ProQuest Number: 10183448

ProQuest 10183448

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

# The 'Subject' and Politics in Habermas

# and Post-structuralism

**Gulshan Ara Khan**

**A thesis submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements of**

**Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**2005**

# The 'Subject' and Politics in Habermas and Post-structuralism

## Contents

**Part One: The Subject**

## Chapter Two: Post-structuralism and the Subject

## Chapter Three: Habermas's notion of the Subject

**Part Two: Politics**

## Chapter Four: Post-structuralism and Politics

## Chapter Five: Habermas and Politics

**Part Three: Evaluation and Conclusions**

**Chapter Six: Similarities and Differences**

**Chapter Seven: Paradoxes and Politics**

# Acknowledgements

# Abstract

In this thesis I undertake a critical examination of the work Jürgen Habermas and the post-structuralist thinkers William Connolly, Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe and I compare their respective notions of the 'subject' and politics. The objective of my thesis is to use the conceptual distinction between contradictions, dialectical oppositions, and paradoxes to demonstrate three central hypotheses. First, I show that Habermas's charge of 'performative contradiction' levelled against the post-structuralists' supposedly 'totalising' critiques of reason does not hold up to scrutiny, because the post-structuralists acknowledge the paradoxical nature of their ontological foundations. Second, I demonstrate that a simple dichotomy cannot be drawn between the work of Habermas and post-structuralism with him on one side as a rationalist and them on the other as 'anti-rationalists' or 'relativists'. Instead, what I elaborate in this thesis is a complex map of similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. For example, I show that on a more straightforwardly political level Habermas shares a number of distinct similarities with the post-structuralist theorists and especially with Mouffe. Indeed, I make the case that Habermas's work cannot be reduced to a form of 'Kantian proceduralism' as it is often said to be. There are in fact distinctly 'Hegelian' elements in Habermas's conception of 'reason' and 'rationality'. Habermas's conception of rationality shares important parallels with the work of Michael Oakeshott, who is a significant influence on Mouffe. Third, I make the case that Habermas's founding principles - despite his claims to contrary - appear to be masking a paradox.

I argue that paradoxes have an important place in the in the history of Western philosophy. I show that the acknowledgement of paradoxes has existed alongside the law of non-contradiction, and reconciliation since the ancient Greeks. I conclude the thesis with the suggestion that an 'agonistic' style of democracy is especially conducive to the idea of paradox because it is predicated upon the idea that there is no objective ontological truth or 'complete' identity. Finally, I suggest that it is essential to maintain the distinction between a performative contradiction, a reconciliatory logic, and a paradox, because it is potentially an injustice when a paradox is 'declared' to be resolved and beyond argumentation or contestation.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

Jürgen Habermas is generally regarded as the most outspoken contemporary defender of the 'unfinished project of modernity' and of Enlightenment reason. His work is often contrasted to post-structuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault who are typically cast as intellectual enemies of the 'Enlightenment faith in reason' (Bernstein, 1992: 200-1; Hoy, 1996: 125; Habermas, 1996c: 53). In this thesis, I undertake a critical examination of the allegedly dichotomous relationship between Habermas and post-structuralism. I compare the work of Habermas with the post-structuralist thinkers William Connolly, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and my focus is on their respective conceptions of the subject and politics. This introductory chapter is divided into ten sections. In the first section, I situate my investigation within the contemporary context and I briefly discuss some of the commentators who have compared Habermas's work with post-structuralism. Following that, in sections two and three, I provide a justification for the choices I have made concerning the theorists that I have included in the thesis. Next, I identify the underlying questions that guide and motivate my research. In section five, I undertake a conceptual clarification of the notion of the 'subject' which is one of the central concepts investigated in this study. In section six, I elaborate the notion of ontology and I situate my comparison between Habermas and the post-structuralists within the wake of Martin Heidegger's project of 'fundamental ontology'. In the following section, I present a brief exposition of my methodological approach and the specific questions that steer my investigation. After that, I present an account of the key concepts of paradoxes and contradictions, which I employ throughout the thesis as a heuristic tool to make effective comparisons between

Habermas and the post-structuralists. In section nine, I outline the central arguments of my thesis which are broken down into three specific hypotheses. This chapter concludes with a brief outline of the content of the thesis.

**Context: continental philosophy and the status of Enlightenment 'rationalism'**

Continental philosophy covers a very wide range of thinkers and traditions ranging over many centuries, and in this thesis I touch only on a number of themes that emerge from this vast subject area. Nevertheless, one pre-dominant set of debates that has come to the fore in recent years concerns the legacy of the Enlightenment and of the so called 'project' of Enlightenment 'rationalism'. At its most general, this is the theoretical and intellectual context in which I situate my research. Habermas is arguably Germany's leading contemporary social and political theorist. His work represents a distinctive body of thought, and he has made highly significant contributions to this debate. Habermas's steadfast defence of the Enlightenment has become a benchmark by which many eminent philosophers have demarcated and differentiated their own positions. For example, in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) Jean-François Lyotard claimed that Habermas's discourse-theoretical approach with its 'search for universal consensus' is misfounded (Lyotard, 1984: 65). From Lyotard's perspective, Habermas's 'project' holds onto a 'unitary' conception of the 'subject' and 'history', which needs to be submitted to the 'severe re-examination which post-modernity imposes on the thought of the Enlightenment' (Lyotard, 1984: 73). Habermas has fuelled this sense of 'polarity' between his position and the 'post-modernists' with the publication of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985). This book is a polemic against the philosophy of Nietzsche and what Habermas calls the post-Nietzschean 'young-conservatism' of Foucault and Derrida (Habermas, 1987b: 13; 1981; 1996c). Habermas identifies what he sees as the weaknesses of Foucault's 'genealogies', of Heidegger and Derrida's 'deconstruction', and of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's 'totalising' critique of the Enlightenment (Habermas, 1987b).

2

Unlike his constructive debates with Hans-Georg Gadamer in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Habermas has not engaged in oral dialogue with any of the prominent post-structuralist thinkers. Indeed, as Samantha Ashenden and David Owen have said, the Habermas and Foucault 'debate' is marked by 'the absence of open dialogue' (Ashenden and Owen: 1999: 1). Foucault and Habermas briefly met in Paris in 1983 and Derrida and Habermas had scheduled to 'meet and discuss' at the Institute for Social Research but the meetings were subsequently cancelled due to ill-health (Foucault: 1984: 373; Habermas, 1998b; Derrida, 2000: 466). In the absence of open dialogue a vast secondary literature has emerged exploring the allegedly dichotomous and antithetical relationship between Habermas and post-structuralism on a number of issues ranging from philosophy, the questions of justice, aesthetics, legitimacy, ethics, responsibility, the 'subject' and politics (See Habermas, 1987; Lyotard, 1984; Coole, 1996; Ashenden and Owen, 1999; Hoy, 1996; Hoy and McCarthy, 1994; Rorty 1985; Bernstein 1991; Kelly, 1994b; Kelly, 1994a; Thompson, 1999).

Habermas has clearly become a target for many post-structuralist thinkers, who disparagingly claim that he is a 'rationalist' and that he effectively reduces political conflicts and struggles to an overarching notion of rationality, morality, and consensus (e.g. Mouffe, 2000b). Those who are sympathetic to post-structuralism tend to ignore Habermas's more recent work and his *oeuvre* is reduced to his theory of 'communicative action'. This is problematic because over the last three decades, Habermas has steered his work in new directions, and beyond his heritage as the heir to the legacy of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Habermas, 1979; 1990; 1996). Stephen. K. White claims that the idea that Habermas is committed to a form of rational consensus that 'homogenizes otherness' is no longer justified for Habermas's work given the modifications and concessions he has made to his critics (White, 1988: 203). Similarly, John S Brady argues that many critics 'provide insufficient' or inaccurate readings of Habermas's theory' that 'overlook' or ignores the modifications that Habermas has made in addressing his critics (Brady, 2004: 340). On the other hand, post-structuralists thinkers get portrayed by

3

Habermas as 'totalising' critics of the universalistic principles of the Enlightenment, and therefore deemed 'relativists' because of their so called 'anti-foundationalist' perspective (Habermas, 1987b). Habermas has claimed that by taking Nietzsche's 'totalising' critique of reason as their point of departure, post-structuralist theorists like Foucault and Derrida get caught in what he calls a 'performative contradiction' (Habermas, 1987b: 119). He presents the arguments of these thinkers as inconsistent. Habermas says that in making their various critiques of the Enlightenment, the post-structuralists necessarily invoke presuppositions which they deny in their critiques (Habermas, 1987b; 1990). This is also problematic because Habermas produces inadequate and somewhat inaccurate critiques of the various post-structuralists. Although he 'concurs' with most of Habermas's work, in 'Deconstruction, Postmodernism and Philosophy: Habermas on Derrida' Christopher Norris makes the point that Habermas has 'misread Derrida's work' (Norris, 1996: 97). Similarly, Bo Isenberg makes the case that on several occasions Habermas's critique of Foucault is either 'confusing' or 'misses the point' (Isenberg, 1991: 299). In addition, a number of commentators have remarked that the debate between Habermas and the post-structuralists is 'lopsided' in favour of Habermas (Kelly, 1994a: 4). James Tully argues that the debate has 'somewhat been obscured by the manner in which Habermas sets up the debate between himself and his opponents' (Tully, 1999: 119). The 'nub of the difficulty' is that Habermas and the post-structuralists 'diverge greatly in their perceptions of discourse, knowledge, and argumentation' and the debate is constructed in Habermasian terms, or generally takes place on a Habermasian 'terrain' (Simons, 1995: 114; Dean, 1999: 168).

Many commentators have attempted to identity the root cause of the differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. For example, in *Kant, Critique and Politics* Kimberley Hutchings argues that the difference between Habermas and the post-structuralists lies in their different relationships to Kant's philosophy (Hutchings, 1996; Tully, 1999). Similarly, James Tully makes the case that Habermas and Foucault have contrasting responses to Kant's question 'What is Enlightenment?' (Tully, 1999: 92). Tully argues that Foucault's 'approach is associated

with Kant's [conception of the] Enlightenment [as an] attitude' or 'ethos', whereas, Habermas's approach is 'derived from Kant's concept of "critique" in his more formal philosophy' (Tully, 1999: 92). According to Stephen. K. White, the polarity between Habermas and the post-structuralists stems from their different approaches to the question of 'responsibility' (White, 1991: 19-23). He argues that Habermas is concerned with the 'responsibility to act', whilst the post-structuralists are concerned with the 'responsibility towards the other' (White, 1991: 20-21). For White, the responsibility to act corresponds with language in its capacity for 'action co-ordination', whereas, the responsibility to otherness corresponds with language as 'world-opening' phenomenon (White, 1988: 192). Consequently, Habermas's work is concerned with an action co-ordinating force and 'a moral-prudential obligation to acquire reliable knowledge and to act to achieve practical ends' (White, 1998: 192-194). By way of contrast, the poststructuralists are concerned with the 'moral-aesthetic sense' which he says modern subjects experience differently from their premodern counterparts (White, 1988: 191-2).

Clearly there are significant differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. Indeed, as Bernstein put it, it 'easy to think that an abyss' separates the work of Habermas and the poststructuralist (Bernstein, 1992: 201). However, a growing number of thinkers have attempted to break this mould. Some commentators have emphasised a shift in Habermas's recent work from a 'strictly' Kantian monological 'proceduralism' towards a more 'Hegelian' conception of social and political relations (Ferrara, 1999; Finlayson, 1999; Rasmussen, 1982). For example, in 1982 David Rasmussen drew attention to the 'latent Hegelianism' in Habermas's theory with its commitment to the idea of the 'progressive proliferation of human possibilities, the institutionalization of new forms of life, [and] the continued differentiation of lifeworld structures' (Rasmussen, 1982: 8). Alessandro Ferrara has also identified 'Hegelian' moments in Habermas's work on 'constitutional democracy' (Ferrara, 2001: 784). Similarly, Gordon Finlayson has identified important 'Hegelian insights' in Habermas's attempts to address Hegel's critique of Kant's moral theory (Finlayson, 1999: 48). As we will see, the post-structuralists are

not Hegelians. Indeed, one defining feature of post-structuralism is a rejection of the Hegelian dialectical logic and its emphasis on the reconciliation of opposites. However, they do share with Hegel (and against Kant) an emphasis on the embedded nature of forms of reason and social norms within concrete historical practices. I will show that this is an important point of similarity with Habermas. In 1987 Ferrara outlined different stages of Habermas's consensus theory of truth and he argued that Habermas's work was in the process of entering a fifth stage (Ferrara, 1987: 47). According to Ferrara, in its latest manifestation, Habermas's theory of truth no longer provides a 'criterion of truth, but only an explication of the meaning of truth' (Ferrara, 1987: 47). Ferrara has made the case that in *Between Facts and Norms* there is a 'general softening of the strong proceduralism, formalism, and generalising universalism which characterised Habermas's framework' (Ferrara, 1999: 37). In fact, Ferrara claims that Habermas's work gradually shifts from the 'generalizing universalism typical of the determinant model [of judgement] and closer towards the model of reflective judgement' (Ferrara, 1999: 38). This sway towards 'reflective judgment' (where the particular cannot be subsumed under the universal) is again a move towards the type of arguments put forward by the post-structuralists (see Lyotard, 1994). Others have sought to show that that there are actually explicit points of similarity between the work of Habermas and some post-structuralist thinkers (Critchley, 2000; Devenney, 2004; Ferrara, 1999; Ingram, 1996). In 'Remarks on Derrida and Habermas' Simon Critchley outlines a number of similarities between Derrida and Habermas, i.e. they are both utopian thinkers 'committed to an ideal of emancipation' (Critchley, 2000: 457). Critchley makes the case that despite their different approaches and terminology, in his work on justice 'Derrida sounds like Habermas' (Critchley, 2000: 456). He says that 'justice in Derrida's work is a moment of formal universality, a context-transcendental idealisation in Habermasian terms' (Critchley, 2000: 455).

I share Ferrara's, Finlayson's, and Critchley's sentiments and my thesis is situated within this theoretical context. However, my approach is distinct from theirs, because I aim to undertake a systematic comparison between Habermas and post-structuralist thinkers who have dealt

explicitly with questions of political philosophy. These are Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe, and I compare their respective accounts of the subject and politics. Indeed, I explore those aspects of Habermas's work which focus specifically upon questions of the subject and political philosophy or political theory. As I will explain in more detail below, I have chosen to focus on these particular post-structuralist theorists because they explicitly situate themselves within the terrain of normative political philosophy and they share Habermas's concern with the defence of and the extension of the principles of liberty and equality. Indeed, all of the theorists examined in this thesis address similar political issues and they share aspects of a common ethico-political trajectory informed by the Enlightenment. At the same time it is important to acknowledge that there are explicit differences that demarcate Habermas from the post-structuralists: one of the aims of this thesis is to undertake a sensitive reading and analysis of both positions. My objective is to elaborate the complex similarities and differences between them. For example, I show that none of the identified post-structuralists are 'relativists' or 'anti-foundationalists'. Also, I examine Habermas's notion of 'rationality' and demonstrate that he does not use this term in a narrowly 'procedural' or overly 'Kantian' manner. Indeed, my underlying objective is to demonstrate that the work of Habermas and the identified post-structuralists cannot be separated into a simple dichotomy, with him on one side as a 'rationalist' defender of Enlightenment universalism, and them on the other side as anti-Enlightenment 'relativists'.

**Post-structuralism**

In this section I define what I mean by the term 'post-structuralism' and explain why I have chosen to focus specifically on the work of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. The terms 'post-modernism' and 'post-structuralism' are often used synonymously and inter-changeably. A number of commentators have expressed doubts about the usefulness of the term 'postmodern' because (apart from being 'vague, ambiguous, and slippery') this term is often used in 'conflicting and even contradictory ways' (Bernstein, 1992; Lyotard, 1991; Hoy, 1996: 125).

Indeed, I wish to distance my research from the terms 'post-modernism' and 'postmodernist' because they are typically used in a pejorative manner to designate those (so called) 'anti-rationalists' and 'relativists' who (supposedly) abandon the universalistic aspirations of the Enlightenment. Instead, I use the term 'post-structuralism' as a way to identify the work of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. However, it will also be helpful to distinguish between post-structuralism in a specific sense (tied to the work of a number of French thinkers in the 1960s who took structural linguistics as their point of departure) from 'post-structuralism' in a broad and inclusive sense (which as I see it encompasses a number of thinkers (French and otherwise) who share a common philosophical orientation). I will briefly say something about each of these understandings of 'post-structuralism' (Dews, 1987).

In the narrow sense post-structuralism refers to the work of French thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault and Jacques Lacan who took their inspiration from the work of structuralist thinkers such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, and Louis Althusser. Key to understanding post-structuralism in this narrow sense is Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of structural linguistics set out in *Course on General Linguistics*. I explore Saussure's ideas in some detail in Chapter One. However, it will be useful to briefly identify some key points here. For Saussure, 'the basic unit of any language [is] the linguistic sign' (Sturrock, 1979: 6). Saussure analysed the sign as composed of a sound or acoustic element (which he called the 'signifier') and the mental image or idea (which he called the 'signified') (Saussure, 1974: 67; Sturrock, 1979:6). Saussure claimed that the existence of distinct languages shows that there is no inner or necessary relationship between a given idea and the sounds with which it is represented (Saussure, 1974: 67-8). According to Saussure, there is an 'arbitrary' relation between signifier and signified (Saussure, 1974: 67). Consequently we can only understand the meaning or value of a word or signifier in terms of its relation to other signifiers within a structured 'totality' *(langue)* (Saussure, 1974: 67). In other words, for Saussure each signifier occupies a place within a synchronic structure of language that gives it its meaning or value. According to Saussure, the signifier is like a pawn in

the game of chess i.e. it is not defined by its 'positive content' but 'negatively', that is, in relation to the other chess pieces (Saussure, 1974: 117). This is what Saussure means when he says that 'in language there are only differences ... without positive terms' (Saussure, 1974: 120).

Post-structuralist thinkers (in the narrow sense of the term) have been concerned to rework Saussure's theory of the arbitrary nature of the signifier, and to challenge Saussure's claim that the play of signification is fixed within a synchronic totality (Derrida, 1978: 351-370; 1982: 307-330; Lacan; 1998, 161-197). For example, Lacan emphasised the permanent sliding of the signified under the signifier, and Derrida's notion of *différance* also brings to the fore the idea of a syntactic excess that forever disrupts synchronic closure (Lacan, 1998; Derrida, 1982). Post-structuralism in this narrow sense has had a significant impact on the work of Laclau and Mouffe, and I will explore these ideas in more detail in Chapter One.

However, in order to understand the differences between Habermas and Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe I think it is also necessary to introduce a broader understanding of the term post-structuralism, which I will use to refer to a wide range of thinkers who share a common philosophical orientation and have 'exercised an extraordinary influences over the intellectual life of the English speaking world' (Dews, 1987: xi). This broader understanding of 'post-structuralism' would include philosophers from the phenomenological tradition as well as the Anglo-American analytical tradition of thought. For example, Jean-François Lyotard (who in his later works takes much of his inspiration from Ludwig Wittgenstein) and Richard Rorty (who takes his main source of inspiration from American pragmatism) (Lyotard, 1984; Rorty: 1982). These thinkers do not necessarily engage directly with the structuralist theory of the sign, yet they do share a common philosophical orientation with the narrow group of post-structuralist thinkers. This philosophical orientation includes embracing epistemological perspectivism and the 'linguistic turn', and especially a critique of Hegel's philosophy of 'World Spirit' and of the Hegelian dialectical logic generally (Hardt, 1993: x). It is important at this point to briefly

identify two influences upon this broader definition of post-structuralism. These are Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud.

In *The Will to Power* published posthumously in 1901, Nietzsche challenged the Cartesian conception of the subject as a rational autonomous entity. By way of contrast, Nietzsche put forward a 'vitalistic' ontology predicated upon a pluralistic 'excess' of 'forces', which he understood as inherently disruptive of the subject (Nietzsche, 1968: 552). Nietzsche understood the subject as a 'self', which is always in a process of becoming rather than as a 'substance' or 'thing' (like Descartes' '*cogito*'), which is supposedly self-present to itself (Nietzsche, 1968: No.552). For Nietzsche, there is no rationally determined subject either self-legislating or self-actualising who can be seen as the author of his own actions (Nietzsche 1984: 28). Rather the subject is created in the process of 'doing the deed', and is inevitably caught up in disruptive forces - from within and without – that exceed 'its' self-legislation and control (Nietzsche, 1968: No. 552; 1994: 28). The Cartesian subject is also challenged in psychoanalytic theory. Freud's theory of the 'unconscious' does not deny the existence of a 'subject', rather psychoanalysis challenges the traditional idea of the individual as an autonomous or fully rational and self conscious subject (Freud, 1984). Freud's theory brings to the fore the hidden unconscious desires constitutive of the subject and which can never be fully known or controlled (Freud, 1984: 159-222).

Nietzsche and Freud have impacted on different aspects of post-structuralism in the wider sense. In particular Foucault and Gilles Deleuze have reworked Nietzsche's ideas in twentieth century post-structuralism, and Lacan has sought to combine the insights of psychoanalysis with the Saussarian notion of the play of signification (Deleuze, 1983; 2001a; Foucault: 1991; Lacan: 1989). I will elaborate these developments some detail in the course of the thesis. However, it is first necessary to explain why I have chosen to focus on the work of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe, and not on any of these other post-structuralist thinkers (in either the narrow or the broad sense). There are three basic reasons for this.

First, there is already a significant body of secondary literature that compares the work of Habermas with Derrida and Foucault (Ashenden and Owen, 1999; Kelly, 1994a; 1994b Bernstein: 1991: Devenney, 2004; Coole, 1996; Hoy and McCarthy, 1994). Secondly, Caroline Williams in *Contemporary French Philosophy: Modernity and the Persistence of the Subject* investigates the concept of the subject in the work of Althusser, Lacan, Derrida and Foucault (Williams, 2001: 3). Her main thesis is that 'the question of the subject persists in all contemporary philosophical perspectives' even those that claim to have abandoned or repositioned it within discourse (Williams, 2001: 1). Williams argues that whilst each of the thinkers addresses the question of the subject within their own 'theoretical milieu', they get drawn into the entrapments of what she calls 'the paradox of the subject' (Williams, 2001: 8). According to Williams, the paradox is that the subject is 'both in the world (as an empirical subject) and also an object of the world (a transcendental subject or object) (Williams, 2001: 8). She says that whilst the 'concept of the subject' is a 'requirement' of theoretical analysis it is at the same time that which must be 'displaced' (Williams, 2001: 9). I agree with Williams that the notion of the subject has not been annihilated from contemporary thinking but persists in different 'forms, styles and modalities in philosophical perspectives' (Williams, 2001: 9). In this thesis I make the case that within their own 'theoretical milieu', Habermas and the post-structuralists Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all address the limitations of the epistemological certainty of the Cartesian subject and in the process outline their own notion of the subject as an ontological problematic. I demonstrate that the four thinkers do not theorise the subject as an origin or foundation understood as a fixed entity. I show that each in their own way they theorise the subject as constituted by and constitutive of social relations. However, I demonstrate that the paradox of the subject is formulated in a significantly different way from Williams account. Following Derrida, I argue that the paradox of the subject is that the subject is both at the same time the conditions of possibility and 'its' impossibility. In other words, I argue that Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe theorise the subject in a paradoxical manner. I demonstrate that for each of

11

the three thinkers that which is constitutive of the subject is at the same time that which disrupts any notion of the subject as a self present unified origin or totality. I show that Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe accept the term paradox in the literal sense of the term, that is, as two opposing premises both necessary but irresolvable and any attempt to solve this paradox leads to the 'Munchhausen trilemma', a term which I explain in Chapter Seven.

Thirdly, and more importantly Habermas's recent work on 'discourse ethics' and on law and democracy brings him more obviously within the traditional discourse of political *philosophy*, and, as I see it, this is also where we can situate the work of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. It is not my intention to enforce rigid disciplinary boundaries, however (for the purpose of establishing the perimeters of those theorists included and excluded from my thesis) I have found it useful to draw upon Paul Patton's distinction in *Deleuze and the Political* between 'political philosophy' and 'political ontology' (Patton, 2000: 9). According to Patton, political philosophy provides the normative or prescriptive 'tools for the justification or critique of political institutions and processes', whereas, political ontology provides 'the tools to describe transformative, creative or deterritorialising forces and movements' (Patton, 2000: 9). I find this distinction useful, because it enables me to distinguish between the work of writers like Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe who have *explicitly* engaged with the traditional prescriptive concerns of political philosophy from the work of writers like Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan, and Foucault. Although, some of these latter thinkers can be said to have contributed explicitly to the discipline of normative political philosophy (e.g. Derrida 1990; 1992; Foucault, 1991b), their association with this discipline is more tenuous and far less explicit than that of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. Perhaps the main contribution of thinkers like Foucault and Deleuze has been to re-articulate the categories of (political) ontology.

Furthermore, I have chosen to focus on Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe because they represent distinct strands of post-structuralist *political philosophy*. Although these authors draw upon each of the different strands of post-structuralism, they can also be delineated according to

the tradition with which they most closely identify. In Chapter One, I make the case that Mouffe's notion of 'subject positions' in discourse can be traced primarily to Saussure/Derrida. In juxtaposition, Laclau's notion of the 'subject of lack' takes its inspiration primarily from Freud/Lacan. By way of contrast, Connolly's notion of the 'self' can be traced to the Nietzschean/Deleuzian/Foucauldian trajectory. In other words, post-structuralism is not a homogenous body of thought and there are significant differences between these various thinkers. However, I make the case that despite these differences we can identify a number of shared principles between these post-structuralist thinkers vis-à-vis Habermas's conception of the subject. Now, I briefly identify the most important works of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe before moving on to situate the work of Habermas in the following section.

Laclau and Mouffe have roots in the Marxist tradition. In his early work, Laclau analysed 'feudalism and capitalism in Latin America, the specificity of the political, the origins of fascism, and the notion of popularism' (Laclau, 1990: 177). He was active in student movement, the editor of the 'Workers' Struggle' the journal of the Argentinean Socialist Party of the National Left (Laclau, 1990: 197-8). Mouffe's early 'Marxist formation' took place in the 'mid-1960s in Paris', where for several years she attended Althusser's seminars (Laclau, 1990: 197). Her first edited book *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* in 1979 focused on evaluating Gramsci's notion of hegemony to re-work and re-figure Marxist and socialist ideals (Mouffe, 1979; 1981). However, in their co-authored work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) they have transformed Left-wing political thinking beyond the confines of traditional Marxism by outlining a 'project of radical democracy' (Laclau, 1990: 197; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 1-3). In this work they have extended the parameters of key Marxist concepts through a democratic reading that appropriates many insights from post-structuralism. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* has become widely accepted as a key 'post-*Marxist*' text concerned with refiguring Marxist ideals whilst retaining 'valuable kernels of critical insights from Marxism' (Connolly, 1995a: 199). This book has had a profound impact on re-thinking both Marxism and pluralism in contemporary social and political theory and pre-

empted the collapse of Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolutions that swept across the former Czechoslovakia and spiralled across Europe at the end of the 1980s. Their work tries to account for the 'proliferation' of 'social struggles' characteristic of the politics of the new social movements, such as, the feminist movement, the environmentalist movement, and anti-racist movements (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 2).

Slajov Zizek is a contemporary philosopher and arguably the leading figure in the Slovenian Lacanian School. His work draws extensively upon Lacanian psychoanalysis, as well as an innovative reading of Hegel (Zizek, 1989). He situates himself politically as a Leninist and an anti-capitalist and he makes 'revolutionary' claims about the Left and its need to 'reject' the liberal's blackmail by shattering the 'cynical consensus' that makes people accept things as they are (Zizek, 2000b: 246; 2001: 3, 246). Since the publication of *The Sublime Object of Ideology* in 1989, Zizek has rapidly published a prolific number of unconventional (and often entertaining) books that introduce and apply the Lacanian categories to everything from ontology to political theory and popular culture. These include *For What They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (1991) and *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Center of Political Ontology* (1999) where he engages with the work of Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, and Ernesto Laclau. In this book he puts forward his own distinctive conception of the late capitalist 'subject of lack' understood as 'caught in the loop of perversion' and he advocates a 'traversing' of the subject's 'fundamental fantasy' to overcome the existing capitalist system (Zizek, 1999: 248, 265).

Zizek initially made his mark with his incisive critique of Laclau and Mouffe's notion of 'subject positions' outlined in *Hegemony* (Zizek, 1990). In his single authored works subsequent to *Hegemony*, Laclau has published *Emancipations* (1996) and *New Reflections on the Revolutions of our Time* (1990). In these writings Laclau has explicitly endorsed Zizek's critique. As I will demonstrate Laclau has re-conceptualised many of his categories (such as hegemony and antagonism) from a Lacanian/Freudian perspective and he has put forward a Lacanian conception of the subject as a 'subject of lack' (Laclau, 2004a: 324). In this thesis, I only explore

Zizek's work in so far as it enables me to delineate Laclau's reconceptualised notion of the subject. In her single authored work, Mouffe has explored many of the traditional normative concerns of political philosophy. These include *The Return of the Political* (1993) and *The Democratic Paradox* (2000) where she examines the constitutive paradox between the principles of 'liberty' and 'equality' (Mouffe, 2000b).

William Connolly is a contemporary American political philosopher who has written a large number of books and articles over the past three decades on a wide variety of issues such as pluralism, politics, morality, modernity, and the subject. He situates himself as a 'post-Nietzschean' thinker and he has been clearly influenced by Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, and Heidegger (White, 1998: 73; 2003: 213; Macdonald, 2002: 167). Connolly started his academic career with the publication of an edited book *The Bias of Pluralism* in1969. In this book he challenged the conventional pluralism of American political science (Connolly, 1969: 3-34). In his subsequent book, *The Terms of Political Discourse* he examined the ambiguity of a range of concepts that are employed in conventional political science such as 'power' and 'interest' (Connolly, 1993d). In *Politics and Ambiguity* (1987), Connolly examines the work of Foucault and Habermas and in the process started to develop his own distinctive conception of the 'self' (Connolly, 1987b: 110-112). In 1993, in *Political Theory and Modernity*, he examined the political philosophies of Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, with the aim of identifying the key 'assumptions' of 'political modernity' (Connolly, 1993c: viii). In the 1990s Connolly fully elaborated his own distinctive 'post-Nietzschean' approach in a series of books. These books are *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations* (1991) *of Political Paradox, The Augustinian Imperative* (1993), and *The Ethos of Pluralization* (1995). In these books Connolly examines the constitutive paradoxes of 'identity' and 'difference', he explicitly reworks the 'pluralist imagination' and he turns his attention to the problem of 'evil' and the relationship of the 'self' to itself (Connolly, 1991a, 1993a, 1995a). He also identified the underlying assumptions of the term 'ontology' and following Foucault makes the case (which has become one of his central claims)

15

that 'nothing is fundamental' and that all ontological assumptions are 'contestable' (Connolly, 1995a: 1). Over the last couple of decades, Connolly has sought to develop an ethos of 'agonistic respect' and of 'critical responsiveness', which - I will show - provides useful insights into questions regarding 'fundamentalism', 'justice', and 'legitimacy' in modern societies (Connolly,1993a; 1993b; 1995a). In this aspect of his work Connolly draws his inspiration and sustenance from Nietzsche's 'tactics of the self', Foucault's 'techniques of the self, and Deleuze's 'micropolitics'. In his more recent work, *Why I am not a Secularist* (1999) and *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (2004), Connolly has paid greater attention to the subject as an embodied being. He elaborates an embodied conception of the subject understood in terms of different 'registers' of being: 'consciousness, unconscious, memory, perception' (Connolly, 2002). It is important to introduce Connolly's work into this thesis and not least because he offers an alternative post-structuralist ontology, conception of the subject, and politics to that put forward by Laclau and Mouffe.

## Critical theory

I will now set out a brief account of the Frankfurt School and situate Habermas's work in relation to Critical Theory. The Institute for Social Research (or the Frankfurt School as it is commonly known) was a German philosophical and social science movement set up within the University of Frankfurt in 1924, with the aim of adapting Marxism to explain the political events of the time (Jay, 1973: 5, 11). The school became part of the Institute for Social Research founded in 1929. In an essay entitled 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (1937) Max Horkheimer one of the founding members expounded the basic tenets of the school. Horkheimer made the case that 'critical theory' was opposed to 'traditional theory', the latter of which he associated with the 'positivist' doctrine that was becoming predominant in many parts of philosophy and the social sciences in the early part of the twentieth century. According to Horkheimer, positivism made an erroneous separation of 'facts' from values' and also accepted the status quo as necessarily given

16

(Horkheimer, 1972: 199, 208, 218). In contrast, he put forward a critical theory that criticised 'positivism' and also those orthodox Marxists who had attempted to turn Marxism into a positive science. According to Horkheimer, critical theory drew upon the critical spirit of Marxism and aimed to criticise existing social relations and put forward knowledge 'to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of men' rather than simply increasing knowledge for its own sake (Horkheimer, 1972: 197, 221).

The rise of National Socialism in Germany saw the school exiled from Frankfurt in 1933 and based in New York from 1934 to 1950, when it returned to Frankfurt (Jay, 1973: xv). During World War II Horkheimer and Adorno wrote a series of books and essays on the degeneration of reason under conditions of modernity and the relationship between authority and the individual. The most important of these writings was the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) and *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). They drew upon a wide range of theoretical perspectives and in particular they turned to the work of Freud, Weber and Nietzsche as well as Marx to explain the rise of fascism and the horrifying events of the holocaust (Wiggershaus, 1994: 327).

Habermas started his career as a 'second generation' member of the Frankfurt School. In 1955 Habermas became Adorno's assistant, and Adorno supervised Habermas's 'habilitation' which was published in 1962 as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Wiggershaus, 1974: 537). From this point onwards Habermas's would draw upon a wide range of diverse theorists to develop his own distinctive contribution to sociology, politics, and questions of methodology. It was in the 1970's that Habermas developed his 'theory of communicative action' set out in the two volumes to the *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981). In these volumes, Habermas puts forward a theory of communication rationality and action or what he calls 'universal pragmatics', which - he claims - is built into the very fact of communication understood as an 'inherently' non-strategic human phenomenon that aims to reach understanding. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, Habermas says every individual engaging in argumentation must presuppose and accept certain normative conditions. According

to Habermas, every speech act implicitly contains universal features, which he calls validity claims. These are claims to truth, normative rightness, and sincerity, which speakers and hearers use to negotiate common definitions and actions in a dialogue aimed at reaching understanding (Habermas, 1979: 28; Habermas, 1984: 95). In these two volumes we also witness Habermas's rejection of what he calls 'the philosophy of the subject' as he embraces the social phenomenology of Alfred Schulz and the linguistic turn characteristic of the work of Gottlieb Frege and Charles Sanders Pierce.

The theory of communicative action also enables Habermas to criticise Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which he presents as an 'Nietzschean' inspired ''totalising' critique of reason. In 1980, Habermas accepted the 'Adorno Prize' and gave his notorious acceptance speech 'Modernity - An Unfinished Project', where he affirmed the political goals of modernity and the Enlightenment and implicitly criticised Adorno and Horkheimer (Habermas, 1996c). Habermas places the later works of Adorno and Horkheimer into the same camp as the post-structuralists because as he sees it they take Nietzsche's 'totalizing' critique of reason as their starting point (Habermas, 1987b: 121). In the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985) Habermas makes his critique of Adorno and Horkheimer's work during and after the Second World War more explicit. He accuses them of falling prey to Nietzsche's 'totalizing' critique of reason and thereby falling in to a 'performative contradiction' (Habermas, 1987b: 120). The charge of performative contradiction is summed up by Thomas McCarthy as follows. He says 'how can one deconstruct all the ideas of reason without at the same time relying on them, at least tacitly' (Hoy and McCarthy, 1994: 35). Over the course of the last two decades Habermas has extended his work in new directions and he has engaged in questions of normative political philosophy. This new direction is apparent in the publication of *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1990), and is most carefully elaborated in his critically acclaimed *Between Fact and Norms: Contributions to a Democratic theory of Law* (1996). I am particularly interested in these later works where Habermas explores traditional questions and concerns of

political philosophy, and I am concerned to demonstrate that he shares important similarities here with the post-structuralist political philosophies of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe.

Adorno and Horkheimer provide a critique of the Cartesian subject in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* before the post-structuralists' critique. However, I do not compare Adorno and Horkheimer's work with Habermas's because they do not fall into Patton's definition of political philosophers. Although, I draw upon a wide range of political ontologists and political philosophers, this thesis is primarily a work of political philosophy.

**Politics and Political Context**

Twentieth century political thinking witnessed a conceptual distinction between the terms politics and 'the political'. As Emily Hauptmann points out the term 'the political' is a specialized 'neologism employed by academic political theorists' (Hauptmann, 2004: 34). It is distinguished from the 'institutionally grounded conception of "politics" as well as from "the state" or "government"' (Hauptmann, 2004: 36). The meaning of the term 'the political' is 'puzzling and elusive' because there is no single definition and it is used diversely by different thinkers (Hauptmann, 2004: 34). For example, Carl Schmitt in *On the Concept of the Political* and Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* both use the term in dissimilar ways. For Schmitt, the political is a distinct realm of human relations characterised by the 'distinction between friend and enemy' that 'denotes the utmost degree of intensity' of human antagonism (Schmitt, 1988: 26). Arendt, on the other hand, uses the term 'the political' to refer to a 'distinct sphere of life' (Arendt, 1958: 9; Hauptmann, 2004: 36). Hauptmann points out that 'the political' is 'neither an organized activity nor an institution, but rather a 'distinct sphere of human life [Arendt] or a distinct kind of human potential [Schmitt]' (Hauptmann, 2004: 36).

In her paper 'A Local History of "The Political"' Hauptmann's examines how the term 'the political' was employed by a 'group of political theorists connected to the University of California, from the late 1950s up to the present' (Hauptmann, 2004: 34). She aptly comments

that the term has been recently appropriated by post-structuralists who conceive of 'the political' as a potential 'sphere of human life' (Hauptmann, 2004: 37). In this section, I do not propose to examine the relationship between the conceptual terms 'politics' and 'the political' in relation to the work of the four thinkers as this task is somewhat undertaken later on in the thesis. It will suffice to say that Chantal Mouffe draws on Schmitt's distinction, Habermas draws on Arendt's in his conception of the public sphere and Connolly's notion of the 'agonistic politics' resonates with Arendt's use of the term 'the political'. The aim of this section is to bring out more explicitly Habermas's, Connolly's, Laclau's and Mouffe's intellectual boundaries in relation to the concept of the political. In this sense, 'the political' is not simply a conceptual term employed by political theorists, but also refers to actual events and phenomena that the theorists have experienced, which have consequently shaped their respective scholarly work and political projects. The objective of this section is to briefly demonstrate that exposure to 'the political' in both Schmitt and Arendt's sense of the term has fashioned the political subjectivities of the theorists in question. The 1960s feminist slogan 'the personal is political' rings true to form in the work of the respective thinkers. In this section I briefly mention some of the life events experienced and witnessed by the four thinkers as well as the developments in political and social theory that have shaped their conceptions of the subject, political ontology and politics.

Habermas's social and political theory has been influenced by a number of significant events and phenomena in history, a few of which I will briefly mention in the following paragraphs. Born in 1929 in Düsseldorf in Germany, Habermas's 'life and work' have been affected by the 'traumatic events of his youth under National Socialism' and the ideals of post-war 'democratic "re-education"' (McCarthy, 1998: 397; Wiggershaus, 1994: 538, 547). As 'their most influential student', Habermas's direct involvement with the first generation of Critical Theorists shaped his early intellectual trajectory (Thompson and Held, 1982: 4). For example, in 1962 he intervened in the 'positivist dispute' between Adorno and Popper by giving a lecture entitled 'Critical and Conservative Tasks of Sociology' (Wiggershaus, 1994: 566). In the

20

following year he published 'Analytical Theory of Science and Dialectics: a Supplement to the Controversy between Popper and Adorno', which 'placed' him on 'Adorno's side' (Wiggershaus, 1994: 567). In the same year, Habermas also published *Theory and Practice* a 'series of essays' exploring the relationship between 'theory and the practice of the social sciences' (Wiggershaus, 1994: 566-7).

The events of the 1960s in particular the German student movement for which Habermas was a 'leading spokesman' had a 'significant impact' on his 'thinking' (Held, 1980: 250). By the late 1960s, Habermas became 'estranged' from the movement. He was critical of their departure from their 'original democratic and non-authoritarian gaols' (Held, 1980: 250-1). Since his involvement in the student movement, Habermas has become one of Germany's leading public intellectuals (McCarthy, 1998 397). Habermas has spoken out on a number of issues, ranging from the infringement of civil rights, to immigration and more recently against human cloning (McCarthy, 1998: 397; Habermas, 2001b). His scholarly work attempts to address these and many other issues by salvaging the 'normative content of modernity' and thereby providing normative grounds for social criticism (Habermas, 1987b: 348). In Habermas's view, his theory of communicative action, which I briefly mentioned in the last section, is a continuation of the work of the early Critical Theorists, that is, to provide a 'consistent' critical theory of society (Habermas, 1987b; Wiggershaus, 1994: 544).

Habermas's work on discourse ethics is the application of his theory of communicative action to question of what is 'just' and 'right' (McCarthy, 1990: vi). It is politically situated as an explicit critique of ethical relativism which he sees as characteristic of post-structuralist thinking and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* written by his mentor Adorno and colleague Horkheimer (Habermas, 1987a). In an attempt to address the scepticism of contemporary social thinking, Habermas has turned to a vast array of diverse thinkers to develop and refine his theory (Wiggershaus, 1994: 578). For example, to mention a few, Habermas has actively embraced aspects of the symbolic interactionist theory of George Herbert Mead, Charles Sanders Peirces's

reflections on the natural sciences and the cognitive developmental psychology of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (Habermas, 1990). These and many other developments have contributed to Habermas's attempts to engender a critical public sphere of active participants to challenge the administering and paternalistic state (Habermas, 1996).

Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical and political trajectory has very much been shaped by their personal experiences and 'in particular their attempt to understand Latin American politics' (Torfing, 1999: 15). I have already mentioned Laclau's and Mouffe's Marxist credentials. They have both been member of socialist parties. Like Habermas, they have both been involved in the student movement in their respective motherlands, him in Argentina and her in Belgium (Torfing, 1999: 15-16). Laclau's Argentinean roots have very much influenced his work on hegemony. For example, his membership to the Argentine Socialist Party ended with his frustration of their 'class reductionist approach' to political events unfolding in the 1960s (Torfing, 1999: 16). The rise of Peronism in Argentina swayed his attention to studying the works of Gramsci and Althusser. This introduced him to the concepts of 'hegemony' and 'over-determination' and helped him theorise populism and the 'class-reductionist tendencies dominant in mainstream Marxism' (Torfing, 1999: 16). Mouffe has been engaged in 'anti-imperialist struggles and joined several Latin American liberation groups' (Torfing, 1999: 15). Similarly, like Laclau she was critical of the 'class-reductionist' framework of conventional Marxism (Mouffe, 1979: 174). In her edited book *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* she turns her attention to Gramsci's notion of hegemony as means to challenge the reductionist conception of the 'state' and 'politics' of mainstream Marxism (Mouffe, 1979: 10; Torfing, 1999: 17).

According to Jacob Torfing, it was Laclau and Mouffe's active political involvement with Latin American politics that led them to read the work of Althusser, Etienne Balibar and Nicos Poulantzas (Torfing, 1999: 17). Their critique of these thinkers saw them turn to the insights of post-structuralism, which had already started to exert significant influence over a number of disciplines and thereby further shaped their theoretical perspective. Their co-authored

work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* drew upon these and other thinkers to respond to the political impasse of the Left in the 1980s. As I have said they rework Gramsci's notion of hegemony and combine it with post-structuralist insights to offer a political mechanism to engender what the subtitle of their book states: a 'radical and democratic politics' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). The theoretical development of their single authored post-*Hegemony* works has been shaped by drawing upon contemporary theoretical debates and perspectives. Laclau has embraced Lacanian psychoanalysis to develop and refine his notion of hegemony and the subject whilst Mouffe has used Carl Schmitt's notion of the political to rethink the constitution of a radical and democratic political community.

Connolly's background as the 'son of an assembly line worker and labor activist' has influenced his theoretical trajectory (Macdonald, 2002: 166). In an interview with Bradley Macdonald, Connolly talks about how he was 'inspired' by 'Marx's early essays on alienation' because they described the 'lived experience of workers' and advanced a 'positive social vision' (Macdonald, 2002: 166). He says this laid the foundation for him to explore the notion of 'self-reflexive consciousness and how to bring such reflexivity to bear in more expressive notions of politics, freedom and inclusion' (MacDonald, 2002: 166). This idea of self-reflexivity continues to be a theme in his more recent work in books such as *Why I am not a Secularist* and *Neuropolitics, Thinking, Culture, Speed*.

Connolly's early work is situated as a political response to the 'behavioural revolution' that dominated the discipline of political theory (MacDonald, 2002: 166). He says he turned to the writings of 'Mannheim, Wittgenstein, Hegel, Habermas, Taylor and Hampshire' to explain how 'concepts constitute social reality as well as describe it' (MacDonald, 2002: 166). In the late 1970s, Connolly encountered the work of Foucault, which he says 'infected' his 'positive vision' (MacDonald, 2002: 166). He says it enabled him to theorise the social movements in the 'domains of feminism, gay rights, ecology and the organization of political science' (MacDonald, 2002: 166). Connolly also acknowledges that Foucault's work was instrumental in swaying his

attention towards the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Deleuze and Guattari ((MacDonald, 2002: 167). This shifted the parameters of his thinking towards elaborating a 'democratic project' (McDonald, 2002: 167). He says he also started to 'rethink 'identity and difference' and began to explore a 'visceral' dimension of the self to cultivate a 'positive vision of pluralism' that did not conform to 'secularism' and was not 'theologically centred' (MacDonald, 2002: 167). Instead, Connolly offers what he calls an 'ethos of pluralisation' to challenge conventional pluralism. Drawing upon the work of Nietzsche, Foucault and Deleuze, Connolly sets out to extend the parameters of conventional pluralist thinking and to offer an 'agonistic' conception of democracy.

In this thesis I show that Habermas and the post-structuralists Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all see their work as an attempt to offer political response to problems in their own historic-social context. They are all progressive thinkers and want to transform political practices into a radical and plural democracy.

## The underlying question: the relationship between philosophy and politics

As I see it a consideration of the relationship between philosophy and politics is the key to an understanding of the similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. Indeed, my thesis is underpinned by the broad question of the proper relationship between philosophy - or more strictly 'ontology' - and politics. Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with the investigation of 'what is?' Ontology investigates the nature of 'Being' and asks the question of 'what there is' or 'what is it for something to exist' (Craig, 2000: 645). This is distinguished from epistemology, which is the theory that concerns itself with the 'nature, sources and limits' of securing knowledge and belief (Klein, 2000: 246). As we will see, this is an important distinction. The history of Western thought is full of examples of philosophers using their ontological perspective (whether these are materialist, idealist, or realist) to ground some ethics and politics. I will briefly consider two exemplary thinkers in the western tradition who

present some set of ontological assumptions as being in a straightforwardly foundational relationship to politics.

In Plato's *Republic* we witness the deployment of philosophy directly for political purposes. The ontological idealism of Plato's theory of the 'forms' is used to provide 'standards and rules, yardsticks and measurements' for the organisation and structure of the perfect political community (Arendt, 1990:102). The ideal form of justice is supposedly represented in the detail of Plato's *Republic* where each citizen is assigned their distinct roles within the framework of a functionally harmonious whole (Plato, 1992). Similarly, Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* - written during the political turmoil that followed the Reformation - reflects the ontology of early modern science. Hobbes does not ground his theory on idealist presuppositions. Instead, Hobbes's political philosophy is underpinned by a materialist and mechanical ontology. Hobbes's ontology leads him to put forward a politics of the absolute sovereign state - the 'Leviathan' - which supposedly emanates in an act of 'contract' between isolated individuals in a 'state of nature' (Hobbes, 1968:76). His politics simply reflects his ontologically atomist conception of 'man' or the individual understood as 'essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them' (Macpherson, 1962: 3). Indeed, Plato and Hobbes's theories exemplify the idea that there is some straightforward grounding of politics in ontology. By way of contrast, the work of Kant and Hegel introduces into this relationship the notion of a self-reflexive 'subject'. In different ways Kant and Hegel are exemplars of modern Enlightenment philosophy and they develop their conceptions of the modern subject from Descartes' notion of the *'cogito'* understood as a self-reflecting and epistemologically self-certain 'subject' (Descartes, 1970: 67). I will now look more closely at this characteristically modern conception of the relationship between philosophy and politics.

**Enlightenment philosophy: the philosophy of the 'subject'**

In the late seventeenth century Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* marks a turn from medieval to modern philosophy, because he introduced the notions of the *res cogitans* (thinking substance) and *cogito* (I think) (Descartes, 1970: 67). The term 'subject' is derived from the Latin words "*subjectus*" and "*subjectum*". It is a compound of two words *sub* meaning 'under' and *jacere* meaning 'throw' or 'cast' (Williams, 1983: 308). '*Subjectum,*' is therefore, taken to mean that which is 'thrown or cast under' (Williams, 1983: 308). Raymond Williams says that the Latin root meaning of the term '*subjectum*' has been historically evident in English language in three senses (Williams, 1983: 308). In the Middle Ages it was evident in the sense of a subject as ontological 'substance'. This sense of '*subjectum*' translates the Greek term '*hupokeimenon*' or '*hypokeimon*', as 'that which lies under' a term which refers to 'that of which all other entities are predicated but which itself is not predicted of anything else' (Critchley, 1996: 51). Second, it was evident from fourteenth century in political theory as in the notion of the 'British subject', that is, as 'a person under the domination of a lord or sovereign' (Williams, 1983: 308). The third sense of the term has been commonly used from the early sixteenth century as 'matter to be worked upon', in the sense of an 'area, theme, or topic, which is studied, written, spoken about, painted, or modelled' (Williams, 1983: 308-9). However, Descartes used the term subject in an innovative way. He brings to the fore a conception of a thinking self (or the '*cogito*)' understood as 'subject', that is, as a self-reflecting and epistemologically self-certain entity. This has had a monumental impact on all subsequent philosophy and the question of the philosophy of the subject will be central to my examination of the similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists.

In his *Meditations,* Descartes invoked a method of 'hyperbolic' - or radical - doubt to question the validity of knowledge obtained through the senses (Descartes, 1970: 61-2). Descartes 'rationalist' method turns away from 'the consideration of the object and from the immediacy of such as experience toward a consideration of the very experience in which objects are given', that

26

is, to a consideration of what Descartes calls the *'res cogitans'* (thinking substance) (Gasché, 1986: 13). This consideration or 'bending back' upon the object of perception shows reflection to be a relation of 'self-reflection' or 'self-mirroring' (Gasché, 1986: 13). In other words, Descartes makes thought or thinking itself both the subject and the object under investigation. By schematising 'the subject of thought itself', Descartes establishes the 'apodictic certainty of a *self* as a result of the clarity and distinctness in which it perceives itself' (Gasché, 1986: 13). In undertaking this venture, Descartes moved beyond traditional conceptions of ontology or metaphysics as ground. For Descartes, the foundation of knowledge now resides in the 'human being's self-determination as a thinking being', that is, in the *cogito*, which engenders itself and 'reflects itself into itself' (Critchley, 1999: 53; Gasché, 1986: 14). This marks a distinctly modern usage of the term subject, whereby the *'cogito'* (understood as a self-reflecting and epistemologically self certain entity) acquires the status of a grounding principle. Descartes conceives of the *'cogito'* as a self present thinking 'subject', 'ego', 'substance', 'man', or 'being' which reflects into itself and in Enlightenment philosophy 'the subject' becomes the foundation of political philosophy (Descartes, 1970: 76; Habermas, 1992: 31; Gasché, 1986: 17). For example, Kant presents the notion of justice (freedom) as a moral law, which acts as a regulative ideal for any individual moral or political action, and for Kant it is an autonomous 'subject' who self-legislates the moral law (Kant, 1999). For Hegel, the subject becomes the active agent of a process of 'world history' understood as a universal teleological process unfolding in a definite direction (Hegel, 1970: 109-111, 493-480). According to Hegel, this process culminates in the realisation of freedom in the modern era of the Enlightenment (Hegel, 1977: 328).

It is important to acknowledge that although Descartes introduces a new and different way in which to theorise the term 'subject' (that is as a self-reflecting entity and ultimately as a moment of epistemological self-certainty) he nonetheless carries over from the Latin the first sense of the term of subject, that is, as 'substance'. For Descartes, the *cogito* is underpinned by a 'thing' that does the thinking, which is the *res cogitans* (thinking substance). According to

27

Descartes, the *cogito* (I think or I am thinking), can only exist in a thinking substance (*res cogitans*) (Descartes, 1970: 70). Thus, it is *res cogitans* as a (reified) thing that is equated with the essence of thought and of the thinking (*cogito*) (Descartes, 1970: 70-75). For Descartes, the *res cogitans* is the ontological foundation for the *cogito* (Descartes, 1970: 70). According to Heidegger, Descartes understands the *'res cogitans'* as an ontological ground or origin, which is defined as *'ens'* (Heidegger, 1998: 46). Heidegger makes the point that in medieval ontology *'ens'* is understood as the Supreme Being or creator that is supposedly self evident (Heidegger, 1998: 46). This idea, which can be traced to Greek ontology, is formed into a 'fixed body of doctrine' in the Middle Ages (Heidegger, 1998: 43). Heidegger argues that Descartes does not question the ontological status of the *'ens'*. Instead, he carries this notion of *ens* into modern philosophy and into his notion of the *cogito* (Heidegger, 1998: 46). Thus, in Descartes *Meditations*, the *cogito* as a reflecting subject is theorised as *'hupokeimenon'*, that is a grounding entity which is self-present to itself (Derrida, 1982: 16). From Heidegger's perspective, it is precisely this understanding of the subject (as a self-conscious entity that is not predicated on anything else prior to itself) that becomes the ontological foundation of Enlightenment epistemology (Heidegger, 1998: 44). Indeed, this conception of a thinking substance (*res cogitans*) that relates to itself as an object by reflecting into the very experience of thought to become conscious of itself (*cogito*) has established self-reflection as the foundation of Enlightenment thought. This has come to be known as 'the philosophy of the subject', the philosophy of reflection, or the philosophy of consciousness.

Subsequent Enlightenment thinkers replaced Descartes' notion of the *cogito* with the notion of 'Man' understood as a self-reflexive agent, that is, as individual or collective subject. In Enlightenment thought 'man' acquires the status of a self-conscious, unified and self present being, i.e. with the qualities attributed to Descartes' *cogito*. In much modern philosophy 'Man' becomes a moment of epistemological certainty, the ontological foundation for establishing social relations, and also the agent of progressive political projects. In different ways the political

projects of Liberalism and Marxism were both indebted to the Enlightenment philosophical principles of rationalism, universalism, and the notion of a unified, rational and autonomous subject. These political doctrines have had many advocates, as well as critics. In the nineteenth century these projects were acclaimed by many for their progressive conception of the subject as origin/foundation of emancipatory politics events. However, by the twentieth century, these projects began to be criticised - for example by feminist theorists - for their philosophical understanding of 'Man', or the 'proletariat', or the 'individual' understood as a rational, autonomous, and universal being. Indeed, the later half of the Twentieth Century has witnessed the widespread rejection of the Enlightenment ideals of universalism, grounded in the notion of man as the subject of progressive politics. This challenge is summarised by Vincent Descombes who makes the case that 'the critique of the theory of the subject points to the illusions underlying any attempt to ground political theory in an essential subjectivity' (Descombes, 1991:120). Indeed, for many post-structuralist critics of the Enlightenment the 'possibility of grounding an ethics, *sittlichkeit*, or way of life on these foundations is rejected' (Descombes, 1991:120). However, it is important to acknowledge that Habermas also makes the case that it is no longer viable to ground ethics and politics in a self-reflexive subject, which supposedly is epistemologically self-certain and self-identical with itself. Nevertheless, in this thesis I will make the case that neither Habermas nor the post-structuralists reject the idea of subjectivity entirely. Indeed, they all emphasise the need to re-conceptualise the 'subject'. In the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists, the emphasis turns from treating the reflexive subject as a moment of epistemological certainty to treating 'it' as an ontological difficulty or problematic. Furthermore, in each of these theories the idea of a direct and necessary relationship between philosophy and politics is put into question. The extent to which ontology informs politics and the ways in which political projects are imbued with ontological presuppositions remains an open question, which I will address in the thesis. What is clear, however, as Habermas puts it is that 'all attempts at

29

discovering ultimate foundations, in which the intentions of First Philosophy [that is Cartesian philosophy] live on, have broken down' (Habermas, 1984: 2).

Throughout this thesis I use the term 'the philosophy of the subject' to refer to the 'thinking self', as it is introduced by Descartes in the late seventeenth century, as opposed to one of the three earlier Latin senses because both Habermas and the post-structuralists use the term the philosophy of the subject with reference to the Cartesian *cogito*. However, I show that for Habermas and the post-structuralists the subject is not some 'thing' which is fixed, self-evident (after a process of reflection) or present-to-itself, that is, a substance or thing that exists as an ontological foundation. None of these theorists ground their politics in the philosophy of the subject understood as a 'fixed' substance. Each of the theorists examined in this thesis take care not to treat the subject as something which is a simple presence 'here' and a 'now'. They do not treat the subject or *cogito* as an epistemological certainty, but rather as an ontological problematic. In other words, for Habermas and the post-structuralists the subject is not origin/foundation of social relations and practices. The challenge is to examine the different ways in which Habermas and the post-structuralists relate the problematic of 'the subject' to questions of politics.

## The 'subject' as ontological problematic

I have made the case that both Habermas and the post-structuralists reject the traditional conception of ontology as being in a foundational relationship to political norms and practices. However, they are nonetheless concerned to account for the philosophy of the subject understood, that is, not as an epistemological certainty - the *cogito* - but as an ontological problematic or difficulty. My comparison of their respective conceptions of the subject is therefore a comparison of their respective ontological frameworks. In order to proceed with this analysis it is first necessary to elaborate the idea of ontology in more detail, and to say something about

Heidegger's seminal work in this area in his *Being and Time* (1927). As I have said, ontology is traditionally understood as an investigation of the question of 'what is…' or 'what is the nature of the object'. Nevertheless, Heidegger claims that since the Greeks Western thinkers have largely forgotten the more 'primordial' question of the meaning of 'Being' as such (Heidegger, 1998: 2).

According to Heidegger, the question of the meaning of 'Being,' is the most universal and the most mysterious of questions (Heidegger, 1998: 62-3). He explains that 'Being' resists every attempt at definition (Heidegger, 1998: 59). According to Heidegger, in Western thought that which is the most 'obscure and hidden' has in fact 'taken on a clarity and self-evidence such that if anyone continues to ask about it he is charged with an error of method' (Heidegger, 1998: 21). For example, I have said that Heidegger understood Descartes to have neglected to question the underlying ontological presuppositions of his *cogito* (Heidegger, 1998: 44). Descartes simply treats the *res cogitans* as *ens,* i.e. as that which is the fixed foundation of the *cogito* (Heidegger, 1998: 46-7).

Heidegger describes Western philosophy as what he calls the 'metaphysics of presence', because Western thinkers typically treat some self present entity or thing as the universal foundation of all particular beings (Heidegger, 1998: 47). In *Being and Time* Heidegger aimed to displace the traditional foundational status of ontology and to replace it with the project of what he called 'fundamental ontology'. Fundamental ontology discloses the original question of the meaning of Being as such, which traditional ontology since the Greeks has forgotten (Heidegger, 1998: 43). In contrast to the 'metaphysics of presence,' Heidegger insisted that fundamental ontology must proceed phenomenologically (Heidegger, 1998: 60). *Being and Time* represents an exhaustive phenomenological investigation of 'Dasein' - which translates as human 'Being there' - understood as the being which questions its own Being (Heidegger, 1998: 23). However, this analysis seems to move inexorably to the conclusion that the question of the meaning of Being will never be rendered transparent because of the inherently temporal conditions of human being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1998: 53). According to Heidegger, *Dasein* is constituted by a futural

temporality that manifests as the impossible horizon of the question of the meaning of Being (Heidegger, 1998: 456-488).

Connolly understands ontology as 'the study of the fundamental logic of reality apart from appearances' (Connolly, 1995: 1). He says ontology is a compound of two Greek words, *'onta'* (meaning the 'really existing things') and *'logos'* (meaning a 'logic, order or design of being') (Connolly, 1995: 1). However, as Connolly points out this definition presupposes that there *is* a 'fundamental logic of reality apart from appearances' out there that we can *know* or discover (Connolly, 1995a: 1). From Connolly's perspective (drawing principally upon Nietzsche), 'the most fundamental thing about being is that it contains no overriding logic or design' (Connolly, 1995a: 1). Connolly uses the term 'ontopolitical interpretation' to make the point that all ontologies are eminently conteststable (Connolly, 1995a: 1). I share Connolly's sentiments and my comparison of the respective ontological frameworks of Habermas and the post-structuralists is situated in the wake of Heidegger's failed project of 'fundamental ontology'. I agree with Heidegger that all ontology proceeds by way of interpretation (i.e. it is a question of meaning) and if we accept that the question of 'fundamental' ontology will never be rendered self-transparent then we are presented with the challenge of comparing alternative ontological frameworks. In this thesis I am concerned to interpret the alternative conceptions of 'the subject' understood in terms of the ontological frameworks put forward by Habermas and the post-structuralists.

**Methodological considerations**

My research is concerned with questions of *meaning*, that is, with the meaning of the alternative conceptions of the subject and politics put forward by Habermas and the post-structuralists. In this section I make a number of general points about the methodological issues which I have had to address in the research and the writing of my thesis. The search for the meaning of these respective theories places my research within the hermeneutic tradition. In this section I therefore

briefly say something about the main innovations in the tradition of hermeneutics which can be traced to the work of Friedrich Schleirmarcher. Schleirmarcher in the early nineteenth century was concerned with the methodological implications of the interpretation of biblical texts in the wake of ecclesiastical monopoly over their meaning (Schleirmarcher, 1986: 80). In the latter half of the nineteenth century Wilhelm Dilthey was a prominent theorist of the hermeneutic method. As Dilthey saw it, the understanding of a given text takes place when the interpreter or researcher effectively reconstructs the original intentions of the author, that is, through a careful process of 'empathy' (Dilthey, 1986: 159). However, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, Dilthey's method of 'self-reflection' was not an 'adequate basis for the hermeneutical problem' (Gadamer, 1986a: 260-1). Gadamer says that Dithey was unable to 'overcome the influence of traditional epistemology' (Gadamer, 1986a: 260). From Gadamer's perspective, the meaning of a text is not something that belongs to the author to be discovered by the researcher; rather meaning emerges in the process of interpretation (Gadamer, 1986a: 261).

According to Gadamer, hermeneutics is a technique or approach that concerns itself with the 'art of understanding' or interpretation (Gadamer, 2004: 173). He says that we can never really know the intentions of the author through the faithful reproduction of authorial intention (Gadamer, 1986b: 264). Meaning is not something that is the exclusive property of the author. On the contrary, as Gadamer puts it the hermeneutic process always commences from some definite set of 'prejudices' or 'fore-understanding' (Gadamer, 2004: 273, 327). Similarly, Heidegger says that '[a]n interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us' (Heidegger, 1998: 191-2). The hermeneutical process must therefore give due consideration to the historical, social, and cultural situatedness of the interpreter. The meaning of a given text emerges in the process of interaction between the interpreter and the text, such that we have a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1986c: 272).

As I see it, the meaning of the various theories examined in this thesis emerges through an active engagement - or dialogue - between the ideas of the various thinkers and in relation to

my own 'fore-knowledge' or prior understanding. I must therefore carry out a detailed textual analysis of the respective theorists in order to draw out points of similarity and difference between them. Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics places great emphasis on the intrinsically subjective nature of interpretation. The interpreter is necessarily situated within a historically bound set of conventions and practices. As John Keane puts it, 'interpreters are already implicated within, and must draw upon, the universe of linguistically structured activities within which their subjectivity has been formed' (Keane, 1988: 210). These presuppositions are reflected in the choices that I have made about what to study and the choices about who is and who is not included in the research (Keane, 1988: 209-10). Furthermore, I do not present my interpretation as a definitive reading. Gadamer's work suggests that it is part of the fate of any text that its 'meaning' is dependent on an indefinite number of readers and hence multiple interpretations (Keane, 1988: 212). This point has been made forcefully by Derrida (Derrida, 1982). Indeed, as Derrida has argued it is a structural characteristic of the text that any particular text can always be subject to new interpretations (Derrida, 1982: 307-330).

However, the inherently subjective nature of interpretation means that it is also important to make explicit the underlying ontological presuppositions that inform my thesis. This is because my thesis is written from a particular perspective. Following Connolly, my working assumption is that there is no 'true' or 'objective' ontological standpoint, but only different and contestable ontological perspectives. My own 'ontopolitical' perspective is principally informed by Nietzsche's and Connolly's idea that there exists 'diverse energies and forces of life that [necessarily] exceed attempts to organize it' (Connolly, 1995a: 38). Indeed, it is my working assumption that notions such as 'the subject' and 'the self' are not pre-given entities, but ambiguous and paradoxical sites of 'social inscriptions and a source of energies exceeding and confounding all those scripts' (Connolly, 1995: 13). It is important to present my own 'ontopolitical interpretations' or 'foreknowledge' from the start of the thesis. From the outset, I endorse Nietzsche and Connolly's ontological belief in a multiplicity of 'forces' (Deleuze, 1983:

6). I understand the world in terms of an irredeemable pluralism between subjects as well as a plurality that is internally constitutive of the subject. This ontology enables us to understand the modern world, in a manner which is not grounded in the logic of identity or an essential subjectivity that is supposedly identical-with-itself. However, again with Connolly, I accept that these assumptions are 'contestable responses to the persistent mysteries of existence' and in this study they are brought into a constructive and open dialogue with the other ontological frameworks examined in this thesis (Connolly, 1995: 28).

**The Salience of William Connolly's approach to the subject and self**

I have already mentioned that this thesis is situated within a Nietzschean framework and that I identify with the political theory of Connolly because he sees his work as a 'politicised left Nietzcsheaniam' (Connolly, 1991a: 190). In this section I elaborate the salience of Connolly's work for my overall perspective on the subject and politics. By the end of the penultimate chapter it will become apparent that in comparison to Habermas, Laclau and Mouffe, I see Connolly's work as offering the most promising theory of the subject and politics. I show that like the other theorists examined in this thesis, Connolly recognises the paradoxical nature of the subject. However, I argue that unlike Habermas, Lacalu and Mouffe, the concepts and language Connolly borrows from Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari enable him to innovatively address both the internal and external pluralism characteristic of the modern subject. It also allows him to tackle both the conscious and unconscious and the linguistic and non-linguistic aspect of the self. In addition, in Chapter Four I show that unlike Laclau and Mouffe (and more like Habermas), Connolly offers a conception of politics that is not premised on fear or a 'constitutive lack' but rather on the idea of politics as creative space for negotiation, activity and self-making

I maintain that the value of Connolly's approach is that he draws attention to the idea that the human subject is susceptible to suffering and therefore potentially the site of 'resentment' because of 'existential injustice inherent in the human condition' and 'systematic social injustice'

(Nietzsche, 1994: 21; Connolly, 1993c: 157; Simons, 1995: 120). According to Connolly, the modern subject's resentment is fuelled by the paradoxical nature of the world, which not only undermines the belief in an absolute truth or objective ground but also disrupts any attempt by the subject or a collective group at grounding itself. This leads to uncertainty and ambiguity of the self and can potentially generate more resentment (Connolly, 1993c: 139). Connolly's theory of the subject is attractive because he readily admits that resentment is not a permanent condition of the human subject but something that can be worked up. Thus, drawing upon Nietzsche and Foucault, he offers the idea of 'techniques of the self', which the human subject can employ upon its self to drain itself of resentment. Central to Connolly's notion of the subject is the possibility of self making, which coincidently makes the dimension of politics a necessity.

In Chapter Four I will show that Connolly's insight that politics is not constituted around a 'constitutive lack' or fear is just one of the many redeeming features of his work. His notion of politics is creative on three additional fronts. First, Connolly endorses a conception an 'agonistic' conception of politics that valorises 'tension' 'conflict', 'competition' and 'strife' in democratic life (Connolly, 1992: 151-152; 2002: 173). In Connolly's view, politics allows for what he calls the 'paradox of difference to find expression in public life' (Connolly, 1991a: 94). In other words, for Connolly, politics is the medium where the human subject finds its political voice and is able to express his/her identities (Connolly, 1991a: 92). He says it also the site where the 'governing cultural consciousness' of 'naturalized' identities are disturbed and 'denaturalized' and in the process new 'constellations' of identities or 'movements' emerge and come into being (Connolly, 1991a: 201; 1995a: 103). On this level, like Arendt's notion of 'the political', politics for Connolly is a space of activity and negotiation.

Second, drawing upon Nietzsche's notion of self-making, Connolly addresses the necessity of addressing the individual self in politics (Nietzsche 1994: 192). Thus, he offers a conception of politics that makes individuality and projects of self-making a necessity for one's sense of identity and self (Connolly, 1991a: 74). It is through engaging in politics and public life

that the human subject can actively work towards creating a sense of self and identity. At the same time, politics is the realm where the individual subject is able to rid itself of loathing by working 'on the self' and artfully creating and working towards a sense of self they respect and admire (Connolly, 1993b: 373; 1993c: 150).

Third, Connolly actively employs Deleuze and Felix Guatarri's notion of 'rhizomes', which allows him to address the collective aspect of political life (Connolly, 1995a: 164: Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 3-25). In their co-authored book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari draw upon agricultural metaphors to expound the basic premises of their philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 3-25). They celebrate the 'multiplicity' of a 'rhizome' which assumes 'diverse forms' and contrast it with the linear hierarchical structure of roots and trees (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2003: 5, 7, 9). For Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome has a non-centralised and non-hierarchical structure and 'does not designate a localizable relation' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 17, 25). They say it has 'no beginning or end'; it is 'always in the middle' where 'things pick up speed' and 'in between things' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 25). In other words, for Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome has heterogeneous connections and can be 'connected to anything other' as opposed to a tree or root, which they argue 'plots a point, fixes an order' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 7). Connolly refers to the 'rhizomatic' political assemblages, which are linked through 'multiple lines of connection' rather than 'unified' around a 'central political idea or ethical principle which all the participants endorse' (Connolly, 1995a: 164; 2004: 168). In other words, in Chapter Four I will demonstrate that Connolly also recognises - alongside hegemonic forms of organisation - that groups crystallise together into a 'constellation' without any explicit intention to do so (Connolly, 1999c: 4). In addition, Connolly also draws on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of micropolitics to further articulate a collective politics. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 213). They describe the former as the 'aggregate of perception and feeling' that is organized and segmented (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 213). For

Deleuze and Guattari, a micropolitics is a form of politics that operates at the 'unconscious' level of 'perception, affection and conversation' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 213). Connolly uses the term micropolitics to refer to a 'cultural collectivisation of arts of the self' (Connolly, 2002: 107). He says that micropolitics are not 'passive' but rather they are 'active, relational, and multimediated' (Macdonald, 2002: 171). For Connolly, they resonate 'across a variety of venues such as texts, films, rallies, protests, and strikes' (Macdonald, 2002: 171). In other words, he sees them as subject and intersubjective practices that work at the level of 'desire, feeling, perception and sensibility' and thereby help 'shape an intersubjective ethos of [agonistic] politics' (Connolly, 1999b: 148).

Connolly's conception of the self and politics offers an affirmative account of the creation of a democratic ethos that allows for self-governance and self legitimation of a polity.


## Paradoxes and contradictions

Having identified a general area of investigation and a broad research problematic for my comparison between Habermas and the post-structuralists, I now begin to narrow the research questions down in order to identify a number of specific hypotheses to be investigated in the thesis. For this purpose, I take my point of departure from Habermas's claim that the post-structuralist theorists find themselves caught in a 'performative contradiction', that is, in their radical or 'totalising' critiques of Enlightenment rationalism. In this thesis I use the conceptual difference between 'contradictions' and 'paradoxes' as a heuristic tool to demonstrate the fundamental differences between Habermas and post-structuralists with regard to their respective conceptions of the subject and politics. In this section, I first present a brief account of the notions of contradiction and paradox as they have been elaborated in western thought since the Greeks. This conceptual distinction is then used in the following section to fully explicate the central theoretical claims of my thesis and a number of specific hypotheses to be investigated in the research.

The ideas of contradictions and paradoxes are central to the history of Western thought. Their presence not only presents a challenge to traditional logic, but they also potentially threaten the foundations upon which Western philosophy is based. Consistency is clearly of central importance in the construction of any theory, idea, or system of thought. No philosopher or theoretician wants his or her ideas to be deemed inconsistent or to be accused of the charge of incoherence or self-contradiction due to faulty reasoning, premises, or conclusions. The importance of eliminating contradictions and paradoxes from systems of thought to ensure coherent knowledge and valid argument dates back to ancient philosophy and logic. Both Aristotle and the Stoics aimed to distinguish between valid and invalid arguments. The influence of Aristotelian logic has permeated the works of philosophers to the present day. Analytical philosophers have sought to ground the truth and falsity of propositions on Aristotle's laws of thought. These laws are encapsulated by Bertrand Russell as follows: 1) The law of identity: 'Whatever is, is', 2) The law of non-contradiction: 'Nothing can both be and not be' in the same sense at the same time, 3) The law of the excluded middle: 'Everything must either be or not be' (Russell, 1946: 72). For many thinkers these laws continue to be of great significance in determining the criteria for knowledge and eliminating contradictions from our understanding of the world (Wilde, 1989: 9).

The notion of contradiction has been dealt with by a number of diverse philosophers and schools of thought (Wilde 1989, chapter 2). Contradictions occur on different levels and fall into a variety of categories. For example, we can distinguish between logical contradictions, practical contradictions, and semantic contradictions (Sainsbury, 1995). For the purpose of identifying Habermas's use of the term I will distinguish between three understandings of the notion contradiction. The first understanding relates to arguments, statements, or propositions and is commonly associated with ancient logic and analytical philosophy. This notion of contradiction arises between two conflicting statements both claiming to be true at the same time. Contradictions of this sort breach Aristotle's laws of thought. For example, the following

statement 'I am tall and I am not tall' is a contradictory statement. Both parts of the statement cannot be logically true at the same time. The first part of the statement conflicts with and contradicts the second part. For the sake of consistency one part of the statement must be shown to be true and the other false. Contradictions in this sense need to be distinguished from contraries which are defined as a pair of statements that cannot both be true at the same time, but they can be false at the same time. For example, both of the following propositions cannot be true: 'All taxis are black and no taxis are black'. They can however both be shown to be false at the same time, and for that reason are called contraries.

The second notion of contradiction is associated with Hegelian dialectics. Hegel puts forward a sophisticated conception of contradiction, which he tells us is the 'root of all movement and vitality' (Hegel, 1999: 439). As Hegel puts it, 'only something that has a contradiction has the urge to move' (Hegel, 1999: 439). Hegel's notion of contradiction is an explicit critique of Aristotle's laws of thought (Wilde, 1989: 17-18). Hegel criticises Aristotle's first law of thought, i.e. the law of identity: 'whatever is is', which he considers as 'nothing more than the expression of an empty tautology' that 'has no content and leads no further' (Hegel, 1999: 413). According to Hegel, the identity of a given notion or proposition is not a positive content in itself, but it is inextricably bound up with difference and otherness in a dialectical relationship (Hegel, 1999: 415). From Hegel's dialectical perspective, contradiction is not limited to abstract concepts, arguments, or statements. It also operates on the level of ontology as the opposition between things, entities, or phenomena (Hegel, 1999, 34). For example, in the *Science of Logic,* Hegel maintains that the notion of 'Being,' implicitly contains within itself its opposite determination i.e. 'Nothing' or 'nothingness' (Hegel, 1999: 82, 83). Indeed, 'Being' cannot be posited at all without its opposite determination, which is non-Being (Hegel, 1999: 431). In other words, Being is an inherent contradiction, because at the same time as implicitly containing its opposite within itself, it also excludes that which is negative to itself. However, according to Hegel, the contradiction within Being and Nothing resolves itself by sublating itself, by transposing itself

into its opposite (Hegel, 1999: 433). The contradiction between the determinate opposites Being (positive) and Nothing (negative) is 'mediated' into what Hegel calls a 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*), which is a higher unity (Hegel, 1999: 107). In the *Aufhebung*, the determinate opposites are overcome and at the same time generate a new opposition between two different (and opposite entities), which preserves within them the previous contradictions (Hegel, 1999: 107). For example, in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel claims that the contradictions between 'particularity' and 'universality' are resolved in the institutional arrangements of the modern constitutional monarchical State (Hegel, 1991: 339). The opposition between the two conditions is overcome, but the contradiction is also preserved within the civil society understood as a necessary moment within the whole. Thus, we can define the second type of contradiction as caught within a dialectical opposition.

The third notion of contradiction is influenced by post-Wittgensteinian philosophy and is central to Habermas's charge of performative contradiction levelled against the post-structuralists. Wittgenstein's later works on 'language games' in the *Philosophical Investigations* enabled subsequent philosophers of language to turn their attention to the question of the meaning of words, understood in terms of their use in every day speech (Wittgenstein, 1967: 23). For example, in his celebrated book *How to do Things with Words* John Austin's explores the different use of words and distinguishes between what he calls 'constative' and 'performative' speech acts or utterances (Austin, 1975: 3-7). Constative speech acts refer to those assertions where the speaker makes claims about a state of affairs that are deemed to be true or false (Austin, 1975: 3). For example, when I point to the computer and utter the words 'this is a computer', this speech act can be deemed to be true or untrue. In juxtaposition, a performative speech act involves 'doing' or 'performing' an action in the actual process of uttering the speech act (Austin, 1975: 6-7). For example, when a recruitment officer utters the following words to her colleague 'you're fired'. In this example, she has performed the action (i.e. the termination of her colleague's employment) in the process of uttering the words. According to Austin, this type of

speech act can be deemed to be 'felicitous' or 'infelicitous' depending on whether or not they have satisfied certain conditions of sincerity, correctness of form, and suitability of content (Austin, 1975: 14-15). A performative contradiction arises when the locutionary (what is stated) part of the speech act is in conflict with its illocutionary force (the action performed) (Jay, 1993: 29). For example, if I say to a colleague 'you're fired' (unless I am joking) when I am not in a position to terminate employment contracts. If this utterance is deemed to be infelicitous and contravenes the 'suitability of form', then I am in a performative contradiction. I will discuss this notion of contradiction in detail in Chapter Three.

However, at this point, what is important is to acknowledge is that all three types of contradiction are potentially resolvable or reconcilable within the terms of their own discourse. With Aristotle, the tension between the contradictory parts of a statement is resolved by deeming one part of the statement to be true and the other false. In Hegel's dialectics, contradictions between opposites are not immediately resolved because contradictions are *preserved* in the *Aufhebung*. The 'resolution' of contradictions in Hegel's dialectical process is not readily apparent. However, there is a moment of ultimate resolution in Hegel's dialectic where all the preserved contradictions *are resolved* or *reconciled* in the notion of 'Absolute Knowledge' (Hegel, 1977: 808; Derrida, 1982: ix; Stern, 2000: 17-18). The performative contradiction characteristic of the 'infelicitous' speech act is also 'resolvable'. It is possible to show a person who is caught in the performative contradiction that in the act of uttering their statement they have made a number of assumptions which are in conflict with that which is uttered. In other words, they have contravened at least one of the conditions of sincerity, correctness of form, or suitability of content. Indeed, we can define a contradiction as a set of conflicting statements, phenomena, or events that *can* in principle be resolved or reconciled. In fact, implicit in the notion of contradiction is the 'ideal' of resolution. Now, I will show that this is not the case with paradoxes.

Paradoxes, like contradictions, have a history that dates back to ancient philosophy and logic. They are a special case of reasoning and have significant implications for philosophical systems and our understanding of the world. The term paradox is a compound of two Greek words *Para* meaning against and *doxa* meaning opinion: a paradox is taken to mean contrary to received opinion. A paradox can be defined as 'an apparently unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable reasoning from apparently acceptable premises' (Sainsbury, 1995: 1). Like contradictions, paradoxes take many forms and have fascinated analytical philosophers and mathematicians over the centuries. The oldest recorded paradox is by the Greek philosopher Eubulides of Megara who said that 'Epimenides the Cretian says that all Cretians are liars' (Cargile, 1995: 643). This is a paradox because if what Epimenides said is true then it must have been a lie. Alternatively, if what he said was a lie then this would have made his statement true. Paradoxes are clearly enjoyable to contemplate. However, they raise serious and fundamental concerns about the limitations of applying logical categories onto our understanding of the world, and its apparent ambiguities. The world is composed of meaning, value, and power relations that cannot be sufficiently expressed in logical statements, but perhaps are captured in the nature of paradoxes.

A paradox is defined as a contradictory statement, phenomena, or event which - unlike contradictions - *cannot* be reconciled because the inherent tension is constitutive of the event or phenomena. The premises or conclusions of a paradox may well be contradictory, but they are also potentially both true, and therefore not resolvable. As Deleuze puts it paradox 'is initially that which destroys good sense...but it also destroys that which destroys common sense', i.e. 'the assignation of fixed identities' (Deleuze, 2001a: 3). Paradoxes become problematic for the status and truth of knowledge when they arrive at acceptable conclusions such as those associated with antinomies. Willard Quine defines an antinomy as 'a paradox that produces a self contradiction by accepted ways of reasoning' (Quine, 1976: 5). An antinomy denotes any argument that has a self-contradictory conclusion and yet seems to be logically valid and to have necessary truths as

premises (Mates, 1981: 3). It can also be presented in the form of a pair of seemingly valid arguments, one leading to one side of the contradiction, the other to the other, and each having only necessary truths as premises (Mates, 1981: 4). According to Kant, there are four fundamental abstract antinomies, that is, the tension between the finite and the infinity, between pluralism and monism, determinism and freedom, and the existence or non-existence of a supreme being (Kant, 1993: 317-340). Each of these propositions consists of a thesis and its contradiction or antithesis. For Kant, these antimonies are contradictions in our reason. They do not exist in reality; they can potentially be resolved (Kant, 1993: 351). This is because for Kant knowledge did not contradict itself (Kant, 1993: 149).

However, Derrida's work demonstrates how the history of western metaphysics is riddled with 'contradictions, paradoxes, inconsistencies, and aporias constitutive of conceptuality, argumentation, and the discursiveness of philosophy' (Gasché, 1986: 135). Indeed, in *The Tain of the Mirror* Gasché argues that Derrida's work 'aims towards a new transcendental aesthetic, a theory which aims at originary constitution, but also at the same time a critique of the concept of origins' (Gasché, 1986: 156). In other words, Derrida has sought to re-establish the traditional foundational status of ontology on a paradoxical basis. According to Gasché, the Derridean notions of *différance, iterability, trace,* and *supplementarity* have the status of what he calls 'pre-ontological' or 'quasi-transcendental' infrastructures (Gasché, 1986: 148, 316, 317). These 'infrastructures' have the inherently paradoxical status of both 'grounding and ungrounding at the same time' (Gasché, 1986: 161). They are both the ontological conditions of possibility of any subjectivity and simultaneously the conditions of impossibility (of a reconciled subjectivity). This Derridean embrace of constitutive paradox is hugely significant, because I make the case that each of the post-structuralist examined in this thesis develop conceptions of the subject, which are basically homologous with the Derridean conception of constitutive paradox. That is, whether they take their inspiration primarily from Derrida or from Nietzsche/Deleuze, or Freud/Lacan.

Indeed, the conceptual distinction between contradictions and paradoxes is of central importance to my thesis, because this enables me to demonstrate that the post-structuralists are not caught in what Habermas calls a 'performative contradiction', but instead readily embrace and accept the paradoxical foundations of their political prescriptions. In fact, I use these notions of contradiction and paradox as a heuristic tool to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists and their respective conceptions of the subject and politics. Put simply, my thesis is this: Habermas's conception of the subject is presided over by the ideal of resolution and reconciliation. That is, the ideal of a reconciliation of the individual subject with his/her own internal contradictions and a resolution of the contradictions between inter-subjective agents. By way of contrast, the post-structuralist conceptions of the subject and politics are presided over by the principle of constitutive and irredeemable paradox.

## Three research hypotheses

The central thesis can be broken down into three more specific hypotheses. These are as follows: 1) the charge of performative contradiction levelled by Habermas against post-structuralism does not hold up to scrutiny. I investigate the notion of performative contradiction and show that it is distinct from a paradox. I demonstrate that Habermas's claim of the performative contradiction is misplaced because the poststructuralists accept the paradoxical character of their founding principles. 2) there is no straightforward dichotomy between the work of Habermas and the poststructuralists, with him on one side as a 'rationalist' and them on the other as 'anti-rationalists' critics of reason. There is a fundamental difference between Habermas's notion of the subject (that is tied to the ideal of a resolution or reconciliation between contradictory and opposing tensions) and the poststructuralist notion of the subject (which takes irretrievable paradox as it articulating principle). However, I show that on a more straightforwardly political level, that Habermas shares a number of distinct similarities with the post-structuralist theorists and especially with the work of Mouffe. Indeed, I make the case that Habermas is not as close to

'Kantian proceduralism' as he is often said to be. There are in fact distinctly 'Hegelian' elements in Habermas's conception of 'reason' and 'rationality'. Habermas's conception of rationality shares important parallels with the work of Michael Oakeshott, who is a significant influence on Mouffe. 3) I make the case that Habermas's own founding principles appear to be masking a paradox despite his claims to contrary.

## Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part explores the notion of 'the subject' in the work of the post-structuralists and Habermas. The second part explores their respective understandings of political philosophy, and especially questions of legitmation. The third part represents my conclusions and summarises the similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. The first two parts of the thesis are each divided into two chapters: the first addresses the work of the post-structuralists and the second Habermas's work. In the first part of the thesis I provide an exposition of the post-structuralists' and Habermas's re-working of the philosophy of consciousness and of the subject, which has been the starting point for philosophy and politics since the publication of Descartes *Meditations*. It will be shown that both perspectives offer conceptions of the subject that are not ontologically grounded or epistemologically self-certain. According to Habermas and the post-structuralists, the subject is not the origin/foundation of social relations. In both perspectives, the subject is theorised as simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by social relations. The second part of the thesis examines first the explicitly political theories of the post-structuralists and then Habermas's. Each chapter begins with an explanation of the significance of 'pluralism' for both the post-structuralists and Habermas's respective understanding of political modernity. It will be shown that Habermas and the post-structuralists both seek to extend and deepen 'liberal democracy' understood not as an end in-itself, but as a means of addressing the pluralism that is constitutive of modern society. In other words, I show that all of the theorists examined in this thesis share a

common political trajectory and that there are important similarities in their advocacy of the principles of liberty and equality. In the third part of the thesis I evaluate the respective theories of the subject and politics. First, I undertake a more detailed comparison between Habermas's notion of 'discourse ethics' and Mouffe's Oakeshottian notion of *'soceitas'* to show that they theorise the basis of the modern political community in a similar manner. Following that, I construct a complex map of the main similarities and differences between the respective theorists on the notion of the subject and modern political philosophy. Then, I demonstrate the paradoxical nature of Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation, despite his claims to the contrary. Finally, I outline an account of a paradoxical political space and I suggest that the political perspectives of Habermas and the post-structuralist could 'agonistically' co-exist in this space. My thesis ends with a summary of the points I have used to demonstrate my argument.

**Part One - The Subject**

# Chapter Two

## Post-structuralism and the 'Subject'

## Introduction

The 'death of the author', the 'death of man', and the 'death of the subject': these are much cited phrases that suggest that the subject has disappeared entirely from post-structuralist thought. However, I will make the case that the concept of the subject has not been annihilated in post-structuralism. On the contrary, in this chapter I demonstrate that there has been a veritable eruption of post-structuralist attempts re-inscribing, re-negotiating, and re-signifying the notion of the subject in a variety of ways (Butler, 1990: 143-149; 1995: 35-36). Given the depth, richness, and diversity within post-structuralism, it is important to point out that post-structuralism is not a homogenous body of thought. Indeed, a number of commentators have argued that despite their shared association with post-structuralism, Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe have put forward different ontological perspectives, which have significant implications for their respective notions of the subject and politics (Wenman, 2003a; Widder, 2000). Also, a debate has evolved in the recent literature between those post-structuralists who broadly support a Freudian/Lacanian social ontology of constitutive 'lack' and those who champion a Nietzschean/Deleuzian ontology of 'abundance' (Gasché, 1994; Laclau, 1994; Thomassen and Landers, 2005). These are important contributions. As I see it, we cannot identify a single, unitary, or definitive 'post-structuralist' notion of the subject. However, in this chapter I am concerned to identify the characteristics that certain post-structuralists have in common with each other, that is, their 'family resemblances' regarding the notion of the subject (Wittgenstein, 1967: 67). This will enable me to undertake a comparison with Habermas's notion of the subject in the following chapter.

These points of similarity are as follows. Firstly, for each of the post-structuralist thinkers examined in this chapter the notion of the subject is not an epistemological point of certainty but an ontological difficulty or problematic. The post-structuralist notion of the subject is not like Descartes' *cogito* the founder and origin of social relations, that is, a fixed substance, unity, thing, or ground upon which everything else is premised. Nor, is it simply an effect of social relations. I will show that the various post-structuralist theorists assert the necessity for some form or another of founding principles but that they also accept these foundations are contestable and contingent. Indeed, for each of the post-structuralist theorists the subject is an inherently paradoxical phenomenon. Following Derrida, we could say that the conditions of the possibility of the post-structuralist subject are at the same time 'its' conditions of impossibility (Gasché, 1986: 184, 316). In other words, that which is constitutive of the post-structuralist subject is at the same time that which disrupts any notion of the subject as a self-present unified origin or totality. In addition, the post-structuralist notion of the subject is constitutively 'incomplete' or always in a process of becoming. We might say that this subject is characterised by a moment of internal pluralism which is always subject to the possibility of change through practices and employing different techniques.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In section one, I present an exposition of Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the 'subject' understood in terms of 'subject positions' in discourse. I explain that Laclau and Mouffe draw their inspiration primarily from the Marxist Antonio Gramsci and Derrida. I make the case that they challenge Louis Althusser's structuralist notion of the subject understood as an effect of ideological interpellation. In section two, I delineate a second post-structuralist notion of the subject, that is, Laclau's Lacanian notion of the subject as 'lack'. I initially present an exposition of Zizek's critique of Laclau and Mouffe's notion of 'subject positions' to demonstrate that Zizek's critique has persuaded Laclau to re-conceptualise the notion of the subject in his post-*Hegemony* writings. Indeed, Laclau explicitly endorses Zizek's critique and delineates a psychoanalytical notion of the subject understood as a

'subject of lack'. Nevertheless, I show that despite Laclau's psychoanalytical turn, his notion of the 'subject of lack' shares the same basic characteristics with the post-structuralist notion of the subject that I have outlined above, i.e. the subject is paradoxically both the conditions of possibility and impossibility of social and political relations. In section three, I delineate Connolly's notion of the subject as 'self'. This represents an alternative post-structuralist conception of the subject. Connolly's perspective is significantly different from that advocated by Laclau and Mouffe. He draws his inspiration from the ontology of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze. I demonstrate how Connolly's notion of the 'self' draws particularly on Nietzsche's account of the problem of '*ressentiment*', understood as an existential characteristic of the human condition or of the 'self'. Nevertheless, despite this difference, I make the case that Connolly's Nietzschean notion of the 'self' also shares the important family resemblances with the other post-structuralist conceptions of the subject. Finally, I end this chapter by suggesting that the post-structuralist paradoxical conceptions of the subject offers important and valuable insights into understanding the human subject.

## 'Subject positions' and the hegemonic subject

The second edition of Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (hereafter referred to as *Hegemony*) was published in 2001. In a new preface to the second edition the author's acknowledge that the book 'has been at the centre of many important theoretico-political discussions' (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: vii; Townsend, 2004). Indeed, since its initial publication in 1985 *Hegemony* has had a huge impact on political and social theory and has received both praise and condemnation from many quarters. The book has given rise to a distinct methodological approach known as 'discourse theory' centred as Essex University (See Howarth, 2000; Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis, 2000). In this section, I reconstruct the central components of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theoretical approach focusing on their conception of the subject.

At the core of Laclau and Mouffe's project is a polemic against traditional Marxist conceptions of the proletariat understood as the subject of history, that is, as a particular class subject that fulfils its universal historical role in bringing about a fully emancipated or classless society understood as totality (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 2). In order to challenge this conventional socialist conception of the subject of history, Laclau and Mouffe turn to Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony' to develop a theory that places particular emphasis on politics understood as the means of instituting social relations (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136). They developed this theory in the context of the growing significance of the politics of the new social movements (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 3). The idea was to 'outline a new politics for the left' that would accommodate diverse 'contemporary social struggles', such as, the feminist movement, the environmentalist movement, and the anti-racist movement (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 3).

In order to grasp the nature of Laclau and Mouffe's theory we need to understand their innovative conception of 'discourse'. However, I start with a consideration of their critique of Althusser's conception of the subject because in embracing the concept of 'discourse' Laclau and Mouffe break with both Althusser's notion of the subject and of ideology. In the 1960s Althusser integrated his anti-humanist and anti-Hegelian version of Marxism with the basic tenets of structuralism to create what has become known as 'structuralist Marxism'. In his famous essay entitled 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' Althusser makes two important contributions to social theory (Althusser, 1971). First, he problematises the traditional understanding of ideology as outlined in *The German Ideology* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Engels and Marx; 1976; Althusser, 1971: 160). Second, he provides a 'structuralist' account of the subject that is in contrast to the epistemologically self-certain Cartesian subject (Althusser, 1971: 182). Althusser argues that in modern capitalist society the relations of production are reproduced and secured through ideology (Althusser, 1971: 185). Unlike Marx and Engels, Althusser does not see ideology as a distortion or illusionary reflection in consciousness of the 'real' economic conditions of existence or of real social relations (Althusser, 1971: 160). The dominant ideology

52

is a material component of the various 'structures in dominance' with its own definite effect (Althusser, 1971: 128, 151). For Althusser, individuals never have a direct experience of reality. Instead, drawing upon Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusser sees ideology as an 'imaginary relation' that individuals have to their 'conditions of existence' (Althusser, 1971: 162).

For Althusser, every individual is a subject of ideology, whose position in the dominant social structure is constituted as an 'effect' of the ideology that 'interpellates' them as a subject or calls them into being (Althusser, 1971: 173). In other words, it is through ideology that individuals become class subjects. According to Althusser, ideology is a set of material practices that literally 'recruits' individuals and transform them into 'subjects' (Althusser, 1971: 169, 174). He says individuals are 'interpellated' or hailed' as subjects into an existing ideological structure or system of recognition, which following Lacan is understood as a 'symbolic' realm that is constituted through language and signifiers (Althusser, 1971: 180). In other words, for Althusser the subject is formed through an imaginary relation and they are constituted as an 'effect' of the given social structure (Althusser, 1971: 162, 168).

Like Althusser, Laclau and Mouffe seek to provide an account of the subject that does not rely on any 'originary' or 'transcendental' conception of the subject. In *Hegemony* they claim that '[w]henever we use the category of "subject" in this text, we will do so in the sense of "subject positions" within a discursive structure' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115). This is in order to avoid falling into the Cartesian trap of delineating a notion of the subject as an epistemological moment of certainty and ontological foundation. For Laclau and Mouffe, the subject cannot 'be the origin of social relations' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115). They reject this idea even 'in the limited sense of [the subject] being endowed with powers that render experience possible' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115). However, Laclau and Mouffe also recognise that a key problem with Althusser's structuralist notion of the subject is that the subject looses any capacity for agency (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 103). The subject becomes simply an effect of the (wholly

determinant) ideological apparatus that interpellates 'it' as subject. This is something they seek to avoid in their post-structuralist theory of the subject.

Laclau and Mouffe's argue that the subject (or 'subject positions') is constituted within a 'discursive structure' as opposed to the traditional notion of 'ideology'. Laclau and Mouffe's notion of 'discourse' draws particularly upon the work of Saussure and upon Derrida's post-structuralist critique of Saussure. As I said in the introduction, the innovation of Saussure's linguistics is his recognition that the value of the linguistic signifier depends upon its relationality to other signifiers, and that any signifier only has meaning within a synchronic system of differences 'without positive terms' (Saussure, 1974: 117). In his essay 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Sciences' Derrida puts forward a post-structuralist conception of the system of differences that is in contrast to Saussure's emphasis on a closed synchronic structure and that 'extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely' (Derrida, 1978: 354). According to Derrida, every structure or discourse is inherently open and contingent and constantly subverted by an infinite play of differences (Derrida, 1978: 352). For Derrida, the identity of every signifier is only ever partially fixed because it is constantly disrupted by a surplus of meaning that is both *witihin* and *outside* the synchronic system of difference (Derrida, 1978: 352). As Derrida puts it, discourse is 'a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified [the grounding origin usually occupied by the subject] is never absolutely present' (Derrida, 1978: 354). In other words, he puts forward a paradoxical notion of discourse and its centre (or subject). He does not deny that every discourse has a centre. However, he says 'that the 'contradictory coherence' of centre is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it' (Derrida, 1978: 352). Similarly, according to Laclau and Mouffe, 'every subject position is a discursive position' which 'partakes of the open character of every discourse, consequently, the various positions cannot be totally fixed in a closed system of differences' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115). In contrast to Althusser's structuralism, this post-structuralist notion of 'subject positions' points towards a

theory of the subject that accepts that subject positions can always be subject to change because they are never 'fixed' or 'permanent' within a totality.

Following Saussure, Laclau and Mouffe claim that any discourse is a partially 'structured totality' which consists of 'a system of differential entities' without positive terms (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 111). They understand discourse as 'an ensemble of differential positions ... that constitute a configuration, which in certain contexts of exteriority can be *signified* as a totality' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 106). However, they draw explicitly upon Derrida's critique of Saussure to delineate their post-Marxist conception of discourse. For Laclau and Mouffe, discourse only exists as a 'partial limitation of a "surplus of meaning" which subverts it' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 111). Laclau and Mouffe call this 'surplus' the 'field of discursivity', which from their perspective is a prior condition of possibility 'for the constitution of every social [or discursive] practice' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 111). We can understand Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the 'field of discursivity' as an infinite play of plural forces, i.e. what Derrida calls '*différance*' (Derrida, 1982: 1-28). This is an inherently paradoxical social ontology: discursivity is the condition of possibility of any 'discourse' (qua totality) but at the same time it is the condition of impossibility of discursive closure because it permanently disrupts that closure (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:111). In other words, at the core of Laclau and Mouffe's social ontology is a paradoxical tension between two opposing notions (discourse and discursivity). This tension is constitutive of their social ontology and cannot be resolved by appeal to Aristotle's law of non-contradiction, nor can this tension ever be reconciled or sublated into a higher unity, in the manner of Hegelian dialectics (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 95).

For Laclau and Mouffe, any discourse is 'constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 112). Different political projects attempt to arrest the flow of differences by ordering social relations or the terrain of discursivity. They make a further distinction between the 'moments' and 'elements' of a given discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). Moments are those subject

positions that are internal aspects of a given discourse, i.e. they have been partially fixed or ordered within a discourse, whereas, 'elements' are differences that have not been fully incorporated within the 'discourse', but they nonetheless remain internal to the parameters of the discourse understood as its internal limit preventing it from completion (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 127). According to Laclau and Mouffe, 'elements' have the status of 'floating signifiers', which penetrate and subvert the discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113). They understand political struggle as the struggle to transform 'elements' to 'moments', but this is never realised because 'moments' in a discourse are never completely totalised since they are subject to the disruption of other 'elements' or the differences that permanently subvert them (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113). Indeed, it is this necessary impossibility of closure which allows for the constitution of new subject positions and identities.

According to critics like Seyla Benhabib, the notion of the subject in post-structuralism has been reduced to a position in language (Benhabib, 1995: 18). However, this is not the case in Laclau and Mouffe's theory. In their theory, a discursive structure is not simply a linguistic phenomenon. Following the work of the later Wittgenstein, Althusser, and Gramsci they assert the 'material' character of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 108). Indeed, they reject any distinction between discursive and so called 'non-discursive' practices: for Laclau and Mouffe discourse is coextensive with social relations (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 107). In order to illustrate this point they cite Wittgenstein's notion of 'language games', which consists of 'language and the actions into which it is woven' (Wittgenstein, 1967: 3; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 108). In an essay entitled 'The Impossibility of Society' Laclau identifies 'the social' with 'the infinite play of differences', and society with 'the attempt to limit that play, to domesticate infinitude, to embrace it within the finitude of an order' (Laclau, 1990: 91). According to Laclau and Mouffe, there must be a partial fixing of meaning in social and political relations because if there was pure contingency then there would be a constant flux and flow of differences, and this would mean chaos, i.e. social relations could never even be temporarily established (Laclau,

1990: 90). On the other hand, if there was pure necessity in the formation of social subject (as with Althusser) there would be a fully determinant synchronic totality, which simply repeated the internal moments of the totality. By way of contrast, according to Laclau the social 'exists as the vain attempt to institute' the impossible object society as totality (Laclau, 1990: 92). However, paradoxically 'the social always exceeds the limits of the attempts to constitute society' (Laclau, 1990: 91).

Laclau and Mouffe describe the political practices whereby meaning and identity is partially fixed as an 'articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). They affirm the primacy of politics in their social ontology. This is because politics is the strategic means by which new discourses are articulated. These practices are made possible in the space that emerges between 'elements' and 'moments' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 110-11). For Laclau and Mouffe, an articulation is 'any [political] practice that establishes a relation among elements such that [the] identity [of those elements] is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). Following Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe describe this space as the terrain of 'undecidability' (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: xi). This is the precarious and ambiguous 'no-man's-land' that makes politics possible because it is neither the space of elements nor moments (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 110-111). They argue that the formation of an articulatory practice 'consists in the constitution of nodal points which partially fix meaning' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113). In other words, subject positions are constituted in the act of a political decision and nothing *apriori* can be said about the nature of the subject positions constituted by the articulatory practice.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, 'the general field of the emergence of hegemony is that of an articulatory practice, that is, a field where the "elements" have not yet crystallized into "moments"' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 134). They turn to the work of the Gramsci to elaborate their theory of hegemony. Gramsci describes hegemony as the political mechanism by which a 'fundamental class' establishes its 'intellectual, moral, and political' leadership (Gramsci, 1988:

249-250). On his reading, the hegemonic class uses a 'combination of coercion and consent' to weld together a 'collective will' or a new 'hegemonic bloc' founded upon the universalisation of its own interests (Gramsci, 1988: 239-242; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136). Unlike Gramsci, for Laclau and Mouffe, no hegemonic project will ever be fully realised, because, as already stated, any attempt to constitute society as a totality necessarily fails as it is only a partial attempt to arrest the flow of differences. Furthermore, from Laclau and Mouffe's perspective there is no privileged or universal class agent of history. The struggle to construct a 'hegemonic bloc' can emanate from the struggles of any group or sector of society, such as, the feminist movement or the environment movement. The 'hegemonic' project is not tied to the essential interests of any fundamental class or group in society. Hegemony is basically a formal category that describes the way in which any particular group or sector of society temporarily institutes their particular conception of social totality (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136, 139). In other words, the agent or subject of hegemony is not an 'essential' or 'fixed' individual, class, or group. Rather, for Laclau and Mouffe, the hegemonic agent emerges in the contingent political act that links together a number of different struggles in a new *'historic bloc'* or *'hegemonic formation'* (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136). For Laclau and Mouffe, the hegemonic subject is not an agent with a predetermined position in 'world history'. Rather, the agency of the hegemonic subject comes into being in the process of contingent political struggles (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 135). Furthermore, according to Laclau and Mouffe, the hegemonic subject 'as the subject of any articulatory practice, must be partially exterior to what it articulates - otherwise, there would be no articulation at all' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 135). In other words, there must potentially be subject positions that do not actively identify with an existing discourse and see themselves as 'partially exterior' to it in order for a transformative agency to emerge. Laclau and Mouffe argue that in order for a hegemonic articulation to emerge there must be 'the presence of antagonistic forces' in society and 'the instability of the frontiers, which separate them' from the existing

system of social relations (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136). Indeed, they say hegemony emerges in a 'field criss-crossed by antagonisms' and 'frontier effect' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 135-6).

The necessary failure of any discourse to completely arrest the flow of differences creates the conditions for the hegemonic subject to emerge. Laclau and Mouffe attribute the hegemonic subject with the capacity to act, i.e. 'it' has subjectivity. However, their notion of the hegemonic subject is not (like the Cartesian *cogito*) the author of discourse and neither is it like Althusser's notion of the subject simply an effect of discourse. As I have said, discourse is paradoxically both the condition of possibility and the impossibility of the subject's emergence. Laclau and Mouffe claim that 'the very identity of the articulatory force is constituted in the general field of discursivity - this eliminates any reference to a transcendental or originative subject' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:114). Laclau and Mouffe tell us that the category of the subject 'is penetrated by the same ambiguous, incomplete and polysemical' nature 'characteristic of every discursive identity' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 121). Thus, the 'subjectivity' of the political agent is never realised. The hegemonic subject attempts to 'suture' elements into moments by constituting society as totality. Laclau and Mouffe share Althusser's anti-Cartesianism. As they see it, 'it is the discourse which constitutes the subject position of the social agent, and therefore, not the social agent which is the origin of discourse' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1990: 101).

Laclau and Mouffe introduce the term 'antagonism' to describe the 'limit of all [attempts] at objectivity, i.e. to explain their paradoxical conception of the subject and of social ontology (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125). They differentiate their use of the term antagonism from the way it has been traditionally used by Marxist theorists to describe political conflict and its causes (Laclau and Mouffe: 1985, 122). They contrast antagonisms to what they call 'real oppositions' and 'contradictions' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 124-5). They say both contradictions and real oppositions, describe the relations between two entities (concepts or things) understood as fully positive identities. By way of contrast, 'antagonism' describes that which prevents the fullness of any identity, structure, or the subjectivity form being realised. Indeed, Laclau and Mouffe's

59

notion of antagonism is an example of a paradox as I have defined it in the introduction. It is not a negative relation between two things or entities like Aristotle's notion of contradiction, nor is it a dialectical relationship between two opposing or contradictory things or entities that can be 'mediated' and reconciled into what Hegel calls a 'sublation' [*Aufhebung*] (Hegel, 1999: 107). Laclau and Mouffe claim that the 'presence' of the antagonising force 'prevents me [the subject] from being totally myself' (Laclau and Mouffe; 1985: 125). As they put it, 'insofar as there is antagonism, I cannot be a full presence for myself. But nor is the force that antagonises me such a presence: its objective being is a symbol of my non-being and, in this way, it is overflowed by a plurality of meaning which prevents antagonism from being fixed as a "full positivity"' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125). For Laclau and Mouffe, the relationship of antagonism force can never be reconciled into a harmonious unity.

Antagonism also explains why society cannot be constituted as totality. They say 'strictly speaking, antagonisms are not *internal* but *external* to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter's impossibility of fully constituting itself' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125). In other words, 'antagonism' names the paradoxical limits of every discourse. Antagonism cannot be resolved with appeal to the law of non-contradiction and nor can it be reconciled into a higher unity. Antagonism is the constitutive condition of (im)possibility of the subject and social ontology, or in the terms of this these antagonism is a constitutive paradox.

I have made the case that Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the subject in terms of diverse subject positions is an ontological problematic that does not have a fixed ontological status. The subject is neither the origin nor simply the effect of social relations. Instead, I have demonstrated that for Laclau and Mouffe, the subject and ontology are both of a paradoxical nature. In addition, I have shown that subject positions are always subject to the possibility of change and are constituted in the moment of the hegemonic articulation, that is, by a hegemonic subject, that emerges in the terrain of undecidiability. As I have said, for Laclau and Mouffe 'the category of the subject is penetrated by the same ambiguous, incomplete, and polysemical character which

overdetermination assigns to every discursive identity' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 121). In *Hegemony*, Laclau and Mouffe have clearly moved way from the Cartesian association of the subject with the individual *cogito*. Their notion of diverse subject positions and the hegemonic subject draws attention to collective forms of political agency.

## Subject as 'lack'

In 1990 Laclau published a collection of essays entitled *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. This book included an essay by Zizek's entitled 'Beyond Discourse Analysis'. In the preface of this book Laclau says that he welcomes Zizek's 'incisive critique' of his and Mouffe's 'treatment of the subject' outlined in *Hegemony* (Laclau, 1990: xvi). In this section, I initially present a brief outline of Zizek's critique of Laclau and Mouffe's notion of diverse 'subject positions'. This is because Laclau has effectively accepted this critique. In his post-*Hegemony* writings Laclau has embraced a psychoanalytic approach to the question of the subject. He has also sought to rework the notions of 'hegemony' and 'antagonism' drawing upon psychoanalysis.

According to Zizek, the notion of diverse 'subject positions' outlined in *Hegemony* actually 'regresses' from a 'finely elaborated' Althusserian notion of the interpellated subject set out in Laclau's earlier work (Zizek, 1990: 250). Zizek suggests that the innovation of Laclau and Mouffe's concept of antagonism in *Hegemony* was not met with a 'corresponding [innovative] concept of the subject' (Zizek, 1990: 250). According to Zizek, what remains implicit in the notion of diverse 'subject positions' is the 'excessive, unacknowledged kernel of the *cogito*', which he understands in terms of the Freudian 'unconscious' (Zizek, 1999: 2). As Zizek sees it, it is the unconscious which dislodges the individual subject from its traditional Cartesian role as ground and origin and not simply a Saussurian play of symbolic differences (Zizek, 1999: 2; 2000b: 215). Drawing upon Lacanian psychoanalysis, Zizek refigures the unconscious in terms of what he calls a 'constitutive' or 'fundamental lack' (Zizek, 1989: 172). He says that Laclau and

61

Mouffe's notion of 'subject positions' effectively 'masks' this 'original void' or 'lack in the structure', which is the 'subject as lack' (Zizek, 1989: 175).

According to Zizek, this psychoanalytical conception of the subject remains implicit in *Hegemony*, that is, in the idea that 'the socio-symbolic field' is 'structured around a certain traumatic impossibility, around a certain fissure which *cannot* be symbolised' (Zizek, 1990: 249). Zizek draws attention to the similarities and differences between Laclau and Mouffe's conception of 'antagonism' and the Lacanian concept of the 'Real', and he draws a clear distinction between the Lacanian 'Real' and the 'social reality of the antagonistic fight' (Zizek, 1990: 253). According to Zizek, the notion of 'antagonism in social reality' correlates with Laclau and Mouffe's concept of *external* antagonism, i.e. the entity which 'is preventing me from achieving full identity with myself' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125). On this reading, says Zizek, the subject would be prevented from realising its full identity by the presence of an *external* 'other' (Zizek, 1990: 253). As I have said, in *Hegemony* this constitutive exclusion is understood as the condition of (im)possibility of the subject. However, Zizek introduces the notion of the Lacanian Real understood as a moment of 'pure antagonism' (Zizek, 1990: 253). He says it is not the presence of the external other that is preventing me from achieving full identity with myself, but rather 'every identity is already marked by an internal impossibility, resting upon a moment of 'pure antagonism' (Zizek, 1990: 252). In other words, he introduces the question of the individual and the psyche into Laclau and Mouffe's theory. Zizek says that 'it is not the external enemy who is preventing me from achieving identity with myself, but every identity is already in itself blocked, marked by an impossibility, and the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of reality upon which we 'project' or eternalize' this intrinsic, immanent impossibility' (Zizek, 1990: 252). Furthermore, on Zizek's reading, this psychoanalytical account of the subject as a 'pure' antagonism is prefigured in Hegelian dialectics. In order to explicate this notion of a 'pure antagonism' at the center of the subject, Zizek refers to the dialectical relationship between the 'Lord and Bondsman' elaborated by Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Zizek,

62

'the Lord is ultimately an invention of the Bondsman, a way for the Bondsman to "give way to his desire", to evade the blockage of his own desire by projecting its cause onto the external repression of the Lord' (Zizek, 1990: 252). In other words, whilst the Bondsman may envisage the external presence of the Lord as an obstruction to his own identity, the full identity of the Bondsman is always already obstructed because of an internal impossibility (later the Freudian unconscious), which is built into every identity. From Zizek's perspective, every identity is always already marked by its own internal limit, that is, the unconscious in psychoanalytical theory and (according to Zizek) pure negativity in Hegel's dialectic (Zizek, 1999: 177).

It is unclear to what extent Laclau's own categories overlap with Lacanian psychoanalysis. Unlike Zizek, Laclau has not developed an explicitly Lacanian body of theoretical work. Moreover, Laclau has recently made a number of criticisms of Zizek's politics. He says that Zizek 'does not make political analysis but simply illustrates psychoanalytical categories with political examples' (Laclau, 2004a: 315). I do not propose to explore these issues in any detail here, but it is important to acknowledge that we should not equate wholesale Laclau's Freudian/Lacanian turn with Zizek's approach. Rather, we should see Laclau as joining Zizek and other Lacanians such as Joan Copjec in theorising the subject as founded upon a constitutive lack or the unconscious (Zizek, 1999; Laclau, 2000; Copjec, 1994). It is clearly significant that Laclau accepts Zizek's critique of the idea of diverse 'subject positions' and that in his later works he does rework the notion subject as constituted around a 'fundamental lack' or 'pure antagonism' (Laclau, 1990; Laclau, 2000). However, for my purposes here it is also important to acknowledge that despite this change, Laclau's conception of the subject of lack still fits with my broad conception of the post-structuralist notion of the subject, i.e. as paradoxically both the conditions of possibility and impossibility of social relations.

In his post-*Hegemony* writings, Laclau invokes Freud and Lacan's meta-psychology to explain the action of the hegemonic subject and 'its' attempt to constitute society as a 'totality'.

Following Freud, Laclau argues that individual and social psychology are inextricably linked. He says from 'the very first individual psychology…is at the same time social psychology as well' (Laclau, 2004b: 47; Freud, 1991:154-155). Nevertheless, Laclau also emphasises Freud's distinction between social and individual psychology: the former is concerned with 'social drives' and the latter with 'narcissistic drives' (Laclau, 2004b: 47). For Laclau, psychoanalysis is the 'only' theory that adequately explains the 'drives' behind the 'construction of society' (Laclau, 2004b: 46). Psychoanalysis provides Laclau with a theory to explain why the hegemonic subject attempts to construct the 'fullness of society'. According to Laclau, psychoanalysis explains the libidinal ties that keep society together as well as accounting for 'its radical disruption' (Laclau, 2004b: 46).

In *Hegemony*, Laclau and Mouffe employ Lacanian psychoanalytic categories such as 'suture' and the idea of 'nodal points' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 111-112). However, in his post-*Hegemony* writings Laclau draws much more extensively on a Lacanian terminology. For example, he invokes categories such as the subject of lack, identification, ego, ego ideal, introjection, projection, imaginary and symbolic (Laclau and Zac: 1994: 31). According to Laclau, the Lacanian notion of the Real, the subject of lack, and are ontological categories (Laclau: 2004a: 324). It is therefore important to briefly summarise the detail of their Lacanian ontology. In Lacanian theory, there are three ontological orders of social existence, these are, the Symbolic, the Real, and the Imaginary (Lacan, 1998; 217-9). These are the conditions of possibility of human (social) relations to exist. The Symbolic corresponds with what Laclau and Mouffe call the discourse, that is, the socially linguistically mediated inter-subjective realm: this is the realm of signifiers, signs, ideology, and representation. According to Lacan, the Symbolic is constituted around a pure void or absence that permanently disrupts its completion in a synchronic totality (Lacan, 1998: 218). This is what he calls the 'Real'. Laclau says that the Lacanian notion of 'the Real' correlates with the notion of 'antagonism' in *Hegemony*, that is, the internal limit of the objectivity of any structure, which cannot be symbolised and prevents any

attempt at completion or totality (Laclau, 1996a: 39). In Laclau's (Lacanian) social ontology, the Real has a paradoxical status. On the hand, the Real is that which allows for the construction and ordering of our everyday identities and reality (i.e. the Symbolic). On the other hand, the Real is also that which prevents and disrupts (disorders) the construction of our identity and reality of the Symbolic order. In terms of this thesis, the Real is both the condition of possibility of signification and the condition of impossibility of full signification (Laclau, 1996a: 37).

For Lacan, the Imaginary corresponds with the individual subject's image of his/her self as a coherent whole, that is, with the ego (Lacan, 1998: 7; Laclau, 1994: 31). Lacan associates the imaginary with what he calls the 'mirror stage', that is an early stage in the child's development prior to the acquisition of language (Lacan, 1998; 2). During the mirror stage, the child's ego or sense of self is formed (Lacan, 1998: 1-8). From Lacan's perspective, the construction of the 'ego' involves a moment of misrecognition. The child's internal fragmentation is overcome through identifying with an external/specular image of wholeness, and this misrecognition subsequently exerts influences throughout the entire lifespan of the individual subject (in the form of neurotic symptoms) (Lacan, 1998: 7). The imaginary relation to the specular image is split between the (precarious) formation of the ego and the child's external image of wholeness. Lacan calls the former the 'ideal ego' and the latter the 'ego ideal' (Lacan, 1998: 339, 340). The 'ego ideal' corresponds with the imaginary, i.e. the illusion of coherence and wholeness and the role of the ideal ego is to try to maintain this illusion (Lacan, 1998: 7).

In *New Reflections* Laclau invokes the psychoanalytical notion of subject as 'lack' for the first time. Laclau theorises the subject in terms of 'dislocation' or what he calls the 'distance between the undecidable structure and the decision' (Laclau, 1990: 39, 61). In other words, the subject does not have a defined location in the social structure as ontological origin (Laclau, 1994: 2). Indeed, it is only because there is a structural dislocation - in his earlier work between elements and moments - that the subject has the space to emerge (*qua* decision) (Laclau, 1990: 62). The dislocation in the structure (or the symbolic) is the 'lack' and for Laclau (following

Lacan) this is the place of the emergence of the subject. For Laclau, the Lacanian notion of the Real emerges as the disruption of the symbolic and prevents 'it' from attaining fullness (Laclau, 2004a: 288). From Laclau's perspective the subject has a paradoxical status. On the one hand, the subject (as 'Real') prevents the fullness of structural totality, i.e. the subject has a dislocatory or subversive role in any structure (Laclau, 1990: 61). On the other hand, the decision enacted by the hegemonic subject (the subject of the imaginary that strives for the fullness of society) provisionally fixes the meaning within a discursive formation, thereby establishing the temporary stability of a plurality of subject positions. In a paper entitled 'Minding the Gap: The Subject of Politics' written with Lillian Zac and published in Laclau's edited collection *The Making of Political Identities* the subject becomes explicitly '*the subject of lack*', that is, the 'place of a constitutive lack', an 'originary lack of being', or an '*irreducible* lack', (Laclau and Zac, 1994: 12, 23, 31). However, this 'lack of being' is also 'the precondition for its access to Being' (Laclau, 1994: 31). In other words, despite the different points of emphasis to the earlier theory of diverse subject positions this remains a paradoxical conception of the subject. On the one hand, the 'lack' is the condition of possibility of the subject and on the other hand the condition of its impossibility.

I have said that Laclau also embraces the Lacanian notion of the '*object petit a*' understood as ontological category and constitutive of the individual subject. It is therefore necessary to briefly explain the Freudian notion of the pleasure principle from which this concept is developed. Freud presents the psychic apparatus of the individual as being predicated on 'the pleasure principle' (Freud, 1984: 278). The 'pleasure principle' refers to the individual's desire to maximise pleasure and to minimise pain. According to Freud, ultimate pleasure is only realised in death or in the complete cessation of striving (Freud, 1984: 311-312). However, in striving to heighten pleasure the individual (subject) cannot avoid the issue of self preservation imposed by reality. In order to continue to enhance its pleasure the psyche has to stay alive. The pleasure principle is therefore regulated and transformed into the 'reality principle' (Freud, 1984: 278).

However, in becoming the reality principle, the pleasure principle does not abandon the 'intention of ultimately obtaining [full] pleasure' in death (Freud, 1984: 278). Instead, this full pleasure and satisfaction is postponed. In the reality principle the pleasure principle accepts 'unpleasure' as an indirect step towards full pleasure (Freud, 1984: 278). Freud says that the sexual instincts try to overcome the reality principle and therefore striving towards full pleasure (Freud, 1984: 278). However, full satisfaction always escapes their grasp. In Lacanian psychoanalysis the embodiment of the impediment preventing the full satisfaction of the pleasure principle is referred to as the *'object petit a'* and the perverse pleasure (pleasure in pain) that the psyche obtains in failing to attain full satisfaction is called *'jouissance'* (Lacan, 1998: 353, 354).

Laclau links the *object petit a* (understood as the cause of the desire of 'the subject lack') to the motivations of the hegemonic subject in the political field (Laclau, 2004a: 288). He says that the *'object petit a* is a lost object, which in the first place, never was', i.e. it is an imaginary object, an object of imaginary fullness (Laclau, 2004a: 288). In the realm of politics, this object is society understood as a completely ordered whole. The pleasure principle explains why the hegemonic subject searches for full satisfaction, i.e. it is looking for the object to 'fill' the structural 'lack' (Laclau, 2004a: 300). For Laclau, the 'subject of lack' cannot achieve full satisfaction, but this does not stop 'it' from continuously searching for the object of fullness. Laclau also uses the Freudian notion of 'identification' to explain the mechanism of hegemony. Identification enables different social subjects to politically come together by putting the 'same object [or the same political project] in the place of their ego ideal and identifying themselves with one another in their ego' (Freud, 1991: 147). In psychoanalytical theory this is the origin of the social bond. In Laclau's theory this explains the actions of the hegemonic subject who attempts to institute the object of society as totality or what Laclau calls a 'society effect' only to necessary fail on each account. As Laclau puts it, 'only by going beyond themselves - only by realising their own being in terms of a 'society effect' that transcends their own particularities - could those particularities become fully constituted' (Laclau and Zac, 1994: 18). For Laclau, there

is an essentially contingent link between the temporary 'representatives' of the whole social order and 'what is represented', i.e. society as an impossible object (Laclau, 2004a: 300). There 'is no permanent attachment between the signifier of fullness and the various objects incarnating it (in Lacan's terms there is always going to be a gap between the jouissance expected and the jouissance obtained)' (Laclau, 2004a: 300). In Chapter Four, I will explore this idea in relation to Laclau's distinctive political theory in more detail.

I have shown how Laclau explains the 'why' of the 'hegemonic act' outlined in *Hegemony* through the use of psychoanalytical categories. It is because the subject is a 'constitutive lack' that it tries to construct 'wholeness' through hegemonic acts by attempting to constitute sociality as totality. In *The Making of Political Identities* Laclau suggests that his 'psychoanalytic' turn is compatible with his earlier notion of the subject in *Hegemony* (Laclau, 1994: 6). As I have said, Laclau emphasises the similarities between the hegemonic subject as the gap or undecidability between the elements and moments of a discourse. However, to what extent Laclau's earlier notion of 'discursivity' and the Lacanian notion of 'the Real' (which in Zizek's words is a 'hard rock' that remains the same in all symbolic structures) are compatible remains a moot point (Zizek, 1989: 169). This is because the social ontology which informs *Hegemony*, suggests that the subject is disrupted in a discourse or an infinite play of forces that differ in quality, quantity, and intensity as opposed to a constitutive lack. In his more recent work Laclau refers to the symbolic realm as a *'failed unicity'* and there is no affirmative reference to a multiplicity of forces or to 'discursivity' (Laclau, 2004a: 325).

By way of contrast, in her work subsequent to *Hegemony* Mouffe has not explicitly or wholeheartedly endorsed Lacanian psychoanalysis. In her single authored works she refers to both Derridean and Lacanian categories to theorise the subject of politics (Mouffe, 1993; 2000b). Indeed, despite scattered references to Lacanian psychoanalysis, it is probably fair to say that Mouffe basically continue to adheres to a Saussarian/Derridean notion of the subject, understood as a differential relation as 'subject positions' within discourse. Her notion of the subject

understood as 'subject positions' has not altered in her post-*Hegemony* writings. Furthermore, as I will explain in Chapter Four, she has sought to combine this approach with a Hobbesian/Schmittian social ontology, which appears to be very close to an anthropology of man as inherently conflictual or antagonistic (Schmitt, 1998: 61; Mouffe, 1995a: 1 543). Indeed, Mouffe tells us that 'the natural condition of mankind is war' (Mouffe, 1995a: 1543). It seems that her conception of 'antagonism' is Hobbesian, as opposed to Laclau's use of the term in a strictly Freudian/Lacanian sense. Nevertheless, despite this difference of emphasis, Laclau and Mouffe continue to share a paradoxical social ontology and to theorise the subject as an ontological difficulty or problematic. In the next section, I show that Connolly's notion of the 'self' shares many characteristics with Laclau and Mouffe's notions of the subject. Nonetheless, Connolly's notion of the 'self' addresses the question of the internal tensions and pluralism constitutive of the individual subject in greater detail than Laclau or Mouffe.

## The subject as 'self'

As I said in the introduction, Connolly has published a large number of books on a wide range of topics from pluralism and the question of identity, to questions of legitimacy and political modernity. His early work is critical of the conventional American pluralism of political science. Over the last two decades, Connolly has sought to rework the 'pluralist imagination' drawing his inspiration primarily from the work of Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger, and Deleuze (Macdonald, 2002: 167; White, 1998: 73; 2003: 213). Connolly offers an alternative post-structuralist ontology and conception of the subject to Laclau and Mouffe. He reworks the traditional notion of the 'subject' and develops a 'visceral' conception of the embodied 'self' (Connolly, 1993c: 156). He understands the 'self' as a living, thinking, breathing, and material being with both consciousness and unconscious memory and perception (Connolly, 2002). For Connolly, the human 'self' must be understood as embodied in the natural and social world conceived with Nietzsche and Deleuze

as a complex of 'forces' (Nietzsche, 1994: 28; Connolly, 1999b: 186; Deleuze, 1983: 51). In other words, from Connolly's perspective the human 'self' is not just a subject position within a discursive structure because the self is constituted by a 'plenitude of being that exceeds the grasp of a single interpretation' (Connolly, 1993a: 94; 1996: 153). Indeed, according to Connolly, 'formal "subject positions" do not exhaust the possibilities residing within those who inhabit them' (Connolly, 1993a: 58). In this section, I elaborate Connolly's materialist ontology of 'life' and his conception of the subject as an embodied 'self'. It will become evident that there are significant differences between this 'visceral' theory of the subject and Mouffe's notion of 'subject positions', or Laclau's notion of the 'subject of lack'. Nevertheless, as I have already said, despite these differences Connolly's conception of the subject shares important points of similarity with the other post-structuralists: for Connolly the subject is paradoxically the conditions of possibility and impossibility of social relations.

Before outlining the detail of Connolly's notion of the self, it is necessary to present a brief exposition of his wider understanding of social ontology. Connolly understands the world in terms of a deep 'multidimensional pluralism', that is, as an excess or an abundance of diverse 'energies' and 'protean forces' of 'life that differ in quality, quantity, and intensity (Connolly, 1999b: 186). According to Deleuze, from whom Connolly takes his inspiration, these forces are either dominant or dominated depending on their difference in quantity, whereas, forces are active or reactive depending on their quality (Deleuze, 1983: 51). For Connolly, 'life' requires 'identity and exceeds any specific organisation of identities' (Connolly, 1995a: 33). As he sees it, 'difference' (understood as the plurality of different forces) and 'identity' (understood as the organisation of those forces) are both necessary and ontological (Connolly, 1995a: 33). As he makes clear in *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* the relationship between the forces of identity and difference is inherently paradoxical. Connolly's theory is predicated upon the permanent tension of these opposing forces that cannot be reconciled in the manner of Hegelian dialectics (Connolly, 1991a: 65). As Connolly sees it, the tension between

70

identity/difference can never be resolved because both 'opposing' principles are constitutive of 'life'. Connolly says that 'care for the strife and independence of identity/difference to be is cultivated by affirming life to be more fundamental than identity' (Connolly, 1995a: 38). Indeed, Connolly treats the Nietzschean concept of 'life' as 'an indispensable, nonfixable marker, challenging every attempt to treat a concept, settlement, or principle as complete, without surplus or resistance' (Connolly, 1993b: 371).

In his recent writings, Connolly, has argued that the classical distinction between nature and culture needs to be reworked (Connolly, 2002: 64). He explicitly rejects two prominent conceptions of nature, that is, nature as an 'intrinsic purpose' or as 'plastic matter to be used' for human utility (Connolly, 1993a: 11). For Connolly, the former idea of nature as having an intrinsic purpose 'invokes god as a mysterious master subject' (Connolly, 1993a: 11). The latter idea of nature as 'plastic matter to be used' invokes 'humanity as technological master subject' (Connolly, 1993a: 11). By way of contrast, he draws upon Nietzsche, Deleuze, and IIya Prigogine (a Nobel Prize winning chemist) to make the case that nature is constitutively incomplete, 'it' is always in a process of becoming because there is always a necessary 'fluidity in things' (Connolly, 1998: 97). On Connolly's reading, nature contains 'elements of unpredictability', and is 'full of micro-differentials that periodically accumulate to generate new things' (Connolly, 2002: 66, 82, 135; 1999a: 23). For Connolly, the world 'flows over with diverse "energies" and "forces" that impinge on human life in multiple ways and that sometimes react to human impingements on them in unpredictable and uncanny ways' (Connolly, 1993a: 10). In other words, these forces of life disrupt any notion of the subject understood as origin or foundation.

In his most recent work, Connolly develops a theory of what he calls 'immanent naturalism', which he defines as the 'idea that all human activities function without the aid of a divine or supernatural force' (Connolly, 2002: 85). From Connolly's perspective, 'immanent' naturalism replaces the traditional status of the 'transcendental' (Connolly, 2002: 85). In his theory the transcendental is not some permanent ontological or epistemological foundation, but

rather an immanent field of forces that is 'infrasensible rather than supersensible' (Connolly, 2002: 85). Connolly invokes a 'Deleuzian metaphysic' of infrasensible forces understood as a 'non-Kantian transcendental field' (Connolly, 199b: 40). He says the infrasensible 'does not exist in the world of appearances', instead it is a 'virtual field made up of elements too small to be perceptible and/or too fast to be actual' (Connolly, 1999b: 40). This immanent field of forces is 'unsusceptible' to 'precise representation' or 'direct conscious control' (Connolly, 2002: 85). Here Connolly draws his inspiration not just from Nietzsche and Deleuze but also from the materialism of the ancient philosophers Lucretius (Lucretius, 1970).

In his essay entitled 'Adorno, Post-structuralism, and the Critique of Identity' Peter Dews has made the case that different post-structuralist theories take their inspiration from different aspects of Nietzsche's thought (Dews, 1989: 15). Dews points out that Nietzsche's thought brings out the tension between 'the fluidity of the ultimate world of becoming, and the static systems of concepts laid over this fluidity' (Dews, 1989: 6). According to Dews, Derrida abandons the 'naturalistic dimension' in Nietzsche's thought and focuses instead upon the 'aporias, contradictions, and ambiguities that emerge within the structure of language' (Dews, 1989: 15). By way of contrast, Deleuze draws attention to the images, movements, and 'flows of content and expression' that do not 'depend on signifiers' (Deleuze, 1990: 21). Connolly's ontological approach differs from Laclau and Mouffe because he embraces both elements of Nietzsche's work. He endorses Nietzsche's 'naturalism' and his understanding of the overlaying of concepts on the fluidity of life. Indeed, Connolly's social ontology is particularly influenced by Deleuze's idea that language is only one mode of signification. From Connolly's perspective 'the materiality of culture exceeds the concepts and beliefs that enter into it' through linguistic expression (Connolly, 2002: 47). By way of contrast to Laclau and Mouffe, he refers explicitly to the 'vitality' of an 'extra-discursive' realm of material forces or material flows that language cannot ever capture (Connolly, 2002: 47).

According to Connolly, thinking operates on number of different levels (Connolly, 1999b: 40). He draws attention to what he calls two different 'registers' or 'layers' of being (Connolly, 2002: 35). One register of being is the linguistic and the other register is 'bodily' or corporeal dispositions many of which are 'below the threshold of reflection' and not readily translatable into language (Connolly, 2002: 35). According to Connolly, we are necessarily bound within the linguistic register of being through which we communicate. However, there is also that register of being and thinking which we experience and feel, such as those intense set of feelings that gather in the gut when we find something morally or ethically dubious. Any attempt to articulate these experiences never does justice to the feeling or thought, because language can only offer a 'surface', flat, or 'celluloid' depiction of the world (Connolly, 2002: 43).

This extra discursive vitality is what Nietzsche tries to articulate with his notion of 'forces', Foucault with his conception of 'power', and Deleuze with his depiction of the movement and flows of 'life' (Nietzsche, 1994: 28; Deleuze, 1983: xiii; Foucault, 1982: 208-226). Connolly cites the following passage from Foucault's work to make this point. Foucault says it 'is not enough to say that the subject is constituted in a symbolic system. It is not just in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices - historically analysable practices. There is a technology of the constitution of the self which cuts across symbolic systems while using them' (Foucault, 1984: 369; Connolly, 1999b: 153; Deleuze, 1990: 21). This quote is important because it demonstrates the differences between Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. Connolly alludes to the 'non-discursive' dimension of life, which Laclau and Mouffe would not accept as a valid object of discourse. Connolly claims that many authors 'do not play up enough the fugitive resistances, encounters, slippages, anomalies, paradoxes, and ambiguities' in life that 'suggest that there is an outside to any historical system' of thought or action (Connolly, 2002: 92). However, despite this difference, all three authors share a paradoxical notion of ontology and the subject. Connolly's notion of identity/difference and the play of material 'forces' is intrinsically paradoxical, like Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the tension

between discourse and discursivity, None of these opposing principles can be resolved or reconciled (in a dialectical fashion) into a higher unity. Rather the opposing principles have a n inherently contradictory status because they are both at the same time the conditions of possibility and impossibility of their respective ontologies and their conceptions of the subject.

Connolly understands modernity as the age in which 'the way has been cleared for "the self assertion of reason" to [apparently] establish itself' (Connolly, 1995a: 3). He identifies Rousseau and Hegel as trying to ground their respective notions of the subject in a secure foundation (Connolly, 1993c: 137). We could add Descartes' notion of the *cogito* to this list of characteristically modern thinkers. For Connolly, these thinkers have all tried to 'find a [metaphysical] home in the [modern] world and [they have] explore[d] alternative routes to its realisation' (Connolly, 1993c: 137). In their different ways they have identified some point of (supposed) self-certainty, which can be attained through the formation of some particular scientific and political practice. Connolly says that 'no reliable predication is possible on the basis of a formal subject position' because an 'infinite number of events' disrupt and modify every combination of subject positions (Connolly, 1995a: 61)

According to Connolly, Nietzsche 'defines ineliminable sources of the urge to find a home [i.e. a metaphysical origin], but sometimes he also seems to look to a world where the urge itself disappears' (Connolly, 1993c: 140). For both Connolly and Nietzsche, it is this urge to find a 'home' as origin/foundation, which is the problem with modern reason. Drawing upon Nietzsche, Connolly makes the case that there is no all encompassing transcendental 'safeness' or certainty to be had in the modern world, because we are necessarily 'metaphysically' homeless (Connolly, 1993c: 141). For Connolly, human life is inherently 'paradoxical' and the problem with modern reason is that it 'strives to eliminate every paradox it encounters' by establishing a source or origin from which to ground life, nature, and the subject (Connolly, 1993c: 139). In the terms of this thesis, modern reason typically invokes the principles of resolution and reconciliation, rather than paradoxes. In the next chapter, I show that Habermas takes modern

reason as his point of departure, and that he appeals to a reconciliatory logic as the governing principle of his notion of the subject.

Similarly, Connolly's says that to be a modern subject is 'to be the locus of an internal struggle one strives to repress' (Connolly, 1993c: 157). To be a modern subject is to have unity imposed upon the self because the self 'interiorize[s] a complex set of socially imposed standards'' in order to 'regulate that in itself which deviates' from the dominant social norms (Connolly, 1993c: 156). This is similar to Foucault's notion of the modern 'normalised subject', which is constituted in the 'disciplinary practices' of different regimes of 'power' (Foucault, 1991a; Connolly, 1993c: 156). For Foucault, modern society is a 'disciplinary society', that is, a society which deploys a multiplicity of 'techniques of power' though various institutions (prisons, schools, factories) to constitute 'individuals' as responsible subjects (Foucault: 1988b, 155, 159; 1991a: 170; 1991a). Connolly says that 'real practices' fix 'dispositional patterns of desire on the self' where the self is drawn 'systematically into the orbit of social discipline' (Connolly, 1992: 148; 1995a: 57). Following Foucault, Connolly argues that the 'normalised self' is 'the self that maintains self-surveillance to avoid the treatment for delinquency, mental illness, or sexual perversity' (Connolly, 1992: 148). Connolly says that pressures and forces of 'normalisation' are 'deeply inscribed in the contemporary [social] order' in which strategies of 'therapy, self-confession, and self-policing' are deployed to instil 'standards of normality into the self, the group, and the nation' (Connolly, 1995a: 88, 90). For Connolly, the problem with normalisation is that they in effect 'institutional privilege' is bestowed upon a 'restrictive set of identities' and 'institutional pressure' securers them, whilst excluding those that are considered different, treating them as something to be feared, abnormal, or 'in need of correction' (Connolly, 1995a: 88-9). The privileged identity is 'naturalized' or 'normalised' and it becomes treated as 'true' and those that deviate from this model are treated as 'intrinsically abnormal' (Connolly, 1995a: 89, 91). Connolly says that a normalising society 'resists the proliferation of affirmative identities' and treats otherness as 'perversified diversities' (Connolly, 1995a: 90). Nonetheless, according to

Connolly, the self 'contains pools of "energy" and "impulses"' that decenter these' attempts at social unity and normalisation (Connolly, 1993a: 10).

According to Jon Simons, Connolly is more 'sophisticated than Foucault' because he 'distinguishes between necessary and existential injustice inherent in the human condition and systemic social injustice which could be removed if the exiting order were transformed' (Simons, 1995: 120). Connolly takes this insight from his reading of Nietzsche. In *On the Genealogy of Morality,* Nietzsche examines the ways in which the human subject is filled with existential suffering and resentment (*ressentiment*) (Nietzsche, 1994: 21). As Connolly puts it, from Nietzsche's perspective the subject is 'susceptible to suffering' and therefore the site of 'resentment, violence, depression, and self-loathing paranoia' (Connolly, 1993c: 157, 158). From Connolly's perspective, to be a human subject is necessarily to 'resent the transiency and suffering which defines the human condition' (Connolly, 1993c: 153). However, it is the way in which the individual responds to this suffering that affects his/her relationship with him/herself and others in the world. Connolly agrees with Nietzsche that difficulties start to emerge when the 'sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering' (Nietzsche, 1994: 99; Connolly, 1993c: 158; 2002: 102, 105). According to Connolly, the problem is that the subject 'gives meaning to suffering by holding itself [and others] responsible' for this suffering (Connolly, 1993c: 158). As Connolly sees it, that which is distinct from one's own identity, i.e. the experience of difference or 'otherness' can become one of the causes of suffering. Difference is transformed into a threat of suffering. The individual turns its dissatisfaction with the world and the self into hatred for that which is different or 'other'.

Connolly also makes a distinction between 'resentment' and 'ressentiment' (Connolly, 1995a: 213). He says that 'resentment' is an unjust injury, whereas, 'ressentiment is stored resentment' (Connolly, 1995a: 213). Connolly says that it is sometimes 'appropriate to act out of resentment because it may help one realise that the 'feeling proceeds from a judgement that is false or inflated' (Connolly, 1995a: 213-14). However, Connolly argues that acting out of

'ressentiment is the thing to struggle against' and 'resist' especially when it has become 'folded into established practices' (Connolly, 1995a: 214; 1998: 100)

Connolly draws upon Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche to identify a psychology of reactive forces such as memory traces which have a 'determinate relation in the subject itself' (Deleuze, 1983: 115, 145). In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze claims that for Nietzsche 'what counts is not the quantity of force considered abstractly but a determinate relation in the subject itself between the different forces of which it is made up' (Deleuze, 1983: 115). He demonstrates how for Nietzsche the subject is characterised by unconscious and conscious reactive forces and active forces (Deleuze, 1983: 112-114). Connolly uses Deleuze's typology of forces to show how the 'self' can respond to reactive and normalising forces.

In the previous section I demonstrated that Zizek invoked Hegel's account of the lord and bondsman in order to make his claim that the subject is constituted by an internal fissure or antagonism, which is then projected onto the external antagonism of a master/slave relation. By way of contrast, Connolly invokes Nietzsche's non dialectical reworking of the master and slave relationship. Nietzsche draws a distinction between what he calls 'noble' and 'slave' morality (Nietzsche, 1994: 19). Those individuals who engage in 'reactive forces' are bearers of slave morality, whereas, those who engage in 'active forces' are bearers of a noble ethic and morality (Nietzsche, 1994: 21-22, 53). In other words, the difference between these two moralities represents a difference in the relationship of the self to the self. According to Nietzsche, the reactive forces embodied in the slave morality are borne out of 'hatred', and are characterised by a need for 'revenge' and a denial of life (Nietzsche, 1994: 21-22). This has a profound affect on one's relationship to oneself and others (Nietzsche, 1994: 19). Slave morality grows out of resentment, which 'gives birth to values' that 'compensate themselves with imaginary revenge' (Nietzsche, 1994: 21). These emotions deny 'life' because they are based on a reaction to events or the actions of others rather than upon action and self-affirmation (Nietzsche, 1994: 21). By way of contrast, a noble ethic is expressed in creative and affirmative acts that are not based on

reaction, but upon an active response to events and phenomena (Nietzsche, 1994: 22). According to Nietzsche, noble values and morality are active forces that grow out of a 'triumphant' 'yes' saying to life (Nietzsche, 1994: 21). Connolly describes what he calls his 'antagonistic indebtedness' to Nietzsche. He explicitly rejects the 'anti-democratic' and 'aristocratic' elements in Nietzsche's thought nonetheless he is persuaded by Nietzsche's account of slave morality and the problem of resentment (Connolly, 199b: 65; 1995: 206; 1991a: 191). In Chapter Four I will show how Connolly attempts to 'democratize the Nietzschean conception of nobility' (Connolly, 2002: 165). As we will see, Connolly's innovation is to read Nietzsche 'the arch-adversary of democracy as a Rousseanian mode of *self-rule* and carrier of nostalgia for an aristocratic ethos, to be an involuntary contributor to the ethos of democracy needed in the late-modern age' (Connolly, 1999b: 157).

Connolly rejects the quest for 'self-knowledge' pursued by 'self-consciousness', which is characteristic of Descartes *cogito* and most fully elaborated in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Connolly, 1993c: 150). These theories presuppose 'the actual or potential transparency of the self to itself' (Connolly, 1993c: 149). He draws upon Nietzsche and Foucault's genealogical critique of 'self-consciousness as reflexivity' (Connolly, 1992: 152; Nietzsche, 1994: 28). Connolly says that the 'pursuit of self-consciousness is the [misguided and impossible] pursuit of a future in which all impulses' and forces that govern the self and society 'are fully transparent to the participants' (Connolly, 1992: 152). Following Foucault, Connolly argues that 'reflexivity is a trap' that obligates the self and brings it 'under the control of historically constructed standards of reason and morality' (Connolly, 1992: 152). However, Connolly makes the case that 'reflexivity' can be modified to allow the self 'glimpses of the limits' of 'its' own identity and self-consciousness that acknowledge that there is 'much about the self that eludes us' (Connolly, 1992: 153, 156).

From Connolly's perspective, there is necessarily 'diversity across and within' the self and we 'necessarily [remain] strangers to ourselves' (Connolly, 1993c: 149; 1995a: 200). He says

the self is 'a complex social structure' characterised by an irredeemable pluralism, which cannot be known or reconciled in a Hegelian manner (Connolly, 1995a: 71). For Connolly, one difficultly with positing the idea of a 'true' or 'core' identity of the subject is that the more the 'self strives to bring itself to fit the dictates of this socially prescribed identity, the more it comes to loathe that in itself which resists this prescription' (Connolly, 1993c: 150). He says the pursuit of self-knowledge fosters self-loathing and 'inspires the self to try to know itself even more perfectly to try to rid itself of this loathing' (Connolly, 1993c: 150). For both Connolly and Nietzsche, the self is not a drive towards complete transparency or self-knowledge. Instead, the idea is for the 'self' to work on itself, in order to create itself through artistic self fashioning and not to discover a true self. The idea is to cultivate a sensibility that accepts the contingency of life and identity but can at the same time affirm its own contingent self (Connolly 1993c: 150). Like Foucault, Connolly hopes that the individual will work 'artfully upon its own entrenched contingencies' with the aim warding off the 'violence' of resentment and reactive forces in order to modify a sensibility 'through delicate techniques' (Connolly, 1993b: 373).

Connolly distinguishes between 'individualism' and 'individuality' (Connolly, 1991a: 74). He says that the former term assumes a 'model' of the normal and 'rational individual against which the conduct and interior of each actual self' is to be 'appraised' (Connolly, 1991a: 74). According to Connolly, the latter term 'gives 'primacy to the individual while qualifying or problematizing the hegemony of the normal individual' (Connolly, 1991a: 75). In Connolly's view, the normalised self constituted as a modern 'unified self-responsible' subject inevitably contains 'resentment against the human condition' within its own identity formation and economy of desire (Connolly, 1991a: 78, 80; 1995a: 214). He says that this resentment can be turned inward so that the self resents itself when it 'deviates' from the constraints of 'normal identity' (Connolly, 1991a: 80). Alternatively, he says resentment is expressed 'against any others who deviate significantly' from the normalised identity (Connolly, 1991a: 80).

In developing his notion of the 'self' Connolly recognises the importance 'of engaging [with] the visceral register of subjectivity and intersubjectivity' (Connolly, 1999b: 15). He is critical of Lacanian accounts of the unconscious dimension of thought. According to Connolly, the problem with psychoanalytical perspectives such as Zizek's is that they do not acknowledge the contestability of their basic assumptions (Connolly, 2002; 204). Connolly takes the notion of a 'dynamic unconscious' as constituted by 'reaction formations' and 'blockages' (rather than the 'imperialism' of the 'Oedipal' triad) from Deleuze and Guatarri's critique of psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1984: 51, 313-5). He says that many unconscious forces are 'virtual', that is, 'they are real without being actual: they exert effects (hence are real) without themselves being refined enough to be direct objects of existential inspection (hence lacking actuality)' (Connolly, 2002: 40, 122). For Connolly, the unconscious is at 'once *immanent* in subsisting below the direct level of consciousness, *effective* in influencing conduct on its own accord and also affecting conscious judgement, *material* in being embodied in neurological processes, and *cultural* in being given part of its shape by previous theories of morality' (Connolly, 2002: 85). According to Connolly, 'new thoughts bubble, flow, or surge into being from a virtual register hard at work below the threshold of feeling and intellectual attention. Since affect is not entirely under the regulation of consciousness, the flow of thinking exceeds its governance too' (Connolly, 2002: 75). He refigures the Freudian unconscious as a 'materialist energetic' (Connolly, 1999a: 23). In his theory, human consciousness 'emerges as a layer of thinking, feeling, and judgement bound to complex crunching operations that enable and exceed it' (Connolly, 2002: 85). From Connolly's perspective, any 'law-like explanations of the mechanisms of thought are likely to remain partial and incomplete' (Macdonald, 2002:173). The self emerges within 'complex culture/body/brain networks', many of which move to fast too be rendered into linguistic expression and these forces are not reducible to 'Newtonian mechanics' (Connolly, 1999a: 23). (Connolly, 2002: 63; 1999a: 23).

In his essay 'Nietzsche: Politics and Homesickness' Connolly engages with Nietzsche's notion of the 'self' as it is elaborated in *On the Genealogy of Morality* and with Foucault's work on 'techniques of the self' (Connolly, 1993c: 147; Foucault, 1988: 16-63). The self or the relation to self is understood as the relation of a force to itself and not a relation of force to another force (Deleuze, 1990: 92). Following Nietzsche, Connolly believes that the subject can affirm the 'joy of life in the midst of its tragic character' and 'deliver itself from resentment and revenge' (Nietzsche, 1994: 19, 105; Connolly, 1993c: 159; 1993a: 119). As Connolly puts it, 'the key to a more generous ethic, according to Nietzsche's Zarathustra, is to work on oneself and to affirm oneself rather than resent [the suffering] that is constitutive of existence' (Connolly, 2002: 145). Connolly agrees with Nietzsche's claim that the 'human being should attain satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of poetry or art' because 'whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims' (Nietzsche, 1974: No. 290, 233; Connolly, 2002: 170). According to Connolly, 'Habermas remains too "intellectualist" in the strategies he adopts to modify the presumptions which underlie action' (Connolly, 2001: 349). He argues that this suppression of the 'tensions and ambiguities' of 'life' for the sake of 'private tranquillity, rational harmony, or consummate political agency' inevitably plants the seeds of resentment (Connolly, 1993b: 384). Instead, Connolly advocates 'adult strategies of self-modification in the organization of desire' (Connolly, 1995a: 58). Connolly argues that our 'highest hope' must be a 'form of selfhood, which does not resent', i.e. a selfhood that does not seek revenge for the contingency of 'its own mode' of being (Connolly, 1993c: 159). For Connolly, 'care of the self' is essential in order to care for others and 'care for others emerges from an abundance cultivated by the self' (Connolly, 1995a: 76).

As Connolly sees it, the individual possesses 'various abilities to move or modify particular patterns of desire by tactical means' and to 'drain' itself of resentment (Connolly, 1995a: 65). However, he says that individuals are not 'sovereign agents who decide the codes of desire' that circulate through them in a conscious manner (Connolly, 1995a: 65). Instead, the

subject needs to develop a variety of different practices for working on itself, and this is what Nietzsche calls 'arts of the self' and Foucault calls 'techniques of the self' (Nietzsche, 1994: 176-177; Foucault, 1988: 16-63). The idea is the subject can begin to challenge - but not to resolve - its own internal tensions through exercising continuous work in the art of self-making. These ideas have their roots in ecclesiastical practices of self-discipline.

Furthermore, because of the 'layered' nature of thinking and the fact that the self is 'moved to some extent by modes of thinking below its [conscious] reach': these techniques of the self have the potential to reach and modify the self beyond simple 'argument', dialogue, and 'command' (Connolly, 2002: 65, 82). They must be able to engage with the visceral register of being by intervening 'at innumerable points "in between": subliminal attachment and explicit belief' (Macdonald, 2002: 169; Connolly, 2002: 20). Connolly envisages these techniques as a 'choreographed mixture of word, gesture, image, sound, rhythm, smell and touch' that condition the terrain in which 'perception, thinking, identity, beliefs, and judgements are set' (Connolly, 2002: 20). Techniques of the self aimed at unconscious processes below the reach of conscious control can alter the individual's thinking, mood, or habit which 'affects the ethical sensibility of individuals in their relations to others' (Connolly, 1999a: 23; Connolly, 1999b: 148).

For Connolly, self-artistry is 'not a "subjectivist" practice' of simply 'expressing what you already are' and it does not aim at 'creating a self-indulgent self' (Connolly, 1993b: 145). According to Connolly, this interpretation 'fails to discern the connection between self-artistry, the desantification of critical elements in your own subjectivity, and cultivation of forbearance and generosity in relations with other constituencies' (Connolly, 1999b: 145). The aim is neither to 'discover [the] true self' nor to 'create a new self entirely by oneself' (Connolly, 1999b: 150). From Connolly's perspective, the goal is to modify an 'already contingent self' (Connolly, 1993b: 373). It is to 'work demurely on a relational self that has already been formed' recrafting those paranoid, revengeful, and self-loathing 'contingencies' that have entrenched themselves as part of the self (Connolly 1999b: 146). According to Connolly, it is possible to affirm a 'form of

selfhood', which is not narcissistic and that acknowledges the contingency of all identity and being (Connolly, 1999c: 159). The idea is for the subject to develop an awareness and acceptance that his/her identity is inherently contingent (Connolly, 1993a: 29). Connolly's conception of the 'self' clearly undermines any notion of a self-certain or transparent subject. Connolly describes the techniques of the self in the following terms, he says 'one part of your subjectivity ...now begins to work on other parts' (Connolly, 1999b: 146). He says 'to change your thinking is to modify to some degree the sensibility in which it is set' (Connolly, 1999b: 148). According to Connolly, the impact of these techniques of self-making is to question our everyday habits and established conventions that have become embedded in social and cultural practices. Furthermore, 'there is no guarantee that artful selves and experimenting constituencies will always succeed in the experiments they undertake' (Connolly, 1999b: 149-150). This does not 'diminish' the work undertaken (Connolly, 1999b: 149-150). However, the 'uncertainty' attached to the techniques of the self means that the individual should learn to appreciate contingency (Connolly, 1999b: 147). As Connolly puts it, 'who knows what new possibilities of being will be opened up by [a] ...modest shift' in the self (Connolly, 1999b: 148). As he sees it, the point is to 'become a self you can respect' and to avoid images of 'wholeness' (Connolly, 1999b: 150).

More contact with dislocatory situations, events, and situations may create diverse opportunities that challenge individual and groups identities. This will make individuals more receptive to the idea that their identity is contingent, contestable, and only one subject positions amongst many. Indeed, Nietzsche's notion of action, affirmation, and creativity suggest an engagement with the self, so that one modifies the self to become an identity that one respects. In Chapter Four, I elaborate Connolly's conception of 'agonistic' democracy infused with a vibrant clash of opinions between a multiplicity of different individuals and groups. I also show that for Connolly the highest aim of self-artistry is to cultivate 'political virtues such as critical responsiveness, agonistic respect, and studied indifference in relations between interdependent constituencies' (Connolly, 1999b: 151). I have shown that like Laclau and Mouffe, Connolly's

conceives of the subject as an ontological problematic. Similar to Laclau's notion of the 'subject of lack' Connolly's notion of the self takes the internal pluralism constitutive of the subject as its point of departure. Connolly's social ontology of 'life' of 'identity/difference' and his notion of the subject as 'self' are founded inherently upon paradoxical premises.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have reconstructed the post-structuralist conceptions of the subject, as it is theorised in the work of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. I have shown that despite their differences, these respective conceptions of 'the subject' have many features in common and that they can be brought together in terms of their 'family resemblances'. This approach will enable me in the following chapter to refer to the 'post-structuralist notion of the subject', that is, in contrast to Habermas's 'inter-subjective' notion of the subject. From my reconstructions we see that the notion of the subject has not disappeared from post-structuralist thinking. Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all reject an epistemological conception of the subject. From the post-structuralist perspective, the subject is not a moment of epistemological self-certainty but an ontological problematic. The post-structuralists all criticise Descartes' notion of the subject as the foundation and origin of social relations. The subject is not what Heidegger calls '*ens*', that is, a fixed point on the ontological horizon: the subject is not understood as a fixed unity and a ground upon which everything else is premised. However, the subject is also not simply an effect of social relations in the manner theorised by Althusser. Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all share the idea that the subject has a paradoxical status, understood as the conditions of (im)possibility of social and political relations. In other words, the subject constitutes the social and is at the same time that which disrupts any notion of a unified social structure or totality. Despite their differences, the various post-structuralist notions of the subject are premised on paradoxical principles and *not* the principle of non-contradiction or the notion of dialectical resolution. Furthermore, for each of the theorists the subject is constitutively 'incomplete' or in a process of

becoming. As Connolly emphasises, the subject can always be modified through the employment of 'different techniques of the self'. Furthermore, Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all accept the contestability and the contingency of their ontological assumptions. They do not deny the need for some form or another of founding principles; however, these founding principles are not absolute or objective but contestable and contingent. They all share an ontological horizon that contains both the force to limit and exceed any social organisation. They all put forward forms of what Stephen. K. White calls 'weak' ontologies as opposed to 'strong' ontologies (White, 2000: 6). White says strong ontologies claim to show us exactly 'the way the world is' and from this the strong ontologist derives his/her universal 'sense of what is right' (White, 2000: 6). By way of comparison, White argues that a 'weak' ontologist accepts that his/her 'conceptualizations' are necessary for 'adequate reflective ethical and political life' but that nonetheless all 'fundamental conceptualizations of self, other, and world are contestable' (White, 2000: 8).

There are good reasons why Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe's notion of the subject have many features in common. They have each embraced what can arguably be seen as the two most important philosophical developments in the twentieth century. That is the ontological turn inspired by Heidegger's project of 'fundamental ontology' and second the linguistic turn, exemplified in the work of Saussure and Wittgenstein. Connolly, Laclau, Mouffe all work broadly within the context of these two developments and in the next chapter I show that (despite his different points of emphasis) Habermas also works within the context of the ontological and the linguistic turns. In the next chapter, I show that Habermas shares many points of similarity with the post-structuralist conceptions of the subject, but that unlike the post-structuralists Habermas takes the notions of 'resolution' or 'reconciliation' as constitutive of the subject, that is, as a kind of regulative ideal of the subject. I explore the implications of this significant point of difference between Habermas and the post-structuralists. In addition, I show that the post-structuralist formulation of the subject comes under attack from Habermas with his charge of 'performative contradiction'. However, I argue that this critique does not hold up to scrutiny

Despite the important points of similarity I also think that the differences between Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe are politically significant. In fact, in Chapter Four I show that despite the similarities between these essentially paradoxical notions of social ontology and the subject, Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe develop notions of politics that are significantly different from one another. As I see it, Connolly's perspective is the most persuasive. As I have said, there is no explicit or substantial theorisation of the individual psyche in Mouffe's work. Indeed, this dimension of the subject is significantly under theorised by Mouffe. Furthermore, her conception of the constitutive nature of antagonism appears to run the risk of ontologising a fearful or even paranoid mode of being that evokes the idea of the 'other' as a permanent threat. Both Connolly and Laclau (in his post-*Hegemony* writings) offer a notion of individual subjectivity, of an individual who has a dynamic relationship to his/her unconscious, so that this relationship can be modified or altered. They both theorise - what we might call - the internal pluralism of the individual subject. However, I think that this dynamic aspect of the individual is much more pronounced in Connolly's work, than in Laclau's notion of the 'subject as lack'. In comparison, Connolly theorises the self as a definite site of political activity, and something to be worked upon. Connolly's notion of 'self-artistry' addresses the predicament identified by Rousseau: How can we have democracy without virtuous citizens and how can we have virtuous citizens without democracy (Rousseau, 1973: 217). Connolly's answer would be: 'patiently and through the work of the self on itself.

As I see it, there are important lessons to be learnt from the post-structuralist conceptions of the subject. The paradox of the human subject is that individuals and groups need some form of identity in order to be. However, the linguistic, bodily, and psychical elements which condition the identities of the individuals or groups also prevent those individuals and groups from achieving totality or completion. This chapter has demonstrated that it is important to state explicitly this paradoxical political ontology and conception of the subject. However, it is equally important to acknowledge, as Connolly says, that no ontology or notion of the subject is

fundamental. These perspectives are contingent, ambiguous, and paradoxical. Furthermore, individuals and groups are not bound to the identities that constitute them. They can enact practices and techniques of the self, in order to weed out elements of resentment and self-loathing. In Chapter Four, I explore the political implications of these approaches in more detail.

# Chapter Three

## Habermas's Conception of the Subject.

### Introduction

The notion of the subject is central to Habermas's 'theory of communicative action' and therefore vital to his overall philosophical and political project. In developing his inherently 'inter-subjective' notion of the subject Habermas draws upon an extraordinarily wide range of sources. There is not the scope in this chapter to explore all of these influences. Therefore, I focus upon a number of key thinkers in my reconstruction of Habermas's notion of the subject. This can be compared with the post-structuralists paradoxical conception of the subject outlined in the previous chapter. Here, I argue that Habermas's notion of the subject invokes elements of the logic of paradox, but is ultimately presided over by a logic of non-contradiction and reconciliation.

In this chapter I address two of the three hypothesis outlined in the introduction. One of my objectives in this chapter is to show that we cannot separate the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists into a simple dichotomy because he shares a number of important similarities with the poststructuralist notions of the subject. For example, I show that (like the post-structuralists) he rejects the Cartesian 'philosophy of the subject', understood as a fixed substance upon which everything else is predicated. Habermas challenges the epistemologically self-certain *'cogito'* and replaces it with a notion of the subject understood as an ontological problematic. For Habermas, the subject is not the foundation and origin of social relations, but neither is the subject simply an effect of social relations (in the manner of Althusser's theory). The subject is constituted by and constitutive of its social 'lifeworld'. Indeed, I will show that the 'life-world' is (paradoxically) at the same time the conditions of possibility of Habermas's social subject and the

condition of 'its' impossibility. In addition, Habermas's notion of the subject experiences changes in its mode of being by engaging in different political practices.

However, despite these important points of similarity I make the case that there are two fundamental differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists with respect to the notion of the subject. First, Habermas develops a conception of the subject that possesses moral and linguistic competencies. This is tied up with Habermas's notion of a performative contradiction: the subject cannot contradict the rules or competencies implicit in his/her communicative speech acts - the 'language game of argumentation' - without falling into a performative contradiction. Here, I show that Habermas is appealing to the 'law of non-contradiction'. Second, I contend that - unlike the post-structuralists - Habermas appeals to a 'reconciliatory' logic to try to overcome the internal pluralism or internal tensions constitutive of the individual subject. Although Habermas recognises the significance of Freudian theory, from his perspective it is crucial to hold to the idea of the individual as potentially a fairly harmonious unity. Otherwise the unconscious would forever undermine his theory of the morally competent communicative individual, which is central to his theory of the subject and politics. In this chapter, I also explore and confirm my second hypothesis by showing that Habermas's charge of performative contradiction levelled against the post-structuralists is misplaced. I demonstrate that on a close examination his accusation of performative contradiction does not hold up to scrutiny, because the post-structuralists justify their founding premises with recourse to the logic of paradox rather than the law of non-contradiction.

There are six sections to this chapter. In the first section I present an exposition of Habermas's rejection of the 'philosophy of the subject', which, he claims has its roots in the tradition of 'philosophical idealism that goes back to Plato' (Habermas, 1992: 29). I identify that for Habermas the main exponent of this approach in its modern philosophical manifestation is Descartes, followed by Kant, Hegel, and his mentor Adorno and fellow colleague Horkheimer of

the School of Critical Theory. According to Habermas, these theorists remain within the 'philosophy of consciousness'. Like the post-structuralists, Habermas embraces the linguistic turn and is concerned to transcend the Cartesian 'philosophy of consciousness' and the 'psychologist' notion of an introspective subject. In the section second, I examine two approaches that Habermas embraces in order to move away from the philosophy of the subject. First, I provide a brief description of Husserl's phenomenology and then I show how Habermas embraces Alfred's Schutz's critique of Husserl, which leads Habermas to develop a social phenomenological conception of the subject. At this point, I demonstrate that Habermas again shares important points of similarity with the post-structuralists, that is, in rejecting the traditional understanding of ontology as straightforwardly foundational. Like the post-structuralists, he replaces this with a phenomenological conception of transient ontological horizons. In section three, I turn to an additional set of resources that Habermas embraces in his move away from the philosophy of consciousness. I show that the 'linguistic turn' characteristic of the twentieth century philosophy is crucial for his Habermas's reconceptualisation of the subject. I provide an exposition of Habermas's theory of 'communicative action' which brings together the phenomenological and linguistic approaches to provide a theory of the subject that is socially and linguistically competent. In section four, I identify how Habermas attempts to side-step the Freudian theory of the 'drives' which played a dominant role in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer through his embrace of the cognitive and moral developmental psychology of Piaget and Kohlberg. I show that Habermas attempts to reconcile the internal pluralism that is constitutive of the individual subject (exemplified in the notion of the unconscious) with recourse to the idea of moral and cognitive competencies. As I see it, this marks a clear point of distinction between Habermas and the post-structuralists. In section five, I provide an exposition of Habermas's critique of the post-structuralist subject and his claim that the post-structuralists fall into a performative contradiction. I explain exactly what Habermas means by a performative contradiction and why it arises in reference to the work of the post-structuralists. However, in section six I explain that Habermas's

charge of performative contradiction is misplaced against the post-structuralists. I make the case that the post-structuralists' conception of the subject is predicated on the notion of constitutive paradox, rather than the principles of non-contradiction or reconciliation. This enables me to re-affirm the idea that on the one hand Habermas's understanding of social ontology shares many similarities with the post-structuralists, but, on the other hand, his theory is fundamentally different, because he remains faithful to the ideals of non-contradiction and reconciliation understood as the governing principles of the modern subject. I conclude the chapter by suggesting that a paradoxical justification of founding principles is not susceptible to Habermas's charge of performative contradiction because paradoxes do not fall under the jurisdiction of the law of non-contradiction.

## Habermas's critique of the philosophy of the subject

In the introduction I explained how Western philosophical thinking since its inception has been grounded in either ontological or epistemological foundations understood in idealist, realist, or materialist terms. I identified Descartes' notion of the *cogito* as having introduced a new understanding of the subject, that is, a 'self- reflexive subject' *qua* foundational substance. I said that the phrase 'the philosophy of the subject' refers to a manner of theorising in which 'self-reflection' and epistemological self-certainty acquires the status of an ontological ground (Gasché, 1986: 13). Habermas's notion of the subject is based on an explicit critique of Descartes' notion of the 'self-reflecting' subject. According to Habermas, Descartes' notion of the '*cogito*' continues the metaphysical tradition of thinking characteristic of Plato's philosophical idealism. Habermas says this type of thinking extends from classical philosophy through the millennia to modern philosophy up to Descartes and beyond into the work of Kant and Hegel (Habermas, 1992: 29). For Habermas, all attempts to supersede this approach from within inevitably remain caught in the horizons 'of possible thought set by metaphysics itself'

(Habermas, 1992: 29). Like Heidegger, Habermas maintains that Descartes' approach renewed the metaphysical and the identity thinking associated with Plato, but on a new 'mentalist' foundation (Habermas, 1992: 31). In other words, for both Habermas and the post-structuralists, traditional metaphysics is deeply problematic in all of its diverse manifestations. Habermas says these approaches privilege 'identity over difference and ideas over matter' (Habermas, 1992: 32). Metaphysical thinking comprehends the principle of identity as origin/foundation. In traditional metaphysics everything relates to the One and from it the many is derived 'as an ordered multiplicity' (Habermas, 1992: 30). According to Habermas, Descartes philosophy is a monistic, unitary, and totalising way of thinking that privileges a unique source - the *res cogitans* – as origin. As Habermas puts it '[s]elf-consciousness, the relationship of the knowing subject to itself has since Descartes offered the key to the inner and absolutely certain sphere of representation we have of objects' (Habermas, 1992: 31). As I have said, he also sees this type of totalising philosophy in both Kant and Hegel. In the work of Kant this relationship of a knowing subject to itself is placed in a foundational position, understood as the source of transcendental knowledge, whereas, in Hegel's work the self-reflexive subject is conceived dialectically as that 'which elevates itself to the position of the absolute' Spirit and agent of historical change (Habermas, 1992: 32). According to Habermas, both Kant and Hegel ground their philosophical systems in the notion of the conscious subject in the active 'determinations of productive reason' which is 'simultaneously totalizing and self-referential reflection' of the subject (Habermas, 1992: 32). Despite this critique, I will make the case that Hegel's reconciliatory logic of the dialectic also underpins Habermas's philosophical and political theory. In fact, Habermas explicitly turns to Hegel in the development of his notion of the subject. Hegel's concept of the culmination of reflection in the Absolute is a sophisticated form of idealism that appropriates and supersedes both Descartes and Kant, which Habermas cannot simply ignore (Gasché, 1986: 45). I will show that there are two conceptions of the subject operate in Hegel's philosophy. Habermas rejects one

of these whilst actively appropriating the other in his own conception of the subject. I shall briefly outline Hegel's notion of the subject before showing how Habermas responds to Hegel.

For Hegel, every identity is ultimately a manifestation of the Idea and the Idea is 'Spirit' or 'Mind' (*Geist*), which is understood as both 'subject' and 'substance' (Taylor, 1975: 110). In fact, Hegel distinguishes between the universal subject of history as *Geist* and the particular subjectivity of concrete individuals (Hegel, 1977: 104-105, 493). Charles Taylor characterises this distinction as a difference between infinite subject and finite subjects (Taylor, 1975: 87-103). Taylor maintains that the former refers to *Geist* (that is God or a cosmic spirit), which - according to Hegel - has an 'objective dimension in social structures', whilst the latter refers to the particular individual natures of rational thinking subjects characterised in the universal notion of 'man' (Taylor, 1975: 87 -103; Knowles, 2002: 13). For Hegel, *Geist* 'must have a vehicle in finite spirit' and is therefore embodied in each individual subject (Taylor, 1975: 90).

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel presents a dialectical account of the development of modern reflexive subjectivity that commences with a rudimentary and immediate form of consciousness understood as 'sense certainty' (Hegel, 1977: 58). Here the subject recognises a basic distinction between itself and objects in the real world (Hegel, 1977: 58-66). Hegel outlines the dialectical unfolding of this consciousness as it moves and changes through different moments from 'sense-certainty' to 'perception' followed by 'understanding' (Hegel, 1977: 46-103). All these forms of consciousness are in a dualistic tension with the world of objects. For Hegel, a key transition occurs in the finite subject when consciousness recognises itself as an object of reflection. When consciousness becomes aware as consciousness it becomes 'self-consciousness' (Hegel, 1977: 104-105). This is the moment of the Cartesian subject which turns away from the immediacy of the object to reflect into itself. This moment is later refined and elaborated in great detail in Kant's transcendental idealism (Kant, 1993: 356). However, Hegel goes beyond both Descartes' and Kant's theory of reflection by extending the scope of reflective self-consciousness, in a process which is ultimately expressed in the concept of the Absolute

spirit (or in Taylor's terms infinite subject). During this transition consciousness becomes aware that the object is 'constructed' by itself and it is at this stage that consciousness conceives of itself as an active subject (Stern, 2002: 67).

For Hegel, self-consciousness is a 'return from otherness' (Hegel, 1977: 105). What was true for consciousness in the world of sense perception was an object understood as something 'other' than itself (Hegel, 1977: 102). However, finite self-consciousness (or subject) now has consciousness of itself as an agent or 'for itself, which is the 'true essence' of subjectivity (Hegel, 1977: 105). For Hegel, the identity of the individual finite subject is *desire* and desire has a double object (Hegel, 1977: 105). The first is the immediate object of sense-certainty and perception and the second is the subject itself (Hegel, 1977: 105). The subject achieves self-consciousness when the opposition is removed between itself and the object and 'the identity of the subject with itself' becomes 'explicit for it' (Hegel, 1977: 105). In other words, the subject of self-consciousness negates the object of desire in order to give itself freedom and certainty (Hegel, 1977: 109). However, the gratification obtained through superseding the immediate object does not satisfy the subject's Desire because the object is produced again and so also is the desire to negate or supersede the object (Hegel, 1977: 109). The finite subject then realises the truth that something other than the object is the essence of Desire (Hegel, 1977: 109). The finite subject realises that it can achieve satisfaction 'only in another self-consciousness' (Hegel, 1977: 110). On Hegel's reading, another self-consciousness (or subject) is fundamental to the existence of 'consciousness as self-consciousness' because self-consciousness 'exists in and for itself' only if 'it' 'exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged' (Hegel, 1977: 111).

In other words, Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness moves in the direction of an intrinsically inter-subjective or relational consciousness or a subject, which - unlike the Cartesian *cogito* - does not obtain self-certainty in isolation. The self-reflexive subject cannot achieve freedom on its own, but instead its very condition of existence and freedom is dependent upon been recognised. According to Hegel, the relationship of one finite self-conscious subject with

94

another sets forth the dialectical movement of self-consciousness that ultimately arrives at freedom understood in terms of the self-realisation of the subject as Absolute Spirit or *Geist* (Hegel, 1977: 493). This is in fact to say that *Geist* realises the 'totality of its formal movements' in the self-consciousness of finite subjects (Gasché, 1986: 20; Hegel, 1977: 479-480). Through determinate reflection *Geist* not only overcomes the 'major antinomy' between the 'thinking subject' and 'what is thought', but it is also aware of the previous movements of immediate and mediated reflection that have taken place which *Geist* realises were originally posited by itself (Gasché, 1986: 32). For Hegel, the Absolute or *Geist* is 'Substance as Subject', that had to posit its own conditions of existence by setting up oppositions, which it then negated and overcome in order to realise itself (Hegel, 1977: 10). According to Hegel, the 'Absolute' is 'essentially a result, that only in the end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists of its nature, viz. To be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself' (Hegel, 1977: 11). From Hegel's perspective, the Absolute or subject 'is at the foundation of everything' and a moment of final reconciliation (Taylor, 1975: 104).

Habermas recognises the importance of Hegel's inherently inter-subjective account of the finite modern subject. However, according to Habermas Hegel's elevation of *Geist* to the position of Absolute subject (developed in Hegel's 'Jena period') is problematic. This is because Hegel abandons the rudiments of a theory of communicative action (found in his earlier works) and seeks to reconcile the dialectic of self-consciousness from *within* the terrain of 'the philosophy of the subject' (Habermas, 1987b: 31). In Habermas's view, Hegel 'interpreted the boundaries drawn by subject-centred reason not as exclusions from but as dichotomies within reason, and ascribed to philosophy an access to the totality *that encompasses within itself* subjective reason and its other' (Habermas, 1987b: 303). From Habermas's perspective, the 'overcoming of subjectivity' is resolved in Hegel's philosophy by developing the concept of the Absolute understood as a historical totality in which self-consciousness teleologically arrives at a form in which it is identical with itself (Habermas, 1987b: 22, 31). Habermas claims that Hegel's notion

of 'Absolute Spirit' effectively 'neutralises the conditions under which modernity attained a consciousness of itself' (Habermas, 1987b: 43). Although, Habermas takes much from Hegel, it is the limitations of this type of totalising and self-referential reflection - or 'identity thinking' - that Habermas seeks to overcome in the development of his own concept of the inter-subjective subject.

Habermas differentiates between Hegel's conception of 'Absolute Spirit' (or infinite subjectivity) and individual (finite) subjectivity (Hegel. 1977: 11, 479-480, 493). He rejects Hegel's concept of Absolute Spirit or *Geist*, but actively embraces Hegel's conception of individual reflexive self-consciousness understood as a defining feature of modernity. Habermas agrees with Hegel that this particular form of subjectivity is a product of the historical events of 'the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution' which have engendered a modern subject capable of freedom through critical self-reflection (Habermas, 2001b: 133). These events are inseparable from the political developments of individualism, of the right to criticism, and of the autonomy of action (Habermas, 1987b: 17). From Habermas's perspective, these achievements are central characteristics of modernity (Habermas, 1987b: 17). Modern society has to legitimate itself through appeals to reason because modernity 'can no longer borrow' from the traditional 'criteria...supplied by another [premodern] epoch; it has to create its normativity out of itself' (Habermas, 1987b: 7). The modern subject has to 'stabilise itself through' the only 'remaining [authority] that of reason' (Habermas, 2001b: 132-3). In the absence of Absolute Spirit, only reason has the authority to stabilise modernity and the modern reflexive subject does not accept anything except in the light of good reason (Habermas, 2001b: 133). In modernity, the subject does not simply act on the basis of identification with the norms of a particular tradition or culture. Indeed, the idea of a self-conscious or self-reflexive modern subject is central to Habermas's defence of modernity and the Enlightenment.

I return to these themes below. However, I will first say something about another philosophical approach that Habermas rejects, which is the notion of the inherently alienated

subject characteristic of the work of his former colleagues Adorno and Horkheimer. In their work developed during and immediately after the Second World War, Adorno and Horkheimer were also critical of the Cartesian philosophy of the subject. As Horkheimer put, it the subject is 'not the place where knowledge and object coincide, nor consequently the starting point for attaining knowledge' (Horkheimer, 1972: 210). However, according to Habermas, Adorno and Horkheimer took a wrong turn in their 'totalising' critique of the very idea of 'reason' and of the reflexive subject borne out of modernity (Habermas, 1987: xvii). Adorno and Horkheimer developed a pessimistic view of the modern subject understood as a thoroughly instrumental subject or self-preserving subject.

Habermas is critical of Horkheimer's essay 'The End of Reason' (1941). In this essay Horkheimer elaborates with what he considers to be the degeneration of reason, which he links with the decline of the 'self' and 'ego'. He says '[t]he fundamental concepts of civilisation [the self, ego, and reason] are in a process of rapid decay' under conditions of modernity (Horkheimer, 1978: 26). He contrasts ancient accounts of reason with its modern manifestation, which, he says has been reduced to a 'pragmatic' instrument 'orientated towards expedience' (Horkheimer, 1978: 28). From Horkheimer's perspective, the ancient '*polis* was guided by the ideal of harmony between the individual interest and the common good', this ideal was renewed in 'medieval towns' and by 'political theorists of the rising national states' (Horkheimer, 1978: 29). However, the 'value rationality' associated with the heroic ideals of antiquity and the traditional norms of medieval society are lost to modern individuals whose sole concern becomes the principle of self preservation (Horkheimer, 1978: 32-33). Horkheimer's reading of modernity is in stark contrast to Hegel's. As I have said, for Hegel, modernity is characterised by the principles of individual subjectivity and the consciousness of freedom. By way of contrast, Horkheimer sees events such as the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism as having engendered new indirect forms of technocratic domination, which realise themselves fully in the social domination of the twentieth century totalitarian political order exemplified in the Third

Reich (Horkheimer, 1978: 36). In Chapter Five, I show that Habermas also contrasts ancient with modern politics to show that a new type of politics has emerged in modern society, which lacks the unifying principle that was taken for granted in the ancient *polis*. However, I show that he does not agree with Horkheimer's pessimistic conclusions. In fact, I show that Habermas argues that modern society can be politically unified through the subjects' capacity for rationality, which is borne out of modernity.

In their celebrated work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) Adorno and Horkheimer present a elaborate further the thesis of the self-destruction of Enlightenment rationality. This book reaffirms the pessimistic view posited by Horkheimer in his earlier essay. As Adorno and Horkheimer see it, 'rather than entering into a human condition' of emancipation: under conditions of modern Enlightenment rationality mankind is 'sinking into a new kind of barbarism' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: xi). They argue that the progressive and liberating aims of the Enlightenment - i.e. of emancipation through critical rationality - have collapsed: 'the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: 3). Turning to the work of Max Weber, they explain the Enlightenment as the triumph of the principle of 'instrumental rationality' in which critical 'subjectivity' or 'self-consciousness' has been replaced in all areas of life by the 'work of automatic control mechanisms' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: 30). Drawing upon Nietzsche, they claim that '[t]he awakening of the self is paid for by the acknowledgement of power as the principle of all [human] relations' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: 9). This thesis is further supported with reference to Freudian 'id psychology' and how the 'id' is brought under control under the repressive control of the ego in the modern individual. Adorno and Horkheimer understand the unconscious in terms of instinctual drives, which are in a tension with the repressive ego. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the 'ego' is thoroughly instrumental mechanism with a 'defensive function' as an 'opponent of the drives' that arises as a result of the conflict between external reality and the instinctual drives that can only realise themselves in destruction' (Whitebook, 1985: 142-3). This reading of Freud is set alongside Adorno and

Horkheimer's account of the 'myth' of the Enlightenment understood as just another form of repression and domination (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: 9). Later in this chapter, I show that Habermas challenges this Freudian reading of metapyschology by turning to the aid of those theorists who have focused on the development of the 'ego' and 'ego-identity' in modern society.

The early critical theorists drew upon and developed Weber's distinction between 'instrumental' and 'value' rationality (White, 1983: 158). Weber defined a social action as 'instrumentally rational' [*Zweckrationalitat*] when the end of some action is subordinated to some strategic means (Weber, 1968: 26). He defines value rationality as 'determined by a conscious belief in the value' of an action for its own sake or 'some ethical, aesthetic, religious or other from of behaviour, independently of its prospects of success' (Weber, 1968: 245). In his essay 'Traditional and Critical Theory' Horkheimer equated positivism, orthodox Marxism, and 'traditional theory', all of which are characterised by a purposive rationality concerned with 'facts' and with 'knowledge for the sake of it' (Horkheimer, 1972: 197, 221). By way of contrast, critical theory is concerned with transforming society into a 'free' community without 'injustice' (Horkheimer, 1972: 199, 217, 221). Habermas argues that Adorno's and Horkheimer's 'theoretical position' on rationality in the 1940s 'converged with Weber's thesis that modernity is characterised by the steady triumph of 'instrumental rationality' over value rationality (Habermas, 1984a: 345). According to Habermas, Horkheimer equates 'purposive rationality' with 'instrumentally reason', whereas, Adorno's notion of an 'administered world' is equivalent to Weber's notion of the 'iron cage' of bureaucracy (Weber, 1992: 181; Habermas, 1984a: 345, 351). Indeed, the central theme of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the 'self destruction of the Enlightenment' and of critical thinking in the triumph of purpose rationality (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979: xiii). As Habermas puts it, for Adorno and Horkheimer critical 'reason' (concerned with social freedom) 'cannot be restored' under modern conditions not even in 'dialectical concepts' (Habermas, 1984a: 372). As Habermas sees it, by the late 1940's they had

'given up the hope of being able to redeem the [emancipatory] promise of early critical theory' (Habermas, 1984a: 386).

Habermas describes *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as Adorno and Horkheimer's 'blackest book' (Habermas, 1987b:106). According to Habermas, Adorno and Horkheimer had joined forces with Nietzsche and others in abandoning all hope in the 'liberating force of the Enlightenment' and instead conceptualised the 'Enlightenment as self-destruction' (Habermas, 1987b: 106). Habermas is concerned to identify the close proximity of Adorno and Horkheimer's position with Nietzsche's 'nihilism' and his supposedly 'totalizing' critique' of reason (Habermas, 1987b: 110, 107). In *Knowledge and Human Interests* Habermas first elaborated his critique of Nietzsche's epistemological perspectivism. According to Habermas, Nietzsche criticises the very roots of reason and reduces critique to just another power relation (Habermas, 1987b: 120). He says Nietzschean perspectivism - in its various manifestations - undermines the positive achievements of modern subjectivity, and reduces the possibility of criticism to just another ideological expression of power (Habermas, 1987b: xvii). For Habermas, Nietzsche carries 'to its end the self-abolition of epistemology inaugurated by Hegel and continued by Marx, arriving at the denial of [critical] reflection' altogether (Habermas, 1972: 290). As Habermas sees it, Nietzsche, 'pursues the self-reflection of the sciences, but with the goal of circumventing both science and critique in a paradoxical fashion' (Habermas, 1972: 291). It is precisely this supposedly total circumvention of reason and critique by Nietzsche, Adorno and Horkheimer that Habermas finds problematic. In the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* he further elaborates these ideas and he acknowledges the proximity of these writers to post-structuralism (Habermas, 1987b).

Furthermore, Habermas's concerns about *Dialectic of Enlightenment* do not stop at the 'totalising' critique of the philosophy of the subject. He also accuses Adorno and Horkheimer of agreeing with Nietzsche's relativist conclusions that 'reason has been driven out of morality and law' as a 'result of the collapse of religious-metaphysical world views' (Habermas, 1987b: 111).

100

From Habermas's perspective, Adorno and Horkheimer's work 'turns into a sarcastic agreement with ethical scepticism' (Habermas, 1987b: 111). As we shall see, it is precisely this ethical 'relativism' that Habermas seeks to avoid in his own conception of the subject and politics. Habermas argues that the 'program of the early critical theorists' was unsuccessful because of the elements of 'the philosophy of consciousness' that remained inherent within it and not because of the inevitability of instrumental rationality (Habermas, 1984a: 386). By changing the paradigm to the theory of communication, Habermas says it becomes possible to resurrect the 'neglected tasks of a critical theory of society' (Habermas, 1984a: 386).

## Social Phenomenology

I have established that - like the post-structuralists - Habermas rejects the Cartesian '*cogito*'. Also, I have shown that Habermas also rejects Hegel's ontology of '*Geist*' and the notion of the inherently alienated subject of modernity put forward by Adorno and Horkheimer. By way of an alternative, Habermas puts forward a concept of the subject that is influenced by the social phenomenology of Schutz. In this section, I show that Habermas turns to social phenomenology to overcome the limitations of the traditional philosophy of the subject. First, I demonstrate how Schutz's social phenomenology breaks with the epistemological and the Cartesian elements in Edmund Husserl's work. Following this, I show the extent to which Habermas embraces Schutz's social phenomenology, which enables Habermas to put forward a conception' of the subject as situated within a phenomenological 'life-world'. This shares a number of important similarities with the post-structuralist notion of the subject outlined in Chapter Two.

Indeed, Habermas's re-conceptualisation of the subject takes much of its orientation from Schutz's social phenomenology. Schutz is an important figure in the history of German sociology and the phenomenological movement. He takes Husserl as his point of departure for his 'social phenomenology'. However, Schutz's notion of social phenomenology also draws important insights from Heidegger's project of 'fundamental ontology' and Heidegger's critique of Husserl.

Schutz also draws upon the pragmatism of George Herbert Mead and William James as well Weber's interpretative sociology (Schutz, 1970: 70; Spielgelberg: 1982: 255). I think it is important to emphasise Schutz's influences on Habermas's re-conceptualisation of the subject because this brings Habermas closer to the post-structuralist notion of the subject outlined in the previous chapter. I will briefly identify the different elements of Schutz's social phenomenology and how they bear upon Habermas's notion of the subject.

At the turn of the twentieth century Husserl inaugurated the philosophical movement of phenomenology. As he saw it, this was a 'new kind of method' developed as an explicit critique of 'naturalist inclinations in psychology (i.e. behaviourism) and philosophy (i.e. positivism) (Husserl, 1996: 15). Husserl's aim was to develop an 'a priori science' of philosophy with a transcendental status' by establishing the 'self-evident' truths or absolutes of subjective experience that could not be doubted (Husserl, 1996: 15; Sharrock and Anderson; 1986: 7). Like Descartes, Husserl located the starting point of his 'pure phenomenology' in the essential structures of consciousness (Husserl, 1996: 20). His phenomenological approach distinguished between the existence of the object of consciousness and the individual subject's conscious perception of the object (Husserl, 1996: 15-16). His phenomenological method was supposed to allow the subject to arrive at a moment of pure experience or consciousness by bracketing of his/her presuppositions or his/her 'taken for granted' assumptions about the world (Husserl, 1996: 17-18). This was achieved through the phenomenological reduction (or *epoche*), understood as a temporary suspension of presuppositions (Husserl, 1996: 17-18). Despite his attempts to offer a new philosophical method, Husserl's notion of 'pure consciousness' retains a close proximity to Descartes' *cogito* (Solomon: 1988: 137). Like Descartes' method of radical doubt, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology reaffirms the philosophy of consciousness and methodological solipsism. Husserl sought to delineate a conception of the subject that arrives at epistemological certain foundations of self-reflection. In his later work *The Crisis of European Sciences and*

*Transcendental Phenomenology* (1938), Husserl acknowledged the importance of what he called the 'inter-subjective' 'lifeworld' *(Lebenswelt)*, understood as a necessary prior condition of individual subjectivity (Husserl, 1970). However, it was Schutz in the early 1930s that developed Husserl's concepts within the discipline of sociology by paying particular attention to the concept of the 'lifeworld' (Spielgelberg, 1982: 256).

In *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1932) Schutz developed the concepts of the 'lifeworld' and 'inter-subjectivity' (Schutz, 1970:72). He rejected the early Husserl's 'transcendental phenomenology' of pure consciousness as inadequate, because he argued that the subject is necessarily constituted by the taken-for-granted assumptions of the inter-subjective lifeworld, which cannot be put into abeyance, or suspended in order to arrive at pure 'transcendental subjectivity' (Spielgelberg, 1982: 256). By way of contrast, Schutz emphasised the significance of the 'natural attitude', that is, the inter-subjective 'world of daily life' of social actors, which conditions their 'actions and interactions' (Schutz, 1970: 72-73). The lifeworld is not a 'private world' of the individual subject but an 'inter-subjective world' of cultural and symbolic meaning that cannot be 'bracket off' (Schutz and Luchkmann, 1973: 4). According to Schutz, the 'lifeworld' is an inescapable part of the subject's phenomenological experience and individual subjects are both constitutive of and constituted by the 'lifeworld' (Schutz, 1970, 72).

Habermas readily embraces Schutz's account of the significance of the 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1984a: 121). He says that the 'lifeworld always remains in the background' of individual subjectivity: individuals are inherently social brings and both constitutive of and constituted by the 'lifeworld' in which they find themselves (Habermas, 1984a; 70, 121; 1987a: 131). However, according to Habermas, Schutz also remains caught in the philosophy of consciousness because he 'plays down the importance of language, particularly the linguistic mediation of social interaction' (Habermas, 1987a: 131). I will elaborate on this point in more detail in the next section.

Schutz's social phenomenology is influenced by Heidegger's project of 'fundamental ontology'. As I have said, for Heidegger, the project of 'fundamental ontology' proceeds phenomenologically and ontology is inextricably bound to the transient horizons of temporality (Heidegger, 1998: 40, 60-61). This is contrasted to the traditional notion of ontology as an temporal origin/foundation. According to Heidegger, every 'Being' is experienced as 'being-in-the-world' and there is no pure moment of consciousness outside of this temporally bound experience (Steiner, 1992: 63). Similarly, for Schutz, the subject is not a fixed 'entity' or 'thing', rather the subject is constitutive of and constituted by its temporally bound social and the phenomenological lifeworld (Habermas, 1987a: 314). Following Schutz, Habermas understands 'ontology' phenomenologically. Habermas's notion of the 'lifeworld' resonates with Heidegger's conception of 'phenomenological ontology'. Indeed, for Habermas, the phenomenologically inter-subjective world of social interaction and meaning cannot be reduced to a historical 'totality of entities' (Habermas, 1984: 82; Heidegger, 1998: 40, 60-61). Like Heidegger, Habermas emphasises the transient nature of phenomenological horizons. In other words, for Habermas the 'lifeworld' - understood as condition of possibility of the subject - is constitutively incomplete.

One of the aims of Schutz's social phenomenology was to establish the 'philosophical foundations of Max Weber's sociology' and in particular his theory of social action (Spielgelberg: 1982: 255). Weber's sociology did not take the assumptions of the natural sciences as its point of departure. His hermeneutic approach to social science sought to understand the subjective meaning behind human conduct and action, through recourse to the concept of *verstehen* (Weber, 1968: 8-9). The concept of *verstehen* (or understanding) also plays a fundamental role in Schutz's social phenomenology, and this follows from Heidegger's claim that the key to the 'phenomenological description as a method lies in *interpretation*' (Heidegger, 1968: 61). As a sociologist, Schutz was concerned with the interpretation of social action and not with the meaning of 'Being', as with Heidegger.

Following Schutz, Habermas also embraces the concept of *'verstehen'*. Habermas acknowledges that *verstehen* has been 'characterised *ontologically* by Heidegger in *Being and Time* as a basic feature of [all] human existence' (Habermas, 1984a: 107). He does not 'systematically rely on this approach' (Habermas, 1984a: 107). For Habermas, *verstehen* ought to be limited to methodological questions regarding the social sciences. This is in contrast to the post-structuralists for whom (following Heidegger) *verstehen* is perhaps the basic challenge of human existence. Nevertheless, Habermas and the post-structuralists would agree that sociology, must seek a *'verstehenden,* or interpretative, access to its object domain' (Habermas, 1984a: 107). For Habermas and the post-structuralists social ontology is understood in terms of a temporally bound world of social subjects who are constitutive of and constituted by their inter-subjective 'lifeworld' of symbolic meaning. In fact, we might go as far as to say that for Habermas there is a paradoxical relationship between the lifeworld and the subject where the subject is a condition of (im)possibility of the lifeworld and the lifeworld is the conditions of (im)possibility of the subject.

Despite these important points of similarity between Habermas's theory and that of Schutz and Heidegger, Habermas claims to supersede the phenomenological approaches. He clearly accepts the phenomenological conception of the referential context of an inter-subjective 'lifeworld' that forms a background context of understanding constitutive of the subject (Habermas, 1987a: 314). However, Habermas claims that this idea needs further elaboration because participants 'draw from the *lifeworld* not just consensual patterns of interpretation (the background knowledge from which potential contents are fed), but also normatively reliable patterns of social relations...and the competence acquired in [the] socialisation processes (Habermas, 1987a: 314). I will now explore these ideas in more detail and show how this emphasis clearly sets Habermas apart from the post-structuralists.

## The theory of 'communicative action'

I have established that Habermas puts forward a phenomenological conception of the subject, constituted in the social 'lifeworld'. Although Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe take their inspiration from different sources, clearly they share similarities to Habermas's phenomenological approach, that is, with its emphasis upon open and incomplete social horizons. However, now I turn to the question of the linguistic and moral competencies that (according to Habermas) the modern subject acquires through interaction in the lifeworld. In Chapter One, I explained the significance for the post-structuralists of the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. I demonstrated that Laclau and Mouffe have drawn extensively on Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in the development of their conception of 'subject positions' in discourse. As I have said, Saussure focused on the structure of language (or *langue*) understood as 'system of different signs without positive terms' (Saussure, 1998). According to Habermas, we necessarily 'find ourselves already situated in our linguistically structured forms of life' (Habermas, 1992: 7; 1996a: xli). However, in contrast to Saussure Habermas focuses on the pragmatic use of language (or *parole*). According to Habermas, Gottlob Frege took the first steps in the 'linguistic turn' in his *Logical Investigations*. In Habermas's view, after Frege 'thoughts and facts can no longer be located immediately in the world of perceived or imagined objects' rather they are 'accessible only as linguistically "represented" (*dargstellt*), that is, as states of affairs expressed in sentences' (Habermas, 1996a:11). From Habermas's perspective, Charles Sanders Peirce's 'semiotic' theory of the sign takes the next and crucial step in the 'linguistic turn' by 'applying formal analysis to the use of language' (Habermas, 1996a: 13). Peirce's emphasis on *parole* and speech acts brings to the fore the pragmatic features of sentences, and emphasises the phonetic, semantic, and syntactic features of everyday speech (Habermas, 1996a: 12). For Habermas, the elementary units of everyday speech (utterances) can be analysed in the form of a 'reconstructive science' (Habermas, 1987a: 339).

In contrast to Adorno and Horkheimer's understanding of the modern subject, Habermas shifts the focus of critical theory from 'instrumental rationality' towards 'communicative rationality' (Habermas, 1984a: 392). According to Habermas, a 'subjectivity that is characterised by communicative reason resists the denaturing of the self for the sake of self-preservation' (Habermas, 1984a: 398). Form Habermas's perspective, Adorno and Horkheimer's account of the thoroughly alienated subject of modernity remains caught in the Cartesian conception of an isolated and autonomous 'I'. By way of contrast, Habermas's conception of the subject of communicative rationality is always embedded within a specific socio-linguistic context (Habermas, 1987a: 120-126).

In the 'Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests' published in 1973, Habermas put forward his initial formulation of communicative rationality and what was later to from the basis of his two volumed of *Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas, 1973). In this postscript, Habermas makes the case that communication rationality is the most fundamental type of action in modern society and he constructs a theory of 'universal pragmatics', that is, the 'constitution of a theory of communicative action' of experience and a consensus theory of truth (Habermas, 1973: 160). Habermas claims that Wittgenstein's later works on 'language games' enabled the philosophy of language to turn attention away from a representational theory of the meaning of words to an analysis of the pragmatic use of words (Habermas, 1973: 160). However, he is critical of the 'particularism' of Wittgenstein and his 'disciplines' John Austin and P.F. Strawson because Habermas says they failed to develop a general 'theory of language games' (Habermas, 1973: 160). Nevertheless, according to Habermas, the basis of his theory of 'universal pragmatics' is to be found in the work of John Searle, who tried to 'arrive at a theory of speech acts based on the ideas' of Austin and Strawson (Habermas, 1973: 160). Indeed, Habermas turns to Austin's *How to Things with Words* to develop a 'general theory of language games' or a universal pragmatics that distinguishes between different types of speech acts and action (Austin, 1962: 1-12). For Habermas, the task of universal pragmatics, is to 'identify and reconstruct

universal conditions of possible understanding' [*Verstandigung*] (Habermas, 1979:1) According to Habermas, the theory of universal pragmatics grounds his theory of 'communicative rationality' by identifying the (supposedly) universal basis of rational experience, judgement, action, and linguistic competence (Habermas, 1990: 310). Universal pragmatics is a universal standpoint - or a kind of Archimedean point - which is presented as a prior condition for engaging in criticism and for action orientated towards reaching understanding (Habermas, 1979: 1).

Following Karl Otto-Apel, Habermas claims to identify the conditions which individual subjects 'must necessarily always presuppose in regard' to our themselves and 'others as the normative conditions of the possibility of understanding; and in this sense what [they] must necessarily already have accepted' (Habermas, 1979: 2). In his earlier work, Habermas called these conditions an 'ideal speech situation' (Habermas, 1990: 88). In addition to fulfilling the claim to comprehensibility, under these conditions, every successful utterance or speech act must satisfy three further validity claims (Habermas, 1979: 28). These are as follows: the utterance must 'count as true for the participants insofar as it represents something in the world; it must count as truthful insofar as it expresses something intended by the speaker; and it must count as right insofar as it conforms to socially recognised expectation' (Habermas, 1979: 28). For Habermas, these validity claims are universal and 'set in the general structures of possible communication' (Habermas, 1979: 97). He says that the subject presupposes them in a 'counterfactual' sense whenever s/he engages in communication. According to Habermas, every valid speech act embodies an implicit claim to truth, authenticity, and normative rightness (Habermas, 1984a: 39). These validity claims (which are implicit in every day speech acts) can be made explicit, redeemed, and vindicated through rational debate and argumentation (Habermas, 1984a: 18-42). Habermas separates the three validity claims for analytical purposes. However, he maintains that every speech act contains some combination of all three validity claims (Habermas, 1990: 137). Furthermore, Habermas claims that although validity claims are always

made within specific contexts both truth and normative rightness have a universal dimension that transcends time and space (Habermas, 1993: 59).

In other words, according to Habermas, there is another rationality that has a force in history and in modern society, which stands in tension with the purely purposive rationality outlined by Adorno and Horkheimer (Habermas, 1 984a: 377-386). This other rationality is implicit in communicative action and Habermas argues that it is geared towards reaching understanding and not towards fulfilling strategic goals (Habermas, 1979:1). Habermas imagines ideal conditions of communication where the only force that operates is the 'unforced force of the better argument' and he suggests that this ought to inform our real practices and concrete social situations (Habermas, 1987: 130; 1990: 198; 1993: 31). Habermas argues that his 'references to idealizations have nothing to do with ideals that the solitary theorist sets up in opposition to reality' (Pensky, 1994: 102). Instead, he says that he refers to the 'normative contents that are encountered in practice' which communicative subjects cannot do without since 'language' and the 'idealizations it demands of speakers, is simply constitutive for socio-cultural forms of life' (Pensky, 1994: 102).

Furthermore, Habermas appropriates Austin's distinction between 'illocutionary' and 'perlocutionary' speech acts in order to make the case that the 'original mode of language' is the 'use of language with an orientation to reaching understanding' through illocutionary speech acts (Habermas, 1984a: 288). Habermas says that the 'instrumental use of language' through perlocutionary speech acts is 'parasitic' on communicative action (Habermas, 1984a: 288). According to Austin, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts both contain 'locution' i.e. there is a moment of action in the 'saying something' or the 'utterance' itself (Austin, 1962: 94). However, it is the consequences of the utterance that distinguishes these speech acts. As I said in the introduction, in an illocutionary speech act the speaker 'performs' an 'act' in the process of saying something such as 'asking a question' or 'announcing a verdict' (Austin, 1962: 98). In a perlocutionary speech act the speaker produces 'certain consequential effects upon the feelings,

thoughts, or actions' of the addressee, for example: 'he persuaded me to shoot her' or she 'convinced' me to dance (Austin, 1962: 101-103). Habermas links perlocutionary speech acts with strategic or means-end rationality (Habermas, 1984a: 290).

For Habermas, communicative action is linguistically mediated interaction in which all the participants pursue *only* illocutionary aims (Habermas, 1984a: 295). He describes linguistically mediated strategic action as 'interactions in which at least one of the participants wants with his speech acts to produce perlocutionary effects on his opposite number' (Habermas, 1984a: 295). By way of contrast, in the exercise of communicative action social subjects are not orientated to their own individual success. Instead, they pursue their goals under conditions that can harmonise their plans of action on the basis of commonality and reciprocity (Habermas, 1984a: 286). According to Habermas, communicative action has a certain transcendence because it is renewed with each act of unconstrained understanding, and with each moment in which social subjects live together in solidarity (Habermas, 1982: 227). Habermas's notion of communicative action and communicative rationality implies a situation free from power.

The theory of communicative rationality enables Habermas to explain the reproduction of the social symbolic lifeworld (Habermas, 1984b: 398). For Habermas, the notion of instrumental or strategic rationality cannot fully explain how the symbolic structures of society are reproduced, whereas, communicative action is the means by which the 'concrete forms of life are reproduced' (Habermas, 1987b: 316). For Habermas, the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is 'made possible' through communicative action (Habermas, 1987b: 343). Habermas says that:

[a] subjectivity that is characterised by communicative reason resists the denaturing of the self for the sake of self-preservation. Unlike instrumental reason, communicative reason cannot be subsumed without resistance under a blind self-preservation. It refers neither to a subject that preserves itself in relating to objects via representation and action, nor to a self-maintaining system that demarcates itself from an environment, but

to a symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretative accomplishments of its members and only reproduced through communication (Habermas, 1984a: 398).

The theory of communicative action is crucial to Habermas's theory of the subject. This facilitates his reconceptualisation of the phenomenological lifeworld as principally a linguistically constructed world. This also confirms the idea that the subject is an intrinsically social being conditioned by its linguistic capacity: as Wittgenstein has said, 'there is no private language' (Wittgenstein, 1967: 25, 275). In addition, the theory of communicative rationality attributes the subject with a universal dimension. It is this universal aspect of the linguistically competent subject, which sets Habermas apart from - what he perceives as - the arbitrariness and the pessimism of Adorno and Horkheimer and the moral scepticism of the post-Nietzscheans. According to Habermas, the intrinsic rational capacity of the communicative subject provides universal grounds for criticism, which are implicit in the universal fact of communication (Habermas, 1984a: 287). For Habermas, reason is 'by its very nature incarnated in contexts of communication action and in the structures of the lifeworld' (Habermas, 1987b: 322). He says 'reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech' (Habermas, 1984a: 287).

## Psychoanalysis and the internal pluralism of the subject

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how the plurality within the individual subject is central to the post-structuralist understanding of the subject. In this section I show that Habermas also addresses this aspect of the individual subject. However, unlike the post-structuralists Habermas presumes that these internal tensions within the subject can be overcome and reconciled. Earlier in this chapter I also pointed out that Adorno and Horkheimer invoked the work of Freud. Indeed, in 'Reason and Happiness' Joel Whitebook has claimed that Freudian 'id psychology' (that starts with 'an assumption of constitutional unsociability and then...tries to account for the facts of

111

society') and a critique of 'ego psychology' (which explains the individual's 'social development by tracing the …genetically social character of the human individual') played a central role in Adorno and Horkheimer's work (Whitebook, 1985: 144). He says that this approach 'allowed them to dramatize the conflict between the individual and society' (Whitebook, 1985: 144). According to Whitebook, the emphasis on the importance of the drives 'prevented' Adorno and Horkheimer from conceiving of the 'possibility of a free society' (Whitebook, 1985: 144). Therefore, in his attempt to move beyond the pessimistic conclusions of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas addresses the potentially disruptive forces of the unconscious drives. As Habermas sees it, this 'inner nature' can be subject to communicatively transparent expression: the drives can be 'released from their paleosymbolic prelinguisticality' (Habermas, 1979: 93). Whitebook questions the extent to which this inner nature can be subject to communicative rationality (Whitebook, 1985: 154). He maintains that it 'remains an historically open question' and it does not follow 'from the linguisticality of society and the linguisticality of the socialisation process that a pre-established harmony exists between society and [the] inner nature' of the individual (Whitebook, 1985: 154). Indeed, Whitebook claims that '[i]t does not follow…from the fact that inner nature is amenable to linguistic meditation that it is linguistic *an sich*' (Whitebook, 1985: 154). By way of contrast, Habermas assumes that the 'unconscious' or the extralinguistic drives can potentially be mastered 'through the internalisation of intersubjective norms' (Whitebook, 1985: 154).

According to Whitebook, Habermas cannot grant the drives independent status because this would undermine the power and force of his theory of communicative action (Whitebook, 1985: 155-156). If the individual subject was inherently conditioned by a wild inner nature this would undermine his/her capacity for reasoned argument because his/her actions would be repeatedly disrupted by uncontrollable passions, emotions, desires and irrational drives. As Whitebook puts it, 'a thicket of non-linguisticality at the centre of the subject would be an anathema' to Habermas's 'entire philosophy' (Whitebook, 1996: 173, 174). Whitebook's position

resonates with Connolly's and Agnes Heller's critique of Habermas's silence about the 'body' and 'feelings' (Connolly, 1995a: 13; Heller, 1982: 22). According to Connolly, Habermas provides a disembodied conception of the subject that is not susceptible to the disruptive forces of desire. Connolly argues that each of the various positions available to Habermas regarding the body subvert the ideal of the rational 'discourse he pursues' (Connolly, 1995a: 13). Hence, he tends to try and avoid this issue altogether. In a similar line of criticism, Benhabib points out that Habermas's universal subject is apparently a gender-neutral subject, but actually possesses qualities characteristic of the male subject of bourgeois individualism (Benhabib, 1992:3). Benhabib argues that Habermas's theory lacks a conception of the 'concrete other' (Benhabib, 1986: 340-2). She says Habermas 'assumes the standpoint of the "generalized other" of rights and entitlements' rather than a 'concrete other', which she says is the focus of her 'communicative ethics' approach (Benhabib, 1986: 339-40). For Benhabib, the 'concrete other' is a real individual with a 'concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution' (Benhabib, 1986: 339-341).

I will now look more closely at Habermas's account of the way in which the Freudian drives can be subject to communicative rationality. Whitebook claims that 'because of the thrust of his linguistic approach' Habermas 'fails to capture the sense of an "inner foreign territory" which is a hallmark of Freudian thought; in principle everything is [for Habermas] potentially transparent. As a result he is in danger of losing sight of the opposition between reason and the drives altogether' (Whitebook, 1985: 157). By way of response, Habermas claims that on his reading inner nature does not fit 'harmoniously into linguistic structures' nor is it 'utterly absorbed by them' (Habermas, 1985: 213). According to Habermas, 'Freud derived the concept of the unconscious from a specific form of disturbance of communication in ordinary language' (Habermas, 1972: 238). For Habermas, these distortions in communication can be overcome through analysis which has 'immediate therapeutic results because the critical overcoming of blocks to consciousness and the penetration of false objectivations' empower the individual

subject in his/her rational use of speech (Habermas, 1972: 233). Habermas replaces the psychoanalytical notion of 'drive energies' with the idea of 'interpreted needs and instinctual vicissitudes' understood as the key features in individual 'identity formation' (Habermas, 1985: 213). According to Habermas, this change in perspective 'does not entail the elimination of inner nature as an extralinguistic referent' (Habermas, 1985: 213). He accepts that communicative action never completely absorbs extra-linguistic instincts (Habermas, 1985: 213). Nonetheless, from a poststructuralist perspective, we could say that Habermas does not appreciate the implications of the potentially disruptive nature of the unconscious drives and instincts (Habermas, 1985: 213). This is made clear in Habermas's engagement with Mead's notion of the 'self', and in his account of the dialectical resolution between the 'I' and the 'me' (Dews, 1999: 102).

In his essay 'Individuation through Socialisation: On George Hebert Mead's Theory of Subjectivity' Habermas endorses Mead's proposition that there is 'no individualization without socialization, and no socialization is possible without individualization' (Habermas, 1992: 26). Habermas claims that Mead was the 'first to have thought through this intersubjective model of the socially produced ego' (Habermas, 1992: 170). For Habermas, Mead leaves behind the 'reflection-model of self-consciousness' in his transition to a model of 'symbolically mediated interaction' (Habermas, 1992: 170-171). Mead explicates 'the self of self-consciousness' as a 'social object' (Habermas, 1982: 172). According to Mead's theory, the subject experiences him/her self in 'the first person of his performative attitude, which is the 'me' …as the second person' (Habermas, 1992: 172). Habermas says that 'in this way there arises an entirely different "me" that is not identical with the "I"' (Habermas, 1992: 172). For Mead, the 'self' or the subject is constituted through a 'dialectical relationship' between what he calls the 'I' and the 'me' (Mead, 1970: 173-178; Dews, 1999: 102). In his theory the 'I' refers to the pressure of the pre-social drives of the self that are 'never entirely calculable' (Mead, 1970: 178). By way of contrast, the 'me' refers to the social part of the self, as a 'group of organized attitudes to others'

(Mead, 1970: 175, 186). The 'me' is the individual's conscious awareness of the internalization of other people's attitudes and expectations of his/her self (Mead, 1970:175). Habermas likens Mead's distinction between the 'I' and the 'me' to 'the moments of the "id" and the "superego" in Freud's structural model' (Habermas, 1987a: 99). The 'me' is the individual as a social subject (Mead, 1970: 173; Habermas, 1992b: 180; Dews, 1999b: 102). According to Mead, the notion of the 'me' is not reconcilable with the impulsively acting 'I' (Mead, 1970: 174). Habermas recognises that for Mead the spontaneous impulses of the 'I' permanently eludes th e 'me' (Habermas, 1992: 172, 18 7). This is not unlike Freudian theory. For example, there is no immediate access to the 'I', because there is an 'inevitable [time] lag, an unclosed gap, between the "I" and the "me"' (Dews, 1999: 102). Furthermore, according to Mead there are several 'me' memory images, which constitute the self (Mead, 1970: 176). The self is not a fixed entity; it changes in respect of changes that take place in the socially constructed 'me'. Here, we can see the influence of Schutz's *Lebenswelt* on Mead's work.

Habermas says that in his theory the 'I' does not 'fulfil the function of self-reference' (Habermas, 1992: 188-9). He maintains that the speaker or the 'I' does not 'numerically' identify him/herself 'before a hearer as a particular entity from among the set of possible objects' (Habermas, 1992: 188-9). His conception of the 'I' in experiential sentences does not express the privileged position of the 'speaker to his own subjective world' (Habermas, 1992: 188-9). Instead, for Habermas, the 'I' stands for 'the actor of a speech act, who in a performative attitude enters into an interpersonal relationship' with a second person (Habermas, 1992: 188-9). According to Habermas, the 'I' is a 'function of *any* illocutionary act, and it is employed performatively in the way that Mead's uses the "'me,'"' which he tells us 'must be capable of accompanying all my speech acts' (Habermas, 1992: 189).

For Habermas, Mead's distinction between the 'I' and the 'me' is problematic because the 'I' as the expression of spontaneous forces cannot claim the 'title "I", as a subject of responsible action' (Dews, 1999: 105; Habermas, 1992: 181). Habermas accepts Mead's notion

of a constitutive tension 'between the "I" and the "me" [but] only for a society that has not yet attainted the ideal of uncoerced mutual recognition' (Dews, 1999: 105). In other words, for Habermas, the tension between the 'I' and the 'me' is not ontologically constitutive of the subject: it is historically specific. Habermas insists on the need for 'reconciling' the gap between the 'I' and the 'me into a single concept which is the "I"': as he puts it, '[t]his paradox is resolved in the temporal dimension' (Habermas, 1992: 187). Indeed, Habermas claims that the gap between the 'I' and 'me' can be resolved in 'historical time', and this is rather like the contradictions and oppositions in Hegel's dialectical process. This is in marked contrast to the post-structuralists who as I have said, accept and embrace the 'gap' or the paradox within the subject as ontological or constitutive.

In 'Communicative Paradigms and Subjectivity' Peter Dews makes an important link between Mead's account of the 'I' and the 'me' and Lacan's distinction between 'le moi' and 'le je' (Dews, 1999: 103). He says that for Lacan 'le moi' refers to Freud's 'das Ich' and 'le je' is understood by Lacan as the subject of the unconscious (Dews, 1999: 103). Dews identifies the similarity between Mead and Lacan is their acceptance that 'we can have no cognitive access' to the 'I' or 'le je' (Dews, 1999: 104). Moreover, this 'I' or 'le je' is not an autonomous subject, it is rather that which disrupts any fixed or total conception of the 'me' or the 'das Ich' (Dews, 1999: 104). As I have said, for Lacan, the concept of a structural lack disrupts every attempts at totality, whereas, for Mead it is the spontaneous and creative force of the 'I' that is disruptive (Mead, 1970: 174; Lacan, 1998: 330-333). Indeed, Mead's understanding of the disruption of every totality by the spontaneous forces of the 'I' is not dissimilar to the role the Real plays in Laclau's psychoanalytic conception of the subject, and the post-structuralists points towards a significant difference between Habermas and the post-structuralists (Laclau and Zac, 1994).

Furthermore, as Whitebook has said, Habermas 'leaves the dynamic unconscious behind completely when he moves to Piaget and Kohlberg' (Whitebook, 1985: 159). Habermas turns to the cognitive and the moral developmental psychology of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg's

in order to circumvent the potentially disruptive forces of the unconscious. As Habermas sees it, these theories supplement and revise Freud's account of the 'psychodynamic developments of the child' (Habermas, 1985: 212). Habermas's adaptation of this approach enables him to focus on the role of the ego and the superego in the structural development of the personality and socialisation.

Drawing upon Piaget and Kohlberg, Habermas links together the cognitive and moral progress of the individual subject with that of modern society as a whole, he links together the processes of 'ontogenesis' and 'phylogenesis' (Habermas, 1979: 78). According to Habermas, 'ego identity' is produced through modern socialisation processes and the internalisation the rules of 'post-conventional' morality, which also makes possible 'self-determination and [the] self-realization' of the subject (Habermas, 1987a: 98). He emphasises the evolutionary development of the ego and the formation of the superego in modern society, which according to Habermas cannot be easily undone unless they are consciously or unconsciously repressed (Habermas, 1990: 127, 182). In fact, for Habermas, the ego is the 'part of the self that develops in a pragmatic context, by mediating internal desires and external possibilities for satisfaction' (Warren, 1995: 184). Habermas focuses on the development of 'moral consciousness' and in particular on the development of the subject's cognitive capability to make universal moral judgements (Habermas, 1979: 78; 1995: 45). According to Habermas, moral consciousness expresses itself in the subject's cognitive capacity to make universal judgements 'about morally relevant conflicts of action' (Habermas, 1979: 78). The emphasis on the development of the 'ego' under conditions of modernity provides Habermas with the argument that the Enlightenment is not simply a narrative of a self-defeating reason inherent in the process of rationalisation. On the contrary, from Habermas's perspective the Enlightenment is an achievement of history characterised by the development of 'ego-identity'.

Habermas reformulates Kohlberg's six stages of the development of moral consciousness within an 'action-theoretic' framework into what he calls the 'General Structures of

117

Communicative Action' (Habermas, 1979: 78). Kohlberg claims that in moral theory there are universal psychological developments (Kohlberg, 1968: 25-30). For Kohlberg, there are three levels of individual and collective moral development, the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional level and each level has two stages (Kohlberg, 1968: 26). There is a linear development from the first stage to the second, each regarding the way in which the concept of "right" is understood (Kohlberg, 1968: 26). I will not reproduce the detail of these stages here. It is stage six that is of particular interest to Habermas where "right" is understood as being guided by universal ethical principles, which all humanity ought to follow (Habermas, 1990: 125). As he sees it, they take priority over all other legal and other institutional obligations because the rational individual has seen the validity of these principles and become committed to them. For Kohlberg, the 'principles' characteristic of stage six are 'universal principles of justice: the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individuals. These are not merely values that are recognised, but are principles used to generate particular decisions' (Kohlberg cited in Habermas, 1990: 125). Habermas equates modern rationality with Kohlberg's final 'post-conventional' stage of moral development, which he sees as a logical development in history, society and moral consciousness.

In Habermas's framework there are three levels of cognitive presuppositions that relate to three levels of what he calls the 'qualifications of role behaviour', which every subject must pass though in the development from pre-school to a young adult (Habermas, 1979: 82, 84). Again, I will not reproduce the detail of the schema here. It will suffice to say that the fully competent adult has the capacity to make judgements and to question social rules and norms of action in relation to universal principles (Habermas, 1979: 84). These three stages of development correspond to three levels in the development of subject's identity formation. At the first level the child is not responsible for his/her behavioural actions. At the second level the child is forming his is/her identity. Finally, at the third level the young adult is able to assert his/her identity independently of his/her concrete roles and the norms they embody. At this stage the individual is

able to distinguish between norms and the principle of 'reciprocity' (Habermas, 1979: 88). For Habermas, the principle of reciprocity is not a norm, but rather 'fixed in the general structures of possible interaction' (Habermas, 1979: 88). Reciprocity 'belongs *eo ipso* to the interactive knowledge of [the morally competent] speaking and acting subject' (Habermas, 1979: 88). For Habermas, 'moral consciousness' signifies the ability of the adult subject or individual 'to make use of interactive competencies for *consciously* processing morally relevant conflicts of action' (Habermas, 1979: 88). In other words, Habermas's morally competent subject has acquired the ability to act in an appropriate or reciprocal manner in situations of potential conflict. He says that:

anyone who has grown up in a reasonably functional family, who formed his identity in relations of mutual recognition, who maintains himself in the network of reciprocal expectations and perspectives built into the pragmatics of speech situation and communicative action, cannot fail to have acquired [these] moral intuitions (Habermas, 1993: 114).

In Chapter Five I show that for Habermas, the moral competencies and linguistic capacities of the modern subject is an essential presupposition of his political theory. This provides him with an account of the means to address conflict situations and the problem of social co-ordination: in his theory citizens establish agreement through communicative power and deliberation to establish regulatory norms of action (Habermas, 1996a: 27).

**Habermas's critique of post-structuralism**

Despite the fact that Habermas and the post-structuralists both reject the epistemologically self-certain Cartesian subject, I have demonstrated that differences in their notions of the subject

become clear in the distinct paths they pursue in their embrace of the 'linguistic turn', and in the way they addressed the internal pluralism of the individual subject. Whilst the post-structuralists understand the inner tensions as constitutive of the subject, Habermas seeks to resolve the inner tensions of the drives by invoking the work of Piaget and Kohlberg. This difference clearly demarcates their respective understandings of the subject, and I will now look at Habermas's explicit critique of post-structuralism. Habermas cannot accuse the post-structuralists of reproducing the Cartesian philosophy of the subject or 'ontologising' the subject. As I have said, the rejection of the *cogito* marks an important similarity between these two perspectives. In fact, Habermas's c ritique of post-structuralism stems from their adherence to a post-Nietzschean critique of reason and the subject. Habermas's claims that all the various forms of Nietzschean inspired critique fall into a performative contradiction, which he defines as occurring 'when a constative speech act k (p) rests on non-contingent presuppositions whose propositional content contradicts the asserted proposition p' (Habermas, 1990: 80). Before evaluating Habermas's accusation of the performative contradiction I shall briefly explore how Habermas understands the term contradiction.

In the introduction I presented three different understandings of the concept contradiction: non-contradiction, dialectical contradiction, and paradox. I agree with Martin Jay that despite Habermas's emphasis on the 'use' of words rather than traditional focus on logical propositions. Habermas's use of the term performative contradiction returns to an Aristotelian logic (as opposed to Hegelian dialectics) because it takes the principle of non-contradiction as its governing principle (Jay, 1993: 28). His concept of performative contradiction is intrinsic to his theory of the formation of the subject at the linguistic level in *inter-subjective* communication (Jay, 1993: 28). In order to explain this aspect of Habermas's theory we need to return to the work of John Austin from whom Habermas takes the notion of performative contradiction and the

distinction between what he calls 'constative' and 'performative' speech acts or utterances (Austin, 1962: 3-6).

According to Austin, constative speech acts replace the traditional grammatical use of the word to report the existence of or describe some 'fact' in reality, that we can deem to be true or false (Austin, 1962: 3). However, communicative subjects do not only invoke utterances to describe facts but in saying things they actually do things, i.e. they actually create states of affairs in the world. As I have said, a performative speech act is the performance of an action in the process of uttering a speech act, and these speech acts can be deemed felicitous (happy) or infelicitous (unhappy) depending on whether or not they have satisfied certain conditions of sincerity, correctness of form, and suitability of content (Austin, 1962: 14-15). According to Austin, what distinguishes a performative from a constative speech act is the 'illocutionary force' or intent behind the performance (Austin, 1962: 3-7). The performative speech act performs an action in the process of uttering the speech act, whereas, the constative speech act reports or describes an existing situation or state of affairs. For example, the phrases 'I apologise', 'I promise', or 'you are fired' are all examples of performative speech acts.

According to Austin, there are myriad forms of speech that violate the law of logical non-contradiction (Austin, 1962: 48). Therefore, he claims the philosopher of language needs to go beyond concentrating simply on the proposition involved in a given speech act and instead look at the total situation in which the utterance is raised (Austin, 1962: 52). Austin shows how certain statements imply the truth of other statements or that certain assertions commit the speaker to other assertions: in other words each performance is inevitably linked to another performance (Austin, 1962: 47). Austin gives the example of the following statement 'John's children are all bald' (Austin, 1962: 50). This statement presupposes that John has children. Austin asks the question what happens if this statement is made when John has no children. According to Austin, under these conditions this statement is not false because it is devoid of reference, and reference is necessary for a statement to be deemed true or false (Austin, 1962: 50-52). Instead, the

statement is 'void' or 'unhappy' because the constative part of the statement is in conflict with the presuppositions (Austin, 1962: 51). Austin draws the conclusion that certain presuppositions are inevitably invoked when particular speech acts are uttered and a performative contradiction arises when the constative part of the speech act contradicts the presuppositions it necessarily invokes in making the speech act (Austin, 1962: 48-52).

Habermas draws explicitly upon Austin's distinction between constative and performative speech acts. However, he is particularly interested in the conditions that Austin attaches to performative speech acts, and the 'contradictions' that arise if they are violated. Habermas reworks Austin's notion of performative contradiction understood as a violation of the context of appropriate validity claims. He defines a performative contradiction as occurring 'when a constative speech act k (p) rests on non-contingent presuppositions whose propositional content contradicts the asserted proposition p' (Habermas, 1990: 80). Adopting the position of a hypothetical 'sceptic', Habermas claims that the speech act 'I doubt that I exist' is an illustration of a performative contradiction (Habermas, 1990: 80). This speech act makes a propositional claim doubting the existence of the speaker, yet at the same time the existence of the 'I' (or the speaker) is a necessary presupposition of this speech act.

Following this logic, in *The Philosophy Discourse of Modernity* H abermas accuses Adorno of falling into a performative contradiction. He says that Adorno failed 'to provide a systematic grounding of the concept of reason to which he implicitly appeals' (Habermas: 1987b: 118, 119; 1979: 72). In his essay *Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification,* Habermas extends this notion of performative contradiction to what he calls the 'moral sceptics' (Habermas, 1990: 76). He does not specify the identity of these so-called 'moral sceptics', the term is invoked only within the context of a hypothetical debate that Habermas puts forward in order to pursue the development of his own theoretical perspective. However, we do not need to look too far to determine the identity of the so-called 'moral sceptics'. In the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas makes numerous references to the moral

scepticism of Nietzsche and post-structuralists thinkers like Foucault and Derrida (Habermas, 1987b: 161-184, 238-293). I therefore take the term 'moral sceptics' to refer to all those post-structuralists who are indebted to Nietzsche. Habermas accuses the moral sceptics of falling into a performative contradiction: with his/her totalising critique of reason the moral sceptic denies certain presuppositions s/he necessarily invokes in putting forward his/her argument.

As I have said, Nietzsche's work does not celebrate 'reason' as an achievement of modernity, but rather perceives it as another ideological expression of the will to power (Habermas, 1987b: xvii, 56). From Habermas's perspective, the implication of Nietzsche's philosophy is a kind of social Darwinism. And this means that we cannot rationally argue that one form of power is (morally) better than another, because everything is reduced to just another expression of power (Habermas, 1987b: 120). According to Habermas, 'totalising' critiques of reason fails to distinguish between power and 'validity' (Habermas, 1987b: xvii, 120, 121). By way of contrast, Habermas hold onto a concept of the reflexive self-conscious subject that provides a criterion for criticism, understood with Hegel as an achievement of modernity. According to Habermas, the historical events of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution established a reflexive subject and institutional structures that could legitimately distinguish between brute power, 'validity' or 'legitimacy'. He says that in their apparent circumvention of reason, the post-structuralists inevitably use reason to criticise reason because in doing this he claims they must accept as 'valid a minimal number of unavoidable rules of criticism' (Habermas, 1990: 81).

Once again, taking inspiration from the work of John Austin and John Searle, Habermas's project of 'universal pragmatics' seeks to make explicit those tacit and implicit rules governing the interactions of competent speakers. He calls the universal rules governing communication the 'presuppositions of argumentation' (Habermas, 1990: 86). Habermas's project is more ambitious than Austin's. The latter's aim is to show that subjects take for granted necessary presuppositions in their speech acts. In comparison, Habermas explicitly states what

these presuppositions are and he attributes them a universal status. Habermas distinguishes three levels of presuppositions of argumentation: those of logical level of products, dialectical level of procedures, and rhetorical level of processes (Habermas, 1990: 87). The universal rules of argumentation are as follows:

(1.1)    No speaker may contradict himself.

(1.2)    Every speaker who applies a predicate F to an object A must be prepared to apply F to all other objects resembling A in all relevant respects.

(1.3)    Different speakers may not use the same expression with different meanings.

(2.1)    Every speaker may assert only what he really believes.

(2.2)    A person who disputes a proposition or norm not under discussion must provide a reason for wanting to do so.

(3.1)    Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.

(3.2)    a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.

b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.

c. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.

(3.3)    No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights laid down in (3.1) and (3.2) (Habermas, 1990: 87-89).

According to Habermas, the first set of presuppositions operates on the logical semantic level they relate to the coherence of speech acts and have no ethical content (Habermas, 1990: 87). This level includes such rules as the subject is not allowed to contradict him/herself and s/he must be consistent in his/her use of the words. For Habermas, participants engaged in argumentation cannot speak in contradiction; they must at least be able to answer 'Yes or No' to a particular utterance or speech act (Habermas, 1992: 189). This is because every speech act is necessarily connected to a set of validity claims that obligate the addressee to take a 'rationally motivated

"Yes/No" positions towards those claims' (Baynes, 1992: 78). Those rules set down on the second level are procedural. They have some ethical import and 'regulate modes of interaction that are necessary to successful co-operation in the search for truth' (Benhabib, 1986: 305). This level includes rules such as allowing a speaker to assert what he/she really believes. It is the rules at the third level of processes that 'define the essence of communicative speech' (Benhabib, 1986: 305). According to Habermas, these rules are *substantive* normative presuppositions of argumentation: they insure 'in principle [all] take part freely and equally, in a co-operative search for truth, where nothing coerces anyone except for the force of the better argument' (Habermas, 1990: 198; 1993: 31).

Habermas argues that when communicative subjects engage in argumentation they must assume the above presuppositions of argumentation. He says that at one time he described these rules as the defining characteristics of the 'ideal speech situation' (Habermas, 1990: 88). However, revising and clarifying this position, Habermas maintains that the intention of his earlier analysis was a 'reconstruction of the general symmetry of conditions that every competent speaker who believes he is engaging in an argumentation must presuppose as adequately fulfilled' (Habermas, 1990: 88). It is this symmetry of conditions (equality and reciprocity) that Habermas reconstructs as part of his project of universal pragmatics, and he says that they are not simply an ideal form of communication, but implicit in every communicative speech act (Habermas, 1990: 88). He claims that they are 'not mere conventions; rather, they are inescapable presuppositions' (Habermas, 1990: 89). According to Habermas, every subject (the 'moral sceptic' included) presupposes these rules as 'unavoidable rules of criticism' and they cannot extract themselves from these presuppositions, which govern the communicative practice of everyday life (Habermas, 1990: 100). From Habermas's perspective 'the sceptic may reject [universal] morality, but he cannot reject the ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*) of the life circumstances in which he spends his waking hours, not unless he is willing to take refuge in suicide or serious mental illness' (Habermas, 1990: 100). According to Habermas, the post-structuralists cannot 'drop out'

or excuse him/herself from these presuppositions to which he/she remains bound though his/her use of language: they are a part of his/her very existence. Habermas claims that the post-structuralists fall into a performative contradiction because they deny the very presuppositions they necessarily invoke in communicating their arguments.

## A critique of Habermas's charge of 'performative contradiction'

The accusation of performative contradiction is a powerful and compelling critique. As Jay has said, it is one the 'reigning regulative ideals' of Habermas's theory of universal pragmatics (Jay, 1993: 25). The charge of a performative contradiction is effectively Habermas's main weapon against all those who would be sceptics of his project. Habermas's contention is that when the post-structuralists deny reason in its entirety they necessarily presuppose the validity of 'a number of unavoidable rules of criticism' (Habermas, 1990: 81). However, Jay remarks that despite its centrality there is no sustained examination of the implications of performative contradiction in Habermas's work (Jay, 1993: 25). In this section, I demonstrate that the charge of performative contradiction levelled by Habermas against the post-structuralists is misplaced. The post-structuralists do not fall into a performative contradiction because in denying the idea of 'rational' foundations they acknowledge that they are necessarily engaged in an inherently paradoxical activity. Indeed, one can elaborate a radical critique of the limits of reason without claiming to escape reason or speak beyond it. Derrida has explicitly made this point. He argues that 'the revolution against reason, from the moment it is articulated, can operate only *within* reason' (Derrida, 1978: 42). According to Derrida, reason can paradoxically be denounced within reason without disengaging from the order of reason altogether. To make this point it will be helpful to briefly consider the debate that took place between Derrida and Foucault.

In the 1970s Derrida and Foucault debated their respective readings of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and the status of reason in western philosophy (Foucault, 1989; Derrida, 1978). As I see it, the charge of performative contradiction could be levelled against

Foucault's first book *Madness and Civilisation*. In this book Foucault traced the historically emergence of 'madness' and he argued that madness has been excluded as an object of modern science and philosophy including from Descartes' *Mediations* (Foucault, 1989: 393). He claims that since the eighteenth century modern reason has constituted itself as the dominant form of knowledge through the exclusion of its other, i.e. non-reason or madness (Foucault, 1989: xii). In *Madness and Civilisation* Foucault claims to go beyond reason and to speak for the mad that have been silenced by the traditions of modern psychiatry (Foucault, 1989: xii). From Foucault's perspective, 'the language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness' could be established 'only on the basis of ... a silence' (Foucault, 1989: xii). Foucault claims that his aim in *Madness and Civilisation* is not 'to write the history of that language [psychiatry], but rather the archaeology of that silence' upon which modern psychiatry is founded (Foucault, 1989: xii). Foucault links madness to silence, and at this stage in his career he claimed he was writing an 'archaeology of [that] silence', i.e. that he was writing the 'history of madness itself' (Foucault, 1989: xii).

In 'Cogito and the History of Madness' Derrida criticised Foucault's claim to be writing a history of madness, understood as the other of reason. According to Derrida, Foucault's reading of Descartes is inaccurate because Descartes does not exclude madness but 'dismisses it as only one *case* of thought (within thought)' (Derrida, 1978: 68). For Derrida, madness is not excluded by modern reason, but it is rather that which reason excludes within its interior, so that madness and is regulated within the text of philosophy or science or within the space of 'reason' (Derrida, 1978: 68). Derrida acknowledges the importance of Foucault's work. However, he also points to the impossibility of writing a history of *madness itself*. In effect Derrida accuses Foucault of falling into what Habermas calls a 'performative contradiction'. According to Derrida, 'Foucault wanted to write a history of madness speaking on the basis of its own experience and under its own authority, and not a history of madness described within the language of reason, the language of psychiatry on madness' (Derrida, 1978: 39). Derrida says that Foucault wanted to a

write a history of 'madness itself, in its most vibrant state, before being captured by knowledge' (Foucault cited in Derrida, 1978: 40). Derrida emphasises the impossibility of this task (Derrida, 1978: 39). As he puts it, the 'misfortune of the mad, the interminable misfortune of their silence, is that their best spokesmen are those who betray them best, and once their silence is itself conveyed one has already passed over into the side of order into the terrain of reason' (Derrida, 1978: 42). From Derrida's perspective, 'there is no Trojan horse unconquerable by reason in general' (Derrida, 1978: 42). Consequently, Derrida says Foucault's claim 'to say madness itself' is 'self contradictory' (Derrida, 1978: 51). Indeed, Derrida claims that Foucault's attempt to write the history of madness in the form of an 'archaeology of a silence' is neither practicable nor possible (Derrida, 1978: 42). He says that this project can take shape in only in two ways: either by 'not mentioning a certain silence, which can be determined only within a language and an order that will preserve the silence, or follow the madman down the road of his exile' (Derrida, 1978: 42). Roy Boyne makes the case that Foucault effectively conceded the force of Derrida's general criticisms regarding historicity and reason (Boyne, 1990: 79).

It is worthwhile comparing Derrida's accusation of 'self-contradiction' levelled against Foucault with Habermas's charge of performative contradiction levelled against the post-structuralists. Derrida and Habermas suggest a similar conclusion about what happens if one tries to escape the 'order of reason' or the 'presuppositions of argumentation'. As Derrida put it, the only options available to those who would transcend reason are staying 'silent' or 'following the madman down the road of exile' (Derrida, 1978: 42). As Habermas puts it, the options are 'taking refuge in suicide or serious mental illness' (Habermas, 1990: 100). The proximity of these positions is compelling. Derrida's accusation of 'self-contradiction' levelled against Foucault *is* an illustration of what Habermas calls 'performative contradiction'. In his first book Foucault's attempts to write an archaeology of madness and this contradicts the necessity of having to articulate that history through the medium of the word, i.e. the order of reason and 'rational' communication. Derrida's deconstructive critiques do not fall into a performative contradiction;

they do not attempt to speak beyond the order of reason. Indeed, Derrida says that 'in accordance with a Hegelian law the revolution against reason can only be made within it' since 'the revolution against reason, from the moment it is articulated, can only operate within reason' (Derrida, 1978: 42). In other words, Habermas is mistaken when he accuses Derrida of falling into to a performative contradiction, because of a supposedly totalising critique of reason. In 'Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-Francois Lyotard' Benhabib makes a similar point with respect to Lyotard. She says that Lyotard avoids falling into a performative contradiction because he privileges narrative as 'one practice of knowledge' to serve as a 'criterion over others' (Benhabib, 1984: 120). Lyotard also dealt implicitly with the charge of performative contradiction by asserting that the phrase I *doubt* is not a first phrase (Lyotard, 1983: 59). According to Lyotard, '*I doubt* presupposes *I* and *doubt* or *I* and *think*, and so on. And each of these "terms" presupposes in turn other phrases: definitions, examples of "usage". It presupposes language, which would be the totality of phrases possible in a language' (Lyotard, 1983: 59).

All of the post-structuralists examined in this thesis emphasise the paradoxical quality of their founding principles. It is inaccurate to describe these theories as *anti*-foundational because they all assert the necessity of some foundational moment understood as the conditions of possibility of the subject and politics: 'life', 'discursivity' or 'the subject of lack'. However, at the same time these notions are the conditions of impossibility of the fullness of subjectivity. The same founding principles necessarily disrupt the totality, closure, or completion of the subject and of politics. These foundational moments are equivalent to what Gasché calls 'quasi-transcendentals' (Gasché, 1986: 148, 316, 317). Paradoxically, they are at the same time the conditions of possibility and the conditions of impossibility of ontologically grounding the subject, and politics in a rational foundation (Gasché, 1986: 161). Furthermore, it is because of the inherently paradoxical nature of these quasi-transcendentals that we can draw the conclusion that for the post-structuralists 'rational' foundations are never given the status of a solid

transcendental (or undeconstructable) status. For Connolly, all 'ontopolitical interpretations' (including his own) are necessarily 'contestable' and for Laclau and Mouffe they are 'contingent'. In other words, for Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe foundational principles are paradoxical, because they are both necessary and contingent. These thinkers are not engaged in a performative contradiction because they recognise that their founding principles are premised on the logic of paradoxes and do not aspire to the principle of non-contradiction.

Paradoxes illustrate the limits of applying logical categories upon our understanding of the world. This is all the more illustrated by the post-structuralists use of antinomies when they simultaneously affirm and deny 'rational' presuppositions. An antinomy can be presented in the form of a pair of seemingly valid arguments, one leading to one side of a contradiction, the other to the other, and each having only necessary truths as premises (Mates, 1981: 4). Indeed, antinomies are made through using the categories of reason they do not claim to go beyond reason; they illustrate the limits of reason. The distinction between contradiction and paradox is central to the different ways in which Habermas and the post-structuralists theorise their respective conceptions of the subject and the nature of foundations. Perhaps Habermas's charge of a performative contradiction identifies a paradox at the core of post-structuralist thinking as well as a fundamental dilemma in the nature of philosophy and politics. It is not the validity of the presuppositions of argumentation that is really at stake in Habermas's charge of performative contradiction, but rather how we justify presuppositions and 'rational' foundations. If we justify them paradoxically then we enter into the realm of uncertainty and this undermines and disrupts any stable conception of the foundational subject. If however, like Habermas we hold onto the logic of non-contradiction with respect to the founding principles then a potentially harmonious and self-certain conception of the subject is re-affirmed. Habermas recognises the existence of paradoxes, however, he does not acknowledge that the critique of reason might be an inherently paradoxical activity, because for him this type of critique necessarily undermines the very premises from which it speaks. Such a critique undermines reason, the achievements of the

130

modernity, the modern subject, and criticism in general. The post-structuralists accept the paradoxical nature of their foundations, they claim that they can on the one hand presuppose the subject as necessary and on the other hand criticise or deny the subject as impossible.

Again, as I have said, in the history of Western philosophy paradoxes are an acceptable form of reasoning that have existed alongside both the principle of non-contradiction and the dialectical logic of reconciliation. It is indeed true that speakers necessarily make assumptions when engaging in 'rational' argumentation or any other 'language game'. As Wittgenstein's works has demonstrated rules are a constitutive part of every language game (Wittgenstein, 1967: 38-39). In fact, the post-structuralists examined in this thesis would all accept that they presuppose assumptions when entering into language games. However, they would not accept Habermas's claim that the rules that govern the multiplicity of language games can be gathered together under a 'universal pragmatics'. Also, they would endorse Wittgenstein's point that speaking subjects are always able to alter the rues as they go along.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that Habermas's notion of the subject includes elements of paradox. However, this theory is also presided over by the principles of non-contradiction and reconciliation. I have demonstrated that in his critique of the Cartesian subject, Habermas puts forward an apparently paradoxical account of the relationship between the subject and his/her 'lifeworld' which are constitutive of and constituted by each other. This enabled me to demonstrate my second hypothesis, by drawing an important point of similarity between Habermas and the post-structuralist notion of the subject and social ontology. However, I then went on to show that Habermas seeks to overcome the internal pluralism of the individual subject by appealing to a reconciliatory logic between the 'I' and 'me', that is, in order to ensure that morally competent communicative action can take place. I suggested that this is indicative of the Hegelian influence upon Habermas's work. Indeed, I have shown that Habermas's

communicative subject takes the dialectical law of reconciliation as its governing principle. According to Habermas, the subject cannot deny or contradict the presuppositions of argumentation (that is the conditions of symmetry and reciprocity underlying all communicative speech acts) without falling into a performative contradiction. I have also demonstrated my second hypothesis that the post-structuralists do not fall prey to a performative contradiction because they accept the paradoxical nature of their founding premises.

The differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists are reflected in their respective understandings of social ontology and their theorisation of the subject. However, these differences do not take the form of a simple dichotomy. Clearly, the post-structuralists and Habermas embrace constitutive paradoxes at the level of social ontology and the internal pluralism of the subject. However, for Habermas these are apparently overcome in his theory of communicative action. I will explore the differences again in Chapter Six. First, however, I turn to the post-structuralists' and Habermas's respective conception of politics.

**Part Two - Politics**

**Chapter Four**


**Post-structuralism and Politics**


## Introduction

In the first part of the thesis I have demonstrated that Habermas and the post-structuralists have both challenged the idea of the epistemological certainty of the Cartesian subject, and that they have put forward alternative conceptions of the subject understood as an ontological problematic. I have shown that Habermas and the post-structuralists do not theorise the subject as an ontological 'origin' or foundation understood as a fixed entity or reified 'thing'. In each of their respective notions of the subject, the subject is both constituted by and constitutive of social relations. These similarities allowed me to partly elaborate my first hypothesis, i.e. that we cannot separate the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists into a simple dichotomy. Nevertheless, despite this similarity, I also made the case that Habermas and the post-structuralists offer distinct conceptions of the subject. The post-structuralist conception of the subject is founded on inherently paradoxical premises. Despite the differences between them, each of the post-structuralists accepts the radical contingency of their founding principles, and the subject is presented as both the condition of possibility and impossibility of social relations. Although Habermas's social ontology invokes a number of apparently paradoxical tensions I have demonstrated that his notion of the subject is principally underpinned by the principle of non-contradiction and the logic of reconciliation. Habermas introduces a moment of universality into his account of the morally competent communicative subject, and thereby (supposedly) eliminates the contingency of his perspective. I argued that although Habermas rejected the Cartesian self-certain subject, he nonetheless falls into a similar fallacy. Habermas seeks to secure

the foundations of his theory of the subject with the idea of the substantive normative presuppositions that any linguistically competent subject must presuppose in order to engage in argumentation. In the first part of the thesis I also confirmed my second hypothesis, which is that on a closer examination Habermas charge of performative contradiction levelled against the post-structuralists does not hold up to scrutiny.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe have all developed notions of politics that are based upon inherently paradoxical premises. Despite this basic similarity, I make the case that there are important differences between Connolly, Laclau, and Mouffe's notions of politics and of the question of political legitimacy. The objective in this chapter is to map out the political differences between the post-structuralist thinkers. This prepares the ground for a comparison with Habermas's politics in the following chapter. Over the course of these two chapters my objective is to further substantiate my first hypothesis, i.e. that we cannot draw a straightforward dichotomy between Habermas and the post-structuralists. Part of my argument here is my assertion that, despite Mouffe's claims to the contrary, her political republicanism shares a number of important similarities with Habermas's political theory.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In section one I show that each of the post-structuralists theorise politics within the historical context of modernity. I explore Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe's conception of modernity, and I show that for all them modernity is characterised by the manifestation of cultural and value 'pluralism' as well as a pluralism of political projects and struggles. Also, I show that this acknowledgement of pluralism brings the question of legitimacy to the fore. For all three thinkers the question of legitimacy becomes a central concern in their conception of politics. In the following three sections I look in more detail at each of the respective post-structuralist accounts of modern politics. I demonstrate that for all of them modern politics is characterised by paradoxical tensions and ambiguities between opposing principles or 'logics'. In section two, I show that for Laclau modern politics is characterised by the inherently paradoxical tension between the 'universal' and 'particular'. In

section three, I show that similarly for Mouffe the notions of 'liberty' and 'equality' are caught in a constitutive paradox. I also demonstrate that Mouffe draws upon the civic republican tradition and upon the work of Michael Oakeshott to develop a distinctive conception of 'citizenship' and of political legitimacy. I explore these ideas in detail because later in the thesis I demonstrate that Mouffe's conception of republican citizenship shares important similarities with Habermas's theory of 'discourse ethics'. In section four, I show that for Connolly the notions of 'identity' and 'difference' are caught in an inherently paradoxical tension and that this tension is characteristic of modern politics. I delineate Connolly's 'agonistic' theory of legitimacy and his notions 'agonistic respect' and an 'ethos of critical responsiveness'.

In the course of this chapter I also re-examine the significance of the term hegemony in Laclau's and Mouffe's work. In Chapter One, I made the case that (drawing upon Gramsci) Laclau and Mouffe understand hegemony as a collective explicit political identity, which is constitutive of social relations: in their terminology hegemony is 'the decision' taken in the terrain of 'undecidability'. According to Laclau and Mouffe, hegemonic articulations become the dominant from of politics under conditions of modernity 'when the reproduction of different social areas takes place in permanently changing conditions which constantly require the construction of new systems of difference' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 138). Here, I also delineate Connolly's alternative to the hegemonic form of politics, which is his notion of 'rhizomatic' pluralism. Finally, I suggest that although Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe share important similarities with respect to the subject and social ontology, they offer different responses to political modernity. I suggest that I find Connolly's notion of 'agonistic' democracy persuasive in challenging existing political sensibilities and institutions.

## Pluralism and the question of legitimacy

In this section, I explain how Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe conceptualise political modernity. It has become common place - usually for critics - to refer to the work of these theorists in terms of

'postmodern' politics, where the prefix 'post' would supposedly refer to something beyond modernity. The term 'postmodernism' was popularised by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*. However, in his subsequent work Lyotard has argued that this term does not refer to some point beyond modernity, as he sees it: postmodernism represents a distinctive sensibility within the horizon of modernity (Lyotard, 1991: 25). It is important to note that none of the post-structuralists examined in this thesis claim to have entered a historical or political terrain *beyond* modernity. Each of the three post-structuralist thinkers sets out their political theory within the horizon of political modernity, understood as a historical context characterised by the emergence of 'liberal democracy' from the eighteenth century revolutions onwards. Furthermore, all three theorists understand cultural and value pluralism as the defining feature of political modernity, and they draw an explicit connection between pluralism and the question of legitimacy. Although they theorise politics in distinct ways and with different points of emphasis, the post-structuralists all present their own accounts of politics not as an end initself, but as a means of addressing the pluralism that is constitutive of modern social relations. In the next chapter, I show that this is also the case for Habermas.

Each of the post-structuralist theorists takes political modernity or modern 'liberal democracy' as the context for their political theorisation. However, this does not mean that they accept current forms of 'liberal democracy' as if it were somehow to be treated as given. Each of the theorists wants to transform current political practices along the lines of either a 'radical and plural democracy', or 'agonistic democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Connolly, 1991). They each put forward explicitly prescriptive political projects, but they nonetheless accept the radical contingency of their respective normative perspectives. This is what we might call the politics of *paradox*. The central prescriptive categories that shape their respective conceptions of politics are premised on paradoxical tensions (oppositional logics) that are understood as constitutive, i.e. they can never be permanently resolved. As I have already demonstrated in respect of the theory

137

of the subject, the post-structuralists reject what Mouffe calls 'the Enlightenment project of [political] self-foundation' (Mouffe, 2000b: 12).

For Laclau and Mouffe, political modernity is characterised by the end of a 'substantive' idea of the good life (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 186; Mouffe, 1993: 11). They associate this with what Claude Lefort has called the 'dissolution of the markers of certainty' (Mouffe, 2000b: 18; Lefort, 1988: 19). Mouffe defines modernity at the political level, from her perspective it is politics that shapes social and symbolic relations and the 'fundamental point of modernity' is the 'advent of the democratic revolution' (Mouffe, 2000b: 11). Following Lefort, she identifies the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century with what she calls a 'new kind of institution of the social' in which 'power becomes an empty space' (Mouffe, 2000b: 11). In *Hegemony*, Laclau and Mouffe draw upon Lefort's theorisation of the 'democratic revolution' to explain how and why pluralism is constitutive of modern social relations. In *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, Lefort argues that the key feature of modern democracy is the break with the monarchical conception of power characteristic of the pre-modern politics of the 'Ancien Regime' (Lefort, 1988:16). Lefort identifies the modern 'democratic revolution' with the demise of absolute monarchical power embodied in the person of the prince, who in pre-modern forms of politics was understood as the representative of a theological or transcendental order (Lefort, 1988: 24). The political space that emerges in the wake of monarchical power is symbolically founded in the sovereignty of 'the people', but the identity of the 'the people' has no secure anchorage and is itself subject to political contestation (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:155). According to Lefort, the defining feature of modern democracy is that the symbolic space of power 'proves to belong to no one' (Lefort, 1988: 27, 39). For Lefort, modern democracy is an unprecedented historical event which cannot be localised within the sphere that is conventionally defined as 'government' (Lefort, 1988: 24). On the contrary, modern politics is characterised by a distinctive 'regime' in which power is not vested in one person or authority (Lefort, 1988: 24). Instead, the space of

power becomes the site of a contest between competing political struggles as they attempt to occupy the empty space of 'power' (Lefort, 1988: 18).

Following Lefort, Laclau and Mouffe argue that under conditions of modernity the transcendental foundations of the pre-modern polity disappear, and with it so does the substantial unity of society (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:186). Under condition of modernity, the locus of power (once occupied by the body of the prince) becomes an 'empty place', which is only ever temporarily filled with some particular representative of 'the people' and there is no certainty as to which constituency will occupy the empty space of power (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 186-7). According to Laclau and Mouffe, in modernity 'a split occurs between the instances of power, knowledge, and the law, and their foundations are no longer assured' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 186). In Laclau and Mouffe's view, the vacuum created by the absence of monarchical power can only be occupied politically through the formation of distinct hegemonic articulations. Under conditions of political modernity there is no foundation, centre, or a single transcendental guarantor that binds power, law, and knowledge together to ensure political 'legitimacy' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 186). In the next chapter, I demonstrate that although Habermas takes his inspiration from alternative sources (i.e. Kant and Hegel) his theorisation of modernity shares many similarities with Laclau and Mouffe's Lefortean conception of modernity.

Connolly shares with Laclau and Mouffe the idea that modernity marks the end of the certainty anchored in a common system of belief. He points out that the term 'modernity' is understood in different ways by its proponents and detractors (Connolly, 1993c: 1). For its proponents modernity is defined 'in contrast to earlier periods' that are considered 'less rational' or 'less democratic', whereas, its opponents defined modernity as a disenchanted age where traditions and spirituality have been replaced by 'bureaucracy' and a 'disciplinary society' (Connolly, 1993c: 1). He says modernity is an 'epoch with no well-defined beginning and or end' and needs to be understood in terms of the articulation of certain 'persistent questions of

meaning' such as 'the relation of human life to nature', the relationship of the 'present to the past' and the 'relation of life to death' (Connolly, 1993c: 2-3). According to Connolly, modernity is an 'epoch in which a set of contending understandings of self' and 'rationality' have 'established sufficient presence to shuffle other perspectives out of active consideration' (Connolly, 1993c: 4). Connolly identifies Nietzsche's phrase 'God is dead. We have killed him' as emblematic of the distinctly modern condition (Connolly, 1993c: 7; Nietzsche, 1969: 41; 1974: 125). According to Connolly, the very idea of having to prove God's existence is an indication of God's death (Connolly, 1993c: 7). As he sees it, under conditions of modernity a common faith or morality or politics 'anchored in a common experience can no longer secure and protect itself from widespread relativism, scepticism, doubt, and unbelief' (Connolly, 1993c: 9). This is because if the 'world is not God's creation' then objective truth does not exist and this therefore paves the way for multiple interpretations (Connolly, 1993c: 10).

Like Habermas, Connolly says in modernity, the way has been 'cleared for the "self assertion of reason" to establish itself' (Connolly, 1995a: 3). In fact, he thinks that it is precisely the self-reflexive aspect of modernity that eventually leads to Nietzsche and his radical critique of 'reason'. As Connolly puts it, modernity 'spawns the critical theories and genealogies many of its defenders decry' (Connolly, 1993c: 11). From Connolly's radically modern perspective, there are no 'rational' guarantees that can secure legitimacy for questions of truth, morality, law, or politics because modernity has itself undermined the ontological presuppositions for any final guarantees (Connolly, 1993c: 11). According to Connolly, it is in the realm of politics that guarantees must be provisionally established and subject to perpetual renegotiation.

These reflections bring to the fore the question of political legitimacy, understood as the relationship 'between the political authority in question and its citizens' (Friedman, 1990: 125). Indeed, in order to make sense of the post-structuralist theories of politics it is important to distinguish between political legitimacy (or legitimate power) and power *as such* (Friedman,

140

1987, 28; 1973). As Hannah Arendt puts it, 'authority' needs to be distinguished from 'force', 'power' and 'violence' otherwise they tend to be used synonymously (Arendt, 1970: 43). We can define authority as the 'right to perform some action, including the right to make laws and all lesser rights involved in ruling' (Friedman, 1987: 28). Authority *compels* obedience, whereas, power *demands* obedience (Friedman, 1987: 28). Authority is a force that is justified in its application (Derrida, 1992: 5). Throughout history, the nature of the claim to authority has varied: the foundations of political authority may be divine, natural, or a matter of human artifice. However, under conditions of political modernity authority is not something which exists without question. On the contrary, it is something which is conferred upon an individual, group, or a set of institutions through a temporary stabilisation of power (O'Sullivan, 2000: 136). A necessary condition for modern authority is that the people acknowledge and 'believe the authority to be right' (Tuck, 1972: 196).

In 'On the Concept of Authority in Political Philosophy' Richard Friedman distinguishes two different ways in which the concept of authority has been conceived in Western political thought (Friedman, 1990: 123). The first approach is Aristotelian in character, and equates authority with the 'common ends' or collective 'conduct' of all the citizens (Friedman, 1990: 123). This effectively does away with the question of legitimacy: the political authority and the laws (that pertain to the authority) are considered one and the same, and they are justified because they have the same purpose or end, i.e. the common good of all the people. The second approach is distinctly modern in character, in the sense that it is concerned with the question of the authoritative 'conduct of the state', and is tied to the idea of a framework of rules of conduct which allow citizens to pursue their own conception of the good (Friedman, 1990: 123-4). Here we have a distinction between authority and the law, which makes the question of legitimacy inescapable in modern politics. In this second approach, authority is understood as 'human artifice' rather than as a divine or natural teleology (Friedman, 1987: 30). Because modern

authority is a human construction, its 'law' is only binding as long the citizens recognise it as such. Due to the high degree of cultural and ethical homogeneity in pre-modern societies political authority was not a central concern. However, under conditions of modern pluralism the status of authority is placed in a precarious position, because political authority no longer generates unreflexive obedience and loyalty. The key questions of modern politics are therefore as follows. How do we secure the legitimacy of the authority of the political order? What makes authority legitimate and what distinguishes legitimacy from brute power?

All the theorists examined in this thesis - Habermas and the post-structuralists alike - argue that the idea of a substantive notion of the common good and the notion of transcendental, divine, or natural authority came to an end with the advent of modernity. Under conditions of political modernity, there is a constitutive 'need to bridge the potential gap between rulers (those holding political authority) and those ruled (those subject to the authority)' (O'Sullivan, 2000: 140). The modern concern with legitimacy can be traced to the tradition of political thought reaching back to the seventeenth century and in particular to the work of Hobbes who accepted the end of an absolute and divine authority and put forward a theory of authority understood as human artifice (Hobbes, 1968). However, in Hobbes' theory the question of political legitimacy is solved once and for all with the original contractual formation of the absolute sovereign authority of the 'Leviathan' (Hobbes, 1968: 100-107). Similarly, in *The Social Contract* Rousseau identifies legitimacy with the 'sovereignty' of the 'citizens', which is expressed as the 'consent' of all the people in the formation of a 'general will' (Rousseau, 1973: 182). Rousseau claims that the people are 'sovereign' and that the laws are only considered legitimate if the people have enacted them, which consequently binds all the citizens to those laws (Rousseau, 1973: 193). Rousseau's notion of the general will has been subject to critique for 'overburdening' its citizens with moral duties (Habermas, 1996a: 102; Connolly, 1987a: 279). For Connolly, the problem of legitimacy is inherently conflictual. He says that 'the issue of legitimacy reaches into every

corner of modernity and each claim to resolve it definitively eventually encounters a series of vocal counterclaims' (Connolly, 1984: 1). Nevertheless, the same question of the legitimacy of the governing political power remains central for political philosophers today. Connolly defines legitimacy as concerned with 'the question of whether and why the order deserves the allegiance of its members' (Connolly, 1987a: 279).

The question is how we decide what is a legitimate authority and how do we secure the validity and authority of political power? At this point it is also necessary to ask the question of how the empty space of power is occupied? What exactly are the political mechanisms that facilitate the struggle to fill the 'empty space of power'? As I see it, the post-structuralists respond to this question in distinct ways. There are two main contenders for this role. The first is the mechanism of hegemony developed by Laclau and Mouffe. The alternative mechanism is the idea of 'rhizomatic assemblages' put forward by Connolly. In the following chapter, I demonstrate that Habermas shares this concern with the relationship between power and legitimacy or what he calls the 'legitimacy gap' (Habermas, 1996: 146).

## Laclau on the 'universal' and 'particular'

In this section, I return to Laclau's theory of hegemony elaborated in Chapter One and I demonstrate that he has also theorised hegemony in terms of alternative attempts to fill the empty space of power. As I have said, for Laclau and Mouffe every hegemonic articulation 'will always be partial and subject to being contested' and re-inscribed (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 187). For Laclau and Mouffe, the political construction of a 'hegemonic formation' represents the political attempt to provisionally secure legitimacy by uniting the different instances of power, knowledge, and law into an 'articulated totality' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 143). It is for this reason that the notion of hegemony and hegemonic articulations becomes central to modern politics.

For Laclau and Mouffe, a hegemonic formation can never be fully realised because it emerges in conditions of 'antagonism' or constitutive 'impossibility'. A successful hegemony only ever temporarily establishes and organises social relations, which are nonetheless always subject to the possibility of renegotiation and contestation. For Laclau and Mouffe, no particular 'hegemonic articulation' can ever completely fill the empty space of power (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 187). In 'Laclau or Mouffe? Splitting the Difference' Mark Wenman contends that 'there are acute political differences' in the way that Laclau and Mouffe theorise the notion of hegemony, that is, in their post-*Hegemony* writings (Wenman, 2003a: 582). I find Wenman's reading suggestive. Indeed, by demonstrating the differences between Laclau and Mouffe, this will enable me later in this thesis to draw out a number of points of similarity between the political work of Mouffe and Habermas. This reinforces my first hypothesis, i.e. that we cannot separate the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists into a straightforward dichotomy. In this section, I initially present a brief exposition of Laclau's own distinctive conception of the notion of hegemony and I examine the paradoxical principles that constitute his conception of modern politics.

Following Gramsci, Laclau theorises hegemony as the strategic means by which one particular social struggle attempts to stand in for the social order as a whole (Laclau, 1996a: 43; Gramsci, 1988: 205). In Gramsci's terms, the hegemonic group 'transcend their corporate [class] interests' and attempt to become the 'general interests of the subordinate groups' (Gramsci, 1988: 205; Wenman, 2003a: 590) In *Emancipations* Laclau reworks this theory in terms of the constitutive tension between the 'universal' and the 'particular' (Laclau, 1996a: 26). For Laclau, the 'universal' is the 'symbol of the missing fullness' of society as a whole (Laclau, 1996a: 28). From his perspective, 'the universal has no particular content of its own' (Laclau, 1996a: 34). Instead, different groups or interests in society struggle 'to temporarily give to their particularisms a function of universal representation' (Laclau, 1996a: 35). Unlike in Gramsci's

theory, these hegemonic struggles are not necessarily the struggles of 'fundamental classes' and on Laclau's reading every attempt to impersonate the universal fullness of society necessarily fails, because no group can ever fully represent this 'impossible' object (Laclau, 1996a: 44). Indeed, for Laclau the necessary failure of the struggle of particular groups - feminist, environmentalists, and so on - to fill the space of power become the universal is the 'precondition for [the continuity of modern] democracy' (Laclau, 1996a: 35).

On Laclau's reading, the 'particular' and 'universal' are in a relation of 'mutual contamination' (Laclau, 2001: 11). He says that the universal (or the fullness of a society that is reconciled with itself) can only be represented as a 'particularized universality' (Laclau, 2001: 11). For Laclau, this mutual contamination (or paradoxical tension) is central to understanding modern democratic politics, understood in terms of the impossible struggle of different particularisms to represent the universal fullness of society (Laclau, 2001: 11). In other words, Laclau equates democracy with the 'terrain of undecidability' or the paradoxical space that keeps the gap between the particular and the universal permanently open (Laclau, 2001: 10). Only when this struggle is conceived of as a constitutive paradox, can the gap between the universal and the particular remain open. Furthermore, Laclau says that the mutual contamination of the particular and universal 'requires the production of tendentially empty signifiers' in order for particularistic groups to attempt to represent the universal fullness of the whole (Laclau, 2001: 11). As Laclau sees it, 'democracy', 'liberty', 'order' are all examples of 'empty signifiers' (Laclau, 1996a: 44, 45). According to Laclau, an empty signifier is 'a signifier without a differential signified' (Laclau, 1996a: 36). Laclau recognises that these signifiers are only ever 'tendentially empty' because they inevitably 'retain remainders of their specific historic context' (Laclau, 2001: 11). Nevertheless, the production of tendentially empty signifiers is fundamental to modern politics (Laclau, 1996a: 42). Because they allow particular struggles - feminist struggles, environmentalist, workers struggles - to attempt to represent the 'absent fullness' of society by

filling the empty signifiers with their own struggle *qua* signified (Laclau, 1996a: 43). For Laclau, this is the very condition of modern politics: 'politics is possible because the constitutive impossibility of society can only represent itself through the production of empty signifiers' (Laclau, 1996a: 44). Moreover, Laclau links this account of modern politics to the Lacanian theory of the subject as 'constitutive lack'. From Laclau's perspective, the hegemonic subject experiences *jouissance* from the impossible struggle to fill the tendentially empty signifiers (Laclau, 2004a: 303).

In *Contingency, Hegemony, and Universality* Laclau also theorises this paradoxical tension in terms of the gap between the 'ethical' and the 'normative' (Laclau, 2000: 82). Again, following Gramsci, Laclau understands the moment of hegemony as an 'ethical' or 'ethico-political' moment (Laclau, 2000: 82). He describes the 'ethical' as an impossible yet decisive moment that is not 'predetermined by an existing normative framework' (Laclau, 2000: 82). As Laclau sees it, every concrete normative order is the 'sedimented form of an initial ethical event' (Laclau, 2000: 82). In other words, according to Laclau, a hegemonic formation is never simply made up of the sum total of particulars from which it is comprised. On the contrary, the ethical moment of hegemony it also includes something that 'utterly transcends' each of these particular struggles, which is the imaginary fullness of society (Laclau, 2000: 82). Laclau understands the struggle for hegemony as the struggle of particular groups to stand in for and to represent the impossible ethical substance of the whole society (Laclau, 2001: 11). However, as Laclau sees it, 'because the universal place is empty, it can [in principle] be occupied by *any* force' and the nature of these forces may not necessarily be democratic (Laclau, 1995: 164). It is important to point out that in Laclau's theory there is nothing inherently democratic about particular hegemonic types of ordering. For example, a given hegemonic formation could be founded upon the ascendancy of fascist or racist principles. Each type of hegemonic ordering has its own 'grammar' or rules of conduct and each is legitimated according to its own articulating principles.

For example, the hegemony of the Third Reich was predicated on the exclusion of non-Aryan people, and the authority of this type of power was legitimated by mass obedience to the Furher. Therefore, according to Laclau, 'the only [genuinely] democratic society is one which permanently shows the contingent character of its own foundations' which 'permanently keeps [open] the gap between the ethical and normative order' (Laclau, 2000: 86). I will now look at Mouffe's conception of hegemonic politics, elaborated in her post-*Hegemony* writings. As shall see, there are subtle but important differences between her position and Laclau's.

## Mouffe and civic republicanism

In this section I outline Mouffe's political theory and her notion of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe both understand hegemony as an *explicit* ordering of social relations. However, in contrast to Laclau, Mouffe theorises hegemony in terms of the political articulation of 'citizenship', understood as the formation of an 'ethico-political' bond which is constitutive of the 'people' or the 'demos'. According to Mouffe, it is 'through their participation' in the 'unity' that is citizenship that individuals are 'treated as equals and exercise their democratic rights' (Mouffe, 1999a: 42). Unlike Laclau, Mouffe does not present citizenship in terms of one sector of society attempting to represent the universal interests of the whole. In fact, Mouffe's notion of 'radical and *plural* democracy' insists that no particular group ought to be coextensive with the collective concerns of the *respublica* (Wenman, 2003a: 598, 599). This is a subtle but significant difference between her position and Laclau's theory (Wenman, 2003a: 597, 601). On Mouffe's reading, 'the people' are formed though a moment of collective *identification* to establish the *respublica* or the rules of the civil association (Mouffe, 1993: 67; 1996: 21). For both Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is a political construction and a form of power. However, in developing her account Mouffe explicitly addresses the question of the specific legitimacy of a radical democratic articulation. I will show that she draws upon the work of Oakeshott to develop a distinctive

147

republican conception of democratic legitimacy. From Mouffe's perspective, the hegemonic articulation of the 'demos' *ought* to be characterised by the coming together of a plurality of 'different forms of life' to establish the rules of the political community, i.e. its conditions of legitmation, that is, the rules that govern the political conduct of citizens (Mouffe, 2000b: 97, 100).

Mouffe makes a distinction between what she calls 'politics' and 'the political' (Mouffe, 1993: 2; 2000b: 101). Following Carl Schmitt, Mouffe defines 'the political' as the 'element of hostility' or conflict in human relations, which she says is constitutive of social relations (Mouffe, 1993: 2; 2000b: 101). This conflict (or 'antagonism') 'can take many forms and [can become] manifest in different types of social relations' (Mouffe, 2000b: 101). According to Mouffe, the political 'must be conceived as a dimension that is inherent to every human society and that determines our very ontological condition' (Mouffe, 1993: 3). For Mouffe, the political 'cannot be restricted to a certain type of institution, or envisaged as constituting a specific sphere or level of society' (Mouffe: 1993: 3). As she sees it, politics is the 'ensemble of practices, discourses, and institutions, which attempts to establish a certain order and organise human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual, because they are affected by the dimension of the political' (Mouffe, 1993: 3). In other words, politics is a set of practices and 'consists in domesticating hostility and in trying to defuse the potential antagonism that exists in human relations' (Mouffe, 1993: 3; 2000b: 101). From Mouffe's perspective, there is always the need for some kind of explicit ordering of political and social relations.

This presentation of 'the political is clearly influenced by Schmitt's distinction between 'friend' and 'enemy'. Schmitt argued that 'the distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity' of human antagonism (Schmitt, 1988: 26). According to Schmitt, the political enemy does not need be morally evil, or a 'foreign' enemy, s/he is simply 'the other, the stranger' who threatens the 'real possibility' of conflict (Schmitt, 1988: 27). For example, the enemy could

be a 'domestic group' whose aim is usurp the power of the legally constituted sovereign authority (Schwab, 1975: 335). Similarly, for Mouffe, the 'enemy' is the potential bearer of antagonism. For Schmitt, politics 'is bound by no law; it is prior to law' (Hirst, 1990: 109). The sovereignty of power effectively creates the law. Indeed, the law is always already a sedimented form of power. Similarly, for Laclau and Mouffe it is political power (i.e. hegemony) that gives legitimacy to the law and not the law that gives legitimacy to political power. For Mouffe, the political community is hegemonically constructed through the symbolic exclusion of enmity though the construction of a 'constitutive outside' (Mouffe, 1993: 2; 2000b: 13). It is important not to confuse Mouffe's notion of the 'constitutive outside' with any external positivity, for example, with some person or group that has a fixed identity in and of itself. Mouffe invokes the Derridean notion of the 'constitutive outside' to emphasise that the 'outside' is not 'the outside of a concrete content' (Mouffe, 1993: 2; 2000b: 12). Rather, the outside is a *symbolic* outside: it is the 'otherness' that enables the demarcation of an 'us' from a 'them' (Mouffe, 1993: 2). According to Mouffe, the construction of every collective identity involves the exclusion (not necessarily a physical exclusion but a symbolic exclusion) of an 'other' or an outside. However, the 'other' remains internal to the identity of the political community understood *paradoxically* as its condition of possibility (Mouffe, 2000b: 13).

Mouffe also draws a distinction between 'antagonism' and 'agonism' (Mouffe, 2000b: 13). She describes 'agonism' as a relationship between 'adversaries' who are defined as 'friendly enemies' (Mouffe, 2000b: 13). Unlike enemies, adversaries experience relations of conflict within a shared or common symbolic space (Mouffe, 2000b:13). Despite their differences, adversaries share a consensus on what Mouffe calls the 'democratic rules of the game' (Mouffe, 2000b, 13; 1993:4). However, from her perspective this consensus involves the construction of collective identities around differentiated positions, which makes choosing between alternatives within the consensus a real possibility (Mouffe, 1993:4). In Mouffe's view, adversaries are 'friends because

they share a common symbolic space, but they are also enemies because they want to organise' the common symbolic space in a different way from one another (albeit through non-violent means) (Mouffe, 2000: 13). Mouffe says that 'if we accept that relations of power are constitutive of the social, then the main question for democratic politics is not how to eliminate power but how to constitute forms of power more compatible with democratic values' (Mouffe, 2000b: 100). For Mouffe, the task of hegemonic politics is to 'create a political identity among persons [otherwise] engaged in [different] enterprises' (Mouffe, 1993: 67). She agrees with Schmitt that it is always necessary to constitute the identity of 'the people' politically, that is, through forms of exclusion (Mouffe, 2000b: 53; Mouffe, 1999: 49). Mouffe's theory shares certain similarities with Hobbes. Like Hobbes, Mouffe's conception of legitimate power emerges from the underlying challenge to transcend the problem of violent antagonism. However, on Mouffe's account hegemonic practices require continual enactments to be sustained, whereas, in Hobbes's theory the problem of legitimation is solved once and for all in a single decisive act of contract (Mouffe, 1993: 37).

Furthermore, according to Mouffe, the political articulation between the principles of 'liberty' and 'equality' are central to modern politics. As she sees it, these two notions 'embody antinimical [or paradoxical] principles' (Mouffe, 2000b: 3). Modern 'liberal democracy' is therefore a contingent historical association in which 'liberalism was democratised and democracy liberalised' (Mouffe, 2000b: 3). On the one hand, the principle of liberty embodies the central values of individual freedoms and human rights. On the other hand, democracy embodies the pivotal values of equality and popular sovereignty (Mouffe, 2000: 2). Mouffe agrees with those 'who affirm that a pluralist democracy demands a certain amount of consensus and that it requires allegiance to the values which constitute its "ethico-political principle"', i.e. 'liberty and equality for all' (Mouffe, 2000b: 103). However, for Mouffe, this consensus is always a partial consensus, established through a provisional hegemony (Mouffe, 2000: 103-4). As she sees it, these contradictory logics can never be 'perfectly reconciled'; they can only ever be temporarily

stabilised (Mouffe, 2000b: 5). Therefore, the notion of 'adversary' is central to the specificity of modern pluralist democratic politics (Mouffe, 2000b: 14). For Mouffe, adversaries subscribe to some political articulation or other of the key principles of liberty and equality, but they disagree with one another about the ways in which they should be combined (Mouffe, 1993: 67; 2000b: 74).

As I have said, for Mouffe, the formation of the political community involves widespread identification with the political principles of 'citizenship', which forms the basis of the rules of civil association. Mouffe turns to Oakeshott's reflections on traditional republican notions of civil association to elaborate her theory of 'radical democratic citizenship' and to develop her own distinct account of political legitimacy. (Mouffe, 1993: 66). In *On Human Conduct* Oakeshott distinguishes between two distinct forms of association. According to Oakeshott, *universitas* describes a teleological from of association in which 'agents ... recognise themselves to be engaged upon the joint enterprise of seeking the satisfaction of some common substantive want' (Oakeshott, 1975: 205). In Oakeshott's view, *universitas* has become the predominant way of characterising the modern state. By way of contrast, he describes *societas* as a bond that ties together agents in an association, which is not directed to the pursuit of a common end or goal (Oakeshott, 1975: 201). *Societas* is a non-teleological association in which citizens simply acknowledge themselves to be in a 'relation of loyalty to one another' (Oakeshott, 1975: 201). The civil associates subscribe to the authority of the *respublica* understood in terms of the conditions of civility or the shared symbolic space where they can pursue their own (plurality of) ends and purposes (Oakeshott, 1975: 183). The *respublica* is a common framework of rules with respect to conduct that allows citizens to pursue their own conception of the good (Oakeshott, 1975: 183). The authority of this type of association involves the maintenance of a shared mode of conduct, and the law or the *universitas* preserves the space necessary for its citizens to pursue their own purposes (Oakeshott, 1975: 201).

151

Drawing upon Oakeshott, Mouffe theorises the basis of the radically democratic political community as a *societas,* which she says 'designates a formal relationship in terms of rules, not a substantive relation in terms of common action' (Mouffe, 1993: 66, 67). As she sees it, this is the only model of citizenship compatible with modern pluralism (Mouffe, 1993: 69-72). For Mouffe, *societas* is the form of commonality compatible with pluralism. She says 'I agree with those that affirm that a pluralist democracy demands a certain amount of consensus and that it requires allegiance to the values which constitute its "ethico-political principles"' (Mouffe, 2000b: 101). According to Mouffe, it is the language of civil intercourse or the *respublica* that ought to unite radical democratic citizens, and unlike Laclau's theory, not the temporary stabilisation of the interests of some particular social struggle (Mouffe, 2000b: 97: Wenman, 2003a: 599). Following Oakeshott, she says *respublica,* is a 'practice' that consists of a 'complex set of rule like prescriptions which do not prescribe satisfactions to be sought or actions performed but moral considerations specifying conditions to be subscribed to in choosing performances' (Mouffe, 1993: 67; Oakeshott, 1975: 183). These rules prescribe certain 'norms of conduct' (Mouffe, 1993: 67). Identifying with the *respublica* allows for the formation of a political identity and at the same time enables citizens to engage in different enterprises and to pursue their own conception of the good (Mouffe, 1993: 67). Following Oakeshott, Mouffe maintains that what is important is not law as such but 'the kind of law' and whether it is 'moral' or 'instrumental' (Mouffe, 1993: 67; Oakeshott, 1975: 318). Mouffe is keen to formulate a conception of citizenship and civil association which is 'compatible with moral pluralism and respects the priority of the right over the good' (Mouffe, 1993: 65). According to Mouffe, citizens share a set of principles specific to the liberal democratic tradition. Invoking Rawls' terminology, she says in *societas* there exists a priority of the right over the good (Mouffe, 1993: 68). However, for Mouffe, the 'principles that specify the right, the *respublica*, are not conceived in a Kantian manner as in Rawls, but [in] a Hegelian way' (Mouffe, 1993: 68). Again, following Oakeshott, she says 'to be associated in terms of the recognition of the *respublica* is to enjoy a *sittlich* relation' (Mouffe, 1993: 68).

Mouffe is aware of Oakeshott's conservatism and the conservative use he makes of the notion of *societas*. However, she thinks that this conservatism can be overcome by introducing radical and democratic principles into the content of the *respublica* (Mouffe, 1993: 68).

According to Mouffe, *societas* describes the ethical character of the bond which unites radical democratic citizens who are 'related to one another so as to compose an identifiable association of a certain sort' (Mouffe, 1993: 66; Oakeshott, 1975: 201). The ethical character of the political community is based around a republican notion of citizenship. For Mouffe, the political principles of liberty and equality are not a legal status simply conferred upon citizens (as in much liberal theory), but an ethico-political form of identification (Mouffe, 1993: 65-6). In other words, the basis of the political community rests upon citizen's recognition of the authority of principles and the 'rules in which they are embodied' (Mouffe, 1993: 65). Mouffe argues that it is not simply enough to acknowledge the authority of these principles, but the citizens need to actively identify with them though active participation in public life (Mouffe, 1993: 65-6). However, she says, since those ethico-political principles can only exist through many different and conflicting interpretations, such a consensus is bound to be a "conflictual consensus"' (Mouffe, 2000b: 101). Mouffe states that democracy is in jeopardy 'when there is insufficient consensus and allegiance to the values it embodies, but also when an excess of consensus hinders its agonistic dynamic, which usually marks a disquieting apathy' (Mouffe, 2000b: 6).

In order for the radical democratic hegemony to continue to secure its legitimacy, repeated acts of legitimacy are required through active participation. This is because 'power loses its legitimacy when it is unable to ensure the social order' and 'shows itself as *mere* power' (Laclau and Zac, 1994: 22). Mouffe explicitly endorses the ideals of the civic republican tradition, which manifests in her support for active political participation (Mouffe, 1993: 65-69). Mouffe recognises that liberal democracy is a contingent historical event that must not be taken for granted and therefore needs to be actively defended and deepened through the struggle for

'radical democracy' (Mouffe, 2000b:6). Mouffe also turns to the distinctly republican conception of 'liberty' outlined by Quentin Skinner (Mouffe, 1993a: 36, 20; Skinner, 1978). Skinner explains how in Machiavelli's work the term *libertas* (liberty) demonstrates how both 'positive' and 'negative' liberty co-existed together in the Italian republics of the renaissance (Mouffe, 1993a: 37; Skinner, 1978). As Mouffe puts it, for Machiavelli 'if one is to exercise civic virtue and serve the common good, it is in order to guarantee oneself a certain degree of personal liberty, which permits one to pursue one's ends' (Mouffe, 1993a: 20). For Mouffe, this distinctive republican notion of liberty is central in addressing the question of modern pluralism, because unlike pre-modern notions of authority it does not impose a substantive notion of the common good. However, this is also different from the liberal notion of citizenship because it is not simply a 'purposive association' or an enterprise in which the civil association is identified with the 'Rule of Law' (Mouffe, 1993: 67). For Mouffe, the republican notion of liberty allows for the personal freedom of the citizen 'to go about one's business under the protection of the law' as well as the liberty of the citizens to collectively exercise civic virtue and to participate in the activities of the state thus creating the conditions of legitimacy (Mouffe, 1993a: 37; Skinner, 1978).

According to Mouffe, an 'agonistic' approach to democracy acknowledges its inherently paradoxical nature, and does not try to disguise this tension behind 'a veil of ignorance' or a 'rational morality' (Mouffe, 2000b, 105). She maintains that a 'proper reflection on the moment of the "decision" which characterises the field of politics' is missing from approaches such as Habermas's 'discourse ethics' (Mouffe, 2000b: 130). As she sees it, her approach is more receptive than the 'deliberative approach' to the 'multiplicity of voices that contemporary pluralist societies encompass' (Mouffe, 2000b: 105). According to Mouffe, Habermas is unable to grasp the nature of 'the political' because he fails to recognise the fact that violence is ineradicable (Mouffe, 2000b: 132). She says that in Habermas's theory the 'very condition of consensus ...is the elimination of pluralism from the public sphere' (Mouffe, 1999: 47). She

maintains that Habermas 'screens out pluralism through the process of argumentation' (Mouffe, 1999: 52). She claims that the idea of an 'unconstrained consensus' is an illusion and that unanimity is 'fatal for democracy' and therefore should be abandoned (Mouffe, 2000b: 5). In Mouffe's view, liberal democracy has only ever displaced (and not eliminated) the antagonism constitutive of social and political relations. Thus, the provisional hegemony of the liberal democratic 'regime' of modern democracy is a contingent historical event that needs to be defended and enhanced by 'fostering identification' with 'democratic values' (Mouffe, 2000b: 96). In the next chapter, I argue that Habermas's political theory of 'discourse ethics' is receptive to pluralism, and in Chapter Six I make the case that there are a number of important similarities in the way that Habermas and Mouffe theorise the basis of the political community. I show that Mouffe's understanding of the notion of citizenship as a collective form of identification and as a set of rules of conduct shares important similarities with Habermas's theory of 'discourse ethics', which similarly identifies principles and rules that ought to inform judgements and regulate the conduct of the citizens (Mouffe, 1993: 65-6). The difference is that Habermas thinks reciprocal relations are implicit in communicative action, whereas, Mouffe believes that common values have to be politically constructed through 'a complex [and contingent] process that takes place through a manifold of practices, discourses and language games' and there will inevitably be some individuals or groups who do not identify with the common values (Mouffe, 2000b: 70). I agree that Mouffe is basically correct when she accuses Habermas of naturalising the foundations of his theory (with the notion of an unconstrained consensus) thereby 'refusing to acknowledge the antagonistic dimension' of politics (Mouffe, 2000b: 131).

In *The Return of the Political,* Mouffe claims that politics is about the 'construction of the political community and not something which takes place within it' (Mouffe, 1993: 81). Mouffe appears to reduce non-hegemonic forms of politics (such as Connolly's notion of 'micro-politics' and the 'techniques of the self') to apolitical acts. However, Mouffe's statement is inconsistent. If

155

we accept Mouffe's idea that the enemy is potentially the bearer of antagonism and that the 'enemy' does not fully disappear in the construction of the political community, then politics must also take place *within* the political community. Also, Mouffe's statement appears contradictory because elsewhere she states that we need to create a hegemony *of* liberal 'democratic values' (Mouffe, 2000b: 96). In fact, we can identify two different readings of hegemony operating in Mouffe's work. First, hegemonic politics is the ordering of social relations under ontological conditions of antagonism or the threat of violent forms of conflict. This is the struggle for hegemony understood as the construction of the political community, and the 'transformation of antagonism into agonism' (Mouffe, 2000b: 103). Second, hegemonic politics is the on going struggle to create alternative combinations of liberal democratic values (Mouffe, 2000b: 96). I do not think this second rendition of hegemony is adequately theorised in Mouffe's work.

## Connolly and 'agonistic' democracy

In this section, I explore Connolly's conception of modern politics. According to Connolly, politics is an inherently 'ambiguous' activity (Connolly, 1991a: 94). On the one hand, politics is the means by which groups and individuals attempt to establish some organisation on the 'protean abundance of life', where 'life' (as I explained in Chapter One) is understood to 'exceed every socially constructed order' (Connolly, 1991a: 176; 1995:1). On the other hand, politics is the means by which established identities can be 'engaged and confronted' (Connolly, 1991a: 94). As I have said, Connolly argues that every attempt to secure a collective or individual identity involves the exclusion of difference (Connolly, 1991a: 66). In *Identity/Difference*, he presents a constitutive paradox, which is intrinsic to the formation of every political identity. For Connolly, a political identity is 'a set of interlocking elements in strife and tension' but nonetheless tends 'to represent itself to itself as a relatively harmonious set of parts that function smoothly together'

(Connolly, 1991a: 204). As Connolly sees it, identity is an 'indispensable feature of human life' and every identity needs difference in order to be. However, the tendency is to translate this difference into an 'otherness', which is understood as a threat to the identity in question (Connolly, 1991a: 64, 158). For Connolly, politics is the medium that enables the 'antinomies of identity and difference' to be 'expressed and contested' (Connolly, 1991a: 92). Like Laclau and Mouffe, Connolly does not offer a definitive solution to the paradox of identity/difference. Instead, he presents 'agonistic politics' as the 'means by which to [permanently] contest the …paradox' (Connolly, 1991a: 92). In Connolly's view, democratic politics should enable the 'paradox of difference to find expression in public life' (Connolly, 1991a: 94). He says each 'set of identities will generate differences that themselves needs to find a political voice' (Connolly, 1991a: 93). Here, I examine these oppositional logics of 'identity' and difference' in more detail. Also, I show that Connolly develops the notion of 'immanent' or 'rhizomatic' political assemblages in more detail, which we can be read as an alternative to the notion of hegemony *qua* explicit political ordering. In addition, I explore Connolly's own distinctive approach to the question of legitimacy.

In the *Ethos of Pluralization*, Connolly argues there is a permanent 'torsion' in modern politics between existing pluralism and what he calls 'pluralization' or the 'politics of becoming' (Connolly, 1995a: xiii; 2001: 352). From Connolly's perspective, the conventional pluralism of American political science is too 'stingy, cramped, and defensive for the world we now inhabit' (Connolly, 1995a: xiii). He says there is 'an unconscious conservatism at the centre of the pluralist imagination' because conventional pluralism misrecognises the paradoxical nature of identity/difference relations (Connolly, 1995a: xiv). Connolly argues that conventional pluralism naturalises existing identities because it privileges the status quo and does acknowledge that new forms of identity are always coming into being, which necessarily disrupt the existing constellation of identities (Connolly, 1995a: xiv). Connolly seeks to refigure the relation between

'pluralism and pluralization [understood] as the constitutive [and paradoxical] tension of [modern] pluralist politics itself' (Connolly, 1995a: xiv). However, Connolly argues that the ethos of pluralization 'does not usher in a pluralism without boundaries' (Connolly, 1995a: 178). He says that political 'limits' and 'restrictions' must be dawn to 'sustain' the 'conditions of existence' of pluralist politics. For example, he argues that widespread 'economic inequality' is incompatible with pluralism (Connolly, 1995a: 193).

Connolly also perceives a 'contest' between the politics of 'pluralization' and 'fundamentalizaton' understood as two distinct responses to the complexities of late modernity (Connolly, 2000a: 598). He says that the fundamentalist defines him/herself against an 'other' which s/he sees as 'intrinsically evil' and which must therefore be destroyed (Connolly, 1995a: 194). According to Connolly, fundamentalism is characterised by 'a general imperative to assert an absolute, singular ground of authority; to ground your own identity and allegiances in this unquestionable source' (Connolly, 1995a: 105). The fundamentalist does not accept the contingency of his/her own identity (Connolly, 1998: 95). Connolly distinguishes between fundamentals and fundamental*ism*. He says that the former is a necessary component of every doctrine or faith, whereas, the latter is a 'set of political strategies to protect these fundaments by defining every carrier of critique or destabilization as an enemy' (Connolly, 1995a: 105). He insists that everyone has strains of 'fundamentalism flowing through them', however he says that there are 'important degree of difference' between the affirmation of 'fundaments and fundamentalism' (Connolly, 1995a: 106). For example, Connolly identifies the fundamentalism of George Bush senior's justification of the Gulf War in 1992 as exemplified in his statement 'What we say, goes' (Bush cited in Connolly, 1995a: 107). Connolly argues that no identity 'deserves to define itself simply as natural, complete, or inclusive' and individuals and groups must resist 'the drive to crystallize' the necessity of their identity (Connolly, 1995a: 183, 188). Like the Sophocles' Theban tragedies, Connolly sees 'a tragic rift in being that cannot be eliminated' (Connolly, 1993a: 122).Indeed, Connolly's 'multidimensional' and pluralist world is

founded on the idea that every particular allegiance 'is contingent because the occasion might occur when it collides with another you have found to be more fundamental at this time' (Connolly, 1995a: 159). For Connolly, even a contingent identity is worth living' (Connolly, 1991a: 171).

Connolly agrees with the general sentiment that democracy is a 'form of rule or governance' (Connolly, 1995a: 153). However, he says that democracy is 'much more' than a procedure (Connolly, 1995a: 153). According to Connolly, democracy is an 'ethos' that 'encourages people to participate in defining their own troubles and possibilities' (Connolly, 1995a: 153). For Connolly, democratic politics is founded upon a 'paradoxical tension'. On the one hand, democracy is the site of governance and 'enactment' which enables 'participation in collective decisions', on the other hand, it is the site of 'disturbance' where 'newly emerging constellations' of forces contest 'sedimented' identities 'denaturalize' and reconstitute them (Connolly, 1995a: 103, 153; 1993b: 379). For Connolly, democracy is a space of negotiation which 'introduces an active tension between cultural drives to identity and the persistent ethical need to contest the dogmatization of hegemonic, relational identities' (Connolly, 1995a: 155, 193). Indeed, the agonistic democracy that Connolly advocates would enable 'anyone to engage the fundamental riddles of existence through participation in a public politics that periodically disturbs and denaturalizes elements governing the cultural consciousness' of the citizens (Connolly, 1991a: 201). For Connolly, it is important is to 'valorize' the 'tension in democratic life' between 'affirming the legitimacy of limits', and 'exposing and opposing the modern drift towards normalisation' by engaging in practices of 'disturbance' and 'critical responsiveness' (Connolly, 1992: 151-152; 2002: 173).

According to Connolly, democratic politics needs to combine the insights of Foucault with the work of C.B. Macpherson (Connolly, 1995a: 104). From Macpherson, Connolly's democratic ethos draws the notion of the positive 'construction of political ideals' such as a critique of the principle of 'economic equality' and a conception of 'the state as a pivotal site of

political action' (Connolly, 1995a: 104). From Foucault, he draws the notion of the 'pursuit of a pluralizing ethos' which challenges and contests the idea of a 'normal individual' and pursues a 'cultivation of agonistic respect for contending interpretations of the fundaments of being' (Connolly, 1995a: 104).

In his recent book *Why I am not a Secularist*, Connolly further elaborates this notion of 'agonistic' pluralism with its prescriptive notions of an 'ethos of engagement' and of 'agonistic respect' (Connolly, 1999b; 1997: 21). According to Connolly, agonistic democracy facilitates the perpetual disturbance and destabilisation of settled identities and conventions through struggle and contestation in public life (Connolly, 1991a: 211). Connolly also distinguishes his approach from the work of Rawls and Habermas. As he sees it, these supposedly 'post-metaphysical' positions offer a 'thin' procedural account of public life and they seek to reduce pluralism to the private sphere (Connolly, 1997: 21). According to Connolly, the type of pluralist politics appropriate to late modern times is one that does not ask different groups to leave their metaphysical assumptions at home in the 'private' sphere (Connolly, 1997: 21). On the contrary, he puts forward a rich conception of politics and of public life, where alternative constituencies would bring their 'fundamentals' into the political arena to be contested. According to Connolly, agonistic respect is similar to 'liberal tolerance' (Connolly, 2004: 176). However, liberal tolerance is based on a secular politics which asks its partisans to leave their 'faiths in the private realm' (Connolly, 2004: 176). From Connolly's perspective, agonistic respect does not relegate difference to the private sphere, but insists that they are brought into the public realm, where they can be contested (Connolly, 2004: 176). In marked contrast to Habermas, Connolly's account of democratic contestation emphasises the ineradicable element of conflict and 'strife' in the politics of identity/difference (Connolly, 1991a: 193). As Connolly sees it, agonistic democracy:

accentuates exposure to contingency and increases the likelihood that the affirmation of difference in identity will find expression in public life. This intensification of the experience of the constructed, relational character of identity/difference constitutes both a virtue and a danger of [agonistic] democracy (Connolly, 1991a: 193).

According to Connolly, agonistic democracy unsettles the 'connections between personal and collective identity' by bringing out elements of contestability within established commonalities (Connolly, 1991a: 200). As Simons puts it, 'Liberal democracy can be radicalized theoretically by liberating it from its philosophical foundations and assumptions about existing autonomous subjectivity' (Simons, 1995: 122). Like Mouffe, Connolly recognises the need for a set of common rules or principles that informs the interactions of the citizens in their 'common life' (Connolly, 1991a: 93). However, he is principally concerned with the way in which these common principles tend to become naturalised and 'normalised', thereby excluding alternative possibilities (Connolly, 1991a: 93). In Chapter Three, I made the case that Habermas seeks to establish the 'unavoidable and necessary presuppositions' that supposedly form the implicit foundation of all forms of argumentation': anything or anyone that contravenes these principles is considered to be self-contradictory or falls into a 'performative contradiction'. Connolly critique of sedimented forms of rule and identity could be applied to Habermas's attempt to naturalise the presuppositions of argumentation.

Connolly recognises that the fundamentalist often rejects agonistic reciprocity and refuses to acknowledge the 'contestability' of his/her claims to an 'intrinsic moral order' (Connolly, 1993b: 382). Connolly hopes that the dissemination of an ethos of agonistic respect will enable fundamentalists to become 'less hell-bent on universalisation of the agendas through which they congratulate themselves and more willing to enter into selective alliances with you for particular purposes' (Connolly, 1993a: xxi-xxii). We can compare Connolly's answer to the problem of

fundamentalism to Mouffe's account of antagonism. Like Mouffe, Connolly emphasises the need for the construction of an alliance between different constituencies to resist the threatening force (Connolly, 2000b: 195). On Connolly's reading, a 'variety of constituencies' can 'band together in opposition' to the antagonising force (Connolly, 2000b: 195). Connolly emphasises the need for collective action between 'several constituencies' building a 'general assemblages for [this] particular purpose' (Connolly, 2000b: 194). Connolly makes the case that rhizomatic pluralism is 'most likely to sink into warring fragments' when some constituents 'insist upon sinking deep, exclusionary roots, disabling possibilities for the formation of democratic assemblages' (Connolly, 1995a: 94).

However, in contrast to Mouffe's notion of hegemony, 'rhizomatic' political assemblages are 'linked through multiple lines of connection' rather than 'unified' around a 'central political idea or ethical principle which all the participants endorse' (Connolly, 1995a: 164; 2004: 168). Connolly shares with both Mouffe and Habermas the idea of a collective form of identification and the idea that a public ethic needs to be cultivated. However, he says that his 'ethic of cultivation' needs to appreciate 'the protean diversity of being', and (unlike Mouffe's notion of hegemony) does not insist that citizens 'converge' around a central form of identification or 'moral source' (Connolly, 2004: 169, 173).

Connolly recognises that sometimes a 'new movement' or 'constituency' emerges in the politics of becoming that may attempt to delimit the range of plural identities (Connolly, 2004: 178). In this situation, Connolly says that 'it is important for those who acknowledge the contestability of fundamental sources to come to terms responsively with the conditions that generate such a movement and to limit its capacity to de-pluralize the order' (Connolly, 2004: 178). Here, we can point to the examples of the Anti Nazi League or the Anti Fascist Alliance in the UK. These are groups which have formed to challenge and de-limit the activities of the British National Party and their attempts to get elected at local elections.

Connolly has a number of apprehensions about the purpose and the identity of the state in late modern times. He understands the term 'state' to refer to 'the political dimensions of the entire order', which includes 'individuals as citizens and taxpayers' as well public and legal institutions and executive agencies (Connolly, 1991a: 206-7). For Connolly, the state prescribes 'relations between it and its citizens' (Connolly, 1991a: 202). Connolly says 'increasingly' the state 'sustains collective identity' through 'punishment' against those that deviate from the dominant norms or who 'threaten to signify' the state's 'inefficacy' (Connolly, 1991a: 206). He also pays particular attention to the way in which the 'ideal of democracy sets the terms for state legitimacy' and the way in which the state is treated as the 'ultimate agency of self-conscious political action' (Connolly, 1991a: 201). According to Connolly, 'to confine the ethos of democracy to the state is to convert the state into the penitentiary of democracy' (Connolly, 1991a: 220). In fact, he argues that the 'fundamentalism of the state constitutes the most dangerous fundamentalism of our time' (Connolly, 1995a: 131). Connolly makes the case for individuals and groups to resist the state's fundamentalism even through this runs the risk of increasing the 'fundamentalism of the state' because he says doing nothing will have the 'same effect' (Connolly, 2004: 131).

From Connolly's perspective, in the cotemporary context of globalisation there is an urgent need today to 'challenge structures of territorial democracy with a politics of nonterritorial democratisation of global issues' (Connolly, 1991a: 218). In a world where many contemporary challenges circumvent the boundaries of the state (such as environmental and ecological concerns) it is a problem that 'the democratic ideal has been colonized by the state' (Connolly, 1991a: 210, 207). As the representative of the common rules of public life in an increasingly fragile world, there is a danger that the state becomes 'a ministry for collective salvation through a politics of generalized resentment' (Connolly, 1991a: 210, 207). According to Connolly, the state 'must be thought and lived as [only] one site of membership, allegiance, obligation, and political mobilization on a globe that presents other viable possibilities of identification inside

and outside state boundaries' (Connolly, 1991a: 215). For Connolly, democratic 'politics flows below, through, and above the level of the state' (Connolly, 1995a: 160). He advocates a democratic ethos carried by 'cross-territorial citizen assemblages' that 'extend beyond the walls of the state' and which 'support positive action' on global issues (Connolly, 1995a: 155, 157; 2001: 352).

Connolly theorises the formation of political assemblages in a manner which is distinct from Laclau and Mouffe. He invokes the term hegemony to explain the process by which certain perspectives establish their presence by shuffling others 'out of active consideration' (Connolly, 1993c: 4). Connolly understands hegemony as the strategic means by which 'an identifiable constellation' of forces attain 'predominance in several areas of life' (Connolly, 1991a: 213). However, for Connolly, the explicit formation of hegemony is only one type of political formation amongst many, whereas, for Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is a necessary condition of every political (or discursive) formation. For Laclau and Mouffe, without some form or other of hegemony, societal relations would rapidly degenerate into 'chaos' (Mouffe, 2000b: 6; Laclau, 1996a: 44, 45). In other words, they take the permanence of 'antagonism and conflict' as the motivation for the struggle for hegemony. Mouffe likens the threat of antagonism to the Hobbesian 'state of nature', and she says that this dimension can never be completely eradicated from political life (Mouffe, 2000b; 6; Laclau and Zac, 1994: 20). In marked contrast to Laclau and Mouffe's concern with the construction of a new from of left-wing hegemonic politics, Connolly is principally concerned with exposing the 'artifice in hegemonic identities and the definitions of otherness (evil) through which they propel their self-certainty' (Connolly, 1993b: 372).Connolly does not imagine that the space of politics is permanently threatened by an inherent violence, chaos, or aggressiveness.

Laclau and Mouffe's notion of hegemony is in marked contrast to Connolly who understands 'order' as being *immanent* to 'rhizomatic' political assemblages and the contingent alliances and networks of forces (Connolly, 2004: 168). Connolly notion of 'rhizomatic

assemblages' takes its inspiration from Nietzsche, Deleuze, and Foucault and emphasises instead the implicit ordering of political 'networks'. Connolly describes a condition of 'network pluralism' as characterised by 'multidimensional connections' across differences such as religion, culture, language, gender and sexuality (Connolly, 2001: 352; Patton, 2000: 90). From Connolly's perspective, order is not only established though - what he calls - 'arboreal' mechanisms (such as hegemony). Instead, complex interactions of multiple constituencies necessarily crystallise together into constellations of 'rhizomatic' forces without any explicit intention to do so (Connolly, 1993c: 4).

In 'The Twilight of the Idols' Connolly identifies problems with Mouffe's use of the term hegemony. As he sees it, 'Mouffe initially grounds the ethos of democratic citizenship in *our* already constituted practices and then slides steadily towards the admission that these are pretty much identifications she hopes we will adopt. Indeed, Mouffe's insinuation of a logic of necessary implication within the democratic tradition is at odds with Mouffean recourse to a constitutive outside that disrupts and exceeds any tradition' (Connolly, 1995b: 132). As I have said, Mouffe seems to oscillate between two accounts of hegemony. When she makes claims about establishing a new hegemony it is unclear whether she is talking about overthrowing our already constituted practices or whether she is theorising the very institution of the political community. In *The Ethos of Pluralisation*, Connolly says that hegemonic identities depend on 'existing definitions of difference to be' (Connolly, 1995a: xvi). From Connolly's perspective, it is important 'to appreciate how concentric circles of political culture', that is, forms of hegemonic power and claims to legitimacy 'are complicated and compromised by numerous crosscutting allegiances, connections and modes of collaboration' (Connolly, 2000a, 603).

From Connolly's perspective, prior to any explicit hegemonic articulation there always already exists an abundance of protean forces of 'life' that differ in terms of their quality, quantity, and intensity. He says we do not need a 'universal "we"' to foster democratic

governance of a population' (Connolly, 1995a, xx). This notion of an immanent ordering of social relations seems to resonate with the ideas of certain nineteenth century anarchist philosophers. For thinkers like Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, the social order is held together by spontaneous bonds of interdependency (Bakunin, 1984; Krotpokin; 1998). Similarly, for Connolly, collective forms of assemblages emerge though the multiple lines of connection between different groups and intersecting constituencies (Connolly, 1995a: xx). From Connolly's perspective, these diverse political forces are not necessarily egalitarian but neither are they inherently violent or antagonistic.

Connolly agrees with Rawls and Schmitt that in the modern world 'we are unlikely to converge on a singe conception of the good' (Connolly, 1995b: 133). However, he says that unlike Schmitt he does not experience the 'modern loss' of 'metaphysic homogeneity as a lack to be closed by a sovereign' power (Connolly, 1995b: 153). In addition, he says that unlike Rawls he does not attempt to 'repair' the loss with a supposedly post-metaphysical account of 'the reasonableness of justice' (Connolly, 1995b: 133). By way of contrast, Connolly experiences this loss not 'only as an abyss, but also an abundance that enables the production of greater diversity and generosity in life' (Connolly, 1995b: 133-4). As Connolly sees it, Mouffe 'forgets to peel off the resentment against the disenchantment of the world sticking to the Schmittian problematic' and she fails to 'mine the positive ethical possibilities residing within an Nietzschean affirmation of this condition' (Connolly, 1995b: 133).

Connolly's theory of agonistic pluralism and rhizomatic assemblages does not fit into conventional models of political legitimacy. At first, it might appear that Connolly has little to add to debates about the legitimacy of a democratic order. However, on closer examination his notion of an 'ethos of critical responsiveness' allows us to grapple with the question of legitimacy in a distinct way. Agonistic respect and critical responsiveness are virtues which partisans in public life cultivate and negotiate, but from the perspective of different moral and metaphysical

orientations (Connolly, 2004: 177). Unlike Mouffe, Connolly is not primarily concerned with the formation of citizenship or the foundations of a democratic order, and he tends to take the context of modern democracy as given. As Connolly sees it, agonistic pluralism infused with agonistic respect and critical responsiveness provides the best possible medium through which to incorporate 'care and independence into strife' and to negotiate the identity/difference paradox (Connolly, 2004: 173). Connolly says 'critical responsiveness' is appropriate to the 'politics of becoming' because it extends a 'generosity' to 'new constituencies', identities, or movements coming to being that may threaten or disturb one's own identity (Connolly, 2004: 178). Connolly describes the space where new identities have not yet fully come into being but nonetheless destabilize the 'naturalness' of old identities as a 'paradoxical gap' and he says it here where critical responsiveness is needed (Connolly, 1998: 95).

Following Paul Ricoeur, Connolly argues that no political act is legitimate simply because it reflects the 'previous consent' of a 'sovereign authority' (Connolly, 1995a: 139). He says a 'political act always lacks full legitimacy at the moment of its enactment' and therefore needs continual re-enactment in order to retain legitimacy (Connolly, 1995a: 139). However, like Nietzsche, Connolly does not seek to legitimatise one particular mode of being (Nietzsche, 1990). On the contrary, he seeks to create new spaces and places where diverse and different identities can flourish. Fu rthermore, Connolly's notion of legitimacy focuses on what he calls 'micropolitics' and is concerned with 'techniques of the self' and offers a radical conception of the politics of legitimacy. For Connolly, micropolitics are a 'cultural collectivisation and politicisation of arts of the self' (Connolly, 2002: 107). Connolly says that micropolitical practices are both subjective and intersubjective: they help to 'shape an intersubjective ethos of politics' by working at the 'level of detail, desire, feeling, perception, and sensibility' (Connolly, 1999b: 148). Micropolitics refers to those intersubjective dynamics that are 'organised and deployed collectively' but that operate 'below the threshold of political visibility' such as formal decision making processes (Connolly, 2002: 20, 21). The practice of 'micropolitics' provides

techniques whereby individuals and groups establish their own 'moral economies' in order to engender 'generosity into the ethical sensibility governing the self' (Connolly, 1993a: 138). It is Connolly's hope that individuals in an agonistic democracy will cultivate 'generosity into the ethical sensibility governing the self'. In other words, he puts forward an agonistic theory of legitimacy.

I have used the term agonism with reference to Mouffe's politics. I explained that she contrasts the term agonism with antagonism. In Mouffe's view, agonism and antagonism are inextricably tied together. Looking at the word anta*gonism* we can see that for Mouffe agonism is internal to antagonism. For Mouffe, by pacifying the *ante* - that which comes before - of antagonism we get agonism. I have already shown that Mouffe takes her point of departure from Schmitt's friend/enemy relation. For Mouffe, antagonism is the 'natural condition of mankind' and refers to a situation of 'struggle between enemies' where the threat of physical killing is a 'real possibility' (Mouffe, 2000b: 102; 1995a: 1543). For Mouffe, agonism is the political transformation of the antagonistic space into one where people identify not as enemies but as adversaries who accept the democratic rules in choosing their actions and performances (Mouffe, 2000b: 103). In an agonistic space the real threat of killing has been transformed into less violent forms of conflict.

By way of contrast, Connolly does not contrast his notion of the agonistic space with violent antagonism. His notion of agonism is principally influenced by Nietzsche's reading of Hellenic Greece. Nietzsche says that agonism as 'competition' was a necessary component of the 'well being' of Hellenic life and society (Nietzsche, 1994: 191-192). Nietzsche is not referring to competition in the modern economic sense as concerned with self-preservation and efficiency, but competition as a stimulant for struggle and contestation (Nietzsche, 1994: 190). Nietzsche says that Hellenic education believed that 'every talent must develop through ... struggle' (Nietzsche, 1994: 192). Thus, every 'Athenian has to develop himself [sic], through competition,

to the degree to which this self was the most use to Athens and would cause least damage' (Nietzsche, 1994: 192). Agonism is then a mode of being that accepts struggle, competition, envy, jealousy as central to life and without which the Hellenic state would be endangered (Nietzsche, 1994: 194). It allows one to develop oneself, through, strife (Nietzsche, 1994: 192). Nietzsche says that Hellenic competitive ambition loathed a 'monopoly or predominance' of single citizen, because under these conditions competition dries up (Nietzsche, 1994: 191). Without competition, Nietzsche claims that Greek life 'gazes into that pre-Homeric abyss of a gruesome savagery of hatred and pleasure in destruction' (Nietzsche, 1994: 193).

Like Nietzsche, Connolly is drawn to ancient Greek ideals, which acknowledges the 'competitive plurality' of human experience that 'dispenses with the idea of the redemption' from the 'rift in being' and does not attempt to reduce it to human error (Connolly, 1993a: 120, 125). He says that his Nietzschean perspective affirms the rift of being and fills it 'with abundance, contingency, creative possibility, and danger' (Connolly, 1993a: 126). Connolly views agonism in terms of the struggles for 'individual *self-making*' (Wenman, 2003b: 169). Connolly's notion of 'agonism' addresses the pluralism that is constitutive of modern social relations, as well as the internal pluralism constitutive of the *self*. For Connolly, it is essential that an individual attains satisfaction with him/herself in order to minimise his or her aggressiveness to others in public space (Connolly, 1993b: 373). As I said in Chapter One, Connolly argues those whom are dissatisfied with themselves are likely to seek revenge on others (Connolly, 1993b: 373; Nietzsche, 1974; No. 290). However, by working upon themselves individuals and groups will learn to engage in identity/difference relations less aggressively. The idea is to cultivate a sensibility that does not require the violent destruction of difference (Connolly, 1995a: 27). His notion of 'agonistic respect' emphasises the need for political actors to cultivate an ethos of care for the rich abundant 'diversity of life' in the hope that this might reduce the elements of resentment which are traded between groups and individuals (Connolly, 1995a: 33). For

169

Connolly, this ethical sensibility requires that groups and individuals acknowledge the contingency of their own identities as they struggle for power and recognition. In Connolly's view, it is important to drain resentment from life by living 'as if there were no agent or principle to whom existential unfairness can be attributed and thus no object to serve as the target of this resentment' (Connolly, 1991a: 165). For Connolly, an agonistic sensibility makes individuals more 'receptive to generic sources of suffering (arguably) rooted in the human condition' (Connolly, 1991a: 191).

In *The Augustinian Imperative*, Connolly rejects the idea that 'there is an intrinsic moral order susceptible to authoritarian representation' (Connolly, 1993a: xvii). He points out that Western conceptions of 'moral order' invariably take the form of 'obedience to a transcendental command' or 'attunement' to an 'instinct pattern' or design in the order of things (Connolly, 1993a: xviii, 34, 38). Connolly draws a distinction between 'morality' and 'ethics' (Connolly, 1993a: 38). This is central to his theory of legitimacy. In Connolly's view, ethics or the ethical refers to relation of the self to the self, and draws its inspiration from a 'nonthesitic' and 'nonteleloglogical source' (Connolly, 1993a: 34, 38). Ethics refers to the sensibility of individual 'self-making' and agonistic respect that I have outlined above. By way of contrast, he says morality or the 'moral order' (which can take many forms) refers to commands, that must be obeyed and with rules that 'normalize' the self. For Connolly, the verb 'to order' treats morality as obedience to a divine or natural order, whereas, the noun 'to order' treats morality as an attunement to inherent or harmonious design (Connolly, 1993a: xii). He says that he does not aim 'to elaborate an alternative moral theory', but rather to 'cultivate a modified sensibility entering into the actions, judgements, and interpretations' of a variety of existing moral perspectives (Connolly, 1993a: xxi). Connolly emphasises the need to challenge existing forms of 'moral order' so as to 'expose the artifice in hegemonic identities' (Connolly, 1993a: xiii). Following Foucault, the idea is to challenge theories of intrinsic moral or political order with an ethical

sensibility that creates 'a little space between morality and ethics' (Connolly, 1993a: 369). He advocates a 'post-Nietzschean ethical sensibility' that manifests in an active and vibrant 'agonistic' democracy, in which individuals practise diverse 'techniques of the self' in order to condition reciprocal generosity as they engage in public life (Connolly, 1995a: 133). Connolly says a critical reflexivity 'encourages us to find space for the other to live and speak on the grounds that we know enough to know that we cannot comprehend' their difference (Connolly, 1984: 243). He does not seek 'to elaborate an alternative moral theory, but to cultivate a modified *sensibility* entering into the actions, judgements, and interpretations advanced' by different political actors (Connolly, 1993a: xxi). For Connolly, 'ethical generosity becomes effective when it is installed in feelings, and this involves a series of tactics patiently applied by a self to a self' (Connolly, 1993b: 373).

Both Connolly and Mouffe put forward the idea of an inherently paradoxical politics that precludes 'the possibility of a complete reabsorption of alterity into "oneness and harmony"' (Mouffe, 2000b: 76). However, their points of emphasis are clearly distinct from one another. Mouffe is concerned with identifying the conditions of a legitimate democratic order. According to Mouffe, every consensus exists as a 'temporary consensus' which is the result of a 'provisional hegemony', and this always involves some form of exclusion (Mouffe, 2000b:104). Nevertheless, like Habermas (and unlike Connolly or Laclau) she is concerned with the question of 'citizenship' and with the collective identity of the 'demos'. By way of contrast, Connolly's emphasis is on challenging hegemonic forms of power in order to create the ethical spaces to allow the paradox of identity/difference to flourish, and not to be constrained within explicit forms of order. Connolly recognises that his notion of 'agonistic respect' is optimistic: it 'provides considerations' that might 'shape the *ideal* of democracy' in the 'late-modern age' (Connolly, 1991a: 193). However, he argues that this ideal is worth pursuing 'even amidst the impossibility of its final realization' (Connolly, 1993b: 381). I find Connolly's notion of 'agonistic respect' (understood as a response to the pluralisation of modern co-existence) persuasive. Connolly

171

encourages individuals to constantly work upon themselves and to purge themselves of resentment. Thus, when faced with a situation which is considered an exception rather than the norm, by engaging in an ethos of critical responsiveness, individuals will try not to single out others as responsible for their existential suffering.

## Conclusion

I have presented three different post-structuralist understandings of the inherently paradoxical politics characteristic of modernity. Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe share important similarities with respect to the subject and social ontology, but these produce very different manifestations in politics. I have shown that for Connolly, politics is characterised by the inherent paradox of the alternate force of between identity and difference. For her part, Mouffe describes the constitutive paradox of modern politics in terms of the struggle between agonism and antagonism and the permanent tension between the principles of 'liberty and equality'. She appears to provide two different readings of the struggle for hegemony. The first refers to the constitution of the political community through the exclusion of antagonism. The second involves the articulation of different combinations of liberty and equality or what she calls the struggle over 'democratic values'. In addition, I have shown that for Laclau the relationship between the 'particular' and the 'universal and 'the ethical' and 'the normative' is also of a paradoxical nature.

As I see it Connolly's theory has a certain pre-eminence. Laclau and Mouffe' do not adequately the problem of 'resentment' *within* the 'self'. By way of contrast, Connolly's theory of 'techniques of the self' and micro-politics explains how individuals and groups can redefine or re-describe a situation and change their perception or understanding of a person or an event, experience, or phenomena. I do not agree with Mouffe that the explicit hegemonic formation of the political community is always necessary in order to overcome violent antagonism. This is because I do not accept Mouffe's basic claim that 'the natural condition of mankind is war'

172

(Mouffe, 1995a: 1543). In fact, in the same way that Habermas overemphasises reciprocity and consensus, Mouffe overemphasises conflict and antagonism. I am persuaded instead by Connolly's 'ethos of critical responsiveness' understood as a means by which to create and generate legitimate democratic spaces. Connolly's framework is not based on a reaction to fear or on the notion of the threatening enemy, but rather, following Nietzsche, it is premised on the notion of the spiritualisation of 'enmity', which is an ethos of engagement that incorporates an 'intercultural appreciation of the fact that no partisan's orientation to the fundaments of being has yet established itself with certainty' (Connolly, 1999b: 161; Nietzsche, 1994: 191). This allows for a radically different understanding of politics and legitimacy, which does not look for some 'other' or 'enemy' as a necessary exclusion. Instead, the focus is on the 'self' trying to drain 'itself' of resentment through 'techniques of the self'. Unlike Connolly, Mouffe's theory does not offer individuals or groups a way in which to work on themselves to create more friends and less enemies. It is only through practices of the 'self' in the way that Connolly describes that individuals and groups attempt to reduce the level of *ressentiment* and to create a radical and affirmative democratic society.

I do not think we should reject the notion of hegemonic politics altogether. As Connolly puts it, hegemony is one aspect of modern politics amongst many. Forms of hegemony become important when we are faced with moments of antagonism. For example, we can turn to the examples of the civil strife that continue to rage over the disputed land of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Prior to 1947 Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus lived side by side as neighbours in the same villages with a feeling of generosity towards each other. Subsequently, these relationships turn into violence, hatred, and outright war. Indeed, we can identify many international conflicts that bear witness to the idea that the exceptional event can turn those we consider our friends into our enemies. We can even look closer at the micro events of our own personal or professional history and bear witness to the experience of the exception. For example, when a person we

considered a friend offends our ethical sensibility. However, it also important to acknowledge that these situations are the exception and not the norm. Also, more important it is in these situations that we need to work upon ourselves - priori to and after hegemony - to drain from our imaginary the resentment we feel towards the enemy. This is because this resentment manifests itself as a resentment towards the 'self', which consequently affects our relationship with ourselves and those around us. By way of contrast, it is when we are comfortable with ourselves, or we can respect ourselves by legitimising our own actions that we extend critical responsiveness and respect to others - this includes animals, minerals, and plants - to create a political community worthy of human 'Being-in-the-world'.

# Chapter Five

## Habermas and Politics

### Introduction

In this chapter I evaluate Habermas's political philosophy. The underlying objective to this chapter is to challenge the predominant understanding of Habermas's theory as a form of strictly Kantian proceduralism. Although Habermas is clearly influenced by Kant, I make the case that he has also been significantly influenced by Hegel and writers in the social contract tradition such as Hobbes and Rousseau. These influences are evident in Habermas's recent work and especially in *Between Facts and Norms*. I make a number of arguments that dislodge the common place understanding of Habermas as a latter-day Kantain. First, I make the case that Habermas uses the terms 'morality' and 'moral norms' as an ethical *(sittlich)* relation rather than in the manner of the Kantian moral law that regulates individual morality. Second, I demonstrate that Habermas uses the terms 'moral norms' synonymously with 'political norms'. Third, I show that Habermas acknowledges an apparently paradoxical tension in modern politics between public and private morality. However, I also show that he appears to undermine this paradox by appealing to a reconciliatory logic.

This chapter is divided into five sections. In section one I show that (like the post-structuralists) Habermas recognises that modern society is characterised by an inherent value pluralism which leads to a 'legitmation gap', that is a gap between what Habermas calls 'facticity' and 'validity' (Habermas, 1996a: 146; Rehg, 1996: xvi). However, in contrast to the

post-structuralists I show that he turns especially to the work of Kant and Hegel to inform his understanding of modernity as a 'project'. In section two, I explain Habermas's project of 'discourse ethics', which is his political response to the value pluralism constitutive of modernity. As Habermas sees it, discourse ethics provides the conditions for a pluralist and democratic community to exist and an account of the way in which the contradictory tension between facticity and validity can coexist in an unresolved tension. Discourse ethics is Habermas's attempt to develop a procedure by which the validity of moral norms can be established and validated without appeal to a higher (or ontological) source of justification, apart from the active consent of the wider political community. Despite Mouffe's claim to the contrary, this is the point where there are important similarities between her theory and Habermas's. In section three, I explain what Habermas means when he says that 'discourse ethics is a moral theory'. I explore Habermas's distinction between morality and ethics and show how this relates to Hegel's use of these terms in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Indeed, I make the case that Habermas's notion of 'morality' is in fact an explicit attempt to combine Hegel's notion of 'ethical life' with Kant's deontological approach. In section four, I explore Habermas's distinction between classical and modern politics and show that Habermas uses the term 'moral' in a manner which is synonymous with modern pluralism. Following this, in section four, I explore Habermas's recent work on legitimacy and democracy. The aim of this section is to show that, for Habermas, democratic procedure provides the conditions of legitimacy for both the law and for political power. First, I explain that Habermas combines sociological and normative approaches to legitimacy. I show how Habermas supersedes the Kantian deontological conception of the moral law by combining the work of Weber and Rousseau to develop a theory of the legitimacy and legality of law and political power in complex plural societies. This takes the 'co-originality' of public and private autonomy as its generating force of legitimacy. Here, I show that for Habermas - in the manner of social contract theory - the coercive element of the law (i.e. the threat of sanctions) can only be legitimated by consent through political participation. However, I also

176

elaborate Habermas's attempt to 'resolve' what he calls the 'paradoxical union' of the 'contradictory logics' of the rule of law and the principle of popular sovereignty. This aspect of his theory is in marked contrast to Mouffe, for whom the 'democratic paradox' is constitutive. Finally, I suggest that Habermas's does *not* demonstrate how the 'allegedly' paradoxical relationship between the rule of law and democracy is 'resolved'. He simply suggests that this tension will be stabilised through cognitive learning processes and in 'historical time'.

## Pluralism and political modernity

In the last chapter I explained that Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all theorise politics within the historical context of modernity. Drawing respectively on Nietzsche and Lefort, they understand modernity as characterised by an inherent value pluralism and in terms of the corresponding challenge or question of legitimacy. In this section, I show that Habermas also situates his account of politics within the context of modernity, which he likewise understands as characterised by an inherent plurality of 'forms of life and rival value convictions' (Habermas, 1993: 22). I make the case that he turns to the work of Kant and Hegel to explain the pluralism constitutive of the modern life. In so doing, Habermas develops three distinct conceptions of modernity, that is, modernity as an event, as a project, and as a process.

Habermas says that Kant's 'three "Critiques"' provide crucial insights into the character of modernity (Habermas, 1987b: 18). He says that 'in place of the substantiality notion of reason of the [premodern] metaphysical tradition' Kant puts forward 'a concept of reason that divides up into [three] moments, the unity of which now has only a formal character' (Habermas, 1987b: 18). Kant separates the faculties of 'practical reason' and 'judgement' from 'theoretical reason and places each of them on its own foundation' (Habermas, 1987b: 18). Appropriating Kant's distinctions, Habermas says that under conditions of modernity transcendental reason has split into three formal 'spheres' of pure reason, practical reason, and aesthetic reason (Habermas,

1987b: 19). Following Weber, Habermas says that these spheres of reason have become institutionalised in the process of cultural modernisation, understood as the 'value' or 'life-spheres' of science, morality, and art, which have become embodied in distinct professions, presided over by 'experts' (Weber, 1991, 123; Habermas, 1981:8). The criterion for science is objective knowledge, which makes validity claims to 'truth'; the criteria for morality is universal morality, law, and justice, which makes validity claims to 'normative appropriateness'; the criteria for art is the production of criticism and makes validity claims to 'authenticity and beauty' (Habermas, 1987b: 19). For Habermas, science, morality, and art each produce certain types of knowledge that individuals learn through their participation in them, which is passed on from generation to generation (Habermas, 1995: 45). Furthermore, Habermas sees modernity as a specific 'project' originally formulated in the eighteenth century by the Enlightenment philosophers (Habermas, 1981: 9). He says the Enlightenment sought to bring the value spheres together in order develop 'objective science, universal law and morality, and autonomous art' as the basis of a fully emancipated society (Habermas, 1981: 9). In marked contrast to the post-structuralists, Habermas wants to complete the 'incomplete project of modernity' (Habermas, 1996c: 38). For Habermas, it is important to bring the different value spheres together so that they can inform each other in a coherent account of 'reason' rather than leaving them split, which he says is tantamount to denouncing the aspirations of the Enlightenment and modernity itself (Habermas, 1981:14).

Habermas also understands modernity as a process of cultural and social modernisation. As he puts it, modern society is split between the 'systems and lifeworld', which correspond to his distinction between instrumental and communicative action (Habermas, 1984a: 70; 1987a: 119-152; 1990: 58). As I have said, for Habermas the lifeworld is the realm of social and communicative interaction. This is an arena where face to face communication takes place and the norms that govern society are reproduced (Habermas, 1984a: 70). By way of contrast, the

'systems' world is the bureaucratic realm of instrumental action and rationality (Habermas, 1987a: 257). This is where the material realm is reproduced and the where the impersonal institutions of money and power pervade (Habermas, 1988: 9). According to Habermas, the processes of social modernity have led to two kinds of pathology. First, the spheres of science, morality and art have become divorced from every day life and communication in the lifeworld as they have become professionalised (Habermas, 1982: 227). Second, he says that the lifeworld has become 'technicized' or subject to the rationale of the imperatives of the system (Habermas, 1987a: 183). He calls the 'uncoupling of system and lifeworld' the 'colonisation of the lifeworld' by systems (Habermas, 1987a: 153). Drawing on the earlier Frankfurt School theorists he makes the case that under conditions of modernity life: reproduction, socialisation, and politics have become increasingly subject to purposive rationality and under the control of money and power rather than communicative rationality (Habermas, 1987a: 183). As Habermas's sees it, the problem is that the gains of modernity described in Chapter Three (i.e. the critical reflexively of the morally competent subject) remain cut off from every day life, as the domination of instrumental reason prevents social subjects from activating their communicative power in order to structure the social world.

Habermas turns to Hegel in search of a theory that may serve as the basis for reuniting the different values spheres. According to Habermas, Hegel recognised the pluralism implicit in Kant's theory of modernity (Habermas, 1987b: 19). Indeed, Habermas sees in Hegel's work a theory of modernity understood as a historical event which is characterised by pluralism, because reason has split into distinct and contradictory moments. As I said in Chapter Three, Habermas acknowledges Hegel's significant insight that modernity is characterised by the principle of reflexive subjectivity, which is established by the historical events of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. These events established a new subjectivity characterised by 'freedom through reflection', but also 'individualism, the right to criticism, [and]

179

autonomy of action' (Habermas, 2001: 133; 1987b: 17). Habermas agrees with Hegel that the modern 'subject' is distinct from pre-modern and ancient forms of subjectivity. In Chapter Three, I explained that for Hegel the principle of subjectivity is particular to the events associated with modernity. By way of contrast, the Ancient Greek *polis* was unified under a relatively homogenised community, the polis was held together under the common goal of pursuing a shared vision of the 'good life'. In medieval societies, subjects were also unified under a shared recognition of a single divine authority. For example, these communities were held together under the religious power of a transcendental guarantor. This power was interwoven with the customary role of the king who was seen to have sacred authority, from which his power was able to legitimate itself. In premodern European states the monarch had the exclusive role as interpreter of the norms which the community recognised as morally binding (Habermas, 1996a: 142).

Habermas says that Hegel sought to reconcile modern pluralism with his theory of unified ethical life brought together under the concept of the Absolute, which manifests in a constitutional monarchical state (Habermas, 1987b: 30). Habermas rejects Hegel's monarchical politics and his notion of the Absolute. Nonetheless, he agrees with Hegel that it is with the onset of modernity that pluralism becomes a central issue that requires a political solution (Habermas, 1984: 180). In Habermas's view 'modernity societies are not homogenous' and he says they need rational forms of social co-ordination (Habermas, 996b: 473). He acknowledges that this modern pluralism, that is, a pluralism 'of conflicting life ideals and value orientations' has a series of consequences for both philosophy and politics (Habermas, 1966a: 64). Like the post-structuralists, he says 'if we take pluralism seriously we must denounce the classical philosophical claim to defend one uniquely privileged mode of life' (Habermas, 1993: 123). Habermas says that power and law - once fused together in pre-modernity in substantial reason under a transcendental authority - has become separated and disconnected in modernity. For

180

Habermas, modernity is characterised by the absence or dissolution of a single transcendental guarantor or a monolithic authority that guarantees the legitimacy of power and law. Like the post-structuralists, Habermas recognises that the fissure between power and law leads to the problem of 'legitimacy', understood as the tension between normative 'facticity and validity' (Habermas, 1996a: 146). Facticity refers to the *de facto* presence of norms in our social world, whereas validity refers to their rational and social acceptance (Rehg, 1996a: xvi). As I said in the previous chapter, for Connolly, Nietzsche's claim that 'God is dead' sums up this predicament (Nietzsche, 1974: 125). This signifies the disappearance of the belief that moral norms are given to individuals by a divine power or authority. According to Nietzsche, all moral norms are human constructs which as a 'system of ends' seeks to control and dominate individual conduct and to keep communities bound together (Nietzsche, 1994: 55, 163). From Nietzsche's perspective, there is no ultimate truth, morality, or law. On the contrary, these phenomena are always expressions of the 'will to power' (Nietzsche, 1994: 55; 1968). For Connolly, this insight leads to an emphasis on ethical 'techniques of the 'self'. It is Connolly's hope that individuals will fashion their own ethical sensibility.

Again, as I have said, Habermas acknowledges Nietzsche's radical critique of morality, which would reduce all claims to legitimacy, authority, and validity, to expressions of power. However, there is a considerable difference between the way in which Habermas and the post-Nietzscheans theorise the predicament of pluralism. Like Hegel, Habermas understands the modern subject as being more cognitively advanced in relation to pre-modern subjects (Giddens, 1985: 100). He says that the modern subject is able to reflect upon his/her decisions and actions and give 'rational' justification for them (Habermas, 1987b: 7). As I have said, according to Habermas, modernity can 'stabilise itself' through 'the only authority remaining that of reason' (Habermas, 2001b: 132-3). From Habermas's perspective, the type of reason borne out of the Enlightenment marks a significant achievement in history, because modern subjects can put aside

the claims of tradition, custom, and habit in favour of an approach which does not accept anything as self evident except in the 'light of good reason' (Habermas, 2001b: 133). For Habermas, the self-reflexive capacities of the modern subject have the potential for stabilising and legitimating modern society without appeal to a divine authority or a substantive notion of the good.

Habermas is not an epistemological perspectivist, but an epistemological 'fallibilist'. He accepts there is no 'objective' morality or belief. Nonetheless, he puts forward a pragmatic or consensus theory of (moral) truth. Following the pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce, Habermas claims that 'truth' is dependent upon the ability of a subject to make claims to truth and to be able to defend those claims against possible objections in order to 'gain the rationally motivated agreement of the interpenetration of the community as a whole' (Habermas, 1996a: 14). The implications of this are that epistemological and moral claims are necessarily 'fallible' because they can always be revised or discarded through a process of rational debate and deliberation. Consequently, Habermas claims that an inherent tension inhabits both law and political power. Habermas says that the facticity of law manifests as the tension between the legality (or positivity) of law (backed by the threat of coercion) and the legitimacy claimed by it through its rational acceptance (Habermas, 1996a: 38-39). With regard to political power the tension manifests between the legitimacy of state power (backed by the instruments of force) and the authority claimed by it through legitimate law (Habermas, 1996a: 38, 136). In other words, whilst Habermas accepts that we can never know the real world or that of justice and the moral law, he is unconvinced by Nietzsche's claim that we cannot draw a distinction between power, authority, and law. By way of contrast, Habermas believes that through 'discourse', which is a 'reflective form of communicative action' individuals can come together as a community of language users to reach collective agreement about what they regard as valid norms and legitimate them through a rational democratic procedure that reflects the inclusive and reciprocal nature of the

presuppositions of argumentation implicit in the fact of speech (Habermas, 1990: 91, 201).

Habermas calls this distinctive approach to morality, ethics, and politics 'discourse ethics'. His

approach has had a significant impact on the theory of 'deliberative democracy' associated with

writers such as Seyla Benhabib and Joshua Cohen (Benhabib, 1996: Cohen, 1996; Dryzek, 1990;

Bonham, 1995).

## Discourse Ethics

In this section I provide an account of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics and I explain how

Habermas distinguishes his notions of morality and ethics from Hegel's use of these terms. The

theory of discourse ethics represents Habermas's attempt to politically address the 'pluralism of

ultimate value orientations' characteristic of modernity (Habermas, 1990: 76). This theory is part

of the wider theoretical project of communicative action and tied to Habermas's aspiration to

'complete the unfinished project of modernity', that is, to bring together the respective gains of

the different value spheres so that they can inform rational individuals in their daily practices. The

central question that motivates Habermas's theory of discourse ethics is as follows: given the

irreducible pluralism of modern life, by what criteria can the validity of moral norms be judged?

According to Habermas, discourse ethics sets up an 'impartial procedure' which is 'designed to

guarantee the impartiality of the process of judging' (Habermas, 1990: 122). In other words,

discourse ethics offers a procedural mechanism by which the different value orientations of

modern life can be mediated 'impartially' (Habermas, 1990: 122). It is the application of

Habermas theory of communicative action to questions of what is 'just and right' (McCarthy,

1990: vii). Discourse ethics aims 'to reconstruct the moral point of view' understood as *the*

'perspective from which competing normative claims can be fairly and impartially adjudicated'

(McCarthy, 1990, viii). According to Habermas, justification becomes a key component of any

moral theory under conditions of modernity (Habermas, 1990: 44). When modern subjects seek to

justify their actions and values they must provide good reasons to say why others ought to accept

them. In Habermas's view, the question of validity should be understood epistemologically, and (because this theory rests upon a consensus and pragmatic theory of truth) a moral norm is considered valid when it has gained the rationally motivated agreement of the community as a whole (Habermas, 1990: 13; 1996a: 14).

According to Habermas, 'discourse ethics' is a philosophical justification of 'ethics', which can be elucidated in terms of a 'formal pragmatic analysis of communication' (Habermas, 1990: 44). Discourse ethics takes its formalism and proceduralism from Kant's approach to morality. This is an explicit critique of the 'moral sceptics' and 'relativists' such as Nietzsche (Habermas, 1990: 44). However, Habermas's theory is formulated as an alternative to other cognitive approaches that derive their moral theory from Kant. For example, Habermas considers Karl-Otto Apel's Kantian inspired approach to be one of the most promising because Apel attempts to ground a cognitive moral theory in an ethics of communication (Habermas, 1990: 44, 195; Apel, 1975; 1999). Nevertheless, Habermas differs from Apel in important respects, which I will explain later in the thesis. Habermas believes that through recognition of the validity claims implicit in speech acts individuals can arrive at a position of agreement regarding the norms that ought to govern their interaction. According to Habermas, individual subjects inevitably make validity claims whenever they use *regulative* speech acts to make normative statements that are intrinsically linked to their inter-subjective social world (Habermas, 1990: 61). He says that every time a communicative actor utters something about his/her social world - or what he calls 'legitimately ordered interpersonal relations' - the normative validity claim of rightness is raised (Habermas, 1990: 59). The claim to rightness is raised in all communicative speech acts that refer to the 'facticity' of social norms because these speech acts regulate norms which exist in the world and which are discursively redeemable (Habermas, 1990: 58-59; 1979: 28). In other words, the claim to normative rightness could in principle be accepted as appropriate, rejected as inappropriate, criticised, or contested by a community of language users (Habermas, 1990: 94).

For Habermas, the rightness or appropriateness of an action/norm signifies the acceptance of that norm by the community.

According to Habermas, normative statements or moral judgements are justified once their legitimacy has been decided and approved by all those affected under conditions of a 'rationally motivated' consensus (Habermas, 1990: 134; 1996a: 14). Indeed, under these conditions, the norms take on the character of a truth claim. Habermas claims that normative or regulative statements do not pertain to truth in the same sense as descriptive statements (Habermas, 1990: 61, 62, 64). Descriptive statements refer to the existence of states of affairs in the world, which can deemed to be true or false (Habermas, 1990: 61). However, Habermas argues that 'normative rightness must be regarded as a claim to validity that is *analogous* to a truth claim' (Habermas, 1990: 197). According to Habermas, this is because once a norm is deemed valid it 'ought' to be treated as true in the same manner as a propositional truth claim (Habermas, 1990: 65, 66, 197). In other words, the question of the appropriateness of moral norms takes on an epistemological status.

Habermas recognises that norms do not go unchallenged in the day to day practices of a social interaction and their acceptance is dependent upon the continual re-establishment of legitimately ordered interpersonal relationships (Habermas, 1990: 61). In other words, the legitimacy of a given norm is stabilised through the continued enactment of that norm by social actors who follow the norm and who engage in practices or actions that fulfil that norm. Habermas distinguishes between the social recognition of a social norm and its worthiness to be recognised (Habermas, 1990: 61). He makes the case that just because the validity of a norm is redeemable does not mean that it will meet with social approval, recognition, or have lasting endurance (Habermas, 1990: 61). For Habermas, the endurance of a norm depends upon both a continual enactment of the norm and good reasons or justifications for the obedience of individuals to the norm in question (Habermas, 1990: 61-62). In other words, Habermas believes

that in modern societies, norms must be justified because he says 'there is no mass loyalty without legitimacy' (Habermas, 1990: 62). Later I show that this leads Habermas to endorse the democratic notion of active participation, so that citizens can take an active role in legitimating norms and avoid paternalistic authorities enforcing norms and laws upon them.

Habermas says he does not claim to provide a philosophical justification for particular moral truth claims because this would in effect mean attributing those norms with a universal status (Habermas, 1990: 63). By way of contrast, discourse ethics provides a hypothetical procedure of 'practical discourse' where linguistically competent subjects could come together to rationally decide upon the validity of competing norms by expressing a 'common will' to identify those legitimate norms that ought to govern their conduct (Habermas, 1990: 14, 62, 67). Habermas claims that his project of discourse ethics provides the ideal conditions by which norms can be decided and agreed upon (Habermas, 1990: 67). Under these conditions, legitimacy follows from the terms of the rational and inclusive procedure in which the norms have been agreed. This is despite the fact that an agreed upon norm may be contrary to an individual participant's own expectations. According to Habermas, validity 'must be understood in epistemic terms as "validity" proven for us' as a rational community of language users (Habermas, 1996a: 14). This is because no individual has direct access to 'un-interpreted conditions of "validity"' (Habermas, 1996a: 14).

As Habermas sees it, there is 'ultimately only one criterion by which beliefs can be judged valid, and that is they are based on agreement reached by argumentation' (Habermas, 1990: 14). Habermas defines argumentation as 'that type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments' (Habermas, 1984a: 18). For Habermas, the 'ideal' process of argumentation is presided over by the presuppositions of argumentation outlined in Chapter Three. Habermas says that every valid norm would have to fulfil the following condition: 'all affected [by this norm] can accept the

186

consequences and the side effects its *general* observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of *everyone's* interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation)' (Habermas, 1990: 65). Habermas calls this condition the 'principle of universalisation', which we can see shares a close proximity to Kant's categorical imperative principle. For Kant, the categorical imperative is to 'act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law' (Kant, 1999: 31). However, although clear similarities exist between Habermas's 'discourse ethics' and Kant's account of the moral law, there are also important differences between them. These differences are summed up in the following citation. Habermas says that in his theory 'rather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others for the purposes of discursively testing its universality' (Habermas, 1990: 67). According to Habermas, for Kant a maxim refers to 'situational rules of action by which an individual customary regulates his actions' (Habermas, 1993: 7). Habermas says that in his theory 'the emphasis shifts from what each rational individual can will without contradiction to be a general law, to what all can will in agreement to be a universal norm' (Habermas, 1990: 67). In other words, Habermas provides an inherently inter-subjective moral procedure, which is 'conceived as to exclude as invalid any norm that could not meet with the qualified assent of all who are or might be affected by it' (Habermas, 1990: 63). Habermas says that this procedure is 'just' because the norm has been agreed upon by all those affected under conditions of inclusion and reciprocity, and it does not privilege a substantive conception of the good (Habermas, 1990: 14, 180). Indeed, Habermas's concern is to move 'beyond the perspective of a particular culture' and to defend an impartial procedure, which establishes the rules and conditions that in principle ought to regulate the space through which legitimate norms can be agreed upon (Habermas, 1990: 197).

Discourse ethics provides a clear 'discourse principle' for establishing the validity of norms. The discourse principle is that: 'only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity *as participants in a practical discourse*' (Habermas, 1990: 66). As Habermas sees it, the procedure is 'impartial' and 'just' because all those affected by a given norm establish its validity under conditions of reciprocity. In a manner reminiscent of Rousseau he says 'agreement of this kind expresses a *common will*' of all the participants (Habermas, 1990: 67). Habermas acknowledges that the principle of discourse ethics 'already *presupposes* that we *can* justify our choice of a norm' (Habermas, 1990: 66). In other words, Habermas's theory of discourse ethics is grounded upon his assumptions about the morally competent communicative subject, who assumes the presence of necessary presuppositions of argumentation as implicit in communicative speech acts. These non-negotiable presuppositions regulate speech utterances whenever communicative subjects aim to 'coordinate their plans of action consensually' (Habermas, 1990: 58). Habermas says that the 'discourse rules are merely the *form* in which we present the implicitly adopted and intuitively known pragmatic presuppositions of a special type of speech, presuppositions that are adopted implicitly and known intuitively' by the modern subject (Habermas, 1990: 91).

## Kant and Hegel

Habermas clearly identifies himself with those philosophers who derive their moral theory from the Kantian tradition. He aims to reconstruct the conditions under which an 'impartial' judgement can be made on the basis of reason concerning practical questions (Habermas, 1990: 120, 195, 199, 203). Indeed, in the essay entitled 'Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action' Habermas claims that – like Kant's moral theory - discourse ethics is a formal, universal, and cognitive moral theory (Habermas, 1990: 120-121,195-199). However, in another essay entitled 'Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?' Habermas

delineates some important differences between his discourse ethics and the practical rationality of Kant's moral theory. Indeed, Habermas recognises that Hegel levelled many important criticisms against Kant's moral philosophy (Habermas, 1990: 195). He singles out four of the 'most trenchant' criticisms (Habermas, 1990: 195). These are as follows: Hegel's objection to the formalism of Kant's moral theory, to the abstract universalism, to the impotence of the 'mere ought', and to the terror of pure conviction in Kantian morality (Habermas, 1990: 195-6). Habermas is keen to demonstrate that his theory of discourse ethics circumvents Hegel's critique of Kant. I will make the case that as Habermas modifies the Kantianism in his 'moral' theory to address Hegel's critique, his discourse ethics loses it distinctive 'Kantian' character and instead adopts many aspects of Hegelian ethics. Indeed, Habermas says discourse ethics 'picks up the basic Hegelian aspiration to redeem it with Kantain means' (Habermas, 1990: 201). First, however, this requires a brief discussion of the distinction between morality and ethics and a consideration of Hegel's reflections on 'ethical life'.

It is important to clarify the precise way in which Habermas understands the terms 'ethics' and 'morality'. Like Hegel, in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Habermas draws a distinction between 'morals' (*Moralität*) and 'ethics' (*Sittlichkeit*) (Hegel, 1991: 135-142). However, these terms do not have exactly the same meaning for Habermas and Hegel (Hegel, 1991: 135-142; Habermas, 1993: 5-6). For Hegel, the Kantian conception of 'morality' is one of two spheres of abstraction - the other is 'abstract right' - whose truth is attained in *ethical life* (Hegel, 1991: 131, 135, 189). In the realm of 'abstract right' persons are supposedly related as moral subjects who are responsible for their actions as a matter of individual subjective conscience. According to Hegel, the realm of 'ethics' or 'ethical life' is a concrete context, such as a tradition or a set of customs, in which the subject considers the appropriateness of his/her actions (Hegel, 1991: 200). From a Hegelian perspective what is significant is the way in which individual conduct is embedded in ethical life (Hegel, 1991: 197-8).

Habermas claims that 'discourse ethics' is a 'moral theory' and this is potentially confusing (Habermas, 1990: 120). Discourse ethics presents itself as concerned with 'ethics', however, this is not strictly correct. Indeed, Habermas has said that discourse ethics is specifically concerned with what he calls 'morality' and he has explicitly identifies himself with the abstract 'universalism' of 'Kantian moral' philosophy rather than the 'concrete particularism' characteristic of Aristotelian ethics or substantive notions of the good (Habermas, 1990: 195-215). Habermas says that unlike Hegel his distinction between morality and ethics does not 'incur the cost of a historical dissolution of morality into ethical life' (Habermas, 1993: 1). Habermas is aware of the confusion generated by his use of the term 'discourse ethics' which is in fact primarily concerned with questions of 'morality' and right. In the preface to *Justification and Application*, Habermas acknowledges that 'it would be more accurate to speak of a "discourse theory of morality", but he claims that he 'retains the term "discourse ethics"' because it has become 'established usage' (Habermas, 1993: vii). However, I will make the case that 'discourse ethics' is a more appropriate term and not just because it has become established usage. In fact, this is the more appropriate term because of the strong element of Hegelianism in Habermas's work. Indeed, I argue that Habermas's notion of 'morality' appears to have more in common with Hegel's notion of 'ethical life' than with Kant's 'moral law' of the categorical imperative.

According to Habermas, 'morality' and 'ethics' both fall under the terms of practical reason (Habermas, 1990: 2). Practical reason concerns itself with the question 'what ought I to do?' (Habermas, 1990: 2). However, he says that different tasks are required of practical reason when the question depends on whether we are concerned with the purposive, the good, or the just (Habermas, 1993: 2). Discourse ethics is primarily a moral theory, which identifies the conditions for impartially and for fairly adjudicating the rightness or wrongness of regulative norms of conduct. From Habermas's perspective, moral questions have a universal aspect. However, this is different from Kant's understanding of 'morality' because - unlike in Kant's theory - the subject

is inherently intersubjective. For Habermas, morality designates a universally binding procedure that establishes the 'just' understood in terms of rules that all participants accept and enact in their public affairs (Habermas, 1990: 198, 199; 1993: 10). Unlike Kant's 'moral law' - or the categorical imperative - these norms of conduct are not commands, standards, or criteria which the individual arrives at introspectively through rising above his/her will to legislate his/her own personal conduct on a maxim that 'would be consistent with a universal law' (Kant, 1999: 42; Habermas, 1993:7). From Habermas's perspective, the validity or invalidity of a norm is decided under the conditions specified by discourse ethics: the rightness of the moral norm is determined by its acceptance by all those affected under 'ideal' conditions of communication. He says the moral realm is where we break with our egocentric perspective though discourse to arrive at agreement regarding a norm that all should follow in informing their conduct (Habermas, 1993: 12; 1996a: 92). In other words, Habermas's use and understanding of the term 'morality' is inseparable from Hegel's concept of the *'Sittlichkeit'* or ethical life. For Hegel, ethical life *'Sittlichkeit'* is not 'abstract' morality, rather it is a 'general mode of behaviour' that appears as 'custom' and is embedded in concrete historical practices (Hegel, 1991: 195). For Hegel, ethical life refers to the rules that govern the conduct of communally situated individuals (for example in the family and in civil society) (Hegel, 1991: 195). According to Hegel, it is in the orchestration of ethical life as a normative order that freedom is actualised (Hegel, 1991: 196). Indeed, Habermas's understanding of morality resembles Hegel's notion of ethical life: it is a set of discursively articulated rules that govern the conduct and behaviour of the ethical community as a whole, rather than a decision arrived at by an individual though introspection. In fact, Habermas's notion of 'morality' appears to operate in both a Kantian and Hegelian manner. Habermas's notion of morality is Kantian in the sense that it provides a 'just' procedure for validating regulative norms. However, those rules of conduct are inherently intersubjective and they become embedded in the customary practices of the community, i.e. they are of an intrinsically ethical nature understood in a Hegelian manner as a *'sittlich'* relation (Habermas, 1990: 88).

According to Habermas, 'ethics' or the 'ethical' refers to questions concerned with the 'good' or with the 'good life'. He says that ethical questions are concerned with contextual judgements regarding our particular communities and they do not call 'for a complete break with our egocentric perspective; in each instance they take their orientation from the *telos* of one's own life' (Habermas, 1993: 6). In other words, in the case of ethical questions 'what is being asked is whether a maxim is good *for me*' in my particular context (Habermas, 1993: 7). Habermas recognises that the 'me' is not an isolated 'me' with an identity in and of itself. Rather, this 'me' is an identity which 'unfolds against a background of traditions' shared with other people which is embedded in a socio-historical cultural form of life (Habermas, 1993: 6). This is like the Aristotlean concept of ethics. In fact, Aristotle's concept of 'ethics' does not differentiate between 'morality' and 'ethics' (Rasmussen, 1990: 65). This is because ancient Greek culture required 'no meta-ethical principles, no principle of universalisation, and no principle of equality in order for virtue to be achieved' (Rasmussen, 1990: 65). However, from Habermas's perspective, in modern pluralist society individuals cannot pursue their ethics or their own particular conceptions of the good life without the mediation of a common space governed by a minimal set of rules or norms of conduct that individuals must respect in pursuing their particular conception of the good.

Following Kant, Habermas says that discourse ethics is a 'de-ontological' and 'formalistic' moral theory (Habermas, 1990: 121, 196-7). A moral theory is described as deontological if it maintains that certain principles, rules, norms, or actions must be adhered to as a duty regardless of their consequences (Habermas, 1990: 196). In *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls - another prominent Kantian - distinguishes between deontological and teleological ethics, concerned respectively with theories of the right and the good (Rawls, 1971: 30). Deontological principles or rules do not presuppose a particular conception of the good life. Rawls defines a deontological theory as 'one that does not specify the good independently from the right, or does

not interpret the right as maximising the good' (Rawls, 1971: 30). In contrast, teleological ethics define a particular conception of the good life, or they define the 'good' independently from the right: the right is defined as that which maximises the good (Rawls, 1971: 24). Deontological ethics are also contrasted to utilitarian ethics and consequentialist ethics. Deontologists seek to treat things as ends and never as means, whereas, utilitarians aim to maximise end goals, and consequentialists are also concerned with the effect of actions. For Habermas, discourse ethics is a deontological moral theory that privileges the right or the 'just' - understood in terms of procedural rules - over any particular conception of the good life (Habermas, 1990: 120, 210; 1993: 2). These rules are 'formal' because they are concerned with questions of 'justice' rather than substantive guidelines or moral norms (Habermas, 1990: 207). They provide a 'just' procedure for practical discourse. Throughout his work Habermas has maintained that he is concerned with procedural conceptions of justice, which appears to place him firmly within the Kantian tradition and in marked contrast to Aristotelians and Hegelians communitarians who - in different ways - assert that moral theory should primarily be concerned with substantive questions of the common good (Aristotle, 1976; Hegel, 1991).

Hegel's critique of the formalism of Kant's categorical imperative is that it requires 'the moral agent to abstract [completely] from [his/her] concrete duties and maxims' and therefore leads to tautological or meaningless statements about morality (Habermas, 1990: 194; Hegel, 1975: 76-77). According to Hegel, the content of the procedural maxim remains empty and the 'universality conferred upon' the moral agent is merely an analytical one (Hegel, 1975: 76). Indeed, for Hegel, any maxim can take the form of a universal law. He says 'there is nothing whatever which cannot in this way be made into a moral law' (Hegel, 1975: 77). Habermas says that his theory of discourse ethics does not lay itself open to Hegel's charge of empty formalism. Defending his account of discourse ethics, Habermas says that Hegel was 'wrong' to suggest that *any* formal or procedural principle necessarily makes only tautological or meaningless statements about morality (Habermas, 1990: 204). He says that his formal moral principle postulates the

'employment of a substantive moral point of view' (Habermas, 1990: 204). Indeed, Habermas says that the issue is not about the universal nature of moral norms, but rather 'whether we can all will that a contested norm gain binding force' under given circumstances (Habermas, 1990: 204). Habermas acknowledges the force of Hegel's charge of formalism and he says that a 'procedural ethic must distinguish between the structure [or the justification] and the content [or the application] of the moral judgement' (Habermas, 1990: 204). Habermas also acknowledges Hegel's point that universal concepts cannot be formulated independently of any vision of the good life (Habermas, 1990: 205). Going beyond Kant, he says that 'discourse ethics extends the deontological concept of justice by including in it those structural aspects of the common good life that can be distinguished from the concrete totality of specific forms of life' (Habermas, 1990: 203).

Following Hegel's critique of Kant, Habermas acknowledges that a rigid separation between the good and the right is difficult to sustain. This distinction has been debated by Habermas and Rawls in a recent issue of *The Journal of Philosophy* (Rawls, 1995; Habermas, 1995). They both conclude by accepting that procedural and substantive conceptions of justice presuppose each another, that they cannot be easily separated into distinct categories because they are based on an inter-dependent relationship (Rawls, 1995; Habermas, 1995). This is no doubt true, however it is also accurate to say that a theorist can emphasise or privilege procedure or ethical substance and Habermas clearly privileges procedure. However, it is important to acknowledge that Habermas understands procedure as a 'practical discourse', which he says is not an abstract formula, but rather 'public affair, practised intersubjectively by all involved' (Habermas, 1990: 198). Furthermore, I have already demonstrated that Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation (i.e. the procedure that governs Habermas's theory of discourse ethics) are described as substantive *ethical* norms (Habermas, 1990: 88, 199). However, Habermas simply denies that they are tied to a particular culture because they are supposedly implicit in all human interaction (Habermas, 1990: 121).

194

Habermas claims that discourse ethics is a universalistic moral theory. According to Habermas, discourse ethics 'rejects the basic assumptions of *ethical relativism*, which holds that the validity of moral judgements is measured solely by the standards of rationality or value' particular to one culture or 'form of life' (Habermas, 1990: 121). In other words, for Habermas discourse ethics supersedes local conventions and customs by favouring general principles and norms that are not tied to any particular historical context. He says that 'anyone who takes part in argumentation of any sort is in principle able to reach the same judgements on the acceptability of norms' (Habermas, 1990: 121). Habermas is keen to make the case that his moral principle is not simply a reflection his own prejudices, that is, an 'adult, white, well educated' western male (Habermas, 1990: 197). The claim to universality is central to Habermas's theory of discourse ethics (Habermas, 1990: 121). Indeed, Habermas claims that the presuppositions of argumentation (with their implications of symmetry and reciprocity) are inherent in the individual's capacity to 'reason' but it is also important that they make use of them in everyday situations in their speech acts, that they become embedded in their concrete communicative action (Hegel, 1991: 70, 71, 73, 111; Habermas, 1990: 203; Knowles, 2002: 163).

Hegel's objection to the abstract universalism of Kantian ethics is that the categorical imperative separates the universal moral law from every concrete particularity. According to Hegel, Kant's universal moral principle remains external to the particular and is therefore insensitive to the specific context of individual actions (Hegel, 1975: 79; Habermas, 1990: 195). Hegel's critique is that Kant's proceduralism is of a 'monological' form that focuses on questions of '*justification*' and leaves 'questions of *application* unanswered' (Habermas, 1990: 206). Habermas agrees with Hegel that Kant's theory suffers from an 'abstract universalism' (Habermas, 1990: 206). However, he says that discourse ethics avoids this critique because 'it' breaks with 'Kant's idealism and monologism' (Habermas, 1990: 206). For Habermas, discourse ethics 'replaces the [monological] categorical imperative' with a dialogical 'procedure of moral

argumentation' that submits every norm to the test of participants in a practical context (Habermas, 1990: 197). Furthermore, the presuppositions of argumentation that govern the practical discourse are 'substantive in kind' (Habermas 1990:199). Indeed, as Habermas says discourse ethics puts forth the following thesis: 'anyone who seriously undertakes to participate in argumentation implicitly accepts by that very undertaking general presuppositions of argumentation that have a normative content' (Habermas, 1990: 197-8). Conceding to Hegel, Habermas says that 'any universalistic morality is dependant upon a form of life that *meets* it *halfway*' (Habermas, 1990: 207). For Habermas, every 'morality revolves around [the notions of] equality of respect, solidarity, and the common good' which can be 'reduced to the relations of symmetry and reciprocity presupposed in [concrete instances of] communicative action' (Habermas, 1990: 201). In other words, Habermas says 'the common core of all kinds of morality can be traced back to the reciprocal imputations and shared presuppositions that individuals make when they seek understanding in every day situations' (Habermas, 1990: 201). In addition, Habermas says that 'moral universalism is a *historical result*' (Habermas, 1990: 208). Indeed, he says that the last couple of centuries have 'witnessed the emergence' of '*directed* trends towards the realisation of basic rights', which he says 'testifies to the "existence of reason" embedded in the everyday lifeworld of modern reflexive subjects (Habermas, 1990: 208). In other words, Habermas agrees with Hegel that modernity is marked by a reflexive form of reasoning and the emergence of moral universalism. However, he sees moral universalism as the embodiment of general 'principles in concrete forms of life' that have taken place through the efforts of 'socio-political' movements, rather than through the unfolding of the 'absolute spirit' (Habermas, 1990: 208).

Furthermore, discourse ethics remains close to the Kantian tradition in the fact that it is a cognitivist moral theory. For Habermas, a cognitive ethics must be able to answer the question about how to justify normative statements or moral judgements through processes of 'reasoning' (Habermas, 1990: 197). According to Habermas, the capacity for making moral judgements

presupposes that the individual involved possesses the cognitive capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. For Habermas, moral judgements are cognitive because they are decided on the basis of reason and they have more than just an expressive or emotional content (Habermas, 1990: 120). In Chapter Three I demonstrated that Habermas draws upon Kohlberg's moral developmental psychology, to put forward a conception of the subject as a competent speaker with certain moral capacities that have been acquired through ontogenetic and phylogenetic learning processes. In other words, Habermas's moral cognitive subject can distinguish between right and wrong. Nevertheless, he says that his 'cognitive' approach is distinct from Kant's categorical imperative. As Habermas puts it, for Kant 'autonomy was conceived as freedom under self-given laws' (Habermas, 1990: 207). For Kant, the rational individual justifies the validity of his/her conduct through a process of introspection, to decide whether s/he could will the conduct to become a universal law (Habermas, 1990: 197). According to Habermas, Kant's moral principle separates 'duty from inclination' and 'reason from sense experience' and therefore lacks 'practical import' (Habermas, 1990: 207). He says that this is not the case for his moral principle because discourse ethics conceives the idea of 'autonomy as [inherently] intersubjective' (Habermas, 1990: 207). Habermas accepts Hegel's critique that the categorical imperative establishes 'a strict separation of the "is" from the "ought"' and fails to address 'how moral insights can be realized in practice' (Habermas, 1990: 196).

Another Hegelian strain in Habermas's discourse ethics is that he accepts that the norms produced through practical discourse are not universal (Habermas, 1990: 99, 207). For Habermas, legitimised norms (like descriptive truth claims) are subject to the principle of falsification and are therefore always potentially subject to contestation, revision, and refinement through practical discourse. Habermas agrees with Hegel that 'unless discourse ethics is undergirded by the thrust of motives and by socially accepted institutions, the moral insights it offers remain ineffective in practice' (Habermas, 1990: 207). He also agrees that the principle of discourse ethics - that is the

principle of inclusion and reciprocity - 'should be transformable into the concrete duties of everyday life' (Habermas, 1990: 207).

Finally, Habermas addresses Hegel's critique of the terror of pure conviction which is arguably implicit in Kantian moral formation (Habermas, 1990: 196). Habermas refers to Hegel's discussion of the Jacobin 'moral zeal' in the *Philosophy of Spirit* where Hegel argues that morality can be used as a justification to bring 'the good into actual existence by the sacrifice of individuality' (Hegel, 1977: 233; Habermas, 1990: 212). Habermas maintains that neither Kantian moral theory nor discourse ethics is guilty of justifying totalitarian ways of thinking (Habermas, 1990: 208). Habermas attributes this instead to the 'philosophers of history, Marxists, and others' who 'delegate revolutionary action to an avant-garde with proxy functions' to realise and represent the total interests of society without making them accountable for their actions (Habermas, 1990: 208-9). The revolutionary avant-garde conceives of society as an object to be conquered by their particular subjective action (Habermas, 1990: 209). Habermas says 'the maxim that the end justifies' the means is incompatible with his notion of 'moral universalism' because the 'only higher level' authority that his theory acknowledges is that of democratically organised 'public spheres' (Habermas, 1990: 208-9). As Mark Warren puts it, for Habermas the public sphere is 'the definitive institution of democracy' (Warren, 1995: 171).

Hegel clearly draws upon ancient Greek ethics. Nonetheless, he also seeks to address the principles of modern subjectivity and of individualism. Indeed, Hegel's notion of 'ethical life' (*Sittlichkeit*) is seen as a 'distinctive contribution to [modern] moral philosophy' (Knowles, 2002: 221). Habermas says that 'Hegel now calls a social condition in which all members receive their due and satisfy their needs without injuring the interests of others, "ethical" [*sittlich*]' (Habermas, 1987b: 28). Like Hegel, Habermas recognises the fundamental pluralism inherent in modern society that arose as a result of the principle of subjectivity/individuality. For Hegel, the principle of modern individualism finds expression in the particularity of characteristic of the institutions

198

of 'civil society'. According to Hegel, the realm of civil society is a modern achievement, which provides the individual subject with the opportunity to pursue this/her private self-interests (Hegel, 1991: 220-239). However, this individualistic principle of civil society is only one moment in the 'whole' of modern ethical life. The full actualisation of freedom can only be realised through citizenship and the institutions of the constitutional-monarchical state.

Habermas applauds Hegel for his recognition of the irreducible pluralism characteristic of modern civil society and for his acknowledgement of the importance of the principle of subjectivity in modern politics (Habermas, 1987b: 16-19). Habermas also recognises that Hegel attempts to provide a unifying mechanism to counter the potentially destructive implications of the pursuit of self-interest. However, in Habermas's view, Hegel's attempt to unify the self-contradictions of modernity in the notion of the constitutional monarchical state is unsatisfactory (Habermas, 1987b: 38, 41). In Habermas's view, the mature Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right* holds onto 'the kind of ethical totality that he first dealt with [in his early works] under the name of popular religion' (Habermas, 1987b: 38). According to Habermas, the young Hegel's unifying principle of ethical life 'did not grow from the soil of modernity but was borrowed from the *idealised* past of the primitive Christian communal religiosity and the Greek polis' (Habermas, 1987b: 30). According to Habermas, Hegel failed to take another option that was available to him in his earlier Jena works, which was to explicate 'the ethical totality as a communicative reason embodied in inter-subjective life' (Habermas, 1987b: 38). As Habermas sees it, if Hegel had followed this earlier line of inquiry then 'a democratic self-organisation of society could have taken the place of the monarchical apparatus of the state' put forward in the *Philosophy of the Right* (Hegel, 1991: 304, 339). According to Habermas, Hegel took his inspiration from the state apparatus that emerged 'after the July Revolution in Paris [1830] and the Electoral Reform Bill of the English Parliament' (Habermas, 1987b: 41). For Habermas, Hegel attempts to legitimate society with the apparatus of a strong state rather than with recourse to democratic mechanisms of

self-legislation. Later in this chapter, I show that as an alternative to Hegel's unity through the 'monarchical' state, Habermas turns to Rousseau and to the idea of a democratic 'general will' as the basis of legitimacy understood as 'the constant will of all the members of the State' (Rousseau, 1973: 193, 250).


## 'Morality' as political norms?

I have argued that Habermas uses the term 'morality' to refer to the principles that constitute the civil norms of a political community and its legitimacy and not to the principles that regulate individual choice and actions. In this section, I make the case that when Habermas uses the terms 'morality', 'moral norms' or 'moral point of view' these should also be understood synonymously with *civil* norms. It is important to establish an alternative reading of Habermas's notion of morality to the one championed by commentator's such as Benhabib. According to Benhabib, the term 'moral' in discourse ethics 'if interpreted correctly could help our moral intuitions' (Benhabib, 1990: 346-7). For Habermas, on the contrary the term moral does not refer to 'concrete morals or ethical judgements'; in his theory this is left to the individual to decide for him/herself (McCarthy, 1990: xi). For Habermas, discourse ethics 'aims to reconstruct the moral [read ethico-political] point of view from which competing normative claims can be fairly and impartially adjudicated' (McCarthy, 1990: viii).

I have already shown that Habermas's notion of morality resonates with Hegel's notion of a *sittlich* or 'ethical life' rather than Kant's notion of the 'moral law'. In order to establish a link between Habermas's conception of 'morality' and 'politics' it is important to clarify how he understands the term 'politics'. The question of politics and of political relations had a presence in Habermas's work since his earliest writings. Indeed, he was concerned with these questions in his doctoral thesis: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* published in 1962, and he returned to them in his subsequent book *Theory and Practice,* published in 1963. The former

work explores the emergence and decline of the eighteenth and century liberal 'public sphere' understood as a space between 'the state and civil society in which public discussion of general interests was conducted' (McCarthy, 1989: xi). The theme of politics is implicit in the two volumes of *The Theory of Communicative Action* and his work on 'Universal Pragmatics'. However, it has once again become explicit in his work on discourse ethics and especially in his most recent works *Between Facts and Norm* and *The Inclusion of the Other*. In 'The Classical Doctrine of Politics' (1963) Habermas distinguished between modern politics and what he called 'the old doctrine of politics' characteristic of the Greek city-state as exemplified in the writings of Aristotle. According to Habermas, 'the old doctrine of politics' was characterised by three elements (Habermas, 1974: 42). First, the classical doctrine of politics is primarily concerned with the doctrine of the good life, understood as the continuation of ethics in the city-state (Habermas, 1974: 42). Habermas maintains that Aristotle saw 'no opposition between the constitution formulated in the *nomoi* [or the laws] and the ethos of civil life' where 'the ethical character of action was not separable from custom or law' (Habermas, 1974: 42). Politics, in this sense allows the citizen body as a whole to realise the true nature of *eudemonia* or the good life. Second, the old doctrine of politics refers exclusively to *praxis* not *techne* understood as two distinct forms of knowledge (Habermas, 1974: 42). *Praxis* was directed towards the formation and cultivation of character, whereas, *techne* refers to the skilful production or mastery of artefacts (Habermas, 1974: 42). Finally, Habermas says that for Aristotle 'politics and practical philosophy cannot be compared in its claim for knowledge with a rigorous science, with the apodiecitic *episteme*' (Habermas, 1974: 42). Practical philosophy is therefore concerned with *phronesis*, a prudent understanding of particular circumstances. According to Habermas, 'Aristotle is of the conviction that a *polis* which is truly worthy of the name ... must be concerned with the virtue of its citizens'' (Habermas, 1974: 47). Otherwise the community would be reduced to a '*koinonia symmachia*' or a mere association (Habermas, 1974: 47). Habermas says that in 'Roman Law the latter is called *societas*, meaning an alliance between citizens' which is

201

'still used today in the sense of a "society" or "company"' (Habermas, 1974: 47). Later in this chapter I show that Habermas's notion of the political community must be understood as *'societas'* , that is, as an alliance between citizens characterised by certain rules of conduct and not a community based upon a substantive notion of the good.

According to Habermas, the classical politics was finally replaced in the age of the Enlightenment with the establishment of 'political science' based upon 'the model of the modern experimental sciences' (Habermas, 1974: 41). He says this new science of politics had 'little more than the name in common with old politics' (Habermas, 1974: 41). For Habermas, it was Hobbes who completed the modern scientific approach initiated in Machiavelli's *Prince* and Thomas More's *Utopia* (Machiavelli, 1961; More: 1961). According to Habermas, each in their own way, Machiavelli and More recognised the need for a distinction between the 'politically enacted constitution and the ethos of civic life within the *polis*' (Habermas, 1974: 54; Machiavelli, 1961; More: 1961). The work of these writers initiated the doctrine of modern politics which is characterised by 'the divorce of politics from ethics' (Habermas, 1974: 54). Taking his inspiration from these theorists Hobbes completely rejected the classical notion of the good life and occupied himself with the question of 'the matter, forme, and power of a commonwealth'. Habermas says that Hobbes was 'no longer doing politics in the manner of Aristotle, but rather [a new scientific] social philosophy' (Habermas, 1974: 41). Habermas says the modern thinkers no longer pondered the question of the good or the exemplary form of life; instead they focused on the actual conditions of survival of the political community (Habermas, 1974: 50). Habermas says that this marks the beginnings of 'modern social philosophy' (Habermas, 1974: 51).

According to Habermas, these defining characteristics of modern politics are implicit in a passage which he cites from Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Hobbes says:

Though nothing can be immortal, which mortals make: yet, if men had the use of reason they pretend to, their Commonwealths might be secured, at least, from perishing by internal diseases....Therefore when they come to be dissolved, not by external violence, but intestine disorder, the fault is not in men, as they are the Matter, but as they are the Makers, and orderers of them (Hobbes cited in Habermas, 1974: 43).

For Habermas, this quote indicates the fundamental differences between classical and modern politics. Habermas sums up these differences as follows. First, in modern politics the state is not concerned with the order of virtuous conduct, but instead it is concerned with order *as such* i.e. establishing the effective conditions of regulation for social interaction (Habermas, 1974: 43). Second, in contrast to the practical philosophy of classical *phronesis*, modern politics is concerned with securing knowledge (*episteme*) of 'the essential nature of justice itself' and to translate this knowledge into rules to be obeyed (Habermas, 1974: 42-43). Third, modern politics is not concerned with the formation of character necessary to lead a virtuous life. Instead, it becomes all the more important to develop a science to work out the conditions in which individuals will behave in a regular or law-like manner (Habermas, 1974: 43). Habermas also distinguishes modern politics from medieval politics. He states that the rules and guidelines about the mode of conduct in medieval political communities were not explicitly laid down. Individuals were socialised into obedient conduct though the family and the church. It is only with modern politics and with the decline of an absolute authority that social co-ordination (in the form of general rules and norms of conduct) becomes necessary. According to Habermas, 'in the domain of social philosophy and politics' the search for these general rules of the political community were 'first introduced implicitly by Hobbes and defined explicitly by Montesquieu' (Habermas, 1989: 53). They have continued in subsequent political philosophies till today.

In the work of Aristotle politics was perceived as a continuation of ethics. For Aristotle, ethics provides the necessary practical conduct for citizens to participate actively in the *polis*. With the shift to modern politics we move from the idea that practical ethics is inextricably linked to politics, to the idea of a separation of ethics from politics. As Habermas puts it, 'what was considered "ethics" since the time of Aristotle now assumed a new, subjectivist sense' (Habermas, 1996: 96). As Habermas see it, in modern politics a distinction between politics, ethics, and morality becomes necessary because of the irreducible pluralism characteristic of modern life (Habermas, 1996: 64). Habermas identifies the problem of co-ordinating the plurality of different conceptions of the good characteristic of modern society as the central concern of 'social philosophy' or 'politics' (but not in the classical understanding of the term, which he sees as inextricably linked with a monistic ethics). For Habermas, the challenge of modern political theory or political philosophy is to identify the universal 'moral' principles that ought to co-ordinate modern pluralist societies. For Habermas, 'the moral principle' or 'moral point of view' is not a comprehensive ethical world view, but nor is it an abstract categorical imperative. Instead, when he uses these terms he refers to the procedures that ensure civil or political conditions that enable individuals to regulate or pursue their own particular conception of the good life (Habermas, 1993: 15-16). In other words, for Habermas, 'morality' is a common form of association - we could say 'ethico-political' bond - between individuals, which lays down the conditions that regulate their individual pursuits of their 'egocentric' point of view (ethics). This is not unlike Mouffe's understanding of the *respublica*. However, for Habermas (unlike Mouffe) the 'moral principle' - i.e. the conditions of civility agreed by individuals in real practical discourses - is underpinned by the conditions of 'symmetry and reciprocity' intrinsic to the universal fact presupposed in communicative action (i.e. the presuppositions of argumentation) (Habermas, 1990: 201).

Agnes Heller and Albrecht Wellmer have both argued that when Habermas uses the term 'moral norms' he actually means political norms (Heller 1984; Wellmer 1990; 1991; Hoffe, 1990; Cohen, 1990: 86; Chambers, 1996: 145). Indeed, Heller claims that Habermas equates 'moral norms with socio-political norms' (Heller, 1984: 9, 4). She maintains that discourse ethics is not concerned to 'enlighten people in an everyday setting about the fundamental character' of their individual choices (Heller, 1984: 20). On the contrary, this is a procedure for validating norms and best viewed as an up-to-date version of 'social contract theories' (Heller, 1984: 12). Benhabib is critical of this interpretation. On her interpretation, 'the basic principle of discourse ethics together with the normative constraints of argumentation can serve as "substantive tests" of our moral intuitions' (Benhabib, 1990: 346-7; 1996).

In the 'Translator's Introduction' to *Justification and Application*, Ciaran Cronin argues that under conditions of modernity the 'ancient understanding' of ethics i.e. 'the issues of how one should live becomes 'essentially an *individual* problem' (Cronin, 1993: xxiii). However, as we move away from the question of how one ought to live we 'inevitably raise the question of how we should regulate our interactions' (Cronin, 1993: xxiii). This question has been the primary concern of modern political philosopher in the social contract tradition such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. In 'The Classical Doctrine of Politics' Habermas asks the following question:

> how can the promise of practical politics - namely, of providing practical orientation about what is right and just in a given situation - be redeemed without relinquishing, on the one hand, the rigour of scientific knowledge, which modern social philosophy demands in contrast to the practical philosophy of classicism? And on the other, how can the promise of social philosophy, to furnish an analysis of the inter-relationships of social life, be redeemed without relinquishing the practical orientation of classical politics? (Habermas, 1974: 44).

Habermas advocates a typically modern understanding of politics. Heller is right to point out that this is a latter day alternative to the social contract tradition. I think Habermas seeks to reformulate the two main types of social contract theory. On the one hand, his is concerned with Hobbes's question of how to establish the conditions of a political community, understood as a sovereign space where one can enjoy certain negative freedoms and co-exist under a unified order. On the other hand, his is concerned with Rousseau's notion of popular sovereignty understood as the source of political legitimacy and as active political participation. I turn now to Habermas's recent work *Between Fact and Norms* to elaborate exactly how he addresses the question of the legitimation of the political or 'moral' community.

## Democracy legitimacy and social contract theory

In *Between Facts and Norms*, law is presented as the central thread that binds the various aspects of Habermas's work together into a coherent political philosophy, which should be read in its relation to the great canonical works of Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel. In this recent work Habermas also puts forward an innovative argument for the 'co-originality' of public and private autonomy in a modern constitutional democracy (Habermas, 2001a). His exploration into the character of law develops a topic he started in *Legitimation Crisis*. In this book Habermas argued that the modern state was potentially subject to a systematic crisis of legitimacy in late capitalist times because it could not rely on 'traditional' forms of legitimation and therefore needs 'genuine participation of citizens' rather than the 'diffuse mass loyalty' of 'passive citizens' (Habermas, 1988: 36-7). He argues that in the 'depolitized public sphere' legitmation has been reduced to 'civic privatism' that entails 'political abstinence' and a concern with one's 'career, leisure and consumption' as well as 'democratic elite theories' that effectively support the idea of the 'naturalness' of the 'capitalist economic society' (Habermas, 1988: 37). According to Connolly, in *Legitimation Crisis* Habermas does not confront the question of legitimacy (Connolly, 1984:

237). Instead, Connolly claims that Habermas retreats to a 'metatheoritical question' concerned with the problem of 'knowledge' and with the 'consensus theory of truth and morality as the answer' (Connolly, 1984: 237). If the question of legitimacy is not adequately addressed in this earlier work, then in *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas is clearly concerned to explore the question of legitimacy and of political and legal norms in a democratic society.

In this section, I show how Habermas distinguishes between communicative and instrumental forms of power and how he ties political legitimacy to communicative power. Following this, I demonstrate how Habermas draws upon Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant to relate public and private autonomy in his distinctive theory of political legitimacy. Habermas's theory of democratic legitimacy attempts to combine liberal respect for the rule of the law with the democratic republican notion of popular sovereignty. This clearly also resonates with the work of Mouffe. However, I also examine whether or not for Habermas the tension between the principles of liberty and popular sovereignty takes the form of a constitutive paradox or a potentially resolvable contradiction of opposites. I show that Habermas recognises a paradox at the heart of modern politics. However, I go onto show how he undermines this paradox by appealing to the logic of reconciliation, that is, with notion of the 'co-originality' of public and private autonomy, and with the idea that this tension might be resolved in 'historical time'.

Following Talcott Parson's sociology of law, for Habermas modern constitutional law is a mode of social integration and addresses the problem of social co-ordination (Bohman, 1994: 908). Law provides rules and norms that govern the actions of individuals in a modern political community, which are manifest in the form of obligations imposed upon the citizens (Habermas, 1996a: 106). In other words, Habermas is not concerned with the 'moral law' in the Kantian sense, i.e. as a universal law that the rational individual imposes on his/her actions through self-legislation. According to Habermas, Kant's moral universal law might be sufficient if all individual perspectives 'cohered' with each other (Habermas, 1993: 7). However, as I have said Habermas's starting point is the idea that modern society is not homogenous and is comprised of

a substantive pluralism of incompatible and 'conflicting life ideals and value orientations' (Habermas, 1996: 64). For Habermas, constitutional law is the mechanism that brings individuals together in a collective association of citizens and the law derives its legitimacy from a democratic authorising force, it emerges as a form of collective action i.e. it is accepted by all affected (Habermas, 1996a: 120). Like Rousseau, for Habermas no law is legitimate unless it has been authorised by the consent of all those affected. As he sees it, democratic citizens should recognise themselves as 'authors of the law to which they are also subject as addressees' (Habermas, 1996a: 449; Rousseau, 1973: 193). At this point, the discourse principle is given an explicitly political articulation as it is transformed into the 'democratic principle' (Habermas, 1996a: 455). Habermas's democratic principle is as follows: 'only those statutes may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent (*Zustimmung*) of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation that has been legally constituted' (Habermas, 1996a: 110). According to Habermas, the democratic principle is 'the reverse side of the principle of law because the democratic principle cannot be implemented except in the form of law, both principles must be realised in *uno actu*' (Habermas, 1996a: 94). Habermas makes an explicit link between democratic procedure and legitimacy, where democratic procedure provides the grounds for the legitimacy of law (Habermas, 1996: 450).

As I have said, one of the key characteristics of modernity is the emergence of what Habermas calls the 'legitimation gap', that is, the tension between the facticity and the validity of legal and social norms (Habermas, 1996a: 146; Rehg, 1996: xvi). In traditional communities the facticity and validity of the law fused together in divine sacred authority. By way of contrast, Habermas says that in modernity - with the severing of power and law - there is no single source of authority that is able to confer legitimacy on political power, the law, or moral norms. However, I have also said that Habermas has rejected Adorno and Horkheimer's Nietzschean inspired 'totalising' critique of the Enlightenment where 'reason' is reduced to just another ideological expression of the 'will to power' (Habermas, 1987b: 128). According to Habermas,

the implications of the Nietzschean critique of reason means that modern subjects would be unable to distinguish between different types of power relations, so that authority, law, and domination would be reducible to a monolithic conception of power (Habermas, 1987b: 120). If law is simply the means by which one power is able to assert itself over another power through the threat of coercion or violence then, for Habermas, there is no way to distinguish between an illegitimate or legitimate political regime (Habermas, 1987b: 123).

Habermas turns to Hannah Arendt and in particular to her distinctions in *On Violence* between power, violence, authority, and force to show that we can distinguish between qualitatively distinct forms of power (Arendt, 1970: 44). According to Arendt, power 'corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert' (Arendt, 1970: 44; Habermas, 1996: 148). Habermas agrees with Arendt, when she says that legitimate power springs up between humans when they act together in concert, and it 'vanishes' the moment the 'group with which it originated' disappears (Habermas, 1996: 147; Arendt, 1970: 44). He reformulates the Arendtian conception of power in terms of a 'consensus-achieving force of a communication aimed at reaching understanding' (Habermas, 1996: 148). Following Arendt, Habermas describes violence as a 'capacity for instrumentalizing another's will for one's own purposes' (Habermas, 1996: 148; Arendt, 1970: 46). Arendt's distinction between violence and power corresponds with Habermas's distinction between 'instrumental' and 'communicative' action, which is central to his theory of communicative action. Arendt's notion of power as a creative, active, and intersubjective force as opposed to the instrumentality, negativity, and reactionary force of violence allows Habermas to establish a link between power and law which is not solely instrumental. In contrast to Weber's instrumental conception of power (where power is the 'probability in a social relationship to assert one's own will against opposition'), Habermas says that Arendt views power 'as the potential of a *common will* formed in noncoercive communication' (Habermas, 1996: 147). According to Habermas, law and power receive its 'full normative sense through a procedure of law making that begets legitimacy' (Habermas, 1996:

135). From his perspective, a 'jurisgenerative communicative power must underlie the administrative power of the government' (Habermas, 1996: 147). For Habermas, following Arendt, a communicative conception of power conceives of political power 'as an *authorizing force*', which legitimates the law and the authority of the political institutions (Habermas, 1996; 148).

According to Habermas, the 'exercise of political autonomy implies the discursive formation of a common will' (Habermas, 1996: 150). For Habermas, the legitimacy of the political order is established through acts of popular sovereignty. He says that the democratic procedure for the production of law provides 'the only postmetaphysical source of legitimacy' (Habermas, 1996: 448). As he sees it, the legitimating force of the democratic procedure means that those who are 'affected could assent as participants in rational discourse' (Habermas, 1996: 458). In Habermas's view, the legitimacy of a political order is initially instantiated by the will formation of the communicative power of citizens. The validity of the political order is secured by the citizen's exercise of political autonomy. Following the democratic republican themes in Arendt's politics, Habermas accepts that the 'competition to acquire and preserve power depends on the communicative formation and renewal of this power' (Habermas, 1996: 149). From this sovereign communicative power emerges legitimate political power. For Habermas, communicative power is translated into administrative or instrumental power through law (Habermas, 1996: 150). He says that law 'joins forces *from the onset* with a communicative power that engenders legitimate law' (Habermas, 1996: 149).

In *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas aims to show that there is a necessary relationship between the 'rule of law' and democracy (Habermas, 1996: 449). He situates his argument in the modern context of a 'predominately secular society in which normative orders must be maintained without meta-social guarantees' (Habermas, 1996: 26). Under these conditions the challenge of social integration shifts onto the 'communicative achievements' of social actors for whom the necessary relationship between 'the binding force of rationally

motivated beliefs and the imposed force of external sanctions' cannot be taken as given (Habermas, 1996: 26). According to Habermas, the modern split between facticity and validity means that all claims to normative validity are 'transformed into facts' which individuals 'evaluate in light of their own preferences' (Habermas, 1996: 27). He says that in the case of conflict, modern subjects face the situation of trying to resolve their differences through communicative action aimed at reaching a consensus on their plans of action or they shift to strategic action (Habermas, 1996: 26; 1990: 58). As he sees it, the only way out to prevent this political conflict from degenerating into 'a war of all against all' is for the actors themselves to 'come to some understanding about the normative regulations of strategic actions' (Habermas, 1996: 26-27).

In a manner which is not too dissimilar from the social contract tradition, Habermas's 'inter-subjective' subjects 'consensually establish suitable socially integrating constraints on strategic action' (Habermas, 1996: 27). Habermas says that norms must be presented 'in such a way that the strategic actor feels compelled to adapt her behaviour in the objectively desired manner' (Habermas, 1996a: 27). At the same time they must 'develop a socially integrating force by imposing obligations on the addressees', which according to Habermas is 'possible only on the basis of inter-subjectively recognised normative validity claims' (Habermas, 1996a: 27). Like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Habermas insists that legal authority is established through consent (Habermas, 1996a: 458). However, for Habermas, this takes place through a discursive deliberative and intrinsically intersubjective model in contrast to the Hobbesian conception of atomised individuals in a 'state of nature' (Habermas, 1996a: 449). According to Habermas, Hobbes's model of the social contract is a 'confluence of rational choices made by independent actors' for instrumental purposes (Habermas, 1996a: 449). By way of contrast, in Habermas's model the subjects create the legal community through communicative power and deliberation by coming to an uncoerced agreement about the norms that govern their political community.

Subjects come together to establish a civil bond between the citizens that is not concerned with substantive ends (Habermas, 1996a: 92-4).

However, in his attempt to bring the idea of human rights and popular sovereignty together in his discourse theoretic approach, Habermas also invokes Kant's critique of Hobbes' social contract theory. According to Habermas, Hobbes is like a theoretician of 'bourgeois rule of law without democracy' rather 'than as the apologist of unlimited absolutism' (Habermas, 1996a: 90). Drawing upon Kant, Habermas says that Hobbes attributes the pre-political subjects in the state of nature with the norms of bourgeois private right, that is, the freedom to enter into contract and to own property. To an Anglo-American audience this reading is not dissimilar from C.B. MacPherson's reading of Hobbes as a theorist of possessive individualism (MacPherson, 1962: 3, 264-5). Fol lowing Kant, Habermas reads Hobbes's social contract as an essentially private contract in which private parties agree to install and not *bind* a sovereign (Habermas, 1996a: 91). He says that Hobbes failed to notice the 'structural difference between the social contract, which serves as a model for legitimation, and the private contract, which basically regulates exchange relationships' (Habermas, 1996a: 92). Habermas says that the latter is formed for some 'determinate end', whereas, the former is 'an end initself' (Habermas, 1996a: 93). He says that 'rights cannot …be grounded by recourse to a model taken from private law' (Habermas, 1996a: 92). From Habermas's perspective, the social contract 'is unique in not having any specific content at all; it provides instead the mode for a kind of sociation ruled by the principle of law' (Habermas, 1996a: 93). Here it is important to acknowledge the similarities between Habermas's conception of the social contract (as a public mode of civil association without a 'determinate end') and Oakeshott's notion of '*societas*' or 'civil association' (Oakeshott, 1975: 201). This is because, as I have said, Mouffe takes much of her inspiration for the idea of 'radical democracy' from Oakeshott's notions of '*societas*' and '*respublica*'.

Habermas turns to the work of Rousseau and Kant to further elaborate this democratic procedure. Habermas claims that both of these theorists insist on the democratic idea that 'the

claim to legitimacy on the part of a legal order built on rights can be redeemed only through the socially integrative force of the "concurring and united will of all" free and equal citizens' (Habermas, 1996a: 32). As he sees it, they both try to 'conceive the notion of autonomy as unifying practical reason and sovereign will in such a way that the idea of human rights and the principle of popular sovereignty mutually interpret one another' (Habermas, 1996a: 100). However, according to Habermas, neither Rousseau nor Kant is able to successfully integrate these concepts in an adequate manner. Rousseau provides a democratic republican reading of political autonomy, understood as the self-legislation of the citizen body, whereas, Kant suggests a liberal reading of political autonomy, understood as grounded in individual moral self-determination (Habermas, 1996a: 100). Habermas says that the problem with Rousseau is that he overburdens the citizens with the integrating function of public virtue, whereas, the problem with Kant is that he reduces law to the question of individual morality (Habermas, 1996a: 102-3). For Habermas, it is important to develop a theory of law that is able to act as a means of social integration whilst avoiding these two difficulties (Habermas, 1996a: 105).

According to Habermas, the civil association lays down the 'performative conditions under which rights acquire legitimate validity, for "right is the limitation of each person's freedom so that it is compatible with the freedom of everyone, insofar as this is possible in accord with a general law"' (Habermas, 1996a: 93). Habermas's theory seeks to accommodate the notions 'individual *and* collective self-legislation' (Baynes, 1995: 207). The democratic social contract 'establishes the principle of law by binding the legislator's will-formation to conditions of a democratic procedure, under these conditions the results arrived at in conformity with this procedure express *per se* the concurring will or rational consensus of all participants' (Habermas, 1996a: 93-4). He says in this way 'the morally grounded primordial human right to equal liberties is intertwined in the social contract with the principle of popular sovereignty' (Habermas, 1996a: 94).

Habermas explores this tension between individual and collective autonomy in further detail, in a recent essay entitled 'Constitutional Democracy: The Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?' (Habermas, 2001a). He claims that the legitimacy of individual liberty and popular sovereignty are 'co-original' (Habermas, 2001a: 767). He makes the case that the 'modern conception of democracy differs from the classical conception in virtue of its relation to a type of law' (Habermas, 2001a: 766). In the classical conception of democracy 'the laws of a republic express the unrestricted will of the united citizens' ensures a positive conception of liberty and which guarantees public autonomy (Habermas, 2001a: 766). Whereas, modern law guarantees a negative conception of liberty, which is concerned with the private autonomy of the citizens. He says modern law is formal because it rests on the premise that anything that is not explicitly forbidden is permitted (Habermas, 1998a: 214). It is positive because the norms that govern it are produced by a law giver or political legislator; it is compulsory because it is sanctioned by the state, and it is individualistic because it is meant to guarantee individual liberties and makes the individual person the bearer of rights (Habermas, 2001a: 766; 1998: 214). Furthermore, Habermas says that the rule of law is one source of legitimation but that this is in tension with popular sovereignty (Habermas, 1996a: 39; 2001: 766). In other words, the legitimacy of modern law is comprised of contradictory principles. Like Mouffe, Habermas appears to acknowledge that these two sources of legitimation of public and private autonomy are in some kind of a paradoxical relationship with each other. He says that under conditions of modern democracy the principles of public autonomy and private autonomy are interdependent, 'co-original', or that they 'require each other' (Habermas, 2001a: 767). From Habermas's perspective:

> citizens make an *appropriate* use of their public autonomy, as guaranteed by political rights, only if they are sufficiently independent in virtue of an equally protected private autonomy in their life conduct. But the members of society actually enjoy their equal

private autonomy to an equal extent - that is, equally distributed individual liberties have "equal value" for them only if as citizens they make use of their political autonomy (Habermas, 2001a: 767).

Clearly Habermas's co-originality thesis bears important similarities to Mouffe's work, in particular her republican understanding of the relationship between individual liberty and active participation. Indeed, as I have said, Quentin Skinner has argued that in the work of Machiavelli and other republican writers there is a recognition of the need for the citizens to guarantee their individual liberty through active participation (Skinner, 1998: 84). According to the neo-roman writers: in order to maintain their freedom the citizens must establish a political system 'in which the sole power of making laws remains with the people or their accredited representatives, and in which all individual members of the body politic - rulers and citizens alike - remain equally subject to whatever laws they choose to impose upon themselves' (Skinner, 1998: 74). From Habermas's perspective, 'private legal persons cannot attain the enjoyment of equal individual liberties unless they themselves, by jointly exercising their autonomy as citizens, arrive at a clear understanding about what interests and criteria are justified and in what respects equal things will be treated equally and unequal things unequally in any particular case' (Habermas, 1998: 208). According to Habermas, '[s]afeguarding the private autonomy of citizens with equal rights must go hand in hand with activating their autonomy as citizens of the nation' (Habermas, 1998a: 210). Through this formulation he aims to show that whilst positive law is necessarily coercive in order for a law to be valid it must be derived from the consent of all those to whom it is applied.

Throughout his article 'Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?' Habermas places the words 'allegedly' and 'supposedly' alongside 'paradoxical' (Habermas, 2001a: 768). Indeed, the question mark at the end of the title of his article suggests that Habermas does not think these principles exist in an inherently paradoxical relationship. In fact, he says that the 'allegedly paradoxical relationship between democracy and the rule of law

resolves itself in the dimension of historical time as long as one conceives the constitution as a project that makes the founding act into an on going process of constitutional making that continues across generations' (Habermas, 2001a: 768). This is clearly in marked contrast to Mouffe for whom the principles of liberty and equality remain in a permanently paradoxical tension. Habermas describes 'the circle of [the] polity's groundless discursive self-constitution' as a 'process - which is not immune to contingent interruptions and historical regressions – [but which nonetheless] can be understood in the long run as a self correcting learning process' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). The idea of a tension between liberty and equality being a 'self-correcting learning process' indicates a reconciliatory logic at work in Habermas's politics. He says that liberal democracy is not something we accept 'as our fortunate inheritance from the past. Rather, it is a project we must carry forward' (Habermas, 1996a: 471). The idea of liberal democracy as 'learning process' resonates with Habermas's optimistic view of the Enlightenment project and his moral cognitivist theory. However, Habermas acknowledges that the process is not immune from 'contingent interruptions and historical regressions', and this suggests that the tension between these principles is perhaps more conflictual than Habermas recognises. Habermas is right to emphasise that these principles are renegotiated through various political practices and that the citizens must actively participate in the public sphere to ensure their private rights. Nevertheless, as I see it, political subjects should not strive for a permanent resolution between the principles of liberty and equality, rather the idea is to forever renegotiate their temporary stabilisation. By way of contrast, in Mouffe's model of the democratic paradox, the tensions always remains even when there are hegemonic moments of temporary stabilisation.

Frank Michelman identifies the problem of infinite regress at the core of Habermas's notion of constitutional democracy. He says in order for a democratic process to 'confer legitimacy on a set of laws issuing from an actual set of discursive institutions and practices in a country those institutions and practices would themselves have to be legally constituted in the right way' (Michelman cited in Habermas 2001a, 773). Acknowledging Michelman's critique,

Habermas accepts that in making his argument for the 'co-originality' of public and private autonomy in a 'legal self-constitution' he inevitably makes a circular argument, which leads to the problem of infinite regress (Habermas, 2001a: 774). Indeed, Habermas is aware that a 'constitutional democracy cannot itself vouch for the legitimacy of the rules according to which it was constituted' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). In other words, he says that the 'chain' of legitmation 'never terminates' because the grounds of legitimation are themselves constantly in need of legitimation (Habermas, 2001a: 774). Habermas does not retreat from this problem of infinite regress by recourse to 'moral insights that are supposed to bring the regress to a halt' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). Instead, Habermas makes the claim that '[r]ather than appeal to a moral reason which would be hard to defend, I propose that we understand the regress itself as the understandable expression of the future-orientated character, or openness, of the democratic constitution' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). In his view, a constitution that is democratic - not just in its content but also according to its source of legitmation - is a tradition-building project with a clearly marked beginning in time' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). Habermas makes an apparently paradoxical move by recasting 'legitimation as a *horizon* rather than a *ground*' (Honnig, 2001a: 796).

Habermas says that public and private autonomy are 'co-original' to modern constitutional politics. In 'Dead Right, Live Futures: A Reply to Habermas's "Constitutional Democracy"' Bonnie Honnig argues that 'when Habermas characterizes his hoped-for future in progressive terms, he turns the future into a ground' (Honnig, 2001: 797). She maintains that Habermas's 'co-originality thesis' 'puts the two principles [of liberty and equality] into a harmonious non-zero sum relation and unifies them into a single "normative justification of liberal democracy"' (Honnig, 2001: 793). As I see it, Habermas's claim that the principles of liberty and equality are 'co-original' is not necessarily problematic. The problem arises when Habermas appeals to a logic of reconciliation. However, this is not the only option and there is no reason why the principles of liberty and equality could not be seen as a constitutive paradox,

understood as a permanent tension between contradictory and/or opposing principles. Habermas does *not* demonstrate how the 'allegedly' paradoxical relationship between the rule of law and democracy is resolved. He simply suggests that this tension will be stabilised through cognitive learning processes and in 'historical time'.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have undertaken a number of tasks. I have delineated Habermas's notion of 'discourse ethics' and made the case that his use of the term 'moral' cannot be separated from a *sittlich* relation. Habermas's use of the term 'moral' is not an abstract formulaic principle like Kant's moral law of the categorical imperative that regulates individual morality. I have also demonstrated that Habermas uses the term 'morality' synonymously with politics. In addition, I have shown that Habermas understands procedure as a 'moral practice', that is, as a practical discourse 'not for generating justified norms…but….for testing the validity of norms that are being proposed and hypothetically considered for adoption' (Habermas, 1990: 103). Finally, I have shown that Habermas recognises a paradoxical tension in modern politics between the principles of public and private autonomy. However, he appears to undermine this paradox with appeal to a reconciliatory logic.

**Part Three – Evaluation and Conclusions**

## Chapter Six

## Similarities and Differences

## Introduction

I have shown that Habermas and the post-structuralists both put forward a critique of the Cartesian philosophy of the subject and that they theorise their respective notions of the subject and politics within the context of modern 'liberal democratic' politics. I have also suggested that, despite Mouffe's claims to the contrary, Habermas's notion of discourse ethics resembles her own account of the basis of the political community in some important respects. The purpose of this chapter is to further illustrate my second hypothesis, i.e. that there is no simple dichotomy between the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I briefly outline Mouffe's critique of what she sees as Habermas's Kantian 'rationalism'. In section two, I undertake a detailed comparison between Habermas's and Mouffe's political philosophy. I invoke the work of Oakeshott as a mediating point, because - as I have said - Mouffe draws extensively upon Oakeshott's theory of civil association in developing her notion of radical democracy. Indeed, as I see it, there are important parallels between Habermas and Oakeshott, and by implication between Habermas and Mouffe. I identify three points of similarity between these thinkers; with regard to the terms moral, *societas* and *respublica*. Having established these points of contiguity between Mouffe and Habermas, in section three I construct a complex map of the main similarities and differences between Habermas and all three of the post-structuralists on the notions of the subject and politics. Finally, I conclude this chapter by suggesting that a reconciliatory logic is evident in both Habermas's ontology and his political philosophy.

## Mouffe's critique of Habermas

Of the three post-structuralists examined in this thesis, Mouffe is the most forthright in her critique of Habermas. Indeed, Mouffe has explicitly defined her radical democratic approach against what she sees as Habermas's Kantian 'rationalism' and the theories of 'deliberative democracy' that take their inspiration from Habermas (Mouffe, 2000b: 84-88; Benhabib, 1996: Cohen, 1996). It is my contention that - despite her critique - Habermas's theory of discourse ethics closely resembles Mouffe's theory of the political community in many respects. In fact, I will claim that Mouffe's political theory (but not her social ontology) has more in common with Habermas's reworked social contract theory than Laclau's account of democracy in terms of the mutual contamination of the 'universal and particular' or Connolly's notion of 'agonistic democracy'.

Mouffe claims that, like Kant, Habermas is really a theorist of 'morality' (Mouffe, 1993b: 56). Her critique is aimed at the 'Kantian inspired philosophy' that she claims underlies Habermas's project of discourse ethics (Mouffe, 2000b: 66). In Mouffe's view, this approach reduces political questions to the 'same category as moral questions' (Mouffe, 1993: 113). She argues that Habermas fails to grasp the antagonistic nature of the 'political' and so he treats politics as a matter of 'public morality' that would supposedly regulate the 'structure of society' and which 'can be decided rationally' among private interests through a 'process of negotiation' (Mouffe, 2000b: 88, 113). By way of contrast, Mouffe identifies her approach as concerned with political 'ethics'. Drawing upon the Aristotlean and Hegelian traditions (although not without criticism), she sees 'ethics' as concerned with 'the normative aspect of politics', that is, with

values such as 'civic virtue' and 'public spiritedness' that citizens realise through 'collective action' and through identifying with each other as members of a political community (Mouffe, 1993: 112-113). In Mouffe's view, Habermas's approach is problematic because like Kant Habermas separates 'morality' from a socio-historical context (Mouffe, 2000b: 88). As I see it, some aspects of Mouffe's critique are valid. I think that it is true to say that Habermas cannot adequately address the question of 'antagonism' because he presupposes the notion of an unconstrained consensus as a regulative ideal. However, I disagree with Mouffe when she says that Habermas reduces politics to a Kantian conception of 'morality'. In Chapter Five, I argued that Habermas moves closer towards Hegel in his attempt to address Hegel's critique of Kantain moral philosophy. Indeed, Habermas has made it clear that his discourse ethics seeks to combine Hegel's notion of ethical life with aspects of Kantian deontology (Habermas, 1990: 201). I also showed that Habermas's notion of 'morality' is inherently an inter-subjective 'practice' or 'public affair' that is concerned with identifying the norms that ought to govern the political community and is not concerned with questions of individual conduct (Habermas, 1990: 197-8, 209). In addition, I agree with John S Brady when he says that Habermas's theory of the 'public sphere and the maintenance of democracy' does not screen out political contestation but requires it as a necessity (Brady, 2004: 334).

Furthermore, Mouffe argues that Habermas endorses 'a strictly proceduralist approach' to politics (Mouffe, 2000b: 86). She puts forward two points of contention with Habermas's 'proceduralism'. First, she rejects the idea that participants in a moral 'discourse' are ever able to arrive at an all inclusive consensus in which they are in full agreement with each other (Mouffe, 2000b: 86). In Mouffe's view, consensus necessarily involves exclusions (Mouffe, 1993: 4). Consensus is therefore always a temporary hegemonic stabilisation of power (Mouffe, 2000b:104). Again, this critique reflects Mouffe's claim that Habermas is unable to account for the moment of the 'political' *qua* antagonism. Second, according to Mouffe, procedures can only 'work properly' if they 'involve a substantial commitment' to some 'specific form of ethos'

(Mouffe, 2000b: 69). She says that democratic procedures necessarily require a 'democratic ethos' in order to 'function and maintain themselves' (Mouffe, 2000b: 69). Mouffe says that from the Habermasian perspective the 'basis of legitimacy of democratic institutions' is derived from the 'obligatory power' of the (supposedly) impartial and fully inclusive procedures (Mouffe, 2000b: 87). I agree with Mouffe's claim that every 'agreement' or 'consensus' necessarily involves power, force, and violence, and that Habermas is mistaken to invoke a notion of unanimous agreement between all participants even when this understood as a counterfactual ideal. As I see it, this reflects the incommensurate ontological differences between these two thinkers: she is committed to the idea of a constitutive paradox and he remains committed to an ontology of reconciliation. However, I am not convinced by Mouffe's second critique of Habermas's 'proceduralism'. Indeed, I have made the case that Habermas does not isolate a moral procedure from an 'ethos'. In Chapter Five, I demonstrated that Habermas claims that 'morality' is never a strictly 'formal' principle, but necessarily invokes 'moral intuitions' that are of an ethical or a 'substantive kind' (Habermas, 1990: 199). In addition, Habermas's theory of the basis of legitimacy is not derived from the obligatory power of an impartial and inclusive procedure. Instead, for Habermas, legitimacy is derived through the realisation of these principles in the active consent of the citizens in their participation in political actions and practices (Habermas, 1996a: 467). Moreover, it is this aspect of Habermas's theory which brings his politics very close to Mouffe.

Mouffe argues that Habermas is a 'rationalist-universalist' who sees the aim of political theory as establishing 'universal truths, valid for all independently of the historico-cultural context' (Mouffe, 2000b: 63; 1993b: 9). Again, I think that this claim is misleading and partly inaccurate. First, Habermas's political project does not aim to establish universal truths. In *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* and *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas does not advocate any 'universal' conception of truth that is supposedly valid at all times and places

irrespective of context. Instead, I have shown that - following Charles Sanders Pierce - Habermas is committed to a 'pragmatic' conception of 'truth' that is decided through a consensus in a particular community (Habermas, 1996a: 14). Indeed, Habermas says that 'there are no moral *facts*' (Habermas, 1993: 27). He recognises that epistemological and moral claims are intrinsically fallible because they are always subject to the possibility of revision and change (Habermas, 1996a: 9). Nevertheless, Habermas does have a 'universalist' aspect to his work. For Habermas, the relations of mutual trust and reciprocity (or the presuppositions of argumentation) that participants implicitly presuppose in their communicative action are universal (Habermas, 1990: 201). This reflects Habermas's ontological belief in reconciliation and the idea that participants in communicative action will essentially aim to arrive at 'understanding' or 'agreement' (Habermas, 1979: 1). However, for Habermas, it is not the aim of political theory to establish any universal or transcendental moral truths. Rather, the aim is for political subjects to agree to the norms that ought to govern the conduct of the political community, and this can only be realised in particular contexts.

According to Mouffe, her project of a radical and plural democracy is like Habermas's in the sense that she also 'pursues "the unfulfilled project of modernity" (Mouffe, 1993b: 10). However, she says that unlike Habermas she does not believe that there is 'a role to be played in this project by the epistemological perspective of the Enlightenment' (Mouffe, 1993b: 10). Again, this is an unsubstantiated critique of Habermas, because his theory of communicative action starts with a critique of the epistemologically self-certain subject of Enlightenment philosophy. Mouffe has two further arguments against Habermas's discourse ethics. In her view, Habermas's theory relegates 'pluralism to a non-public domain' (Mouffe, 2000b: 92). Whilst this critique may apply for Rawls's theory of the 'original position', it does not apply to Habermas. As Habermas sees it, discourse ethics establishes the rules of the political community which provide the space for the public deliberation of the pluralism values (Habermas, 1990: 43-116). Second, she says she

agrees with Charles Larmore's claim that Habermas's 'co-originality' thesis of constitutional democracy 'privileges the democratic aspect over' over individual liberty (Mouffe, 2000b: 92-93). According to Larmore, Habermas's claim that rights and self rule are co-original is 'misleading' because he 'mistakenly makes democratic self-rule a principle prior in status to that of individual rights' (Larmore, 1999: 612). He argues that for Habermas, popular sovereignty is the 'ultimate basis' of the organisation of political life and the truth of 'individual liberty' lies in the way in which the 'principle of self rule' is embodied (Larmore, 1999: 613) Larmore says that the discourse principle is 'too substantial [a] principle 'to be 'implicit in the idea of practical discussion' (Larmore, 1999; 620). However, this is also true of Mouffe's own conception of democracy, because she claims that the enjoyment of individual liberty is grounded upon active 'democratic citizenship' (Mouffe, 1999: 42). Indeed, she says that 'democratic citizenship' is a prior condition for 'the respect of individual liberty' (Mouffe, 1993b: 69-70).

## Comparison between Habermas, Mouffe, and Oakeshott

I have shown that many of Mouffe's criticisms of Habermas's discourse ethics do not hold up to scrutiny. In Chapter Five, I made the case that in his attempt to address Hegel's critique of Kant's moral theory, Habermas's work moves away from a strictly Kantian approach. Habermas does not put forward a purely procedural account of the 'moral law' that regulates individual conduct. Habermas moves towards a conception of 'morality' that is similar to the Hegelian notion of ethical life (*sittlich*), understood as norms embedded in concrete contextual practices. I have also argued that this Hegelian element is present in Habermas's understanding of law as a form of social co-ordination. In this section, I focus on these important 'Hegelian' aspects of Habermas's later work (from his *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* to *Between Facts and Norms*) to show that he is fact closer to aspects of Mouffe's work than he is to Kant (Mouffe, 1993: 56). However, I am not making the case that Habermas is a Hegelian. Indeed, I have

already said that he seeks to combine Hegelian and 'Kantian' elements in his theory of discourse ethics. I will re-examine the Kantian aspects of Habermas's work in the next chapter.

Here, I make the case that there is a close proximity between Mouffe's and Habermas's respective theorisations of the modern democratic political community, that is, in terms of what she calls *'societas'* and he refers to as the 'conditions of social intercourse' (Mouffe, 1993: 69; Habermas, 1974: 43). On a preliminary analysis this may appear misguided, given Mouffe's explicit critique of Habermas's 'discourse ethics' and her explicit attempt to distinguish her approach from his politics. Indeed, an apparent point of difference between Mouffe and Habermas is their respective understandings of the concept of rationality. Mouffe presents her conception of rationality - as *'phronesis'* - as being in contrast to Habermas's Kantian inspired 'rationalism', universalism, and proceduralism (Mouffe, 1993b: 13-14). However, I demonstrate that on a closer examination they share important points of similarity in the way they theorise the notion of modern 'rationality'. This will become clear with recourse to the work of Oakeshott, understood as a mediating point between Mouffe and Habermas. In Chapter Four I demonstrated that Mouffe makes extensive use of Oakeshott's reflections on civil association in her theory of 'radical democracy'. In this section, I show how many aspects of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics resonates with the same Oakeshottean concepts.

As I see it, Habermas's does not use the term 'rationality' in an abstract way as a kind of 'pure procedure'. In fact, I show that we can read Habermas's notion of rationality more like Oakeshott's use of the term 'practical knowledge', that is, as an acquired practice or mode of conduct. Also, I show how Habermas's notion of morality shares important similarities with the Oakeshottean terms *societas* an*d respublica*. Mouffe and Habermas share the idea that modern society cannot be organised on the basis of a substantive notion of the good, but instead it should be founded upon a civic ethos (Mouffe, 2000b: 69; Habermas, 1990: 14, 62, 67). In addition, I

226

argue that Mouffe understands the *'respublica'*, in a Hegelian manner - i.e. as a *'sittlich'* relation - which clearly resonates with Habermas's use of the term 'moral norms'.

In his essay entitled 'Rationalism and Politics' Oakeshott argues that since the European Renaissance 'rationalism' has had a profound impact on modern political relations to the extent that 'almost all politics...have become Rationalist' (Oakeshott, 1991: 5). Oakeshott defines rationalism as an intellectual belief in the 'authority of reason' or the 'sovereignty of technique', which he contrasts to traditional and practical forms of knowledge and experience (Oakeshott, 1991: 6, 8). He says that the modern rationalist believes that all mankind is equipped with the technique of 'reason' understood as a 'common power of rational consideration' (Oakeshott, 1991: 6). Oakeshott pours scorn on the modern application of 'rationalism' to the realm of politics, and the erroneous belief that there is a perfect 'rational' solution to political problems (Oakeshott, 1991: 10, 15). For Oakeshott, every concrete human activity involves at least two inseparable forms of knowledge. The first is 'technical knowledge', which is a set of rules maxims, instructions, or directions that can be learnt and applied in a mechanical way, for example, the rules of algebra (Oakeshott, 1991: 12, 14, 20, 21). The second is 'practical knowledge' which invokes practices, such as skills that are acquired through experience and that cannot be formulated into rules (Oakeshott, 1991: 12). As Oakeshott put it, practical knowledge can 'neither be taught not learnt, but only imparted and acquired' (Oakeshott, 1991: 15). Here Oakeshott is referring to experience or judgements one acquires in the practice of doing an activity, such as learning to ride a bike.

As I said, Habermas's critics have branded him a 'rationalist' because of his advocacy of a 'rational consensus' arrived at through cognitive reasoning. It is therefore important to clarify how Habermas uses the term 'rational' and how it relates to his notion of politics. I make the case that Habermas uses the term 'communicative rationality' as a mode of practical conduct and experience, which is similar to Oakeshott's account of practical knowledge and not technical

rationality. In fact, Oakeshott's notion of technical rationality shares important parallels with the notion of instrumental reason as it is invoked in the work of Max Weber and the earlier Critical Theorists influenced by him. Following Weber, Horkheimer and Adorno saw modern society as thoroughly dominated by technical rationality and a corresponding 'iron cage' of bureaucracy (Weber, 1992: 181; Habermas, 1984a: 345). We have seen that Habermas criticises Adorno and Horkheimer for failing to recognise that there is another form of reason operating in social relations which is communicative rationality and this is *acquired* by social subjects in their intersubjective engagement in their everyday lifeworlds.

For Habermas, communicative rationality is an inherently inter-subjective phenomena, which is best understood as a form of practical reason in an Aristotlean sense. Despite clear difference between Habermas and Aristotle, I think Habermas's concept of 'rationality' nonetheless shares important similarities with Aristotle's notion of *'phronesis'* understood as prudence or practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1976: 209). In the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle is concerned with the notion of 'virtue' understood as an action orientated towards some the 'good' or some substantive end, which is happiness (Aristotle, 1976: 63). Aristotle says that ethical 'goodness' is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' that translates into 'habit' or 'custom' (Aristotle, 1976: 91). From Aristotle's perspective, one becomes virtuous through practice and training (Aristotle, 1976: 97-8). The virtuous citizen acquires certain habits and customs of behaviour carefully over his lifetime. As Habermas puts it, for Aristotle the cultivation of virtues is a matter of 'practical deliberation' or *phronesis* rather than a fixed body of knowledge (or *'episteme'*) (Habermas, 1993: 21). As I have said, Habermas is not an Aristotlean: he is not concerned with questions of the good life or how the virtuous citizen ought to live his life. Nevertheless, his notion of 'morality' as a 'practice' that requires 'moral intuitions' of a 'substantive kind' correlates with Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, i.e. it is a cultivated practice rather a fixed body of knowledge or a formulaic rule like the Kantian categorical imperative (Habermas, 1990: 201). In fact, Habermas claims that 'communicative

reason reformulates the practical reason of classical political philosophy' (Habermas, 1996a: 3-4). Communicative reason is made possible 'in the linguistic medium through which interactions are woven together and forms of life are structured' (Habermas, 1996a: 4). Habermas is clear that communicative rationality is not a 'subjective capacity that would tell actors what they ought to do' in the manner of an abstract formula (Habermas, 1996a: 4). Habermas says that recasting 'the basic concepts of "practical reason" in terms of "communicative rationality" ... has the advantage of not cutting social theory off from the issues and answers developed in practical philosophy from Aristotle to Hegel' (Habermas, 1996a: 9). In other words, Habermas's concept of communicative rationality is not a form of technique that can be learnt as a set of rules or technical knowledge (*episteme*).

This reading of Habermas's theory is not without difficulties. In fact there is an apparent ambiguity in the way that Habermas uses the term 'communicative rationality', which has led to a number of contrary interpretations (Mouffe, 2000b; Hoy and McCarthy, 1994; Tully, 1989; Giddens, 1985). Habermas appears to oscillate between rationality as I have just describes it, i.e. as a kind of embedded practical reason and rationality understood as a universal or pure procedure i.e. a universal' rationality - like an Archimedean point' - that ought to be applied in every particular context or culture (i.e. the presuppositions of argumentation). Both these readings of 'rationality' appear to be present in Habermas's theory of discourse ethics. For example, Habermas claims that communicative rationality is borne out of the Enlightenment and is therefore tied to the historical and cultural context of modernity. However, when he is defending his position against moral sceptics he moves to assert the 'universalism' of communicative rationality. Habermas says that his conception of rationality has 'more to do with the specific challenges posed by social modernity that have covered the globe rather than the standards of western civilisation' (Habermas, 1996a: 97). However, there is a degree of circularity in Habermas's account of rationality. He starts from the historical context of post-Enlightenment

rationality, and then (like Kant) abstracts his conception of rationality from this context to attribute it with a universal and transcendental status, only then to defend it with references to contexts and empirical events.

Despite this apparent ambiguity, I am generally persuaded by the interpretation of commentators, such as Anthony Giddens and James Tully, who understand Habermas's notion of communicative rationality as an embedded practice and as a form of practical reason concerned with the mode of conduct of inter-subjective subjects in their everyday lifeworlds (Giddens, 1985; Tully, 1989). Tully argues that Habermas's own distinctive mode of critical reflection is a distinct 'practice' (Tully, 1989: 182). For Habermas, the presuppositions of argumentation are a practice or mode of conduct and not an algorithm or a set of rules to be followed like Kant's categorical imperative. Oakeshott says that 'no action is by itself rational' rather 'what makes it rational is its place in a flow of sympathy, a current of moral activity' (Oakeshott, 1991: 129). In other words, 'rationality' depends on context in question and is dependent on the manner in which knowledge is used (Giddens, 1985: 98). Habermas makes a similar point when he says that 'reasons only count against the backdrop of context dependent standards of rationality' (Habermas, 1996a: 36). In other words, Habermas's communicative rationality is not a technique that can be deployed with precision regardless of context or even learnt with expertise. On the contrary, it is part of the practical knowledge of the everydayness of the social world, which individuals acquire through ontogenetic and phylogenetic learning processes. As Tully puts it, even sophisticated and elaborated forms of reflection like Habermas's account of 'discourse ethics' 'are practices in the sense that participants presuppose customary ways of acting with or using words' (Tully, 1989: 182). For Habermas, communicative rationality is imparted and acquired through socialisation.

I turn now to examine the similarities between Habermas's, Oakeshott's, and Mouffe's notion of morality. According to Oakeshott, the modern rationalist treats morality as 'the self-conscious pursuit of moral ideals' (Oakeshott, 1991: 40). The rationalist understands morality by abstracting from his/her personal experience to derive universal principles or ideals, which ought

to be approved by the common reason of mankind (Oakeshott, 1991: 40). The 'rationalist' reduces morality to a technique and a technical knowledge rather than something embedded in particular contexts and traditions. We can identify Kant's categorical imperative elaborated in *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* as paradigmatic of this kind of moral rationalism. Kant's moral principle 'act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' is a formal, abstract, universal principle or de-ontological maxim to be applied in morally significant actions irrespective of circumstances (Kant, 1999: 31).

According to Oakeshott, a moral practice - properly understood - is not an 'instrumental practice' for the 'achievement of any substantive purpose' (Oakeshott, 1975: 60). Instead, it is a 'relationship of human beings' in the 'mutual recognition of certain conditions' that act as 'prescriptions of obligations' to be observed when choosing performances (Oakeshott, 1975: 78-79; 1983: 132). He says that 'moral conduct' refers to a relationship between 'agents' in terms of 'the acknowledgement of the authority of a practice composed of conditions, which because of their generality attracts itself the generic name: morality' (Oakeshott, 1975: 60). A moral practice is a 'procedure or a language of self-disclosure' it is an everyday 'practice of "just" conduct' (Oakeshott, 1975: 70,182). For Oakeshott, a moral practice imposes obligations. However, morality 'is not a device for formulating judgments about conduct or for solving so-called moral problems' (Oakeshott, 1975: 161). For Oakeshott, 'a moral practice' is not composed of 'a system of general principles nor a code of rules' about human conduct, nor does morality constitute anything so specific as a "shared system of values", instead morality is a 'vernacular language of colloquial intercourse' (Oakeshott, 1975: 63, 161).

Oakeshott's conception of morality and practical knowledge has more in common with Aristotlean ethics (that is, an ethos tied to a socio-historical community) rather than the Kantian categorical imperative. Like the Aristotlean notion of '*phronesis*', Oakeshott sees morality as inseparable from behaviour and practices of concrete historical communities. As I have said,

231

Aristotle's notion of '*phronesis*' refers to a kind of practical knowledge or the habits, customs and behaviour that citizens acquire over the course of their lifetime and that regulate their conduct (Aristotle, 1976: 97-8). Oakeshott also acknowledges Hegel's notion of 'ethical life' as a significant contribution to moral philosophy (Oakeshott, 1975: 256; 1983: 161; Knowles, 2002: 241). According to Oakeshott, what Hegel calls 'ethical life' is a 'moral association' and he acknowledges Hegel's insight into the different 'modes of association' emerging in modern Europe (i.e. the family, civil society, and the state) (Oakeshott, 1975: 256. 261; 1983, 161).

As I have already said, Mouffe subscribes to a '*phronesis*' approach to ethics. She has edited a series of books under the title of 'Phronesis'. Mouffe identifies 'morality' with Kantianism, that is, with abstract universalism and rationalism. However, she acknowledges that Oakeshott does not use the term 'moral' in this way (Mouffe, 1993: 68). She says that for Oakeshott morality is an 'ethico-political' relation since he 'asserts [that] what is civilly desirable cannot be inferred or derived from general moral principles and that political deliberation is concerned with [its own distinctive kind of] moral considerations' (Mouffe, 1993: 68). As I see it, Habermas also uses the term 'moral' in this way, i.e. to describe a distinctive kind of 'ethico-political' relation, rather than an abstract formula or comprehensive world view. I have shown that Habermas theorises 'morality' as a procedure or as a 'just practice' that seeks to establish the conditions of civil association. Habermas uses the term 'moral' to refer to that which is civilly desirable. In his attempt to address Hegel's critique of Kant, Habermas's notion of morality moves steadily away from Kantian universalism and abstraction towards a more Hegelian notion of ethical life (*sittlich*), understood as embedded in concrete contextual practices. Habermas says that 'discourse [ethics] picks up the basic Hegelian aspiration to redeem it with Kantian means' (Habermas, 1990: 201). For Habermas, a moral procedure is a form of association that is 'not based on a shared conception of the good, but on a more abstract form of recognition contained in the idea of free and equal consociates under law' (Baynes, 1995: 221). However, the key

(Hegelian) point is that this abstraction must find expression in a 'practical discourse', understood as a 'public affair, practised intersubjectively by all involved' (Habermas 1990: 198, 121-122).

Habermas's notion of discourse ethics also shares similarities with the way in which Oakeshott and Mouffe theorise the political community as *societas*. In Chapter Four, I explained that Oakeshott contrasts *universitas* with *societas*, understood as two distinct forms of political association. *Universitas* specifies a form of association as 'an enterprise to pursue a common purpose or promote a common interest' (Mouffe, 1993: 66). By way of contrast, Oakeshott describes *societas* as a bond that ties agents together in an association, but which is not directed to the pursuit of a substantive goal. *Societas* is an association in which citizens acknowledge themselves to be in a 'relation of loyalty to one another' (Oakeshott, 1975: 201). The civil associates subscribe to the common authority of the *respublica* understood in terms of the conditions of civility to be subscribed to as they pursue their own conception of the good. In Oakeshott's view, 'Juristically, *societas* was understood to be the product of a pact or an agreement... to acknowledge the authority of certain conditions' (Oakeshott, 1975: 201). This type of association involves the maintenance of a shared mode of conduct, and the law preserves the necessary space for citizens to pursue their own purposes. Drawing upon Oakeshott, Mouffe also describes her notion of radical and plural democracy as a *societas* (Mouffe, 1993: 67). The citizens of the radical and plural democracy are related to one another in a 'formal relationship in terms of rules, not a substantive relation in terms of common action' (Mouffe, 1993: 66; Oakeshott, 1975: 201). Again, I see important similarities here between Mouffe and Habermas.

Indeed, Habermas's notion of discourse ethics should be understood as a '*societas*' in Oakeshott's and Mouffe's sense of the term, that is, as a 'formal' association between citizens based upon the shared recognition of an obligatory mode of conduct a opposed to a *universitas* orientated towards some substantive end (Habermas, 1990: 103, 204, 205; Oakeshott, 1975: 201). Like Mouffe, Habermas says that discourse ethics is formal in the sense that it does not identify a

common good but rather provides the civil conditions for pluralistic social interaction (Habermas, 1990: 103). Nevertheless, despite this important point of similarity between Habermas and Mouffe, they theorise the formation of the *respublica* in distinct ways, and these differences reflect their underlying ontological frameworks. For Mouffe, the rules of the civil association (or *respublica*) are hegemoncially (politically) constructed and this necessarily involves exclusion (Mouffe, 1993: 4). By way of contrast, for Habermas, mutual respect, reciprocity, and full inclusion of the civil association are implicit in the very fact of communicative speech acts and the point is to realise this in concrete political practices (Habermas, 1990: 122, 136, 201).

For Oakeshott, a *respublica* is a 'practice of "just" conduct' (Oakeshott, 1975: 182). *Respublica* 'constitutes a deliberately alterable system of law, and specifies' the 'norms of civil conduct' be taken account of and subscribed to in choosing performances' (Oakeshott, 1975: 176, 182). Mouffe says the *respublica* 'consist[s] in a complex set of rules or rule like prescriptions which do not prescribe satisfactions to be sought or actions to be performed but moral considerations specifying conditions to be subscribed to in choosing performances' (Mouffe, 1993: 67; Oakeshott, 1975: 183). In Mouffe's words *respublica* is a system of rules which specify a 'language of civil intercourse' and creates an 'ethico-political bond uniting democratic citizens' (Mouffe, 2000b: 97). From Mouffe's perspective, *respublica* is a hegemonic articulation predicated upon active identification, and always subject to the possibility of re-articulation (Mouffe, 1993: 69-70). Invoking Rawls's vocabulary, Mouffe says in a '*societas* there exists a priority of the right over the good' (Mouffe, 1993: 68). However, she adds that in Oakeshott's case, 'the principles that specify the right, *respublica*, are not conceived in a Kantian manner as in Rawls, but in a Hegelian way, since for him, to be associated in terms of *respublica* is to enjoy a sittlich relation' (Mouffe, 1993: 68).

Similarly, for Habermas, the norms that govern the political community are not understood in an abstract manner, they must be agreed and validated by all participants involved in a practical discourse (the discourse principle) (Habermas, 1990: 66). Like Mouffe's 'norms of

234

conduct' they are valid only so long as the citizen's instantiate them in their daily activities (Habermas, 1990: 65; Mouffe, 1993: 69). Moreover, for Habermas, these norms do not prescribe a substantive notion of the good they nonetheless include what he calls 'structural aspects of the good life' (Habermas, 1990: 203). In other words, the norms that govern the conduct of participants in practical discourse take the form of a '*sittlich*' relation. The norms that establish the conditions and rules that regulate the civil association are not *deduced* from the presuppositions of argumentations. Instead, the presuppositions of argumentation must be realised in the everyday communicative speech acts of the citizens. Like Oakeshott, Habermas understands 'law' as a moral association in terms of the 'recognition of the authority of rules (that is) which impose obligations to subscribe to adverbial conditions in the performance of self-chosen actions of all which fall within their jurisdiction' (Oakeshott, 1983: 136; Habermas, 1990: 89, 91).

**Complex map of similarities and differences**

One of the main objectives of my thesis is to demonstrate that there is no simple dichotomy between the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists. I have shown that Habermas and Mouffe share a number of important similarities. Indeed, it is inadequate to portray these perspectives as a dualism with Habermas on one side as an abstract 'rationalist' and the post-structuralists on the other as 'irrationalists' or 'totalising critics' of reason. Habermas and the post-structuralists misrecognise each other's position, and they fail to take into account that they share important points of similarity. In this section, I construct a complex map that summarises the main points of similarity and difference between them. I demonstrate a number of equivalences between Habermas and the post-structuralists and also align Habermas with certain post-structuralists against the others. To start with, we have been able to ascertain that for all four theorists the subject is an ontological problematic. Indeed, I have established that there are four different understandings of the subject. Laclau and Mouffe's co-authored work emphasised the

notions of 'hegemonic agent' and 'subject positions' in discourse. Next, I demonstrated that in his single authored work Laclau explicates a psychoanalytical conception of the subject understood as the 'subject of lack'. Third, I identified Connolly's notion of the subject as an embodied 'self'. Finally, I elaborated Habermas's notion of the subject, understood as an inherently 'inter-subjective' or communicative subject.

In chapter two, I demonstrated that - despite the differences between them - each post-structuralist conceptions of the subject are alike in fundamental respects. These points of similarity are as follows. For each of the post-structuralist thinkers examined in this thesis the notion of the subject is not an epistemological point of certainty but an ontological problematic. The post-structuralist notion of the subject is not like Descartes' *cogito* (i.e. the founder and origin of social relations), that is, a fixed 'substance', 'unity', 'thing', or 'ground' upon which everything else is premised. However, nor is the subject simply an effect of social interpellation as in Althusser's theory. For the post-structuralist theorists, the subject is an inherently paradoxical phenomenon. As I have said, the subject is both the conditions of possibility of social relations are at the same time the conditions of impossibility of society as a whole. The various post-structuralist theorists assert the necessity for some form or another of foundation but they also accept that this foundation is contestable and contingent (Connolly, 1995a: 1; Laclau, 2000: 201). The post-structuralist notion of the subject is constitutively 'incomplete' or always in a process of 'becoming' (Connolly, 1998: 97; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 121). We might say that this subject is characterised by a moment of internal pluralism which is always subject to the possibility of change through practices and employing different techniques.

Similarly, Habermas rejects the Cartesian conception of the subject as an epistemological certainty premised on the *res cogitians*, understood as a fixed ontological point. For Descartes, the *cogito* is a self-reflecting subject that affirms itself as the ground upon which experience of the world is based. By way of contrast, Habermas and the post-structuralists all share the basic premise that the subject is both constituted by and constitutive of his/her social 'lifeworld'

236

(Habermas, 1984a; 70, 121). They all make the point that the subject is not the origin of social relations, that there is a constitutive inter-play between the subject and his/her external environment. Another point of similarity between Habermas and the post-structuralists is that their respective notions of the subject are formulated in contrast to the incapacity of the Cartesian philosophy of the subject to account for the internal pluralism (the unconscious) which is constitutive of individual subjectivity. Habermas and the post-structuralists each address the moment of internal pluralism that is constitutive of the subject.

However, it is the different ways in which they theorise this moment of internal pluralism that points towards a significant difference between Habermas and the post-structuralists. Although Habermas appears to accept that a paradoxical relationship exists between the subject and his/her inter-subjective lifeworlds, his notion of the internal dynamics of the individual subject is clearly underpinned by a reconciliatory logic. As I said, Habermas maintains that the opposing tension between the 'I' and the 'me' (that is the internal pluralism of the subject) can be potentially resolved in 'historical time'. In the introduction, I elaborated the notion of reconciliation in respect of Hegelian dialectical logic, which is premised on the claim that opposing concepts or notions can be brought together - or sublated - into a higher unity. From the Hegelian perspective, two opposing concepts or phenomena can be unified together and preserved into a third concept that is the product of their negation and their unification in a higher moment (Hegel, 1999: 107). As I see it, despite Habermas's explicit rejection of the Hegelian notion of Absolute Spirit he nonetheless imagines that the internal contradictions of the subject can be brought under a reconciliatory logic in a similar fashion to the Hegelian dialectic. The tension that Habermas describes between the 'I' and the 'me' (that is between the pre-social natural drives and the memory image of the self that is constituted by the mediation of the gaze of the other) is not *constitutive* of the subject (Habermas, 1992: 187). As he sees it, this tension will be reconciled into a harmonious unity in the 'temporal dimension' and through cognitive developmental processes (Habermas, 1992: 187). For Habermas, the tension between the 'I' and

237

'me' cannot be a constitutive part of the subject because this would undermine the principle of non-contradiction that is intrinsic to his notion of moral competency (Whitebook, 1985: 155-156)). If the individual is constitutively unable to resolve the tension between the 'I' and 'me', this potentially means that the subject would always necessarily be incapable of engaging in 'reasoned argument' because uncontrolled desire would contradict his/her communicative competence. This suggestion that the tension can be reconciled in historical time implies that, for Habermas, unlike the post-structuralists the tension between the 'I' and the 'me' is *not* ontologically constitutive of the subject. Instead, for Habermas, the tension is a historical opposition: this tension is presently a feature of modern subjectivity, but it will potentially be smoothed out or resolved through ontogenetic and phylogenetic processes of development.

By way of contrast, the post-structuralists accept the internal tensions as constitutive of the subject. In other words, the subject's internal pluralism is irresolvable. For Laclau, for example, drawing on Lacan, the relationship between the 'le je' ('I') and 'le moi' (me) is irredeemably paradoxical (Laclau, 1994: 31). The 'le je' will never be an autonomous self-certain subject, rather it is the 'subject of lack' that necessarily disrupts any and every attempt to fix the 'le moi' (Laclau, 1994: 31). From the post-structuralist perspective, the relation between the 'I' and the 'me' is not an opposition in the way in which Hegel understands it, that is, as an opposition that is superseded through a dialectical/historical process of reconciliation. If the tension between the 'I' and the 'me' is understood as ontological then the subject is a constitutive paradox and there is no possibility of a resolution of 'its' internal tensions.

I think Habermas is mistaken when he suggests that the tension between the 'I' and the 'me' can potentially be resolved into a harmonious unity. Habermas is correct to point out that we are necessarily social and linguistic beings. However, he assumes the ideal of unity with regards to the internal dynamics of the subject, which I think is politically and ethically problematic. From a perspective that is principally informed by Connolly's notion of the irredeemably plural self, we could make the case that the idea of a resolution or reconciliation overburdens the

238

individual by imposing an impossible unity as the regulative ideal of subjectivity. This generates a 'normalised' conception of the individual subject that is trapped in an impossible vision of unity, perfection, righteousness, self-certainty, and so on (Connolly, 1991a: 74, 75). From Connolly's perspective, this would fuel a revengeful and resentful conception of the self, which is unable to accept those impulsive or spontaneous elements of the self that do not fit the vision of 'responsible' agent (Connolly, 1991a: 80).

Habermas ethically overburdens the subject by forcing it to comply with an image of harmony and internal reconciliation. From a Nietzschean perspective, this is the image of a life denying subject that denies the internal pluralism of its own subjectivity, which will resent itself because it is unable to live up to the image of unity that it has internalised (Nietzsche, 1994: 28). If the subject is constantly watching itself from the gaze of harmony, then as Nietzsche says we all will suffer its resentment (Nietzsche, 1994: 28). For Habermas, the Cartesian subject is characterised by 'a relationship of the knowing subject to itself, which offers the key to the inner and absolutely certain sphere of representation we have of objects' (Habermas, 1992: 31). As I said, he has rejected this conception of the subject. However, we might ask just how distinct a communicative subject, who *had* reconciled the 'I' and the 'me' through a fully effective cognitive process of development, would be from the Cartesian *cogito*?

At this point we can draw the conclusion that there are indeed important differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists in their respective understandings of the subject. However, these differences are not straightforward and we require the conceptual oppositions between contradictions and paradoxes to make sense of them. On one level, Habermas appears to put forward a paradoxical conception of the subject which is constitutive of and constituted by its inter-subjective lifeworld characterised by an open phenomenological horizons. Nonetheless, his conception of the tensions internal to the subject is premised on a reconciliatory logic. Habermas's notion of the speaking subject takes the law of non-contradiction as its regulative

ideal. Unlike the post-structuralists, he imagines that the modern subject could become essentially reconciled with 'itself'.

Furthermore, my analysis has shown a number of similarities between Connolly, Laclau, and Mouffe's conception of politics. They all take modern pluralism as their starting point, and they embrace an inherently paradoxical conception of politics. The post-structuralists paradoxical conception of politics takes different forms, characterised by a number of constitutive tensions outlined respectively by Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe. Mouffe points to the ambiguous tension between agonism/antagonism and she describes the democratic paradox in terms of the permanent tension between the principles of 'liberty' and 'equality' (Mouffe, 2000: 3). Similarly, Laclau's is concerned with the 'mutual contamination' between the 'universal' and 'particular' and Connolly's notion of politics is premised on the paradoxical tensions between different forces: the forces of 'identity/difference, 'concentric/rhizomatic', and 'pluralism /pluralisation'.

Again, we can identify important points of similarity between Habermas and the post-structuralists with regard to politics. For Habermas, like the post-structuralists, modern politics is characterised by pluralism, by the question of legitimacy, and by the tension between the principles of liberty and equality (Habermas, 2001a)). All of the theorists examined in this thesis agree that modern politics is defined by a pluralism of values, that modernity is characterised by the end of a common or substantive notion of good. They all acknowledge that this is in contrast to pre-modern politics characterised by a single unified or common morality, where legitimacy was guaranteed by a monarchical authority, understood as the representative of a divine power.

Like the post-structuralists, Habermas appears to embrace two paradoxes in his account of modern politics. First, he identifies a 'legitmation gap' that emerges with the split between facticity (the existence of social norms) and 'validity' (the rational and social acceptance of a social norm) (Rehg, 1996: xvi). According to Habermas, in pre-modern society, facticity and validity were fused together in the representative of a divine or sacred law. He says that under political modernity legitimacy emerges paradoxically from legality (Habermas, 1996a: 33, 72,

73). This is similar to the post-structuralist claim that - with the severing of power, knowledge, and law - under conditions of political modernity there is no single power or source of authority that can legitimise power, law, or morals norms (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 186; Connolly, 1993c: 9). Second, Habermas accepts that the 'constitutional assembly cannot itself vouch for the legitimacy of the rules according to which it was constituted' (Habermas, 2001a: 774). He recognises that this leads to the problem of an 'infinite regress' in which the democratic process is caught in a circular self-constitution (Habermas, 2001a: 774). Habermas appears to accept that the paradox of legitimacy or of self-constitution is constitutive of modern democratic politics. Or does he?

Habermas clearly also shares with the post-structuralists a defence of the principles of liberty and equality. However, as I have said, there are subtle but significant differences between the way in which Habermas and Mouffe theorise this tension. In Chapter Five, I identified an ambiguity in the way in which Habermas theorises the relationship between public autonomy and private autonomy. Habermas refers to the tension as a 'paradox' (Habermas, 2001a: 766). However, he also appeals to a reconciliatory logic with his suggestion that the tension between the principles of liberty and equality could be reconciled in 'historical time' (Habermas, 2001a: 768). Indeed, Habermas questions whether the union between the principles of constitutionalism and democracy is indeed paradoxical. His aim in 'Constitutional Democracy: A Contradictory Union of Paradoxical Principles?' is to demonstrate that the principles of constitutionalism and democracy are 'co-original' (Habermas, 2001a). As I see it, Habermas does not circumvent the paradoxical nature of this relationship by introducing the idea of 'co-originality'. An opposition or contradiction of 'co-original' principles could be understood as a paradox. With Mouffe, I think we should understand the citizens engaging in temporary negotiations of the democratic paradox, which is never fully stabilised or permanently resolved in historical time. From this perspective, the tension between the two principles can always be re-instantiated and made explicit by showing the precarious nature of every hegemonic stabilisation. Indeed, Habermas

himself recognises that the 'resolution' of public and private autonomy is 'not immune to contingent interruptions and historical regressions' (Habermas, 2001a:774).

When Habermas suggests that the traditions of liberalism and democracy can be resolved in 'historical time', his argument resembles his claims about the tension between the 'I' and the 'me'. Indeed, Habermas presents modern liberal democratic polices as a cognitive learning process. As I said, he treats this as a (potentially) resolvable opposition rather than a constitutive paradox. As I see it, Habermas's presentation of the tensions within constitutional democracy is problematic. Mouffe is correct when she says that the principles of liberty and equality are associated with historically contingent traditions and that the tension between them should be treated as an inherent paradox (Mouffe, 2000b: 4). If this tension is understood as constitutive paradox, then we can understand modern politics as a consistent struggle to recast this necessary but impossible tension into different configurations.

In addition, we can draw a number of equivalences between different aspects of Habermas work and the individual post-structuralists, that is, in contrast to the other post-structuralists. For example, Habermas and Connolly have both challenged the idea that the state is the main locus of politics (Habermas, 1996a: 307, 359, 369; Connolly, 1991a: 218). Habermas associates the state with 'instrumentality rationality' and with the 'systems' world, and he is concerned with the 'colonising' effects of the state upon the everyday 'lifeworld' of individuals, communities, and groups (Habermas, 1987a: 153). Throughout his work, Habermas has been attentive to the ways in which a technocratic and 'paternalistic' state can undermine democratically organised public spaces. Similarly, Connolly is aware of the way in which the state is deeply implicated in the processes of normalisation. He draws attention to the ways in which democratic ideals are 'colonized by the state' (Connolly, 1991a: 210, 207). They both point to the need for a further democratisation of what Habermas calls the 'public sphere' and Connolly calls the 'agonistic space' of politics (Habermas, 1996a: 359; 1998: 373; Connolly, 1991a: xi; 2002: 173).

We can also establish a link between Laclau, Mouffe, and Habermas in contrast to Connolly. Despite their differences, these three thinkers all point to the need for some kind of consensus understood as the ground - and not the *telos* - of democratic politics (Laclau, 1996a: 43; Mouffe, 1995b: 41; Habermas, 1996a: 14). By way of contrast, according to Connolly 'we simply do not need a universal 'we' to foster the democratic governance of a population' (Connolly, 1995a: xx). As he sees it, multiple connections and collaborations between diverse and interdependent groups and individuals 'infused by a general ethos of critical responsiveness drawn from a variety of sources' will prove sufficient to govern a democratic society (Connolly, 1995a: xx, 94). In Chapter Four, I showed that Connolly's vision of 'network pluralism' resembles the ideas of anarchist thinkers like Bakunin. According to Connolly, we do not to create an explicit consensus or hegemonic foundation of the community because immanent forms of ordering simply emerge from the politics of becoming. By way of contrast, Laclau, Mouffe, and Habermas all insist upon the idea that some kind of consensus is a necessary pre-condition of modern democratic politics. From Laclau and Mouffe's perspective the idea of 'network pluralism' would never be sufficient to address the problem of 'antagonism', which is why they emphasise the need for the hegemonic construction of the political community. For Habermas, consensus or 'mutual trust' is always already *implicit* in the very fact of communication (Habermas, 1990: 136). The point is to make this *explicit* in our political practices by agreeing on valid norms to regulate the conduct of the community.

Despite the obvious difference between Mouffe and Habermas with respect to their social ontology. I have made the case that there are important similarities between them with respect to the way in which they understand consensus. Mouffe and Habermas theorise the conditions of the political community in terms of a set of *rules, norms,* or *practices* to be taken into consideration by the 'citizens' in performing actions. As I see it, this can be contrasted to Laclau, who, it seems, is concerned only to explore how different sectors or groups attempt to impose their own particularities or to stand in for and represent the whole political community (Laclau, 1996a: 43).

Indeed, Mouffe and Habermas are both concerned to theorise consensus in terms of 'citizenship' and some form of 'constitutionalism', understood in terms of the rules of civility that preside over the civil association (Mouffe, 1993: 4, 123; 1995b: 34; Habermas, 1990: 88-89; 1993: 31). Mouffe's Oakeshottean use of the term *respublica* understood as a 'practice of specifying conditions to be subscribed in choosing performances' clearly resonates with Habermas's notion of the 'norms' which specify rules to be followed in performing an action or practice.

Mouffe and Habermas both understand a democratic society as one in which citizens are united around a common recognition of the 'ethico-political' values of liberty and equality. Mouffe understands democracy as concerned with civic participation, republican citizenship, and with the struggle to institute the *demos*, which is a temporary hegemonic articulation of the 'people' (Mouffe, 1993b: 7, 33; 1996: 46). Like Mouffe, for Habermas, democracy is concerned with popular sovereignty, civic participation, and the self-legitimation or governance of the people (Habermas, 1996a: 488). In contrast, Laclau theorises a democratic society as one which 'permanently shows the contingent character of it own foundation' by keeping the gap between the universal (as such) and the particularism (that temporarily embodies universality) permanently open (Laclau, 2000: 86). It is not at all clear in his theory how we can distinguish a democratic from hegemonic articulation from non-democratic forms of hegemony. For Laclau, hegemony is simply the outcome of the struggle by different social sectors to become the impossible object society-as-totality (Wenman, 2003a). In fact, what Laclau calls hegemony – i.e. the part standing in temporarily for the whole - is precisely what Habermas calls paternalism, which from Habermas's perspective is actually the failure of democracy (Habermas, 1996a: 504). By way of contrast, Mouffe's account of a radical democratic hegemony as *societas* resonates with Habermas's notion of constitutional democracy, which is concerned with ensuring both the public and private autonomy of citizens (Habermas, 2001a: 767).

Clearly Mouffe and Habermas share important similarities in the way in which they theorise the political community; this is despite the fact that she endorses a paradoxical notion of

244

he subject, whereas, he appeals to the logic of reconciliation and the principle of non-contradiction. I will explore Habermas's account of paternalism to draw out another point of contiguity between Habermas's and Mouffe's work on democratic 'citizenship'. Habermas draws a distinction between paternalism and constitutional democracy (Habermas, 1996a: 454). He understands paternalism in terms of 'administrative agencies' or external bodies imposing 'rights' or modes of being upon the citizenry (Habermas, 1996a: 78, 188) The term paternalism relates to Habermas's earlier discussions in *Legitimation Crisis*, where he challenged Niklas Luhmann systems theory (Habermas, 1988: 136-142). This is a non-participatory model of politics where the administrative system has assumed the commanding position to solve the problems of a complex modern society (Habermas, 1988b: 134). In this earlier work, Habermas invoked the notion of active will formation of a participatory citizenry to combat the encroaching effects of the what he called 'systems' imperatives, that is, the instruments of money, power, and the state on the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987a: 385).

As Habermas sees it, if citizens do not actively participate in the continuous recreation of the political community then there is a likelihood that 'paternalistic monopolies' will step in and hinder the process of democratisation (Habermas, 1996a: 318). According to Habermas, 'actual participation in political action, deliberation and conflict' makes citizens 'aware' of their 'remote and indirect connection [with] others' as well as their commonalities and differences, which further facilitates their sense of autonomy, self-understanding, self-realization and allow for self-transformation (Habermas, 1996a: 280). Participation and public deliberation helps individuals to develop important 'capacities' of practical reasoning and engage in processes of reasoning to 'arrive at judgements they can defend in argument' and debate (Warren, 1995: 172; Bohman, 1994: 897). In *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas stresses the importance of the 'public sphere' as a 'communication structure rooted in the lifeworld through the associational networks of civil society' where individuals 'participate in discussions about matters of common concern' and is the vehicle of 'public opinion' (Habermas, 1996a: 307, 359; Warren, 1995: 171). For Habermas,

245

the 'informal' unregulated public sphere (and not the formal regulated institutions and administrative bodies such as parliaments) is not conceived as an 'organisation' but rather as 'spontaneous' and 'wild' 'archaic structure' that coalesces in an open inclusive and 'complex networks' of 'overlapping, subcultural politics having fluid, temporal, social, and substantive boundaries' (Habermas, 1996a: 304, 307). In Habermas's view, paternalistic authorities are anti-democratic because they deny the addressees of the law the opportunity to be its authors, and they also make citizens 'passive' by conferring rights upon them (Habermas, 1996a: 79, 454). In other words, for Habermas paternalistic authorities restrict rather than improve the 'methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion' (Habermas, 1996a: 304). He makes the case that rights have to be politically constructed through active participation otherwise the danger is that citizens treat the paternalistically imposed rights as 'pre-given moral facts' (Habermas, 1996a: 454). Habermas clearly favours democracy over paternalism as the basis for the political community.

The paternalism/constitutionalism divide in Habermas's work is useful because it helps to establish the contrasting ways in which Laclau and Mouffe theorise the notion of hegemony (Wenman, 2003a). In Chapter Four, I explained that for Laclau the moment of hegemony is understood as precisely the moment when a part of society stands in to represent the interests of society as a whole (Laclau and Zac, 1994: 18). By way of contrast, for Mouffe hegemony is understood as moment of collective identification through democratic citizenship and with the rules of the *'respublica'* (Wenman, 2003a: 599). It would not be implausible to describe Laclau's notion of hegemony as being in some sense a resemblance of Habermas's account of paternalism, whereas, Habermas's notion of democracy sounds similar to Mouffe's notion of radical and plural democracy. Habermas is concerned to avoid the 'hegemony' of some paternalistic authority standing in for and impersonating society as a whole (Habermas, 1990: 208-209). Like Mouffe, he is more concerned with active, participatory and collective citizenship. Like Mouffe, Habermas, believes that the 'ethical substance of a political integration that unites the citizens of

the nation must remain "neutral" with respect to the differences between the ethical-cultural communities within the nation, each of which is integrated around its own conception of the good' (Habermas, 1988a: 227). Habermas's proposal for constitutional democracy is 'not based on a shared conception of the good, but on a more abstract form of recognition contained in the idea of free and equal consociates under law' (Baynes, 1995: 221).

However, by drawing upon this point of similarity between Mouffe and Habermas I do not mean to suggest that there are not fundamental differences between them, that is, in the way they theorise the construction of the consensus. Mouffe shares with Laclau the belief that consensus is hegemonically constructed through creating a chain of equivalences between different sectors of society and that this necessarily involves exclusion (Mouffe, 1993: 69; 1995a: 1535). By way of contrast, for Habermas, consensus is necessarily inherent in communication. For Habermas, the very fact of inter-subjective communication presupposes the 'idealizations' of consensus as being implicit in language (Habermas, 1984a: 287; 1990, 86, 88). In other words, the communicative subject inherently conforms to a certain mode of consensus that is fully inclusive and 'is essentially democratic in structure' (Rasmussen, 1996: 1079). Habermas attributes his notion of the subject with certain linguistic and moral competencies. He focuses upon moral consciousness as an aspect of the ego and in particular the cognitive side, which, for Habermas, is the ability to make moral judgement (Habermas, 1995: 45; Habermas, 1979: 78). The notion of reciprocity as fixed in the general structures of possible interaction - which according to Habermas is a characteristic of the modern subject - further allows Habermas to claim that the subject can act in an appropriate manner in conflictual situations. By way of contrast, Mouffe's work has shown that we cannot take a consensus of democratic values for granted. From her perspective, consensus is something that has to be politically constructed, and will necessarily involve exclusions.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have undertaken a number of tasks. First, I have demonstrated that much of Mouffe's critique of Habermas's 'rationalism' is misfounded. Second, I have shown that Mouffe and Habermas share a number of important similarities with Oakeshott in the way they theorise the basis of the modern political community. In addition, I have constructed a complex map to show the similarities and differences between Habermas and the other post-structuralists. This reinforces my hypothesis that we cannot draw a straightforward dichotomy between the work of Habermas and post-structuralism. Indeed, I have shown that there are a number of important similarities between Habermas and Mouffe's politics. However, despite these important points of similarity, I have identified two fundamental differences between the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists. Habermas treats consensus and the idealizing 'presuppositions of argumentation' as a necessary condition for communication and argumentation. This has significant implications for his conception of political participants coming together to generate a 'united will of free and equal citizens'. Habermas assumes that the practice of communication is intrinsically democratic in structure. Similarly, a reconciliatory logic is evident in Habermas's attempt to resolve the opposing tensions of the 'I' and 'me' internal to the individual subject. The notion of a reconciled subject as regulative ideal reappears in Habermas's politics, and, in particular in the theoretical underpinnings of his political philosophy.

# Chapter Seven

## Paradoxes and Politics

### Introduction

In the Introduction I established a conceptual distinction between contradictions, dialectical oppositions, and paradoxes. The Aristotlean law of non-contradiction insists that a tension between a pair of apparently conflicting entities existing at the same time and in the same sense - such as A and *not* A - must potentially be resolvable by deeming one side of the tension true and the other false. Hegelian dialectical logic presents the idea that a tension between two opposing notions or phenomena can be sublated into a third term or higher unity. I described a paradox as a union of contradictory or oppositional principles that cannot be resolved or reconciled, but which exists in a permanently unresolved state of tension. Although the laws of non-contradiction and dialectics are distinct logics, I made the case that the goal or *telos* of resolution is implicit in both of them. All three logics have been part of the history of Western philosophy. The purpose of distinguishing between them is to establish a heuristic tool to explore the similarities and differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists with regard to their respective conceptions of the subject and politics.

I have used the distinction between contradictions, dialectical oppositions, and paradoxes to examine the three research hypotheses that I specified in the Introduction. My first task was to demonstrate that the charge of 'performative contradiction' levelled by Habermas against the post-structuralists does not hold up to scrutiny. My second task was to demonstrate that the relationship between the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists cannot be separated into a

straightforward dichotomy. This is my third task: to demonstrate that despite Habermas's claims to the contrary, his founding premises are also inherently paradoxical. In Chapter Two, I demonstrated that the post-structuralists are not caught in a performative contradiction because they accept the inherently paradoxical nature of their supposedly 'totalizing' critiques of reason. In Chapter Six, I drew out a number of important similarities between Mouffe's notion of *societas* and Habermas's theory of discourse ethics and I aligned aspects of Habermas's work with individual post-structuralists in relation to the others, to develop a complex map of similarities and differences. My principal objective in this chapter is to show that (despite the general perception of Habermas as a Kantian transcendental philosopher) on a close examination Habermas's justification for the presuppositions of argumentations looks decidedly paradoxical rather than an ultimate philosophical foundation, i.e. an 'Archimedean point' that transcends space, time, and culture.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I examine the explicitly 'Kantian' aspect of Habermas's work to assess the way in which Habermas justifies his presuppositions of argumentation. In order to undertake this task, I initially present an exposition of Kant's categorical imperative followed by a brief summary of Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation. That is, to show that they both share the idea that these moral principles are 'necessary and universal'. Following this, I examine Habermas's justification of his presuppositions of argumentation more carefully. I show that in his attempt to avoid the 'Munchhausen trilemma' (explained below) Habermas moves away from any strong claim to 'ultimate foundation' and moves closer to an acknowledgement of the 'paradoxical' status of these foundational premises. In section two, I summarise some of the implications of my research findings for the relationship between ontology and politics. I make the case that there is no necessary relationship between a given ontology and a given politics, but nonetheless there must be some form of relationship between ontology and politics. In section three, I explain why I favour a Nietzschean inspired approach to ontology, the subject, and politics. Drawing upon the

work of Nietzsche and Connolly, I argue that a paradoxical political space allows for different political ontologies and epistemologies to co-exist in such a way that individuals and groups can contest the mysteries of existence in complex relations of interdependence. I conclude this chapter by suggesting that there are important tensions and ambiguities in Habermas's work, which perhaps intimate to the idea that his 'necessary and universal' presuppositions of argumentations' mask a paradox.

**The paradoxical nature of the presuppositions of argumentation?**

In the development of his theory of communicative action and of discourse ethics, Habermas has drawn upon a wide range of thinkers and theoretical traditions. He is not steadfastly loyal to any of these traditions. For example, I have shown that we can identify both Kantian and Hegelian aspects to Habermas's theory of discourse ethics, and that in his attempt to address Hegel's critique of Kant he has moved much closer to the Hegelian position. By bringing out this Hegelian aspect of Habermas's work - which is often under theorised or overlooked in the secondary literature - I have been able to draw a number of similarities with Mouffe's conception of the political community. However, I now propose to look more carefully at the distinctly Kantian aspects of Habermas's work. This would seem to be the place to look for the most obvious differences between Habermas and the post-structuralists. The purpose of this section is to identify the explicitly 'Kantian' aspects of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics to assess whether on a close examination we can identify a number of tensions and ambiguities that could be construed as paradoxes. Indeed, my intention in this section is to demonstrate my third hypothesis that Habermas's supposed Kantian foundationalism is inconsistent and appears to resemble a paradox itself. As I have said, Habermas attributes the presuppositions of argumentation with a 'universal and necessary' status. However, I contend that in this attempt to articulate the 'universal and necessary' status of these principles, Habermas appears to move away from making a strong claim to an 'ultimate foundation' - a kind of Archimedean point -

towards a position that is in fact closer to the post-structuralists. Habermas himself describes his position as a 'weak transcendentalism' (Habermas, 1993: 83). In order to make this argument, I examine Habermas's response to the 'Baron von Munchhausen's trilemma', which is the idea that all attempts at ultimate justification are logically impossible because they fall prey to one of three unacceptable situations of 'logical circularity, dogmatism, or infinite regress' (Habermas, 1990: 79).

In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant sought to 'establish the supreme principle of morality' (Kant, 1999: 5). He claimed to discover a formal rule of action, which is universal in its application, unconditionally necessary, and transcendental in the sense that it is valid or morally binding for all rational beings irrespective of historical or cultural context (Kant, 1999: 31, 34). Kant called this supreme principle of morality the 'categorical imperative', which acts as a maxim for moral action: 'act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law' (Kant, 1999: 31). The categorical principle is a 'rational principle' or 'moral law' that establishes the rule individuals ought to obey not to arrive at a desired end, but irrespective of the consequences that may follow. Furthermore, according to Kant, it is not sufficient for an action to conform to the moral law, in order for an action to be moral, it must be done for the sake of the moral law as a duty (Kant, 1999: 3). For Kant, the categorical imperative is an example of what he calls 'synthetic *a priori*' knowledge, that is, knowledge which cannot be deduced from experience. Instead, this kind of knowledge is a 'universal and necessary' truth - a kind of unalterable 'Archimedean' point – for moral actions and human relationships (Kant, 1993: 189). Synthetic *a priori* knowledge represents principles that the mind can know and understand, even if they cannot be empirically proved.

Kant also attributes the categorical imperative with the status of a 'regulative ideal'. According to Kant, an ideal is 'not a concrete idea' but provides reason with a 'standard of action …which may help us to reform ourselves' (Kant, 1993: 395). By making certain concepts ideal, Kant attributes them with a status beyond human construction, but they nonetheless have the

power to regulate, because he says they are part of human 'reason'. Kant's moral law of the categorical imperative is underpinned by the 'golden rule', which is '[s]o act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means' (Kant, 1999: 38). This is a universal principle of reciprocity, which is concerned with the idea of respect for all beings, and which - according to Kant - ought to underlie all moral actions.

There are clear similarities between Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation and Kant's categorical imperative in the sense that they are both attributed with a necessary and universal status. Nevertheless, as I have said there are two significant differences that differentiate these approaches. First, unlike Kant's categorical imperative, Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation are 'substantive in kind' because they have an 'ethical' import (Habermas, 1990: 198; Benhabib; 1986, 305). Second, the presuppositions of argumentation are inherently inter-subjective rules that 'define the essence of communicative speech' (Habermas, 1990: 88-89; Benhabib, 1986: 305). They are unlike Kant's categorical imperative, which individuals use as rule to self-legislate their own conduct (Benhabib, 1986: 305). This is the point where the Hegelian aspects in Habermas's work come in. Habermas's discourse ethics relies upon a collective citizenry to enact and embody the principle of universalisation in their every day practices; otherwise, the norm is non-existent. They cannot be forced upon a citizenry. A given norm is legitimate as long as citizens observe its general effects in their daily practices. However, for analytical purposes I will put these differences between Habermas and Kant to one side for the moment in order to interrogate the supposedly apodeictic status of the presuppositions of argumentation. As I have said, like Kant's notion of the categorical imperative, Habermas attributes his core principle of reciprocity with a 'necessary and universal' status. In other words, the presuppositions of argumentation would supposedly be beyond contestation. They are as follows:

1.1 No speaker may contradict himself.

1.2 Every speaker who applies a predicate F to an object A must be prepared to apply F to all other objects resembling A in all relevant respects.

1.3 Different speakers may not use the same expression with different meanings.

2.1 Every speaker may assert only what he really believes.

2.2 A person who disputes a proposition or norm not under discussion must provide a reason for wanting to do so.

3.1 Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.

3.2a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.

3.2b Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.

3.2c Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.

3.3 No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights laid down in (3.1) and (3.2) (Habermas, 1990: 89).

According to Habermas, every participant in a practical discourse *must* assume the existence of these 'inescapable and necessary presuppositions of argumentation': they are *apriori*, in the sense that they are supposedly implicit in the very fact of communicative speech (Habermas, 1990: 89). They regulate the utterances and interactions of participants by providing 'the general symmetry of conditions that every competent speaker who believe[s] he is engaging in argumentation must presuppose' (Habermas, 1990: 88).

The presuppositions of argumentation are central to Habermas's theory of discourse ethics. Habermas says that the 'discourse principle' presupposes the 'principle of universalisation', which in turn can be derived from the presuppositions of argumentation (Habermas, 1990: 88). The discourse principle reads as follows: 'only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity *as*

*participants in a practical discourse*' (Habermas, 1990: 66). The 'principle of universalisation' is that 'all affected [by a norm] can accept the consequences and the side effects its *general* observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone's interests (and those consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation)' (Habermas, 1990: 65). According to Benhabib, the principle of universalisation is 'redundant' because it 'adds little but consequentialist confusion' to Habermas's theory (Benhabib, 1992: 37). She argues that the principles of 'universal moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity' are adequate to serve as the 'only universalisation test' (Benhabib, 1992: 37). I will focus on Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation rather than the principle of universalisation or the discourse principle.

Habermas's position is in marked contrast to the post-structuralists. Connolly does not seek to justify his notion of 'identity/difference' by attributing this tension with an apodeictic status that is supposedly beyond revision. For example, Connolly repeatedly asserts the contestable nature of his categories. Zizek has argued that Laclau treats the notion of 'hegemony' as a universal category, that is, as an abstract 'a priori formal matrix of [the] social space' (Zizek, 2000a: 111). However, Laclau has rejected this claim. In response to Zizek, he has said that '[o]nly if I fully accept the contingency and historicity of my system of categories, but renounce any attempt to grasp the meaning of its historical variation conceptually, can I start finding a way out of [the] blind alley' of *apriori* universalism (Laclau, 2000: 201).

Habermas recognises that he needs to justify the foundational status he attributes to the presuppositions of argumentation against the claims of the 'moral sceptics', and that this is no straightforward task. He says 'I am not dramatizing the situation when I say that faced with the demand for a justification cognitivists [like himself] are in trouble' (Habermas, 1990: 79). He says 'the skeptic' feels incited to 'recast his *doubts* about the possibility of justifying a universalist morality as an *assertion* that it is impossible to justify such a morality' (Habermas, 1990: 79). For example, Habermas is aware of Hans Albert's 'critical rationalist' (or Popperian)

critique of those cognitivists who attempt to justify 'moral principles with universal validity' (Habermas, 1990: 79). In this critique, Albert makes recourse to the 'Baron Von Munchhausen's trilemma' (Habermas, 1990: 79). According to this trilemma, every attempt at an ultimate justification - with regards to morality - is indeed faced with one of the following predicaments: infinite regress, logical circularity, or dogmatism (Habermas, 1990: 79). Habermas does not demonstrate how his justification of the presuppositions of argumentation avoids the Munchhausen trilemma. Instead, he simply claims that Karl-Otto Apel has 'refuted the objection to the "Munchhausen trilemma"' (Habermas, 1990: 79).

There is not the scope to explore Apel's supposed 'refutation' of the Munchhausen trilemma in any detail. However, I will briefly lay out the main points because it helps explain the differences between Habermass and the post-structuralists. Like Habermas, Apel is another leading German theorist who has developed a theory of communicative ethics, which is comparable to Habermas's theory. Apel has developed his 'transcendental-semiotic' position as an explicit alternative to the 'postmodernists' and to Popperian critical rationalism (Apel, 1998). He claims that his 'transcendental-semiotic' account of ultimate justification does not fall foul of the 'Munchhausen trilemma' because this method 'ascertains only what it itself relies on as a method of foundation; it ascertains only those kind of presuppositions that itself cannot dispute if it is to avoid a performative contradiction' (Apel, 1998: 91; Apel, 1987: 277). In other words, Apel does not refute the Munchhausen trilemma, he simply asserts that his theory cannot be articulated without recourse to the presuppositions of argumentative discourse. Like Habermas, Apel claims that 'we must presuppose that there are true statements in distinction from false ones', which can be 'thematized in an argumentative discourse' and can 'be proved to be inter-subjectively valid or false' (Apel, 1998: 87). He claims that everyone engaged in communication must presuppose the possible existence of an 'ideal communication community', that is, ideal conditions where individuals are able to formulate problems and possible solutions to those problems free from power and manipulation (Apel, 1998: 87). Apel makes the strong claim that

these presuppositions of argumentative discourse are 'ultimate foundations', i.e. they *must* be presupposed by all participants otherwise they fall into a 'performative self-contradiction' (Apel, 1987: 277; Papastephanou, 1998: 5-6). However, I do not think Apel avoids the Munchhausen predicament. In fact, we could argue that he simply asserts the ultimate necessity of the presupposition of argumentative discourse.

Habermas agrees with Apel's claim that Popper and the post-Nietzscheans fall into a performative contradiction. However, unlike Apel, Habermas is not prepared to make such a strong claim to an 'ultimate foundation'. Indeed, he says an 'ultimate justification' for the presuppositions of argumentation is 'neither possible nor desirable' (Habermas, 1993: 84). In fact, Habermas goes so far as to say that he can modify Apel's argument so as to 'give up any claim to an "ultimate justification" without damage to the argument' (Habermas, 1990: 77). He shifts 'the deep structures of communication' from Apel's transcendental ultimate ground to a 'fallible and hypothetical ground' (Chambers, 1996: 112-3). In giving up the notion of an ultimate foundation, Habermas moves away from Apel's stringent Kantianism and introduces an element of ambiguity into his own account of foundations. Indeed, Simone Chambers has pointed out that Habermas 'hopes to avoid the dangers of foundationalism while maintaining a foundation for this theory' (Chambers, 1996: 113). Although it is never explicitly stated, Habermas intimates that any attempt at ultimate justification is 'dogmatic'. He says that it is only when the 'philosopher finds himself constrained does he offer "ultimate justifications"' (Habermas, 1993: 79). Habermas says that his justification of the presuppositions of argumentation is not based on an ultimate foundation, but neither is it mere 'convention' (Habermas, 1990: 89). As I have said, Habermas claims that the 'necessary and universal' presuppositions of argumentation are 'unavoidable' and 'inescapable' but he also insists they are not 'ultimate foundations' (Habermas, 1990: 81, 89). In other words, he deploys the same charge as Apel against the post-structuralists, but *without* the ammunition of an 'ultimate foundation' because he is not prepared to make this strong claim to justify his moral principle. This position sounds similar to the post-structuralists.

In the remainder of this section I identify a number of apparent ambiguities of Habermas's justification for the presuppositions of argumentation. Habermas says that the 'rules [of argumentation] that subjects capable of speech and action must use if they are able to participate in argumentation is in a certain sense not fallible' (Habermas, 1990: 97). As I have said, they are 'necessary' and 'universal'. This would seem to be a clear difference between Habermas and the post-structuralists. The post-structuralists accept with Habermas that every practice consists of rules of some kind or another. However, the post-structuralists also claim that there is no single determinate way of following a rule (Tully, 1995: 108). Drawing upon Wittgenstein, Mouffe has argued that a rule is always subject to the possibility of amendment in the activity of applying the rule. Individuals alter the rules of a given practice as they go along (Wittgenstein, 1987: 19, 83; Tully, 1995: 108). However, Habermas also claims that his 'reconstruction of this pretheortical knowledge and the claim to universality' for the presuppositions of argumentation *is* fallible and that he has to put his 'reconstructions up for discussion in the same way in which the logician or the linguist, for example, presents his theoretical knowledge' (Habermas, 1990: 97). In fact, with his recourse to the notion of 'performative contradiction' Habermas relies on an essentially negative justification for the most fundamental aspect of his theory. He says that: '[d]emonstrating the existence of performative contradictions helps to identify the rules necessary for any argumentation game to work; if one is to argue at all, there are no substitutes. The fact that there are no alternatives to these rules of argumentation is what is being proved; the rules themselves are not being justified' (Habermas 1990: 95). This statement suggests that Habermas recognises that he cannot prove the necessity of the rules of argumentation. Unlike Apel, Habermas is apparently content to illustrate the 'inescapability' of the rules of argumentation. However, this fallibilism does not stop Habermas explicitly stating the content of the rules (that cannot be proved). Nor does this stop him from asserting that these rules ought to govern the practices of communicative actors. In other words, in his attempt to avoid dogmatism, Habermas appears to have found himself caught in something

like a paradoxical argument. On the one hand, he makes it clear that the presuppositions of argumentation can neither be proved nor justified. However, on the other hand, he readily identifies the content of these rules which he says are 'necessary and universal'. With his charge of performative contradiction, Habermas effectively puts the onus of disproof onto to his critics. In effect he says 'I dare you to disprove these rules without falling into inconsistency': he is unable to give a positive justification for the fundaments of his own theory. In fact, Habermas has not demonstrated or explained what he means by the terms 'unavoidable' or 'necessary'. Indeed, Finlayson has argued that 'neither Habermas not his followers' have been able to 'provide' a 'formally valid derivation' for the principle of universalisation (Finlayson, 2000: 321, 335). If Habermas's presuppositions of argumentation are neither ultimate foundations nor conventions, then perhaps the only other option left is to accept that (like the founding principles of the post-structuralists) they are both transcendental and conventional at the same time. He does not attempt to reconcile this opposition, nor does he deem one position true and the other false. Indeed, this seems to indicate a paradox. The fact that Habermas is unwilling to confirm Apel's dogmatic assertion of an 'ultimate justification' suggests that his theory maybe masking a paradox.

It seems pertinent here to mention that when Kant himself ponders the task of providing the ultimate 'condition' of the 'necessity' of the moral law, he in fact acknowledges the impossibility of this task, and he presents this impossibility in the form of a paradox (Kant, 1999: 66). Kant says that while we do not 'comprehend the practical unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, we nonetheless comprehend its *incomprehensibility*' (Kant, 1999: 66). At the heart of Kant's attempt to justify the necessity of a supreme moral principle is seemingly a paradox (Paton, 1989: 123). Perhaps all the while that Habermas is unwilling to provide an 'ultimate foundation' for the supposed 'necessity' of the presuppositions of argumentation we are left with no option but to conclude that Habermas's justification for the moral principle is also based on a paradox.

259

## Ontology and Politics

My thesis brings to the fore a series of questions concerning the relationship between ontology and politics. In this section, I draw a number of conclusions with respect to this relationship. In the introduction I made the case that there is no necessary relationship between a given ontology and a particular form of politics. I argued that that we cannot derive a single theory of politics or a set of concrete political manifesto from a particular social ontology. As I see it, it is always possible to derive a number of different political positions from a given ontological framework. For example, we need only look at the multitude of 'socialist' groups and organisations - past and present - that claim to derive their political agenda from Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. Also, it is important to note in this respect that Laclau and Zizek have disputed the political import of the 'Lacanian' ontology of 'constitutive lack'. Whilst they clearly share the same ontology their political prescriptions are very different. Zizek has made recourse to a conventional Marxist account of class politics and a 'Leninist' account of the need to seize political power (Zizek, 1999: 236). By way if contrast, Laclau's Gramscian inspired notion of politics emphasises the role of the new social movements and the need to build a collective hegemony (Laclau, 1996a: 43). This reinforces the idea that we can derive a number of different political projects and agendas from a single ontological horizon, which are not necessary compatible with each other. Perhaps even left and right-wing interpretations can be made of the same ontology. For example, Mouffe and Leo Strauss both draw on the underlying assumptions of Hobbes and Schmitt, i.e. the central significance to politics of the problem of violent antagonism. However, Mouffe invokes these theorists to justify the ideals of democracy and pluralism, whereas, Strauss uses them to reinforce a neo-conservative or right-wing interpretation (Mouffe, 1993; 2001b; Strauss, 1963; 1975).

Nevertheless, as I see it, the fact that different political theories can be drawn from the same ontological foundations does not mean there is *no* relationship between ontology and

260

politics. Thinkers like Rorty who claim that we can simply do away with 'metaphysics' because it is of no use to public practices and debate are mistaken (Rorty, 1989: 88-94; 1998). As Connolly says, every political theory or programme is infused with ontological assumptions. These assumptions will necessarily affect the political theory in some way: there is always some form of relationship between a given ontological and political position, and ontology necessarily has political effect. Every ontology invokes a 'set of fundamental understandings about the relation of humans to themselves, to others, and to the world' (Connolly, 1987b: 9). As I have said, ontology is concerned with the question of the conditions of possibility for the existence of things in the world. A social or political ontology, therefore, provides us with the general conditions of politics and political relations. This can be distinguished from - what Heidegger would call - the ontic fact of concrete political practices of individuals and groups. Ontology presents a framework from which to describe and interpret the world. I will briefly explore the political implications of accepting the ontological necessity of a paradoxical and incomplete conception of the subject in order to substantiate these claims.

The ontologies of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe are constitutively incomplete because they are premised on inherently paradoxical principles that cannot be reconciled: the conditions of possibility of the subject and politics are simultaneously the conditions of impossibility. I have explained that they do not theorise this paradoxical notion of ontology is exactly the same way. Laclau understands this incompletion as a moment of 'pure negativity', that is, embodied in the Lacanian notion of the Real or the notion of 'antagonism' (Laclau, 1996a: 37). In Connolly's work, the limit that prevents ontological completion is theorised as an abundance or an excess: the 'protean', 'rhizomatic' or 'pluralizing' forces of 'life' (Connolly, 1993a: 58, 94). For Mouffe this ontological limit is understood as a 'constitutive outside' characteristic of all identity relations and objectivity (Mouffe, 1993: 2; 2000b: 13). The post-structuralists all attribute ontology with a *quasi*-foundational status, that is, a groundless grounding or a paradox. The very concepts that are posited as necessary to any social formation or notion of a subject also

undermine the possibility of realising society or the subject as a complete whole. Whilst, there is no single political project to be drawn from these theories, they nonetheless have political import. The terms and notions used to elaborate their social ontology and conceptions of the subject appear explicitly in their political analysis. For example, Laclau's notion of constitutive lack provides an explanation for the motivation for the struggle for hegemony: politics is staged around a permanent 'lack', which the hegemonic subject tries to fill through the struggle for society as a whole.

From the post-structuralist perspective the open character of social ontology means that no political practice can claim to be total or complete. The ontology of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe, allows for the paradoxical nature of the subject and politics to be brought to the fore. They do not envision politics as a harmonious space in which difference is eliminated or assimilated. Instead, they embrace a conception of politics that accepts discord, conflict, paradox, agonism, and perspectivism Nevertheless, Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe accept that there is no direct political manifestation which can be derived as a 'true' reflection of their particular ontological perspective. Similarly, no political programme can claim to be inherently democratic. I have shown that Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe all assert a preference for some form or other of democracy. However, the paradoxical and incomplete nature of ontology means that any concrete political manifestation is always a temporary articulation that has managed to stabilise itself. This applies equally to their own political prescriptions of 'radical and plural democracy' and 'agonistic pluralism'. Every successful political practice is one that has been sedimented or naturalised in a particular context. This post-structuralist position is distinct from an ontology that holds out for an ideal of reconciliation - such as Habermas - and therefore holds out for a democratic politics that is realisable in 'historical time'.

In the first section of this thesis, I argued that Habermas's conception of the subject shares similarities with the post-structuralist understanding of the subject. Like the post-

structuralists, Habermas understands the subject as an ontological problematic, and he understands ontology in phenomenological terms, i.e. as characterised by transient horizons. For Habermas, the intersubjective subject in 'its' phenomenological 'lifeworld' initiates change and prevents the closure of any system. However, the differences between the two approaches became apparent when I demonstrated that Habermas also presents his notion of the subject as a cognitive developmental subject that has acquired certain moral and communicative competencies through a 'self-correcting learning process' (Habermas, 2000a: 774). According to Habermas, when individuals fail to act in accordance with those norms that they have acquired through phylogenetic and ontogenetic processes then they are burdened by their conscience, and this becomes a central factor in his theory of politics (Habermas, 1979: 91).

By way of contrast, the post-structuralists do not attribute the subject with concrete competencies, understood as some kind of product of the historical process. Habermas's conception of the subject effectively fuses the ontic (i.e. the modern reflexive subject) and the ontological (i.e. the inter-subjective communicative being) conception of the subject. By way of contrast, the post-structuralists delineate a strictly 'ontological' conception of the subject divested of any ontic content. For the post-structuralists, it is important to keep the gap between the ontological conception of the subject and concrete historical or ontic social 'subject positions' permanently open. The post-structuralist concept of the subject is political not because it possesses certain moral competencies, but because it disrupts the notion of full-identity or completion. From the post-structuralist perspective, a political programme has to be receptive to this incompletion. At the same time, these perspectives suggest that we need to be cautious about defending certain 'ontological' agendas that may be political exclusionary. For all of the post-structuralists explored in this thesis, social ontology opens up new and different avenues for understanding politics, rather than providing a necessary or direct foundation for their political philosophies.

## Agonism and paradoxes

In this section, I endorse Connolly's notion of agonism and I briefly elaborate an agonistic conception of paradoxical politics. 'Agonism' signifies the contestation and struggle between a multiplicity of individuals and groups (Connolly, 1991a; Honnig, 1996; Mouffe, 2000). For Connolly, the agonistic space provides the conditions for existential struggle for self-making to flourish (Connolly, 2004: 174). We could say that the agonistic space of politics is especially conducive to the idea of paradox, because agonism is predicated upon the idea that there is no objective ontological truth or 'complete' identity (Connolly, 1995a: 188). Agonistic democracy allows for struggle, strife, and 'negotiation' between competing ontological and ethical conceptions (Connolly, 1999b: 154). Indeed, for Connolly, 'agonistic respect' is the antidote to fundamentalism. The fundamentalist asserts the 'singular' and 'absolute' authority of his/her identity as grounding the claim to 'truth' and treats those that do not fit this identity as 'evil' (Connolly, 1995a: 105, 194). The fundamentalist leaves no room for disagreement because s/he does not accept the 'contingency' of his/her own identity (Connolly, 1998: 95). By way of contrast, an agonistic politics allows for different identities and truths to emerge in a paradoxical space, where no identity is 'natural', definite or beyond contestation (Connolly, 1995a: 188). Connolly's notion of 'critical responsiveness' would introduce 'generosity' into the constantly re-negotiated space of the 'agon' (Connolly, 2004: 176).

Indeed, as I see it, Connolly's Nietzschean notion of the 'self' - understood as a relation of force to itself - provides the most promising theory of the subject examined in this thesis. Connolly offers a layered conception of the 'self' which addresses both the internal and external pluralism constitutive of the modern subject. He addresses both the conscious and unconscious and the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the self and (unlike Laclau and Mouffe) those 'corporeal' dispositions that operate 'below the threshold of reflection' (Connolly, 2002; 35). I agree with Connolly that the self 'contains pools of energy' and 'impulse' that decenter any notion of a coherent and transparent subject (Connolly, 1993a: 10).

Again, the value of Connolly's Nietzschean approach is that he draws attention to the fact that the human subject is susceptible to suffering and therefore potentially the site of 'resentment violence, depression, and self-loathing paranoia' (Nietzsche, 1994: 21; Connolly, 1993c: 157, 158). However, Connolly shows that 'resentment' is not a permanent feature of the self, but something that can be worked upon through techniques of the self. As Simons puts it, '[p]erhaps there is no more pressing political need than arts of the self through which people detach themselves from their current subjectivities' (Simons, 1995: 123). This is because the self can change its particular 'organization' of 'desire' through 'adult strategies of 'self-modification' (Connolly, 1995a: 58). Indeed, as Connolly says that individuals can use the energies which construct desire to resist resentment (Connolly, 1995a: 50, 55). Connolly's political theory draws attention to the different ways in which individuals experience resentment. Sometimes individuals and groups identify another person or community as the cause of suffering. However, this only serves to heighten their own suffering. From the Nietzschean perspective, if the individual responds to an injustice through a paranoid, fearful, and revengeful manner then they have effectively enslaved themselves to the oppressor or to 'hatred' (Nietzsche, 1994: 19). However, if the individual acts from a position of openness then they have acted affirmatively and creatively (Nietzsche, 1994: 22, 53). At other times, individuals are the cause of their own suffering at which point it is important for the self to 'resist the flows of revenge' by working upon itself to overcome self-loathing (Connolly, 1991a: 80; 1993a: 119; 1995a: 66). Connolly's 'ethos of pluralisation' encourages groups and individuals not to seek a cause for their existential suffering, but to look towards a greater acceptance of the mystery of life and to accept existential suffering as inevitable and to find 'satisfaction' with oneself (Connolly, 2002: 170). From this perspective, it is vital for the subject to develop an active relationship to itself. This is to recognise that the relationship of the self with the self is not a power-relationship, but as Deleuze says a relation of force to itself (Deleuze, 1990: 92). This perspective enables individuals to acknowledge that sometimes there is some suffering for which there are no identifiable or apparent causes.

Laclau's psychoanalytic notion of the subject shares important similarities with Connolly's notion of the self. For example, both Laclau and Connolly share the idea that the traditional philosophy of the subject imposes a false unity on the individual subject. In addition, in his most recent work Laclau acknowledges the non-linguistic register of affect (Laclau, 2004a). Despite these important points of similarity, I find Laclau's psychoanalytical idea that the subject is constituted around an 'ontological lack' problematic. The terminology invoked in his theory suggests a negative life denying subject unable to fill its constitutive 'lack' (Laclau, 2004a: 324). The presentation of the unconscious as a moment of 'pure antagonism' seems to establish a pessimistic, paranoid, and fearful view of the world. Fear is no doubt a characteristic of individual subjectivity. However, from Connolly's perspective, the self can work to purge fearful thoughts and emotions in order to develop an ethical sensibility where the 'other' inside is not experienced as a threat to identity. Connolly's notion of the subject is not premised on the negative idea of a 'fundamental lack', but rather on the affirmation of a 'plenitude of being that exceeds' every identity but nonetheless make every identity possible (Connolly, 1993a: 58, 94).

Similarly, I find Mouffe's emphasis on the 'antagonistic' nature of social relations problematic. In Mouffe's work, the antagonistic element stems from her Hobbesian/Schmittian inspired notion of politics, which perceives human relations as always potentially threatened by the emergence of friend/enemy relations and the prospect of uncompromising forms of conflict (Mouffe, 1996: 147). As I have said, Mouffe seeks to recast antagonism into an 'agonistic' relationship between adversaries within the parameters of the democratic political community (Mouffe, 2000b: 117). However, because of Mouffe's overriding concern with the notion of the enemy, her theory risks losing sight of the paradox of friend and enemy relations and thereby essentialising enmity. This would be the opposite problem to Habermas's notion of the subject, which presupposes a conception of the other as based on 'mutual trust' or a situation of non-violence understood as implicit in the fact of communication (Habermas, 1990: 136). In contradistinction, Mouffe sometimes sounds as through the relations between the self and other

are inherently violent. As she puts it, the 'natural condition of mankind is war' (Mouffe, 1995a: 1543). From Connolly's perspective, this leads to a 'reactionary' and paranoid self rather than a self that affirms the vitality of life. From a Habermasian perspective one can argue that Mouffe's notion of the subject is an instrumental subject that only identifies with an ethico-political relation in order to move from a situation of antagonism into agonism (Mouffe, 2000b: 117). We could say that Mouffe's notion of 'agonism' establishes a negatively defined political space. This is not to say that Mouffe is not correct to identify the danger posed by 'rise of various forms of fundamentalism' and the threat of physical violence is a real concern in the current political climate (Mouffe, 1993: 132). However, her *intrinsically* 'negative' construction of the political community is limited because she does not explore the ways in which individual and groups might make more friends and fewer enemies. Connolly's Nietzschean notion of resentment is more hopeful. Connolly argues that through 'techniques of the self' individuals can try to rid themselves of this resentment, in order to become 'satisfied' with themselves (Connolly, 2002: 170).

Indeed we should acknowledge that a multiplicity of different forms of disagreements, resentments, differences, conflicts, and tensions are constitutive of the space of politics, and not the monolithic 'antagonism' in Laclau and Mouffe's sense of the term. This is why Connolly's agonistic theory of politics is preferable to that put forward by Mouffe. The basis of an agonistic space is premised on the recognition of the paradoxical nature of politics, that is, a politics that accepts that identities are always in the process of self-making and new identities are always coming to being. It is for this reason that I favour an 'agonal' form of politics because it is premised on a vision of 'an already contingent self' that is in the process of strife and self-making (Connolly, 1993b: 373). This allows for an inclusive political space of multiple and plural truths, identities, and selves. It allows individuals and groups to bring their own political and metaphysical perspectives into the political arena to contest their claims to ontology, politics, the subject, and truth. This agonal conception of politics does not favour one claim to truth over

another. It accepts that a plurality of contingent truths exist and therefore allows for different truths and social forces to emerge.

Connolly's notion of the political order is also more convincing than the other theories examined in this thesis. For Connolly, politics consists of networks and multiple alliances of social forces. It is the space where the identity/difference paradox is played out. As he sees it, 'deep pluralism' is characterised by complex networks of mutual constraint as individuals and groups struggle for power in public debate and deliberation. In Chapter Four, I claimed that Connolly's notion of politics shares many similarities with the nineteenth century anarchists like Bakunin. For Connolly, individuals congeal into networks and associations without any explicit ordering of society and social relations (Wenman, 2003b: 170). From Connolly's perspective, there are multiple and complex lines of connection, intersection, and alliances to be pursued between different associations and networks to form a 'majority assemblage' to support programs for 'different reasons' and generate political activism (Connolly, 1995a: 95).

By way of contrast, I find Mouffe's account of the perennial need for 'hegemony' unconvincing. From Mouffe's perspective, hegemony is an explicit attempt to construct a common political identity around the ethico-political principles of liberty and equality, and through the exclusion of the 'enemy' who does not adhere to these principles (Mouffe, 1995b: 39; 2002: 3). Mouffe insists on the need for bringing many different groups, associations, individuals, and networks under a shared, common, and unified political identity (Mouffe, 1993: 6; 1995b: 3). Like Habermas, Mouffe advocates an overarching framework of citizenship that unifies the different individuals and groups in the demos. The difference is that for Habermas this unity is supposedly inherent in the very fact of human communication and only needs to be made explicit though the construction of constitutional democracy. For Mouffe, the political community is a political project that needs to be explicitly constructed under conditions of antagonism. By way of contrast, Connolly argues that there is no need to explicitly order society because a vibrant plurality of associations emerges spontaneously out of the politics of becoming. In other words,

the order that Mouffe wants to construct explicitly is already implicit in the networks and associations that Connolly describes. Connolly therefore challenges the hegemony of the predominant order and its 'normalising' effects, and he advocates the creation of democratic spaces which are conducive to allow the identity/difference paradox to flourish (Connolly, 1995a: 88-91). Although Connolly's notions of 'agonism' and 'agonistic respect' are optimistic, they offer an affirmative account of the creation of a democratic ethos and virtues that allows for self-legitimation and governance.

Despite the difference between them, Laclau like Mouffe reduces politics to the hegemonic struggle to impose an explicit order. However, hegemony is only one mode of politics amongst many and these thinkers fail to recognise that many forms of politics exist that do not arise from the need to impose order on society. Individuals create associations and alliances and come together to form community groups such as 'neighbourhood watch' groups, or reading groups, or self-help groups, which are orientated to some particular purpose and they do not want to impose their values on society as a whole. Connolly's account of micro-politics and agonistic pluralism envisions such diverse and even contradictory alliances between different groups and individuals.

Connolly, Habermas and Mouffe all address the predicament of legitimation in modern society. Habermas and Mouffe both offer important insights into the legitimacy of a political community understood as a set of rules and practices to be continually affirmed through the actions of citizens. Connolly's alternative and 'agonal' theory of legitimation is a practice that the individual self engages in to try and loosen 'established moral economies and engender generosity into the ethical sensibility governing the self' (Connolly, 1993a: 138). I do not think that these positions are incommensurate. Connolly's 'agonistic' theory of legitimacy or 'self-legitimation' can compliment the type of legitimation through the *lex* or the *res publica* theorised by Mouffe and Habermas. He is concerned with the governance of the self, and they are concerned with the conditions of a legitimate political community. Perhaps if these perspectives

are read together they address Rousseau's famous paradox of democratic citizenship which is that the 'fundamental principle' of democracy' is 'virtue' but cannot exist in the first place without 'virtuous' citizens (Rousseau, 1973: 271).

This model of politics could revitalise regional and local assemblies and empower local communities in deciding the allocation of resources for its citizenry. Agonal politics gives self-autonomy to citizens in making decisions about their life, rather than states, administrators and large corporations. This allows us to return to politics understood as a space where a clash of opinions and (not truth) reside, because no one has unmediated access to the essence of the world (Arendt, 1967: 115, 116).

A number of commentator's have identified problems with Connolly's exclusive emphasis on the 'ethos of critical responsiveness'. For example, White makes the case that Connolly subordinates 'justice to critical responsiveness' (White, 1998: 75). Donald Moon argues that Connolly needs to be able to 'justify his reasons to others on grounds that they could not reject' (Moon, 1998: 70). Benhabib has put forward the argument that 'antifoundationalist theorists of democracy are circular' because they 'posit or simply take for granted precisely those moral and political norms of citizens' equality, freedom, and democratic legitimacy' (Benhabib, 1996: 71). This critique clearly cannot be levelled at Mouffe because as I have shown her basic premise is that a consensus has to be politically constructed (Mouffe, 2000b: 117, 131). For Mouffe, 'reciprocity and hostility cannot be dissociated' and the 'social order will always be threatened by violence' (Mouffe, 2000b: 131). She says the aim of democratic politics is to create an agonistic 'framework' and to 'transform antagonism into agonism' (Mouffe, 2000b: 117). Perhaps there is an unacknowledged and accounted moment of 'reciprocity' underpinning Connolly's 'ethos of critical responsiveness'. Nevertheless, as Connolly says 'if a pluralizing ethos presupposes a "consensus," it is mobilized above all around reciprocal appreciation of the contestability of contending presumptions about the fundamental character of being. It is an ironic consensus' (Connolly, 1995a: 104).

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have defended my third hypothesis. I have shown that there are important tensions and ambiguities in Habermas's work, which suggest perhaps that his 'necessary and universal' presuppositions of argumentations' mask a paradox. In addition, I have made the case that there is no necessary relationship between a given ontology and any particular political practices because of the inherently subjective nature of onto-political interpretation. However, I have also argued that ontology is significant because the philosophical assumptions that a theorists makes have political effect. Every form of politics needs to be challenged and problematised (Mouffe, 2000a: 441). Otherwise, as Mouffe says, we 'remain hostage to the common sense dominant' in our age (Mouffe, 2000a: 441). Finally, I have argued that a Nietzschean inspired notion of 'agonism' allows for a multiplicity of individuals, groups, and perspectives to come together to politically contests their respective ontological, political, and metaphysical perspectives in an agonistic political space. As I see it, this is the most appropriate from of paradoxical politics.

## Chapter Eight


## Final Conclusions


By using the conceptual distinction between contradictions, dialectical oppositions, and paradoxes, I have demonstrated the three hypotheses outlined in the Introduction. First, I have shown that Habermas's charge of performative contradiction against the post-structuralists' so-called 'totalising' critiques of reason does hold up to scrutiny because they embrace the paradoxical nature of their ontological foundations. Second, I have demonstrated that we cannot draw a simple dichotomy between the work of Habermas and the post-structuralists because he shares a number of important similarities with them regarding the subject and politics. Third, I made the case that Habermas's own founding principles appear to be masking a paradox despite his claims to contrary. Unlike Apel, Habermas does not justify his presuppositions of argumentation with reference to an 'ultimate foundation', that is, something like an unalterable Archimedean point outside of space and time. By way of contrast, Habermas appears to fall into the Munchhausen trilemma, because he is apparently caught in a circular argument: the 'presuppositions of argumentation' are an 'ultimate foundation' and a 'mere convention'. When the post-structuralists are caught in this in-between choice they get accused by Habermas and Apel of falling into a performative contradiction. However, I have made the case that their position is consistent because they justify their contradictory or opposing foundational principles paradoxically: the subject is simultaneously the condition of (im)possibility of social relations

One problem with asserting the principle of non-contradiction or reconciliation as the governing logic of the foundation of the subject and politics is that it forces an 'either/or' choice. Habermas's emphasis on cognitive developmental processes and the goal of moral competencies

suggest that all conflicts within the self are society are *potentially* 'reconcilable' or can be synthesised into a higher unity. The problem with this approach is that it militates against 'irreconcilable' differences, forcing these tensions into a false unity by assimilating them into unity. I find this emphasis on non-contradiction as an ideal potentially problematic that it potentially has 'totalitarian' implications. Indeed, I have argued that it is important not to 'naturalise' certain underlying ontological assumptions about the subject. As I see it, it is only by embracing paradoxes at the level of ontology that we can justify our founding principles without falling into totalitarian ways of thinking. There is no criterion by which to establish whether or not a particular ontology or conception of the subject is closer to 'reality' than any other perspective and this goes equally for those post-structuralist perspectives that explicitly acknowledge the paradoxical status of their founding premises.

By embracing the paradoxical status of the subject and yet affirming definite political projects (agonistic respect and radical and plural democracy) the post-structuralists also avoid the charges of relativism, anti-foundationalism, and skepticism. By accepting the paradoxical status of their prescriptions they can commit themselves to democratic political projects and principles without making claims to ultimate foundations or objective truth. At the same time as affirming these normative principles, Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe accept that the principles that they hold as central to their respective political projects are drawn from their own contextual position and that they are necessarily subject to contestation and change.

The charge of performative contradiction is summed up by Thomas McCarthy. He says 'how can one deconstruct all the ideas of reason without at the same time relying on them, at least tacitly' (Hoy and McCarthy, 1994: 35). I have argued that by accepting the paradoxical status of their basic foundations the post-structuralists can make propositional statements about the limits of reason that take the form of acceptable or consistent contradictions. For example, Nietzsche says 'facts [are] precisely what there is not, only interpretations' (Nietzsche, 1968: 44). It could be argued that the statement engenders a performative contradiction. The content of the

proposition contradicts the assumptions presupposed in making the proposition. The logicians would respond to this statement with the claim that there must be at least one fact, which is the fact that there are no facts only interpretations. However, it could also be claimed, by way of an alternative, that this statement is just another interpretation. Both of these analyses are logical truisms: with a paradox both truisms are acceptable at the same time, thus evading the charge of inconsistency. The charge of performative contradiction forces a choice between whether this proposition is a fact or an interpretations and it cannot be both. By way of contrast, paradoxes allow us the opportunity to be coherent, even if that coherence involves the acceptance of two contradictory or opposing statements co-existing together in an irreconcilable tension, such as identity/difference, agonism/antagonism, the universal and particular and so on.

Clearly, we cannot place Habermas on one side of a dichotomy as a 'rationalist' and the post-structuralists on the other side as 'irrationalist' or 'relativists'. However, we cannot deny that there *are* important differences that distinguish their work. Habermas's work is motivated by a belief in a 'rationally motivated' consensus (Habermas, 1996a: 14). It seems to me that the 'dialectical' aspects of Habermas's work are very significant. Habermas's quest is for reconciliation, that is, between the 'I' and 'me' and between private and public autonomy. This is an important difference in the way that Habermas and the post-structuralists address the questions of political and social modernity. Habermas also invokes the logic of non-contradiction (in his charge of performative contradiction) and paradox (in his account of the tension between the individual subject and his/her phenomenological lifeworld). By way of contrast, the post-structuralists consistently invoke the notion of paradox as central to their conceptions of the subject and modern politics.

As I have said, Habermas has never been faithful to one particular theoretical tradition. He says he 'stylizes the arguments and counterarguments from different positions in such a way that they emerge from one another in good dialectical fashion' (Habermas, 2001a: 770). This explains why Habermas's theory of 'discourse ethics' incorporates both Kantian and Hegelian

elements. Like Hegel, Habermas takes a reconciliatory logic as his regulative ideal. He aims to reconcile or sublimate a number of distinct theoretical perspectives into his own discourse-theoretic position. My aim has been to demonstrate that Habermas and the post-structuralists share a number of important points of contiguity. Also, I have made the claim that if we accept the paradoxical nature of the political space as 'agonistic' in the way Connolly understands this term, then Habermas's position could perhaps coexists as one amongst many in the agonist space of politics. As Tully has said, Habermas is moving in the direction of accepting his approach as one amongst many, but it is unclear just how far Habermas is willing to go along this road (Tully, 2002: 217).

I will end this thesis with the following claim. It is essential to maintain the distinction between a performative contradiction, a reconciliatory logic, and a paradox, because it is potentially an injustice when a paradox is declared to be 'resolved' and beyond argumentation or contestation in politics. We need to guard the distinction between paradox and contradiction, and avoid collapsing a paradox into a contradiction or reconciling it otherwise we run the risk of treating some political convention or set of identities as 'natural' when in fact it is not. I agree with Connolly when he says that 'thinking itself becomes blunt and dull if it always tries to resolve paradoxes rather than to open up spaces within them and negotiate considered responses to them' (Connolly, 2002: 52). By recognising that there is no resolution to the 'mysteries of existence' we can create and embrace a multiplicity of ways of being which may never fit together in an ordered whole. If this is unacceptable to 'logicians' then I can only return to the definition of a paradox, which is a contradictory union of principles, which are both true and *equally* valid.

# Bibliography

Adorno, T. *et al* (1969) [1950] *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Norton.

Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. (1979) [1944] *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Althusser, L. (1971) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' in L. Althusser *Lenin and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Apel, K.O. (1975) 'The Transcendental Conception of Language-Communication and Idea of a First Philosophy' in H. Parret (ed.) *History of Linguistic Thought and Contemporary Linguistics*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Apel, K-O. (1980) [1972] *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Apel, K-O. (1987) 'The Problem of Philosophical Fundamental Grounding in Light of a Transcendental Pragmatics of Language' in K. Baynes, J. Bohman and T. McCarthy (eds.) *After Philosophy: End or Transformation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Apel, K-O. (1998) *From a Transcendental-semiotic Point of View*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Apel, K-O. (1999) 'Openly Strategic uses of Language: A Transcendental Pragmatic Perspective (A Second Attempt to Think with Habermas against Habermas)' in P. Dews (ed.) *Habermas: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Arendt, H. (1967) 'Truth and Politics' in P. Laslett and W.G. Runciman (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*. Third Series. Oxford: Alden Press.

Arendt, H. (1970) *On Violence*. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press.

Arendt, H. (1990) 'Philosophy and Politics' in *Social Research* 57 (1): 73-103.

Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Aristotle (1976) *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics*. London: Penguin Group.

Ashenden, S. and Owen, D. (1999) *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting The Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory.* London: Sage Publications.

Austin, J. L. (1975) *How To Do Things With Words.* Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakunin, M. (1984) *Political Philosophy: Scientific Anarchism.* London: Free Press of Glencoe.

Baynes, K. (1992) *The Normative Grounds of Criticism: Kant, Rawls, and Habermas.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Baynes, K. (1995) 'Democracy and the Rechtsstaat: Remarks on Habermas's Faktizität und Geltung' in S.K. White (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion To Habermas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Benhabib, S. (1984) 'Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-Francis Lyotard' in *New German Critique* 22: 103-126

Benhabib, S. (1986) *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Benhabib, S. (1990) 'Afterword: Communicative Ethics and Contemporary Controversies in Practical Philosophy' in S. Benhabib and F. Dallymar (eds.) *The Communicative Ethics Controversy.* Cambridge: Mass: MIT Press.

Benhabib, S. (1992) *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics.* New York: Routledge.

Benhabib, S. (1995) 'Feminism and Postmodernism' in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser (eds.) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange.* New York and London: Routledge.

Benhabib, S. (1996) 'Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy' in S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

·

Bernstein, R. (1992) 'An Allegory of Modernity/Postmodernity: Habermas and Derrida' in R. Bernstein *The New Constellation: The Ethico-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bernstein, R.J. (1988) 'Dallmayr's Critique of Habermas' in *Political Theory* 16 (4): 580-593.

Bernstein, R.J. (ed.) (1985) *Habermas and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bohman, J. (1994) 'Complexity, Pluralism, and the Constitutional State: On Habermas's *Faktizitat* and *Geltung*' in *Law and Society Review* 28 (4): 897-930.

Bohman, J. (1995) 'Democracy and Cultural Pluralism' in *Political Theory* 23 (2):253-79.

Bohman, J. (1996) 'Two Versions of the Linguistic Turn: Habermas and Poststructuralism' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boyne, R. (1990) *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason*. New York: Routledge.

Brady, J.S. (2004) 'No Contest? Assessing the Agonistic Critiques of Jürgen Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 30 (3): 331-354.

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Subversions in Identity. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1995) 'Contingent Foundations' in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell, and N. Fraser (eds.) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*. New York and London: Routledge.

Cargile, J. (1995) 'Paradoxes' in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chambers, S. (1996) *Reasonable Democracy: Jürgen Habermas and the Politics of Discourse*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Cohen, J (1990) 'Discourse Ethics and Civil Society' in D. Rasmussen, (ed.) *Universalism and Communitarianism* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

Cohen, J. (1996) 'Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy' in S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Connolly, W.E. (ed.) (1969) *The Bias of Pluralism*. New York: Atherton Press.

Connolly, W.E. (1979) 'The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas' in *History and Theory* 18 (3): 397-417.

Connolly, W.E. (1984) 'The Dilemma of Legitimacy' in W.E. Connolly (ed.) *Legitimacy and the State*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Connolly, W.E. (1987a) 'Legitimacy' in D. Miller, J. Coleman, W.E. Connolly and A. Ryan (eds.) *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Connolly, W.E. (1987b) *Politics and Ambiguity*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Connolly, W.E. (1988) *Political Theory and Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Connolly, W.E. (1991a) *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Connolly, W. E. (1991b) 'The Agonism of Difference' in *Strategies* 4(5): 58-68.

Connolly, W.E. (1992) 'Discipline, Politics, Ambiguity' in T. Strong (ed.) *The Self and the Political Order*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Connolly, W.E. (1993a) *The Augustinian Imperative*. London: Sage Publications.

Connolly, W.E. (1993b) 'Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault' in *Political Theory* 21 (30: 365-389.

Connolly, W.E. (1993c) *Political Theory and Modernity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Connolly, W.E. (1993d) *The Terms of Political Discourse*. Third Edition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Connolly, W.E. (1995a) *The Ethos of Pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Connolly, W.E. (1995b) 'Twilight of the Idols' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 21 (3): 127-137.

Connolly, W.E. (1997) 'A Critique of Pure Politics' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 23(5): 1-26.

Connolly, W.E. (1998) 'Rethinking the Ethos of Pluralisation' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24(1): 93-102.

Connolly, W.E. (1999a) 'Brain Waves, Transcendental Fields and Techniques of Thought' in *Radical Philosophy* 94 (March/April): 19-28.

Connolly, W.E. (1999b) *Why I am not a Secularist*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Connolly, W.E. (2000a) 'Speed, Concentric Cultures and Cosmopolitanism' in *Political Theory* 28 (5): 596-618.

Connolly, W.E. (2000b) 'The Liberal Image of the Nation' in D. Ivison, P. Patton, and W. Sanders (eds.) *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Connolly, W.E. (2001) 'Cross-State Citizen Networks: A Response to Dallmayr' in *Millennium* 30 (2): 349-355.

Connolly, W.E. (2002) *Neuropolitics Thinking, Culture, Speed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Coole, D. (1996) 'Habermas and the Question of Alerity' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Copjec, J. (1994) 'Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason' in J. Copjec (ed.) *Supposing the Subject*. London: Verso.

Craig, E. (2000) 'Ontology' in *Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge.

Critchley, S. (1999) *Ethics, Politics and Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*. London: Verso.

Critchley, S. (2000) 'An Agenda for Discussion: Remarks on Derrida and Habermas' in *Constellations* 7 (4): 455-465.

Critchley, S. and Dews, P. (eds.) (1996) *Deconstructive Subjectivities*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Cronin, C. (1993) 'Translator's Introduction' to J. Habermas *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

D'Entreves, M.P. and Benhabib, S. (eds.) (1996) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dean, M. (1999) 'Normalising Democracy: Foucault and Habermas on Democracy, Liberalism, and Law' in S. Ashenden and D. Owen (eds.) *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting The Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Deleuze, G. (1983) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. London: Athlone Press.

Deleuze, G. (1990) *Negotiations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. (2001a) [1969] *The Logic of Sense*. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (2001b) *Pure Immanence: Essays on Life*. New York: Zone Books.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2003) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.

Derrida, J. (1978) [1967] *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (1982) [1972] *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1992) 'Force of Law: the Mystical Foundations of Authority' in D. G. Carlson, D. Cornell and M. Rosenfeld (eds.) *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. New York: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (2000) 'Performative Powerlessness: A Response to Simon Critchley' in *Constellations* 7 (4): 466-468.

Descartes, R. (1970) *Descartes Philosophical Writings*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited.

Descombes, V. (1991) 'Apropos the Critique of the Subject and the Critique of this Critique' in J. Luc Nancy (ed.) *Who Comes After the Subject*. New York Routledge.

Devenney, M. (2004) *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory Between Critical Theory and Post-Marxism*. London: Taylor and Francis Books Ltd.

Dews, P. (ed.) (1986) *Habermas: Autonomy and Solidarity*. London: Verso.

Dews. P (1987) *Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*. London: Verso.

Dews. P (1989) 'Adorno, Post-Structuralism, and the Critique of Identity' in A. Benjamin (ed.) *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*. London: Routledge.

Dews, P. (ed.) (1999) *Habermas: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Dilthey, W. (1986) 'The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life Experiences' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Dryzek, J.S. (1990) *Discursive Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dryzek, J.S. (2001) 'Legitimacy and Economy in Deliberative Democracy' in *Political Theory* 29(5): 651-669.

Engels, F. and Marx, K. (1976) *The German Ideology*. Third Revised Edition. Moscow: Progress.

Ferrara, A. (1987) 'A Critique of Habermas's Consensus Theory of Truth' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 13 (1): 39-67.

Ferrara, A. (1988) 'Universalisms: Procedural, Contextualist, and Prudential' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 14 (3/4): 243-270.

Ferrara, A. (1999) *Justice and Judgement*. London: Sage.

Ferrara, A. (2001) 'Of Boats and Principles: Reflections on Habermas's "Constitutional Democracy"' *Political Theory* 29 (6): 722-791.

Finlayson, G. (1999) 'Does Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral Theory Apply to Discourse Ethics' in P. Dews (ed.) *Habermas: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Finlayson, G. (2000) 'Modernity and Morality in Habermas's Discourse Ethics' in *Inquiry* 43: 319-40.

Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power' Afterword in H.L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Foucault, M. (1984) 'Politics and Ethics: An Interview' in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1988) 'Technologies of the Self' in M. Foucault et al (eds.) *Technologies of the Self*. London: Tavistock.

Foucault, M. (1989) [1961] *Madness and Civilisation*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1991a) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1991b) 'Governmentality' in G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmental Rationality*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatscheaf.

Freud, S. (1984) [1915] *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*. Hamondsworth: Penguin.

Freud, S. (1991) 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego' in A Dickson (ed.) *The Penguin Freud Library* Vol. 12 *Civilisation, Society and Religion*. London: Penguin.

Friedman, R.B. (1987) 'Authority' in D. Miller, J. Coleman, W.E. Connolly and A.Ryan (eds.) *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Friedman, R.B. (1990) 'On the Concept of Authority in Political Philosophy' in J. Raz (ed.) *Authority*. New York: New York University Press.

Gadamer, H-G. (1986a) 'The Discrediting of Prejudice by the Enlightenment' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gadamer, H-G. (1986b) 'The Rehabilitation of Authority and Tradition' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gadamer, H-G. (1986c) 'The Principle of Effective History' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gadamer, H-G. (2004) [1975] *Truth and Method*. Second Edition. London: Continuum Publishing Group.

Gasché, R. (1986) *The Tain of the Mirror*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gasché, R. (1994) 'Yes Absolutely: Unlike Any Writing Pen' in E. Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. London: Verso.

Giddens, A. (1985) 'Reason without Revolution? Habermas' Theorie des kommunikativen' in R.J. Bernstein (ed.) *Habermas and Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gramsci, A. (1988) 'Selected Writings 1916-1935' in D. Forgacs (ed.) *A Gramsci Reader*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Habermas, J. (1972) [1968] *Knowledge and Human Interests*. London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1973) 'A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests' in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3: 157-189.

Habermas, J. (1974a) [1963] *Theory and Practice*. London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1974b) [1963] 'The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy' in J. Habermas *Theory and Practice*. London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1979) *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1981) 'Modernity vs. Postmodernity' in *New German Critique* 22 (Winter): 3-14.

Habermas, J. (1982) 'A Reply to My Critics' in J.B. Thompson and D. Held (eds.) *Habermas: Critical Debates*. London: Macmillan Press.

Habermas, J. (1984a) [1981] *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and Rationalization of Society*. Volume One. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1984b) [1973] 'What Does a Legitimation Crisis Mean Today? Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism' in W.E. Connolly (ed.) *Legitimacy and the State*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Habermas, J. (1985) 'Questions and Counterquestions' in R. Bernstein (ed.) *Habermas and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1986) 'Life Forms, Morality and the Task of the Philosopher' in P. Dews (ed.) *Habermas: Autonomy and Solidarity.* London: Verso.

Habermas, J. (1987a) [1981] *The Theory of Communicative Action: The Critique of Functionalist Reason.* Volume Two. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1987b) [1985] *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1988) *Legitimation Crisis.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1989) [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1990) [1983] *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1992) [1988] *Postmetaphysical Thinking.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1993) [1990] *Justification and Application.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1995) 'Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason' in *Journal of Philosophy* 92 (3): 109-131.

Habermas, J. (1996a) [1992] *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1996b) 'Reply to Symposium Participants' in *Cardozo Law Review* 17(4/5): 1477-1558.

Habermas, J. (1996c) [1981] 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1998a) [1996] *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1998b) [1989] 'Taking Aim at the heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's What is Enlightenment?' in M. Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2001a) 'Constitutional Democracy? A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles' in *Political Theory* 29 (6): 766-781.

Habermas, J. (2001b) *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hardt, M. (1993) *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy.* London: UCL Press.

Harrington, A. (2000) 'Alfred Schutz and the "Objectifying Attitude"' in *Sociology* 34 (4): 727-740.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1975) [1802] *Natural Law.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) [1807] *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1991) [1821] *Elements of the Philosophy of Right.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1999) [1812] *Science of Logic.* New York: Humanity Books.

Heidegger, M. (1998) [1927] *Being and Time.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Heller, A. (1982) 'Habermas and Marxism' in J.B. Thompson and D. Held (eds.) *Habermas: Critical Debates.* London: Macmillan.

Heller, A. (1984) 'The Discourse Ethics of Habermas: Critique and Appraisal' in *Thesis Eleven* 10/11: 5-17.

Hirst, P.Q. (1990) *Representative Democracy and Limits.* Cambridge: Polity.

Hobbes, T. (1968) [1651] *Leviathan.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hoffe, O. (1990) 'Kantian Scepticism Towards Transcendental Ethics of Communication' in S. Benhabib and F. Dallmayr (eds.) *The Communicative Ethics Controversy.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Honnig, B. (1996) 'Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home' in S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Honnig, B. (2001) 'Dead Rights, Live Futures: A Reply to Habermas's "Constitutional Democracy"' in *Political Theory* 29(6): 792-805.

Horkheimer, M. (1978) [1942] 'The Ends of Reason' in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt (eds.) *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. New York: Continuum.

Horkheimer, M. (1972) [1937] 'Traditional and Critical Theory' in M. Horkheimer *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Herder and Herder.

Howarth, D., Norval, A., and Stavrakakis, Y. (eds.) (2000) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies, and Social Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hoy, D. and McCarthy, T. (1994) *Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hoy, D.C. (1996) 'Splitting the Difference: Habermas's Critique of Derrida' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hume, D. (1975) [1777] *Enquires Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Husserl, E. (1970) [1938] *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Husserl, E. (1996) [1935] 'The Vienna Lecture' in R. Kearney and M. Rainwater (eds.) (1996) *The Continental Philosophy Reader*. London: Routledge.

Hutchings, K. (1996) *Kant, Critique, and Politics*. London: Routledge.

Ingram, D. (1996) 'The Subject of Justice in Postmodern Discourse: Aesthetic Judgement and Political Rationality' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Isenberg, B. (1991) 'Habermas and Foucault Critical Remarks' in *Acta Sociologic,* 34: 299-308.

Jay, M. (1993) Force *Fields: Between Intellectual and Culture Critique*. London: Routledge.

Kant, I. (1999) [1785] *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kant, I. (1993) [1781] *Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Everyman.

Keane, J. (1988) 'More Theses on the Philosophy of History' in J. Tully (ed.) Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, M. (1994a) 'Introduction' in M. Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

Kelly, M. (1994b) 'Foucault, Habermas, and the Self-Referentiality of Critique' in M. Kelly (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

Klein, P.D. (1995) 'Epistemology' in *Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge.

Knowles, D. (2002) *Hegel and the Philosophy of Right*. London: Routledge.

Kohlberg, L. (1968) 'The Child as a Moral Philosopher' in *Psychology Today* 2: 25-30.

Kohn, M. (2000) 'Language, Power, and Persuasion' in *Constellations* 7 (3): 408-429.

Kropotkin, P. (1998) [1902] *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. London: Freedom Press.

Lacan, J. (1998) '*Ecrits: A Selection*. London: Routledge.

Laclau, E. (1990) *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. (1994) 'Introduction' in E. Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. (1996a) *Emancipations*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. (1996b) 'Deconstruction, Pragmatism, Hegemony' in C. Mouffe (ed.) *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*. London: Routledge.

Laclau, E. (2000) 'Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics' in J. Butler, E. Laclau, and S. Zizek *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. (2001) 'Democracy and the Question of Power' in *Constellations* 8(1): 3-14.

Laclau, E. (2004a) 'Glimpsing the Future' in S. Critchley and O. Marchant (eds.) *Laclau: A Critical Reader*. London: Routledge.

Laclau, E. (2004b) 'Suggestion, Imitation, Identification'. Unpublished Manuscript.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical and Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1990) 'Post-Marxism Without Apologies' in E. Laclau *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time*. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (2000) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical and Democratic Politics*. Second Edition. London: Verso.

Laclau, E. and Zac, L. (1994) 'Minding the Gap: The Subject of Politics' in E. Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. London: Verso.

Larmore, C. (1999) 'The Moral Basis of Political Liberalism' in *The Journal of Philosophy* XCVI (12): 599-625.

Laslett, P. and Runciman, W.G. (eds.) (1969) *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*. Third Series. Oxford: Alden Press.

Lefort, C. (1988) *Democracy and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lucretius (1970) *On the Nature of the Universe*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Lyotard, J-F. (1984) [1979] *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota.

Lyotard, J-F. (1988) [1983] *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lyotard, J-F. (1991) *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lyotard, J-F. (1994) *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Stanford University Press.

Macdonald, B. J. (2002) 'Towards an Ethos of Freedom and Engagement: An Engagement with William E. Connolly' in *Strategies* 15(2): 165-181.

Machiavelli, N. (1961) *The Prince*. Middlesex: Penguin.

Macpherson, C.B. (1962) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Macpherson, C.B. (1979) *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mates, B. (1981) *Sceptical Essays*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

McCarthy, T. (1988) 'On the Margins of Philosophy' in *Journal of Philosophy* 85(11): 645-648.

McCarthy, T. (1989) 'Translators Introduction' in Habermas *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

McCarthy, T. (1990) 'Introduction' in Habermas *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

McCarthy, T. (1992) 'Practical Discourse: On the Relation of Morality to Politics' in C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mead, G. H. (1970) *Mind Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviour*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Moon, D.J. (1998) 'Engaging plurality: Reflections on the Ethics of Pluralization' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24(1): 63-71.

More, T. (1961) *Utopia*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.

Mouffe, C. (ed.) (1979) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*. London: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (1981) 'Hegemony and the Integral State in Gramsci: Towards a New Concept of Politics' in G. Bridges and R. Brunt (eds.) *Silver Linings: Some Strategies for the Eighties*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Mouffe, C. (1993) *The Return of the Political*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (1994) 'For a Politics of Nomadic Identity' in G. Robertson et al. (eds.) *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*. London: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (1995a) 'Democracy and Pluralism: A Critique of the Rationalist Approach' in *The Cardozo Law Review* 16 (5): 1533-1545.

Mouffe, C. (1995b) 'Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity' in J. Rajchman (ed.) *The Identity in Question*. London: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (1996) 'Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?' in D. Trend (ed.) *Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship, and the State*. New York: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (1999a) 'Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy' in C. Mouffe (ed.) *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (1999b) 'Introduction: Schmitt's Challenge' in C. Mouffe (ed.) *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2000a) 'Rorty's Pragmatist Politics' in *Economy and Society* 29 (3): 439-453.

Mouffe, C. (2000b) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.

Mueller-Vollmer, K. (1986) 'Introduction' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Nietzsche, F. (1968) *The Will To Power*. New York: Vintage.

Nietzsche, F. (1974) [1881-2] *The Gay Science.*. New York: Vintage Books.

Nietzsche, F. (1976) [1873] 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense' in W. Kaufmann (ed.) *The Portable Nietzsche*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Nietzsche, F. (1982) [1883-4] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Nietzsche, F. (1990) [1885-6] *Beyond Good and Evil*. London: Penguin.

Nietzsche, F. (1994) [1887] *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1995) [1873-6] *Unfashionable Observations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

O'Neill, S. (2001) 'Constitutional Reason and Political Identity' in *CRISPP* 4(3): 1-26

O'Sullivan, N. (2000) 'Power, Authority and Legitimacy: A Critique of Postmodern Political Thought' in *Political Theory in Transition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oakeshott, M. (1975) *On Human Conduct*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Oakeshott, M. (1982) *On History and Other Essays*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Oakeshott, M. (1991) [1962] *Rationalism in Politics*. London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd.

Paton, H.J. (1989) *The Moral Law: Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Patton, P. (2000) *Deleuze and the Political*. London: Routledge.

Peirce, C.S (1955) *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*. New York: Dover Publications.

Pensky, M. (ed.) (1994) *The Past as Future: Jürgen Habermas Interviewed by Michael Haller*. Lincoln: University of Nesbraska Press.

Plato (1992) *The Republic*. London: Everyman

Quine, W.V.O. (1976) *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rabinow, P. (ed.) (1984) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Rasmussen, D. (1982) 'Communicative Action and Philosophy: Reflections on Habermas' theorie des kommunikativen handelns' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 9:1-28.

Rasmussen, D. (1990) *Reading Habermas*. Cambridge, MA.: Basil Blackwell.

Rasmussen, D. (1994) 'How is Valid Law Possible?' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 20(4): 21-44.

Rasmussen, D. (1996) 'Jurisprudence and Validity' in *Cardozo Law Review* 17, March: 1059-1082.

Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

Rawls, J. (1995) 'A Reply to Habermas' in *Journal of Philosophy* 92 (3): 132-178.

Rawls, J. (1996) *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rehg, W. (1994) *Insight and Solidarity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rehg, W. (1996) 'Translator's Introduction' in J. Habermas *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rorty, R. (1982) *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rorty, R. (1985) 'Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity' in R.J. Bernstein (ed.) *Habermas and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rorty, R. (1989) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rorty, R. (1998) *Achieving out Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America*. London: Harvard University Press.

Rousseau, J.J. (1973) *The Social Contract and the Discourses*. London: Everyman.

Russell, B. (1946) *The Problems of Philosophy* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sainsbury, M. (1995) *Paradoxes*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saussure, F. de (1994) *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Fontana.

Schleirmarcher, F.D.E. (1986) 'General Hermeneutics' in K. Mueller-Vollmer (ed.) *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Schmidt, J. (1996) 'Habermas and Foucault' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Schmitt, C. (1998) *The Concept of the Political*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schutz, A. (1970) *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Schutz, A. and Luchkmann, T. (1973) *Structure of the Lifeworld*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Sharrock, W.W. and Anderson, R.J. (1986) *The Ethnomethodologists*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood.

Simons, J. (1995) *Foucault and the Political*. London: Routledge

Skinner, Q. (1978) *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. Vol. 1: *The Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Q. (1998) *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Solomon, R.C. (1988) Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sophocles (1974) *The Theban Plays*. Translated by E.F. Watling. London: Penguin.

Spielgelberg, H. (1982) *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*. Third Edition. Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Steiner, G. (1992) *Heidegger*. Second Edition. London: Fontana Press.

Strauss, L. (1963) *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and its Genesis*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Strauss, L. (1975) *Political Philosophy*: Six Essays. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.

Sturrock, J. (ed.) (1979) *Structuralism and Since: From Levi-Strauss to Derrida*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, C. (1975) *Hegel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomassen, L. and Tender, L. (2005) *On Radical Democracy: Politics Between Abundance and Lack*: Manchester: Manchester University Press. Forthcoming.

Thompson, S. (1999) 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' in S. Ashenden and D. Owen (eds.) *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting The Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Townsend, J. (2004) 'Laclau and Mouffe's Hegemonic Project: The Story So Far' in *Political Theory* 52(2): 269-288.

Tuck, R. (1970) 'Why is Authority such a Problem?' in P. Laslett, W.G. Runciman, and Q. Skinner (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics, Society*. Fourth Series. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Tully, J. (1995) *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tully, J. (1989) 'Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy: Understanding Practices of Critical Reflection' in *Political Theory* 17 (2): 172-204.

Tully, J. (1999) 'To Think and Act Differently: Foucault's Four Reciprocal Objections to Habermas's Theory' in S. Ashenden and D. Owen (eds.) *Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting The Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory.* London: Sage Publications.

Tully, J. (2002) 'The Unfreedom of the Moderns in Comparison to Their Ideals of Constitutional Democracy' in *The Modern Law Review* 65 (2): 204-228.

Warren, M. (1995) 'The Self in Discursive Democracy' in S.K. White (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weber, M. (1968) *Economy and Society: An Outline of an Interpretative Sociology.* New York; Bedminster Press.

Weber, M. (1991) 'Politics as a Vocation' in H.H. Gerth and C.Wright Mills (eds.) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* London: Routledge.

Weber, M. (1992) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* London: Routledge.

Wellmer, A. (1990) 'Practical Philosophy and the Theory of Society: On the Problems of the Normative Foundations of a Critical Science' in S. Benhabib and F. Dallmayr (ed.) *The Communicative Ethics Controversy.* Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

Wellmer, A. (1991) *The Persistence of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wenman, M.A. (2003a) 'Laclau or Mouffe? Splitting the Difference' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 29 (5): 581-606.

Wenman, M.A. (2003b) 'Agonistic Pluralism' and Three Archetypal Forms of Politics' in *Contemporary Political Theory* 2(2): 165-186.

White, S.K. (1983) 'Habermas on the Foundations of Ethics and Political Theory' in D.R. Sabia and J.T. Wallulius (eds.) *Changing Social Science.* Albany: SUNY Press.

White, S.K. (1988) 'Poststructuralism and Political Reflection' in *Political Theory* 16 (2): 186-208.

White, S.K. (1991) *Political Theory and Postmodernism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

White, S.K. (1998) '"Critical Responsiveness" and Justice' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24 (1): 73-81

White, S.K. (2000) *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology in Political Theory.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

White, S.K. (2003) 'After Critique' in *European Journal of Political Theory* 2(2): 209-226.

Whitebook, J. (1985) 'Reason and Happiness: Some Psychoanalytic Themes in Critical Theory' in R.J. Bernstein (ed.) *Habermas and Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Whitebook, J. (1996) 'Intersubjectivity and the Monadic Core of the Psychic: Habermas and Castoriadas of the Unconscious' in M.P. D'Entreves and S. Benhabib (eds.) Habermas *and the Unfinished Project of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Widder, N. (2000) 'What's Lacking in the Lack: A Comment on the Virtual' in *Angelaki* 5(3): 117-138.

Wiggershaus, R. (1994) The *Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wilde, L. (1989) *Marx and Contradiction.* Aldershot: Avebury.

Williams, C. (2001) *Contemporary French Philosophy: Modernity and the Persistence of the Subject.* London: Athlone Press.

Williams, R. (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* London: Croom Helm.

Wittgenstein, L. (1967) *Philosophical Investigations.* Third Edition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Young, I.M. (1996) 'Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy' in S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zizek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (1990) 'Beyond Discourse Analysis' in E. Laclau *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time.* London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (1991) *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (1999) *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2000a) 'Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes Please!' in J. Butler, E. Laclau, and S. Zizek *Contingency Hegemony and Universality*. London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2000b) 'Da Capo senza Fine' in J. Butler, E. Laclau, and S. Zizek *Contingency Hegemony and Universality*. London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2001) *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the Mis(use) of a Notion*. London: Verso.