dynamic. 'Narcissus is both prime mover and barrier for love' (p. 124). The knowledge of psychoanalysis presents the necessity of the Oedipal structure.

If 'love in the feminine' is to lend imaginary resources to the speaking subject, the presentation of the 'originary' correlation of abjection and idealization is not to be abstractly understood as setting the task of reintegrating the psychic sphere in its pre-Oedipal form. Narcissism, even as the dynamic of internal boundaries, carries within itself their dissolution. The 'object' and dynamic of psychoanalysis is given as the imaginary:

Freudian love - transference - holds to a wager lucidly laid beyond hatred and death: it is the amorous transference that produces the dynamic effects of the cure. Freudian

dualism finds its strongest expression in this impossible harmonization of amorous space, in this fractured space of lovehate. (TL, p. 125)

Nevertheless, in the synchronic perspective, not only the correlation of love and hate but the interdependency of the imaginary and symbolic is the condition of the creative potential of the imaginary. The speaking subject is the subject of drives *and* desire, the imaginary *and* representation. The wager laid 'beyond' hatred and death requires the dialectical experience of love, but inseparable from hatred as the latter is, the dynamic of love is insufficient to the aims of analysis. Its aim remains the traditional one of recovering the 'desire' of the analysand.

The deformation of the semiotic processes does not simply pose the question of reintegrating the 'imaginary' but demands an acknowledgment of the significance, diachronically, of their fate in the Oedipus complex. Idealization does not have the stability of the libidinal cathexis of an *object*. Alone, it is a fragile transference, turning the other into a 'fake':

The fake would arise because one only rarely succeeds in identifying fully with that ideal; either it does not hold, or it is demolished, or else Narcissus, with his mother's help, believes he does not need it because he already is it (an ideal for his mother). Then instead of having to *create* what will enable him to equal his ideal - a work, or an idealized object to love - Narcissus will *fabricate* an *ersatz*. (TL, p. 126)

The immediate identification with an imaginary other runs the risk of erotic passivation. Both enslavement to the other and fetishization of one's own image (p. 126) indicate the ambiguity of narcissism, since its pre-objectal identification inclines Narcissus away from recognition of the otherness of the other.

Since it is not object-oriented, identification reveals how the subject that ventures there can finally find himself a hypnotized slave of his master; how he turns out to be a nonsubject, the shadow of a nonobject. (TL, p. 37)

The necessity of the 'fake' for the sake of separation is met by the necessity of the negotiation of the Oedipal complex for the sake of the object of desire through which the ideal becomes an 'other'.

Formerly, when poetic language and psychoanalysis were considered as signifying practices in the doctoral thesis of 1974, poetic language was distinguished by reason of the absence of addressee in its 'transference' on to the signifying process alone. In the 1980s, Kristeva's claim that the transference involves the dynamic of the imaginary turns psychoanalytic experience into a site of the production of 'metaphoricalness', analogous to that of poetic language. In a manner comparable with the release from finitude enacted in poetic language, psychoanalytic experience enacts infinity (the dynamic of the creative imaginary) by intriguing the 'existence of' infinite space.

Kristeva is not therefore suggesting that the reparative potential of narcissism lies solely in the correlation of abjection and idealization. As contraries they are mutually dependent and the overweening power of one requires the corrective strength of the other. Thus, recovery from enslavement to an idealized other may go the way of the violence of abjection as a capacity for separation: 'Abjection of self: the first approach to a self that would otherwise be walled in' (PH, p. 8). Nevertheless, *bordering on the drives* or engulfment in the real as abjection is, this way out may then stumble self-protectively on fetishization; *bordering on the mirror stage*, narcissism tends to the fetishization of one's own

image. For Kristeva, however dialectical the complex of abjection is, it is not a complex which psychoanalysis can be said to have the power to approach: 'Emphasizing it would lead the patient into paranoia or, at best, into morality' (*PH*, p. 48).

The loving dynamic of the transference substantiates the minimal, violent, connection with the world formed by abjection. Kristeva's return to Freud's theory of narcissism seems to suggest that the terms of the cure reside in the intriguing and enactment of the relation to the imaginary father. However, while for Kristeva the psychoanalyst must stand in for the 'Great Other' (p. 31) in order to recover the dynamic of narcissism in its totality, this is not the cure: 'The analyst occupies the place of the *Other*.... Indeed, identification with this manifestation of the Other together with his introjection do not take place without his symbolic or imaginary putting to death' (*TL*, p. 13). The analyst 'follows or diverts the path [of abjection], leading the patient toward the "good" object - *the object of desire*' (*PH*, p. 48).

The cure, in its power and in the limits of that power, requires both the correlation of semiotic processes and their interconnection with intersubjective relations. The analyst aims at, not the narcissist, but the lover:

the lover is a narcissist *with an object*....
As far as he is concerned, there is an
idealizable other who returns his own ideal
image (that is the narcissistic moment) but
he is nevertheless an other. (*TL*, p. 33)

The meaning of the cure which emerges from Kristeva's return to Freud is the recovery of the drive-related *and* desiring subject. Thus, although Kristeva will mark a hesitation over Freud's use of the term primary *identification* for the process of construction of the ego ideal (*TL*, pp. 40-1), she will not make a terminological distinction which would obscure the

unity of semiotic idealization and symbolic identification. In their 'unity' each mediates the other.

It is as subjects of representation and subjects of the Other that both the dangers of narcissism (idealization/abjection) and the fixation of identities (subject/object; culture/nature) are relieved of their internal and reciprocal opposition. The dual nature of the 'transference' lends the knowledge of psychoanalysis its status as basis for an ethics: the negotiation of the 'otherness' of the other requires acknowledgement of the primal void, and thus of the idealization reparative of abjection's violence. But it also requires the 'distance' set up by identification in the Oedipal complex. Or rather, it requires the distance between the 'ideal' and the 'object of desire' as condition of their mediation. Kristeva calls this mediation, or in her terms heterogeneous relation, an 'impossible harmony': neither disharmony nor harmonization since the latter would reintroduce the former; it would overcome the distance necessary to the withstanding of either the metonymy of the impossible quest or the narcissistic deformations of hysterical idealization. The loved object - hence the self as 'other' to itself - is an *'impossible' perfect lover*.

C. 'After Religion, Morality, Legality'

1. The Modern Narcissus

Kristeva's conception of the modern Narcissus diagnoses a culture suffering from a surplus of abjection connected with the lack, or loss, of love. Her *theory* of the modern subject diagnoses its maladies as a fate of western subjectivity in the context of the death of God ('God is love'). This diagnosis draws on the Freudian return to Narcissus for the psychoanalytic knowledge of narcissism's dynamic, a knowledge which takes into account the death drive.

It is perhaps more interesting today to stress the originality of the narcissistic figure and the very particular place it occupies, in the history of western subjectivity on the one hand, and on the other, taking its morbidity into account, in the scrutiny of the critical symptoms of that subjectivity. (TL, p. 105)

Kristeva's modern subject is the one who 'lacks being particular' (its laws, whether imposed from without or self-given, do not mediate its dimensions but divide them off from one another). The modern Narcissus is the subject 'outside': isolated by the modern forms of law, and without the resources of a God-relation.

Because today we lack being *particular*, covered as we are with so much abjection, because the guideposts that insured our ascent toward the good have been proven questionable, we have crises of love. Let's admit it: lacks of love. (TL, p. 7)

Kristeva coined the term 'lovehate' (*hainamoration*) to express the place of the 'impossible' harmony, to which idealization and abjection contribute, within intersubjective relations. The conception of lovehate responds to the modern Narcissus, who represents the de-formation of the western subject.

When Freud took the word narcissism back from the realm of psychiatry, Narcissus again and

more than every caused discomfort. Narcissus had become a perverse symptom. The tremendous introspective elaboration of which Plotinus or Thomas Aquinas only represent eminent summits, had become dismantled, and a sickly, illusory longing on the part of a Self deprived of an Other is all that remains of the speculative journey aiming at the creation of a subjective internality. (TL, p. 123)

On the scale of her cultural interpretation of modern social and political relations, the rehabilitation of Narcissus represents a recommendation to the theory and knowledge of psychoanalysis in the context of the 'end' of monotheism and the fate of the loving subject it attempted to elaborate and to secure a space for. The return to Freud's 'knowledge' of narcissism elaborates a relation to a third which does not promise salvation in ignorance or repression of 'death's work' in the formation and de-formation of the speaking being (p. 124); nor re-present the burdensome exclusions and identifications of the Oedipal triad. The reintegration of imaginary resources (the phantasmatic love and hatred informed by the pre-Oedipal drama) signifies the recovery of psychic space or 'innerness'.

The degeneration of idealization and abjection is founded in an abstraction from the *mediation* of semiotic and symbolic. The breakdown of amorous space thus bears a historical significance and a cultural meaning. It signifies the fate of 'western' subjective internality, and it means that the breakdown in modern social and political relations corresponds with crises of love. Kristeva diagnoses the disintegration of intersubjective relations in the symbolic order as the social de-formation of love and hatred, and theorizes that deformation on the basis of the processes of idealization and abjection intelligible to psychoanalysis.

Kristeva will later develop a social theory of nationalism and religious disposition in which the

intensity of patriotism and the hatred of the foreigner re-present the disharmony of idealization and abjection. Both that 'love' and that 'hatred' represent a social breakdown - toward hatred and death. In *Strangers to Ourselves* (1988) Kristeva's call to rethink the foreigner as the 'stranger within' corresponds to her theory of the correlation or heterogeneous relation of idealization and abjection:

To discover our disturbing otherness, for that indeed is what bursts in to confront that 'demon', that threat, that apprehension generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, solid 'us'. By recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners. (*SO*, p. 192)

Kristeva does not, however, propose a simple reintegration of intersubjective relations through the ethics of psychoanalysis. The possibility of the disintegration of love and hatred in social relations is itself founded in the fragility of the 'pre-Oedipal' drama of narcissism. The tendency to de-formation of the heterogeneous processes of idealization and abjection, as has been argued, lies within: there is no question of a straightforward theory of social reform on the basis of psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalytic 'knowledge' is a knowledge of the difficult 'birth' of the subject out of love *and* hatred. The notion of the drives' dominant destructive wave of 1974 is not subject to any revision: the birth of the subject takes place in a 'vortex' of violence, as its condition. Psychoanalysis has no speciously benign illusions about the nature of the speaking being: the speaking subject 'is not innocent'.

2. The Aesthetic: Site of Critique or Fascination with Abjection?

And yet, in these times of dreary crisis, what is the point of emphasizing the horror of being? ... In short, who, I ask you, would agree to call himself abject, subject of or subject to abjection? (*PH*, pp. 208-9)

In the realm of intersubjective relations the deformation of the imaginary triad operates as enslavement (idealization) and the 'power of horror' (abjection). The enslavement to an ideal or the fascination with horror are interconnecting polarities with a dire social and political implication of profound contemporary relevance. Modern literature, the re-composition of monotheism's elaboration of love and hatred, discloses the 'truth' of the sacred (*PH*, p. 26), and bears the consequences of the disclosure. The enslavement of self and other which Kristeva claims to be a fate of the 'Father-religions' of monotheism, in their contemporary impact on the speaking subject, is articulated within the literary disclosure of the 'abjection' suppressed by monotheism's boundary to the sacred. The critical moment of the re-composition of love, hatred, and the feminine which Kristeva discovers at the centre of modern literature (Miller, Artaud, Céline...) bears, in her view, the complementary narcissistic de-formation: fascination with... powers of 'horror'.

The exposition of abjection in one of the two complementary texts on narcissism (*Powers of Horror*) concentrates on Céline's 'specific articulation of the abject' (*PH*, p. 26). Céline's writing does not take up its place in Kristeva's thesis of the disclosure of the repressed of monotheism in any simple sense (*PH*, p. 26). It portrays the danger of the fascination with abjection. Céline's writing recomposes (re-jects and reconstructs) monotheism's configuration of love and hate, only to reconfigure an object of hatred: the Jew, Céline's 'one object' (*PH*, p. 178). His writing borders

on the eroticization of the abjection it discloses, on the 'defence' of the living being in the face of abjection: 'when he succeeds in eroticizing it, when he allows the nonobject-oriented, pre-narcissistic violence of the death drive directed toward an object to run wild, then death triumphs in that strange path' (PH, p. 49).

The theoretical stance Kristeva takes on modern literature is less a seeming paradox in the context of her affirmation of poetic language than an ethical stance. The violence inseparable from 'revolution in poetic language' must be known and theorized. The theoretical stance is the possibility of articulating an ethics out of psychoanalysis' *knowledge* of the imaginary. Psychoanalysis responds to the modern 'surplus' of abjection, and to the cathartic imaginary of modern literature. Modern literature's status as recomposition of the sacred contributes to Kristeva's estimation of the 'aesthetic' as site of the critique of modernity (presentation of its contradictions). Nevertheless, the theory and knowledge of psychoanalysis remains indispensable.

Céline's writings present the adventure of poetic language, but also the danger it harbours:

contemporary literature, in its multiple variants, and when it is written as the language, possible at last, of that impossible constituted by either a-subjectivity or by non-objectivity, propounds, as a matter of fact, a sublimation of abjection. Thus it becomes a substitute for the role formerly played by the sacred, at the limits of social and subjective identity. *But we are dealing here with a sublimation without consecration. Forfeited.* (PH, p. 26)

A word of warning on Borges, for example:

Just imagine that imaginary machine transformed into a social institution - and

what you get is the infamy of... fascism.
 (PH, p. 25, ellipsis in French original)

It is the ethic of psychoanalysis that responds to the
 'powers of horror':

My prejudice is that of believing that God is
 analysable. *Infinitely*. ('Mémoire', *L'infini*,
 pp. 46-7; my emphasis)

The conclusion to Kristeva's brief section on Borges presents an equivocal statement. It does not simply signal a danger immanent to the poetic text as 'signifying practice', an efficacy poised in the direction of fascism. The claim needs to be read in the light of the insistence on *knowing* the necessity of maintaining the existence of 'infinite' space that forms the imaginary. Hence the above warning can be read as follows: 'just imagine' (*imaginer*) that imaginary machine transformed into a social institution, and what you get is anti-semitism, the 'infamy' of fascism; imagine again - *infinitely*, as psychoanalysis has the capacity to do and the necessity of which it knows - and out of the psychoanalytic ethic you have the basis for a nonfoundational ethics. Psychoanalysis does not negotiate abjection, since 'at best' this would lead into morality (PH, p. 48). Instead it intrigues the full dimensions of the imaginary and hence the 'infinitely' of Kristeva's infinite.

The enslaving tendency of idealization and the 'horror' of abjection have cultural implications of which psychoanalysis is the theory and knowledge. The return to Freud retrieves its social and political implications because the theory of psychoanalysis discloses *the implications for social and political thought* of the knowledge of psychoanalysis: the speaking subject is not innocent, and so the task of theory is 'to provide a law (universal) for its jouissance (singular)'.¹³

Nevertheless, the full social and political significance of the 'theory, knowledge and power' of psychoanalysis emerges in Kristeva's appreciation of Céline. Kristeva both analyses the fascination with abjection in its subjective mechanism and appreciates it as 'limit' and outcome of symbolic Power - a limit and an outcome to which the analyst bears witness. In *Powers of Horror*, abjection, intelligible to psychoanalysis but beyond the dialectic of the cure, takes on the full weight of the departure from the *polis* and manifests the absolute 'inner' of death drive and the persistence of the 'thetic moment' as a boundary which structures and encloses the 'symbolic order'. 'Monotheism' belongs within this boundary as part of Kristeva's 'objective totality', even though its determinations (pure/impure, inside/outside) point to the 'structuration' of the symbolic order.

Céline's writings configure the impact on the speaking being of the moral, political, signifying, and above all religious structures of western history. As has been shown, Kristeva outlines the communication between literature and psychoanalysis on the ground that psychoanalysis functions 'under the same amatory conditions that rule the production of metaphoricalness in poetic discourse' (*TL*, p. 276) The *amatory condition* of Céline's re-jection of monotheism's elaboration of love and hatred is anti-semitism. Kristeva's delineation of the 'position' of the contemporary psychoanalyst ('he', 'she') is tinged with an acknowledgement of the profound meaning of Céline's amatory condition: his hatred of 'the Jew'.

Because of knowing it, however, with a knowledge undermined by forgetfulness and laughter, *an abject knowledge*, he is, she is preparing to go through the first great demystification of Power (religious, moral, political, and verbal) that mankind has ever witnessed; and it is necessarily taking place within that fulfillment of religion as sacred horror, which is Judaeo-Christian monotheism.

In the meantime *let others* continue their long march toward idols and truths of all kinds, buttressed with the necessarily righteous faith for wars to come, wars that will necessarily be holy. (*PH*, p.210; my emphasis)

The rendering of the production of metaphoricalness as a *loss* in modernity is echoed in Kristeva's statement of it in 'Desire' where she was forced to change her *terms* 'mother' and 'father' into an abstract formulation on the importance of maintaining the existence of the distance between 'X' and 'Y'. Kristeva referred there to the crisis of the paternal function and claimed it to be a 'contemporary fact' (p. 23). The status given to the facticity of the crisis of 'metaphoricalness' leads further, in *Nations and Nationalism*, to a comprehension of the contemporary western world in terms - with the usual reservations - of Hegel's configuration of culture: 'self-alienated spirit'. In the same publication the problematic of the ego ideal is directly raised in relation to 'the national problem today'. The question, on social and political terrain, 'where is the *optimal* located?' takes us away from the categories of psychoanalysis: 'We have no choice here but to abandon psychoanalytic references and turn to political sociology' (*NN*, p. 53).¹⁴

Does this represent a change of heart on Kristeva's part over what 'others' have been doing 'in the meantime'? If there are such others (political sociologists?), the reasons behind Kristeva's readiness to readdress them are an outcome of the difficulty of pluralist practices in the face of the reality of the 'crisis'; but they are also an outcome of the 'loss' of the comprehension of objective spirit from the beginning of her writings, and the consequent fixation of 'death drive' and 'symbolic order' which led to the psychoanalyst's isolated knowledge of and witness to horror:

literature: the sublime point at which the abject collapses in a burst of beauty that overwhelms us - and 'that cancels our existence' (Céline). (*PH*, p. 210)

The analysis of Céline's 'scription' suggests that modern literature presents both implications of the 'critical' de-formation of the subject: it is the site of 'critique' of monotheism and of the subject-law relations in legality and morality; but it also embodies and enacts the 'crisis' of that de-formation. Once again, the key feature of Kristeva's concept of 'infinity' and her exposition of 'practice' is the importance of the renewal of rejection, or in other words the 'maintenance' of heterogeneous contradiction, which implies a sustained engagement with the 'symbolic'. Any 'practice' of poetic language will simply reenact the 'crisis' if it does not lead to a renewed engagement with the symbolic (under the guidance of the wise analyst?). It will remain locked in opposition to, hence in identity with, the object of its 'decomposition'.

Despite the distinction made in the early writings between the avant-garde and modern literature, Céline's 'scription' reveals that modern literature remains within the problematic of the 'negative affirmation': infinity 'in' language may always result in the negativist fetish which made avant-garde literature a symptom as well as a practice.

Given Kristeva's concept of 'infinity', the only theoretical stance she can take up at this point is to urge the importance of sustaining an engagement with the symbolic. It is the nature of Kristeva's 'infinite', therefore, which lies at the root of the striking position she has adopted recently on the resources for rethinking 'nationality' in contemporary Europe. Her estimation of what is to be expected from the respective resources of the French Enlightenment and of German post-Enlightenment thought rests on the

opposition of 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' which her theory of the 'subject' means to undermine, but which her concept of infinity makes absolute. Chapter 5 will show how the 'theory of the subject' based on the discovery of the unconscious presents difficulties for the attempt to transcend the 'boundary' of psychoanalysis and engage with the symbolic order on its own terrain.

CHAPTER 5 'STRANGERS' AND 'CITIZENS'

Introduction

In two recent publications Kristeva has developed the theoretical arguments of the 1980s into an assessment of the implications and limitations of the theory and knowledge of psychoanalysis for addressing contemporary social and political relations. First: the concluding chapters to *Strangers to Ourselves* argue for the pertinence of the return to the Kantian 'idea' of cosmopolitanism, and propose a revised notion of cosmopolitanism which accommodates the ethics of psychoanalysis. Second: *Nations and Nationalism* considers the question of how 'the ethical course suggested by *psychoanalysis*' stands in relation to the contemporary problematic from which it is not exonerated: that of 'putting the "national" back into question' (NN, p. 51).

In both texts Kristeva seeks to determine the position and utility of psychoanalytic references, given the 'absence of a new community bond - a saving religion' able to integrate the multiple social bonds of the contemporary multinational society (SO, p. 195). In order to do so, Kristeva poses and responds to two basic questions. The first: given the lack of a contemporary integrational and salvatory discourse, how do the resources of psychoanalysis contribute to our understanding of the paradoxical communities of contemporary Europe? Further: at what point must specifically psychoanalytic references give way before the theoretical task set by the rise of the multinational society (notably France), and by the (re)emergent ideologies of nationalism in Europe?

Kristeva's seeks to determine the value of the respective contributions of psychoanalysis and political sociology for thinking through the encounter

between the 'stranger' and the 'citizen'. The explicit and implicit relation to Hegel informing Kristeva's fundamental concepts are central to her assessment of the implications of psychoanalysis for an ethics and a politics responsive to the contemporary world. This chapter takes issue with the manner in which Hegel's 'worlds of spirit' are deployed in order to determine the (de)formation of the contemporary western world; and with the subsequent repudiation of the resources of speculative philosophy for the theoretical task of expounding the encounter between 'stranger' and 'citizen'.

A. The Power of Duty

1. The Law of the Unconscious

In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva proceeds from the exposition of the fascination with horror that lurks in modern literature, in order to reconfigure the 'powers of horror' within the Freudian account of the 'unheimlich'. This reconfiguration suggests that the truth of the sacred disclosed in Céline's 'scription' re-presents an intrapsychic 'law' that inclines towards the working out of the powers of horror. Uncanny strangeness is, on Freudian terrain, 'a psychic law allowing us to confront the unknown and work it out in the process of *Kulturarbeit*, the task of civilization' (SO, p. 189).

In reference to and distinction from the Kantian 'idea' of the league of nations, Kristeva proposes a cosmopolitanism based on the 'law' which the discovery of the Freudian unconscious has disclosed. The logic of the unconscious presents the irreducible 'universal' of the speaking being: the speaking being as a 'bundle' - 'desiring, desirable, mortal and death-bearing'; yet, as such, 'always already shaped by the other' (SO, p. 182). The formation of psychic space, working out of the death drive, founds the bond of intersubjectivity.

The ethics of psychoanalysis implies a politics: it would involve cosmopolitanism of a new sort that, cutting across governments, economies and markets, might work for a mankind *whose solidarity is founded on the consciousness of its unconscious* - desiring, destructive, fearful, empty, impossible.... On the basis of an erotic, death-bearing unconscious, the uncanny strangeness - a projection as well as a first working out of the death drive - which adumbrates the work of the 'second' Freud, the one of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, sets the difference within us in its most bewildering shape and presents it as the ultimate condition of our being *with others*. (SO, p. 192; my emphasis)

A law for the speaking being must recognize and rehabilitate the fundamental law 'of' the speaking being which shapes intersubjectivity. If the foundation of our solidarity is the first working out of the death drive, Kristeva's 'universal' is placed in the unconscious as a fundamental 'otherness' to itself of the speaking being. The ultimate conditions of our being with others are death's work and the metaphorical 'object', out of which our psychic, lovehating space takes form. This notion of the 'subject' poses the *renewability* of intersubjective relations because the separated subject is an 'accident' of infinite space. The renewal of the intersubjective is a 'cathartic eternal return' based on the law of the 'bundle':

'Might not Universality Be... Our Own Foreignness?' (SO, penultimate chapter title)

In the ethics of psychoanalysis duty does not, as Hegel said of Fichte's political philosophy, 'only have power insofar as the individual's *reason* acknowledges it as law' (*Diff.*, p. 149). The acknowledgement of 'mankind's solidarity' is the consciousness of its unconscious, which suggests that the truth of the unconscious will have power insofar as it is acknowledged as universal.

The question remains of how to elaborate the politics 'implied' in the ethics of psychoanalysis; how to turn this law, intelligible to and theorized by psychoanalysis but not within its power beyond *its own* confines, into a law 'for us'. This implication itself implies a renegotiation of the 'being particular' that we lack today. Yet the ethics of psychoanalysis already presents a difficulty for the elaboration of the politics it 'implies', given that the foundation of man's solidarity suggests a cosmopolitanism which is to 'cut across governments...'. If the truth of the unconscious will have power insofar as it is acknowledged as universal, what 'in the State... is to govern'? (*Diff.*, p. 149)

2. *Esprit générale*: Horror of the Volk?

Kristeva's 'Open Letter to Harlem Désir' (1990) is one of the essays, translated in *Nations and Nationalism* (1993), which engages in a debate on how to rethink 'nationality' in contemporary Europe. The context of this rethinking is the problem set for the notion of citizenship by the multinational society arising from the growth of immigration. Kristeva's ethics of psychoanalysis, approached in *Strangers to Ourselves*, is to find its place at this difficult encounter between 'stranger' and 'citizen'. Kristeva attempts to determine the position of 'the ethical course suggested by *psychoanalysis*' vis-à-vis the problematic of 'nationality' from which it is not exonerated.

It is notable that Kristeva announces the necessity of abandoning psychoanalytic references at this point (*NN*, p.53). The foundation of mankind's solidarity is intelligible to psychoanalysis as the unconscious - death-bearing but 'always already shaped by the other'. The destructive potential of the intrapsychic condition of intersubjectivity is met, within the psychoanalytic scene, by the dynamic of 'identification' with the metaphorical 'object'. Nevertheless, the idea of 'the optimal narcissistic image' cannot function as a regulating idea on socio-political terrain. The regulating ego ideal does not translate into a concept of the 'national', since it is difficult to locate the 'optimal' apart from the degeneration that the narcissistic image harbours (*NN*, p. 52).

The necessity of turning from psychoanalytic *references* to a political sociology is then drawn out within an uneasy negotiation of the respective contributions to be expected from French Enlightenment and German post-Enlightenment thought. For Kristeva, the German thought of 'culture' and 'nation' is redundant, for the reason that the romanticist and idealist elaborations of *Volksgeist* present a danger within the untranscendable

reality of 'national identities' today (NN, p. 33). At the point of the turn to political sociology, Kristeva is adamant on the distinction between the resources of the French tradition and those of the German for the 'problem of the nation':

I am among those who *dread and reject* the notion of *Volksgeist*, 'spirit of the people', which stems from a line of thinkers that includes Herder and Hegel. (NN, p. 52; my emphasis)

Unquestionably located within the narcissistic deformation, German *Volksgeist* is opposed to French *esprit générale* (expounded in the thought of Montesquieu).

Kristeva first presents the destiny of *Volksgeist*: 'a repressive force aimed at *other* peoples and extolling *one's own*' (p. 54); 'the *Volksgeist*'s appropriating and authoritarian calls' (p. 62). *Volksgeist* cannot contribute - quite the reverse - to rethinking 'nationality' since the notion bends the 'other' to 'the norms of our own repression'. In strong contrast, *esprit générale* is promoted as an idea that can valorize and guarantee private and particular domains, safeguarding them against the claims made by the legislative, the political or the 'national' to be the 'last recourse' (pp. 61, 55). The destiny of *esprit générale*: France, 'this contractual, transitional, and cultural nation' (p. 47); this 'highly symbolic body' (p. 43).

Leaving behind the psychoanalytic reference of the optimal narcissistic image and its possible (German?) destiny beyond the confines of psychoanalysis, Kristeva turns to the tradition of the French Enlightenment for its elaboration of particular and universal, citizen and nation. The resources for thinking nationality in German (German romanticism, German idealism) are intelligible, after Freud, as presenting an opposition

of semiotic and symbolic: a ('secret') foundation from which a symbolic Power is deduced (*die deutsche Nation*). Conversely, the French nation is a *highly symbolic body*. The idea of *esprit générale* does not abdicate the engagement with the symbolic, but neither does it present an abstract ideal, since it posits the general in the particular, puts it in concrete form (NN, p. 56). When it comes to elaborating the politics implied in the knowledge of psychoanalysis, we must leave the 'German' at its boundary.

the secret notion of *Volksgeist*, one that is intimate and indeed mystical (in the sense of *Gemüt* and *Einfühlung*), appears to me as favoring hegemonic claims (be they German, Hungarian or Romanian) and is a product of the same disease, with differences that are simply quantitative and, one would hope, consequences less catastrophic than those of the Third Reich, wherever that ideology turns up. I would thus assert that nationalism is neither 'good' nor 'bad', but that within the reality of national identities, which cannot be transcended today or in a long time, I would choose Montesquieu's *esprit générale* over Herder's *Volksgeist*. (NN, p. 33)

In the theory of psychoanalysis *Einfühlung*, 'the assimilation of other people's feelings', is an identification with a metaphorical 'object' (TL, p. 24). It points to the dynamic of the transference. On the terrain of social and political relations it would be a mystical, secret notion, which is better rejected within the 'reality' of national identities today, even if nationalism *is neither 'good' nor 'bad'*.

Kristeva does not specify that in German idealism it is Fichte who translates the 'Volk' into the 'Nation'; who, in the context of Napoleonic military occupation in 1808, 'addresses' the people; who, by identifying the 'culture' or 'formation' of the German people, adopts the 'nation' into German (*Reden an die deutsche Nation* - not 'Volk'). It is Fichte who, without abandoning the rational state deduced from first

principles, now bases his ethical and political philosophy on a theory of 'culture'.¹

Hegel, grasping in 1801 the social and political implications of Fichte's system, presents in contrast to the foundational treatment of ethics and politics which prepares the way for Fichte's 'nation', the idea of the '*Volk*':

As a result of the absolute antithesis between pure drive and natural drive [Fichte's] *Natural Right* offers us a picture of the complete lordship of the understanding and the complete bondage of the living being. It is an edifice in which reason has no part and which it therefore repudiates. For reason is bound to find itself most explicitly in its self-shaping as a people (*Volk*), *which is the most complete organization that it can give itself*. But that State as conceived by the understanding is not an organization at all, but a machine, and the people is not the organic body of a communal and rich life, but an atomistic, life-impooverished multitude. (*Diff*, pp. 148-9; my emphasis)

Kristeva's supposed sublation of the idealist concept of the 'subject' fails to address the Hegelian notion of the *Volk*. It led in the early writings to the impossibility of recognizing mediation in the posited totality of objective existence (the symbolic order). When the question arises of the politics implied in the ethics of psychoanalysis, the problematic of mediation in objective existence must be returned to; but the return to social and political relations is unavoidably hampered by the retention of Kristeva's fundamental concepts. At the 'boundary' of psychoanalysis the materialist concept of negativity is hampered by its sublation of the 'system'. Kristeva's 'ethics' and 'politics' are formed out of the restriction of the recognition of mediation in objective existence.

The nonfoundational ethics based on the knowledge of psychoanalysis suggests a renegotiation of *particular* (citizen) and universal, whose outcome is the idea of

an optimal national model. First, the 'ethics' comprehends a recognition of otherness on the basis of our own otherness. Second, and in contrast to the destiny of *Volksgeist*, the 'politics' promotes an idea of the integration of particular spheres - multiple social bonds - within a symbolic body. The process of integration, its moments, is grasped in the concept of *esprit générale* received from the French Enlightenment. In this concept, the particular is not subsumed under the universal; what is grasped is the movement of duty - the recognition of particular and universal within and, in transition across to, each more encompassing sphere of societal organization. Kristeva's rethinking of the 'national' according to a transitional logic of particular and universal (of the 'confederate' rather than the 'citizen') quotes approvingly from Montesquieu's *Les pensées*:

If I knew something useful to myself and detrimental to my family, I would reject it from my mind. If I knew something useful to my family but not to my homeland, I would try to forget it. If I knew something useful to my homeland and detrimental to Europe, or else useful to Europe and detrimental to Mankind, I would consider it a crime. (*NN*, p. 28)²

The ethics of psychoanalysis 'implies' this recognition of what is claimed to be a serial logic of concord, despite the 'rejecting' and 'forgetting' it contains. Its knowledge can be accommodated in the notion of *esprit générale*.

let us have universality for the rights of man, provided we integrate in that universality not only the smug principle according to which 'all men are brothers' but also that portion of conflict, hatred, violence, and destructiveness that for two centuries since the *Declaration* has ceaselessly been unloaded upon the realities of wars and fratricidal closeness and that the Freudian discovery of the unconscious tells us is a surely modifiable but yet constituent portion of the human psyche. (*NN*, p. 27)

The notion of *esprit générale* in Kristeva's view can accommodate the intrapsychic foundation of intersubjectivity. It takes up where the 'optimal narcissistic image' must leave off. The speaking subject is rehabilitated as in-dividuum and participates in different social groups which are nevertheless connected at points where the social organization has a broader and more encompassing scope. The speaking subject belongs in the flexible 'symbolic body'. *Esprit générale* is held to exist as a French national idea that 'can make up the *optimal rendition* of the nation in the contemporary world (NN, p. 39). The serial logic of concord is a model presenting a workable transitional movement of 'duty' in the contemporary multinational society. To adopt Montesquieu's *esprit générale* as the 'nation' is to locate an 'optimal model' which accommodates 'the heterogeneous, dynamic, and "confederate" meaning that Montesquieu gives to a political group'. This location of the optimal is held to avoid the degenerations of the dynamic of idealization and of identification known to psychoanalysis. It is only 'within' the boundary of the psychoanalysis that its knowledge has a positive content, where the 'dynamic' unfolds as experience. Beyond that boundary the knowledge of psychoanalysis is 'negative' and regulative, establishing the limitations of the legislative, the political and the national as claims to be a last recourse.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear what 'in the State... is to govern'. Kristeva's retention of the foundational distinction between semiotic and symbolic is requisite for the concept of heterogeneity which informs the 'law' of the unconscious and hence both the ethics of psychoanalysis and the politics it implies. It has been seen that the diachronic exposition of the unity of the semiotic and symbolic presents the 'positing' of the subject and the symbolic through a 'leap'. The 'leap' illuminated thus, diachronically, invests the totality

of objective existence with an irreducibly unknowable founding moment. The foundation and laws of the 'state' present a totality of 'structures' without mediation, whose objective 'biological' and 'historical' law remains an unknown 'inner'.

Kristeva's rendering of the atomistic individual subject to symbolic Law fails to recognize mediation in the objective totality. It implicitly accepts the Fichtean concept of the 'state', even as the *Volksgeist qua* foundation of 'German' nation elicits dread and rejection. If the thetic moment out of which the structures of society are posited is a 'leap', it is in effect an unknowable principle of what 'is not an organization at all' - the symbolic order. It remains the case that 'in the State, Right alone is to govern' (*Diff.*, p. 149). The subject-law relation in the sphere of legality is merely that of an atomistic self-consciousness bound to a structure, a symbolic Law. The subject may be pulverized, put in process, subject of and to abjection, wrenched in love out of identity, uncannily strange to itself. But symbolic Law remains as a simple, if unstable, identity. Kristeva's reformulation of Lacan does not change the significance of the symbolic order for human law but leaves it as an irrevocable human destiny. The unity of the 'separated' subject, as desiring and drive-related, cannot be brought into a relation with societal structures. The 'idea' of the optimal national model cannot return to the opposition of the 'separated subject' and symbolic law, since the heterogeneous logic it accommodates has made that opposition absolute.

Kristeva's 'law' of the unconscious is, implicitly, a return to Hegelian self-consciousness because it presents a 'subject' that is not an individual set apart from the universal, but is inseparable from intersubjectivity. However, the relation in which it is placed to Power on the one hand, 'destiny' on the

other, disguises the Hegelian truth. Kristeva's thought of the opposition between 'powers of horror' and 'symbolic Power', in which the first cannot escape from the second, can only be overcome by re-cognizing her law of the unconscious as a one-sided unity or identification of human and divine law. When she expresses the law of the unconscious in the proposition 'the object of love is a metaphor for the subject', self-consciousness (in Hegel's sense) is isolated over against 'symbolic Power'. She isolates the mechanism of 'desire-and-drives' from a realm of social and political relations which on the one hand is subject to 'the first great demystification of Power' (*TL*, p. 210), and on the other stands fast in opposition to the - human and divine - universal of the speaking subject. The idea of *esprit générale* is introduced in the context of the persistence of abstract right and symbolic Power, but can only persist in setting them aside.

The following two sections will question the necessity of this outcome for the speaking subject, by addressing the return to Hegel where Kristeva's elaboration of an ethics and a politics returns explicitly to the exposition of the 'worlds of spirit' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What can be achieved here is not the 'synthesis' of psychoanalytic references and Hegel's philosophy of law, but a demonstration that Kristeva has mistaken and lost the meaning of 'mediation', and hence the resources of speculative philosophy for the problematic in which she is engaged.

B. Antigone: the Destiny of the Actual Self

Kristeva's adoption, repudiation and adaptation of the shapes of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* lies within her general presupposition of the meaning of Hegelian 'self-consciousness'. As has been seen, Kristeva maintains that there is an absolute distinction between Hegelian 'immediacy' and the 'in itself' and 'for itself' of consciousness. On one side, the immanent presence of the absolute in knowledge is the truth of Hegelian mediation, on the other 'any other "means" of knowledge is no more than a recognition' (TL, p. 39). The possibility of the progress of the phenomenology of 'spirit' - Hegelian necessity - is located in the standpoint of philosophical consciousness, which takes upon itself what happens for consciousness 'behind its back'. Consequently the movement of consciousness is determined as a structural repetition.

The rendering of Hegelian self-consciousness as a constituted consciousness determines the presupposition of 'spirit' in Kristeva's analyses of the shapes of consciousness which present the first *two* of Hegel's three 'spiritual spheres': 'the *true spirit*' (the ethical order), 'self-alienated spirit' (culture), and 'spirit that is certain of itself' (morality). In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* the movement of consciousness as the relation to a 'world' is explicitly ('for itself') the movement of 'spirit'. The necessity of the progress of the shapes of consciousness is determined by the immediacy or abstraction of that relation when it develops within the standpoint of consciousness:

Spirit is the *ethical life* of a *Volk* in so far as it is the *immediate truth* - the individual that is a world. It must advance to the consciousness of what it is immediately, must leave behind it the beauty of ethical life, and by passing through a series of shapes attain knowledge of itself. These shapes, however, are distinguished from the previous ones by the fact that they are

real spirits, actualities in the strict meaning of the word, and instead of being shapes merely of consciousness, are shapes of a world. (*Phen.*, #441)

Kristeva repudiates the movement of the idealist dialectic on the grounds of the supposed reconciliations which are held to determine the transitions from one spiritual sphere to the next (ultimately and from the beginning - if impossibly - to 'absolute knowledge'). She adapts the dialectic of the ethical order and of culture on the basis of the accommodation of the 'unconscious' in the dialectic. This adaptation contributes to the elaboration of an 'ethics'.

1. The Eternal Irony of the Community

I will comment here on a passage from one of the early essays discussed in chapter 1 (*Matière, sens, dialectique*), in order to draw out the problematic outlined above: the appearance of an opposition between the 'law' of the unconscious and the 'power' of socio-symbolic Law. This opposition has led to the idea of a cosmopolitanism based on the recognition of intersubjectivity as mediation of the 'self' in and through the 'other'. The idea is proposed in deliberate abstraction from the socio-symbolic conceived either as a Power in the process of demystification or as 'governments' to be 'cut across'.

In '*Matière, sens, dialectique*' the discussion of 'maintained heterogeneity' turns briefly to Hegel's presentation of the 'eternal irony of the community' (*MSD*, pp. 269-70). The context is the difficulty for philosophy - to be worked out through the materialist dialectical logic informed by psychoanalysis - of thinking 'woman' as knowing and ethical subject; it is a question of 'her' discourse. The section in Kristeva's essay avails itself of certain moments of

Hegel's presentation of *Antigone*. It is a counterreading of these moments, rather than either an independent interpretation of *Antigone* or a comprehensive approach to Hegel's dialectic of the interconnection and opposition of human and divine law in the distinct spiritual sphere of the ethical order.

The renegotiation of Hegel's presentation of *Antigone* coopts the determinations of 'universal', 'singular' and 'immediate' in the first world of spirit. It deploys the relations of 'man' and 'woman' to desire and death in the disequilibrium of *the ethical world* and in *ethical action*, on the presupposition that the Hegelian 'concept' is equivalent to Kristeva's rendering of Lacan's 'master signifier'. This use of the dialectic does not remark on the difference between 'ethical order' and 'ethical action'; but it accounts for the later use of the determinations of 'universal', 'singular' and 'immediacy' in the context of an enquiry into the possibility of an ethics for 'women today'; a possibility which arises by way of an overturning of the gendered relations to desire and death in the first world of spirit ('Stabat Mater'; see section 2 below).

Kristeva compresses two determinations of 'woman' in the dialectic of the ethical world by identifying the moment of 'the peaceful organization and movement of the ethical world' with the opposition of the community-essence relation (manifest/unconscious power). Such an identification reveals the failure to approach Hegelian 'necessity' since it ignores the movement of the dialectic. Kristeva does not specify the movement of the dialectic, from ethical order to ethical action, because her deployment of its categories ('immediately universal', 'immediately particular', 'singular') would not address the subject-substance relation which spirit is in the first shape of the spiritual spheres, and in which the dialectic unfolds: the first world of spirit unfolds the

relations of 'universal' and 'singular' within the *immediate unity* of self-consciousness and substance ('the *true spirit*').

In an effort to pose the question of 'how' there exists a discourse maintaining heterogeneity (without falling into the problem of the subjective enclosure - be it the aesthetic enclosure or the 'detour' of perversion intelligible to psychoanalysis) Kristeva claims a materialist sublation of how 'woman' is situated in relation to the Hegelian 'concept'. Since the 'concept' is translated as the 'master signifier', Kristeva discovers in the Hegelian dialectic an opposition between the subject of desire (man) and a being who does not attain to that singularity (woman). It will be by focussing on the position of 'woman', and questioning the restriction on her possibilities which her 'negativity' vis-à-vis the community institutes, that Kristeva will proceed to rethink woman as subject of desire and ethical subject (section 2 below). The position of 'woman' is assessed as follows in '*Matière, sens, dialectique*':

It is perhaps not insignificant that it falls to a 'woman subject' to maintain here (and elsewhere) this frustrating discourse, neither father nor son, the discourse of heterogeneity. For woman, of whom each knows that one cannot know what she wants because she wants a master, represents the negative in the homogeneity of the community: 'eternal irony of the community'. That by which she ironises the communitary homonymy is that 'in her being destined for singularity and in her pleasure, she remains immediately universal and alien to the singularity of desire'.
(*MSD*, p. 269)

My intention here is to question the deployment of Hegel's dialectic as a source for Kristeva's attempt to pose the possibility of an ethics for, or rather from, 'her' (*hérétique*). I will turn in the following section to show that this is a direction in which

Kristeva attempts to take the Hegelian structural form of the ethical order.

In Hegel's dialectic the *homogeneity* of the 'community' is, as such, not substantial. It does not endure (just as there is no constituted self-consciousness as basis of the dialectic). For here, where substance is immediately grasped as self-consciousness, the community subsists only in interconnection with its 'essence', with the unconscious divine law. The dialectic of human and divine law presents the specific shape of spirit as the immediate truth of the unity of self-consciousness and substance. Spirit is the simple division into manifest and unconscious power, each determined as the (immediately) universal beings, *Mann* and *Weib*.

The difference between the ethical life of the woman and that of the man consists just in this, that in her vocations as an individual and in her pleasure, her interest is centred on the universal and remains alien to the particularity of desire; whereas in the husband these two sides are separated; and since he possesses as a citizen the self-conscious power of universality, he thereby acquires the right of desire and, at the same time, preserves his freedom in regard to it. (#457)

When Kristeva compresses these determinations of *Mann* and *Weib* together with the moment of the 'eternal irony of the community', she fails to comment on the *differences* presented between the union of man and woman in the ethical order and the relation of brother and sister (*Antigone*) through which the content of the relation to divine law is specified. The moments of the peaceful world order and its destruction are taken to present the instability of a structural difference; rather than the necessity of the transition from the peaceful movement of the ethical order to its destruction, a necessity presented when this spiritual sphere is *distinguished* as a structured form (#672).

'Woman' only represents the negative in the homogeneity of the community given the movement of 'singular' and 'universal' within this distinct spiritual sphere. Kristeva isolates a circle in Hegel's 'circle of circles' and posits it as the totality. It is only by doing so that she can translate the 'concept' of the first world of spirit as the 'master signifier'.

The dialectic is to be grasped as the movement of necessity which takes place when the immediate division of substance (self-consciousness) is determined as two individuals; each in relation to one of the ethical powers as which the division of substance presents itself; one in relation to the known law (self-conscious power) and one in relation to its essence (the unconscious power); as a relation to the ethical powers the individuals are *universal* beings. The dialectic presents the necessity of the downfall of 'the beauty of ethical life' because the beauty of ethical life presents the unity of self-consciousness and substance in its immediate truth (*Phen.*, #441).

The dialectic of the first world of spirit expounds the movement from 'justice' to 'crime' given the specific determination of the subject-substance relation. That relation brings forth 'ethical action' in the peaceful world order, as a necessity. The movement which reintroduces equilibrium in the peaceful order is 'justice', since it does not 'happen' through the opposition of the two laws. Ethical action is distinguished as the movement which *determines* 'guilt' and 'crime' since the deed which takes place *is* the opposition and mutual violation of the two determinations of law. It breaks up their interconnection and brings down this spiritual sphere.

As a consequence of Kristeva's concept of self-consciousness - of her conception of the unstable 'thetic unity' - she must presuppose what spirit is in

this spiritual sphere. The structural concept of the homogeneity of the community fails to negotiate the *differences* within and between ethical order and ethical action. The Hegelian dialectic is taken up one-sidedly. 'Man' and 'woman' are approached as differentiated positions in the ethical world's 'concept' (master signifier). There is no approach to the determination of 'man' and 'woman' in the 'beauty of ethical life'; to the division of spiritual essence into distinct spiritual substances - 'a human and a divine law' (#445); or to how the immediate individual existence that the ethical powers give themselves characterizes the difference of 'man' and 'woman'.

the two sexes overcome their natural being and appear in their ethical significance, as diverse beings who share between them the two distinctions belonging to the ethical substance. These two *universal* beings of the ethical world have, therefore, their *specific* individuality in *naturally* distinct self-consciousnesses, because the ethical spirit is the *immediate* unity of the substance with self-consciousness - an *immediacy* which appears, therefore, both from the side of reality and of difference, as the existence of a natural difference. (# 459)

To read Hegel's categories of 'universal', 'immediacy' and 'singularity' as presenting his interpretation of sexual difference through the relation of 'man' and 'woman' to the community or the law is to ignore the relation in which the dialectic unfolds. It is to ignore that 'the union of man and woman' in the peaceful world order is the interconnection of 'human' and 'divine' law because the unity of self-consciousness and substance is immediate; it is also to ignore that that middle term breaks down *as* a middle term because the 'middle' is at the same time the fall into an opposition between the known law (the manifest power) and the unconscious power.

In the first spiritual sphere, spirit is 'the *individual* that is a world' because the ethical order

presents the unity of the substance (spiritual essence) with self-consciousness in its *immediacy*: 'Spirit is, in its simple truth, consciousness, and forces its moments apart' (#444). The necessity of the movement from the peaceful organization and movement of the ethical order (justice) to its downfall is the necessity of the unity of 'justice' and 'crime' when the subject-substance relation is an immediate unity. The immediacy determines the division of the unity of self-consciousness and substance into two ethical powers which give themselves individual existence in consciousness: the two universal beings. The division of spiritual substance is determined as consciousness, 'and forces its moments apart'. This is the moment of ethical action. Spirit in its simple truth turns the 'unity of substance and self-consciousness' into an opposition of consciousness and substance: the division of 'substance and consciousness of the substance' (#444).

It is in *action* that the division of spirit comes to light (*ibid.*). Ethical action in the ethical order is the ruin of the ethical substance in this shape: 'what is ethical, being at once absolute *essence* and absolute *power* cannot suffer any perversion of its content' (#467); for what is ethical in this spiritual sphere, distinguished as such, is the interconnection of the conscious law and the unconscious power. The conflict of 'Creon' and 'Antigone' is the movement in which this comes out 'into the light of day'.

the ethical action contains the moment of crime, because it does not do away with the natural allocation of the two laws to the two sexes, but rather, *being an undivided attitude towards the law, remains within the sphere of natural immediacy*, and, *qua* action, turns this one-sidedness into guilt by seizing on only one side of the essence, and adopting a negative attitude towards the other, i.e. violating it. (#468)

Woman is not 'the eternal irony of the community' because as individualization of the divine law or 'general possibility' of the other, self-conscious, power 'woman' is the eternal disturbance of the homogeneity of the community. Woman is the *eternal* 'irony' of the community because the disturbance of the peaceful organization is an outcome of its repose. The law of the nether world is an *unconscious* power which, brought into the light of day wreaks destruction on the community that misrecognizes the action of the other as an arbitrary violation. This the movement proceeds from conscious and unconscious power to 'human and divine *knowledge*' :

the significance of the deed is that what was unmoved has been set in motion, and that what was locked up in mere possibility has been brought out into the open, hence to link together the unconscious and the conscious, non-being with being. In this truth, therefore, *the deed is brought out into the light of day, as something in which the conscious is bound up with the unconscious, what is one's own with what is alien to it, as an entity divided within itself, whose other aspect consciousness experiences and also finds to be its own, but as the power it has violated and raised to hostility.* (#469)

The disturbance of the ethical world is the action of the two sides as which the two ethical powers 'give themselves an individual existence' (#465). In the repose of the ethical order (the beauty of ethical life) 'woman' comes forth as the eternal irony of the community from by way of how she figures from the perspective of 'knowledge' of human law. But from the perspective of knowledge of human *and* divine law it can be seen that the manifest power has (mis)recognized what it encounters, the law with which it is interconnected, as the arbitrary action of 'nature'; has failed to recognize in it the appearance of the power of the nether world, essence or general possibility of the its own power.

In the ethical order, justice restores equilibrium in response to the power of nature ('as yet no deed has been committed' (#464)). The restoration of justice on the part of *human* law does not lie within an opposition of individual and community:

The justice, however, which brings back to equilibrium the universal in its ascendancy over the individual is equally the simple spirit of the individual who has suffered wrong; it is not split up into two, the one who has suffered the wrong and an entity in a remote beyond. The individual himself is the power of the nether world, and it is *his* Erinys, *his* 'fury', which wreaks vengeance.
(# 462)

Because the divided attitude of consciousness to law is determined as two consciousnesses, the action of one universal being - 'woman' - is treated by the other as a 'wanton outrage'; but the crime is the action of both sides. It is only in the *action* of the two universal beings as which divided substance is determined that the disturbance appears and woman presents the eternal irony of the *community* (not of the ethical order). On the one hand, the unity of substance and self-consciousness 'appears as order and harmony of two essences'. On the other, 'the deed is the *actual self*':

It becomes the negative movement, or the eternal necessity, of a dreadful fate which engulfs in the abyss of its single nature divine and human law alike, as well as the two self-consciousnesses in which these powers have their existence - and for us passes over into the absolute being-for-self of the purely individual self-consciousness.
(#464)

When Kristeva determines the 'subject' as conceived by 'philosophy' as the void whose truth is forgotten in the turn to the epistemological treatment of the 'subject', she discerns but does not approach the transition to 'legal personality': 'the absolute being-for-self of the *purely individual self-consciousness*'. Instead of approaching the transition, Kristeva departs

from 'legality'. Hegel's dialectic presents 'the soulless community which has ceased to be the substance - itself unconscious - of individuals and in which they now have the value of selves and substances possessing a separate being for self' (#477). Kristeva's writings presuppose 'legality' and her thought starts out from 'our dreary crisis' (*PH*, p. 208).

Furthermore, her construction of the 'act' in speculative philosophy abstracts one moment of the dialectic. The 'act' is held to be the socio-historical act through which (sexual) impurity 'gets rid of itself': 'Probably echoing the Greek *polis*, [Hegel] conceives of no other ethics than that of the act', the 'historical act' (*PH*, p. 29). Kristeva provides no specific reference for this interpretation, but in Hegel's presentation of the conflict of 'Creon' and 'Antigone' the deed is not the totality of the ethical. The ethical action is the *actual self*, which brings down the ethical order. It is not the 'historical act' but the movement which breaks up the ethical order, the dialectic of the immediate unity of self-consciousness and substance in its specific shape.

If the 'stages' of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are taken in their dramatic sense, the drama here moves from the Greek stage to the Roman stage, and the transition from the ethical world to legal personality can be viewed as a 'historical act'. In this case, Hegel's philosophy of law cannot be said to suppress 'death's work' in the concrete history of the 'subject'. The moment of 'pure self-consciousness' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the outcome of the engulfment in the abyss of true spirit; of the 'deed' in which 'what is one's own' is bound up with 'what is alien to it' (#469). This outcome is 'for us' - acknowledging that engulfment in the abyss of 'negativity in the form of individuality' (#674) would leave neither self nor other surviving.

Kristeva's account of psychoanalysis argues that the truth of the speaking being is brought into the light of day, within the boundary of analysis, as the unity of what is one's own and what is alien. It is not, within those bounds, an *actual self* or 'deed'. This brings into question how Kristeva's speaking subject, unity of Oedipus and Narcissus, of human and divine law, is placed in modern social and political relations. Alone as a lover, a lover alone - since the *actual self* is dead?; *cut off from governments, economies and markets*; depositing a permanent catharsis of permanent crisis:

literature: the sublime point at which the abject collapses in a burst of beauty that overwhelm us - and 'that cancels our existence' (Céline). (*PH*, p. 210)

2. An Ethics From Her

In 'Stabat Mater' Kristeva attempts to elaborate the structural relations of 'death', 'desire', the 'feminine', and 'discourse', and the implications of these structures for an 'ethics'. This attempt works out of Hegel's determinations in the dialectic of true spirit, but fails to address what spirit is in the movement of manifest and unconscious power, to their opposition and to 'human and divine knowledge'. As outlined above, the division of essence, individualized as 'man' and 'woman', implies the self-opposition of spiritual essence: 'consciousness is a divided attitude to law'.

Kristeva's claim for the importance of examining the meaning of the Virgin Mary - 'alone of her sex' (*TL*, p. 253f.), without singularity or individuality [*Einzelheit*] - is justified as the necessity of analysing the 'fantasy' of motherhood in our civilization: 'the *consecrated* (religious or secular) representation of femininity is absorbed by motherhood'

(*TL*, p. 234). Kristeva acknowledges the restrictions for women today of this 'consecrated' representation of femininity, and acknowledges that its rejection in feminist thought is a response to the implications of its acceptance (a model for women without singularity or individuality). Yet she stands firmly against the *position* of rejection, since, she argues, it is impossible to say whether the empty result of the repudiation of the representation of motherhood can find a content. 'Nothing, however, suggests that a feminine ethics is possible' (*TL*, p. 262). 'Stabat Mater' stands by the task of rethinking what exists - 'the only function of the "other sex" to which we can definitely attribute existence' (*TL*, p. 234). The impact and contradictions of a morality that opposes law and flesh sets the task - in default of there being anything to say whether or not a 'feminine ethics' is possible - of giving the law 'flesh', of rehabilitating love and death.

The task of elaborating what Kristeva calls an *hérétique* is posed as a route through and departure from Hegel:

A woman will only have the choice to live her life either *hyperabstractly* ('immediately universal', Hegel said) in order thus to earn divine grace and homologation with symbolic order; or merely *different*, other, fallen ('immediately particular', Hegel said). But she will not be able to attain to the complexity of being divided, of heterogeneity, of the catastrophic folding-'being' ('never singular', Hegel said). (*TL*, pp. 248-9)

Kristeva reads the configuration of the ethical world order as containing Hegel's determination of the relation of 'woman' to the 'symbolic'; and as presenting the dissociation of 'woman' from the separated 'subject', owing to the opposition of negativity and 'desire' determined as sexual difference. The theory of the 'semiotic' and the

'symbolic' has evidently opened up a different analysis of 'woman' than that attributed to Hegel's thought, by readdressing rather than rejecting what the 'mother' is. She is disclosed as both the 'field' of the negative heterogene (matter, drives) and 'site' of the emergence of the symbolic - not the negativity of the 'symbolic' therefore, but a separated subject. The theory of the semiotic and the symbolic presents, 'contra' Hegel, *her* singularity, her 'being divided'. The possibility of her discourse, her speech is posed: 'if she were to situate herself in the Logos, she would construct a discourse that would be the *negation* of this master signifier as an *engendering* of the concept... exposing it as an engendering starting from an elsewhere' (MSD, p. 270). Without losing the subject of 'lack' - corresponding to the necessity of representation - the negation of the 'master signifier' overcomes the opposition of 'desire' and 'negativity' determined as sexual difference.

The re-cognition of 'woman' illuminates the necessity of acknowledging the nature of the speaking being (separated, desiring and mortal) in an ethics which no longer rests on and repeats the opposition of 'law' and 'negativity', or 'community' and 'essence', known 'from Hegel'; an ethics beyond the opposition of man and woman, as subject of desire on one side and immediately universal or fallen being on the other. 'Herethics' is an ethics which recognizes heterogeneity. '*It swallows up the goddesses and removes their necessity*' (TL, p. 263)

Both Kristeva and Hegel re-cognize the truth of the sacred as the unconscious power. However, Hegel does not determine the gender relation as opposition of 'desire' and 'negativity'. The dialectic presents the individualization of the determinations of substance when the subject-substance relation is in immediate unity. For Hegel, the truth of the sacred is

unconscious power in this spiritual sphere as a distinct spiritual sphere. Here, self-consciousness 'is' substance, and substance 'is' self-consciousness only in the *immediate* truth of their unity. The mediations that this implies does not leave the subject-substance relation in the immediate truth in which it appears in the configuration of *true spirit*.

With Kristeva, who comprehends the whole movement of the dialectic as sustained by and for a 'constituted' consciousness, we come, given psychoanalysis, to know the subject-substance relation in one way alone: self-consciousness is a *lover*. The wrenching of the subject out of identity (subject-object relation) through the metaphor is the only subject-substance relation. Consequently, the foundation of the separated subject remains in opposition to the totality of objective existence, the socio-symbolic order; and we *know* the (de)formation of self-consciousness only as a 'torn consciousness'.

C. Self-alienated Spirit. Culture

1. Spiritual Judgement and the Disrupted Consciousness

The Nephew's 'torn consciousness' (Hegel) is the culture that knows itself as such: knowing that we are at least double, like the Nephew, we accomplish an essential step in culture. By mending that laceration, we shall attain absolute religion or spirit. I have, however, just mentioned some of the totalizing pitfalls involved. *Let us then remain within the culture and the endeavour*, as did the nephew, to recognize ourselves as strange in order better to appreciate the foreigners outside of us instead of striving to bend them to the norms of our own repression. (NN, p. 30; my emphasis)

In Hegel the transition 'for us' from the ethical world to 'legal personality' is necessary for the comprehension of 'self-alienated spirit' (culture). If the transition were *not* 'for us', there would be a continuous process of natural consciousness toward and out of 'absolute knowledge'. Kristeva turns the recognition of 'self-alienated spirit' into a *step in culture*; and it is her own turn to a concept of duty, beyond the boundary of psychoanalysis, that attempts to mend the laceration of the 'actual self'.

Hegel's dialectic of 'culture' is the movement of the self-consciousness which is self-related since it 'does away with this abstraction of the person' (#596). The two determinations of spiritual essence, or the two spiritual powers, are 'dominion and wealth' (#495). The subject-substance relation is not in immediate unity, hence not divided into a conscious and an unconscious law. The opposition of subject and substance in 'self-alienated spirit' is an opposition in which both determinations of substance are *known*. With 'pure consciousness', 'the moments of substance are for him not state power and wealth, but the *thoughts* of good and bad' (ibid.).

The movement of the opposition of subject and substance is the experience of a pure consciousness whose nature changes because the necessity of the movement is not from 'justice' to 'crime', the appearance of the unity of unconscious power and manifest law - but '*spiritual judgement*' (ibid.). The pure consciousness finds that object to be good which is like itself, 'and that to be bad in which it finds the opposite of itself' (#496). The movement of the dialectic presents the reversal of the judgement of good and bad because, in the subject-substance relation of this spiritual sphere spiritual judgement self-consciousness is 'in and for itself' (self-related). The *different* attitude to the determinations of substance - the thoughts of good and bad - is not a divided attitude, and the movement is the movement of the pure consciousness itself.

the consciousness that is in and for itself does find in the state power its simple essence and subsistence in general, but not its individuality as such; it does find there its *intrinsic* being, but not what it explicitly is *for itself*. Rather, it finds that the state power disowns action *qua* individual action and subdues it into obedience. (#497)

The nature of the determinations of spiritual substance, dominion and wealth, as self-alienated determinations, will be brought to light through the movement and reversal of spiritual judgement.

The individual, therefore, faced with this power reflects himself into himself; it is for him the oppressor and the bad; for, instead of being of like nature to himself, its nature is essentially different from that of individuality. (ibid.)

The judgement is inverted:

Wealth, on the other hand, is the good; it leads to the general enjoyment, is there to be made use of, and procures for everyone the consciousness of his particular self. It is *implicitly* universal beneficence; if it refuses a particular benefit and does not

choose to satisfy every need, this is accidental and does not detract from its universal and necessary nature of imparting itself to all and being a provider. (ibid.)

Consciousness is a 'disrupted consciousness' which has experienced the self-alienation of the determinations of 'dominion' and 'wealth'. Spiritual judgement now falls into two consciousnesses, that which is aware of the experience of the 'twofold finding of likeness and twofold finding of disparity' (#499), the disrupted consciousness; and that which sustains the immediate validity of the thoughts of good and bad, the honest consciousness that rejects the position taken by the disrupted consciousness. It is the former which presents the shape of spirit:

The content of what spirit says about itself is thus the perversion of every concept and reality, the universal deception of itself and others; *and the shamelessness which gives utterance to this deception is just for this reason the greatest truth* (#522; my emphasis)

The greatest truth of the world of self-alienated spirit is the position which gives utterance to consciousness of the absolute perversion; the absolute perversion of itself and of the 'universal power' (law, good and right) (#517-19). Here consciousness is 'the double reflection of the real world into itself': *'the fading, but still audible sound of all this confusion'* (#525).

The reversal of spiritual judgement has brought to light the self-alienation of the determinations of 'substance'; and the concepts of good and bad which are the moments of substance for pure consciousness, have lost their immediate validity. The mediations of this dialectic, the judgements of pure consciousness and their reversal, has as its outcome the 'spirit' of the world of culture: 'spirit that is conscious of itself in its truth and in its concept' (#520). The world of culture is known as self-alienated spirit - the

disrupted consciousness is the consciousness that *knows* the absolute perversion.

Kristeva's version of the 'disrupted consciousness' abandons a 'language' of spirit and turns this world of spirit into the '*culture* that knows itself as such'. She argues the necessity of not stepping out of the disrupted consciousness, but instead of a materialist rethinking of it 'after' Hegel. However, in the dialectic of the distinct sphere of culture, the determinations of substance for pure consciousness - law, good, and right - cannot be abstracted from the self-alienated determinations of substance: 'dominion', or 'universal power', and 'wealth'. The determinations of substance re-present the unity of self-consciousness and substance that 'culture' configures: they represent the antithesis of essence and individuality when self-consciousness, as 'in and for itself', is the self-conscious unity of self and essence but remains '*consciousness* of an objective real world freely existing on its own account' (#485).

In this distinct spiritual sphere substance is self-alienated as 'state power' and 'wealth'. Kristeva, however, inserts into the meaning of 'universal power' both the concept of 'good' she has determined as that of monotheism and the concept of 'morality' that opposes law and flesh. As a result of this deployment of Hegel, the narcissistic experience intelligible to psychoanalysis must present itself as the experience deposited by the self-alienation of 'universal power'. The 'universal power' is known to be self-alienated but *counts as actual*. That this is Kristeva's position is succinctly expressed in the discussion of her work in 1984, where she claims that the 'crisis of the paternal function', together with the perversity of our times inseparable from it, 'is a contemporary fact' (*Desire*, p. 23).

Given Kristeva's rendering of symbolic Law or (universal) Power, narcissistic experience is the '*unique access road to truth*' (TL, p. 133). In the relation sustained between the concept of the death drive and the concept of the 'symbolic', our task is to remain within the culture and the endeavour 'to recognize ourselves as strange'. Both the estimation of literature and the function of psychoanalysis take up their positions in - what Kristeva will not call - self-alienated spirit.

2. Literature: Spirit of the Real World of Culture

There is no trace left of the slightest shame or condemnation: scription, which knows and wants itself to be sign and symbol, claims Narcissus' divided image and draws its inspiration from that exquisite separation within the speaking being. (TL, p. 133)

Kristevan 'scription' is, in Hegel's words 'the shamelessness which gives utterance' to the perversion of every concept and reality, and which is 'just for this reason the greatest truth' (#522). Literature as scription is the spirit of the real world of culture - spirit that is *conscious* of itself in its truth and in its concept. The self-alienated universal power, or 'prohibiting judging agency' whose structure psychoanalysis has disclosed, is actual. It is both the re-jected thetic unity *and* the necessary margin of poetic 'practice'. In this way Hegel's third world of spirit, 'morality', and the dialectic of religious representation, is restricted to the moment of 'universal power' in the dialectic of culture. Furthermore, the concept of the 'good' attributed to the theological and mystical elaborations of love finds its place within the moment of 'universal power': 'By mending that laceration [the disrupted consciousness] we shall attain absolute religion or spirit' (NN, p. 30).

Literature is the consciousness of culture - beyond 'good' and 'bad' ('nationalism is neither "good" nor "bad"'). It may then present the *symptom*, intelligible to psychoanalysis, of the impact of self-alienated universal power. Céline's writings exemplify the inextricability of the decomposition of Power and the 'powers of horror'. The truth of religion, its 'fulfilment as sacred horror' or as abjection, is presented in Céline's writings: 'he believes that death and horror are what being is'; nevertheless 'he can show it to us only because he stands elsewhere - within writing' (*PH*, p. 34). His 'scription' is a sublimation of abjection without consecration. It remains a 'symptom' because there is no *renewal* of the decomposition-composition of the determinations of substance (law, good and right). The absence of renewal is, here, the fixity of Céline's 'amatory space', a position taken from the *known* impact on the unconscious of the monotheism (universal power) of western civilization. This fixity is a security in the face of the death-bearing risk of 'scription'. Célinian anti-semitism is the 'scription' that remains fixated on the 'universal power' it re-jects: 'a *delirium* that literally prevents one from going mad, for it postpones the senseless abyss that threatens this passing through the identical, that scription amounts to' (*PH*, p. 137).

Literature as the consciousness of culture only goes beyond the 'symptom' thanks to the *concept* of the infinite given through the knowledge of psychoanalysis: 'we are all subjects of the metaphor' (*TL*, p. 279). The 'signifier', rescued through the theory of the drives from its Lacanian position as 'master', is the site of infinite space and renewability of the 'subject' (*TL*, p. 277). At this point in Kristeva's thought - where the boundary between psychoanalysis as a 'practice' and literature as a practice has been shown (catharsis/working through), and shifted (knowledge of

psychoanalysis/infinity of the signifier or 'permanent' catharsis) - there emerges a concept of 'faith'.

In the Hegelian dialectic, spirit that is *conscious* of itself and of its concept is the transition to 'faith and pure insight': 'an actuality has been raised into another element', an essence for consciousness beyond the actual world, which 'nevertheless counts as an actual essence' (#527). In Kristeva's writings knowledge of the disrupted consciousness provokes the question of faith. Having *departed* from the 'faith' whose moments are comprehended in the dialectic of faith and pure insight, Kristeva seeks out our alternative. 'Psychoanalysis or Faith', the subtitle to Kristeva's second work on 'love', announces this moment in the consciousness of self-alienated spirit.

The faith whose movement is presented at this point in the Hegelian dialectic is in Kristeva's writings the 'illusion' disclosed by psychoanalysis. Furthermore, the loss of the guarantee of that illusion is suffered as the *absence* of a salvatory discourse. Remaining with narcissistic experience, symptom of this absence and unique access to truth, an aesthetic faith is affirmed after we have attained clear understanding of - in Hegel's words - the consciousness for which essence is beyond the actual world but nevertheless counts as an actual essence.

today literature is both the source of 'mystical' renewal (to the extent that it *provides new amatory spaces*) and intrinsic negation of theology to the extent that the only faith literature conveys is the assurance, painful just the same, of *its own performance as supreme authority*. (TL, p. 279; my emphasis)

Faith is brought down to earth as the self-witting *performance* of the lover (literature). The risk of passing through the potentially abyssal narcissistic experience, a risk which does not refer authority

elsewhere, is the production of metaphoricalness that takes on the painful assurance of its own supreme authority.

In love with our own productions, under empty skies, we have not departed from aesthetic religion. Religion of the imagination, the Ego, Narcissus, esthetic religion dies harder than Hegel thought.... Since then, *forsaken by faith but ever loving*, hence imaginative, egoized, narcissistic, we are the faithful of the last religion, the esthetic one. We are all subjects of the metaphor. (TL, p. 279; my emphasis)

In the Hegelian dialectic the shape of consciousness that stands under such emptied skies is the 'Enlightenment'. It is perhaps no accident that Kristeva's thought turns to the French Enlightenment when the 'stranger' known to psychoanalysis is brought into an encounter with the 'citizen'. The importance of the turn to political sociology for thinking this encounter can be viewed in the context both of the boundary of psychoanalysis, and of the uncertain destiny of the powers of Narcissus' productions vis-à-vis symbolic law, good and right.

Nevertheless, in the 'absence' of homogeneity, the significance of modern literature holds as the assumption of the discourse of heterogeneity. Literature is left as the only outcome of the crisis of the experience of loss of a salvatory discourse which neither remains within its illusions nor fails to accommodate its truth. It is left to 'literature' to work on the self-alienated universal power (law, good and right), while in the totality of objective existence the idea of the confederate nation cuts across governments. *Esprit générale* leaves to one side the self-alienated 'Power'. It leaves in position the 'power' of governments, and what is to govern in the 'state' remains Fichtean 'right'. It is at the point of this encounter between 'stranger' and 'citizen' on the terrain of the thinking of objective existence

(political sociology) that the relation sustained in Kristeva's writings between psychoanalysis and philosophy shows its inadequacy.

The presupposition of philosophy which holds in Kristeva's cultural theory restricts the turn from within psychoanalysis to the rethinking of social and political relations. This presupposition represents the failure within Kristeva's deployment of Hegel to approach the 'third world of spirit' or to countenance a 'faith' which is not aesthetic; in the broader terms of the place of her *oeuvre* in post-Kantian thought, it is the failure to take on Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy of law.

Summary of and Conclusion to Part II

The disclosure of 'death's work' in reason, the theory of 'poetic language', and the formulation of an intrapsychic law of intersubjectivity - together, these fundamentals of Kristeva's thought have presented a typology, but also 'stages' of literature as a socio-historical practice that works on the self-alienated 'universal': the power of the modern state and power of monotheism. The treatment of the semiotic in the later writings has changed the meaning of its 'heterogeneous relations'. In 1974 the semiotic *chora*, or ordering, was adamantly distinguished from the concept of 'law' ('a term we reserve for the symbolic'). The triadic structuration of semiotic relations is now put forward as an intrapsychic law that founds the bond of intersubjectivity. It was the absence of determinateness and limitation in the semiotic 'unity' of semiotic and symbolic which led in Part I above to the Hegelian criticism of Kristeva's concept of 'practice'. The question that now arises is whether Kristeva's intrapsychic law posits determinateness and limitation in both unities of finite and infinite. In fact this is not the case, since the universality Kristeva claims for her law of the 'unconscious' remains cut off from the symbolic order. Even when she claims that the idea of *esprit générale* both accommodates the Freudian truth and presents a serial logic of concord that posits the general in the particular, the idea is regulative and opposed to what governs in the 'state'.

Kristeva's writings present two stages in the meaning of 'psychoanalysis' for 'poetic language'. In the first stage the deformations of the 'subject' (subjective enclosure of the infinite 'in' language) produced the necessity of psychoanalysis as the working through of its determinations. The 'dynamic' of this working through leads to a concept of infinity which overcomes its previous appearance as the *imperative* to maintain

'heterogeneous contradiction'. Once the semiotic 'ordering' is redefined as an intrapsychic law the infinity of the signifier is secured as the 'existence' of infinite space. The 'signifier' becomes the infinite 'in' language *infinitely*, and grounds the practical potential of 'poetic language'. Nevertheless, this only expresses the truth of Kristeva's concept of the infinite, a truth which holds from the outset of her materialist inversion of Hegel. Because determinateness and limitation are not posited in one of the two unities of 'semiotic' and 'symbolic', they return absolutely in the eternal recurrence of the subjective enclosure of 'signifying practice'. There is one configuration of the 'formation' of the subject, and consequently a proliferating typology of deformations which is left without recourse to a knowledge of social and political relations.

CONCLUSION

The thesis has established that Kristeva's 'return to Freud' contains an explicit and an implicit return to Hegel. The attention given here to the philosophical foundations of her thought has brought to light the aporiae and inconsistencies in the reformulation of Lacan's 'symbolic' and the materialist theory of culture it proposes.

Kristeva has claimed that the Freudian science discloses 'death's work' in 'reason', and that the implications of this for social and political thought are established through a materialist rereading of the Hegelian dialectic. The distinction between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' overcomes the nature/culture dichotomy in modern philosophy, and turns the psychoanalytic knowledge of the 'separated' subject into a comprehension of the formation and deformations of 'self-consciousness'. The 'unity' and deformations of self-consciousness are expounded on the basis of the notion of the 'subject' as a heterogeneous relation of divine and human law.

However, an opposition between the 'semiotic' and the 'symbolic' is sustained on the terrain of social and political relations, and this leads to inconsistencies in Kristeva's thought. A contradiction appears between her departure from the philosophical comprehension of the modern state and religion, and the explicit avowal that the moments and structures of the 'state' comprehended in idealist philosophy (the transcendental 'subject', abstract right and abstract morality) are the essential moments of modern social and political relations.

Kristeva's thought sustains a divided attitude to law. On one side, a 'self-alienated' symbolic Law counts as the actuality of the contemporary western world and is to be 'worked on' by poetic language. On the other, the

intrapsychic 'law' known to psychoanalysis sets a task for political philosophy: to elaborate a 'regulative idea' as the last recourse for responding to differences in the modern multinational society. This elaboration can only be followed through on the basis of Kristeva's setting aside of socio-symbolic Law in the 'ethics of psychoanalysis'.

The 'work' on the self-alienated Law, confined to literature, and the 'work' on the intrapsychic law, posed as the task of political philosophy, cannot be brought together. The divided attitude to law, and the nonunifiable separation of 'work' is an outcome of the materialist abstraction and opposition of subjective and objective 'spirit'; and of the consequent failure to recognize mediation in social and political relations.

Once 'death's work' in 'reason' is held to be suppressed in Hegelian self-consciousness, an 'immediate unity' of subject and object containing the moment of 'death' is unearthed from the dialectic. However, Kristeva's 'immediate unities' break down within the task for which they are recalled: first, Bataille's *expérience*, the reversal of Hegelian *Erfahrung*, is redundant because it is not a 'practice'; second, the 'Maoist' social agency is placed in 'the most immediate violence', but the dialectic of social transformation collapses without any exposition of the breakdown being provided; third, the 'direct and immediate experience' disclosed in the structure of narcissism poses a concept of the 'infinite' renewability of the 'subject', but the concept of infinity contains the contradictions of the idealist *Sollen*. Kristeva's *hérétique*, the sublation of the first world of 'spirit', sustains a concept of the symbolic order which isolates, totalizes and freezes Hegel's circle of circles into one circle, whose solid walls an 'other' ethics attempts to storm.

When Kristeva presupposes 'philosophy' she misses the meaning of Hegel's first world of spirit as an 'immediate unity' of subject and substance, and hence the different configurations of the subject-substance relation which determine the relations to 'work', 'desire' and 'otherness' in the experience of consciousness. The seeming retrieval of death's work in 'reason' posits its abstract repetition, and does not distinguish the forms of its appearance in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* or their connection with the standpoint and 'shapes' of consciousness.

Kristeva's typology of critical discourses abandons 'reason' to the endless renewal of a 'law' which is not known. The thesis has located the source of this social and political agnosticism in the fixation of the reflective concept of 'negativity'. The value for social and political thought of the 'ethic' of psychoanalysis, and the place of the nonfoundational 'ethics' elaborated from it, is redefinable once Kristevan 'self-consciousness' (the lover and stranger) is brought into an encounter with the philosophy of law intrinsic to Hegel's presentation of the formations and deformations of 'self-consciousness'.

APPENDIX

Terminology

The passage in this thesis across the range of Kristeva's thought (from the 'materialist dialectical logic', to the theory of symbolization, through the analysis of 'narcissism', and finally to her position on the contemporary European 'nation') leads to problems of exegesis based on the developments and changes in Kristeva's terminology. It is a particular problem for this thesis because of Kristeva's own strategy in the development and presentation of her thought, which is an eclectic strategy. Linguistics, structuralism, dialectical materialism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis - a broad-ranging use is made of categories from these different bodies of thought in order to build up Kristeva's conceptual framework, and to claim its scope.

It is necessary to follow Kristeva through this range of intellectual resources, *and* to engage in varying degrees with her semanalysis of philosophy, literature and 'theology'. The unity of her thought, and its philosophical foundations, can only be demonstrated through her writings, and by placing it in an external encounter with speculative philosophy.

Despite this, I will use Hegelian terminology within the exegesis of Kristeva's thought. Her interpretation of Hegelian 'spirit' and 'recognition' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* would seem to disallow the use of these terms in the context of her own concept of 'negativity', or of the elaborations of 'practice' derived from it. Furthermore, I am arguing that the refusal of Hegelian 'mediation' in the comprehension of social and political relations determines the limitations and the difficulties which emerge in her thought. Nevertheless, Kristeva's analysis of the subjective (re)enclosures of the negative force of her materialist dialectic does imply a grasp of the meaning of '(mis)recognition' in Hegel's presentation of the experience of 'consciousness' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I therefore employ the terms 'recognition', 'spirit', and 'concept of reflection' (*Reflexionsbestimmung*) where the Kristevan concept justifies such a use.

Notes to chapter 1

1

The specific logic that avant-garde texts develop... imposes a recall to Hegelian logic: the sole analysis in full knowledge of the syntactical reason that modern texts, precisely, subvert and ruin.

(*'Matière, sens, dialectique'*, p. 271.)

2 Lukács's account of the significance of these debates for Marxist dialectics specifies the differences between the practical philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Hegel ('Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', section II, in *History and Class Consciousness* (1967)). Kristeva, however, will not address the different 'forms' of transcendental philosophy. The immediate relation to Hegel misses the philosophy of law in German idealism, crucial to a proper assessment of the thought from which Kristeva's own thought embarks.

3 Collected in *Polylogue*, Editions du Seuil 1977. All translations of passages cited from the three essays under discussion in this chapter are my own.

4 The positions are those, respectively, of Fichtean idealism, the dogmatic fate of Marxism, and the Hegelian system.

5 The concept of 'rejection' will be discussed in section B of this chapter, which outlines the emergence of the Kristevan 'subject' out of Bataille's 'desire' and the Freudian theory of the drives.

The link with Hegel is evident in the following remark in *'Matière, sens, dialectique'*: 'A Hegelian logic which would thus here be recovered and displaced, confronted with what seems to us to be demanded in the first place by a materialist position and, consequently, with the Freudian "scission" of the subject in the signifier' (p. 271).

6

But our reason, as it were, sees in its surroundings a space for the cognition of things in themselves, though we can never have determinate concepts of them and are limited to appearances only.

(*Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, p. 101.)

7 *Science of Knowledge* (1797). Fichte attempted many presentations of his *Wissenschaftslehre* ('Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge'). The number of complete versions included in the *Nachlass* is estimated at over twenty in

the recent translation and collection of his early writings (D. Breazeale, *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, p. 33)

8 See Part I (pp. 93-119) of the *Science of Knowledge: 'Fundamental Principles of the Entire Science of Knowledge'*.

9 Here is where the reference to Hölderlin and Fichte comes in. The passage continues: 'Hölderlin seeks such a heterogeneity when, in his letter to Hegel of 26 January 1795, he criticizes Fichte's conception of an "absolute I".' (MSD, p. 279, n.2)

10 'le contraire de ce 'quelque chose' qu'il est et qui, donc, le détermine tout en se déterminant dans la contradiction qui les pose'. (MSD, p. 281)

11 In Hegel, the dialectic - 'discourse of the concept', 'discourse in production' - exposes both alternatives. The transcendental alternative is avoided because the *Logic* presents the 'scission of the concept through itself'. The channel of objectal investment is avoided because the *Phenomenology* is 'a cold universality, frustrating the I [Moi] by putting a check on its *desire* (for recognition) and on its *phantasms*), through the analysis, precisely, of their engenderment' (MSD, p. 268).

12 Kristeva's clarification of the importance of 'narcissism' within the knowledge of the practical available from the discoveries of psychoanalysis appears in the later writings on 'love' and 'abjection'. Her arguments on the significance of 'narcissism' after Freud form the appearance of a difficulty over how both to determine the 'boundary' of psychoanalysis and take its knowledge into the field of social and political relations. See chapters 4 and 5 below.

13 Kristeva's reference is to Ph. Sollers, '*Lénine et le matérialisme philosophique*', *Sur le matérialisme*, Editions du Seuil, 1974, p. 97.

14 I specify Kristeva's 'reversals' of the thinking of the 'subject' from idealism to dialectical materialism in chapter 3 below.

15 Kristeva's recovery of drive theory in Freud's thought insists on a 'heteronomy', not dichotomy or opposition, of the drives. This sustains her account of symbolization and its import for social and subjective transformation:

Drives are material, but they are not solely biological since they both connect and differentiate the biological and symbolic within the dialectic of the signifying body

invested in a practice.... Drives are the repeated scission of matter that generates signifi-
 cation, the place where an always absent subject is produced.... In a moment that constitutes a *leap* and a *rupture - separation* and *absence* - the successive shocks of drive activity produce the signifying function. (RPL, p. 167)

Divesting the heterogeneity of drives of the 'fundamental dichotomy' which belongs to them in Freud's insight (ibid.), Kristeva abandons the notion of the drives as opposed forces in conflict (ego/sexual drives; life/death drives), and posits them as not only 'biological' but 'social'. Drive theory is the basis of Kristeva's theory of signification, of her claim that the materialist dialectic is social and political thought, and of her concept of practice.

16 The texts she derives this response from are *L'érotisme*, *L'expérience intérieure*, *Méthode de Méditation*, and *Etre Oreste*.

17 Kristeva's doctoral thesis (*Révolution du langage poétique*) is subtitled '*L'avant-garde à la fin du xix. siècle: Lautréamont et Mallarmé*'. Part III in particular expounds the negation at work in the writings of Lautréamont and Mallarmé, and the social and historical conditions for their limitations.

18 The idea of the operation *Bataille* exercises on Hegel's *Phenomenology* is often presented in phrases using the term '*à rebours*'. In my opinion 'against the grain' might best capture the thought of this operation, since its meaning is less a 'reversal' of the process than what such a reversal enables: the disclosure of symbolization beneath the movement 'to' self-consciousness. However, I will also translate it as 'in reverse' or 'backwards' according to syntactical necessity, acknowledging the French.

19 'Unary subject' translates Kristeva's *sujet unaire*, in order to show the distinction from *sujet unitaire*: the distinction marks the difference between the subject as conceived by idealism (the unitary subject) and the instance of the subject as a stasis traversed: here, *Bataille*'s '*ipse*'.

20

Das einfache Ich ist diese Gattung oder das einfache Allgemeine, für welches die Unterschiede keine sind, nur, indem es negatives Wesen der gestalteten selbständigen Momente ist; und das Selbstbewusstsein [ist] hiermit seiner selbst nur gewiss durch das Aufheben dieses Anderen, das sich ihm als selbständiges Leben darstellt; es ist Begierde. Der Wichtigkeit dieses Anderen

gewiss setzt, es für sich dieselbe als seine Wahrheit, vernichtet den selbständigen Gegenstand und gibt sich dadurch die Gewissheit seiner selbst, als wahre Gewissheit, als solche, welche ihm selbst auf gegenständliche Weise geworden ist.

(*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970, p. 143.)

21 Chapter 5 of Section II of *Revolution in Poetic Language*, which repeats with minor amendments these passages on Hegel from the essay on Bataille, runs: 'self-consciousness constitutes itself through the supercession of the *heterogeneous Other*' (p. 134).

22 See 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious':

Truth is nothing other than that which knowledge can apprehend as knowledge only by setting its ignorance to work. A real crisis in which the imaginary is resolved, thus engendering a new symbolic form, to use my own categories. This dialectic is convergent and attains the conjuncture defined as absolute knowledge. As such it is deduced, it can only be the conjunction of the symbolic with a real of which there is nothing more to be expected. What is this real, if not a subject fulfilled in his identity to himself? From which, one can conclude that this subject is already perfect in this regard, and is the fundamental hypothesis of this whole process. He is name, in effect, as being the substratum of this process; he is called the *Selbstbewusstsein*, the being conscious of self, the fully conscious self. (*E*, p. 296)

23 This idea that there is a transition from 'sense-certainty' to 'self-consciousness' excludes the dialectic of 'perception' and of 'force and the understanding' within Section A of the *Phenomenology*. Kristeva will come to read the second in a way consistent with the interpretation of *Begierde* - as the dialectic's representation of negativity, as the constitution of unity on the basis of 'scissions, impulses, collisions, rejections driven back in the name of and in view of the subjective unity not only of the understanding, *but also of reason*' (*RPL*, p. 116).

With respect to 'perception', it is notable that Kojève - whose translation is Kristeva's source - passes over this configuration in his *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, with the remark '*Ce chapitre n'a pas été commenté*' (Gallimard edition, p. 46). This is not to insinuate Kristeva's dependence on Kojève's work, but

it is noteworthy in the context of an assertion of the
'transition from sense-certainty to self-
consciousness'.

Notes to chapter 2

1 The French publication of Kristeva's doctorat d'état is divided into three parts of which the first is 'theoretical', the exposition of the concept of poetic language. The second part reforms the science of 'linguistics' on the basis of the disclosure of 'poetic language'. Part three details the role of the nineteenth-century avant-garde (Lautréamont and Mallarmé) in the passage to 'poetic language'. The English version translates only the first, theoretical, part.

2 See 'Postmodernism?', *Bucknell Review* 25, 2, 1980: 136-41.

3 This meaning is pointed out, for example, by Philip Lewis in his review of *La Révolution du langage poétique* on its publication in France in 1974 (*Diacritics*, Fall 1974, pp. 28-32); and is highlighted in Roudiez's introduction to the English-language translation of 1984 (p. 1).

4 The concluding section of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, on 'The Modern Time', expounds the emergence of 'conscience and subjective principle' in the Protestant Reformation, the latter's influence on political development, and its failure to permeate the whole Catholic world. Each term of Hegel's 'Reformation and Revolution' is in a dialectical relation to the other determined by the 'opposition of the will' they present. The opposition holds between the principle of Protestantism ('religious emancipation and inward harmony', p. 438) and the Enlightenment's formal principle of freedom, attaining its speculative recognition in Kant ('rationality of will... right purely for the sake of right, duty purely for the sake of duty', p. 443). The latter is put into practical effect in the French Revolution. Hegel's inquiry into the reasons for the separation of Reformation (in Germany) and Revolution (in France) goes into the historical conditions informing the determination both of their respective principles and of the manner of transformation of the secular in each case.

I am not suggesting that there is a direct analogy between Hegel's dialectical recognition of the separation of Reformation and Revolution in Germany and France and Kristeva's generalization of the 'flight from the finite'; merely that Kristeva's attempt to account for the failure of 'right' - which addresses only one side of the 'opposition of the will' - contains a Hegelian ambition. Kristeva's analysis of the 'transition' from political to cultural revolution in the socio-economic conditions of late nineteenth-century France fixes the relations of determination, with the result that 'capitalism' is taken to shatter

the 'discourses' which Hegel's speculative treatment of State *and* Church comprehends.

5 For example in sections of *Tales of Love* (1983), and in *Black Sun* (1987).

6 The place of Maoism in Kristeva's published thesis has hardly been noted in the critical reception of the book, and as far as I am aware there has been no discussion of its structural necessity in her thought of this period.

Kristeva commentary and criticism focusses either on the diagnostic meaning of 'revolution' in Kristeva's doctoral thesis: the 'cultural' revolution represented by the avant-garde (for example, Lewis 1974; Roudiez 1984) or on the - prognostic - notion of 'revolution' in Kristeva's concept of modern (and postmodern) signifying practices (Lewis 1974; Alice Jardine 1986; Edelstein 1992).

Lewis refers to but does not elaborate on the socio-political element in Kristeva's doctoral thesis:

The deconstruction of the unitary subject and invention of a pluralized successor imply not only the most radical of cultural revolutions, but also the strategic placement of revolutionary activity primarily in relation to its localizable object, a grounding of militant theoretical reflection in the potential repercussions of transforming that object. (pp. 31-2; my emphasis)

This comment does contain Kristeva's substitution of a Maoist dialectical conception of experience (the relation to a localizable object) for a Hegelian dialectical conception of the experience of consciousness. However, Lewis does not grasp the *theoretical* exigency of the social subject within Kristeva's formulation of the 'pluralized successor' to the unitary subject.

7 Kristeva would have difficulty in maintaining this position on the 'philosophical' tradition vis-à-vis Hegel's treatment of sense-certainty had she not already decided that philosophy cannot present 'reason' except within the Cartesian framework of 'thought'.

8 'From One Identity to an Other', *Desire in Language*, Columbia University Press, 1980, p. 132. 'De l'une identité l'autre' was published in France in *Polylogue*, Editions du Seuil, 1977.

9 Elliot notes that Kristeva's return to Lacan recasts 'the Lacanian imaginary and symbolic orders into the corresponding modalities of the *semiotic* and the

thetic'. This 'correspondence', in his view, nevertheless contains a departure from Lacan: Kristeva's 'semiotic' continues to exert an influence in the symbolic order of communication and signification, whereas 'for Lacan entry to the symbolic order implies a radical break-up of and separating out of the imaginary order'. (1992, pp 221-2.)

Whether or not there is agreement with Elliot's construal of Lacan, the point is clarified if it is seen that it is Kristeva's articulation of the 'mirror stage' and 'entry into' the symbolic as a '*thetic phase*' which establishes their connection in the 'order' of the symbolic.

10 *Seminar II*, XIX, p. 241. Kristeva's connection of the imaginary and symbolic, in the *thetic phase*, follows the Lacanian thesis that 'There is never a subject without an ego, a fully realised subject, but that in fact is what one must aim to obtain from the subject in analysis' (*ibid.*, p. 246). She, too, emphasizes the dialectical nature of psychoanalysis implicit in this statement. If, as Lacan states, 'the ego gets confused with the subject', in Kristeva's later works the 'narcissistic absorption' which sets up imaginary objects of desire is not only a site of difficulty for the subject, but the possibility of renewal in analysis (*IBWL*, p. 55). Kristeva's works of love will therefore always emphasize the role and forms of narcissism. (See chapter 4.)

11 As Kristeva will put it in the 1980s: 'because psychoanalysis is a different kind of science, we must be clear about the fact that its object is something that emerges from the imagination.' (*IBWL*, p. 20).

It is because Kristeva is concerned, in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, with exposing the drive-related subject subtending the desiring subject that her position on transference in analysis appears to be so critical (see the final section of chapter 3 below). The whole impetus of the return to the theory of the drives lies in the search for a way out of the subject of lack (the subject absent from, subordinated to, the signifier).

When Kristeva comes partially to revise her position on transference in analysis, she proposes a thoroughly Lacanian description of it: 'the object of psychoanalysis is simply the *linguistic exchange* - and the accidents that are a part of that exchange - between two subjects in a situation of *transference* and *countertransference*' (*IBWL*, p. 1).

12 'Du "Trieb" de Freud et du désir du psychanalyste', *Écrits*, Editions du Seuil, p. 853.

13 The analysis of 'aggression' in Klein's middle period contains the notion of a 'restitutive' affection, but it is only in 1937 that she fully develops the concept of 'reparation'. Compare the discussions of the relation between sadism and anxiety in the formation of the super-ego (*The Psychoanalysis of Children*, 1932, Virago 1989) with 'Love, Guilt and Reparation' (1937) in *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, Virago 1988.

Kristeva develops Klein's notion of 'aggression' in pre-Oedipal object-relations into a component of her theory of narcissism (see chapter 4 below), and ultimately into an irreducible component of the intrapsychic law of intersubjectivity (chapter 5 below).

Notes to chapter 3

1 Kristeva's economy of 'drive rejection' presents a fundamental dimension of (re)symbolization: 'This is the mechanism of innovation, which displaces the frameworks of the real, and, as Marx has shown, characterizes social practice in all domains, *but especially and with the most immediate violence, in politics*'. (RPL, p. 179; my emphasis)

2

The amount of 'drive pressure' (*Triebdrang*) depends on the extent of the contrast between the genes that condition the whole. Modern genetic theory has confirmed this doubling and its repetition and has made it more precise by positing the reversed selection of doubles in the constitution of new structures. (RPL, pp. 168-9)

For Kristeva, the limitation of genetic theory resides in the 'substantialism' which sets its account of the constitution of new structures apart from the social dimension contained in Freud's theory of the drives. When genetic theory comes to apply its findings to psychopathological phenomena the result is a 'crude typology' (p. 169). Kristeva's acknowledgement of this theory for having provided a more precise understanding of drive behaviour is therefore qualified: the theory failed to comprehend the determinations of the drives' differentiation-and-connection of the 'biological' and the 'symbolic' (p. 167).

3 The expression 'localization' and the citation on the possibility of ontologizing the unconscious are taken from Samuel Weber's introduction to the thought of Lacan. (Samuel Weber (1978), *Return to Freud. Jacques Lacan's Dislocation of Psychoanalysis*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 63.)

Weber emphasizes Lacan's treatment of the aporia opened up by Saussure's structural linguistics. Saussure both indicated the 'differential' nature of the signifier vis-à-vis the signified (the signified is an 'effect' of the signifier), and specified the 'unity' of the sign, or correspondence of signifier and signified. The aporia opens up when the signifier's differential operations is once again reduced to the metaphysical principle of the primacy of the ideational content (on which the 'identity' of signifier and signified is based). It is an aporia owing to the necessity, for Saussure, of positing the unity of the sign if there is to be an isolatable object of linguistics: *langue* or the 'system' of language. (Weber, chapter 3).

4 'Device' translates Kristeva's '*dispositif*', a previous thesis of the signifying process, a signifying 'arrangement' of semiotic functioning (dis-positif).

6 See chapter 4 below.

7 Kristeva's 'ethics of psychoanalysis' is quite consistent with this thesis of the early writings, and the latter remains unaffected by the abandonment of Maoism.

8 See the Appendix below for a justification for using this Hegelian term - (mis)recognition - in reference to Kristeva's exposition of the renewal of re-jection.

9 See note 23 to chapter 1 above, on the fact that Kojève fails to comment on the configuration of 'perception'.

10 When Kristeva does not specify 'objective material relations' she avoids the attention to the forms of 'classical philosophy' which is present in Lukács's studies on Marxist dialectics (*History and Class Consciousness*). Kristeva neither articulates the Marxist thought she depends on, nor returns to its relation to German idealism as a whole.

11 Stewart Smith (ed.) *Collected Works*, trans. Clemens Dutt, vol. 38.

12 *Révolution du langage poétique*, Editions du Seuil 1974, p. 178.

13 'From One Identity to an Other', in *Desire in Language*, pp. 142-3.

14 Oxford Amnesty International Lecture Series, 1992.

15 'From One Identity to an Other', p. 146.

16 See chapter 4.

17 Kristeva, following Freud's text on 'Negation', emphasizes the inextricability of the 'unconscious' and 'repression'. Kristeva's claim that the text 'has' no unconscious rests on her claim that its 'act' recalls 'the dialectical moment of the generating of signifiante' prior to the mode of negation which links repression and the unconscious. (*RPL*, II, chapter 7).

18 Those who have drawn attention to this problem include Jacqueline Rose, who is alert to the consequences of abstracting the 'semiotic' from the 'symbolic', and grasps the significance of Céline in Kristeva's thought (1986, pp. 143-4); Anthony Elliott, who appreciates the value for social and political thought of Kristeva's concept of the 'imaginary', but suggests that 'a thoroughgoing revision of the Lacanian

concept of the symbolic' is necessary (1992, p. 230); and Paul Smith, who abhors what he regards as the primacy of the 'semiotic' in Kristeva's later writings, believing that the concept of 'heterogeneous contradiction' has been abandoned and that it sustained the political dimension of Kristeva's thought (1989, p. 89).

19 *SL*, p. 142.

Notes to Intertext

1 See chapter 3 above, note 1.

2 See chapter 4, section A3, below for Kristeva's interpretation of the 'immediate' in Hegel.

3 In Hegelian logic, the infinite that posits the finite appears in the logic of 'essence'. Kristeva's concept of 'restructuration' would appear to avoid this notion of causality.

4 See chapter 5 below, section A.

5 See chapter 3 above, note 2.

6 See *NN*, p. 53 and note the title to the final chapter of *Strangers to Ourselves*, with its ellipsis: 'In Practice...'. Kristeva's turn to 'political sociology' is discussed below in chapter 5.

Notes to chapter 4

1 Smith (1989), p. 90; Elliott (1992), p. 227.

2 Kristeva's criticism of structural linguistics as enclosed within the bounds of the positivist sciences (see chapter 2 above) argued for the loss of the 'socio-historical' dimension of the 'subject'. In the context of the categories of the 'diachronic' and the 'synchronic' therefore, Kristeva's reemphasis on the 'diachronic' dimension of language retrieves the historical determination of its 'synchronic' dimension. The latter, while it retains the preeminence it held in Saussurean linguistics, is therefore released from the structuralist characterization and limitations of the 'synchronic', in which it is posed as the articulation of language as a differential system of 'values' in abstraction from their generation.

3 In the *Ego and the Id*, Freud articulated what would be necessary to negotiate the unconscious sense of guilt; the most profound and intractable obstacle to the cure, if the 'boundary' of analysis is observed:

there is often no counteracting force of a similar order of strength which the treatment can oppose to it. Perhaps it may depend, too, on whether the personality of the analyst allows of the patient's putting him in the place of his ego ideal, and this involves a temptation for the analyst to play the part of prophet, saviour and redeemer to the patient. Since the rules of psychoanalysis

are diametrically opposed to the physician's making use of his personality in such a manner, it must be honestly confessed that here we have another limitation to the effectiveness of analysis. (p. 391, n. 1)

Kristeva's reinvestigation into the 'primary process' and her account of the intelligibility of psychosis, proposes the 'temporary' use of the analyst's personality in such a manner, within the dynamic of transference and countertransference. The limitation of psychoanalysis reemerges as its 'boundary':

Termination of the analysis signals the dissolution of certain fantasies as well as of the analyst, whose omnipotence is put to death... Fantasy returns to our psychic life, but no longer as cause for complaint or source of dogma. Now it provides the energy for a kind of artifice, for the art of living. (IBWL, p. 9)

4 *Grounding for the Metaphysic of Morals* (1775), Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981.

5 The 'utility' of Kristeva's thought for feminism has been presented most recently and comprehensively by Oliver (1993).

6 Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-90), p. 20.

7 Freud, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis*, PFL 11, p. 69:

we are bound to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts are there from the start; so there must be something added to auto-eroticism - a new psychical action - in order to bring about narcissism.

8 The notion of abjection as 'reversed hatred' remains indebted to Klein. See chapter 2 above, note 13.

9 See Smith (1989), p. 87; and Rose (1986), who is aware of the point I am making.

10 'Women's Time', *Kristeva Reader*, p. 210. The expression 'the speaking subject is not innocent' was heard at Kristeva's lecture, presented as part of the Oxford Amnesty International Lectures Series, 1992.

11 *The Ego and the Id*, cited in *TL*, pp. 26-7).

12 The respective positions of Oliver (1993, p. 183) and Elliott (1992, p. 230).

13 Oxford Amnesty International Lecture Series, 1992.

14 See chapter 5 below.

Notes to chapter 5

1 From the first *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794); within the 'Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation' (1794); through the expositions of the foundations of 'natural law' and the 'system of ethics' (1796-8); in the articulation of a 'Closed Commercial State' (1800); and most explicitly in the *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808).

As Lukács remarks in 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', Fichte 'is always concerned with the same problem' (*History and Class Consciousness*, p. 212, n. 20). Lukács argues that Fichte's 'absolute subject' implies, and raises most clearly, the problem of the *concrete* subject=object (p. 123). The philosophy of law developed in the debates of German idealism falls out of Kristeva's treatment of the subject in social and political relations, because the theory of the 'symbolic' identifies all forms of transcendental philosophy in terms of the 'act' of the understanding.

2 In *Oeuvres complètes*, Roger Caillois, ed., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris: Gallimard, 1985, 1: 976.

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