

PREFACE

In the discussion that follows, I deploy texts as a toolbox to “rummage through” (*DEIV*, 523). Likewise, I treat authors as tinkerers of thought, rather than theorists of systems (*RM*, 27). The purpose is to breathe a second, strategic life into both books and thinkers. To this end, I draw eclectically on the archive of modern (Western) philosophy. I use it to outline a critical history of numerous systems of thought, or rather fragments of each as they crisscross each other at particular historical junctures. The aim is to highlight the role played by our pre-suppositions, or prejudices, in how we think (Gadamer 1989, 265–300). These fore-structure our understanding and determine any interpretation of (in this case) the modern fortunes of knowledge, power and ethics. The deployment of these tools and resources as a “pair of glasses directed to the outside” (Marcel Proust cited by Gilles Deleuze, *LCMP*, 208) serves to articulate an alternative form of critical philosophy, viz., one that is shorn of metaphysics and oriented towards a nominalist history of the contingencies that constitute our present. In other words, insofar as critical history highlights the lack of necessity in who we are, it opens up spaces for how we might become otherwise.

The endeavour to articulate a mode of critique of critical history is indicative of the influence of numerous people upon how I think (as opposed to contexts and things, which presumably account for what I think). For the time being one must signal a word of gratitude to those past and present, even if this vestige of the vocation of philosophy is a life-long calling of sorts and the sole recourse to stability within the precarious context

of the global institutionalisation of higher education. First and foremost, I would like to thank Kimberly Hutchings and Russell Keat, especially the former whose guidance and work first mapped out the coordinates of the activity of critique during a period of study in Scotland (1996–2002). Secondly, I owe a debt of gratitude to several *consœurs* and *confrères* in France, who provided intellectual nourishment as I negotiated the national anachronisms of French academe in its bid to go global (2003–2011). They include Jacques Harel and Erik Neveu; Michel Puech; Laurent Bibard; Pascal Ayoun and Laurence Decréau; Bernard Reber; Brent Kever; Fabienne Canal, Gabriel Périès, Jean-Marc Salmon, Cédric Gossart, Nabyla Daidj, Jean-Luc Moriceau and Thierry Ischia; and, perhaps above all, Pierre-Antoine Chardel, whose intellectual curiosity never wanes and is a constant source of inspiration. Thirdly, the accumulation of perspectives took a new challenge when I moved to Japan (2011). I extend thanks to Chuo University and the University of Tokyo for providing the institutional space that is crucial for transforming ideas into thought. Acknowledgement is also due to these organisations for providing, albeit inadvertently, a testing ground for the little pastor's *amor fati*—akin, in the local idiom, to the *ganbaru* ethos—which demands not merely that we bear what is necessary, but love it and wish nothing to be different.

Finally, excerpts of the first and last chapters have previously appeared in *Parrhesia: a journal of critical philosophy*, while minor parts of Chaps. 2 and 3 have already materialised in *Kritike: an online journal of philosophy*. I have also drawn on some of the ideas put forth in three further articles, which appeared in *Society and Business Review*, *Fast Capitalism* and *Theory, Culture & Society*. I would like to thank the publishers of the above journals for permission to reproduce some of that material here. Otherwise, it remains for me to perform the peculiar academic ritual of authorial intention. In my collection of ideas from others and their subsequent nourishment in the different spaces I have passed through, any articulation of them here as thought is on the proviso that all errors are my own, while all claims and arguments are my sole responsibility.

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REFERENCE

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1989. *Truth and Method*. trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall. London: Sheed and Ward.

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