

Avowing Violence:
Foucault and Derrida on Politics, Discourse, and Meaning

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Abstract

This paper enquires into the understanding of violence, and the place of violence in the understanding of politics, in the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. These two engaged in a dispute about the place of violence in their respective philosophical projects. The trajectories of their respective subsequent bodies of thought about power, politics and justice, and the degrees of affirmation or condemnation of violent nature of reality, language, society and authority can be analysed in relation to political traditions of realism, radicalism and liberalism. We trace the starting points, and points of convergence and divergence, between them, and consider the implications of their work for our capacity to critically judge episodes and uses of violence in political contexts.

Keywords:

Foucault, Derrida, violence, politics, state, legitimacy, justice, realism, liberalism

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1. Introduction

In this paper we examine the construction and evaluation of violence in the work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). This critical work is part of a larger project in which we examine justifications of violence, and theoretical treatments of violence as a theme, in political theory contexts. In particular we here enquire of Foucault and Derrida what critical and normative resources they offer for judgement, both of uses of violence in politics, and also of the ways in which conceptual and theoretical links are made between politics and violence in their own, and in others', political thought.

Differences between Foucault and Derrida are vividly apparent in their famous dispute about the interpretation of Descartes' cogito, and Foucault's thesis about the origins of the 'division' between reason and unreason in the classical age.¹ Derrida accuses Foucault's work in *Folie et deraison* (1961) of doing violence to Descartes' *Meditations* as philosophy, and, more generally, of enacting a totalitarian kind of violence.² Foucault's response to this charge, in turn, identifies Derridean deconstruction with sovereign exclusion, the permanent possibility of making texts subject to the sovereign, arbitrary power of the reader.³ Foucault and Derrida differ, in shifting ways across the trajectory of their work, in their respective degrees of affirmation and condemnation of the violent nature of reality,

social relations, language and knowledge. The cogito dispute illustrates the differences in the ways, in their early work, they conceptualise and characterise violence.

The developments of their thinking about the nature and role of violence, however, also show some convergences, in particular in the implications for theory of the relation between violence and politics. Ultimately, we argue, Derrida and Foucault share what might be called a 'radical resignation' about violence. For both, the possibilities of a world without violence are elusive or even nonsensical. In Foucault's case, throughout, a fascination with the radical possibilities of violence is accompanied by a constant confirmation of the close relation between violent practices and sovereign, disciplinary and bio-political power. Derrida's 'radical resignation' takes different forms at different times. In his early work the finding of violence everywhere is accompanied by condemnation but also by an implied view that violence simply is ubiquitous. In later work, he conceptualises different forms of violence - specifically, worse and better. He also addresses the theme of responsibility in connection with necessary and inevitable violence. In the end, for both thinkers, violence presents a ubiquitous challenge, but also a condition of possibility, for political thought and action. We can link Foucault's articulation of politics and violence with the Sorelian tradition of 'virtuous violence'.⁴ Derrida's later work links clearly to the theme of human rights, and in particular to the role of international organisations in their realisation. Ultimately their understandings of the meaning and effects of violence remain distinct, and the broader conclusions they draw for political judgment and practice, in a violent world, are not the same.

2. Violence, Reason and the Subject

“Evil is freed from all that its wealth of iconographic fauna could do, to preserve only a general power of intimidation: the secret danger of an animality that lies in wait and, all at once, undoes reason in violence and truth in the madman’s frenzy”.⁵

This sentence from Foucault’s account of the place of madness in shifting constructions of forms of unreason in the classical age typifies the ways in which violence is characterised in his early work. On the one hand, violence is always felt, embodied and historicized. On the other, extremes of violence potentially challenge predominant grids of intelligibility, in this case the division between reason and unreason. According to Foucault, Descartes’ exclusion of the possibility of madness from the systematic process of doubt in the *Meditations* prefigures the repressive violence of the great internment and subsequent histories of how madness is thought and ‘treated’ in the age of enlightenment. But it also confirms madness in itself as ‘other’ to rational order, a permanent violent challenge to the rule of reason, one that is never fully captured or controlled by the normative division between reason and unreason.

It is this position that Derrida criticised when, in a 1963 lecture to an audience that included Foucault, he questioned Foucault’s ontological or metaphysical commitment to ‘madness’ as a reality beyond the historical social forms of sanity and insanity.⁶ Derrida attacked Foucault’s interpretation of Descartes, arguing that to read Descartes as contributing to a social structure of ‘reason and madness’ is to misunderstand Descartes’ essentially philosophical project.⁷

'Such an effort risks doing violence to this project in turn risks doing it violence in turn, and a violence of a totalitarian and historicist style which eludes meaning and the origin of meaning.' 'I am not saying that Foucault's book is totalitarian' Derrida goes on disingenuously, 'when I state that the [epigraph of the chapter on the great internment] becomes violence itself'.⁸

But what precisely is the violence of which Derrida accuses Foucault? How does it relate to the kinds of violence so often recounted in Foucault's work at this time? In effect, Foucault's violence, according to Derrida, lies in his (Foucault's) attempt to historicize the originary violence that gives the possibility of meaning but that cannot be recouped within meaning: 'the forced entry into the world of that which is not there and is supposed by the world'.⁹ In contrast to Foucault's treatment of violence as embodied practices, Derrida's is focused on the relation of the philosopher to the conditions of possibility of meaning, a relation which can never be non-violent but which may be more or less violent. Historicism is violent and implicitly totalitarian (philosophically and politically) because it claims authoritative access to the meaning of meaning.¹⁰ Derrida's reading of the Cartesian cogito is therefore less violent than Foucault's, because Derrida's, unlike Foucault's, does not reduce philosophy to history, or confuse specific historical phenomena with the conditions of historicity in general.

... when I say that this reduction to intraworldliness is the origin and very meaning of what is called violence, making possible all straitjackets, I am not invoking an other

world, an alibi or an evasive transcendence. That would be yet another possibility of violence, a possibility that is, moreover, often the accomplice of the first one.¹¹

Foucault's rejoinder to Derrida, published nearly ten years after Derrida's critique, puts Derrida's denial of 'evasive transcendence' into question.¹² Most of Foucault's response focuses on a close reading of Descartes' text that aims to demonstrate the errors and weaknesses of Derrida's equally close reading. The crux of Foucault's critique of Derrida's reading is that Derrida, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, precisely does not attend to Descartes' own words. He (Derrida) is able to make his argument only by sleight of hand tricks, such as assigning doubt as to the possibility of the philosopher's madness to an other voice, and by ignoring or misconstruing the Latin text.¹³ On Foucault's account, the *Meditations* are both the logical demonstration of a systematic set of philosophical propositions and an ascetic exercise 'by which each reader must be affected, if he in turn wants to be the subject enunciating this truth on his own behalf'.¹⁴ In other words, the *Meditations* are as much about the production of a particular kind of subject as they are about the production of a particular meaning. Derrida's reading, according to Foucault, ignores the ascetic, affective power of Descartes' text entirely, reducing discursive practice to 'textual traces' and 'marks for a reading', and thereby confirming a disembodied authority in the reader (Derrida). Foucault does not call Derrida's reading 'violent'. In this respect his language is notably more moderate than that of Derrida's critique. But he does conclude by identifying Derrida's reading with the exercise of arbitrary sovereign power.¹⁵

The cogito dispute speaks to fundamental differences between Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy and Derridean deconstruction. In relation to violence, it demonstrates the difference between Derrida's philosophy, which continually invokes violence in the abstract context of the possibility of meaning, and which links the latter to potentially violent (totalitarian) political outcomes; and Foucault's philosophy, which speaks little of meaning or of violence in the abstract, but ubiquitously of embodied discourses, practices and experiences of violence inherent in different relations of power. For Derrida it is originary violence, formally defined, that is the key focus of attention; for Foucault it is the affective and productive dimension of different sorts of violent practice. Although violence is inherent in discourse for Foucault, he does not treat it as inherent in meaning as such. Hence, the relation between language and violence is for him contingent and historically shifting. There can be no ethical or political promise whatsoever in violence for Derrida. But Foucault connects a particular kind of violence to the possibility of radical change. In the following sections we look more closely at how violence figures in the work of the two thinkers.

3. Foucault

The significance of violence for politics for Foucault shifts with a chronological development from an early pervasive emphasis on the violence of order and power, and on transgression as the necessary political response, to a more complex set of accounts of the interaction of forms of violence with forms of state and social organisation. Textually, we can locate these accounts in, first, the early publications *Folie et deraison* (1961), *Naissance de la*

clinique (1963), and *Les Mots et les choses* (1966); while the later view is worked out in the lectures that have recently been published as *Society must be defended* (1975-6), in *La volonté de savoir* (1976), and in the essay 'Governmentality' (1978).¹⁶

We begin with Foucault's analysis of violence and confinement which culminates in 'Sadism' as a cultural fact. References to Sade are frequent in Foucault's early books, in the context of his analysis of treatments of the human body, practices of confinement, and practices of exhibition. As forms of visibility change 'what was invisible is now offered to gaze'.¹⁷ The hitherto unspoken and unconceptualised: 'emerges into the light of language – the same light that illuminates ... Sodom.'¹⁸ The 'world over which Sade extended his sovereignty' is one in which madness has become a spectacle, and in which practices of confinement and restraint, using chains, ropes and cages, reach a level of violent intensity that makes clear that they are no longer inspired by any desire to punish nor duty to correct, but can only be understood as the expression of animality, or passion.¹⁹ Here Foucault's analysis of power and violence focuses on discourses and disciplines. Categories of normal and deviant, and classifications of forms of deviance, go hand in hand with forms of treatment and control. For 'the normal' the categories and classifications enjoin modes of conduct, standards of action and behaviour, and supply a basis for judgement of acceptable and unacceptable. For 'the deviant' the categories and classifications justify diverse forms of treatment by individuals in professional capacities, such as physician, and in political offices, such as gaoler or legislator.

'Everything that morality, everything that a botched society, has stifled in man, revives in the castle of murders'.²⁰ On one reading of Foucault, Sadeian violence realises, albeit in a distorted way, the violence of the new scientific world of classification, administration, manipulation and exploitation. Or perhaps, we can say equally that modern social and state violence realises, albeit in a distorted way, the interpersonal bodily violence of the Sadeian 'castle of murders'. The new sciences, and the concomitant bourgeois morality, attempt to repress and they oppress; they attempt to order and in so doing they do violence of a particular kind to human bodies and to social relationships. Sade's visions and representations of scenes of torture for pleasure, of subjugation in the cause of mastery, stand as a kind of apotheosis of classical practices of representation, and hence as a reproach to modern science and art. Further, though, the violence therein is not so much a reproach to modern violence, more a revelation of the violence that modernity *disavows* but cannot vanquish. Modernity represents itself to itself as a pacific mode of ordering; but this alleged pacifism, or the superficial appearance of it, is possible only because of the violence of discipline, treatment, and classification and administration.

In *The Order of Things* Foucault observes that after Sade violence, life and death, desire and sexuality, will extend, below the level of representation, an immense expanse of shade which we are now attempting to recover, as far as we can, in our discourse, in our freedom, in our thought.²¹

The thesis here is ambiguous.²² But whichever way it is interpreted, it articulates Foucault's early fascination with the place of violence in social order and in resistance to it, in the pursuit of liberation.²³

Three distinct theses about violence emerge out of Foucault's early texts:

- First, that Sadism and Sadeanism mirrors the violence of sovereignty, the violence of the state, and reveals, by reflection and refraction, the true nature of new forms of social control.
- Second, the explicit *avowal* of this violence breaks through, transgressing the social order, and in this way reveals the disequilibrium in the superficially coherent surface of social and political life, but also puts that surface into a kind of social crisis.
- Third, there is a celebration of, and pleasure in, this transgressive avowal. And following from this, there is a concomitant sense of loss as this explicit, articulated violence is lost in the modern world of disciplines and organised social institutions.²⁴

Foucault never lets go of this view that violence cannot be thought about without facing such experience of pleasure and loss.

In his later work these themes and theses recede. The analysis of power moves from a focus on the physical treatment of individual bodies, first to disciplinary power, and then to a focus on populations. In *Society must be defended* Foucault identifies a historical shift from interpersonal violence. Classical theories of sovereignty, and discourses and practices of sovereignty, focussed on the sovereign's power 'of life and death' – the power to put someone to death or to let them live. But in the nineteenth century, with the new scientific

disciplines and associated practices of government, such traditional sovereign power is displaced by the power 'to make live or let die', as 'the biological comes under state control'.²⁵ This power is non-disciplinary. It is directed not to a man as a body, but to man at the level of species.²⁶

In *The History of Sexuality, an introduction* (1978, originally *La volonté de savoir*, 1976) Foucault succinctly sets out his new model of biopower. The new 'biopolitics of population'²⁷ sees the 'entry of phenomena peculiar to life of the species into the sphere of political techniques'.²⁸ The medicalisation of bodies, statistical assessments of the entire social body, campaigns for the health of the race, bring discourses of 'blood' into relation with discourses of 'sexuality'. Once again, de Sade enters the narrative - Sade speaks of sex without any norm or intrinsic rule; for him sexuality and passion are subject to the unrestricted law of a power which knows no other law but its own.²⁹ But in later discourses of sex, the preoccupation with blood continues in practices and regulation of marriage.³⁰

Between the classical sovereignty of the power of death, and the modern governmental power of making life, comes the emergence in the early modern period of new discourses of war and politics premised on a race thinking that is antithetical to classical rationalism. In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault identifies the emergence of 'us versus them' discourses as a challenge to the traditional principle of sovereignty. In contrast to the 'violence and truth in the madman's frenzy' of his earlier analysis, however, there is now no sense that this new challenge presents any alternative that is beyond sovereignty or beyond history. Instead Foucault traces how it brings new forms of power onto the scene which then intersect with

both sovereign and disciplinary power, ultimately amplifying rather than challenging the power and violence of the state. We see a shift from group dynamics against sovereignty to group dynamics that become sovereignty's, and domination's, accomplice. From the seventeenth century onwards, Foucault argues, enmity between different groups is expressed in terms of 'races': aristocratic bitterness against the crown and against the common people; puritan leveller struggles against foreign domination.³¹ During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the discourse of race, rather than challenging sovereignty, becomes drawn into the confirmation of it. The biological continuum established by the new sciences is fissured by the discontinuity of 'race'. War is no longer the destruction of a political adversary, but of an enemy race.³² Nationalism and imperialism exemplify the interplay of sovereign and biopolitical power, culminating in the Stalinist and Nazi states.³³

'If genocide is indeed the dream of modern power, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large scale phenomena of population.'³⁴

From these considerations of violence and politics we can pull out two further theses, that emerge in Foucault's later work, about violence. They focus markedly less than the earlier ones on the emancipatory possibilities of transgressive violence as such, and more on the insistence that the link between violence and politics persists, whether the former begins in resistance or repression.

- Fourth, therefore, the challenge to sovereignty is followed by resubjugation by discipline, and then by biopolitical techniques. That is to say, forms of violence

combine with state and social governance in distinct and specific ways, but always are so combined, in ways that amplify rather than modify the state's violent potential.

- This leads to the fifth Foucaultian argument. Contexts of power are very close to contexts of violence. To be sure, there is a clear distinction between the exemplary and spectacular punishments described at the beginning of *Discipline and Punish*, and public health discourses and practices of hygiene and population fitness.

Nevertheless, regimes of truth and discipline are bound up with the amplified violence of the modern, biopolitical state; and effective oppositions to them are inevitably imbricated with violence.

3. Derrida

For Derrida social, interpersonal violence is made possible by the more fundamental violence involved in the generation of meaning. In his early work, as we have seen in his critique of Foucault's treatment of the cogito, violence is discerned in conceptualisation and the drawing of grammatical and linguistic distinctions, in the formulation and promulgation, let alone enforcement, of rules including rules of language and of ethics.³⁵ Violence, hence, is found to be central to philosophical projects and approaches including structuralism³⁶, metaphysics or ontology³⁷, as well as certain kinds of ethics³⁸.

Derrida's repeated search for culprits, the repeated identification of philosophers with *unavowed* violence, or with complicity in domination and worse, is strikingly like the persistent repudiation of monism and totalitarianism by other cold war philosophers like

Isaiah Berlin, Hannah Arendt and Karl Popper.³⁹ There are of course marked differences. Berlin, Arendt and Popper focus on value, and on beliefs, while Derrida's focus is on the process of making and establishing meaning. For the first three, 'monism' invariably amounts to a philosophical, and hence political, reason for oppression, coercion, and in the extreme for imprisonment and annihilation.⁴⁰ By contrast, Derrida sees the establishment and enforcement of meanings, categories, distinctions, themselves as acts of violence, not just pretexts for violence, although they can indeed be those as well.

In 'Force and Signification', the whole project of structuralism, consisting in the reduction of linguistic 'sign' to an underlying grammatical, psychological or social structure is characterised tout court as 'a dream of violence'.⁴¹ Derrida's criticism of structuralism relies on the paradox that structuralist analysis denies the 'force' element of meaning – that is, the intended and received significance of an utterance, which is distinct from the 'meaning'. Structural analysis of language, and of social life, seeks to reveal the deep structure of meaning. Derrida's argument is that this is 'possible only after a defeat of force';⁴² 'force is the other of language without which language would not be what it is'.⁴³ In 'Violence and Metaphysics', Derrida argues that Levinas' attempt to establish a non-violent ethics necessarily fails.⁴⁴

'The very elocution of nonviolent metaphysics is its first disavowal ... every historical language carries within it an irreducible conceptual moment, and therefore a certain violence. ... If one does not uproot the silent origin from itself violently, if one decides not to speak, then the worst violence will silently cohabit the *idea* of peace. ... One

never escapes the economy of war ... [T]o separate the original possibility of speech - as nonviolence and as gift - from the violence necessary in historical actuality, is to prop up thought by means of transhistoricity.'⁴⁵

Here we have a series of violences, in which the *disavowal*, repudiation or combat of one inevitably enacts another. However, in this paper Derrida introduces, in addition to the ideas of first and subsequent violences, the evaluative idea of 'worst' and 'least'. There is no point asserting that speech is a nonviolent response to physical coercion - because speech is conceptual, and hence is based on a violent assertion of a limit; further, speech breaks silence. There is no point asserting that ethical face to face encounter is nonviolent - because it is premised on a proscription, 'thou shalt not ...'. However, the violence of speech, or ethical encounter, can well be better than 'the worst' violence. The peace of silence, of saying nothing, can allow the worst violence to proceed. 'The first violence is this dissimulation; but it is also the first defeat of nihilistic violence, and the first epiphany of being.'⁴⁶

A similar scheme of first or originary and second, is set out in 'The Violence of the Letter' where a third violence is also introduced. This chapter is a criticism of Levi-Strauss's anthropology. Derrida finds violence in Levi-Strauss's 'tone': his account of a 'writing lesson' in a Nambikwara village (Brazil, in 1938) is recounted 'in the tones of violence repressed or deferred, a violence sometimes veiled, but always oppressive and heavy'.⁴⁷ More profoundly than a critical revelation of Levi-Strauss's written rhetoric, however, Derrida is here concerned with the violence of language and writing. Writing, and language, involve difference, classification, and the system of appellations'.⁴⁸ Writing involves making a mark,

which is the sign for and stimulus for a sound; so neither mark nor vocalisation are pure.

Analogously, societies are 'capable of obliterating the proper'.⁴⁹ That is to say, in any society individuals can be classified and grouped; they can have their individuality obliterated and overlain with some other order of 'naming'. Derrida here brings first or originary, and second or social and interpersonal, violence into clear and close relation with one another.

The 'originary violence of language which consists in inscribing difference' ... severs 'the proper from its property and its self-sameness'.⁵⁰ The second, social violence 'is no more simple than the use of proper names'. Ruse, perfidy, oppression, evil, war, indiscretion, rape – all of these familiar and deplorable phenomena are connected with the originary violence which splits the self from itself, splits the thing from its identity, severs proper from property.

In Levi-Strauss' anthropological narrative little girls in the village break a social rule by disclosing to him one another's names, thereby mimicking, reenacting, and making plain the original violence of naming itself. The anthropologist himself, of course, is to be held responsible for their 'violence'; he is the violator.⁵¹ Derrida calls the first, originary violence, at this point, 'arche violence'; while the second, social violence can also be referred to as 'law' (where 'law' signifies the rule that is transgressed). And there is a third violence – that of the theoretical reflection and conceptualisation of the first and second, where, as he puts it, 'the common concept of violence ... should no doubt be situated'.⁵² The 'third' violence of reflection both reveals and relies on the first and second.

In these papers, then, Derrida offers two kinds of distinctions between violences. *First*, schemes of 'first, second, third', or 'originary and subsequent'. These distinguish and relate

conditions of the possibility of meaning, with social relations, and with formulations like positive and moral law, rendering violence ubiquitous. This provokes a Derridean leading question: 'if it is true, as I in fact believe, that writing cannot be thought outside of the horizon of intersubjective violence, is there anything, even science, that radically escapes it?'⁵³ The implications of Derrida's account of violence are to some extent ameliorated by the *second* kind of distinction he draws: an evaluative distinction between better and worse, greater and lesser violence. Derrida insists that 'true violence' is a breach of integrity. It is from this understanding that naming itself, which splits self-identity, is a form of violence. So, too, are rape and lies. So, too, is the presence of spectators in some social interaction. But rough games, striking a comrade in the course of comradely interaction, are not truly violence because 'no integrity has been breached'.

In his later work, Derrida's concern with identifying the culprits who unwittingly unleash or support violence, recedes. His focus, building on his analysis of the violence inherent in all meaning, turns rather to the insistence that any ostensibly 'non-violent' philosophy is a sham. Second, it follows, we (all) must therefore take the measure of the violence that our philosophy, or our actions – endorsement or opposition – involve. Third, we should engage and take responsibility for the lesser violence. Derrida's later work focusses on paradoxes of violence, in ways that to some degree reiterate the form of his earlier criticism of Foucault, but which also, by way of the theme of responsibility, turns to a realist, but liberationist, political action.⁵⁴

'The Force of Law' begins with an extended consideration of the violence of being forced (or asked, or required) to speak in a language other than one's own. The distinction between 'just force' or 'non-violent force' and 'violence that is always deemed unjust' is problematised because, of course given what is true of language, it is not possible to 'speak directly about justice ... without immediately betraying justice'.⁵⁵ Here we have a reiteration of the form of his early criticism of Foucault. Derrida goes on, partly through engagement with Benjamin's 'Critique of Violence', to underline the philosophical and political relation between violence, law and justice. In so doing he affirms his commitment to understanding violence as the violation of integrity, and his view that law requires such a violation. And so too does any concrete articulation of the aspiration to justice, since any such articulation necessarily does violence to integrity, reducing the unique and singular to other terms. In this context, what becomes important is not the (necessarily doomed) quest for a non-violent politics but refusing to *disavow* one's own violence and, more generally, not denying the risks of violence inherent in political action.

'The Politics of Friendship' discloses 'the silent unfolding of that strange violence that has forever insinuated itself into the origin of the most innocent expressions of friendship or justice'.⁵⁶ Derrida's considerations of hospitality and cosmopolitanism reveal similar difficulties: how can I be hospitable without property and a legal right to privacy and exclusion?⁵⁷ The paradoxes, as it might be, of violence are, then, brought to prominence in these works. And in this context of paradox, the theme of responsibility also becomes prominent. To be sure, this is prefigured in Derrida's demand that Levi-Strauss take

responsibility for the violence of his own observation of a society, of his manipulation of the society in order to discern its meaning, of his assumption that prior to his intervention with paper and pencils the Nambikwara lacked writing, despite the fact that they have language, and laws.⁵⁸ The 'strange violence that insinuates itself into the innocent experiences of friendship' consists in our being caught in responsibility, having freedom imputed to us without being left free.⁵⁹

At the end of 'The Force of Law' Derrida remarks that he is here unable to read the theme of responsibility in Walter Benjamin's theory of 'pure violence'.⁶⁰ At the end of *Politics of Friendship* he returns to the Aristotelian 'deliberate choice to live together'.⁶¹ There is a 'call to responsibility' also in *Spectres of Marx*, where Marxism is found to be both necessary and structurally insufficient as a response to the excesses of capitalism, to neo-liberal politics and economics, and as a response to the collapse of the soviet economies and states.⁶² 'The ordeal of undecidability' calls for decision, and promise – that is to say, responsibility.⁶³ And responsibility, seemingly, involves a contingent support for the least worst, the lesser violence.⁶⁴

How do Derrida's evolving arguments about the significance of violence relate to Foucault's views? As we saw above, for Foucault, the Nazi state represents 'the paroxysmal point' of an interplay between sovereign power and biopower that is 'inscribed in the workings of all states'.⁶⁵ And it testifies to the failure of what began as violence resistant to sovereignty to break through without reinstituting repressive violence. The message of *Society Must Be Defended* is grimly insistent on the inescapability of the violence inscribed in all states

and pessimistic about the possibility of any kind of 'beyond'. In 'Force of Law', Derrida's final reflections on Benjamin also centre around the Nazi state and the final solution as the extreme case of the potential for violence inherent in all meaningful action and interaction. Derrida, however, is not interested in the specific combinations of regimes of truth and embodied practices that enabled Nazism as a historical phenomenon. Rather, he is interested in the possibility of judgment. He criticises Benjamin's idea of 'pure violence' because of the ways in which it is open to interpretation as an endorsement of the justifiability of genocide.⁶⁶ As in his critique of Foucault in the cogito dispute, totalitarianism is located in the claim to authoritative ground. Resistance to totalitarianism is not to be found by identifying practices that challenge totalitarian power, but through the constant affirmation of the groundlessness of one's own claim to authority, and consequent diffidence about imposing one's claims on others.

Let us return to Foucault's five claims about violence elaborated in the previous section. The differences with Derrida are particularly obvious in relation to the first four.

- First, in contrast to Foucault's starting point, Derrida begins not with the violence of the classical age, as mirrored in Sadism, but with the violence of language and philosophy.⁶⁷ Unlike on Foucault's account, this is not a historically locatable violence, nor is it directly inscribed on bodies. It is a violence that conditions thought but which is beyond thought. For Derrida the historically situated nature of Foucault's analysis misses the essential point, which is that historical violences are always conditioned, and permitted, by a more fundamental violence.

- Second, whereas, at least in Foucault's early work, violence breaks through, transgressing the social order, and putting the superficially coherent surface of social and political life into crisis, for Derrida such a breakthrough is impossible. There is no escape from the condition of arche-violence, the unavoidable violation of integrity underpinning the possibility of any kind of intersubjective relation. For Derrida, transgression is always recouped within the threefold structure of violence. The danger of 'worst' violence lies in the *disavowal* of this condition, a disavowal of which he accuses Foucault in the cogito dispute.
- Third, therefore, Foucault's celebration of transgressive violence in certain of his texts is anathema to Derrida, for whom violence is an inescapable, and always frightening, burden. Again, we see this in Derrida's rejection of Foucault's setting up of the 'madness' of the past as a reproach to the modern disciplinary world in *Madness and Civilization*.
- Fourth, for Foucault, emancipation from older forms of sovereignty is followed by resubjugation by new forms of discipline, and then by the technologies of biology and warfare that put whole populations into conflict with each other. For Derrida, the tertiary structure of violence enables different manifestations of empirical practices of violence in different historical and social contexts, but this does not mean that violence changes in any fundamental way. In contrast to Foucault's emphasis on the specificity and historical contingency of violent practices, oppressive or resistant, Derrida's emphasis is on the violence inherent in the condition of historicity as such. This means

that Foucault's interest is in the effects and affects of violence, what it produces and how it is produced. By contrast, Derrida's interest is in the evaluation and limitation of a violence that is generic, formal and ineradicable in any world of meaning, from the Nambikwara's to that of the Nazi state.

In spite of the strength of these differences, however, Derrida and Foucault also share ground, in two crucial respects, when it comes to relation between politics and violence.

- For very different reasons both thinkers agree on Foucault's fifth argument, which is that contexts of rule and government, and resistance to rule and government, in modern states, are always also contexts of violence.
- And even as Foucault abandons the idea of violence enabling a radical breakthrough beyond specific modern forms of discipline and governmentality, and Derrida moves to think positively about what politics might be on the assumption of the ubiquity of violence, they converge on the normative significance of *avowal* for discrimination.

From their earliest work, Foucault is concerned to debunk modernity's, and Derrida is concerned to debunk philosophy's, *disavowals* of their own violence. The avowal of violence that has revolutionary possibilities in Foucault's early work is still integral to the modest possibilities of resistant practice identified in his later work. Likewise, the negativity of Derrida's avowal of violence in his early work remains integral to the idea of a responsible politics in his later work.

When we look at the trajectories of their respective work, there seems to be an inverse relation between Derrida and Foucault when it comes to their optimism or pessimism about

the implications of violence for politics. The earlier Foucault links violent transgression to liberation from power, while the earlier Derrida offers little space for emancipation from the layers of violence that mark the relation between the possibility of meaning and the world of law, sociality and politics. As Foucault develops his work into a focus on modern disciplinary and biopower, however, the idea of a violent breakthrough into another kind of social and political order disappears from view. By contrast Derrida increasingly focuses on what it means to face up to political responsibility in the *avowal* of the ubiquity of violence, and argues for the possibility and the importance of distinguishing between greater and lesser violence.

4. The Question of Judgement

There is, of course, much debate and dispute about the 'political implications' of deconstruction, and of Foucault's structuralism and post-structuralism, in the sense of the question whether Foucault and Derrida were right wing or left wing. Whose side they were on in the class wars as they were pursued in Europe in the 1960s, 70s and 80s? Did Foucault's commitments to violent action and transgression reveal him as participating in the kind of fascism with a small f that is common to left and right?⁶⁸ Did Derrida's emphasis on undecidability all along mask a commitment to decisionism?⁶⁹ Theoretically, furthermore, there is a question whether their accounts of agency and circumstance afford an adequate theory of domination, submission, resistance and social change, and therefore whether their understandings of politics are really equal to the phenomena. In addition, there is the

question of the lack of any explicitly meta-normative analysis, or any clear first order normative principle guiding the 'shoulds' and 'should nots' of politics, notwithstanding the explicitly prescriptive or evaluative aspects of their own texts.⁷⁰

The arguments of Derrida and Foucault, therefore, raise a series of questions. What follows from the two thinkers' differently grounded claims as to the ubiquity and *avowal* of violence in politics? What resources do they give us for analytical or evaluative discriminations between different manifestations of violence in politics? And how do such arguments overlap with, or contest, other ways of conceptualising that relation? We suggest that the arguments of the two thinkers can be located with reference to two distinct crossroads of western political thought, but in ways that push against the limitations of the perspectives with which they connect. In Foucault's case, his views of politics and violence can be read as a crux between political realism and revolutionary radicalism. In Derrida's case, the crux is instead between political realism and reformist liberalism. In both cases, however, the recognition and *avowal* of violence in politics goes much further than it does in the traditions with which their work interconnects. For both Foucault and Derrida, politics extends to all realms of discourse and practice, including their own. For both of them, self-consciousness about the political effects of their respective philosophical theories is crucial. Both of them resist the idea that there could be an a priori distinction between what is political and what is not. For this reason, neither thinker could endorse any ambition, such as Arendt's, to keep violence apart from politics by definition.⁷¹ And both are open to drawing and re-drawing discriminations within and between the categories of politics and violence.

For Foucault, processes, accretions, crystallisations constitute regimes of power, and also constitute contestations of regime. The processes and accretions sometimes involve the violent oppression and injury of individuals; resistance to regimes involves organisation, the invocation of historically concrete relationships like rights, and forms of violence.⁷² Regimes include governments, systems of law, courts, institutions of punishment and control. Their violence may be explicit, but in modernity is increasingly *disavowed* and understood in other terms. For Derrida, philosophical and social practices of naming, promising (explicit, or as implicit as promising is in the deployment of a word or phrase), forms of violence such as the use of weapons and the enforcement of rules or prohibitions, the dilemmas of undecidability and decidability, are all clearly related on the one hand to the human capacity for language and on the other to the human capacity for state and social organisation and enforcement. As a result, the power to govern and be governed, the deciding of laws and their application, the circumstance in which classes and groups are dominating or dominated - these are matters of politics, and to engage with them, intellectually or actively, is to engage in politics.

In a celebrated debate with Noam Chomsky in 1971 Foucault refused to follow any kind of pacific line. Chomsky was looking from Foucault for a condemnation or repudiation of possible violence, which he refused.

'When the proletariat takes power, it may be quite possible that the proletariat will exert towards the classes over which it has triumphed a violent, dictatorial and even bloody power. I can't see what objection one might make to this.'⁷³

In the same year, in a discussion with Pierre Victor and other Maoist activists in response to a project to set up a people's court to judge the police, Foucault argued vigorously against any form of court, against procedures and protocols, which rather than being any form of popular justice are likely to be 'its deformation'⁷⁴. Instead Foucault seems to approve the kinds of acts of popular justice that 'flee from the court' and that include spectacular bloody display, such as the parade of heads on stakes.⁷⁵

Foucault certainly does not, will not, explicitly address the question of transhistorical criteria for acceptability or non-acceptability of particular forms of violence. For him, violence is part of the world and its life. Life, for Foucault, the relationship of self to self and others in relation to power - to discipline, sovereign punishment and its threat, organised administration and technology - is historically variable, and the place of violence (meaning basically, swords and knives used on human bodies, blood and bruises, cuts and blows) in this relationship similarly. Nevertheless, in spite of his resistance to drawing the line between 'good' and 'bad' violence, from his earliest work, Foucault's concern with violence is always to do with violence as a productive practice. Ultimately it is what violence does, not what it is, that is important. What kind of relation to self and other does it produce, what kind of relations of power does it sustain or challenge? This is always a contextual question.

Thus, whether and how particular forms of violence may be resistant to power will and must vary. To be sure there is an obscenity in the scene of the hanging, drawing and quartering that he puts before us in the first pages of *Discipline and Punish*. But the reader's prurient engagement with, or horrified reaction to, that image is also a challenge to the selves

constructed through the *disavowal* of violence prefigured in the great internment. Foucault argues that there is something transgressive and hence progressive in de Sade's reaction to confinement with his print scenes of torture for sexual gratification. The feeling of pain as pleasure, a theme present throughout much of Foucault's work, represents a possibility of resistance specifically within the context of disciplinary and bio-power. At the same time, however, as Foucault moves away from the notion of fundamental radical disruption of modern relations of power, he increasingly *avows* the dangers of his own discourse and the ultimate violence of legislating the meaning of resistance and alternatives in advance:

the power that one man exerts over another is always perilous. I am not saying that power, by nature, is evil; I am saying that power, with its mechanisms, is infinite ... Against power one must always set inviolable laws and unrestricted rights.'⁷⁶

Through the course of Foucault's work two different impulses seem to be at work when it comes to the relation between politics and violence. The radical resignation of his later work in many ways parallels the tradition of political realism associated with Clausewitz and Weber.⁷⁷ Foucault's considerations in *Society Must be Defended* start from a reversal of the Clausewitzian dictum that war is the continuation of policy by other means. Foucault considers the implications of thinking of politics as the continuation of war. The social and biopolitical implications of this are key preoccupations for him. Here, however, we are preoccupied with the pervasiveness of violence - the infliction of injury and pain on bodies by means of a variety of instruments and weapons - in Foucault's, and in Clausewitz's, work. For Clausewitz, politics requires violence; and violence is an irreducible (primordial)

aspect of human conduct, which can, in the right conditions, be made politically serviceable.⁷⁸ Weber too takes it that 'violent social action is obviously something absolutely primordial'⁷⁹ and for him violence is tied into the very concept of political association.⁸⁰ Weber emphasises the collective and constructed nature of political violence in his own time. His conception of discipline is clearly echoed in Foucault's analyses of modern social relations: for Weber modern warfare is entirely a matter of instrumental rationality and requires instilled virtues of conscientiousness, courage and so on.⁸¹ We have seen that Foucault's understanding of social relations is that violence will, often, be an aspect of them. It is magnified and refracted as it is suppressed and disciplined. It is used against people by those who dominate, and against the dominators by those who are oppressed. Insofar as there is any judgement to be made in this regard it is to do with whose side one is on, and with the effectiveness or otherwise of the means chosen, something of which there is no guarantee in advance.

Along with political realism, however, there is also a strand of Foucault's thinking that links to the tradition of theorising revolutionary violence, not as a matter of means in relation to externally given ends, but as the expression of a constitutive relation to self radically distinct from the discursive constructions of the oppressor. This is most evident in the 'violence and truth of the madman's frenzy', which gains its subversive power from the incapacity of the discourses of the classical age to capture it. In the later work there is still an echo of Sorelian themes, in which the virtuous violence of the proletariat speaks to a different mode of self-making, beyond means-end thinking and capitalist relations of production and exchange. To say that violence is both political and ubiquitous, as Foucault does, is not to say

that it is always the same or always carries the same value. But it is to deny both the existence of transhistorical standards against which politics and violence may be judged, and to deny the possibility of non-violent politics.

In contrast to Foucault, Derrida is always critical of violence. However, because he identifies the essence of violence with the violation of integrity that is the impossible ground of meaning as such, he, like Foucault, is unable to identify criteria for distinguishing 'good' from 'bad' political violence a priori. Oppression, marginalisation, exploitation, disadvantage, injury are condemned, but the reasons for this are not quite clear. Derrida's own theory of violence, forcibly expressed throughout his work, is that the violence of ontology, or meaning, 'permits' the social violences of exploitation, terrorism etc. This clearly raises the question of how Derrida can respond to the accusation that although his deconstructive method is designed to reveal the violence of the postulations, demarcations, conceptualisations, and metaphysics of other philosophers, he is unable himself to avoid exactly similar or analogous moves.⁸² Derrida concedes as much - conceding the violence of academic discussions in *Limited Inc.*⁸³, conceding his own metaphysical complicity in the metaphysics he seeks to undo⁸⁴. It seems that Derrida obsessively seeks to unmask the violence in others' work while all the time holding up his hands to the violence in his own.

In his explicit engagement with politics, similarly to Foucault, there is a kind of political realism present in Derrida's work. Violence is socially and politically organised and perpetrated - by governments, by hostile groups and populations, by well meaning agencies who are trying to help, on individuals just because they are migrating, or are identified with a

particular ethnic or religious group, on the poor by way of deprivation and humiliation, because they are poor. Always, however, these forms and occasions of violence are linked to 'the originary violence' of naming, drawing distinctions in language. They are linked in particular to the postulation of, and insertion into the world, of that which is not there - that is to say, in metaphysical postulations of 'things' that are outside our world of language, text and interaction.

In *The Politics of Friendship, Of Hospitality, and Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* the themes of impossibility and undecidability are present: the duty of hospitality must be premised on the right of property and hence to exclude and withhold hospitality;⁸⁵ the contexts of friendship must always be close to those of enmity.⁸⁶ When we take these impossibilities together with Derrida's scheme of 'worst' and the 'lesser' violence, clearly we are given the justification for choosing, weighing up, forms of violence against each other, and making political and ethical judgements. In his later work this distinction between the worse and lesser violence is joined by a commitment to the historical construction of human rights⁸⁷, and to the principle that 'justice does not end with law'.⁸⁸ Whilst always holding back from any straightforward transcendentalism, the 'quasi transcendentalism' acknowledged in Derrida's later work links his position to liberal traditions of ethical discrimination between good and bad violence. The echo of the sovereign gesture that Foucault discerned in Derrida's reading of Descartes can be traced in Derrida's commitment to an unknowable justice, and the capacity it offers to discriminate between greater and lesser violence. On this basis he is able to identify (as lesser violence) with the impossible ideal of

Europe, against the violence of Al Qaeda.⁸⁹ He does so, however, always without certainty of the grounds and effects of his own discrimination, and as with Foucault, with the certainty that there can be no politics without violence.

5. Conclusion

There are important shifts over time in the focus and emphases of Foucault and Derrida in their implied theories of politics and violence. Their opposition in the dispute over the cogito prefigures these differences, and also prefigures certain commonalities. It seems plausible that had he lived Foucault would have seen in Derrida's cautious alignment with 'Europe', just another exercise of sovereign power perpetuating the violent exclusion of a radical 'other'. Foucault consistently remained sceptical of the pacific claims of modern liberal orders. For him Derrida's argument would be understood as violently disingenuous - yet another *disavowal* by Europe of Europe's violence. There are clear parallels between the ways Foucault and Derrida sensitise us to the political significance of the avowal and disavowal of violence in politics. But their own readings of this significance remain different.

Both extend the insights inherent in political realism to a broader discursive realm, which does not respect fixed distinctions between state and civil society, for instance, or politics and society. Both also hold on to an ambition to discriminate between different kinds of violence. With Foucault, however, the grounds of this discrimination are built into an oppositional understanding of modern power. The violence that critics, oppositional thinkers, and resisters must value enacts a challenge to the disavowed violence of modern

states. These both depend on and deny the violence of their regimes of juridical, disciplinary and biopolitical power. For Derrida, by contrast, violence is never positively valued. At most, it might be more or less in keeping with an aspiration towards justice. This aspiration must be as transhistorical as is the impossibility of justice in any meaningful intersubjective relation.

For Foucault violence and politics can only be understood in the context of embodied experience and practice, in the worlds of historical subjectivities. For Derrida, his interest in the theme of violence is part of his enquiry into the very conditions of historicity, rather than forming any kind of interest in the history of violence. That both of them, lately, endorse trans-state institutions and practices of human rights and laws is a notable convergence, perhaps best understood as a sign of their respective versions of political realism. But the convergence is from the contrasting starting points of embodied historicity, and ahistorical possibility, respectively.

¹ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, trans. Richard Howard (trans of abridged version (1964) of *Folie et deraison: Histoire de la folie a l'age classique*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1st 1961) London: Tavistock 1971; Jacques Derrida 'Cogito and the History of Madness' in *Writing and Difference* trans and intro Alan Bass, London and New York: 2001, pp36-76 (French first edn. 1967; orig. lecture delivered 1963); Foucault 'My Body, This Paper, This Fire' trans. Geoffrey Bennington, in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 Vol 2 'Aesthetics'* James D. Faubion ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin 1998 pp.393-417 (orig. 'Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu' Appendix to *Histoire de la Folie a l'age classique*, (revised edn of *Folie et deraison*) Paris: Gallimard 1972).

² Derrida 'Cogito and the History of Madness' esp p.57.

³ Foucault, 'My Body, This Paper, This Fire', in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 Volume 2*, esp p 416

⁴ Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, orig. pub 1908, trans. T E Hulme revised Jeremy Jennings, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; see Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, 'Politics, Violence and Revolutionary Virtue: Reflections on Locke and Sorel', *Thesis 11: a journal of critical theory and historical sociology* (Number 97 Special Issue: Contesting the Legacy of '89': Revolutionary Narratives and Non-Violence in European Political Theory Edited by Christopher Finlay and Stefan Auer) pp.45-62.

⁵ Foucault *Madness and Civilization*, p. 72

⁶ Derrida 'Cogito and the History of Madness' pp.40, 57.

⁷ Derrida 'Cogito' p. 53.

⁸ Derrida 'Cogito' p.5.

⁹ Derrida 'Cogito' p.57.

¹⁰ Derrida 'Cogito' pp. 69-70

¹¹ Derrida 'Cogito' p.57.

¹² Foucault, *Histoire de la folie* Appendix esp p.602; 'My Body, This Paper, This Fire', in *Essential Works* Volume 2, esp p. 416.

¹³ Foucault 'My Body', p.416.

¹⁴ Foucault 'My Body', p.406

¹⁵ Foucault 'My Body', p.416

¹⁶ Michel Foucault *Madness and Civilisation* see note 1; *The Birth of the Clinic: an archaeology of medical perception* Alan Sheridan trans. London: Tavistock 1973; *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human sciences* London: Tavistock, 1970; *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-76*, trans. David Macey, Ed Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, Intro Arnold I Davidson, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003; *The History of Sexuality: an Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, London: Allen Lane, 1978; 'Governmentality', in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3: Power* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002, pp. 201-22.

¹⁷ Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* p.195.

¹⁸ Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* p.195.

¹⁹ Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation* p.65

²⁰ Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation* pp.281-2.

²¹ Foucault, *Order of Things* p.211.

²² On one obvious reading, modern representations attempt to submerge violence, life and death, desire and sexuality, but these are nevertheless present and, indeed, visible as 'shadow', and potentially recoverable. In another reading it is violence, life and death, desire and sexuality that do the 'shading', the submersion; and in freedom we try to recover what is overshadowed and concealed by them. The French does not disambiguate these alternatives. Of course, desisting from proposing any clear causal model is consistent with Foucault's structuralist (and post-structuralist) scepticism about subjectivity and agency, and with his avowed methodological principle, as clarified in 'Truth and Power', where he says that in *The Order of Things* he was not trying to explain, but to 'identify and describe regimes', ('Truth and Power' in James D.Faubion ed *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 Volume 3: Power*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 2001 pp.114-5.) In 'Truth and Power' Foucault describes himself as anti-structuralist (p.115) although the Preface to *Folie et déraison* clearly describes the study as 'structural' (p.vii); and note an interview from 1966 quoted in Didier Eribon *Michel Foucault* (first published French 1989) trans. Betsy Wing, London: Faber and Faber, 1991, p.161. For the purposes of this paper it seems appropriate to treat Foucault both as structuralist and post-structuralist; both descriptions can be valid, obviously, as these terms cover a wide field.

²³ Didier Eribon (see note 23) and James Miller (*The Passion of Michel Foucault*, London: Harper Collins, 1993) both link these passages, and the themes of death and violence in Foucault's early work to his personal struggles, to his personal fascination with violence, and hence to his engagement in politically violent events in the 1960s. The Foucauldian idea of violent action, such as some of the events of May 1968 and Foucault's own participation in occupation and battles with the police at Vincennes in 1969, is that the transgressive shade should be revealed,

reclaimed and politicised. The view that Foucault was personally committed to the retrieval of violence in opposition to order is reinforced by other texts from this period in which he discusses forms of oppositional violence and their necessity. In particular 'Human Nature: justice versus power' (his 1971 debate with Noam Chomsky) in Fons Elders (ed) *Reflexive Water: the basic concerns of mankind* London: Souvenir Press 1974, and 'On Popular Justice' in Michel Foucault *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977* Colin Gordon ed New York: Pantheon Books 1972; see Miller pp.203-5, Eribon pp.242-256.

²⁴ Foucault, *Order of Things* p.211.

²⁵ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* p.240.

²⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* p.240.

²⁷ Foucault, *History of Sexuality* p.139.

²⁸ Foucault, *History of Sexuality* pp.141-2.

²⁹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality* p.149.

³⁰ Foucault, *History of Sexuality* p.150.

³¹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* p.59.

³² Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* p.255.

³³ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* pp. 82-3; 260.

³⁴ Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol 1* p.137

³⁵ In addition to 'Cogito and the History of Madness', see also 'Force and Signification' (1963)

and 'Violence and Metaphysics' (1964) both in *Writing and Difference* (fp French 1968) trans, intro and notes by Alan Bass London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1978, pp.3-30, 79-153; *Of*

Grammatology, (fp French 1967) corrected paperback edition, trans Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 2001.

³⁶ Derrida, 'Force and Signification'; 'Violence of the Letter' in *Of Grammatology*.

³⁷ Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics'.

³⁸ Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics' pp.121ff.

³⁹ For all these three, 'monism' - the view that there is a single unified and harmonious set of true statements, or an objectively valid and consistent set of values, or a single value to which all others reduce - recurs, with variations in detail, in the western philosophical tradition. All three link this theme to the licence to use violence 'in pursuit of the ideal' in Berlin's words (Isaiah Berlin 'The Pursuit of the Ideal' in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1990 pp.1-19). Like Derrida's, the work consists in readings of philosophical texts and the identification of tendencies and implications therein.

⁴⁰ Hannah Arendt *Origins of Totalitarianism* new edition with prefaces, San Diego: Harcourt Inc, 1951; Karl Popper *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 volumes, 1. *The Spell of Plato*, 2. *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1945; Isaiah Berlin *Four Essays on Liberty* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969.

⁴¹ Derrida, 'Force and Signification', p.3.

⁴² Derrida, 'Force and Signification', p.5.

⁴³ Derrida, 'Force and Signification', p.27.

⁴⁴ Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics' p.83.

⁴⁵ Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics' p.148.

⁴⁶ Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics', p.148.

⁴⁷ Derrida, 'Violence and the Letter' in *Of Grammatology*, p.106.

⁴⁸ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.110.

⁴⁹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology* p.109.

⁵⁰ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.112.

⁵¹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.113.

⁵² Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p 112

⁵³ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.127.

⁵⁴ In Derrida's later explicitly political work he considers the difficulties with any political 'strategy', but his focus on problems strongly implies that action is nevertheless appropriate. We refer here to Jacques Derrida 'Force of Law: the Mythical Foundations of Authority' in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson eds, London: Routledge, 1992, pp.3-67; J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the state of debt, the work of mourning and the new international*, (fp French 1993) trans. Peggy Kamuf, intro Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg, London: Routledge, 1994; 'The Politics of Friendship', *Journal of Philosophy*, 1988, pp. 632-44; *Politics of Friendship*, (fp French 1994) trans. George Collins, London: Verso, 1997; J. Derrida *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, (fp French 1997) eds Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney, London: Routledge, 2001; J. Derrida, and G. Borradori, 'Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides', in Giovanna Borradori (ed.), *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 85-171, 2003.

⁵⁵ Derrida, 'Force of Law', p.10.

⁵⁶ Derrida 'Politics of Friendship' 1988 p.634.

⁵⁷ Derrida *Of Hospitality*, p.47.

⁵⁸ Derrida 'Violence of the Letter' *Of Grammatology* p.110; see also for example 'Violence and Metaphysics' pp.79-80.

⁵⁹ Derrida, 'Politics of Friendship' 1988 p.634.

⁶⁰ Derrida, 'Force of Law' p.63.

⁶¹ Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* p.199.

⁶² Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* . pp.87-8.

⁶³ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* p.94.

⁶⁴ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* pp.105-6

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p.260.

⁶⁶ Derrida 'Force of Law' p.62.

⁶⁷ There is, actually, one place where Foucault does associate discourse with violence - in 'The Order of Discourse' which was his inaugural lecture to the Collège de France, December 2 1970. Here he argues: 'we must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things'. In our view this remark does not imply that Foucault converges with Derrida in his construction either of discourse (and language) or of violence. For one thing, he immediately hastens to modify the force of the utterance: '... a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them.' 'The Order of Discourse' in Robert Young (ed) *Untying the Text: a Post-Structuralist Reader* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul pp.51-76, p.67, (orig. *L'ordre due discours*, Paris: Gallimard 1971 p.55) For another, as far as we can see, this is an isolated instance of a definite association between discourse, as such, and violence, in Foucault's work.

⁶⁸ Miller *Passion of Michel Foucault* pp.129-244; for the general question of the political implications of Foucault's work see Simons *Foucault and the Political*.

⁶⁹ Bennington and Derrida *Jacques Derrida* p.197; John P. McCormick 'Derrida on Law: Or, Poststructuralism Gets Serious' *Political Theory* 29, 3, 2001 pp.396-8.

⁷⁰ For examples of and discussion of such controversies see Simon Critchley *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* 2nd ed (1st 1992) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1999; Morag Patrick *Derrida, Responsibility and Politics* Aldershot: Ashgate 1997; Lois McNay *Foucault and Feminism* Cambridge: Polity Press 1992; Jon Simons *Foucault and the Political* London: Routledge 1995.

⁷¹ Hannah Arendt *On Violence* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969, pp.51-6; Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings 'On Politics and Violence: Arendt contra Fanon' in *Contemporary Political Theory* 7, 1, 2008, pp.90-108.

⁷² See, for instance, 'Useless to Revolt?' (fp *Le Monde* May 1979) in Foucault *Essential Works Vol 3: Power* pp.449-453

⁷³ Foucault 'Human nature: justice versus power' in Elders ed *Reflexive Waters* p.182; Miller *Passion of Michel Foucault* pp.201-2.

⁷⁴ 'On Popular Justice' p.2

⁷⁵ 'On Popular Justice' p.6.

⁷⁶ 'Useless to Revolt?': 'pp.452-3.

⁷⁷ Carl von Clausewitz *On War* (fp 1832-1837) trans and ed Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976; Max Weber *Economy and Society* (fp 1921) Geunther Roth and Claus Wittich eds, Berkeley Ca: University of California Press, 1978; Elizabeth Frazer and

Kimberly Hutchings. 'Virtuous violence and the politics of statecraft in Machiavelli, Clausewitz and Weber'. *Political Studies* Forthcoming 2010.

⁷⁸ Clausewitz, 1993, Bk. I, Ch. 1, s 28, p. 101

⁷⁹ Weber, 1978, p. 904

⁸⁰ Weber, 1948, p. 334

⁸¹ Weber, 1978, pp. 1149-50

⁸² As Morag Patrick puts it: 'The violence which jeopardises the validity of Derrida's discourse is inescapable. It occurs wherever he manipulates a context in order to construct the structural figure which bve as much necessary to, as in need of, deconstructive reading.' *Derrida, Responsibility and Politics*, p. 49

⁸³ Jacques Derrida *Limited Inc* ed Gerard Graff, Evanston: Northwestern University Press p.112.

⁸⁴ Patrick *Derrida* p.xi.

⁸⁵ Derrida *Of Hospitality* p.47

⁸⁶ Derrida 'Politics of Friendship' p.634.

⁸⁷ 'Autoimmunity' p.132.

⁸⁸ Autoimmunity p.133.

⁸⁹ Autoimmunity p.113.