Suffice it to say that McKeon does not forget his dialectical method. Each text provides the ground for a mini-drama of the conflict between the various epistemological and social positions even if the text finally declares a more or less coherent allegiance to one position. Like the previous material, these readings show an exciting synthesis of old and new observations and are further evidence of the author's interpretive powers.

In a gracious and elegant conclusion, McKeon suggests that the initial positions occupied by Richardson (naive/progressive) and Fielding (skeptical/conservative) in their debate over the representation of truth and virtue in prose narrative are reversed. In Tom Jones Fielding is accused by his contemporaries of creating a progressive plot celebrating "low" characters, while Richardson's epistolary extravagance in Clarissa leads to a charge of epistemological relativism and skepticism. McKeon argues that the reversal and rapprochement in the positions occupied by Fielding and Richardson show that the oppositions that he has constructed in the course of his book "are losing their intellectual and social significance. . . . By the end of the eighteenth century, romance idealism will have emerged from the long process of positive revaluation that issues in the romantic movement and in the ascendancy of the secularized, human spirituality of the aesthetic" (418-19). The novel for McKeon "mark[s] the discovery not of the relation between these realms [of truth and virtue] but of an increasing division between them that is too great to ignore. In this respect the novel, although 'new,' is the explicit commemoration of a previous and tacit knowledge, as well as of its fragility and dissolution" (420). There is an echo here of the idealist and Marxist Lukács in McKeon's view of the novel as an attempt to represent and explain the new "gulfs" created by developments in the material and ideological forces at work in society. This echo helps to identify the "pre-giveness" of McKeon's discourse as it incorporates the voices of Hegelian idealism, Russian Formalism, historical materialism, and a good many others into its own particular and exciting idiom.


Michel Foucault’s work has been notoriously difficult to place within the traditional categories reserved for philosophers. It is often easier to decide instead which categories his work excludes. But even that modest project is not without its perils. For example, Frank Lentricchia has insisted that Foucault is not a "nominalist" (193) without saying much about what he takes that word to mean and without noting that there are explicit passages in Foucault which seem to insist that, in general, "one needs to be nominalistic" (History of Sexuality 93). It is one of the interesting aspects of *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy* that it gives a convincing account of the sense in which Lentricchia’s claim needs to be qualified.

If for simplicity’s sake we take "nominalism" to be what Rajchman claims it is for Foucault—the doctrine "that only individual things exist and that the way they are sorted into classes is only a convention of human practice" (74)—it is clear that Foucault was at least less of a nominalist in his early work, to his dismay later. *Histoire de la folie* (1961) is a study of Madness, of an experience overlaid (but not engendered) by history, embodied and glorified by the modernist avant-garde. It is not hard to detect here a Rousseau-esque portrait of the noble neurotic, struggling valiantly against the constraints of modern life and language. And it is hard not to see Foucault’s own work, beginning with *L’Ordre du Discours* (1971), as a struggle against that same brand of historiography.

The disruptions of 1968 had a profound effect upon Foucault. Increasingly less impressed by the actual literary accomplishments of the period and less enamored of the avant-garde that produced them, Foucault began to gain some distance from his earlier assumptions and to ask himself the same question he had always asked of previous historical moments: how had things ever come to look that way? Why, in other words, had "Madness" ever assumed such an awesome abistorical presence behind his own historical research? He began to see that a really adequate history of madness would have to be a nominalist history of "madness," where "the quotation marks have a certain importance" (*The Use of Pleasure*)—a history of our coming to conceive of "madness" as a category in the first place.
But that was not quite the history he eventually wrote. *Surveiller et punir* (1975) is a history not of madness but of incarceration, and its not-so-hidden agenda was to show that behind the operations of language lies the deployment of power relations which have assumed an identifiable form in modern culture. The history of the prison over the past two centuries shows the evolution of this technique: placing all the intimate details of a person’s life under as much surveillance as an inmate’s is the first step toward making that person “normal.” In short the utopian dream of a rationally ordered society has its nightmarish underside in the experience of the prisoner. Since the eighteenth century, the normalizing practices of the prison have been diffused throughout Western culture, in factories, schools, barracks, asylums, from the data collection of the psychologist to the data-based scrutiny of the IRS examiner. In fact, the evolution of “disciplinary” penal practice is closely correlated with the rise of social science itself, whose statistical procedures originated with the first widespread surveillance of delinquency. Power, as Nietzsche would say, produces knowledge.

Rajchman, in his book, focuses not on the actual discussions in *Surveiller et punir*, but on the consequences which they suggest for Foucault’s overall project. “Power,” as Foucault understands it, is dispersed throughout even the most inconsequential practices of social life, forming a network of interactions rather than a locus of privilege: it is not a prerogative exercised by the upper class, neither by the apparatus of the State nor through the mystification of ideologies. Since “power” is not the monopoly of the few, the committed intellectual cannot hope to divine an enlightened revolutionary program to secure it. He cannot in fact hope to speak for the masses at all—“the masses” is as dubious a term for Foucault’s nominalist vocabulary as “Madness.” What he can do is to engage in specific political struggles with the aim of allowing the people most involved to speak for themselves.

The consequence is easy to see. The results of Foucault’s research could not fit easily within the framework of a leftist political programme. Each of the traditional categories of Marxist analysis—the oppressed class, the goal of History, “History” itself—is subjected to the same nominalist dispersal, leaving only local problems to be addressed by the intellectual specifically immersed in their details: problems of delinquency, mental illness, gender roles. Given Foucault’s assumptions, it is hardly surprising that he strenuously avoided concrete proposals in these local matters or that he was assailed from all sides of the political scene, from the Left no less stridently than from the Right. Yet it remains true that the issues which attracted his attention were always the sort one would expect a card-carrying Leftist to concern himself with (he had in fact been a member of the Communist Party in the 1950s). His political concerns, in other words, lacked any broad ideological articulation; or what Rajchman has dubbed “Foucault’s Dilemma.”

This political quandary forms the centerpiece for Michel Foucault: *The Freedom of Philosophy*. How, Rajchman asks, is it possible to make sense of a political involvement devoid of a political agenda? The book’s title conveys Rajchman’s suggestion for a solution: Foucault “introduces a new concept of freedom, and thus transforms the role of the philosopher-intellectual” (102). The book’s many other points of interest—its account of Foucault’s intellectual journey out of the ’60s, its analysis of his radical nominalism, its discussion of his differences with Habermas—all of these are background. The more sense one can make of this “new freedom,” the more success one ascribes to Rajchman’s project.

The first point to notice here is that “freedom” is not Foucault’s own explicit preoccupation, as Rajchman readily admits; nevertheless, the question of freedom “is found in what he does, motivated by his search for a new role for philosophy in the ‘ethic of the intellectual’” (121). This is the main claim of the book, and it is one likely to puzzle a good many readers of Foucault who could point to what he repeatedly says about power: “Power is everywhere” (*History of Sexuality* 93). Where then is there any room for freedom? And given Foucault’s bias against existentialist humanism, why foist upon him an interpretation that makes him sound like a disciple of Sartre? The fact that a reader of Rajchman’s book could be asking such questions even after a thorough reading points to one of the book’s two main weaknesses: not that there is no way of responding to these doubts, but that the book does not really make a convincing response. There just is no extended discussion of textual evidence that could place freedom in the forefront of Foucault’s concerns. As a result, no one who was not already predisposed to a positive assessment of Foucault’s project would be convinced by Rajchman’s discussion.

It is interesting to notice, however, that recently published material provides some textual evidence in favor of Rajchman’s intuitions. At the very least, it now seems clear that Foucault was deeply interested in the problem of freedom; for example:

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. . . . Con-
sequently there is no face to face confrontation of power and freedom which is mutually exclusive (freedom disappears everywhere power is exercised), but a much more complicated interplay. In this game freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power. ("The Subject and Power" 221)

And though what Foucault has in mind in this passage is not perhaps immediately apparent, it is clear elsewhere that he intends more than a trivial semantic ploy: he explicitly draws upon the "voluntary choice" nurtured in Greek ethics and the "exercise of freedom" admired by Baudelaire, for whom modern man is "the man who tries to invent himself" ("What is Enlightenment?" 39-42). Perhaps Foucault is not as far from Sartre as we might suppose—but we could not be certain of that just from reading Rajchman.

Nevertheless, given the evidence from the late work of Foucault, Rajchman's own book is likely to stand as a prolegomenon to any future Foucault scholarship, primarily because it sketches out how an "ethic of the intellectual" might be formulated to solve Foucault's dilemma. "Ethics" in Foucault's last works is concerned not with codes of conduct but with the ways in which one might stand in relation to those codes—the reasons one finds for being moral, the ideal traits one's moral practice is supposed to perfect, the techniques one uses to perfect that practice. Ethics, in this sense, is the arena of self-making, and for ethical practice one needs to see that the self does not come ontologically preformed: we don't "liberate" the self, we constitute it. Here one might object that what we are in a position to constitute admittedly depends on what we are in a position to experience. But at this point Foucault insists that what we already "know" about the self is one of the conditioning factors for that subjective experience—which is what his nominalist treatment of the "self" is intended to counteract. His last works are a historical inquiry into the ways that the mundane practices of culture have "forced upon us" a particular conception of our "true nature," our abnormalities, our unconscious yearnings, and our ethical options. In this way, Rajchman claims, Foucault opens up the question of our freedom with respect to those formations of self, a freedom modeled not on release from repression (since there is no true nature to recover), but on the freedom of a persistent scepticism (2), which exposes the cant of naturalism and opens up a "clearing" for another possibility: the possibility of "freedom as revolt" against prevailing local practices (117).

Thus the political function of the intellectual would be the relentless public practice of the sceptical nominalist's art, encouraging others to undertake their own ethical transformation. Such a project, of course, does not supply any positive political agenda. But a leftist might conceivably invoke Foucault in the (admittedly vague) hope that, because relations of power constitute an interlocking fabric, "each localized struggle induces effects on the entire network" (Sheridan 139).

This will hardly satisfy critics worried about Foucault's "anarchism." ("Things don't just take care of themselves, dammit.") To them, Foucault's response is given, indirectly, in his final (ethical) work: political action, whatever the limits on its impact, is hopelessly misguided unless its participants "take care" of themselves. And this might well involve some rather radical self-reconstitution.

Surely this response blunts at least some of the force behind the political dilemma facing Foucault. But other questions loom as well, and this points to the other major weakness of Rajchman's book. Not only does it fail to demonstrate clearly that Foucault's underlying concern is with freedom, but it also fails to explore fully the philosophical ramifications of that concern. To what extent is the freedom gained through a Foucauldian examination "real" freedom? After all, if power relations are as pervasive as Foucault claims, they must govern even the sceptical practice of Foucault himself, whose research occurs within the same sort of mundane contexts (colleagues, texts, institutions) that it studies, so one has to wonder whether Foucault's "freedom" is not just the switching of obedience from one regime of power to another. Why then call it "freedom"? In fact, why not do a Foucauldian analysis of that notion?

Giddiness over such an analytical spiral might make one suspect that Lentricchia could be right after all: nominalism has to stop wherever a philosopher's fundamental assumptions are lodged. (Foucault's assumptions appear to center on the notions of "power" and, if Rajchman is correct, "freedom.") Presumably Foucault himself would resist a deconstruction of his own position. The question is: how would he do so?

One possible response here is to suggest that the issue is not metaphysical at all. This is not a matter that Rajchman really discusses except perhaps obliquely by his choice of title: "The Freedom of Philosophy"—emphatically not "The Philosophy of Freedom". Why, Foucault might ask, should freedom need to be construed as a metaphysical category in the first place, one even capable of being deconstructed? Do aesthetic categories run the same risk?
This is an avenue Rajchman needs to consider. For as long as "freedom" is open to the same radical nominalist analysis as "madness," Rajchman faces a difficulty exactly parallel to the one he attributes to Foucault: a philosophical project that lacks any stable philosophical articulation. This we might call "Rajchman’s Dilemma," and it will be interesting to see if and how it is resolved.

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Works Cited


In "Philosophy in America," the introduction to *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, John Rajchman argues that the book is about "new directions in American philosophy... new kinds of philosophy that may revitalize American intellectual debate" (xiii). What he means is suggested by the book's title, which, in strictly historical terms, refers to the rejection of the methods and assumptions of analytic philosophy by a growing number of American philosophers and to the subsequent proliferation of research programs and paradigms that marks contemporary work in the field. But as Rajchman defines it, the term "post-analytic philosophy" has another, more polemical meaning as well. "In post-analytic philosophy," he suggests, we... find a challenge to the Kantianism that holds that morality consists in what can be justified to all rational agents, a challenge to the scientism which postulates a single kind of rationality, and a challenge to the humanism that assumes that all works appeal to the universality of the human imagination. (xxiv)

In assembling *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, Rajchman and Cornell West have combined both historical and polemical agendas by including a wide range of essays, written between 1973 and 1985 by such influential American philosophers as Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, Arthur Danto, Stanley Cavell, and John Rawls, which suggest both the diversity of post-analytic philosophy and the challenge it poses to traditional philosophical debate. Further, recognizing that the issues raised by these authors often cut across disciplinary boundaries, they have also included several essays by critics who are not professional philosophers, including Harold Bloom and Sheldon Wolin, and have organized the collection into four broad categories: one on historical and conceptual issues (Rorty, Putnam, Nagel, Bernstein), and others on literature (Danto, Cavell, and Bloom), science (Davidson, Hacking, Kuhn), and moral theory (Rawls, Scanlon, Wolin). The book does have some limitations, most notably a striking absence of work by women or, with the exception of Cornell West’s afterword, by people of color, and because of its emphasis on American philosophy, it does not include philosophers and critics who draw on European models like deconstruction, Marxism, or psychoanalysis. But overall, the result is a valuable collection, supplemented by Rajchman’s introduction and West’s afterword, which provides an excellent introduction to the issues at stake in post-analytic philosophy and, at the same time, raises important questions about its cultural, historical, and political implications.

Because analytic philosophy sought to develop an ahistorical methodology similar to and capable of explaining the natural sciences, an important source of the critique of the analytic tradition has been the critique of its view of science, a critique suggested here by Ian Hacking and Thomas Kuhn. In "Styles of Scientific Reasoning," Hacking argues that each period of scientific development has its own style of ar-