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PHILOSOPHICAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN KANT, FOUCAULT, AND AGAMBEN

1. MISSING REFERENCES

A review of Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* on February 28, 1971. The reviewer claimed that Foucault had called the work an "archaeology of the human sciences" because the word "archaeology" had enjoyed "an aura of depth and genesis, outside its normal field, since Freud."¹ Foucault forcefully denied this charge, claiming in his response to have derived his conception of archaeology from Immanuel Kant. "The reviewer does not know," Foucault said, "that Kant used this word in order to designate the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought."² Foucault then advises the reviewer "to leaf through Kant," even though Kant is "not as fashionable as Freud."³

While he seems to take a great deal of pleasure in this display of erudition, Foucault does not tell us where Kant addresses "the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought" or why he had called it "archaeology." Foucault merely gestures toward an unspecified passage in an unspecified work, in which he claims to have "pointed to this use" of archaeology in Kant.⁴ Yet the discussion in question does not appear in any of the texts that Foucault published during that time. The editors of his *Dits et Écrits* have appended a footnote to Foucault's response to the *New York Times* review, referring readers to Part IV of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, however, Kant's conception of archaeology is not discussed in the pages to which the footnote refers. Nor is it discussed anywhere else in that work.⁵

In what follows, I will attempt to supply the discussion that is missing from Foucault's response to the *New York Times* review and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. By exploring the concept of philosophical

archaeology that Kant develops in his late essay on the progress of metaphysics and relating it to Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences, I hope to shed some light on the critical exchange with Kant that is to be found in Foucault's early writings.⁶ I also hope to refute a claim recently advanced by Giorgio Agamben, who has taken up the question of philosophical archaeology in an essay included in his book *The Signature of All Things*.⁷ While the connection between Kant's philosophical archaeology and Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences may be more tenuous than Foucault's response to the *New York Times* review may lead us to believe, I will argue that Kant still provides a better model for understanding Foucault's archaeology than the alternative proposed by Agamben.

2. A PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

When Foucault said that Kant used the word archaeology "to designate the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought," he was referring to the "jottings" for Kant's unfinished essay on the progress of metaphysics.⁸ It is here that Kant introduces the concept of "philosophical archaeology" (*philosophische Archäologie*) and uses it to describe the conditions of a "philosophical" history of philosophy.⁹

Kant's notes and the transcripts of his lectures show that he had an abiding interest in the history of philosophy and its relation to the practice of "philosophizing."¹⁰ While Kant acknowledges that there is something to be gained by studying the history of philosophy and the works of other philosophers, he is primarily concerned with the use one makes of one's own reason when one is philosophizing. Kant denies that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is "a critique of books and systems," for example, precisely because it seeks to advance the cause of philosophical knowledge. Kant is not concerned with what other philosophers have thought or written in his *Critique*, because he thinks one must already possess philosophical knowledge, in order to judge the merits of their work. Without a properly philosophical understanding of the history of philosophy, Kant says, "the unqualified historian

and judge assesses the groundless assertions of others through his own, which are equally groundless.”¹¹ This, more than anything else, is what one must avoid, if one wishes to think philosophically about philosophy.

The Prussian Royal Academy of the Sciences gave Kant the opportunity to explore the idea of a philosophical history of philosophy more systematically when it posed the question “what real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?” for its prize-essay competition in 1790. Although the Academy extended the deadline for submissions from 1792 until 1795, Kant was unable to finish his essay and never submitted his work to the Academy. There are, of course, many reasons Kant did not finish his essay, many of them having to do with his old age, his ill-health, and the controversies surrounding his critical philosophy; however, one should not discount the possibility that there was a more philosophical reason for Kant’s failure to complete his answer to the Academy’s prize-essay question. The difficulties Kant thought he would face in presenting a “philosophical” account of the progress metaphysics had made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff are evident from the very first pages of the drafts for his essay.¹²

Kant explains the difficulties involved in presenting a philosophical account of the progress of metaphysics when he explains his understanding of the question his essay was to answer. According to Kant, “the Royal Academy of Sciences calls for a survey of the advances in one part of philosophy, in one part of academic Europe, and also during one part of the present century.”¹³ Such a survey should be “a readily performable task,” Kant says, “for it only has to do with history.”¹⁴ By listing the discoveries philosophers have made in metaphysics in Germany in the period following Leibniz and Wolff, contestants would be able to produce a history of philosophy comparable to the history of any other science. Because metaphysics is not a science like astronomy or chemistry, mathematics or mechanics, however, Kant does not think it admits of the same kind of historical explanation as do those sciences.

Metaphysics does not admit of the same kind of historical explanation as the other sciences because it is, in Kant's words, "a shoreless sea, in which progress leaves no trace behind, and whose horizon contains no visible goal by which one might perceive how nearly it has been approached."¹⁵ An answer of the kind the Academy expects is, for that reason, something "almost despaired of."¹⁶ Even if a suitable answer could be found, Kant fears that "the condition laid down, of presenting in brief compass the advances it has achieved, makes the difficulty greater still."¹⁷ Metaphysics is "by nature and intention a completed whole" for Kant, something which is either "nothing or everything."¹⁸ As such, the work of philosophy cannot be described in terms of the "constant and unending" progress of the other sciences.¹⁹ Nor is any survey of the progress of metaphysics possible, unless one is also willing to systematically reconstruct the whole science of metaphysics.

Despite the difficulties he enumerates regarding the nature and scope of the Academy's question, Kant says he will attempt the task set before him, and explain how metaphysics finally became a science in the period following Leibniz and Wolf. Kant credits Wolff with making valuable contributions to ontology, but in general he denies that metaphysics had made any real progress since Aristotle.²⁰ The halting steps made by dogmatists and skeptics—ancient and modern—cannot be considered real progress, in Kant's view, because metaphysics is a science which is either "nothing or everything."²¹ For that reason, metaphysics only achieves its "ultimate purpose" (*Endzweck*) with the *Critique of Pure Reason*.²² It is the *Critique of Pure Reason* that finally makes metaphysics "the science of progressing by reason from knowledge of the sensible to that of the super-sensible."²³ "If it has done this in Germany, and done it since the days of Leibniz and Wolff," Kant says, "then the problem of the Royal Academy of Sciences will have been resolved."²⁴

Kant's reference to the historical and geographic conditions under which metaphysics has become a science is clearly ironic, but it would be wrong to conclude that Kant thinks history and

geography are entirely incidental to the history of philosophy. The “temporal sequence” (*Zeitordnung*) through which metaphysics becomes a science is “founded in the nature of man’s cognitive capacity” according to Kant.²⁵ He thought that human beings had a natural predisposition (*Naturanlage*) to metaphysics, in other words, because the idea of metaphysics “lies wholly prefigured in the soul.”²⁶ It is for this reason that “the idea of a metaphysics inevitably presents itself to human reason, and the latter feels a need to develop it.”²⁷ What is crucial for the history of philosophy, however, is that human reason develops the idea of metaphysics according to a determinate temporal sequence, through which the history of philosophy achieves its ultimate purpose. This development is not shaped by the influence of historical contingencies or empirical facts or any other conditions external to philosophy. The historical development of philosophy is, on the contrary, determined by reason itself.

Kant explores the conditions under which one might be able to reconstruct the “temporal sequence” according to which metaphysics develops in a “jotting” bearing the title ‘On a Philosophical History of Philosophy.’ While it seems that Kant never incorporated the contents of this “jotting” into the text of his essay on the progress of metaphysics, it is significant for our purposes, because it is here that Kant describes his conception of philosophical archaeology. According to Kant “a philosophical history of philosophy is itself possible, not historically or empirically, but rationally, i.e. *a priori*. For although it establishes facts of reason, it does not borrow them from historical narrative but draws them from the nature of human reason, as philosophical archaeology.”²⁸ Foucault surely had this passage in mind when he said that Kant called archaeology “the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought.”²⁹ Kant’s remarks make it clear that it is the nature of human reason itself which “renders necessary a certain form of thought.” Philosophy articulates the principles of human reason in history and according to a certain “temporal sequence,” to be sure, but the history of philosophy is determined by reason rather than history, if history is considered to be a kind of empirical knowledge

of “things as they are.”³⁰ To know the history of philosophy philosophically, that is, to know how philosophy would be articulated by reason itself, as a science, and to know the history of philosophy in a way that follows from the necessity of *a priori* principles—this is what Kant calls “philosophical archaeology.”

3. THE HISTORY OF THE THING WHICH HAS NOT HAPPENED

Giorgio Agamben does not mention Foucault’s reference to Kant and “the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought” in his recent essay on philosophical archaeology. The discussion of Kant’s reflections on the possibility of a philosophical history of philosophy with which he begins his essay suggests that Agamben was aware of Foucault’s reference to Kant in his response to the *New York Times* review; yet Agamben passes from his consideration of Kant to discussions of Nietzsche and Overbeck, Heidegger and Benjamin, Mauss, Dumézil, and Freud without acknowledging Foucault’s reference to Kant. This oversight may be surprising, given Agamben’s preoccupation with philology and the evident pleasure he takes in making curious and unlikely connections. His silence becomes less surprising, however, when one considers the paradoxes Agamben attributes to Kant’s philosophical archaeology.

According to Agamben, the conception of a philosophical archaeology that Kant develops in the “jottings” for his essay on the progress of metaphysics “runs the risk of lacking a beginning” and recounting “the history of the thing which has not happened.”³¹ This introduces an “essential dishomogeneity” into Kant’s conception of a philosophical history of philosophy, which Agamben traces back to the difference between the “factual beginning” of the history of philosophy and the principles which determine the course of the development of metaphysics *a priori*.³² Because Kant does not refer the beginning of philosophy to any “chronological datum,” Agamben does not think the philosophical history of philosophy Kant describes can mark its beginning in time.³³ The beginnings of

the history of philosophy are philosophical, for Kant, so they must be sought in principles which determine what “ought to happen” and “what could happen” in the history of philosophy, according to the nature of human reason. Agamben takes this to mean that Kant’s conception of a philosophical history of philosophy is only an idea, something which “can never truly be given as an empirically present whole.”³⁴ While Agamben does not explain why this should be the case, we may suppose that it is because “what should happen” and “what could happen” are possibilities, whose potential “not to be” cannot be excluded. The realization of the philosophical history of philosophy is, for that reason, always deferred, and the gap between the real history of philosophy and the ideal history of what Kant thinks philosophy could be or should happen becomes “essential,” because the real history of philosophy and the ideal of a philosophical history of philosophy never coincide.³⁵

Although Agamben insists that Kant’s philosophical history of philosophy becomes “the history of the thing which has not happened,” Agamben also regards the “essential dishomogeneity” of Kant’s philosophical archeology as a “constitutive gap,” which defines Kant’s conception of philosophy and renders it intelligible. It is because Kant excludes what could happen and what should happen in the history of philosophy from its real history, in other words, that Kant can define what is to be included within the history of philosophy, according to his own understanding of the nature of human reason. Agamben describes a similar logic at work in philology, history, anthropology, and psychoanalysis in his essay, arguing in each case that these sciences exclude the “origin” as something “prior to” the order of knowledge, in order to preserve the integrity of the order they propose.³⁶ It is only by defining the “beginning” of a science in opposition to what came “before” that science that one is able to delimit a particular field of inquiry. In so doing, however, one establishes a relation between what follows from the beginning of a science and what precedes it, what is included within the order of knowledge and what is excluded.³⁷ What is excluded becomes definitive of what is included and what is included simply

becomes what is not excluded.

The logic of this operation is the same as the logic of the ban that Agamben describes in *Homo Sacer*. Agamben calls the ban “the power of delivering something over to itself, which is to say, the power of maintaining itself in relation to something presupposed as nonrelational.”³⁸ In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben tried to show how this logic was paradoxical, because it both excluded bare life from the political order and included it within that order at the same time. Because a political life is a life which is subject to sovereign power, Agamben argues, bare life must be understood as a life which has no relation to the political order and which is not governed by sovereign power. Insofar as subjection to sovereign power is something which is imposed on life, however, the idea of a political life necessarily presupposes the idea of a life which precedes political subjection. Instead of being a life which is outside the political sphere and free from sovereign decision regarding its life and death, bare life comes to be included within the political order as life that is to be subjected. The history of modern political institutions illustrates the disastrous consequences of this logic and the ongoing attempts sovereign power has made to include bare life within the political order.³⁹

In his essay on philosophical archaeology, Agamben casts archaeology as the science which exposes the paradoxes of the logic of presupposition and exclusion. Unlike Kant, whose philosophical archaeology merely reproduces this logic, Agamben thinks Foucault acknowledges the gap between “a heterogenous stratum that is not placed in the position of a chronological origin” and something “qualitatively other,” which establishes the relation between what is excluded from that order as heterogenous and what is included within the order of knowledge.⁴⁰ This gap is constitutive for archaeology, according to Agamben, because it renders that which is included intelligible and establishes its credentials as knowledge. Instead of presenting this knowledge as essential and necessary, however, Agamben claims that Foucault’s archaeology establishes the distinction between knowledge and its

presupposed yet excluded other “in order to work on it, deconstruct it, and detail it to the point where it gradually erodes, losing its originary status.”⁴¹

What is central to archaeology, for Agamben, is “the movement of freedom” that Foucault attributes to dreams and the imagination in his ‘Preface’ to Binswanger’s *Dream and Existence*.⁴² Foucault had praised Binswanger for recognizing the “poetic” function of dreams and the imagination, rather than emphasizing their role in wish fulfillment, as Freud had done.⁴³ The “movement of freedom” to which Agamben refers is this imaginative “poetics.” Instead of proposing an objective account of the past “as it was,” Agamben thinks Foucault’s archaeology exercises its “freedom” and its “poetic” license, conjuring up an image of the past, which it then proceeds to deconstruct.⁴⁴ Through this movement, Agamben suggests, archaeology exposes the past as a projection of the present, which contains the present within itself. This in turn reveals the image of the past to be a history of the present, because it shows how the present recreates itself as the “future anterior” of the past.⁴⁵ By making the past the origin of the present order, while simultaneously excluding the past as “other” than that order, the present secures a beginning for itself and saves that beginning from critical scrutiny. The origin of the past is simply the “will have been” of the present, whose image is “derealized” by archaeological excavations.⁴⁶

Recognizing the logic of inclusion and exclusion at work in our image of the past allows us to free ourselves from the fantasy that the set of inclusions and exclusions that order our lives are somehow the “archaic” origin of our present reality. Far from being an inheritance which we must carry into the future, archaeology presents the past as a work of fiction, something which is literally “made up.”⁴⁷ We may study the past and play with the distinctions projected into the past by the present, but we are under no obligation to regard them as essential and original features of our individual and collective modes of existence.⁴⁸ This, I think, is the concrete meaning of redemption for Agamben,

because it “unworks” the distinctions that organize our lives and our political institutions, and gives us the freedom to create new forms of life.

4. THAT WHICH RENDERS NECESSARY A CERTAIN FORM OF THOUGHT

It should be clear by now that Kant and Agamben present very different accounts of the nature and value of philosophical archaeology. Yet neither of them seems to correspond to the archaeology of the human sciences that Foucault undertakes in *The Order of Things* in any straightforward fashion. By weighing the different conceptions of philosophical archaeology which are to be found in Kant and Agamben and comparing them to Foucault’s own archaeological practices, however, it may be possible to assess their relevance for our understanding of Foucault and his reasons for relating his own investigations to Kant’s philosophical archaeology in his response to the *New York Times* review.

The fact that Foucault claimed to have derived his conception of archaeology from Kant in his response to the *New York Times* review does not prove that Foucault agreed with every aspect of Kant’s account. Foucault would most likely have seen Kant’s identification of the principles of a philosophical history of philosophy with the principles of human reason as evidence of the kind of subjectivism and anthropologism he so sharply criticized in phenomenology. In the ‘Forward’ to the English edition of *The Order of Things*, Foucault says he rejects phenomenology, precisely because it “places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity—which, in short, leads to a transcendental consciousness.”⁴⁹ While these remarks appear to be directed against Husserl, later chapters reveal Kant’s critical philosophy to be “the threshold of our modernity,” which makes man the privileged object of the human sciences.⁵⁰ Phenomenology is for Foucault only a late and confused expression of this development, causing it to “topple over, willy-nilly, into anthropology,” despite its claim to be a pure philosophy and a rigorous science.⁵¹ If Kant’s philosophical archaeology could be said to follow a similar trajectory, founding its philosophical claims about the history of philosophy on a theory of the subject, then many of the

objections which Foucault raised against phenomenology could also be leveled against Kant.

The archaeology of the human sciences that Foucault presents takes a theory of discursive practices as its starting point, rather than a theory of the subject.⁵² By focusing on the discursive practices which order the epistemic fields of the renaissance, the classical age, and modernity, Foucault highlights the differences between the way knowledge is ordered in each period. Because Foucault brackets questions of causality in *The Order of Things*, however, it is difficult to see how his archaeology could be said to describe “the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought.”⁵³ While Foucault emphasized the necessity with which certain forms of thought are determined in his paraphrase of Kant’s “jottings” on philosophical archaeology, it is impossible to recount the history of that which “renders necessary” (*rendre necessaire*) a certain form of thought, when one has suspended questions of causal determination, explanation, and influence. Something is necessary because it is determined in a way that is not merely possible and not merely actual, for reasons which are neither arbitrary nor contingent. Unless one is willing to explain why something takes place, in other words, it is impossible to determine how it might be rendered necessary. Foucault’s resistance to causal explanation distances him further from Kant’s conception of philosophical archaeology, because it prevents him from saying anything about the necessity of the discursive practices he considers.

The impossibility of describing “that which renders necessary a certain form of thought” in archaeological terms does not mean that Foucault is committed to the peculiar conception of arbitrariness that characterizes Agamben’s understanding of philosophical archaeology. By making archaeology a kind of conjuring trick, which creates an image of the past as the presupposed but excluded origin of the present, Agamben is denying that there is anything which renders a certain form of thought necessary.⁵⁴ The very idea that something would render a certain form of thought necessary is absurd, for Agamben, because he regards history as a catalog of the distinctions we use to order our

thoughts and our activities, which is projected into the past.⁵⁵ The effects of the distinction between man and animal and the distinction between bare life and the political life of the citizen and many other distinctions may be a real part of our history, but these distinctions are simply works of fiction.⁵⁶ Attributing any kind of necessity to such distinctions would be the most obscene kind of obscurantism, from Agamben's perspective, because it would give them the power and authority of an ontological foundation, which would guarantee their legitimacy.⁵⁷ By revealing the ungroundedness of distinctions which order our lives and thoughts and showing them to be arbitrary and inessential, Agamben thinks we suspend their effects and free ourselves from the illusion that the catastrophe of the present was unavoidable.

To declare the distinctions which order knowledge in a given period to be arbitrary would be going too far for Foucault. Foucault does not address questions of causality in his archaeology, because he regards the causal explanations which are usually employed in the history of philosophy and science to be "more magical than effective."⁵⁸ Explanations which claim that a particular event was determined by "the spirit of the age," for example, are not so different from those which purport to explain how the soul moves the body. Citing the invention of the telescope as the cause of the revolution in modern astronomy and talking about how the attempt to address the social question leads to totalitarianism are, for similar reasons, too simplistic to be taken seriously. Anyone with a sense of the complexity of the forces which drive historical change will readily acknowledge that these accounts are insufficient from a methodological perspective, regardless of the particular contexts in which they appear. Denying their efficacy does not commit one to the view that change is arbitrary, however, and it does not suggest that the distinctions we use to order our knowledge are fictional. It merely acknowledges the difference between description and explanation, while recognizing the complexity of causal explanations.

Foucault avoids the "magical thinking" of traditional narrative history by describing the

transformations which take place in the epistemic fields of different periods and highlighting their differences.⁵⁹ Privileging description over explanation does not, however, limit archaeology to empirical observation. The force of Foucault's archaeology comes from the recognition that the empirical is the product and not the principle of the order of knowledge. "There is no similitude and no distinction," Foucault claims, "that is not the result of a result of a precise operation and of the application of a preliminary criterion."⁶⁰ Even the attempt to distinguish various "empiricities" according to the qualities we observe in them presupposes principles of similarity and difference, deriving their significance and the schema according to which they are applied from a certain order of knowledge. This means that observable empirical phenomena become visible through a "hidden network that determines the way they confront one another."⁶¹ While Foucault also maintains that the order which derives from this network "has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language," he insists that its existence is as undeniable as its effect.⁶² Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences is concerned with the "experience" of that order, which he regards as a "historical *a priori*" that allows certain ideas, sciences, and rationalities to become manifest in different periods.⁶³

The thread which ties Foucault's archaeology to Kant's conception of philosophical archaeology is perhaps to be found in the priority Foucault affords to the experience of order. While Agamben takes order to be fictional, a late and ultimately groundless projection of the present upon the past, Kant and Foucault both affirm the priority of order and the posteriority of the empirical. The principles which determine the empirical are necessary for Kant, whether they are the pure concepts of the understanding or the principles which allow a science of metaphysics to become manifest in history, because they derived from the nature of human reason. The temporal order according to which the idea of metaphysics develops is consequently a necessary order, which cannot fail to achieve its ultimate purpose. Foucault distances himself from Kant, because he does not consider the epistemic

configuration which orders knowledge in a given period under the sign of necessity. Nor is Foucault concerned with the “ultimate purpose” of the order he describes. Nevertheless, Foucault acknowledges that different epistemic configurations make certain forms of thought possible within different historical periods. Regarded as the historical *a priori* of a certain form of thought, he even acknowledges that the order of an epistemic configuration may serve as the “condition of existence” of knowledge.⁶⁴

5. CONCLUSION

Foucault shares with Agamben a concern for the effects of that knowledge and his interest in practices of resistance, through which it might be possible to destabilize the present order and reconstitute different forms of life. Yet this concern does not lead Foucault to deny the reality or the priority of order. Foucault associates his own archaeology of the human sciences with Kant’s conception of philosophical archaeology, because he regards order as the historical condition of the possibility and reality of different forms of thought, even when those forms resist the distinctions which are to be found in the present order of knowledge. The considerable difference between Foucault’s historical conditions and the philosophical necessity of Kant’s *a priori* principles must be stressed, but these differences qualify a common interest in “that which renders necessary a certain form of thought.”

Notes

* I would like to express my gratitude to the executive committee of the Society for European Philosophy/Forum for European Philosophy for selecting this paper “best paper by a postgraduate student” at the 6th annual joint SEP/FEP conference in Rome. I would also like to thank Verena Erlenbusch and Becca Longtin, with whom I presented this paper. I learned a great deal from Verena’s and Becca’s papers on Foucault and Agamben and truly enjoyed working with them. The advice I received from Joseph Tanke also did much to improve the final version of this paper.

1. Steiner, George. “The Mandarin of the Hour—Michel Foucault.” *New York Times Book Review*, February 21, 1971.
2. Foucault, Michel. “Monstrosities in Criticism.” Translated by Robert J. Matthews. *Diacritics* 1 (1971). pg. 60. See also Foucault, Michel. “Les Monstrosités de la critique.” Included in *Michel Foucault: Dits et Écrits I (1954-1975)*. Edited by Daniel Defert, et al. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. pp. 1089-1090.
3. *Monstrosities in Criticism*, pg. 60. *Les Monstrosités de la critique*, pg. 1090.
4. *Monstrosities in Criticism*, pg. 60. *Les Monstrosités de la critique*, pg. 1090.
5. See *Les Monstrosités de la critique*, pg. 1089. See also Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972. pp. 135-195.
6. The details of Foucault’s early appropriations of Kant are analyzed in great detail by Djaballah, Marc. *Kant, Foucault, and the Forms of Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2008. See also Han,

7. Agamben, Giorgio. "Philosophical Archaeology." Included in *The Signature of All Things*. Translated by Luca D'Isanto with Kevin Attell. New York: Zone Books, 2009. pg. 93. See also Agamben, Giorgio. "Philosophical Archaeology." Included in *Law and Critique*, Vol. 20 (3), 2009.
8. "Jottings" is the term used by the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant to designate those parts of Kant's *handschriftliche Nachlaß* that are called *löse Blätter* by the standard *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA) of Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften*. A more precise translation would be "loose sheets," but I have followed the convention established by the Cambridge edition in my references to Kant's "jottings."
9. Kant actually refers to a *philosophirenden* or "philosophizing" history of philosophy in his "jottings" on the progress of metaphysics. It is important to note that talk of a "philosophizing" history of philosophy is as unusual and unconventional in German as it is in English, but it corresponds to the emphasis Kant places on the practice of philosophizing in other texts. I have nevertheless preferred to call Kant's history "philosophical" rather than "philosophizing," for reasons of style.
10. See, for example, Kant, Immanuel. *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Edited and Translated by Karl Ameriks and Steve Narragon. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. pp. 299-302 (XXVIII: 531).
11. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. pg. 150 (A13/B27).
12. Kant, Immanuel. "What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?" Translated by Henry Allison. Included in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*. Edited by Henry Allison and Peter Heath. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Henry Allison provides a useful survey of the history of the text of Kant's essay in his editorial introduction in the Cambridge edition of *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy After 1781* (pp. 339-442). The text we have today was compiled shortly after Kant's death from three different manuscripts by Kant's friend Friedrich Theodor Rink. The original manuscripts have been lost and the shortcomings of Rink's editorial procedures make it difficult to determine the authenticity of Kant's text. A certain degree of caution is therefore necessary in attributing the claims found in *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?* to Kant. The positions attributed to Kant in this essay should, for that reason, be taken *cum grano salis*, though they have been confirmed by comparison with Kant's notes and lectures.
13. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
14. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
15. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
16. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
17. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
18. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
19. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:259).
20. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 354 (AA XX:260).
21. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:260).
22. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:260). The idea that an *Endzweck* is an "ultimate purpose" plays an important role in Kant's writings on teleology. See, for example, Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. pg. 294 (AA V: 426).
23. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 353 (AA XX:260).
24. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 357 (AA XX:264).
25. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 357 (AA XX:264).
26. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 419 (AA XX:342). See also *Critique of Pure Reason*, pg. 147 (B21-22).
27. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 419 (AA XX:342). See also *Critique of Pure Reason*, pg. 147 (B21-22).
28. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 417 (AA XX:341).
29. *Monstrosities in Criticism*, pg. 60. See also *Les Monstrosités de la critique*, pg. 1089.
30. *What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany*, pg. 417 (AA XX:340).
31. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 81.
32. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pp. 82-83.
33. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 82.
34. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 82. Agamben admits that "what could or ought to have been given" in philosophy is something that "perhaps one day might be," but he also suggests that the realization of that possibility is infinitely deferred, when he says "at the moment, they exist only in the condition of partial objects or ruins." Because the realization of the

possibility of what could be and what should be is never realized “at the moment,” the possibility of what could and what should take place in the history of philosophy must always remain a possibility with respect to the present, something which is forever “to come,” which, for that reason, never is. Jacques Derrida has analyzed this logic in many places, especially with respect to “democracy to come.” See Derrida, Jacques. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. pp. 78-94. Agamben has objected to the way this logic infinitely defers the “unworking” of an ultimately fictional injunction by interminably deconstructing it, maintaining it, Agamben says, “in a spectral life.” See Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. pg. 64. The difference between Derrida and Agamben on this issue is discussed by Mills, Catherine. *The Philosophy of Agamben*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009. pg. 121.

35. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 82. Agamben’s discussion of the paradoxes of Kant’s philosophical archaeology should be compared with his criticism of deconstruction and contrasted with his defense of Foucault’s archaeology in Agamben, Giorgio. “Theory of Signatures” Included in *The Signature of All Things*. Translated by Luca D’Isanto and Kevin Attell. New York: Zone Books, 2009. pp. 78-81. It should also be noted that Kant did not maintain the view that Agamben attributes to him at the beginning of his essay on philosophical archaeology. Agamben points to a passage in Kant’s *Logic*, where Kant says that philosophy cannot be learned, because “it is not yet given,” but Agamben misrepresents the context in which Kant made this claim and its implications, when he suggests that the whole of philosophy can never be “given” as such for Kant. Instead of arguing that philosophy is only an idea and does not exist in reality, as Agamben claims, Kant is arguing, in the passage from the *Logic*—and in the corresponding passage in his lectures, which I have cited in note 8—that one must philosophize, in order to become a philosopher. One cannot simply memorize what other philosophers have said, taking their words to be true on the authority of the wise men who have spoken them. One must think for oneself, if one wishes to learn philosophy, and approach philosophical questions with one’s own reason. When one has done that, then Kant thinks one has “given” oneself philosophy. Kant cannot mean that it is impossible for philosophy to be given at all, or that philosophy cannot be an empirically given whole, because Kant claims to have made metaphysics a science in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787). Kant went on to defend the claim that his “critique” had made metaphysics a science in his *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as a science* (1783), *On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one* (1790), and the drafts of his prize-essay on the progress of metaphysics (1793/1804). In his late writing against Fichte, Kant even claimed that his *Critique* contained the entire science of metaphysics, a claim which is contradicted by the text of the ‘Introduction’ to the first (A) and second (B) editions of the work. For all of these reasons, it is impossible to maintain that Kant thought that “what could happen” and “what should happen” in the history of philosophy could not be realized.

36. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pp. 82-92.

37. For a helpful account of Agamben’s critique of this logic, see Düttmann, Alexander García. “Never Before, Always Already: Notes on Agamben and the Category of Relation.” *Angelaki: A Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 2001, 6(3), 3-6.

38. Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. pp. 109-110.

39. See, for example, *Homo Sacer*, pp. 148, 169-176.

40. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 84.

41. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 102.

42. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 103.

43. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 104. See also Foucault, Michel. “Introduction.” Included in Binswanger, Ludwig and Foucault, Michel. *Dream and Existence*. Translated by Keith Hoeller. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993. pg. 72.

44. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pp. 104-105.

45. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pp. 105-106.

46. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pp. 103-105.

47. The English word “fiction” is derived from the Latin *ingere*, which means “to touch,” but also “to shape” and “to form.” Etymologically, the term need not refer to works of literature, but may be extended to anything which is “shaped” or “formed” or even “made.” Reading the various “fictions” Agamben refers to in his works as things which are “made up” is helpful for understanding his critique of the distinction between the norm and exception, law and anomie, man and animal, and so forth.

48. On the significance of study and play, see *State of Exception*, pp. 63-64.

49. Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. pg. xiv. Similar claims are to be found in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where Foucault is even more explicit in his criticism of the phenomenological approaches to history. It is here that Foucault famously accuses phenomenology of “transcendental

- narcissism” and claims that his archaeology aims to “free history from the grip of phenomenology.” See *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pg. 203.
50. *The Order of Things*, pg. 319.
51. *The Order of Things*, pp. 220, 248.
52. *The Order of Things*, pg. xiv. The theory of discursive practices to which Foucault refers is articulated more generally in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp.
53. *The Order of Things*, pg. xii-xiii.
54. The fictional and even arbitrary character of the distinctions human beings use to order their life and thought is a general feature of Agamben’s thought, but it is perhaps most clearly expressed at the end of *Language and Death*, a work dedicated to the “ungroundedness” of philosophy. In the context of a discussion of the relation between violence and sacrifice, Agamben argues that “man, the animal possessing language, is, as such, ungrounded... he has no foundation except in his own action... in every case, the action of the human community is grounded only in another action... the ungroundedness of all human praxis is hidden here in the fact that an action... is abandoned to itself and thus becomes the foundation for all legal behavior; the action is that which, remaining unspeakable and intransmissible in every action and in all human language, destines man to community and to tradition.” This means that the categories governing human language, communities, traditions, and laws have their foundations in human action. The acts which “found” those languages, communities, traditions, and laws may have real and even disastrous consequences, but they are ultimately gratuitous. They cannot be considered necessary, for Agamben, because they are arbitrary. See Agamben, Giorgio. *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*. Translated by Karen E. Pinkus and Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. pg. 105.
55. *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 93.
56. See Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open: Man and Animal*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. pp. 35-36. See also Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. pp. 86-88.
57. At the end of his essay on philosophical archaeology, Agamben argues that “the human sciences will be capable of reaching their decisive epistemological threshold only after they have rethought, from the bottom up, the very idea of an ontological anchoring, and thereby envisaged being as a field of essentially historical tensions.” See *Philosophical Archaeology*, pg. 111. Given his emphasis on the ultimately fictional nature of the distinctions which generate these historical tensions, it is likely that Agamben would deny that these distinctions have any “ontological anchoring,” which would provide them with I have simply called “a foundation in “reality.”
58. *The Order of Things*, pg. xii-xiii.
59. *The Order of Things*, pp. xii-xiii, xxii, 218. See also *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 5-6, 169-177.
60. *The Order of Things*, pg. xx. See also *The Order of Things*, pg. 252, where Foucault begins to discuss the role this approach to the empirical will take in the epistemic configuration of modernity, noting that “visible forms, their connections, the blank spaces that isolate them and surround their outlines—all these will now be presented to our gaze only in an already composed state, already articulated in that nether darkness that is fomenting them with time.”
61. *The Order of Things*, pg. xx.
62. *The Order of Things*, pg. xx.
63. *The Order of Things*, pg. xxi-xxii.
64. The phrase “conditions of existence” (*les conditions d’existence*) appears several times in *The Order of Things*, often in conjunction with Foucault’s discussion of Cuvier. See *The Order of Things*, pp. 274. It acquires a more general methodological significance in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. See *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 27-28, 38, 116-117. Foucault also sometimes refers to the historical a priori as the “condition of reality” (*condition de réalité*) of statements, which I take to be lexically equivalent to the idea of a “condition of existence.” See *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pg. 127.