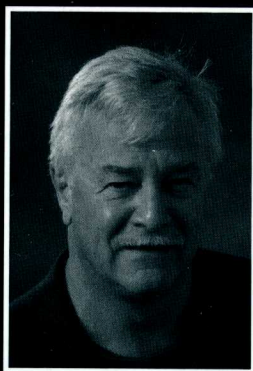


Education, Philosophy and Politics

The selected works of
MICHAEL A. PETERS



MICHAEL A. PETERS



world library of **EDUCATIONALISTS**



Education, Philosophy and Politics

The selected works of Michael A. Peters

Michael A. Peters



First published 2012

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2012 M. A Peters

The right of Michael A. Peters to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Peters, Michael A.

Education, philosophy and politics: the selected works of Michael A. Peters/Michael A. Peters. —1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Peters, Michael A. 2. Education—philosophy. 3. Political science—philosophy. I. Title.

LB885. P47A3 2012

370.1—dc23

2011021782

ISBN: 978-0-415-68605-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-15589-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon

by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Education, Philosophy and Politics

In the **World Library of Educationalists** series, international experts themselves compile career-long collections of what they judge to be their finest pieces – extracts from books, key articles, salient research findings, major theoretical and practical contributions – so the world can read them in a single manageable volume.

Michael Peters has spent the last 30 years researching, thinking and writing about some of the key and enduring issues in education. He has contributed over 60 books (authored, co-authored and edited) and 500 articles to the field.

In *Education, Philosophy and Politics*, Michael Peters brings together 15 of his key writings in one place, including chapters from his best-selling books and articles from leading journals. Starting with a specially written introduction, which gives an overview of Michael's career and contextualises his selection, the essays are then arranged thematically to create a pathway for thinking in philosophy of education which is forward looking but takes account of tradition and the past. The subjects of the chapters include:

- Wittgenstein studies
- Philosophical critique of modernity
- French poststructuralism
- Jean-Francois Lyotard
- Foucault and Deleuze
- Derrida
- American pragmatism
- Rorty
- Cavell
- Philosophy and racism.

Through this book, readers can follow the themes and strands that Michael Peters has written about for over three decades and clearly see his important contribution to the field of education.

Michael A. Peters is Professor of Education at the University of Waikato, New Zealand and Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), USA.

World Library of Educationalists series

Other books in the series:

Lessons from History of Education

The selected works of Richard Aldrich

Richard Aldrich

Education Policy and Social Class

The selected works of Stephen J. Ball

Stephen J. Ball

Reimagining Schools

The selected works of Elliot W. Eisner

Elliot W. Eisner

Reflecting Where the Action Is

The selected works of John Elliott

John Elliott

Development and Education of the Mind

The selected works of Howard Gardner

Howard Gardner

Constructing Worlds through Science Education

The selected works of John K. Gilbert

John K. Gilbert

Learning, Curriculum and Life Politics

The selected works of Ivor F. Goodson

Ivor F. Goodson

The Curriculum and the Child

The selected works of John White

John White

The Art and Science of Teaching and Learning

The selected works of Ted Wragg

E.C. Wragg

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original sources for chapters are given below. I have changed the titles of some chapters from the original to better reflect the coherence of the collection.

- 1 'Philosophy as Pedagogy: Wittgenstein's Styles of Thinking', in Michael A. Peters and J. D. Marshall, *Wittgenstein: Philosophy, Postmodernism, Pedagogy*, Westport, CT and London: Bergin & Garvey, 1999, pp. 174–91.
- 2 'Writing the Self: Wittgenstein, confession and pedagogy', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 34, 2, 2000: 353–68.
- 3 'The Analytic/Continental Divide: Nietzsche and The Critique of Modernity', in Michael A. Peters, J. D. Marshall and P. Smeyers (eds), *Nietzsche's Legacy for Education: Past and Present Values*, Westport, CT and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2001, pp. 187–206.
- 4 'Introduction: Heidegger, Education and Modernity', in M. Peters (ed.), *Heidegger, Education and Modernity*, Boulder, CA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 1–24.
- 5 'Truth-Telling as an Educational Practice of the Self: Foucault, Parrhesia and the ethics of subjectivity', *Oxford Review of Education*, 29 (2), 2003: 207–23.
- 6 'Neoliberal Governmentality: Foucault on the Birth of Biopolitics', in S. Weber and S. Maurer (eds), *Gouvernementalität und Erziehungswissenschaft* (Governmentality and educational science), Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag (Publisher for Social Sciences VS), 2006, pp. 37–50.
- 7 'Lyotard, Nihilism and Education', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 25 (4), 2006: 303–14.
- 8 'Gilles Deleuze's "Societies of Control": From disciplinary pedagogy to perpetual training', *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 23 (4), 2001.
- 9 'Humanism, Derrida, and the New Humanities', in G. Biesta and D. Egea-Kuehne (eds), *Derrida and Education*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 209–31.
- 10 'Rorty, Wittgenstein, and Postmodernism: Neopragmatism and the Politics of the Ethnos', in Michael A. Peters and J. D. Marshall, *Wittgenstein: Philosophy, Postmodernism, Pedagogy*, Westport, CT and London: Bergin & Garvey, 1999, pp. 133–51.
- 11 'Achieving America: Rorty, Postmodernism and the Critique of the Cultural Left', *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies* 22 (3), 2000: 223–41.

- 12 'Wittgensteinian Pedagogics: Cavell on the figure of the child in the *Investigations*', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 20 (2), 2001: 125–38.
- 13 'White Philosophy in/of America', *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, 10, 2011, forthcoming.

I would like to thank Anna Clarkson for her encouragement and support in assembling this collection.

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
Introduction: education, philosophy and politics	1
<i>Notes</i> 10	
<i>References</i> 10	
1 Philosophy as pedagogy: Wittgenstein's styles of thinking	12
<i>Introduction</i> 12	
<i>Wittgenstein as philosophy teacher</i> 14	
<i>Wittgenstein, teaching and philosophy</i> 17	
<i>The style of the Investigations: dialogue and pedagogy</i> 20	
<i>Notes</i> 24	
<i>References</i> 26	
2 Writing the self: Wittgenstein, confession and pedagogy	29
<i>Introduction</i> 29	
<i>Culture and Value – autobiosophy/philography</i> 31	
<i>Confession as a redeemed 'philosophical' genre</i> 33	
<i>Reading and writing the self</i> 38	
<i>Notes</i> 41	
<i>References</i> 42	
3 Nietzsche, nihilism and the critique of modernity: post-Nietzschean philosophy of education	44
<i>Introduction</i> 44	
<i>Nietzsche and the analytic/Continental divide</i> 44	
<i>Nietzsche and the critique of modernity</i> 47	
<i>Habermas, Nietzsche, and the question of postmodernity</i> 50	
<i>Note</i> 53	
<i>References</i> 54	
4 Heidegger, education and modernity	56
<i>The reception of Heidegger</i> 57	
<i>Heidegger's critique of modernity</i> 61	

vi Contents

<i>Heidegger, politics and Nazism</i>	64
<i>Sources of Heidegger's anti-modernism</i>	65
<i>Beyond modernity?</i>	67
<i>Notes</i>	69
<i>References</i>	70
5 Truth-telling as an educational practice of the self: Foucault and the ethics of subjectivity	73
<i>Introduction</i>	73
<i>Foucault on truth: from regimes to games of truth</i>	75
<i>Parrhesia, education and practices of truth-telling</i>	78
<i>Conclusion: Foucault and the prospects for parrhesiastical education</i>	84
<i>Notes</i>	86
<i>References</i>	87
6 Neoliberal governmentality: Foucault on the birth of biopolitics	89
<i>Introduction</i>	89
<i>German neoliberalism and the birth of biopolitics</i>	92
<i>German neoliberalism and the birth of the European social model</i>	95
<i>Notes</i>	96
<i>References</i>	98
7 Lyotard, nihilism and education	100
<i>Introduction: the problem of nihilism in education</i>	100
<i>A brief history of European nihilism – Nietzsche and Heidegger</i>	102
<i>Lyotard and European nihilism</i>	104
<i>Language-games and The Postmodern Condition</i>	107
<i>Lyotard's passage to The Differend</i>	108
<i>Notes</i>	111
<i>References</i>	111
8 Gilles Deleuze's 'societies of control': from disciplinary pedagogy to perpetual training	113
<i>Introduction</i>	113
<i>Disciplinary societies, disciplinary pedagogies</i>	114
<i>Deleuze's 'societies of control' and continuous education</i>	116
<i>Notes</i>	125
<i>References</i>	125
9 Geophilosophy, education and the pedagogy of the concept	127
<i>Introduction</i>	127
<i>Philosophy as concept creation</i>	127
<i>Geophilosophy</i>	129
<i>An excursus: the principle of territory and the geography of reason</i>	131
<i>Capitalism, philosophy and the state</i>	132
<i>Notes</i>	134
<i>References</i>	135

10	Humanism, Derrida and the new humanities	136
	<i>Introduction</i> 136	
	<i>Renaissance humanism and education</i> 136	
	<i>Martin Heidegger's Letter on Humanism</i> 139	
	<i>Derrida, humanism and the new humanities</i> 141	
	<i>Notes</i> 148	
	<i>References</i> 151	
11	Politics and deconstruction: Derrida, neoliberalism and democracy to come	154
	<i>Introduction: politics and deconstruction</i> 154	
	<i>Derrida, neoliberalism and anti-Nietzscheanism: re-writing the subject</i> 158	
	<i>Democracy to come</i> 162	
	<i>Notes</i> 164	
	<i>References</i> 165	
12	Neopragmatism, ethnocentrism and the politics of the <i>ethnos</i> : Rorty's 'postmodernist bourgeois liberalism'	168
	<i>Introduction</i> 168	
	<i>Rorty's philosophical trajectory</i> 169	
	<i>Rorty's postmodernist bourgeois liberalism</i> 172	
	<i>Notes</i> 181	
	<i>References</i> 183	
13	Achieving America: postmodernism and Rorty's critique of the cultural left	186
	<i>Introduction</i> 186	
	<i>'Postmodernism' and Rorty's narrative turn</i> 189	
	<i>Achieving America</i> 192	
	<i>Notes</i> 196	
	<i>References</i> 197	
14	Deranging the <i>Investigations</i> : Cavell on the philosophy of the child	199
	<i>Introduction</i> 199	
	<i>The 'voice' of the child in the Investigations</i> 202	
	<i>Note</i> 207	
	<i>References</i> 207	
15	White philosophy in/of America	208
	<i>Introduction</i> 208	
	<i>The idea of American philosophy</i> 210	
	<i>Narratives of 'white philosophy'</i> 214	
	<i>The hope of American pragmatism</i> 216	
	<i>Notes</i> 218	
	<i>References</i> 219	
	<i>Index</i>	221

INTRODUCTION

Education, philosophy and politics

Education, philosophy and politics is the *tripos* that occupies a central place within the Western tradition defining the canon and genres, as well as the practices of political and pedagogical institutions that to a large extent have endured in one form or another premised upon the notion of *logos* and dialogical exchange as the educational basis for the pursuit of the good life. It is difficult to separate these elements historically, and from ancient times they have together formed the cultural basis of life in the *polis*: in a word, education as the political philosophy of democratic citizenship and participation. Contemporary discussions of early Greek philosophy have emphasized the strong connections between philosophy and politics. Following the work of Jean-Pierre Vernant (1962/1982) and others, G. E. R. Lloyd (1979) argued that *in addition to* other relevant factors such as the spread of literacy, the political dimension is crucial for understanding the characteristic openness and dialectical argumentation that distinguished early Greek philosophy. He focuses on the experience that many Greek citizens acquired in the evaluation of evidence and arguments in the contexts of politics and the law. In *The Origins of Greek Thought* (1982) Jean-Pierre Vernant inquired of the relationship between the newly discovered Mycenaean world and the invention of rationality by the Greeks providing an answer that points to the democratic political experience of archaic Greece, and the development of discourse in relation to civic duties. In this context a number of contemporary philosophers including Michel Foucault, Pierre Hadot and Stanley Cavell have proposed new ways of approaching ethics and of reconfiguring the task of philosophy and education that focuses on spiritual *exercises* of ethical self-transformation and ideals of moral perfection often conceived of as forms of wisdom. In their work spiritual exercises, practices of the self, ways of life, the aesthetics of existence, and the care of the self displace the picture of morality as primarily a code of good conduct.

In my work I view Wittgenstein as someone who also practiced this ideal and who is to be distinguished as a philosopher who constantly reflected upon the nature of philosophy and embodied the ideal of philosophy-as-pedagogy – the philosopher as teacher and the teacher as philosopher. This is the essence of a philosophical education established by thinkers who challenged the canon and see education as a living engagement with freedom. Pierre Hadot (2004: 3) expresses the view that ‘philosophical discourse . . . originates in a choice of life and an existential option’ which are ‘never made in solitude’ but only ever in relation to a community or philosophical school.¹

The contemporary significance of this conception of the moral life is closely tied to the institutionalization of philosophy and pedagogy, the development of free speech in the

2 Introduction

city-state, the contestability of tradition and the innovation and rhetorical skill of those in pre-Socratic traditions that set themselves up self-consciously as teachers and philosophers who were critical of tradition. Yet it is clear that both ancient and classical Greece had strong cultural and economic connections with the eastern and central Mediterranean. Early Greek writing, art and city culture owed a great deal to the Near East. I mention this because many scholars now question the coherence of the concept of the West conceived as an unbroken thread with pure origins that miraculously began in classical Greece. Yet many of the philosophers who have guided me and constitute the object of discussion and criticism in this collection appeal to classical Greece heritage and make the return to classical Greek texts in order to understand the philosophical and pedagogical traditions of the West and in some cases to overturn some of its deepest commitments and values.

In defining 'philosophy before philosophy' Hadot (2004) identifies two currents of pre-Socratic Greek thought. First, the intellectual movement that began with Thales in Miletus, followed by Anaximander and Anaximenes and then spread to other Greek colonies in the sixth century to be taken up by Xenophanes, Pythagoras, Parmenides and Empedocles. This movement proposed a *rational* explanation of the world against the mythical narratives of past and existing cosmogonies. Second: 'the desire to educate, or the concern for what the Greeks called *paideia*' (p. 11), essentially a form of aristocratic education aimed at the nobility of the soul or what later became 'virtue'.² The Sophist pedagogical tradition originated in response to the needs of Athenian democracy by professional teachers who were often strangers to the city or immigrants who taught their students the language skills of persuasion and argumentation required to take part in the struggle for power that dominated the democratic life of the Assembly. In addition, they taught enough of all the subjects that comprised *culture* – science, geometry, astronomy, history, sociology and law – in order to achieve *aretē* or 'excellence', a kind of competence that was 'intended to enable young people to play a role in the city' (p. 14). While the teachings of the Sophists was based on all the accumulated knowledge it was submitted to radical critique even though ultimately the goal was the education of youth for a success in the life of the *polis*.

This is a tradition in which I would like to situate myself: not so much an 'applied philosopher' – one who applies philosophy to practical problems in the field of education – but rather someone who embraces a philosophical form of life, who not only believes in the significance of the status of the question and a life of study implied by attachment to teaching institutions but also someone who seeks to focus on how we might set ourselves free from the impositions of tradition and in particular to encourage an escape from the forms of institutionalization and ethnocentrism that define and shape our institutions, our forms of reading and writing, and our subjectivities. Education as dialogue, broadly speaking, is the attempt to understand how non-formalizable acts of conversation serve to break the spell of the logic of a proposition or the sheer force of argumentation directing us away from *dialogue as dialectic* to *dialogue as open intercultural conversations* that permit and enable the other to speak (Besley and Peters, 2011). It is this extension of speaking and acting chances that historically distinguishes the conversation of democracy and in the age of new social media we may at last be moving beyond the one-way, industrial, broadcast, one-to-the-many transmission model of public pedagogy into a many-to-many, interactive, peer-to-peer model of openness that serves as the new global public space for education and democracy (Peters and Roberts, 2011).

Ludwig Wittgenstein is the philosopher that most defines my approach and orientation, although I have wrestled with the sphere of his influence and sought to check it through the writings of Nietzsche and Foucault, among others, who together provide a

theory of power in relation to language and discourse. He was not a classical scholar and, indeed, by some accounts he was contemptuous of the Western tradition dating from the Greeks. In his notebooks he makes some perceptive remarks about Socrates' search for the essential definition of a word and is critical of both Socrates' conception of dialogue and his use of power in reducing the Sophists to silence:

Reading the Socratic dialogues one has the feeling: what a terrible waste of time! What's the point of these arguments that prove nothing and make nothing clearer? (Wittgenstein, 1980: 14).

Socrates keeps reducing the Sophist to silence – but does he have *right* on his side when he does this? Well, it is true that the Sophist does not know what he thinks he knows; but that is no triumph for Socrates. It can't be a case of 'You see, you don't know it!' – nor yet triumphantly 'So none of us knows anything!' (ibid.: 56).

Wittgenstein draws our attention to the way Socrates shuts down conversation, in dialogical exchange with his adversary he trumps each argument to show the errors of his interlocutors. Dialogue as a hermeneutics of the self is based on the recognition of the pragmatics of context in the co-determination of meaning which ideally initiates a dialogue with others and ourselves, with language and ultimately with both human understanding and the history of philosophy. It is what Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) refers to as 'the dialogical imagination' (Peters, 2011a).

Philosophy has been dominated by the philosophy of self since the time of the ancient oracle at Delphi who invokes us to 'know thyself' and as both Foucault (1988) and Hadot (2004: 21) explain, 'care of the self', 'moderation in all things' and in fact a whole list of maxims (some 140 of them) that defined the moral life including education. In antiquity, selfhood and the subject can be traced in the conjuncture of metaphysics, philosophical psychology and ethics. Plato defined the soul as the essence of being and Aristotle considered the self as an activity of the body. Avicenna, the Persian philosopher, imagined the self as consisting in human self-awareness that demonstrated the substantiality of the soul. Scholasticism, derived from medieval centers of learning, sought to harmonize the concept of the soul in a rational theology. The concept of self-determination as a positive idea of freedom based on the philosophy of free will (construed as the ability to make choices) is intimately connected to the question of moral responsibility. For the Greek and particularly for Aristotle the closest relation to the complex modern idea of freewill was the idea and concept that our actions 'depend on us', that we are in some sense the cause of our actions. While the Romans had the same combination of 'free' and 'will' in their term *liberum arbitrium* or *libera voluntas*, the Greeks had no such combination.

The concept of the unified self as a source of consciousness that is a responsible agent receives an influential treatment in Descartes' 'philosophy of interiority' as the first step in theory of knowledge. For Descartes, the 'subject' (the 'ego', the 'I', 'res cogitans') is something that thinks and Descartes starts from the 'ego' (the 'subject') the 'cogito sum' as indubitable and thus able to serve as the certain foundation for knowledge, enabling the liberation of philosophy from theology. But Descartes' distinction between thought and extension, mind and body, is the distinction between the subject and the object that that makes possible the distinction between the knower and what he knows as the beginning of modern epistemology. The notion of the self as a 'subject', as the source of subjective experiences, consciousness and feelings becomes a central term in the modern Continental tradition in debates over human autonomy taking new forms in German idealism with Kant and Hegel largely in response to Hume's radical scepticism

4 Introduction

who regards the self as nothing more than a bundle of perceptions. Like many philosophers in the idealist tradition before him, Hegel believes that consciousness of objects necessarily implies some awareness of self, as a subject, which is separate from the perceived object. But he takes this idea of self-consciousness a step further and asserts that subjects are also objects to other subjects in his famous formulation of 'master/slave dialectic' based on the 'struggle for recognition' implied in self-consciousness: self as negation of others. Idealist notions of the subject as a unified source of consciousness become the basis for radical critique in the hands of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche who begin to deconstruct the notion of autonomy that underlies the social contract in liberal political theory. It was Heidegger who perhaps most fully rethinks the notion of the subject as embodying human self-consciousness and a generation of scholars following him – Lacan, Althusser, Foucault, Bourdieu, Derrida – question the tradition of the philosophy of the subject (and the self as essence) as a foundation for liberal institutions, not least schools, universities and the liberal theory of education and morality.

The philosophy of the subject took different philosophical forms in response to different historical and cultural contexts. The humanistic tradition in philosophy around the time of the Florentine Renaissance really constitutes a form of pedagogy more than a coherent philosophy and it is preoccupied with the process of character formation in relation to the speaking and writing subject (Peters, 2001). Jacob Burckhardt (1978), the cultural historian who influenced Nietzsche so deeply, in his now classic work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, provides an account that links the transformation of the city into a state ('The state as a work of art') based on the educational development of the individual and the revival of the culture of Antiquity in the schools and universities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

What Wittgenstein shares with Nietzsche, Heidegger and the French tradition is the questioning of the anthropocentrism of the Western tradition especially as it comes to dominate modern philosophy in the Cartesian model of man as a basis for universal knowledge, morality and political action. My efforts as an educational philosopher in the shadow of vastly more insightful thinkers has been to realize the consequences of forms of pedagogical humanism, to critique them, to expose their ideological, anthropological and ethnocentric forms, to open them up to scrutiny and, thereby, to deepen them and make them more profound. This is in part the source for the critique of individualism, in its crude economic form of *homo economicus*, and of liberalism as a political and educational philosophy.

Wittgenstein, together with Nietzsche and Heidegger, operated for me as a kind of platform to approach French poststructuralist thinkers – Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard – and the American post-Wittgensteinians, Richard Rorty and Stanley Cavell. Wittgenstein, I have argued in a series of publications, sometimes with friends like James Marshall, Nicholas Burbules and Paul Smeyers, is a 'pedagogical philosopher' who anticipates many of the themes that dominate postmodern philosophy and displays an uncanny series of resemblances to a number of significant motifs in the work of Nietzsche and Heidegger: the concern with a post-metaphysical philosophy or way forward that highlights a cultural and historical picture of language, the significance of the question of style or form of thinking and its philosophical genres, the notion of multiplicity and use in language that deconstructs totalizing and monotheistic conceptions of dialogue.

The best sources on Wittgenstein I have found tend to emphasize the 'openness' of later Wittgenstein's texts, their dialogical, pedagogical and pragmatic nature, and the persistence of the question of philosophy and pedagogy as a way of life. Wittgenstein's cultural turn to 'practices' of which language use is a part enables him to emphasize a

contextualism, a form of semantic and epistemological holism, that view meaning as a characteristic of sentences rather than concepts, and meaning as relative to the speaker and the context of use. This enables us to take a historicist approach to philosophy itself and to the question on the materiality of discourse whose forms are to a large extent dependent on the rules of genres. From this perspective – what is called ‘speaking, reading and writing the self’ – I am inclined to view Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* as a multi-faceted non-dialectical *dialogue* in the tradition of a philosophical confession that wrestles with the problems of modern philosophy and the Cartesian model of subjectivity.

By contrast Nietzsche, who was a classical scholar strongly oriented to Greek classical culture, complained that Enlightenment philosophers had idealized and *aesthetized* Greek culture as noble, elegant and grandiose, stripping it of its vitality as a warrior culture and burying the unpleasant truths. In classical Greek tragedy he found an art form that transcended meaninglessness and depicted life as a struggle between Apollonian and Dionysian elements (Nietzsche, 1962/1872). This struggle comprised both an aesthetic of order, clarity and rationality based on the Olympian deities and the Homeric heritage and also the dark side of humanity driven by intoxication, sexual license, and the dissolution of the individual representing the irrationality, destructive and narcotic Dionysian impulse. In his later work he contemplates an education infused with various historical modes of knowing and consciousness that understands the past requires interpretive skills based on understanding the oracle’s invocation to ‘know thyself’ (Nietzsche). For Nietzsche the investigation of the past is always an exploration of oneself and one’s cultural inheritances. Only through this process are we enabled to move towards forms of self-mastery and health. Nietzsche’s study of Greek philosophy and culture was an important source of his critique of the nineteenth century. Soon after the publication of the *Birth of Tragedy* in 1872 Nietzsche delivered a series of lectures entitled ‘On the Future of Our Educational Institutions’ in which he criticized the utilitarian functions of Germany’s education for the state and pursues a vision that suggests the genius artist can recreate culture through great works and liberate the true self through forms of ‘self-overcoming’ and self mastery. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), the work that continues a thread connecting truth, power and subjectivity, Nietzsche confronts the philosophical question of the *value* of truth, its deeper expression as the will to power and knowledge, and its primacy in the history of Western metaphysics.

In *Nietzsche*, a four volume work completed over the period 1936–62, Heidegger focuses on clarifying what metaphysics is – the structures of Being—and Nietzsche’s place as ‘the last philosopher’ who completes and exhausts all the possibilities of the metaphysics of subjectivity with its emphasis on the will to power that leads to ‘becoming’ which is the supreme act of willing and eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger indicates that Nietzsche’s major work *The Will to Power* integrates his principal concepts – will to power, eternal recurrence into a unity, revaluation of all values in view of nihilism – into a unity that did not come together before Nietzsche became disabled by mental illness. Fundamental to Heidegger’s discussion of the ‘event’ of Being is a kind of historicist thinking that understands the nihilism at the root of contemporary morality and politics that cannot be

overcome by tearing away at it or shoving it aside—which is what we do when we replace the Christian God with yet another ideal, such as Reason, Progress, political and economic ‘Socialism,’ or mere Democracy (II 179; I 442).

Nietzsche, for Heidegger, was the first philosopher to point to new beginnings for the West in ways that go beyond nihilism to a humanity that was no longer tied to a conception of Being understood in terms of the relations of production or necessarily

6 Introduction

tied to Western nihilism culminating in the industrial-technological era. Perhaps, most insightfully, Heidegger understands art as both the most expressive configuration of the will to power (*techné*) and also as a *poiesis* or 'bringing forth' that involves the most profound forms of self-creation in a world without God. The question is whether either Nietzsche or Heidegger provides genuine new beginnings for a post-metaphysical West and what role education, culture and art might play in this new beginning.

Deleuze's (1983/1962) highly influential book on Nietzsche occupies a central place in the contemporary history of French poststructuralism as an exegetical reading that emphasized forces of multiplicity – the logic of affirmation and difference rather than negation – and a philosophy of becoming. Deleuze introduces Nietzsche's work in the form of a general semiology that is also concerned with power and forms both as ethics and ontology. As he argues, Nietzsche diagnoses nihilism as the movement of history to which he opposes the affirmation of power where the reactive forces of *ressentiment* and bad conscience are finally conquered. It is a work that is set against Hegel and the dialectic; as he argues in the formulation 'The Games of the Will to Power against the Power of the Dialectic':

Three ideas define the dialectic: the idea of power of the negative as a theoretical principle manifested in opposition and contradiction; the idea that suffering and sadness, the valorization of the 'sad passions', as a practical principle manifested in splitting and tearing apart; the idea of a positivity as a theoretical principle and practical product of negation itself. It is no exaggeration to say that the whole of Nietzsche's philosophy, in its polemic sense, is an attack on these three ideas. (1983: 195–6)

Deleuze's radical questioning of the dialectic is to be contrasted with the purely positive power of the affirmation inherent in the principle of 'difference' as the linguistic constant that serves as the basis for a notion of the subject that is not tied to negation, to self as negation of other, to the master–slave dialectic locked in a struggle to the death, or to Hegelian or Marxist politics. Deleuze's Nietzschean critique of the Hegelian dialectic culminates in *Difference and Repetition* where difference is subordinated to identity as a transcendental principle that ties together the themes of difference, multiplicity, virtuality and intensity based on a genetic model of difference that repudiates the essential model of identity (Plato), the regulative model of unity (Kant), and the dialectical model of contradiction (Hegel) (Smith and Protevi, 2008).

The 'decentering' of structure, of the transcendental signified, and of the sovereign subject, Derrida suggests – naming his sources of inspiration – can be found in the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics and, especially, of the concepts of being and truth, in the Freudian critique of self-presence, as he says, 'the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity and of self-proximity or self-possession' (Derrida, 1978: 280), and, more radically, in the Heideggerian destruction of metaphysics, 'of the determination of Being as presence' (ibid.). In the body of the essay, Derrida considers the theme of 'decentering' in relation to Lévi-Strauss' ethnology and concludes by distinguishing two interpretations of structure. One, Hegelian in origin and exemplified in Lévi-Strauss' work, he argues, 'dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign' and seeks the 'inspiration of a new humanism'. The other, 'which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism' (Derrida, 1978: 292).

Foucault turns to Nietzsche to inquire and unmask the power/knowledge condition of language and discourse, and the discursive formations and regimes that make 'truth' possible. In 'Prison Talk' Foucault (1977/1975) suggests:

It was Nietzsche who specified the power relation as the general focus, shall we say, of philosophical discourse – whereas for Marx it was the productive relation. Nietzsche is the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory in order to do so.

In 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' Foucault (1971) elaborates how Nietzsche sets genealogy against metaphysics and the search for truth, challenging the pursuit of origins as the misguided attempt to find the essence of things. Genealogical analysis reveals that behind things there is 'not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms' (p. 78). And he goes on to provide a reading that questions the notion of origins as a site for truth:

Examining the history of reason, he learns that it was born in an altogether 'reasonable' fashion from chance; devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition- the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason. Further, genealogical analysis shows that the concept of liberty is an 'invention of the ruling classes' and not fundamental to man's nature or at the root of his attachment to being and truth (p. 78).

Against this background Foucault reestablishes the concept of *descent* (*Herkunft*), as affiliation, the dispersion of events, and its attachment to the body as the inscribed surface of events and *emergence* (*Entstehung*) as the play of forces. Genealogy cultivates a form of 'effective' history and an historical sense that opposes the three modalities of Platonic history:

The first is parodic, directed against reality, and opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; the second is dissociative, directed against identity, and opposes history given as continuity or representative of a tradition; the third is sacrificial, directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge (p. 93).

Foucault's project is to link genealogy to questions of historical ontology and the ways we constitute ourselves in relation to truth as subjects of knowledge, as subjects and moral agents acting on others. This orientation ties in closely with what he calls 'the genealogy of ethics' based on the investigation of 'techniques of the self' in the history of Western ethics and informed by the ideal of 'care for the self'. This is an exercise of understanding how human beings give meaning to moral conduct as an inquiry of the relationship of the self to itself, rather than an approach that tries to grasp the conception of morality through an objective or scientific account of what it is to be human. He is interested in describing and analyzing of how human beings in different eras have come to conceive of their own conduct as ethical around a series of problems such as sexuality or freedom that emerged as a system of practices. He demonstrates how the ethical self emerges out of a series of practices of self-reflection.

This line of philosophical inquiry also coalesced with the work of two post-Wittgensteinian philosophers in the American tradition – Richard Rorty and Stanley Cavell – who, each in their own way, self-consciously acted as a bridge between analytic and Continental philosophy while reforming or reshaping American philosophy as something distinctively American. Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979),