PARALLAX

THE CYNIC ENLIGHTENMENT

Diogenes in the Salon

LOUISA SHEA

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PARALLAX  RE-VISIONS OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Stephen G. Nichols, Gerald Prince, and Wendy Steiner
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Louisa Shea

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For my father and my mother
William and Evelyn Shea

"What sort of a man do you consider Diogenes to be?"
"A Socrates gone mad," replied Plato.
Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers

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Preface

Ancient Cynicism has survived in the popular imagination as a set of stock images: Diogenes, ill-clad and grumpy, lounging in his tub, or old and haggard, wandering the streets of Athens in broad daylight, lantern in hand. Little else has subsisted outside of scholarly discourse. The word *cynic* now bears only a vague and uncertain relationship to the famous Greek Cynic Diogenes; it has come to signify, in the words of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* "a person who believes that people are motivated purely by self-interest rather than acting for honorable or unselfish reasons."[1] But *cynic* did not always denote a self-seeking and ruthless individual. The word, which derives from the Greek *kyon,* meaning "dog," originally designated a group of ancient Greek philosophers who prided themselves on behaving like hounds, the better to bark at the follies of their age.

The movement, which took root in fourth-century BCE Athens with Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope, has always held an ambiguous place in the history of philosophy: fiercely opposed to any form of theoretical abstraction or institutional organization and famous for defying all codes of decency, it survived on the margins of the Academy and the Lyceum as a movement of lone, public haranguers. Early commentators looked on it with an odd mixture of admiration and scorn: Epictetus and the emperor Julian sought to salvage it from opprobrium by ridding it of its more problematic and populist features and elevating it to the status of a universal philosophy, but the strategy failed to make Cynicism palatable to medieval Christianity, let alone to the vituperative verve of Counter-Reformation moralists such as François Garasse or Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac. By the seventeenth century the Cynics had gained a reputation as moral and religious pariahs; by the nineteenth century they had lost not only their moral but also their philosophical credibility. In his lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel sounded the death knell of Cynicism as a philosophy worthy of serious scholarly attention, dismissing the ancient sect as theoretically unfit to enter the canon of modern philosophy: "There is nothing particular to say of the Cynics, for they possess but little philosophy, and they

did not bring what they had into a scientific system," he wrote, adding with reference to Antisthenes that "his principles are simple, because the content of his teaching remains general; it is hence superfluous to say anything further about him."[2]

In this book I hope to show why it might, after all, be worth our while to say something further about the Cynics. For if Hegel did indeed succeed in writing the ancient Dogs out of the history of philosophy, Cynicism has nevertheless survived, reemerging with renewed vigor at crucial moments in the history of modern philosophy. My focus is on the role Cynicism came to play in debates in and about the Enlightenment, both in the eighteenth century and in recent reflections on the viability of Enlightenment critique.

My own curiosity about the Cynics and their legacy was sparked when I came across a curious coincidence. In the early 1980s the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and his French contemporary Michel Foucault independently turned to Greek Cynicism as a model for a new way of doing philosophy. Nineteen eighty-three saw the publication of Sloterdijk's immensely popular *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft (Critique of Cynical Reason),* which celebrates ancient Cynicism as the last stage of Enlightenment and the solution to the ills of modernity. Sloterdijk posits a clear split between Greek Cynicism and its modern counterpart, cynicism (lowercase), an attitude of disillusioned self-interest that he interprets as the direct consequence of the failure of the Enlightenment to provide for a more just society. Sloterdijk argues that only by reviving ancient Cynicism can we combat our society's pervasive cynicism and rekindle the hopes of the Enlightenment. The following year, Foucault, who had not read Sloterdijk, delivered his last lecture course at the Collège de France. Five of the nine lectures analyze Cynicism and elevate Diogenes as the symbol of the committed intellectual. Foucault too speaks of Cynicism as a philosophy that could enable us to carry on the task of critique inherited from the Enlightenment.

Why did Foucault and Sloterdijk turn to the ancient Cynics? What caused this unforeseen revival of the ancient sect, and why did both philosophers link it to the Enlightenment? Can Cynicism function as a model for how we should do philosophy today? This first set of questions led to a second, namely, What was the status of Cynicism in France and Germany in the eighteenth century? Did writers of the period concern themselves with Diogenes of Sinope? Can we speak of an Enlightenment Cynicism that was later lost or forgotten and that Foucault and Sloterdijk helped us rediscover? And if so, why did neither Foucault nor Sloterdijk give much heed to eighteenth-century Cynics?

My research revealed that despite their marginal position in modern intellectual history, the Cynics have a long legacy in Western thought and a particularly rich, largely unexplored history in the French and German Enlightenments. Scholarship on Cynicism tends to mark the demise of the ancient movement around the sixth century and to treat the rediscovery of Cynic texts in the Renaissance as the movement's final, brief moment of glory. But if the Cynics undeniably fell from grace in the wake of their sixteenth-century revival (for moral and religious reasons during the Counter-Reformation and for reasons of philosophical rigor in the nineteenth century—witness Hegel), the mid-eighteenth century saw a concerted effort among the French philosophes and their international coterie to revive Diogenes as both a literary and a philosophical model. Diogenes figures importantly in the works of major writers of the latter half of the century in France and Germany: beginning with D'Alembert, who, in his *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands,* of 1755, called for the Diogenes of his age to step forth and lead the republic of letters, Cynicism began circulating as a desirable, if widely contested, philosophical and literary model. Denis Diderot and Christoph Martin Wieland each made him the subject of a philosophical novel; Frederick the Great, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the Marquis de Sade all claimed the role of Cynic for themselves. Lesser-known writers such as Pierre le Guai de Prémontval and M. L. Castilhon joined the fray, as did Catholic writers of the French Counter-Enlightenment and anonymous pamphleteers from the 1760s through the French Revolution. At times with humor, but often with bitter acrimony, writers fought over the question who had the right to speak in the name of Diogenes. Anticipating their twentieth-century successors, they turned to Cynicism as a touchstone for defining the role the man of letters—what we would today call the *écrivain engagé* or public intellectual—should play in last decades of the *ancien régime.*

This, then, is a book about the philosophical uses to which Diogenes of Sinope has been put by thinkers committed to social change, and specifically about the role Cynicism played in the development of eighteenth-century philosophical thought and in recent debates on the legacy of the Enlightenment. I hope to show that if Diogenes belongs, on the one hand, to a stock repertoire of culturally transgressive figures and appeals in part because of his rebel status, he stands for more than provocation. It would be a mistake to dismiss Diogenes as just another marginal type invoked to ward off, if only symbolically, the writer's bitterly felt lack of power to effect change. For Diogenes is not any old fool: he appeals to Diderot, as he will to Sloterdijk, because

he is the first philosophical fool, a "Socrates gone mad," as Plato is reputed to have called him, whose task it is both to make fun of philosophy and to goad the philosopher to greater self-awareness.[3] The Diogenes figures we encounter from D'Alembert to Foucault empower an attitude of revolt and rebellion, but they function above all as the object of complex discussions and negotiations. One key argument of this book is that much of the interest generated by Cynicism in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth derives from internal tensions in the search for an appropriate language in which to communicate social criticism (how much of the Cynic's bite could one, and should one, make use of?) and from philosophers' deeply felt need for an ethical basis from which to engage in criticism. The Cynics' rejection of abstract theory in favor of a lived philosophy premised on harsh self-discipline held the promise of an intransigent critical attitude freed, by its orientation toward action and the everyday, from a disheartening and paralyzing skepticism.

Yet because he is defined on the one hand by his free speech and his stringent self-discipline and on the other by his scandalous acts of public indecency and shocking disrespect for even the most commonsensical of social values, the ancient Cynic defies simple identification: he is always simultaneously an object of desire and an object of revulsion. His activities as defacer of public norms give us, at best, an ambiguous portrait of the Cynic as rascal as well as moralist. As a model for a better way of doing philosophy, Diogenes remains not a little suspicious. A grotesque parody of Plato, Diogenes functions, in Foucault's words, as "the grimace" or "broken mirror" of philosophy, in which every philosopher must recognize himself, though not without a shudder of protest.[4] This is what makes him such an interesting figure upon which to base a discussion of the modern intellectual: he responds to the aspiration to courageously confront the injustices that plague society even as he forces a direct confrontation with the darker aspects of the will to change the world.

The revival of Cynicism in the eighteenth century marks a desire on the part of the philosophes to shape the emergent figure of the public intellectual and a willingness to grapple with the social and political difficulties raised by what Diderot called the impulse to "change the common way of thinking."[5] But the difficulties of negotiating a space for Diogenes within the social world of the republic of letters and in the political climate of eighteenth-century France proved too perilous a task even for the literary avant-garde of the day. In the end, D'Alembert and his fellow men of letters so neutralized the threat posed by Cynicism that they rendered the movement virtually unrecognizable. One consequence of the Cynics' moral ambiguity, then, and a central

thesis of this book, is that by seeking to salvage Cynicism for social criticism the philosophes in fact contributed to the demise of the movement within Western intellectual history. By purging the sect of its less respectable traits, the philosophes in effect rendered Cynicism philosophically superfluous (their clean-shaven Diogenes proved, when all was said and done, a poor rival to the more traditional models of Socrates and Seneca) even as they drew attention to those aspects of the ancient sect they sought to curtail, they unwittingly paved the way for the transformation of the concept into its modern counterpart, cynicism in our everyday sense of the term, a thesis beautifully illustrated, as we shall see, in Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau.*

It would be an exaggeration, no doubt, to say that Cynicism died out at the close of the eighteenth century as the result of the philosophes' failed attempt to revive the movement for contemporary social change. But Cynicism undeniably suffered a fall from grace and memory in the nineteenth century, as evidenced in the gradual semantic shift by which *Cynicism* became divorced from its philosophical roots and came to acquire its current meaning as an attitude of disillusioned self-interest. The philosophes' overpurification of Cynicism paved the way for Hegel's dismissive comments and the movement's gradual excision from the domain of philosophy proper.[6] When Sloterdijk and Foucault unexpectedly revive Cynicism from its philosophical slumber and engage it in a debate on the legacy of Enlightenment thought, they pick up, so to speak, where D'Alembert and Diderot left off: though they refer only in passing to eighteenth-century debates on Cynicism, their texts can productively be read as attempts to revisit, on new ground, the historical moment in which the Cynic revival was first attempted in the name of Enlightenment.

The book is, accordingly, divided into two parts: the first focuses on the uses to which Cynicism was put in the eighteenth century; the second turns to revivals of Cynicism in contemporary discourses about the Enlightenment. Following an introductory chapter on the ancient Cynics, chapter 2, "Taming Wild Dogs: The Polite Education of Monsieur Diogène," explains why the philosophes sought to put Cynicism back in circulation after its devaluation at the hands of Counter-Reformation writers and why, to this end, they found it necessary to remint the Cynic coin by divesting it of its impure allies, a scathing tongue and rude manners. The conflict between the conversational norms of the republic of letters and the rhetorical strictures imposed by censorship on the one hand and Diogenes' rude and reckless speech on the other led writers from D'Alembert to Prémontval and Diderot to adopt a policy of containment as the only possible means of negotiating a place for Cynicism within

the *ancien régime*. The ancient philosopher gained a renewed popularity both in France and in Germany as a bold but decent spokesman for all enlightened intellectuals.

Attempts to contain Cynicism did not always succeed, however, and the shunned Cynic dregs found their way back into circulation. Chapter 3, "Menippus on the Loose, or Diderot's Twin Hounds," investigates Diderot's secret misgivings about the ability of a polite Diogenes to reform society and his private speculations about the harm and self-delusion created in the attempt. *Le Neveu de Rameau,* which stages the dialogue between two would-be Cynics, the philosopher Moi and Rameau's rascal nephew, poignantly suggests that the Encyclopédistes and their circle, strive though they might to fashion themselves and their contemporaries as autonomous and unprejudiced human beings—to produce themselves, that is, as D'Alembert's socially responsible, independent Cynic—in fact produce nothing more than grotesque parodies of Diogenes, skeptical thinkers without principles or social conscience, cynics in the modern sense of the term. The irreverent nephew emerges not as the antithesis but as the heir of the philosophes, the unwitting product of an "age of reason." He ushers in the era of the modern cynic, Sloterdijk's disillusioned and disaffected *Zyniker*. *Le Neveu de Rameau* is a pivotal document in our study because it stages an auto-critique of the Enlightenment through Cynicism. But the text deserves attention for a second reason as well: in the figure of the linguistically and socially deviant nephew, Diderot revives an alternative Cynical stance derived from Menippean satire (Menippus being one of Diogenes' first followers), a stance that accepts the bawdy, the dirty, and the impolite as possible means of correcting and advancing the work of critique. A biting social critic *and* a parasitical *profiteur,* a Cynic and a cynic, the nephew incarnates both the malignant tumor unwittingly engendered by the philosophes' attempts to enlighten the age and its possible remedy.

Where chapter 3 focuses on the intellectual and linguistic dangers inherent in Cynicism, chapters 4 and 5 consider a second aspect of the ancient sect that troubled the attempt to revive Diogenes as a model for the public intellectual in eighteenth-century France: Cynic politics. Eighteenth-century writers were quick to celebrate Diogenes' courageous defiance of Alexander the Great, but as Diderot knew only too well, eighteenth-century Paris was no Athens: only a madman would dare speak to Louis XV as Diogenes did to his king. What, moreover, were they to make of the ancient Cynics' more radical antipolitical quips? In his now lost *Republic* Diogenes envisaged a community without laws or taboos; while the text would not have been available to our eighteenth-cen-

tury writers, much of its contents, from the rejection of law and government to the defense of incest and anthropophagy, could be gleaned from sources that had been widely available since the Renaissance, such as Diogenes Laertius and Dio Chrysostom, to name but two of the most important. How could such an anarchical politics serve the practical need for social reform?

The question is particularly pertinent because three canonical authors of the eighteenth century—Wieland, Rousseau, and Sade—developed their political ideals in dialogue with Cynicism. Wieland is known as a theoretician of cosmopolitanism in the German Enlightenment, but it is seldom pointed out that he first expressed his cosmopolitan views in a fictional rewriting of Diogenes' *Republic.* In his *Sokrates mainomenos, oder die Dialogen des Diogenes von Sinope (Socrates out of his senses: or, dialogues of Diogenes of Sinope)* (1770), Wieland contrasts his ideal, a moderate cosmopolitanism, to what he deemed Rousseau's mistaken interpretation of Cynic politics as a primitive republican utopia. Rousseau, for his part, shows an affinity to Cynicism in his early political writings, but he subsequently rejects Cynicism as incompatible with a genuine republic. Turning the tables on Rousseau, Sade gives his own version of Diogenes' republic in *Français, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains* (1795), where he uses Cynicism as a tool for attacking the hypocrisies of the new French Republic and its unwitting hero, Jean-Jacques. Chapter 4 focuses on the contradictory uses of an anarchist Diogenes as both spokesperson and critic of the republican ideal in Wieland and Rousseau; chapter 5 turns to the young heir of the Enlightenment, the Marquis de Sade, and his resolute attempt to revive Cynicism in its full-fledged moral and political ambiguity.

Our story of the vexed relationship between Cynicism and Enlightenment picks up again two centuries later, with the unexpected resurgence of Cynicism among philosophers deeply committed to assessing the legacy of the Enlightenment for contemporary critique. Part 2, "Theory Turns Cynical: Diogenes after the Frankfurt School," begins with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's reflections on the Enlightenment and their brief comments on Cynicism, before turning to the resurgence of the ancient sect in the works of Sloterdijk and Foucault, two philosophers engaged in reevaluating the Frankfurt school's analysis of the Enlightenment for contemporary critique. Chapter 6 gives an overview of the reception of Cynicism in the twentieth century and its relation to postwar debates on the Enlightenment; chapters 7 and 8 treat the writings of Sloterdijk and Foucault, respectively. The central argument is that both thinkers see in Cynicism a means of exiting the apparent deadlock that had pitted supporters and critics of the Enlightenment against one another in

the latter part of the twentieth century, a deadlock that Foucault, in his essay "What Is Enlightenment," calls "the blackmail of the Enlightenment."[7] Both revive Cynicism as our best hope for reengaging with a tradition of emancipatory philosophy. Adorno had located the future of critique in the restricted sphere of high modernist art; Habermas shifted the site of social resistance to the public sphere; Sloterdijk and Foucault now suggest a third locus of critical empowerment: Cynicism, understood as an embodied philosophy, a way of life. They offer very different interpretations of Cynicism, but both locate its power in Diogenes' ascetic practices, his decision to live in accordance with the principles he proclaims. The future of Enlightenment, through Cynicism, would mean reviving philosophy as a way of life and anchoring critique and the hope for political reform in a commitment to living differently, even outrageously.

Of course, Foucault and Sloterdijk write in a very different political climate from their eighteenth-century predecessors, and in response to a different set of Enlightenment problematics, developed in the wake of the Second World War and in response to Adorno and Horkheimer's devastating critique of the Enlightenment. But their analysis of Cynicism is born from concerns very similar to those of their precursors: a search for an effective language for communicating social criticism and the urgently felt need to articulate an alternative philosophical ethos. Yet whereas the philosophes sought to impose outer constraints on Cynicism by taming its language and manners, Foucault and Sloterdijk respond to Cynic roguishness from within. They legitimate Cynicism by anchoring it in a personal ethics and in practices of self-governance that would contain its potential nihilism. In the conclusion, I reflect on the tension between these two methods of containment and on the place Cynicism's moral ambiguity might claim in modern thought.

A Note on Scholarship

A lack of theoretical foundations and an association with dirty and shameless scoundrels relegated Cynicism to the backwaters of critical inquiry in the modern period. It was not until Donald Dudley's seminal *History of Cynicism* (1937) that Diogenes and his followers reentered the arena as an object of serious study. The field received a new impetus in the mid-1970s, when Léonce Paquet published a French translation of collected writings on Cynicism, sparking a renewed interest in the ancient sect and its legacy. Nineteen seventy-nine saw the publication of Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting's *Der Kynis-*

mus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus, a carefully researched study of the reception of Cynicism from antiquity to the mid-twentieth century, which still awaits a much-needed translation. In 1997 France's Centre national de la recherche scientifique hosted an international conference on Cynicism, which led to a publication, while in the English-speaking world, the literature on Cynicism was given new life by the publication in 1996 of the first collection of essays on the topic in English, Robert Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé's *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy.*

Cynicism has been the object of an increasing number of book-length studies in the past decade, but with the exception of David Mazella's *Making of Modern Cynicism,* which traces the semantic history of the term, and Ian Cutler's *Cynicism from Diogenes to Dilbert,* which offers an engaging, popularizing account of Cynicism through the ages, book-length studies of Cynicism have tended to focus on the classical world (most recently William Desmond's *The Greek Praise of Poverty: Origins of Ancient Cynicism*) or the early modern period, with two recent studies of Cynicism in the French Renaissance, Michèle Clément's *Le Cynisme à la Renaissance* and Hugh Roberts's *Dogs' Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts.* The eighteenth century almost invariably gets short shrift: with the exception of Niehues-Pröbsting and Mazella, who devote several chapters to the topic, the relationship between Cynicism and the Enlightenment has gone largely unnoticed.[8] With this book I hope to make a contribution to the emerging body of literature on Cynicism by approaching the question, for the first time, from the perspective of debates in and about the Enlightenment. My aim is not to write a comprehensive history of the reception of Cynicism in modernity but to show how Cynicism functions as an important philosophical concept in the development of modern thought and to reflect on the promises it can hold for the future of critique.

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The Cynic Enlightenment

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1 *Ancient Rascals*

Diogenes of Sinope and the Cynic Tradition

Cynicism was born in Athens in the fourth century BCE with Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope and gave rise to a long philosophical tradition. From the fourth century to the waning years of the Roman Empire, Cynics could be encountered on street corners throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the Italian peninsula haranguing passers-by with great zeal and wit. They were generally a rather dirty lot, with unkempt beards and grimy fingernails, recognizable by their distinctive dress: a rough double mantle, a knapsack of sorts to hold their meager possessions, a walking stick as a sign of their errant life. Their physical appearance mirrored their philosophical stance: the rejection of all that society considered acceptable or right. Their rhetoric, which ranged from the irreverent quip to the passionate diatribe, marked them as both jesters and street preachers, committed tooth and nail to jolting their contemporaries into self-reflection.

The Cynics positioned themselves willfully on the margins of society and of philosophy. For this reason, despite its historical and geographical span, Cynicism never established itself as a philosophy on a par with Stoicism, Epicureanism, or Skepticism. Resolutely antitheoretical, the early Cynics mocked abstract principles and codified philosophies in favor of a lived philosophy. Much of the appeal of Cynicism lies in its adherents' uncompromising commitment to living what they preach. The Cynics communicated, in dress and speech, a sense of urgency: they professed a philosophy for the here and now, for times of crisis and uncertainty. They scorned contemporary philosophies for having forgotten philosophy's true goal, to prepare one "for every fortune,"[1] to teach

one to face the contingencies of life. All other teachings—grammar, music, mathematics, rhetoric—they deemed vain.[2] To the traditional path, which led to happiness and serenity through years of arduous study, the Cynics opposed a practical road to enlightenment. Plato famously dubbed Diogenes a "Socrates gone mad," a quip matched only by Diogenes' disregard for Plato, whom he considered a vain and useless philosopher, for what good, he asked, "is a man who has spent all his time philosophizing without having once disturbed or worried anyone?"[3]

More than a school, Cynicism was an attitude, a lived philosophy without set doctrines or codified teachings, and for this reason it resists definition. The nature of our early sources and the complex history of Cynicism's transmission compound the difficulty. Nonetheless, as we shall see, there is much that can be gleaned from these sources.

A preliminary note on language: the German language differentiates between the contemporary, common meaning of the term and its philosophical counterpart by referring to the former as *Zynismus* and the latter as *Kynismus.* This distinction was introduced into the German language only in the nineteenth century; Nietzsche, for instance, still employs the single word *Cynismus* for all meanings of the term. The English language has no such distinction, although it has become common practice to capitalize the word *(Cynicism)* to denote the school or movement and to lowercase the word to denote the common meaning. I adhere to this practice for the purpose of clarity.

Searching for Sources

Establishing solid facts about the early Cynics is no mean feat. We possess very few documents from the pen of the founding Cynics, and what fragments have survived from contemporaries of Diogenes, such as Crates or Onesicritus of Astypalaea are so brief and disjointed as to reveal very little about Cynic philosophy.[4] By the time Diogenes Laertius wrote his biography of Diogenes of Sinope in the first half of the third century, the latter's writings, if indeed they existed, had already disappeared, leading to controversy over which works, if any, could rightfully be attributed to the proto-Cynic. Diogenes Laertius gives two possible lists of works written by Diogenes: the first, from an unknown source, attributes fourteen dialogues and seven tragedies to Diogenes of Sinope, while the second, from Sotion, provides a shorter list, with only a few titles in common with the first source. Diogenes Laertius indicates, however, that "Sosicrates in the first book of his Successions, and Satyrus in the

fourth book of his Lives, allege that Diogenes left nothing in writing" (DL 6.80). Several anecdotes from the Cynic tradition support this view by suggesting that Diogenes of Sinope favored the spoken over the written word, as when "Hegesias having asked him to lend him one of his writings, [Diogenes] said, 'You are a simpleton, Hegesias; you do not choose painted figs, but real ones; and yet you pass over the true training and would apply yourself to written rules'" (DL 6.48). While scholars disagree as to particulars, critical consensus follows Kurt von Fritz in arguing that Diogenes of Sinope did produce a body of works, among them a *Politeai* and an Oedipus play. The texts have not, in any case, come down to us, and we must content ourselves with reconstructing them from secondary accounts.[5] The same is true for the works of Diogenes' most famous follower and literary innovator, Menippus of Gadara, father of the Menippean satire, whose writings have survived only in imitations by Varro (of which, in turn, only quoted fragments remain), Seneca (*The Pumpkinification of Claudius*), and the several satires of Lucian.

What we know about the early Cynics comes, then, largely from secondary sources. We meet the Cynics in collections of anecdotes and apophthegms about famous figures, in serious philosophical dialogues and orations, as well as in literary satires of the early centuries CE. These paint lively portraits of the early Cynics, but we would do well to approach them with a healthy measure of skepticism. Most of these texts were written several hundred years after the death of the fathers of Cynicism, Antithenes and Diogenes of Sinope (our most important single source, the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* by Diogenes Laertius, dates from the early third century CE, postdating the earliest Cynics by some six centuries), and few cite their sources. In addition, each type of source (biographical accounts, philosophical expositions, literary reconstructions) adds a distinct set of problems.

The Biographical Tradition

As regards the biographical tradition, the difficulty stems largely from the anecdotal nature of the information provided. The lives and philosophy of the early Cynics have been handed down to us largely through collections of *chreiai,* anecdotes about and sayings by famous persons, often witty or humorous, that purport to impart an ethical or philosophical teaching.[6] Much of our knowledge about the lives of the early Cynics comes to us from Diogenes Laertius's wickedly witty potpourri of *chreiai* in the sixth book of his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers.* The book offers a hodgepodge of quotations attributed

to and anecdotes about Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope, and their fellow Cynics. In the section on Diogenes (6.20–81), a short biographical narrative (20–23, 73–78) frames a far longer central section (24–69), in which the author has collected all manner of sayings about and by the most famous of the early Cynics. Tales that offer a positive valuation of the Cynics are set alongside less flattering reports, and as Klaus Reich points out in his introduction to Otto Apelt's German translation of the text, truth is mixed with fiction, and legend with historical fact.[7] By the time Diogenes Laertius wrote his life of Diogenes, anecdotes about the Cynics had passed through five centuries of retellings and transformations. Thus, Diogenes of Sinope, who came to be seen as the proto-Cynic, was already a literary character, a figure constructed through hearsay, (mis)quotation, and interpretation.

The biographical sources on the Cynics must therefore be treated with a measure of caution. Yet for all their historical dubiousness, the *chreiai* nevertheless reveal something important about Cynicism. *Chreiai* are told about many philosophers (about Zeno, Anarcharsis, and Aristippus, for instance),[8] but it is only in the accounts of the lives of the Cynics that the *chreiai* dominate, to the near exclusion of biographical narrative and philosophical exposition. Why this is so is a function not of scant historical sources but of the nature of Cynic philosophy. Cynicism is intimately connected to the *chreia* tradition in two important respects: in its emphasis on philosophy as a way of life and in its combination of wit and morality.[9] Diogenes' disdain for high-flown theories and his commitment to living what he preaches dictate that his philosophy be transmitted in anecdotal fashion. Cynicism teaches through example; it cannot be adequately conveyed in the form of a treatise or philosophical exposé. Moreover, the twin characteristics of the *chreia,* namely, the transmission (1) of an ethical teaching (2) in a witty fashion, beautifully capture the moral-satirical tenor of Cynicism. Diogenes is, in Robert Bracht Branham's words, "a satiric provocateur as well as a heterodox moralist," and no form more adequately captures the Cynic's commitment to teaching through wit than the seriocomic *chreia* tradition.[10]

From Greece to Rome: A Problem of Transmission

Our other early sources on Cynicism, be they literary (such as Lucian) or philosophical (such as Epictetus, Julian, or Dio Chrysostom), present us with a set of difficulties that have to do with the complex history of Cynicism's transmission from Greece to the eastern Mediterranean and Rome in the early

centuries BCE. Cynicism made its way into the Roman Empire through three principal channels: under Stoic influence (Zeno is said to have been a follower of Crates, Diogenes' first disciple); as a literary movement descended, most prominently, from the satires of the Cynic Menippus and developed, most famously, in the writings of Lucian and Varro; and as a popular philosophy: the Roman Empire, as the Emperor Julian was quick to point out, was plagued by wandering troupes of men comprising largely members from the poorer strata of society who adopted Cynicism as a popular philosophy for the disenfranchised and discontented. They could be seen begging at crossroads or preaching their Cynic gospel of simplicity and defiance on street corners. These Cynic troupes transformed the highly individualistic Cynicism of a Diogenes into a collective movement that bore only a vague resemblance, of dress and rhetoric, to the early Cynics. This threefold legacy explains much of the confusion and conflicting interpretations that mark both early sources and recent scholarship on Cynicism.

Our earliest philosophical accounts of Cynicism come from the pens of writers who were, for the most part, strongly influenced by Stoicism, among them Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Julian. The Stoic bent of much early writing on Cynicism accounts for the two features common to these sources: a rejection of Cynicism as a popular movement and a concerted effort to idealize Cynicism so as to render it palatable to the Roman elite. Cynicism provided the Stoics with an important philosophical lineage that linked them, via Crates, Diogenes, and Antisthenes, to Socrates, but it threatened to undermine their position in the empire by associating Stoicism with the less admirable characteristics of the Cynics, in particular their shameless lack of decorum and their rejection of political and social duties.[11] Stoic philosophers resolved the tension by rewriting Cynicism, ridding it of its amoral and asocial characteristics. Epictetus (c. 55–120 CE) offers an idealized version of Cynicism, purified of its most obscene gestures and filtered through the lenses of Stoic philosophy, and the emperor Julian (c. 332–61 CE), following in Epictetus's steps, goes so far as to raise Cynicism to the status of a universal philosophy founded by Apollo himself. This philosophy, he makes clear, has nothing in common with the filthy practices of contemporary Roman Cynics, who "go up and down in our midst subverting the institutions of society, and that not by introducing a better or purer state of things but a worse and more corrupt one."[12] The presence of mendicant Cynic troupes in the empire facilitated the task of idealization by providing philosophers with a highly visible scapegoat on which to project the less desirable qualities once associated with Diogenes of Sinope. Thus written

accounts of Cynicism from as early as the second century CE bring to light the ambiguity that lies at the heart of the Cynic mode of living. Shameless, outspoken, with no regard for tradition or social custom, the Cynic appears at once as a brave cultural critic who attacks the false values of contemporary society in the name of nature and reason and as a dirty, vulgar parasite who, in Oscar Wilde's words, "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."[13]

While the Stoically inflected Roman Cynics and their beggarly popular counterparts fought over Cynicism, a distinctly literary Cynicism imposed itself as a third strand of the Cynic legacy. Varro (116–27 BCE), who resuscitated the Menippean satires for a Latin audience, was dubbed "Cynicus Romanus" and the "Romani stili Diogenes" by Tertullian,[14] but his works have survived only in fragments, from which it is difficult to reconstruct with any certainty the tone and tenor of Menippus's Cynic writings. It is in the writings of Lucian (c. 120–80 CE) that the tradition has been passed on—a tradition that would see renewed vigor in the Renaissance, when the first modern editions of Lucian gained popularity, thereby firmly associating Cynicism with satire in the early modern period. Characterized by a seriocomic style *(spoudogeloion)* and the mixing of genres, the Menippean satire carries Diogenes' aphoristic wit into the domain of prose narrative and establishes Cynicism as a literary genre that ridicules all manner of pretension with great verve and humor.[15]

Lucian's works are precious documents of a certain Cynic strain, but they tell us little about the lives and philosophy of the early Cynics. Lucian adopted the Cynics as characters in his works and as the patrons of his biting satirical style, but as he turned the Cynics into comic versions of literary muses, he offered conflicting valuations of their movement, at times mocking, at times full of praise for their courage and unflinching critical stance. His disparaging account of the death of the Cynic Peregrinus in *The Passing of Peregrinus* is balanced by his glowing account of the title character in *Demonax;* between these two extremes lie the comic representations of the Cynic in *Philosophies for Sale* and of Menippus as the narrator-fool of *Icaromenippus or Beyond the Clouds* and *Menippus or a Necromantic Experiment.* The true face of the ancient Cynic eludes us at every turn.

Modern scholars echo these conflicting valuations of Cynicism and bear witness to the various branches of Cynicism that have come down to us from Roman times. On the one hand, scholars who stress the literary tradition bring to the fore the witty, aphoristic style of the Greek Cynics, their subversion of serious philosophical rhetoric, their seriocomic tone, and their contributions to the formation of literary genres such as the satire. Heinrich Niehues Pröbst-

ing, for instance, argues against the grain that our sources permit us to speak with certainty only of a literary and satirical tradition of Cynicism. The notion of a lived Cynic movement must remain, he contends, a matter of speculation.[16] On the other hand, scholars who privilege the philosophical legacy of the Cynics outline instead the basic Cynic principles (and their transformation under the influence of populist movements): an ascetic, independent life; a commitment to the drastic reduction of needs to the simple basics of animal existence; a missionary zeal in their criticism of society; a sharp, scourging tongue (the Cynic's parrhesia); an open defiance of tradition, rituals, and organized religion; a scorn for idealist theories and for Plato in particular; a cosmopolitan attitude born from a critique of contemporary politics and nationalism.[17] Whether these principles are viewed positively or negatively, as the courage of the wise man or the scandalous practices of a good-for-nothing, will depend on whether one interprets the relationship between the ancient Cynics and their populist heirs in the Roman Empire as a relationship of continuity or one of rupture.

The name Cynic itself captures the threefold character of the movement. The noun claims two roots, one in *Kynosarges,* the name of an ancient Greek gymnasium where Antisthenes is said to have held his lessons, and the other in the Greek *kyon,* "dog." The first etymology confers dignity upon Cynicism, raising it up to the status of a school on a par with the Academy and the Lyceum.[18] The second, by contrast, emphasizes the scorn the Athenians had for Diogenes and his followers. The noun *kyon* was used as a term of abuse and hurled at the ill-clad, shameless, sharp-tongued Cynics, who wittily adopted the opprobrium for themselves, delighting in the endless possibilities the label afforded them. Diogenes Laertius reports that Diogenes was apt to take the identification with the dog at face value, as when he lifted his leg and relieved himself on a group of young insolents who teased him with a dog's bone, thereby turning the public's scorn against the lads (DL 6.46). But he also accepted the label as an accurate description of his decision to live like a dog, to reduce life to its basic animal needs. The wily Diogenes took *dog* to mean not only a dirty, uncivilized creature but also a devoted guardian. He is reported to have said that like a guard dog, "I set my teeth in rascals" and protect the true value of life (DL 6.60). The Cynic defines himself by a metaphor that escapes any single-minded explanation and eludes any reduction of his philosophy to a simple system. Niehues-Pröbsting has suggested, moreover, that the name *kyon* may have had a third origin. He argues that *dog* originally referred neither to the uncivilized behavior of Diogenes nor to his role as a devoted guardian of

the people but was used instead to designate all authors of satires (those whose writings "bite"); thus the term is applied, Niehues-Prösbsting points out, to philosophers unconnected to the Cynics, such as the Eretrian Menedemus.[19] The literary aspect of Cynicism would thereby be inscribed in its very name. The competing etymologies of Cynicism thus paint three different pictures of the Cynics: as serious philosophers, as scurrilous public denouncers of social vices, and as authors of satires.

A Counterfeiter's Biography

As the history of their name and transmission suggests, the Cynics are notoriously difficult to pin down. Their eccentric behavior and their lack of theoretical foundations make it nearly impossible to define such a thing as Cynic doctrine. Because the Cynics teach by example rather than by precept, an account of the tale of their individual lives and the legends to which they gave birth remains our best means of approaching the ancient sect. I propose to begin, then, with a brief biography of the proto-Cynic Diogenes as a first step toward outlining certain key principles of the Cynic movement.

As befits the morally ambiguous figure of the Cynic, the legend of Diogenes begins with a crime of counterfeit money and the pronouncement of a mysterious oracle. Tradition holds that Diogenes of Sinope was exiled from his native city for falsifying coins, or for helping his father in such a business. On leaving Sinope, the young lad set out for Delphi, where the oracle instructed him to do the very thing of which he had been accused, to "adulterate the coinage," *parakharattein to nomisma* (DL 6.20–21). Thereupon, Diogenes set off for Athens, where he lived in utter poverty, refusing any work other than walking through the streets critiquing and mocking the inhabitants of the city, "adulterating currency in very truth" (DL 6.71) and fashioning his life in accordance with the principle set for him by the oracle. According to an alternate version of the tale, Diogenes consulted the oracle before committing forgery; his crime, committed in good faith, would then be the result of a misunderstanding: "Some say that having been appointed to superintend the workmen he was persuaded by them [to adulterate the coinage], and that he went to Delphi or to the Delian oracle in his own city and inquired of Apollo whether he should do what he was urged to do. When the god gave him permission to alter the political currency, not understanding what he meant, he adulterated the state coinage" (DL 6.20).

As this version makes clear, the injunction *parakharattein to nomisma* must

be understood figuratively, as a riddle or a wordplay. The Greek word *parakharattein,* as Ingram Bywater and Joseph Grafton Milnes have shown, has at least three meanings: to stamp a noncirculating piece of metal (in other words, to make a false coin); to put a new stamp on an old coin, thus changing its value; and to deface the markings on a coin so as to render it illegible and valueless.[20] Only the first meaning is clearly criminal. The word *nomisma,* "coin," similarly carries multiple significations. It originally meant that which has value or validity, referring to legal tender in the economic sphere but also to that which has currency in the social domain (norms, customs), and is related to the noun *nomos,* "custom, law." Hence the riddle: you must deface the social norms, you must alter the moral currency. The young Diogenes erred in taking the oracle literally; he turned philosopher when he understood the connection between *nomisma* and *nomos.* In the words of Diogenes Laertius, "It was plain that he [Diogenes] acted accordingly, adulterating currency *(nomisma)* in very truth allowing convention *(nomos)* no such authority as he allowed to natural right *(physis)*" (DL 6.71).

The oracle became the Cynic's principal rule of life. Diogenes gave shape to the riddle in his own life, following a course of action actively opposed to the social values of wealth and good reputation. He is said to have taken up residence in a tub or shack on the outskirts of Athens, adopting as his only possessions a mantle, a walking stick, and a knapsack. One anecdote reports that upon seeing a young boy quench his thirst from the cup of his hands, he decided that his drinking bowl was superfluous and threw it away (DL 6.37). He ate frugally, begging for his food when necessary, and trained himself, through self-discipline and endurance, to limit his needs to the bare essentials of life. He stamped his body with the "true" or "natural" needs, for which he exchanged the false effigies of socially created wants and desires, the chains of contemporary life.

Diogenes did not stop at altering his own life's currency. Devoted to the mission set him by the oracle, he sought to remint society by actively defacing the rules of proper behavior. This he accomplished through mockery and public displays of socially inappropriate behavior intended to shock his contemporaries into the awareness that what they considered good or right was not worthy of the name. A constant presence in the marketplace of Athens, like Socrates he played the role of social gadfly, rebuking citizens for their follies. But he did so in a more outrageous manner than his famous contemporary. He could be seen masturbating in public places (when rebuked he sighed, "[Ah, if only] it were as easy to banish hunger by rubbing the belly!") or defecating

on the stage at Olympus.[21] His shameless acts were meant to shock. They said, louder than words, that what his fellow men thought shameful was not half as much so as their hypocrisies.

Diogenes' bodily, often grotesque protests against the false sense of decency that governs and constrains human relations exhibit an anti-idealist strain set on debunking the cruelty, falsity, and absurdity of high-flown theories. He took issue with the philosophers of his time for forgetting that it was the duty of philosophy to prepare one for life, not to construct abstract systems of speculation. This point is beautifully illustrated by the several anecdotes involving Plato, from Diogenes' biting jab at the revered philosopher, "What good is a man who has spent all his time philosophizing without having once disturbed or worried anyone?"[22] to the splendid anecdote of the naked chicken: upon hearing Plato define man as "a featherless biped," Diogenes grabbed a chicken, plucked it, threw it in the circle that had formed around Plato, and declared, "Here is your man, Plato" (DL 6.40). Diogenes' disregard for philosophical theories was matched only by his scorn for political authority. Several tales depict Diogenes mockingly outwitting tyrants; the most famous reports that when Alexander the Great paid him a visit, inviting him to "ask of me anything you like," our fierce Cynic barked back, "Get out of my sun" (DL 6.38, my translation). Religion fared no better. One day, the tale goes, having come across a woman kneeling prostrate before the gods, he interrupted her prayer to rebuke her for sticking her bottom up in the air behind her, for surely, Diogenes mocked, the gods being everywhere, one must be behind her—was she not ashamed to shove her bottom in his face? (DL 6.37). Customs, politics, philosophy, religion—none escaped Diogenes' counterfeiting zeal.

Diogenes' activities as defacer of public norms give us at best an ambiguous portrait of the Cynic as rascal as well as moralist. This ambiguity is germane to the oracle. For the oracle is itself a rascal's take on the dignity of oracles; it is, one might say, a counterfeit oracle. As both Eduard Schwarz and Kurt von Fritz have argued, the injunction to "deface the currency" appears to be an imitation of the oracle given to Socrates. And Schwartz, following the nineteenth-century scholar Hermann Diels, adds that the rather odd reference to Diogenes' father, questions of historical verity aside, might best be explained by analogy to Socrates; just as Socrates adopted his mother's profession (midwifery) as a metaphor for his own philosophical endeavor, so the Cynics might be said to construct their philosophical lore on similar lines: the father's literal defacing gives birth to the son's metaphorical task.[23] Olof Gigon and Niehues-Pröbsting concur, though they speak not of imitation but of parody

and delight in the comic effect afforded by the Cynic oracle's literal, criminal meaning.[24] The parody of the Socratic model goes hand in hand with Diogenes' irreverent attitude toward philosophy and religious rituals. Any literal interpretation of the oracle as enjoining the Cynic to commit a felony must be discarded (the one version of the tale in which Diogenes actually counterfeits the coinage in Sinope tells that he did so only because he had failed to understand the true meaning of Apollo's message),[25] but we cannot deny that roguishness has stamped even Diogenes' philosophically correct interpretation of the oracle. His grasp of the oracle's metaphorical signification does little to reestablish Diogenes as a good citizen. He may be committed heart and soul to bettering his fellow citizens, but his methods make him a rogue and a troublemaker nonetheless. The oracle *parakharattein to nomisma* is a fitting motto for the scandalous morality of Diogenes the Dog.

Cynic Principles

The Cynic counterfeiter relies upon impromptu acts of disrespect to deface the norms of his day. But for all Diogenes' lack of theoretical foundations, a number of key Cynic principles stand out from a study of his life. Free speech *(parrhêsia)* and "a life lived according to nature" are the two principal correlates of the commitment to defacing the currency. The latter, as we shall see, depends on the Cynic's devotion to asceticism, self-sufficiency, shamelessness, clarity of mind, and cosmopolitanism.

Parrhesia

Changing the common currency required courage and verbal courage in particular. Diogenes Laertius reports that when Diogenes was asked to name the most precious thing in the world, he replied, "Parrhêsia," freedom of speech (6.69). Parrhesia was a political prerogative at the time: it granted all Athenian citizens the right to voice their opinions at public assemblies. When the Cynics, many of them wanderers or exiles, laid claim to parrhesia, they brazenly appropriated and transformed the notion. They turned parrhesia, once the state-sanctioned privilege of the few, into the prerogative, indeed duty, of all human beings, and they broadened the concept to signify not only the right to speak out publicly on matters that concerned the *polis* but also the right to speak one's mind in any and all circumstances, on public as well as private matters, whether formally invited to do so or not.[26]

The most famous example of Cynic parrhesia is without doubt Diogenes' summary dismissal of Alexander ("Get out of my sun"), but parrhesia was not limited to contesting political power. It stood opposed to courtly flattery but also to the abstruse speech of philosophers, the empty talk of public orators, and the idle chatter of the people: "The school of Euclides he [Diogenes] called bilious, and Plato's lectures a waste of time, the performances at the Dionysia great peep-shows for fools, and the demagogues the mob's lacqueys" (DL 6.24). This quotation gives us a sense of the compass of Cynic parrhesia, and it tells us something about the tone and tenor of Diogenes' free speech. One might expect the Cynic practicing parrhesia to address his interlocutor with straightforward honesty, as a wise man enlightening his fellow human beings. But the Cynics we encounter in Diogenes Laertius rarely offer blunt, or directly useful, advice. Diogenes' encounter with Alexander is a case in point: presented with the perfect occasion to instruct Alexander in the ways of good government, Diogenes prefers to dismiss the monarch in a display of disdainful independence. This would trouble those who wished to uphold the Cynics as positive, politically engaged models, from Dio Chrysostom, who penned a version of the anecdote in which Diogenes delivers a lengthy speech on good governance, to the French philosophes at the court of Frederick the Great, who sought in the tale of the encounter between Diogenes and Alexander a model of enlightened monarchy.[27]

Cynic parrhesia is more than defiant honesty: it designates a rhetoric particularly adapted to the Cynic's commitment to defacing the currency. In keeping with his rejection of high-flown theories and verbose abstractions, the Cynic shuns long discourses in favor of quips, aphorisms, and physical gestures.[28] Master of the bon mot (for which he was to earn both respect and suspicion in the eighteenth century),[29] Diogenes employed humor and wit to challenge accepted norms of behavior and reveal the absurdity of commonly held premises. To give but one example: One day, Diogenes Laertius reports, Alexander approached Diogenes of Sinope and proclaimed, " 'I am Alexander the great king.' 'And I,' said he 'am Diogenes the Cynic [literally, the Hound]' " (6.60). Diogenes upsets the traditional hierarchy by a simple quip: his response makes grammatical and logical sense (he answers Alexander's self-presentation in kind), but it does so at the expense of the implicit norm that demands that when the king speaks, he be answered not in kind but by an act of deference.

Drawing upon Mary Douglas's analysis of the social function of humor, Branham suggests that the strength of Diogenes' rhetoric lies in its ability to "disorganize" social conventions and the rituals of daily life, thereby pro-

ducing, in Douglas's words, "an exhilarating sense of freedom from form in general."[30] The Cynic, that is, employs his wit to challenge specific norms but also, and more generally, to get himself out of sticky situations and assert his independence. Thus: "Dionysius the Stoic says that after Chaeronea he [Diogenes of Sinope] was seized and dragged off to Philip, and being asked who he was, replied, 'A spy upon your insatiable greed.' For this he was admired and set free" (DL 6.43). Cynic parrhesia is a rhetorical strategy for defacing the social and political currency and a method of philosophical instruction (like the Zen master, the Cynic teaches not through discourse but through witty or aphoristic sayings), but it is also an assertion of individual freedom.

Diogenes' followers added significantly to the Cynic rhetorical repertoire. Whereas Diogenes privileged the spoken word, his successors wrote widely, renewing and often mixing traditional genres. They developed distinctly Cynic genres, such as the comical reworking of the Platonic dialogue, the parodic retelling of myths, the jest-earnest satires of Menippus, and the diatribes of Bion of Borysthenes. The aphorism prized by Diogenes would have a long history, and it is telling that Nietzsche, master of the genre and committed, as the Cynics were, to the transvaluation of values, gave the Cynics their due in his writings.[31]

Behaving Like a Dog: Cynic Nature

> *And it was plain that he acted accordingly, adulterating currency in very truth, allowing convention no such authority as he allowed to natural right, and asserting that the manner of life he lived was the same as that of Heracles and that he preferred liberty to everything.* *DL 6.71, my emphasis*

The oracle calls upon the Cynic to speak courageously but also to behave in a certain manner. *Parakharattein to nomisma* enjoins the Cynic to devalue the currency *(nomisma)* by overturning the current customs and laws *(nomos).* He does so by playing the dog *(kyon),* by choosing, that is, to live according to nature *(physis)*, not *nomos.* The opposition between *physis* and *nomos* was of course a commonplace of Sophistic thought at the time, but whereas the Sophist debated the concepts, the Cynic put his money where his mouth was and actively sought to live according to nature. This practical application of "dogness" has the disadvantage of making the scholar's life difficult: in characteristic fashion, the early Cynics did not define their use of nature or animal life. The early sources point nevertheless to three principal functions of Cynic

nature: as a method of self-perfection, a tool of social criticism, and a touchstone for questioning accepted definitions of what it means to be human.

A method of self-perfection. As a method of self-perfection—with respect, that is, to his individual desires and impulses—the commitment to animal nature enabled the Cynic to rid himself of socially created wants and desires. The animals we encounter in the Cynic anecdotes tend to share a common trait: they set an example of self-sufficiency for the Cynic. According to one source, it was a mouse that first put Diogenes on the course to becoming a Dog. Plutarch recounts in his *Moralia* that when Diogenes was still a young man, newly embarked on his philosophical venture, one night he found himself cursing his foolishly self-imposed poverty and solitude. As he sat munching on his crust of bread, eyeing with envy the rich table of nearby revelers, he caught sight of a mouse feasting on the crumbs of his own poor meal, "whereupon he once more recovered his spirits, and said to himself as though rebuking himself for cowardice, 'What are you saying, Diogenes? Your leavings make a feast for this creature, but as for you, a man of birth and breeding, just because you cannot be getting drunk over there, reclining on soft and flowery couches, do you bewail and lament your lot?' "[32]

To live like an animal meant, then, committing oneself to simplicity (the reduction of needs to a minimum), self-sufficiency *(autarkeia),* self-control, and indifference to hardship *(apatheia).* Nature demanded of the Cynic not the bestial gratification of his every instinct but *askêsis,* discipline. To become a dog, the Cynic undertook a harsh regime of physical training, hardening his body against the elements the better to resist the lure of social comforts and its illusory goods (he was said to roll in the burning sand in summer and embrace snow-covered statues in winter to inure himself to hardship) (DL 6.23). By training his body, the Cynic seeks to achieve clarity of mind, to dispel the *typhos* (illusion; literally "mist" or "fog") in which most humans live. Clarity of mind (*atyphia,* non-cloudiness) is, as Luis Navia has put it, "the Cynic's *summum bonum,*"[33] the goal of his animal pursuit. Animality, understood as the reduction of one's needs to a minimum, is less a goal in itself than it is the condition of possibility of freedom.

Animal life thus meant an ascetic life, but it also came to designate adaptability and a certain form of pragmatic hedonism. A variation of the mouse anecdote, which Diogenes Laertius places, tellingly, at the very beginning of his "Life of Diogenes," makes the point: "Through watching a mouse running about, says Theophrastus in the Megarian dialogue, not looking for a place

to lie down in, not afraid of the dark, not seeking any of the things which are considered to be dainties, he discovered the means of adapting himself to circumstances" (6.22).[34] Ancient Cynicism was not a philosophy of undiluted asceticism. For every tale of Diogenes rolling in the burning sand to harden his body or eating crumbs while his neighbors feast, we find a counteranecdote depicting the proto-Cynic swigging happily from a jug of wine[35] or acting upon his sexual impulses in the marketplace.[36] The Cynic did not advocate that one deny one's needs but rather that one learn to satisfy them in the simplest and most immediate manner possible.

On being asked what he had gained from philosophy, Diogenes replied, "This at least, if nothing else—to be prepared for every fortune" (DL 6.63). To lead an animal life is to train one's body and mind so as to free oneself from illusions and achieve clarity of mind. It is this clarity of mind that enables the Cynic to adapt to circumstances: *askêsis* unclouds the mind and makes the Cynics, in the words of Léonce Paquet, "capable of a marvelous receptivity toward the world around them. This should not be confused with 'defeatism' or puerile passivity; it is instead a very supple courage that enables one, slowly, to measure oneself against any condition, climate, or challenge."[37] Animality, for the Cynic, is first and foremost a technique for sloughing off illusory desires so as to achieve not only indifference to the world but freedom, what Branham calls "the Olympian independence of the gods, who 'needing nothing', live easily free of mortal cares."[38] In his freedom, the Cynic is master of improvisation and spontaneity; in this he resembles at times the freewheeling scam artist (with whom he was to have a long and interesting history), but he also stands apart from the scurrilous rascal, because he grounds his artistry in ascetic discipline. As a method of self-perfection with respect to his own desires the return to animal nature enabled the Cynic to reach a state of clarity and independence.

A method of social critique. As a method of social critique—with respect, that is, to customs and laws—animality enabled Diogenes to measure the social norms of his day against the simplicity of animal need and to find them, and those who followed them blindly, lacking. The Cynics attacked the social distinction between private and public acts, for instance, by eating and urinating in the marketplace, as animals did. They willfully practiced shamelessness and rejected the Greek ideals of decency and honor as so many hypocrisies.

The Cynic's use of animality as a means of social engagement is better understood if we remember that the Cynic is an urban animal and that of

all the species to which he compares himself, the dog remains the dominant model. The mouse quietly went about its business of gathering crumbs; the Cynic goes about it rather more loudly. Like the dog after which he is named, the Cynic barks, drawing attention to himself and his rugged way of life and berating his fellow human beings for living ill. The dog anecdotes in the early sources are often comical, sometimes rude, as when Diogenes lifts his leg and drenches a crowd of boys for taunting him with the insult "dog" (DL 6.46). But alongside tales that present the dog as bestial or fiercely asocial are a number of anecdotes that define *dog* as the guardian of the people. Thus, "the other dogs, Diogenes would say, bite their enemies, whereas I, I bite my friends, so as to save them."[39] Or again, "And he would jestingly remark when taxed for his currish manners, 'Well, dogs follow along to the festivals, but they do no wrong to any of those attending; they bark and attack rogues and thieves, and when their masters are in a drunken sleep, they stay awake and guard them.' "[40]

The decision to live like a dog is, then, also a decision to play a particular role in society, the role of watchdog and guardian. The Cynic is fierce because he knows that he can wake his fellow human beings from their folly only by roughing them up a bit. He lives a life of complete destitution, like that of a beast, so that others may learn to live simply. As Diogenes Laertius reports, "[Diogenes] used to say that he followed the example of the trainers of choruses; for they set the note a little too high, to ensure that the rest should hit the right note" (6.35).

The two functions of Cynic animality, self-perfection and social criticism, cannot be separated: the latter depends on the former. The Cynic's personal commitment to poverty and simplicity grants him the visibility necessary to communicate his message; the credibility to preach his Cynic gospel (because he has tested his principles on his own flesh); and the license to speak, the license, that is, of the fool and the outsider.

A touchstone for questioning accepted definitions of what it means to be human. At a third and more radical level, Diogenes played upon his "animal nature" to call into question accepted definitions of what it means to be human. He performed the dog to protest definitions of man grounded in religion, sociability, respectability, and political allegiance. Among his targets was the parochialism of civic and national attachments. Diogenes Laertius reports that when "asked where he came from, [Diogenes] said, I am a *kosmopolitês,*" a citizen of the cosmos (6.63). This is the first time the word *cosmopolitan* appears in Greek,

and it seems to promise a positive definition of man as a citizen of the world and a member of a shared humanity. But most scholars of Cynicism agree that for Diogenes cosmopolitanism signifies a form of apoliticism, or more accurately, of antipoliticism. The Cynic's radical opposition of nature to culture implies a rejection not only of the polis but of all social ties. Diogenes himself mockingly described his state in tragic verse: "A homeless exile, to his country dead / A wanderer who begs his daily bread" (DL 6.38). The Cynic's cosmopolitanism is not first and foremost the affirmation of our common humanity but a rejection of any definition of man as a political animal.[41]

The Cynic's seeming disregard for humanity is strengthened by his lack of regard for his fellow human beings. Diogenes was famous for insulting his contemporaries in terms that verged on the misanthropic. One anecdote has him standing in the marketplace in Athens calling out loudly, "Men, gather round, I am looking for men!" When a crowd gathered, he hit them with his stick, snorting contemptuously, "It was men I called for, not scoundrels" (DL 6.32). Or again, "Some men took him into a magnificent house and warned him not to expectorate, whereupon having cleared his throat he discharged his phlegm into the man's face, being unable, he said, to find a meaner receptacle" (DL 6.32).[42] And perhaps most disturbingly, "Seeing some women hanged from an olive-tree, he said, 'Would that every tree bore similar fruit' " (DL 6.52).

These anecdotes tell us in no uncertain terms what Diogenes thought of his contemporaries, but their form (as pranks or jokes of dubious taste) reminds us that the Cynic's lack of respect for his fellow human beings has method to it: Diogenes aims to shock his contemporaries into seeing that what they think of as human or humane is not worthy of the name. His tone is elsewhere more gently humorous, as when, upon his "leaving the public baths, somebody inquired if many men were bathing. He said, No. But to another who asked if there was a great crowd of bathers, he said, Yes" (DL 6.40). Like a character in Old Comedy, he plays the role of buffoon the better to show up the follies of his contemporaries. The famous anecdote in which Diogenes walks the streets of Athens in broad daylight, lantern in hand, looking for a human being (DL 6.41) perhaps best captures the Cynic's philosophical and ethical quest to discover what it means to be human. Diogenes never finds his man, nor does he clearly define what such a man might look like, but his life stands as an example of how one might go about the quest: the Cynic seeks, in his own body, to reduce man to his bare essentials by stripping himself of all socially created wants and desires and by testing the limits of his own strength and endurance.

Diogenes behaves like an animal in order that he may become a human being. His life is a test of what man is when he has been stripped of all his goods, when, like Lear, he has been reduced to "a poor, bare, forked animal."[43]

The comparison to King Lear is telling. For Lear discovers compassion in his baseness; something of the milk of human kindness awakens in him when he feels in his own flesh the hardship of the dispossessed and bears for a time the burden of the poor. Diogenes, having stripped himself bare, finds a human nature far less kindly than Lear's. What is shocking about the early Cynics is not so much their shameless acts of social provocation as their willful discrediting of human dignity and of the qualities we usually associate with human goodness. As the emperor Julian bitterly complained about the Cynic gangs of his day, "They trample on all laws that can be identified with honour and justice, and more than this, [they] trample on those laws which have been as it were engraved on our souls by the gods."[44] Among the unwritten laws that we encounter throughout Greek literature and philosophy, William Guthrie reminds us, are the laws that enjoin us to honor our parents, bury our dead, and refrain from incest and ingratitude.[45] The Cynic's attack on human dignity goes beyond a critique of social mores in the name of a natural good (far beyond, for instance, Rousseau's call for a return to a beneficent nature): Diogenes pressed the question of animality so far as to mock such sacred prohibitions as cannibalism and incest,[46] as well as the sacred duties of respect for one's elders or for the human corpse.[47]

In disregarding conventional dignity, the Cynic overthrows the hierarchy that places man above beast; what is more, he upsets the key notions of reason and self-mastery so often associated with nature in Hellenistic philosophy. As noted above, the Cynic's commitment to a life lived according to nature grants him independence and self-sufficiency *(autarkeia);* yet, paradoxically, his pursuit of simplicity leads him to overcome even the ideal of self-sufficiency. Diogenes pushed the principle of independence to such extremes (the refusal to work for a living) that it became its opposite—the king of independence is also a beggar, hand outstretched for a crumb of bread. Nature, for Diogenes, is an exercise in dispossession, a means of stripping himself of every time-honored social virtue, even the philosophical virtue of independence.

The Cynic's position should not be confused with that of Callicles, who considered human nature to be selfish. Diogenes never advocates the unflinching pursuit of one's own interest and the increase of power. The Cynics do not ascribe any positive content to the concept "nature," be it an inherent goodness or selfishness. It is better understood as a task, or practice: by play-

ing the dog, the Cynic seeks to free himself from every illusion and achieve a state of clarity of mind. There is here an echo of certain Eastern religious movements, and several scholars have pointed out the possibility of historical contact between the Cynics and the Indian Gymnosophists during Alexander's campaign, while others, such as Thomas McEvilley, bring to the fore important similarities in practice between Cynicism and the Zen and Ch'an traditions: "the shortcut to enlightenment . . . emphasis on the present moment and acceptance of it . . . the frequent use of perverse, irrational, and/or violent examples . . . a mirthful attitude which often expresses itself as ridicule of convention," and "an extreme self-possession."[48] Peter Sloterdijk, we shall see in chapter 7, will make much of the connection between Cynicism and Buddhism, stressing meditation and spontaneity as central characteristics of his new Cynic. Sloterdijk no doubt presses the comparison too far, but the emphasis on stilling the mind should not go unnoticed. Diogenes' animality is neither a pursuit of the so-called unwritten laws of nature over and against positive law nor a pursuit of instinctual gratification but a quest for clarity of mind as the condition of possibility of freedom.

In his *Men and Morals* Woodbridge Riley comments that the Cynics "confused a return to nature with a return to bestiality" and that, "overwhelmed with the complexities of society, the Cynic took the easy role of over-simplification—disregard for dress, contempt for society, and a general attitude that whatever is is wrong."[49] While Riley is right to point out the potential scurrility of Cynic nature and the Cynic's flirtation with bestiality, he oversimplifies the complex primitivism of the Cynics.[50] Cynic animality, or "a life lived according to nature," is at least these three things at once: an *askêsis* (a personal exercise in self-discipline and the reduction of one's needs to a minimum), an oppositional stance, and a provocative unseating of our most basic understanding of what it means to be human. Cynic philosophy represents a unique experiment in the history of philosophy: the attempt to live like a dog. While the endeavor may not fully have succeeded, it remains a remarkable experiment, one that challenges our understanding of nature and of mankind and invites us to seek new ways of relating to ourselves and to the world.

Cynics Ancient and Modern

From this brief portrait of the ancient Cynics, it is clear that several competing images of the Cynics vie for center stage. Three dominate. The first is the image of the austere, ascetic Cynic, ardently pursuing a life of simplicity

and honesty and committed to the good of his fellow citizens. As a philanthropist and a moralist, he sits with dignity alongside Socrates in the pantheon of wise philosophers. Hounding him like a dark double is the image of the scoundrel Cynic, without principles or morals. Rude, obscene, and disruptive, he tramples carelessly on all that humanity deems precious, scorning in his self-proclaimed freedom the dignity of human life. Around both these figures dances the satirical Cynic, laughing merrily at the earnestness of the first and the roguishness of the second.

The second Cynic, the rogue, has survived the best: when we speak today of a "cynic," we mean primarily an unprincipled person who holds all ideals in contempt, a nihilist who pursues his own interest at the expense of every and any moral value. As mentioned above, the typographical distinction between the Cynic and the cynic is relatively recent; it mirrors the German distinction between the *Kyniker* and the *Zyniker,* a distinction that seems to have appeared only in the early nineteenth century. The privileging of the unprincipled cynic to the exclusion (indeed historical amnesia) of the other Cynics is a product of the post-Enlightenment age. This book seeks to understand why this is so; it also attempts to counter this one-sided Cynic legacy by bringing to light the rich and varied philosophical uses to which the Dogs have been put by writers from Diderot to Foucault.

PART ONE

Eighteenth-Century Cynicisms

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2 *Taming Wild Dogs*

The Polite Education of Monsieur Diogène

Chaque siècle et le nôtre surtout aurait besoin d'un Diogène; mais la difficulté est de trouver des hommes qui aient le courage de l'être, et des hommes qui aient le courage de le souffrir.

Every age, and ours above all, would need a Diogenes; but the difficulty is in finding men courageous enough to be one, and men courageous enough to suffer one. *Jean le Rond D'Alembert*

In his *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands (An Essay upon the Alliance betwixt Learned Men, and the Great),* of 1753, D'Alembert called for the Diogenes of his age to step forth and lead the republic of letters. His call did not go unheeded: from Pierre le Guai de Prémontval to Denis Diderot, and from Christoph Martin Wieland to Frederick the Great, D'Alembert's contemporaries responded with a passion for Diogenes. Yet Diogenes the Cynic was a filthy, impudent man, a troublemaker and a jester. He shirked his social duties; he mocked upstanding citizens in public; he masturbated publicly; and ran around the streets in broad daylight with a lantern. What role could D'Alembert, polite man of letters and coeditor of the *Encyclopédie,* ascribe to this shifty figure in the work of the philosophes? Why place an ancient philosopher so at odds with the manners and the philosophical ethos of the day at the center of the mid-eighteenth-century republic of letters?

D'Alembert was not unaware of the ambiguous nature of his Cynic desire. Attracted by the heroism and political indemnity of Diogenes of Sinope and fascinated by the linguistic verve and frank speech of the Cynics, he was careful nevertheless to police the boundaries of his own Cynicism. In an age marked by polite constraint and a salon culture carefully policed by the *salonnières,* Cynic attitudes of disrespect and the Cynic rhetoric of impudent and

outspoken speech shimmered as an alluring alternative to polite conversation and conventional manners. Situated between the "conversible world" of salon culture, on the one hand, and polite conversation's main rival, eloquence, on the other, Cynicism presented writers with a third possibility for defining an appropriate and effective language for voicing social criticism. For D'Alembert and his contemporaries, Diogenes came to function as a touchstone for assessing the linguistic and social base of the republic of letters: they were tempted by the linguistically and socially disruptive potential of Cynicism but had to contend with the realization that these also threatened the foundation of the Enlightenment project of social change. Cynic bluntness and irreverence were bound to undermine not only the (relatively) peaceful compromise the philosophes had achieved with the authorities but also, more importantly, the collaborative and social basis they had established among themselves. Limits needed to be imposed on the Cynical. Following D'Alembert, Prémontval and Diderot understood that if they were to resuscitate Diogenes, they must refashion him as a good citizen of the republic of letters. In this chapter I focus on attempts to negotiate a space for Cynicism, and in particular Cynic rhetoric, with the salon culture of the mid-eighteenth-century *société des gens de lettres.* The Cynic made his entry onto the philosophical scene in the eighteenth century as a stockinged and well-powdered Dog, though as we shall see in the following chapters, he was not always so easily tamed.

The social and political situation of the philosophes in mid-eighteenth-century France explains in part the distance that separates d'Alembert's Cynicism from Greek Cynicism and from its modern incarnations in the writings of Foucault and Sloterdijk. Cynicism developed, with Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope, as a lived philosophy, the antitheoretical response to Plato's abstract speculations. It demanded of its followers first and foremost that they change their manner of living and dedicate their lives to challenging their fellow human beings, whatever their rank or status. Their motto, as Michel Foucault would put it, might have been *Une vie autre pour un monde autre,* "a different life for a different world."[1] The eighteenth-century appropriations of Diogenes considered in this chapter reject the Cynic imperative to "live differently," that is to say, outrageously, and focus instead on the demand, beautifully expressed by Diderot, to "think differently."[2] The new Diogenes motto reads *Une pensée autre pour un monde autre,* "a different way of thinking for a different world": social change remains the horizon of the new Cynic's intellectual labor, but he trusts, for political and epistemological reasons, in the trickle-down effect of

his thought rather than in the hammer blow of the proto-Cynic's scandalously disruptive acts.

From the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century: The Reception of Cynicism

The eighteenth century inherited a rich and complex tradition of Cynicism garnered from texts that ranged from the early church fathers to Renaissance satirists and seventeenth-century moralists. Mid-eighteenth-century understandings of Cynicism consisted of a palimpsest of conflicting interpretations and judgments that needed to be sifted through and brought into alignment with the social and epistemological program of the Encyclopédistes. D'Alembert and his contemporaries faced the task of reinventing, rather than simply reinstating, the figure of the Cynic.

Several of our primary sources on the Cynics, including Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* and Plutarch's *Moralia,* were not rediscovered until the Renaissance, which also saw the first translations of Lucian and a renewed interest in Menippean satire. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries mark a turning point in the history of the European reception of Cynicism, characterized by the rediscovery of the bawdy and irreverent aspects of the tradition that the Middle Ages, wittingly or not, had left out. It would be a mistake, however, to disregard medieval writings on Cynicism. Although they lacked access to several key texts, medieval scholars and clergymen engaged in a reevaluation of Cynicism in its relation to Christianity, and their writings deeply influenced the reception of Cynicism in subsequent centuries, not least the seventeenth-century debates on the value of pagan virtues and pagan philosophy. From its earliest appearance in Christian Europe, Cynicism had to contend with Christianity, and the attempts to reconcile the two left deep traces on the image of Cynicism in the West.

Medieval scholars had access to two main sources on the ancient Cynics: pagan Latin authors, primarily Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, and Macrobius, and the Christian Latin writers Jerome, Augustine, Tertullian, and Sidonius Apollinaris.[3] Taking their cue from the Christian fathers, and Saint Jerome in particular, medieval authors tended to emphasize the virtuous (Christian) aspects of Cynicism and to minimize or reject the shameless irreverence of Diogenes and his followers. Thus Saint Augustine endorses the Cynics' lifestyle in his *De Civitate Dei,* but he dismisses their indecent public acts

as not only immoral but truly incredible.[4] Augustine simply refused to believe that the Cynics masturbated in public, convinced that shame would not have permitted it. Various encyclopedic works of the Middle Ages express a similar ambivalence toward Cynicism, but as Sylvain Matton has argued, the Middle Ages on the whole paid little attention to the less savory aspects of Cynicism, preferring to focus on reconciling the ancient sect with Christian beliefs and philosophical ethics. From the earliest centuries, parallels were drawn between monastic orders and the Cynics for their asceticism and their radical commitment to poverty.[5] Daniel Kinney has pointed out that Saint Francis described the Franciscan street preachers as "jesters of God," thus associating them with the beggarly Cynics who played the fool to unmask self-proclaimed wise men. The Dominicans, for their part, acknowledged their ties to the ancient sect when they punned on their name *Domini canes,* "dogs of God."[6] The most complete attempt to reconcile Cynic and Christian values can be found in John of Wales's *Compendiloquium de Vitis Illustrium Philosophorum* and the work of his disciple Jacques Legrand.[7]

The Middle Ages succeeded in maintaining a precarious balance between Cynicism and Christianity by selectively emphasizing the Cynic attitudes that fitted into a Christian ethics and dismissing the more lascivious characteristics of the ancient sect. The rediscovery of Greek sources on Cynicism from the fifteenth century on unsettled this happy harmony. With Diogenes Laertius and Lucian in hand, the Renaissance revived the entire repertoire of Cynic wit and impertinences, opening the floodgates not only to a renewed philosophical understanding of Cynicism but also to a gleeful literary tradition grounded in Menippean satire.

Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* was first translated into Latin in 1433 by the Camaldulite Ambrogio Traversari. It was printed in Rome in 1533, a few decades after the publication of another major source on Cynicism, Plutarch's *Moralia* (1509). As early as 1471 the Sorbonne published a translation of Crates' *Epistles,* and a few years later Francesco Griffolini Aretino presented Diogenes as a model for the contemporary world in the Latin translation of the "Pseudo-Diogenes Letters," which he dedicated to Pius II.[8]

These works enjoyed a large dissemination: Aretino's translation, for example, was published in Nürnberg c. 1475, reedited and published in Florence in 1487, then in Venice c. 1495, and finally translated into French in 1546. The works of Julian, Dio Chrysostom, Stobaeus, and the Greek fathers were also brought to light, as were the writings of Lucian, and by 1581 the humanist Justus Lipsius had penned "the first modern work to style itself a Menippean

satire,"[9] his *Satyra Menippea. Somnium. Lusus in Nostri Aevi Criticos* (A Menippean satire. The Dream. A satire on the contemporary philologians). The consequences of these translations and editions were far-reaching. Where the Middle Ages had emphasized the moral aspects of Cynicism, the Renaissance reinstated the jest-earnest vein, from the Lucianic and carnivalistic writings of Erasmus and Rabelais to the political satires that ran rampant in France during the late sixteenth century, such as the 1582 pamphlet *Diogène, ou du moyen d'establir, apres tant de misere & calamitez, une bonne & asseurée paix en France, & la rendre plus florissante que jamais* or the *Satire Ménipée,* of 1594, a political text by supporters of Henry IV de Navarre against the Catholic League. Fools, jesters, and picaresque rogues of the family of Frère Jean soon peopled the literary scene, expanding the Renaissance's understanding of Cynicism beyond the confines of moral asceticism. By the time of the Renaissance, in Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting's words, "shameless sexual speech as well as biting satire and insulting sarcasm were perceived as being decisively Cynic. . . . Modern cynicism was originally sexual and comical."[10]

The irreverent bawdiness of Renaissance literary Cynicism met with resistance and hostility in the seventeenth century, when the Counter-Reformation mounted a ferocious attack on Cynicism. Medieval and humanist attempts to reconcile Christianity with Cynicism gave way, in the writings of religious authors of seventeenth-century France, to an outright condemnation of the ancient Cynics. The polemic on Cynicism must be understood within the context of the French moralists' debate over pagan philosophy. Could pagan virtues be useful to contemporary society, or were the virtues of ancient heroes and philosophers no more than glittering images and cunningly disguised vices? Was Diogenes' extreme poverty, for example, merely an expression of arrogance and pride? Cynicism and Epicurianism fared poorly: often lumped together, they fell under attack for their ties to religious skepticism and libertinism and were pronounced guilty.

One of the most virulent attacks against Cynicism came from the pen of the Jesuit François Garasse, in *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps, ou prétendus tels* (The curious doctrine of the would-be wits of our age), of 1623. Designed to counter the arguments of the "would-be wits" of his age, Garasse's book launches an assault on seventeenth-century libertines and their classical forefathers, intent on bringing them down, if not by logic and good sense, then by *ad hominem* attacks and ridicule. The section on Diogenes, who is the prime culprit in a chapter on the first Greek atheists, is a good example of Garasse's vituperative verve. Diogenes leaps off the page as a "rogue," a "ma-

niac," a "conceited fool," a drunk, a buffoon, and an arrogant atheist.[11] Garasse compares him to the king's fool Brusquet, interprets his decision to live in a barrel as a sign of his fondness for wine, and considers his rudeness to Alexander unforgivable. He concludes by wondering why no one knocked the villain out and cleared the earth of an unwanted and unnatural criminal. Diogenes "lived brutally, Cynically, and irreverently in public places, using impious terms and performing filthy actions that *tapinambours* and cannibals would have been ashamed to perform," Garasse proclaims.[12] His judgment was shared by many of his contemporaries, from the Jesuit Nicolas Caussin to Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac and Esprit Fléchier, all of whom contributed to transforming the polemic on Cynicism into a virulent attack on the figure of Diogenes and his descendants, the libertines.[13]

Garasse faults Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch for having "passed down to us the inanities of those two scoundrels," Diogenes and Democritus,[14] yet we have Garasse and his allies to thank for keeping an interest in Cynicism alive and for causing such central figures as Cyrano de Bergerac, La Mothe Le Vayer, and, later in the century, Pierre Bayle to challenge their readings and reinstate a more complex picture of the ancient Cynics.[15] Both La Mothe Le Vayer and Bayle dismiss Garasse's criticism as foolish and unscholarly.[16] La Mothe Le Vayer is especially forceful in expressing his scorn for the author of the *Doctrine curieuse* and explains Cynic impudence as strategic rather than simply insolent: the Cynics used excessive language and gestures not to invite others to imitate them but to bring men back to the middle road.[17] Bayle offers a historiographical reading of the Cynics, sifting through ancient sources and modern commentaries to discover the "true" Diogenes. He celebrates Diogenes for his courage and independence, stresses his love of wit ("le bon mot"), and criticizes him less for his shamelessness than for his misuse of reason: "Diogenes the Cynic was one of those extraordinary men who push all things to excess, even reason, and who confirm the maxim *All great minds possess a little madness.*"[18] With Bayle, we begin to move away from the Christian debate on the Cynics toward a scholarly and philosophical evaluation of the ancient sect. At the turn of the eighteenth century and under the pen of the father of the republic of letters, Diogenes enters learned discourse as a distinctly philosophical model.

While identifying the love of wit as a guiding Cynic principle, Bayle sees in this predilection for "le bon mot" a source of Cynic excess, "for the passion for the *bon mot* is usually so strong that one prefers to satisfy it than to preserve a friendship or prevent an unhappy change of fortune."[19] Where the Renaissance

had celebrated the satirical repertoire of Cynicism, and seventeenth-century Counter-Reformers had employed Cynical diatribe to condemn Cynic rudeness, the republic of letters would, under the pen of Bayle, celebrate the wit and pointed "bon mot" of the Cynic, but with a keen awareness of the dangers and excesses of too witty a repartee. Cynic rhetoric would preoccupy writers of the eighteenth-century republic of letters in their search for a critical language that would satisfy the social demands and political constraints of the times. A mischievous and dangerous twin of polite conversation, Cynic rhetoric shares with conversation a penchant for wit and "le bon mot"; by pushing its wit to extremes, Cynic rhetoric threatens to unbalance the precarious harmony of the Enlightenment republic of letters. D'Alembert and his contemporaries did not let this danger pass unnoticed.

D'Alembert's Diogenes

When D'Alembert called out for the Diogenes of his age to step forth and lead the republic of letters, he was mobilizing a host of Cynic images and evaluations. Bayle's interest in Diogenes as an intellectual figure sat uncomfortably next to Renaissance celebrations of the strongly sexualized and bawdy character of literary satires. Both clashed with Counter-Reformation condemnations of Diogenes as an atheist and a scoundrel. D'Alembert thus faced a twofold task in his *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands.* He had to appeal to the courage of his fellow citizens of the republic of letters to become new Diogenes figures, while carefully defining what he meant by a Cynic attitude and how it might be played out within the framework of French society of the 1750s and 1760s.

D'Alembert, scientist, man of letters, and coeditor of the *Encyclopédie,* wrote his *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands, sur la réputation, sur les mécènes, et sur les récompenses littéraires* in 1753, in an attempt to define the role of men and women of letters for his age. That this was more than a literary exercise is clear from the *avertissement* to the second edition of the *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (which includes the *Essai*) in 1759. D'Alembert explains that he conceived the new edition of his work in response to the polemics that had erupted around the *Encyclopédie,* and he specifically mentions the *Essai* as central to this enterprise.[20] Understood in this light, the essay reads as a call to men and women of letters to assert their autonomy as a group against the impingement of censorship in all its forms, patronage (whether in the form of private support or royally funded acad-

emies) chief among them. Against the backdrop of this critique of patronage, Diogenes shines as the champion of independence and the model of the true philosopher:

> Let us conclude from all this that men of letters should seek the commerce only of those aristocrats who treat them as equals and as friends. . . . I have never understand why people admire Aristippus's response to Diogenes: *if you knew how to live amongst men, you would not live off vegetables.* Diogenes did not accuse Aristippus of living with men, but of courting a tyrant. Diogenes, who defied the Conqueror of Asia with his indigence, and who lacked only decency to be the true model of the wise man, was the most disparaged of all philosophers in antiquity, because his intrepid truthfulness made him the scourge of the philosophers. . . . Every age, and ours above all, would need a Diogenes; but the difficulty is in finding men courageous enough to be one, and men courageous enough to suffer one.[21]

I quote this passage at length because it illuminates not only D'Alembert's selective interpretation of the ancient Cynic but also the image of the Cynic that came to dominate the republic of letters in the second half of the eighteenth century. D'Alembert selects two main qualities for his Diogenes: independence (from patronage and from collaboration with tyrannical governments in particular) and the free, courageous expression of truth ("sa véracité intrépide" [his intrepid truthfulness]). He concomitantly rids him of two vices commonly attributed to the ancient Cynic, misanthropy and indecency. He dismisses the first as historically inaccurate and the second as a deplorable and now obsolete characteristic of the proto-Cynic.

From the vast repertoire of Cynics, ranging from the Greek loners to the wandering bands of Cynics in Roman times and the literary fools of the Renaissance, D'Alembert selects a philosophical and literate Diogenes, raising him up as the model of the contemporary man of letters. As Niehues-Pröbsting has said of Christoph Martin Wieland's Diogenes, the Cynic became the model in the eighteenth century of what we would today call the intellectual.[22] Diogenes' anti-intellectual stance, his sarcastic dismissal of Plato's high-flown theories, and his marked preference for oral over written forms of expression are omitted from D'Alembert's portrait. In a *société de gens de lettres,* dominated by the ideals of politeness and sociability and founded upon the circulation and discussion of texts, Diogenes remains a critical and courageous thinker. He is the standard against which other men and women of letters must measure themselves, but he sheds his filthy cloak, his active pursuit

of poverty, and his tendency to "outrage" and overstrain reason beyond the bounds of common sense and decency.

D'Alembert's polishing of Diogenes includes a softening of his biting and acerbic tongue. On several occasions D'Alembert speaks out against the satirical and often slanderous tone of literary polemics, and he prides himself on speaking the truth, in this piece as in all his writings, "in such a manner as to give as little offense as possible, without weakening the truth."[23] D'Alembert's criticism is leveled not at Diogenes, whose fondness for diatribe and unflattering witticisms he leaves unmentioned, but at his contemporaries. The omission speaks eloquently, however, of D'Alembert's desire to include Diogenes in the rhetorical practice of polite conversation that had become, in theory if not always in practice, the discursive basis of the republic of letters. D'Alembert transformed the ancient Cynic into a man of letters and integrated him into a distinctive group whose meeting places were the Parisian salons and who shared the project of writing and supporting the *Encyclopédie.* He gave his Cynic a language that would allow him to engage with his peers in a manner suitable to collaboration, conversation, and the fruitful exchange of ideas. The new Diogenes championed by D'Alembert and evoked by several of his contemporaries took the form of the ideal member of the republic of letters. It will be useful, then, to begin by saying a few words about this republic, the values it sought to uphold, and the place Cynicism might carve out within it.

The Republic of Letters: Toward a Polite Critique

The term *republic of letters* appears as early as 1417 *(Respublica literaria),* but it was not until the seventeenth century, and Bayle's journal *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* in particular, that the term began to refer to a group of men and women of letters engaged in an exchange of texts and ideas.[24] Based on the ideals of reciprocity, equality, and cosmopolitanism, the new republic sought to create a space (through print but also in the salons of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France and the coffeehouses of England) where men and women of letters could come together, regardless of gender or social rank, to discuss matters of literary and, increasingly, political interest.[25]

In France the republic of letters grew, in Dena Goodman's words, from an "apolitical community of discourse" in the seventeenth century to "a very political community whose project of Enlightenment challenged the monarchy from a new public space carved out of French society."[26] Jürgen Habermas has

argued the same point with regard to Great Britain, identifying the republic of letters and its gathering points in London coffeehouses as the birthplace of a new public sphere. Located between the private life of citizens and the structures of political power, this new public space offered men and, to a lesser extent, women the opportunity to critically examine cultural and political productions and to articulate their criticisms in a space temporarily disengaged from their professional and political duties.[27] In the France of Louis XV and Louis XVI, where men of letters were for the most part divested of political function, preserving the autonomy and good health of the republic of letters thus became of paramount importance.[28] D'Alembert's insistence on keeping men and women of letters outside the sphere of influence of those in power can be understood in this context. Only by preserving its independence, à la Diogène, could the republic of letter hope to influence, if only indirectly, the course of social and political progress.

The Discursive Norm of the Republic of Letters: Polite Conversation

The good health of the republic of letters depended on the collaboration of its members. Defining a set of manners and an appropriate tone and level of verbal exchange was thus essential. Rules of proper behavior were posted on the doors of London coffeehouses, and in Paris the *salonnières* played the roles of mediators, gently chiding their guests when they raised their voices, monopolized conversation, or broached inappropriate topics of discussion.[29] The practice of polite conversation had been made fashionable in the salons of seventeenth-century France and in the England of the early eighteenth century through the writings of Shaftesbury, Addison, and Steele. It established itself as the norm of the Enlightenment republic of letters, its "central discursive practice,"[30] as Dena Goodman has put it. Polite conversation, for all its complex implications with practices of social exclusivity, censorship, and dilettantism, became the basis that ensured the peaceful collaboration of its members by encouraging, in John Constable's words, "the talent of contradicting without displeasing."[31]

Epistemologically, plain or polite prose was established as the sine qua non of scholarship. The scientific revolution had laid down new demands for precision and clarity that discredited the flowery language of traditional rhetoric, with its emphasis on *copia verborum* to the detriment of *copia rerum.* Turning their back on the schoolroom, with its dusty, erudite tomes and its practice of *disputatio,* young scholars prided them themselves on seeking knowledge

through observation, experience, conversation, and collaboration. D'Alembert begins his *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres* with a nod to this convention, crediting the Abbé de Canaye, to whom he dedicates the essay, with a share in the conception of the book: "Receive, dear friend, the fruit of our conversations, which belongs to you as it does to me."[32] Across the Channel, David Hume articulated the turn to conversation as a reaction against the lamentable state of scholarship in mid-century Britain: "Learning has been . . . shut up in Colleges and Cells, and secluded from the World and good Company. By that Means, every Thing of what we call *Belles Lettres* became totally barbarous, being cultivated by Men without any Taste for Life or Manners, and without that Liberty and Facility of Thought and Expression, which can only be acquir'd by Conversation."[33] Deploring the division of the world of letters into the "learned" and the "conversible" world, Hume takes it upon himself to remedy the situation by instating himself as "a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation."[34] Diderot echoes Hume's position in his *Apologie de l'abbé Galiani,* adding to the defense of salon conversation against the wooden rhetoric of the "school bench" a praise of the "gayness" and skepticism of the polite style that guards against fanaticism, thus ensuring a true "liberty and facility of thought."[35]

On the social level, the polite style enabled the consolidation of the mercantile and professional classes and provided a justification for the commercial values that came to dominate the period. Adam Potkay has pointed out that by mid-century the new British governing class, or Whig oligarchy, had adopted polite conversation as the discursive basis of the new social order and a counterweight to the Opposition's combative eloquence, with its emphasis on civic virtue and its attacks on social corruption.[36] Political arguments for *le doux commerce* that lauded commercial society for its capacity to bring private interests into harmony with one another extended to the linguistic meaning of *commerce,* or conversation.[37] Polite interaction and genteel manners could function as a corrective for the loss of a strong sense of the public good associated with the precommercial age of civic humanism. By harmonizing, or at the very least abating, the conflicting private interests of those engaged in conversation and exchange, and by teaching the middle classes standards of taste that would enable them to discriminate among the abundance of goods in an emerging consumer society, the polite style asserted itself as the language of the commercial and leisure classes.

Socially, polite conversation thus became a marker of exclusivity and good breeding. It had, of course, shed the aristocratic pretensions inherited from

seventeenth-century French salons and extended its social base through the medium of conduct books and polite periodicals. But the art of conversation remained a privileged discourse, carefully marked off from the florid, figurative language associated with the vulgar. Adam Smith noted with disdain in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* that "there is nowhere more use made of figures than in the lowest and most vulgar conversation."[38] Polite conversation emerged, that is, as the discursive basis of the professional and commercial classes. It sought to carve out a space of egalitarian exchange and critical discussion among a social group often excluded, in France in particular, from direct political power.

Politically, polite conversation played one further and important role: it enabled writers to circumvent censorship through indirection. Diderot and his contemporaries transformed the art of conversation, in both its oral and written forms, into a subversive tool, a coded language that circumvented censorship by locating dangerous ideas in the interstices of the pages, in the interplay between the voices of the characters rather than in the text itself. Diderot expresses this most clearly in the *Encyclopédie*'s system of cross references, which transforms the linear, alphabetical order of the encyclopedia into a dialogic structure that calls upon readers to make use of their critical ability in discerning the hidden meaning of the text:

> [The cross references] will counter notions; bring principles into contrast; covertly attack, unsettle, or overturn some ridiculous opinions which one would not venture to disparage openly. If the author is impartial, they will always have the double function of confirming and refuting, disrupting and reconciling. . . .
>
> . . . This means of undeceiving men acts very quickly on good minds, and ineluctably and without any disagreeable consequence, silently and without scandal, on all minds. It is the art of tacitly deducing the boldest consequences. If such confirming and refuting references are foreseen well in advance, and skillfully prepared, they will give an encyclopedia the character which a good dictionary ought to possess: that of changing the common mode of thinking.[39]

Leaving behind the vehement, direct rhetoric of the treatise, and shirking the blunt speech of the Cynics, polite writers employ the art of conversation to imply what cannot be said and to critique where critique is silenced.

Criticism of the Polite Style: The Revenge of Eloquence

Polite conversation did not go uncontested in mid-eighteenth-century France and Great Britain. Echoing the concerns of the country party in early-eighteenth-century England, Rousseau scornfully called politeness and its political ally, commerce, "the masterpiece of policy of our age" (le chef-d'œuvre de la politique de notre siècle),[40] and he deplored the cultural products of the polite style as so many "garlands of flowers over the iron chains in which men are burdened."[41] He dismissed the arguments for *le doux commerce* as justifications for greed and self-interest and refuted the so-called public sphere of the salons and coffeehouses as politically impotent, conciliatory, and corrupt. Like Bolingbroke before him, Rousseau held politeness responsible for the loss of the civic spirit, masculine virtues, and republican ideals of ancient Athens and Sparta. He looked to ancient eloquence, in its ideal republican form, as, in the words of Adam Potkay, "a metonymy for an imagined scene of ancient oratory in which the speaker moves the just passions of a civic assembly and implants a sense of community with his words."[42]

Critiques of politeness were also voiced from within the salon circles. André Morellet and Jean-François Marmontel participated actively in salon life, but they revealed in their memoirs a deep dissatisfaction with the norms of salon conversation.[43] Frustrated by the censorship and dilettantism enforced upon them by the watchful *salonnières,* Marmontel and Morellet express a nostalgia for eloquence, understood as the free-flowing rhetoric of masculine discourse inherited from the schoolroom. Goodman notes that they refer to three sites of counterpoliteness rhetoric: first, the classroom and its exercises in *disputatio;* second, the evenings at Baron d'Holbach's, where rules of conversation were freer than at Madame Geoffrin's and men were permitted to hold forth at length without being interrupted or reprimanded for their vehemence; and third, the postprandial walks in the Tuileries, where men, having bid their female lunch companions adieu, were free to discuss politics and voice their opinions freely and forcefully.[44] In short, politeness was accused of being politically corrupt or at least quietistic and of imposing chains upon the free articulation and exploration of ideas. Two hundred years later, Habermas and Foucault would repeat this argument, the former upholding the eighteenth-century republic of letters and its polite, consensual linguistic practice as the site of a critical and effective public sphere, the latter repeating, though from a different political position, many of the arguments that Bolingbroke, Rousseau, and Marmontel had leveled against polite society. The question of

politeness—and of its rivals, eloquence and Cynic rhetoric—lies at the center of both eighteenth- and twentieth-century debates on the viability of the Enlightenment project.

Cynic Rhetoric: An Alternative to the Polite Style and Its Rival, Eloquence?

The practice of eloquence was polite conversation's main rival as the discursive basis of the republic of letters. Politically, eloquence promised civic unity and a strong sense of the public good; intellectually, it evoked images of a powerful, articulate, and masculine mind; and on the personal level, it conjured up a strong sense of self, a voice distinct from the polite, and hence to an extent conformist, language of the age. But Cynic rhetoric, with its penchant for satire, vitriolic diatribe, and irreverent *franc parler,* reared its head as a third contender in the struggle to define an appropriate and effective critical language practice.

It is important in this context to remember that the ancients too had their disputes over eloquence and dialogue (the ancestor of eighteenth-century conversation) and sought to position Cynic rhetoric in relation to these two dominant discourses. In his *Double Indictment,* written in the second century, Lucian opposes Lady Rhetoric and Old Man Dialogue, playfully setting the florid language of the former against the terse prose of the latter. This is interesting in itself, but so is the reason why Rhetoric and Dialogue meet. Each has come to the Areopagus to bring a Cynic, an unnamed Syrian easily identified as Lucian, to trial. Lady Rhetoric accuses the Cynic of being a man of easy virtue, a fickle lover who ruthlessly abandoned her, his benefactress, in favor of Old Man Dialogue. Dialogue, in turn, charges the Syrian with betraying his trust and turning his clean, philosophical prose into a farcical hodgepodge of styles. The Cynic's seriocomic rhetoric, with its odd mixture of high and low, verse and prose, stands trial for corrupting the purity of dialogue and making a mockery of oratory. Eloquence and Dialogue stand temporarily united against Cynicism, but only because they each want to win Cynicism over to their own causes and make him an obedient and faithful ally of their styles and philosophical outlooks.[45]

Cynicism represents a third term in the eloquence-dialogue rivalry, a potential ally or, as Lady Rhetoric and Old Man Dialogue soon discovered, a disruptive alternative. For writers of mid-eighteenth-century France, Cynicism, understood here as a philosophical attitude but also as a distinctive rhetoric

grounded in wit, diatribe, and the mixing of genres, once again plays the role of the third term in a binary system. Writers who were aware of the limitations of the polite style but remained committed to establishing conversation as the discursive basis of the republic of letters could turn to Cynicism as an alternative. If they could succeed where Old Man Dialogue had failed and give the wayward Cynic a polite education, they might coopt Cynicism as the avant-garde of the republic of letters.

In his essay "Defacing the Currency: Diogenes' Rhetoric and the *Invention* of Cynicism," Robert Bracht Branham argues for the existence of a distinctly Cynic rhetoric, "unlike any other developed in antiquity." Grounded in the principle of free speech and distinguished by "a distinctive set of rhetorical topoi, verbal techniques (*eg.,* pun, parody, obscenity) and physical gesture for advocating Cynic ideology," Cynic rhetoric challenges established norms through humor, parody, and improvisation. As Branham points out, nearly one in six citations by Diogenes in Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* are puns or wordplays, while many others "depend on quotations and parodies of poets."[46] Viewed from this perspective, Cynic rhetoric appears as a sibling of the polite conversation practiced in the republic of letters. Both employ wit to question prejudice and trade formal protocols of reason and oratory for linguistic practices that draw heavily on oral and quotidian forms of expression. Niehues-Pröbsting has argued that Cynic rhetoric developed as "a comical recasting of the serious philosophical dialogue,"[47] and to the extent that writers of the Enlightenment republic of letters themselves remodeled the traditional philosophical dialogue, abandoning its didactic and at times wooden form in favor of a playful, conversational exchange between characters, they assert their ties to Cynic rhetoric.[48] Cynicism appears, then, not as a practice extraneous to the polite style but as an inherent potential of conversational writing, its dangerous extreme or logical excess a potential at once alluring and threatening.

This close affinity between the polite style and Cynic rhetoric helps explain why the philosophes were so concerned with defining the acceptable limits of the Cynical within the sphere of letters and social criticism. The interest in Cynicism was motivated as much by a desire to police the boundaries of the polite world as by an attraction to the outspoken courage of Cynic parrhesia. Admiration for Cynic speech was carefully balanced by the warning *cave canem,* "beware the bite of the sharp-fanged dog." D'Alembert and his contemporaries might laugh at the indignation of Lucian's Old Man Dialogue, but they would have sympathized with his sense of philosophical duty and

his distrust of the Cynic fool. Old Man Dialogue's tirade is worth quoting at length, as it will help clarify some of the issues at stake in the eighteenth century's conflictual relationship to Cynicism:

> The wrongs done me and the insults put upon me by this man are these. I was formerly dignified, and pondered upon the gods and nature and the cycle of the universe, treading the air high up above the clouds where "great Zeus in heaven driving his winged car" sweeps on; but he dragged me down when I was already soaring above the zenith and mounting on "heaven's back," and broke my wings, putting me on the same level as the common herd. Moreover, he took away from me the respectable tragic mask that I had, and put another upon me that is comic, satyr-like, and almost ridiculous. Then he unceremoniously penned me up with Jest and Satire and Cynicism and Eupolis and Aristophanes, *terrible men for mocking all that is holy and scoffing at all that is right.* At last he even dug up and thrust in upon me, Menippus, a prehistoric dog, with a very loud bark, it seems, and sharp fangs, a really dreadful dog who bites unexpectedly because he grins when he bites.[49]

The Cynic oversteps the limits of polite dialogue and favors the obscene and the ridiculous at the expense of moral decency and philosophical rigor. Cynic rhetoric might be defined as conversation in a salon that has muzzled its policing *salonnière* or as banter in a coffeehouse where the rules of proper behavior have been torn from the entrance door. Like Old Man Dialogue, D'Alembert and his fellow Encyclopédistes fear that their questioning of prejudices in the name of a better society may slip all too easily, with Cynicism, into a nihilistic "scoffing at all that is right," while their careful negotiations with those in power and with the public might give way to a hostile, biting attack on all men and all values alike.

Thus, although the philosophes looked to Cynicism as the avant-garde of the Enlightenment republic of letters and aspired to the ancient Cynic's direct and satirical critique of power, political and social pressures discouraged them from adopting the Cynic's bark. Not only was Cynicism politically unthinkable under the reign of Louis XV but it was potentially harmful to the task the philosophes had set for themselves as reformers and enlighteners of their age. As Bayle had already pointed out in his article on Diogenes, wit and "le bon mot," characteristics of Cynic and polite rhetoric alike, must be kept in check lest they lead to follies and excesses that no rational person could endorse.

Polite and Well-Bred Cynics

D'Alembert's call for a newly polished Diogenes did not fall on deaf ears. In 1754 Pierre Le Guai de Prémontval responded with a proud "Diogène, c'est moi" in his book *Le Diogène de D'Alembert ou Diogène décent.* This otherwise unremarkable collection of *pensées* is worthy of attention because it demonstrates a keen awareness of the function of Cynicism in mid-eighteenth-century France, as the site for defining the role of the intellectual and ingratiating writers with the community of letters and the government. The book consists of a series of short maxims on questions of philosophy, morality, religion, and taste, and if Prémontval does indulge in the occasional outburst against polite society and its attendant philosophical model, Socrates ("Good Lord! Have we not had our share of Socrates? . . . I don't believe that the patience of Phaenarete's son can be of use today. . . . It is by painful incisions that we must now wrest the truths from the breasts of men"), he carefully tempers each such remark with the assurance that collaboration among men of letters constitutes the last resort of the intellectual, his hope and solace in an age that has ceased to take its philosophers seriously: "I am convinced that all the metaphysicians in the world have no influence on the multitude, and that we have only a very limited influence on the small number of men who think. But it is important for those few that we examine every truth with the greatest care."[50] Prémontval's Cynic bears only the vaguest resemblance to his ancient model: well bred and well traveled, he dismisses mockery and diatribe as intellectually sterile ("disputes have only ever produced confusion, obstinacy, and hatred") and socially ineffective ("harsh reprimands render virtue odious and the heart bitter").[51] The decent Diogenes no longer openly challenges social and religious structures but retreats into intellectual speculation and literary production.

Prémontval's personal circumstances may help to explain his polite gentrification of D'Alembert's Diogenes. Forced to flee France for having criticized a number of Catholic dogmas, Prémontval sought refuge in Switzerland and Holland before settling in Prussia under the protection of Frederick the Great. In 1752 he became a member of the Academy of Science of Berlin, but he received little recognition in France. *Le Diogène de D'Alembert ou Diogène décent* was Prémontval's attempt to reinstate himself in the eyes of the French reading public and the French authorities. He took a conciliatory stance on matters of religion and politics to show that he was an upstanding citizen and a good Christian, a man worthy of recognition by his national peers. The references to Diogenes are intensely personal and come from a man who has suffered the

consequences of too bold a tongue. They stem from the pen of a mature man of letters who abjures his youthful Cynic brazenness in favor of a more tempered form of social critique.

Diogenes' retreat from direct ethical action to literary elegance among French men of letters was echoed in German literary circles as well, in Christoph Martin Wieland's Cynic novel of 1770, *Sokrates mainomenos, oder die Dialogen des Diogenes von Sinope (Socrates out of his senses: or, dialogues of Diogenes of Sinope),* for instance, and the several German periodicals that appeared throughout the century under titles such as *Der Teutsche Diogenes* (1736–37) and *Der neue Diogenes* (1778–79).[52] Wieland's novel, which I will return to at some length in chapter 4, defines the new Sinopean as a witty but never extreme critic of society, prone to sentimentalism and given to elegiac praises of nature from which all references to brute animality or digestive functions have been carefully excised. The editors of the abovementioned journals likewise claim Diogenes as a figure of authority—the Cynic, symbol of the serious cultural critic, lends the journal credibility—but they rid him of any socially unacceptable or revolutionary characteristics. Thus, as Niehues-Pröbsting points out, *Diogenes in *** oder satyrisch-moralische Makulatur* (1774) reassures its readers that this Cynic journal will contain "nichts Unanständiges," nothing indecent, blasphemous, or unpatriotic. *Der neue Diogenes oder Beurtheiling alltäglicher unbemerkter Weltbegebenheiten, zum Behuf eines freiern vernünftigern Denkens und Handelns* (1778–79) similarly attempts to legislate the borders of the new Cynicism by defining its rhetoric and its tone. An article entitled "Über den witzigen Ton in Gesellschaften" (On the witty tone in society), carefully distinguishes between good-natured wit and the aggressive, destructive, and "diabolical" mockery of false Cynics.[53] Like D'Alembert and Prémontval before him, the editor of *Der neue Diogenes* recuperates Diogenes as the figurehead of the republic of letters and a bold but decent spokesman for all enlightened intellectuals.

Diderot's Farewells to Cynicism

Among those who sought to define the acceptable place of Cynicism within social critique, none felt the difficulties and compromises demanded by the task as keenly as Diderot, who entertained throughout his life a vivid and at times tortured relationship with his Cynic alter ego. Diderot's passionate relationship to Cynicism crystallizes the philosophes' attitude towards the ancient sect and provides insight into the social and political reasons behind the

eighteenth-century taming of Diogenes. In his most private work, *Le Neveu de Rameau,* a text he did not show even to his closest friends, Diderot let Diogenes out of his pen and allowed his biting, mocking, and irreverent voice to speak out against the polite philosophes. But in all his other writings, in his essays, letters, and articles, Diderot polices the boundaries of Cynicism, carefully distancing himself from the bluntness, asceticism, and obscenity of the ancient Cynic. I will treat Diderot's polite Cynicism here and turn to *Le Neveu de Rameau* in the following chapter.

Diderot identifies himself with Diogenes in several texts, but as Jean Starobinski has aptly pointed out, he allies himself with the ancient Cynic only to betray him.[54] As he wrote in a letter to Sophie Voland, "I am good old Diogenes, but with a small piece of cloth draped, more or less carefully, around me" (note the malicious "more or less"), "but Diogenes daily takes his leave. In eight or ten years, he will have disappeared altogether."[55] His acts of self-identification with the proto-Cynic are in fact acts of renunciation—in the name of political necessity, aesthetic ideals, and social mores.

Diderot bids his first farewell to Diogenes as early as 1748. Threatened with imprisonment at Vincennes for his too daring *Pensées philosophiques* and his lascivious novel *Les bijoux indiscrets,* Diderot promises to put down his Cynic pen and follow Socrates: "I will not counter your reproaches with the examples of Rabelais, Montaigne, La Motte-le-Vayer, Swift, or others I could name who have attacked the fools of their day *in the most Cynical manner* and yet kept the title of sage. I want the scandal to end, and without losing further time in apologies, I abandon the jester's staff and bells never again to take them up, and I return to Socrates."[56] Cynicism is here first and foremost a question of style: it denotes the satire of a Rabelais and the fool's "staff and bells," which Diderot abandons in favor of the less disruptive language of the eighteenth-century Socrates. I return to the question of Diderot's relation to satire in the following chapter; here it suffices to note that Diderot's initial rejection of Cynicism is motivated primarily by a political concern: the need to avoid censorship.

Diderot rapidly warmed, however, to his new, non-Cynical self. In a short autobiographical piece, *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre,* written c. 1769, Diderot once again bids a poignant, though this time humorous, farewell to Diogenes and declares himself, almost against his will, partisan of the luxuries and aesthetic pleasures afforded by salon culture. Diderot had by then climbed to a place of prominence in the literary world, and when the *salonnière* Madame Geoffrin offered to refurbish his apartment and dress him like a true man of letters, he could not refuse. Farewell, then, to his old, tattered dressing

gown; farewell to the faithful desk that had creaked and tottered for so long under the weight of his dusty books. Ill at ease in his new crimson robe, aware of having allowed himself to be corrupted by the flattery of his patron, Diderot addresses the ancient Cynic with the accents of a repentant sinner who has betrayed his master and his most cherished ideals:

> O Diogenes, were you to see your disciple wrapped in the ostentatious cloak of Aristippus, how you would laugh! O Aristippus, this cloak was paid with many a contemptible action! What measure is there between your soft, crawling, effeminate life and the free and firm life of the beggarly Cynic? I have left the barrel where you reigned to serve under a tyrant.[57]

Diderot's scorn for Aristippus, Diogenes' famous alter ego and the man who gave up his independence to serve at the court of the tyrant Denys, leads Diderot to call for the destruction of all his new possessions should he indeed become corrupted by them. But as he imagines this future iconoclastic act, he begins to retract his plea. Of all the gifts bestowed upon him by Madame Geoffrin, one only causes him to pause: a painting by Claude-Joseph Vernet. Diderot cannot bear to part with it, whatever the cost to his Cynic identity: "O God, I resign myself to the prayer of the holy prophet and to your will; I give all things up to you; yes, all, except my Vernet; oh, leave me the Vernet!"[58] Diogenes might have stood a chance against the lure of physical comfort and social standing, but how could he rival the pleasures afforded by the arts?

Diderot rejects Cynicism on aesthetic grounds, but he also questions its viability as a philosophical attitude. In the article "Cynique," which he wrote for the *Encyclopédie,* he paints a positive image of the ancient Cynics, praising their moral strength, their virtue (he denies all reports of Cynic immodesty), and Diogenes' verve and humor. But he condemns their asceticism and asociability as acts of psychological violence comparable to those of the Stoic Cato: "I would gladly be Cato; but I believe it would cost me much, and others as well, before I had become him. The frequent sacrifices I would be forced to make to the sublime character I would have taken as my model would fill me with a bitter and caustic bile that would spill over into the world at every moment."[59]

Read through the lens of the article "Cynique," the humorous farewell to Diogenes in *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre* gains a positive value: by embracing luxury, Diderot claims his humanity and softens the edges of a severe moralism to which he was not impartial. For Diderot readily admits that the bold and ascetic lifestyle of the ancient Cynics appeals to him insofar

as it permits him to play the role of social and political scourge, to become the voice of reason and morality crying out in the marketplace: "In Athens . . . I would have taken up Aristotle's or Plato's robe, or put on the frock of Diogenes," he writes in the last years of his life, in his *Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron.*[60] But the opening phrase, "In Athens," reveals how intensely Diderot felt the distance that separated fourth-century BCE Athens from contemporary Paris. As an eighteenth-century character, Diogenes was absurd and unthinkable: "Who today would dare brave ridicule and scorn? In our midst Diogenes would live under a roof, not in a barrel; in no region of our world would he take on the role he played in Athens. He might preserve his independent and firm spirit, but he would never say, even to the pettiest of our sovereigns, as he did to Alexander: *Get out of my sun.*"[61]

In the last years of his life Diderot returns to his first farewell to Cynicism, in 1748, and expresses the bitter awareness that Diogenes' biting satire, his blunt political criticisms, and his ascetic monkish lifestyle can live on only in the imagination, as fantastical projections of a moral rigor and a political power that have no room in the polite and censored world of eighteenth-century letters.

Diderot's personal engagement with Cynicism makes clear that the Encyclopédistes did not turn their backs on the more disruptive and radical Cynic traits without regret. But turn their backs they did, in an attempt to salvage Cynicism for philosophy. The philosophes sought to put Cynicism back in circulation after its devaluation at the hands of Counter-Reformation writers, and to this end they reminted the Cynic coin by divesting it of its impure allies, a scathing tongue and rude manners. Niehues-Pröbsting accurately sums up philosophical Cynicism in the period when he writes that eighteenth-century men of letters retained from Diogenes only his independence, his freedom of speech, and a courageous critique of religion and prejudice.[62] In the context of our study it is equally important to consider what the philosophes rejected. Among the dregs of their reminted Cynicism we find (1) the irreverence of Cynic speech ("j'abandonne la marotte et les grelots" [I give up the fool's staff and bell]); (2) the asocial and apolitical implications of Diogenes' philosophy; (3) a sexuality that went beyond the sensual and extended to the publicly outrageous; and, most importantly, (4) the central Cynic metaphor of living like a dog, "according to nature" and in stark opposition to the social norms of the day. In a polite society the indecent poverty and primitivism of Diogenes could only marginalize the social critic and render his work ineffective. This is why, as we shall see in chapter 4, the philosophes sought to discredit Rousseau,

who had become associated with a primitivist version of Cynicism, as a false Diogenes, a "singe de Diogène," as Voltaire Cynically put it.[63]

Attempts to contain Cynicism did not always succeed, however, and the shunned Cynic dregs found their way back into circulation. As Niehues-Pröbsting has shown, the desire to claim Cynicism as a positive model was thwarted first by members of the anti-Encyclopédiste party, who accused the philosophes of being Cynics in the worst sense of the term, as when Joseph de Maistre attacked Voltaire as a dirty and perverted Cynic: "Other Cynics astound virtue, Voltaire astounds vice. He plunges into the muck, he rolls in it, he feeds on it; he delivers his imagination over to the enthusiasm of hell, which lends him all its strength and drags him to the very limits of evil."[64] But the philosophes' self-image as clean-shaven Diogenes figures was also undermined by writers sympathetic to the project of saving Cynicism for Enlightenment. It is to these figures we turn in the following three chapters.

3 *Menippus on the Loose, or Diderot's Twin Hounds*

The prevailing tendency among writers in mid-eighteenth-century France and Germany was to produce clean-shaven, sociable Diogenes figures. D'Alembert had called for "the Diogenes of our age" to step forth, and his contemporaries responded to the challenge by adopting the pose of the Cynic philosopher in their writings. But theirs was a Diogenes stripped of his bawdy past, his hair powdered, his sharp tongue made pliable to the latest tastes and fashions of the times. The ancient philosopher was reborn as the child of the republic of letters: a polite and well-read young man dedicated to the betterment of society.

But the norms of politeness did not go uncontested in mid-eighteenth-century Europe, and critics of the niceties of the polite world produced their own versions of the eighteenth-century Cynic, dark doubles of the well-mannered characters in Prémontval or D'Alembert. In this chapter I focus on Diderot's contentions with the polite world and with the linguistic and philosophical strictures the "conversible world" imposes upon philosophical reflection.[1] As we saw in chapter 2, Diderot rejected Cynical satire in his early works in favor of what Dena Goodman has called the "central discursive practice of the Enlightenment Republic of Letters,"[2] polite conversation. In his essays, letters, and philosophical works, he too partook of the attempt to produce a socially and philosophically respectable Diogenes figure. But Diderot's growing disappointment with the critical force of politeness led him to question his rejection of Cynicism and to consider first eloquence and then Cynic rhetoric as the true repository of critical thinking. I argue that Diderot turns to two less

recognized classical authorities, the Eclectics and the Cynics, to define alternate rhetorical strategies (eloquence and satire, respectively) that contest the dialogic rhetoric of his declared model, Socrates. My reading focuses on the article "Eclecticism" from the *Encyclopédie* and on *Le Neveu de Rameau.*

The article "Eclecticism," though it has received little attention from critics, occupies a central place in Diderot's thought. Under cover of writing a historical survey of the ancient sect, Diderot defines the task and the rhetoric of the modern Eclectics, the Encyclopédistes. The article is a manifesto for the *Encyclopédie.* It expresses faith in the project of gathering and organizing knowledge and articulates a powerful nostalgia for the eloquence of the ancients. Diderot's praise of Eclecticism already includes, however, a reflection on the failure of the philosophical project it defines. Lack of government funding and tight censorship laws transform the Eclectic philosopher into a hungry, hounded man, a scam artist, a cynic in the less noble sense of the term. The article "Eclecticism" raises the suspicion that a morally questionable Cynicism lies at the heart of the philosophes' critical enterprise and that neither the lost eloquence of the ancient Eclectics nor the polite style of its modern heirs can stem the rising tide of cynicism.

Le Neveu de Rameau pushes the suspicion further. By staging the encounter between D'Alembert's polished Cynic and his monstrous twin, the parasitical, satirical Cynic embodied by Rameau's nephew, the text suggests that the philosophers themselves, and not the authorities alone, are to be held responsible for the turn to Cynicism in its less savory acceptation. It also reveals the connection between the *Encyclopédie,* the arch-Eclectic work of the French eighteenth century, and its parodic double, Menippean satire. *Le Neveu de Rameau* deserves attention in this study, then, for two main reasons. First, it poignantly suggests that the Encyclopédistes and their circle, strive though they might to fashion themselves and their contemporaries into autonomous and unprejudiced human beings—to produce themselves, that is, as D'Alembert's sociably responsible, independent Cynic—in fact produce nothing better than grotesque parodies of Diogenes, skeptical thinkers without principles or social conscience. *Le Neveu de Rameau* stages an auto-critique of the republic of letters: the scoundrel Cynic unrelentingly deflates the principles upheld by the good Cynic philosopher. The crucial point is that the irreverent nephew is presented not as the antithesis of the philosophes but as their heir, the unwitting product of an "age of reason." He ushers in the era of the modern cynic, Sloterdijk's disillusioned and disaffected *Zyniker.*[3]

Second, *Le Neveu de Rameau* delineates an alternative Cynical stance that

accepts the bawdy, the dirty, and the impolite as possible means of correcting and advancing the work of critique. The nephew plays the role of satirist that Diderot had regretfully laid to rest, and he embodies the false Cynic that Diderot attacked in the *Encyclopédie.* A biting social critic *and* a parasitical *profiteur,* a Cynic and a cynic, he incarnates both the malignant tumor unwittingly engendered by the philosophes' attempts to enlighten the age and its possible remedy.

Learning Politeness: From Diogenes to Socrates

Diderot learned the rules and ruses of the polite style the hard way: thrown into prison in 1749 for four of his earliest works—the *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), the *Bijoux indiscrets* (1748), the *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient* (1749), and the manuscript "Oiseau blanc, conte bleu" (c. 1748)—Diderot was forced to think hard about how he would pursue his intellectual endeavors in the future to avoid causing himself undue harm or risk having his voice silenced once and for all. As Carol Sherman has pointed out, the imprisonment at Vincennes marks a turning point in Diderot's style, from "the allegorical satire" of his earliest works to the "dialogue or the *essai dialogué,* as Vernière has called it" of his most famous writings.[4] As early as 1748, in response to those who felt it was their civic duty to denounce him to the police, Diderot recanted his satirical tone. In the dedication to his *Mémoires sur différents sujets de mathématiques* (1748) Diderot explains his decision to one of his critics:

> I will not counter your reproaches with the examples of Rabelais, Montaigne, La Motte-le-Vayer, Swift, or others I could name who have attacked the fools of their day *in the most Cynical manner* and yet kept the title of sage. I want the scandal to end, and without losing further time in apologies, I abandon the jester's staff and bells never again to take them up, and I return to Socrates.[5]

By linking his earliest writings to the Cynical tone of Rabelais, Diderot not only sets up Socrates, and by extension the Socratic dialogue, in opposition to the "staff and bells" of the fool's satire; he also links the satirical tradition to a biting Cynic rhetoric. The dedication to the *Mémoires sur différent sujets de mathématique* thus marks Diderot's rejection of Cynicism, or, to be more specific, of the literary legacy of Cynicism, the satirical mode inherited from Diogenes' heir, Menippus. He asserts this rejection with conviction ("never

again to take them up"), but not without a certain regret: the references to Rabelais, Montaigne, La Motte Le Vayer, and Swift express a nostalgia for an age that recognized the Cynic's vehement rhetoric as a useful and powerful vehicle for critiquing social norms.

Diderot's turn away from the Cynic literary tradition is motivated by social and political concerns. At stake is the problem of the transmission of ideas: how can one best spread ideas that are perceived as threats by political and religious authorities? Socrates offers a particularly apt model for Diderot and his contemporaries because he embodies the problem and offers a solution. As the persecuted hero of Greek philosophy, he provides consolation and encouragement to censored writers in the eighteenth century. He vindicates those thrown into prison for their ideas, and it is surely no coincidence that Diderot chose to translate Plato's *Apology* and parts of the *Crito* while at Vincennes. But Socrates offers more than consolation: he stands for dialogue and a method of question and answer that seeks to draw out the truth rather than bark it out, Diogenes style. Plato allegedly nicknamed Diogenes a "Socrates gone mad," emphasizing the distance that separates the Cynic from the wise and calm Socrates; the latter may well have been a gadfly, but he was no raging dog. In declaring his return to Socrates, Diderot thus gives us his stylistic manifesto: from now on he will communicate his ideas in dialogue form, if for no other reason than to avoid being whipped like a dog.

Diderot's friends called him "Socrates" or, more affectionately, "Frère *Tonpla,*" the *verlan,* or slang, for Brother Plato. The inversion of the two syllables of *Tonpla* creates a code that sets the insiders off from hostile outsiders and gives us an idea of how the philosophes would use the Socratic dialogue to protect their ideas from censorship, for instance, in the system of cross references in the *Encyclopédie,* which allowed a secret dialogue to take place in the interstices between the officially sanctioned articles.[6] Diderot turned to Socrates to "change the common mode of thinking."[7] He put down the loud, jingling jester's "staff and bells" and devoted his life to the secret undermining of authority and prejudice. He wrote a number of *essais dialogués* throughout his life, defended the lighthearted gaiety of conversation as a critical tool in his *Apologie de l'abbé Galiani,* and though the police files reported him to be "a most dangerous man," he succeeded in avoiding further imprisonment and in living, when all is said and done, the respectable life of a good citizen and responsible thinker.

But Diderot could not ignore the nagging feeling that polite conversation alone would not change the common way of thinking. In his writings, both

published and private, he articulates a longing for the lost eloquence of the ancient world and for the Cynic's satirical bite. Like Morellet and Marmontel, who, though they complied in public with the conversational style demanded by salon society, criticized polite norms in their essays and memoirs and attacked conversation for the linguistic and political shackles it imposed upon thought, Diderot struggled to come to terms with the limits of dialogic writing and the philosophical style it implied.[8] His meditation on eloquence in the article "Eclecticism" and his reflections on Cynicism in *Le Neveu de Rameau* constitute two important moments in Diderot's reevaluation of his Socratic turn and of his vision of what the philosophe, or public intellectual, should be. The self-professed philosophes of the latter half of the eighteenth century expended much ink defining the role of the philosopher, or man of letters, in society. By weighing the respective merits of ancient sects and meditating on the language best suited to the task of enlightening his fellow citizens, Diderot rescripts this debate. He takes to task the ideal man of letters celebrated in the *Encyclopédie* article "Philosophe" and upholds a dangerously cynical view of the philosopher and his contributions to social progress.

Looking ahead to Foucault's definition of Cynicism as an inverted form of Eclecticism ("une sorte d'éclectisme à effet inversé"),[9] I focus my readings of the article "Eclecticism" and *Le Neveu de Rameau* on the images of the philosopher they convey and on the linguistic models on which they rely. None of Diderot's writings expresses as marked a nostalgia for eloquence as the article "Eclecticism"; no text of his critiques the polite man of letters as virulently as *Le Neveu de Rameau.* I submit that the model of eloquent speech dissolves in the first text into a residual discourse that can be recuperated in Diderot's time only as components of polite style (enthusiasm and genius) or as a parody of eloquence in the language of the Cynical nephew. Whereas the Eclectic's eloquence falters against the rocks of persecution or folly, the Cynic's playful parody of the gestural language of the ancients permits him to slip through the cracks of censorship and reclaim the critical force of philosophical inquiry. This Cynic parody of eloquent and polite speech does not come without a price, however; it questions the enterprise of the eighteenth-century intellectual at its roots and celebrates the ambiguous figure of the jester in the stead of the wise and respectable philosopher.

From Socrates to the Eclectics: Ousting the Cynics?

The *Encyclopédie*'s official definition of the philosopher, in the entry "Philosophe," paints the portrait of a man both reasonable and sociable:

> Reason determines [the action] of the philosopher . . . but it is not the philosophic spirit alone which the philosopher cultivates, he carries his attention and his concerns further. . . . [R]eason compels him to know, to study, and to work to acquire sociable qualities.[10]

This philosopher meditates, observes, engages in conversation. We may assume that he writes, but never at times that might conflict with his social engagements and certainly not in an ill-lit garret, with thoughts only for food:

> [From what we have just said we can see] how far removed from the true idea of the philosopher are these idlers who, abandoning themselves to lazy meditations, neglect the care of their temporal affairs, and of everything that is called fortune. The true philosopher is not at all tormented by ambition, but he wishes to have the comforts of life; beyond what is strictly necessary, he requires an honest superfluity necessary to an honorable man, and by means of which alone he is happy: this is the basis of proprieties and pleasures. It is false philosophers who have given rise to this prejudice that the strictest necessity is sufficient, by their indolence and by their dazzling maxims.[11]

Philosophy, we are told, requires a certain *bien-être.* The article excludes the Stoics, with their "chimerical insensitivity,"[12] from the category of true philosopher, and we may suppose that it would have little praise to bestow on the resolutely penniless Cynics.

The article "Philosophe," based on Dumarsais's essay of 1743, predates the *Encyclopédie.* It captures the general spirit of sociability and rationality promoted by the philosophes, yet it maintains an aristocratic tone that is somewhat out of touch with the social reality of a number of the Encyclopédistes, not least the young Diderot.[13] Alternative definitions of the ideal philosopher emerge elsewhere in the *Encyclopédie,* in particular in the entries on ancient philosophical sects.[14] Diderot contributed to the endeavor with his articles "Scepticisme," "Cynique," and "Eclectisme" and ultimately gave his allegiance to the third. He admired the Skeptics, but he saw them as no more than steppingstones in a larger, constructive project,[15] and while he enthusiastically embraced Diogenes' linguistic verve in the article "Cynique" and praised Antisthenes' courage "to trample underfoot what was ostentatious and imposing

in the ideas of Socrates,"[16] he expressed reservations about the "unnatural" austerity of the Cynic way of life:

> From this we see that Antisthenes' virtue was unhappy, a condition that will always occur when one stubbornly insists on giving oneself an artificial character and artificial morals. I would gladly be Cato; but I believe it would cost me much, and others as well, before I had become him. The frequent sacrifices I would be forced to make to the sublime character I would have taken as my model would fill me with a bitter and caustic bile that would spill over into the world at every moment.[17]

Diderot critiques the Cynics along official party lines, praising their freedom of thought and speech but condemning their asocial tendencies and dismissing as false Cynics the bands of "buffoons, impudent fellows, beggars, parasites, gluttons, and good-for-nothings"[18] who usurped the name of Cynic under the Roman Empire.

Diderot salvages vestiges from the Skeptics and the Cynics for his own philosophy. It is not surprising, therefore, to see him celebrate the Eclectics, the master dabblers of the ancient world, as the fathers of philosophy and the models the *Encyclopédie* (an Eclectic enterprise by definition) would try to emulate. Diderot aims to define the *Encyclopédie* as the work of the best Eclectic writers. Yet in the article "Eclecticism" he sets out to praise Eclecticism as the best model for philosophy, but he ultimately undermines his purpose. He demonstrates instead, against his better hopes, that Eclecticism remains a historical impossibility, bound to degenerate, in the eighteenth century as in the ancient world, into a vapid syncretic compromise or a self-seeking, cynical pose in the worst and most modern sense of the term.

Diderot begins his article with a glorious description of the Eclectic as an independent and courageous thinker:

> ECLECTICISM *(History of ancient and modern philosophy).*
>
> The Eclectic is a philosopher who tramples on prejudices, tradition, respect for one's elders, universal consent, authority, in a word everything that subjugates the minds of the many; who dares to think for himself; who seeks out the clearest general principles, examines them, discusses them, admits nothing except on the basis of his experience and reason; and who, out of all the philosophies that he has analyzed impartially and without awe, forms one that is his own.[19]

Yet his history of ancient Eclecticism bears seemingly no relationship to this opening definition. A tale of corruption and demise, it tells of the first Eclec-

tics, who perverted Eclecticism at its roots by watering it down into obscure and harmless forms of syncretism. Diderot holds the religious and political structures of the times responsible for the degeneration of Eclecticism. Because they feared that the tyranny of Christian authorities would cause various sects (the Skeptics, the Cynics, and the Stoics in particular) to rise up in arms, the Eclectics of the third and fourth centuries developed conciliatory systems, monstrous hybrids, as Diderot terms them, of Christian theology and Greco-Roman philosophies. Far from creating a peaceful compromise between the ancient philosophical sects and the new religion, the work of the early Eclectics culminated in a double failure: the failure to live up to the Eclectic's calling to trample underfoot prejudice and tradition and the failure to create a conciliatory philosophy that would appease Christians and pagans alike. Diderot's account of the lives of third-century Eclectics reads like a litany to persecuted philosophers: from Sopatrus to Maximus of Ephesus and the beautiful Hypatia, we witness the impossible reconciliation of Eclectic philosophy with religious and political authority. Eclecticism, from its earliest beginnings, appears an impossibility, a promise that cannot come to fruition in history. Would-be Eclectics are doomed to betray their intellectual principles in the attempt to pacify the authorities, or they find themselves condemned to silence, if not death, at the hands of political leaders.

Yet Diderot refuses to give up on Eclecticism, the philosophy of those who "dare to think for themselves." He concludes his survey of the ancient Eclectics with the violent murder of Hypatia in 415 CE, but he pursues a second, modern history of the movement starting in the late sixteenth century, with Francis Bacon, the father of the experimental method, at its head. Diderot's list of early modern Eclectics ("Jordanus Brunus de Nole, Jérôme Cardan, François Bacon de Verulam, Thomas Campanella, Thomas Hobbes, . . . René Descartes, Godefroid-Guillaume Leibniz, Christian Thomasius" [335]) comes from Jakob Brucker, but the emphasis on Bacon (who figures so prominently in the *Discours préliminaire* to the *Encyclopédie*) is his and indicates a desire not only to study the history of Eclecticism in the sixteenth century but also to glean from it a list of precursors and models for the *Encyclopédie* project. As Diderot salvages Eclecticism for the *Encyclopédie,* he also expands the term to embrace all fields that endeavor to advance knowledge, from high-flown intellectual pursuits to the mechanical arts, which were to gain such a central place in the *Encyclopédie* and its illustrations. "Up till now," writes Diderot, "one has largely restricted the term eclecticism to matters of philosophy; but it is not difficult to predict that it will become more general" (339).

Diderot had shown that Eclecticism failed in ancient times because of the political structures of the day. If he is to advocate a rebirth and expansion of the movement, Diderot must, in his dual function as writer and editor of the *Encyclopédie,* create the historical possibilities for the flourishing of the arts in France. This is why at the close of the historical section of the article he appeals to political and religious authorities to finance research, in particular in the mechanical arts:

> Would it not be desirable to grant them [the mechanical arts] their own academy? . . . The State would thereby present forty unhappy citizens who have worn themselves out with work, and who have barely enough bread to feed themselves or their families, with an honorable source of revenue and the means to contribute even greater services to society than they have so far, by consigning in writing the precious observations they have made over the years. . . . But in the absence of the establishment I propose, all their observations are lost, their experience vanishes, the centuries slip away, the world grows old, and the mechanical arts remain in their infancy. (340)

The tone of regret and the sense of loss that close this passage indicate the distance that separates the France of Louis XV from the ideal conditions that would make Eclecticism possible. Diderot corroborates this regret by briefly listing the main historical obstacles to Eclecticism, all of which can be traced to religious and political institutions: "religious controversies," "intolerance and superstition," "indigence that casts the man of genius on the opposite side from that which nature intended," and "the indifference of the government, which in its political calculations counts for infinitely less than it is worth the glory the nation receives from the arts and letters" (338).

The article "Eclectisme" traces a trajectory that begins with persecuted eloquence and ends with the call for state-funded research. The move is politically cunning: by concluding his discussion with the seemingly harmless field of mechanical research, Diderot erases the consequences for the contemporary world of the politically subversive history he has outlined. The modern Eclectic, he seems to say, is no rabble-rouser but a patient laborer, no enemy of the state but a useful worker. He will, funding provided, gather his precious and careful observations in academic, state-subsidized "memoirs" for the betterment of society. Yet Diderot does not quite succeed in sealing off the history of the early Eclectics from the contemporary manifestations of Eclectic thinking. The essay's narrative energy—its emotional investment—derives from the rhythmic return of the dual themes of eloquence and persecution in the brief biographies of third-century Eclectics. Diderot has remarkably little to say

about the content of early Eclectic philosophy. His biographies teach us little about the systems of Longinus, Sopatrus, Maximus of Ephesus, or Hypatia, but they narrate at length the tale of their oratorical exploits, their imprisonments, and their bloody deaths. Eloquence functions, one might say, as the surplus meaning of the text, its secret desire. Beyond, or within, the political commentary, the text exhibits a nostalgia for eloquence, a longing and an admiration that escape the bounds of a rational critique of repressive authorities.

Diderot delivers his most poignant paean to eloquence in his account of the life and martyrdom of the last of the ancient Eclectics, the beautiful Hypatia: her "éloquence enchanteresse" (332) mirrors the radiance of her physical appearance and seems to place her above the common mortal. Eloquence and beauty form the kernel that no political regime and no syncretist dilution of Eclectic principles can spoil. Like Rousseau and many of his contemporaries, Diderot longed for an age when the power of the spoken word could gather crowds and rouse spirits. But Diderot expresses here a nostalgia less for the political possibilities of public oratory than for the sheer force and enthusiasm of its eloquence. The descriptions of Eclectic eloquence do little to recommend it on the basis of intellectual integrity or reason. We are told that the Eclectics' speeches paralyzed judgment and bordered on folly: "Maximus of Ephesus . . . put such force into his thoughts, such energy into his expression, such nobility and grandeur into his images, a *je ne sais quoi* so striking and sublime, even in his unreason, that he robbed his audience of the freedom to contradict him: he was Apollo on his tripod, who mastered men's souls and commanded their minds."[20]

Yet one cannot help but feel that this description is celebratory: the expanding, anaphoric clauses and the hyperbolic comparison to Apollo mimic the grand style of oratory with great verve, showing off Diderot's own mastery of language and his control of his readers' minds. If the secret purpose of the historical survey lies in the promotion of the Encyclopédistes and their fellow workers, the secret pleasure of the text is in its celebration and imitation of ancient eloquence.

In other words, Diderot aims to rescue Eclecticism for contemporary philosophy both by creating political conditions for the flourishing of philosophical and scientific inquiry and by encouraging contemporary Eclectics to adopt a more subtly subversive language than the eloquent harangues of their forefathers. But the text exceeds and rebuts its apparent aim: the nostalgia for eloquence strains the limits of a polite style that has learnt to control the excesses of language and the desire for immediate, political power, while the

repeated side comments on the unfortunate state of political support for the arts belie Diderot's hope for a happy collaboration between philosophy and government.

Diderot's criticism of his government is evident when he portrays the extreme indigence of the modern man of letters, forced to eke out a living without financial support from the authorities. He describes the situation as a condition "that casts the man of genius on the opposite side from that which nature intended" (338), and he berates patrons for supporting "unhappy souls, chained to the characters they are condemned to play" (339). Condemned to sing for his bread, the avant-garde thinker of the mid-eighteenth century learns to assume the roles of the "characters" demanded of him, betraying himself and his nation in the process. The modern man of letters slowly begins to resemble a subservient, parasitical *littérateur* rather than an Eclectic. He begins, that is, to resemble the dirty Cynic embodied by the nephew in Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau.*

In the article "Eclecticism," the burden of this perversion falls upon the social and political institutions of the times. The polite style promoted by the Encyclopédistes stands as a corrective to this process: it aims to circumvent the corruption of men of letters by enabling them to express subversive ideas in a more discreet manner, thus keeping writers out of trouble and in good money. In *Le Neveu de Rameau,* however, Diderot implicates not just politicians but the philosophes themselves, and their polite discourse, in the degeneration of philosophy and the corruption of social relations. *Le Neveu de Rameau* explodes the myth of the autonomous philosopher laboring in the name of social progress and reveals the deep-seated connection between the would-be Eclectic and his less savory brother, the dirty Cynic, whom Prémontval and his contemporaries had tried so hard to push out of the confines of philosophy. Through Rameau's nephew, Diderot articulates a double critique of the literary elite of his time: *Le Neveu de Rameau* suggests, first, that Diderot and his fellow writers failed to transmit their ideas in a manner beneficial to society and that their debunking of prejudices created cynics (in Sloterdijk's sense of *Zyniker*) rather than enlightened citizens; and second, that the philosophes themselves, try though they might to portray themselves as free and outspoken thinkers, in fact took part in the betrayal of philosophy by bowing to the demands of propriety and shutting their eyes to social reality.

The would-be Eclectic, or Encyclopédiste, not only creates cynics of those who read his works; he becomes himself a social parasite, a cynic in the less glorious acceptation of the term, employing his status as philosopher to create

for himself a comfortable niche in society. Goethe, who first made *Le Neveu de Rameau* available to the public in his German translation of 1805, described the text as a "bomb exploding in the midst of French literature."[21] The text is dynamite because it calls into question the entire enterprise of the republic of letters in the second half of the eighteenth century, and it employs the two-faced figure of the Cynic to do so. The text thus plays a pivotal role in the history of the relationship between Cynicism and Enlightenment: it employs the former to question the latter, showing Cynicism to be at once the illness and the potential remedy of the progressive agenda of the philosophes.

Cynic Philosophers and Cynic Rascals: Le Neveu de Rameau

Le Neveu de Rameau takes the form of a dialogue between Moi, a well-to-do philosopher, and Lui, Rameau's nephew, a social parasite without home or trade, a *raté* who makes his living as best he can by playing the fool. The two characters meet by chance at the Café de la Régence in the gardens of the Palais Royal and engage in a conversation that takes on, in leaps and bounds, the major philosophical themes of the day: genius, education, morality, aesthetics. The philosopher defends the bastion of virtue and good taste; the nephew ruthlessly undermines each and every one of the philosopher's beliefs. As the two men jockey for power in the debates, each claims to speak in the name of Diogenes.

Two references to Diogenes frame Diderot's text.[22] Near the beginning of the dialogue, the nephew appropriates the title of Cynic, declaring himself the heir of a shameless Diogenes and his sometimes lover, the prostitute Phryne: "[for] I am as impudent as the one and I am fond of consorting with the others" (car je suis effronté comme l'un, et je fréquente volontiers chez les autres).[23] At the end of the dialogue, the philosopher, who is by now exasperated and confused by the nephew's insolent antics, reclaims Diogenes for philosophy. He rescues the ancient Cynic from the likes of Lui by rescripting him as an ascetic and independent thinker who alone stands above the "vile pantomime" (*NR* 107; Tancock 123) of society. Diderot scripts his dialogue, that is, as a face-off between two contrasting images of Cynicism: on the one hand impudent free speech and intellectual promiscuity ("je fréquente volontiers chez les autres"), on the other austerity and autonomy.

The two references correspond to the twin images of Cynicism in circulation in mid-eighteenth-century French letters, with Moi representing a somewhat exaggerated version of the philosophes' idealized Cynic, and Lui a hodgepodge

of all the scurrilous elements the philosophes had sought to expel from the tradition. This dual image of Cynicism is of course not new. Epictetus articulated the opposition in the first century CE, settling the score in favor of the upright Cynic, and his eighteenth-century French successors, from D'Alembert to Prémontval and Voltaire, followed suit. Diderot's originality lies in staging the conflict, and doing so in an unprecedented face-off that has left critics, to this day, baffled as to its outcome. Who wins the verbal sparring match in *Le Neveu de Rameau*? It is tempting, given the parodic element in both portraits, to dismiss both Lui and Moi as simple straw figures of the traditional good and bad Cynics.[24] It seems to me, however, that we miss much of the novel's power if we discard the two characters as mere caricatures. By confronting the two Cynic types in a single text, Diderot does more than gently mock extremes: he opens a dangerous gateway between aspects of the ancient sect that he and his contemporaries had purposely sealed off one from another.

Diderot gives in to the cultural impulse to cut off the less attractive features of Diogenes by lumping them together in the figure of the false Cynic Lui, but he undermines this action by reintroducing into French literature the ambiguity that had characterized the proto-Cynic of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers.* The lazy good-for-nothing is also the character who "brings out the truth":[25] he plays, that is, the dual role of scoundrel and parrhesiast. Far from simply selecting the satirical vein of Cynicism at the expense of other Cynic traditions, Diderot mobilizes all three dominant philosophical and cultural images of Cynicism: the idealized Cynic and his wretched counterpart, inherited from commentators of the second and third centuries; the protean, unclassifiable Diogenes of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives,* where wise sayings and scatological jokes tumble out together happily from the Cynic's mouth; and the satirical tradition inherited from Menippus and Lucian, a tradition very much alive in western Europe since Erasmus and Thomas More's translations of Lucian in the Renaissance. Yet even as he draws on these traditions, Diderot refashions his Cynics as products of his times. The nephew's Cynical remarks bear on mid-eighteenth-century Paris as he experiences it—as a rapidly expanding commercial society in which traditional values have succumbed to the new idol, money (witness Lui's delightfully comical paean to the louis d'or), and against which the philosophes are impotent as moral agents, or worse, complicit as agents of corruption. Moi's Cynic similarly bears the stamp of tradition and the imprint of the present: he resembles the ascetic Diogenes of Julian and Epictetus, but his Cynicism carries a new uneasiness, a hint of bad conscience, a worried awareness that it may be impossible, even undesirable,

to translate the ancient Cynic ideals of virtuous autonomy into French society of the 1760s. Cynicism acquires, in *Le Neveu de Rameau,* a new semantic layer, a historical accretion of meaning that inflects the concept in the direction of modern cynicism.

The result is a deeply disturbing reflection on the relationship between Enlightenment and Cynicism in both its noble and its scurrilous forms. By confronting the mirror images of Cynicism, Diderot binds them together with a new tie: he declares Cynicism, in its less savory acceptation, the result, rather than the antithesis, of the philosophes' intellectual and social labor. In this he anticipates Peter Sloterdijk's definition of modern cynicism *(Zynismus)* as the perverse product of Enlightenment, as "enlightened false consciousness" or "that state of consciousness that follows *after* naïve ideologies and their enlightenment."[26] *Le Neveu de Rameau* thus stands at the cusp of the split between Cynicism and cynicism: it holds together, precariously, the critical tradition of blunt and irreverent speech and the disillusioned apathy of the disenchanted.

The Nephew as False Cynic

As a Parisian realist, Rameau perverts many Cynic principles into self-interested and self-serving practices. Like the bands of wandering Cynics in Roman times, who latched on to Cynicism because it afforded them a philosophy (and hence an identity and a sense of authority) that required no learning and no skills on their part, the nephew, an "artiste manqué," a "raté," the unfortunate kin of a most successful musician, finds in the role of the brazen-faced Cynic a justification for his good-for-nothingness. He proudly defines himself as "an ignoramus, a fool, a lunatic, rude, lazy and what we in Burgundy call an out and out shirker, a rogue, a gormandizer,"[27] thereby putting Diogenes' impertinence (which we are wont to believe served the higher purpose of social critique) on the same plane as the later Cynics' swindling ways (which served at best to fatten their own pouches). We can better grasp the nephew's particular brand of Cynicism by seeing how he remints three central Cynic principles: free speech, the commitment to living according to nature, and fidelity to the oracle's injunction *parakharattein to nomisma,* "deface the currency."

The nephew redefines the Cynic *franc parler,* so cherished by his contemporaries, by crossing the fine line that tradition had drawn between the bold, courageous speech we associate with the proto-Cynic and the idle chatter of

those who say "n'importe quoi," as Foucault put it in his lectures on Greek parrhesia:[28]

> I say things as they come to me; if sensible, all to the good, but if outrageous, people don't take any notice. I use freedom of speech for all it's worth. I have never reflected in my life, either before speaking, during speech or after. And so I give no offense.[29]

By confusing boldness with idle chatter, the nephew empties the Cynic's free speech of its aggressive and disruptive charge: "And so I give no offense." As the nephew will repeat on more than one occasion, he is "sans conséquence" (*NR* 58; Tancock 80), that is, of no importance or social standing, but also without effect, without influence on the course of events. By asserting impotence the nephew simultaneously claims for himself the immunity of the Cynic-fool and divests himself of responsibility for his words and for the world: Lui, like his forefather Diogenes, uses his *franc parler* to ridicule and unmask social conventions, but he stops short of resisting or overturning the practices he mocks.[30] As Helen Harth has put it, the nephew Cynically unmasks the pretenses and the corruption of the mid-eighteenth-century Parisian literati, but he accepts what he reveals as a "fait accompli" and accommodates himself to reality as best he can, relinquishing the critical force of his unmaskings in the name of survival and profit.[31]

Diderot's use of the word *cynique* in the novel confirms the devaluation of Cynic free speech. The word appears only once in the text, in adjectival form (all other references to the sect are to Diogenes), when the nephew employs it to describe a guest of the Bertin household: "Nous avons quelquefois l'ami Robé. Il nous regale de ses contes cyniques" (Sometimes we get friend Robbé. He entertains us with his cynical tales) (*NR* 58–59; Tancock 81). The adjective *cynique,* which in mid-eighteenth-century France denoted an impudent tone or manner ("The Cynics' impudent manners have given the epithet *cynic* to expressions that are overly bold and offend propriety"),[32] gains a particularly unpleasant ring when coupled with the noun *conte,* which Jean Fabre glosses as referring, in eighteenth-century usage, to malicious gossip and mocking jeers: "Surtout au pluriel . . . se dit des médisances, des railleries."[33] By allying the adjective *cynique* with the salacious and gossipy tales of the "ami Robé," Diderot inflects the word in a new direction, in which gossip, and not truth-telling or even saucy impudence, becomes the prime characteristic of the Cynic tone. In 1771 the famous court gossip and scandalmonger Thévenot de Morande would publish his *Le philosophe cynique, pour servir de suite aux "Anecdotes scandaleuses*

de la Cour de France," confirming the growing association of Cynicism with malicious talk of others' private affairs.

The nephew performs a similar transformation on a second key tenet of ancient Cynicism, Diogenes' reliance on nature. Like Diogenes, the nephew grounds his philosophy in a return to the fundamental principles of nature, but he defines nature differently. For Lui, nature signifies self-interest, a Hobbesian war of all against all in the great battle for survival: "In nature all the species feed on each other, and all classes prey on each other in society."[34] Far from standing opposed to society, as its counterpoint and measuring stick, nature now appears at one with society, its guiding principle and its unspoken rule book. The corrupt underworld of Paris *is* nature, and the nephew accuses the philosopher of idealism and bad faith for refusing to accept this. To be true to nature, and honest with oneself and with society, one must live by the principle of self-interest. Rameau unmasks the "good" Cynic's commitment to poverty and ascetic self-fashioning as a sham, the consolatory philosophy of the have-nots. To Moi's claim that money is not the most precious thing in life, the nephew retorts, "Very odd. People aren't born with that kink. It is acquired, for it isn't natural."[35] Diogenes tested social norms against the yardstick of nature to reveal the insignificance and pettiness of our desires for luxuries and social recognition; the nephew performs a similar test, only to confirm the natural, necessary, and inevitable reality of our desire for self-advancement and profit.

As a result, the nephew transforms Cynicism from an exceptional into a regulative principle. Cynicism, which had always been considered a strange and rare practice, the prerogative of a few fierce hearts (Diderot refers to the ancient Cynics as "outrés dans leurs préceptes"),[36] now appears, as it will in Sloterdijk, as the banal reality of everyman. When Moi, shocked by what he perceives to be the nephew's odd way of looking at the world, inquires, "Is there anybody there with nerve enough to be of your opinion?" the nephew responds without skipping a beat, "What do you mean by anybody? It is the sentiment and opinion of the whole of society" (*NR* 55; Tancock 78).

The consequence is a radical shift in the meaning of the Cynic oracle *parakharattein to nomisma.* The oracle demanded that the Cynic adopt an oppositional stance toward society, but the nephew turns to Diogenes' sect the better to accommodate himself to society: he defaces the values to which society pays lip service and that the philosopher–Moi defends—"fighting for one's country," "helping one's friends," "having a position in society and fulfilling its duties," "seeing to the upbringing of one's children" (*NR* 40; Tancock 65)—be-

cause they do not conform to the way things really are. As Jacques D'Hondt put it, "In fact, the values he attacks no longer correspond to the reality of the world in which he moves. He is finishing off dying values; he puts to death an ideology that is already out of date."[37] One might go so far as to say that the nephew does not deface values: he reports their de facto devaluation in the Paris he knows. Worse yet, he embraces new values in their stead: Teach his son to be a good citizen? the nephew exclaims with mock indignation. Pshaw, to survive in this world, he need only learn to value money!

> Money, money. Money is all, and the rest, without money, is nothing. And that is why, instead of stuffing his head with fine maxims that he would have to forget or else beg for bread, when I possess a louis, which isn't often, I take up my stand in front of him. I take the coin out of my pocket. I show it him with admiration.[38]

The nephew accompanies his speech with a comic pantomime in which he parades an imaginary louis d'or under the philosopher's nose before tucking it safely into his vest pocket with the contented and self-satisfied air of a rich banker. For Jacques D'Hondt, this spells the final perversion of ancient Cynicism: Rameau "enthrones the less than glorious bourgeois values that reflect the new reality. . . . He instills respect for the only value that has become real in their eyes, market value promoted to the dignity of a moral value."[39] Abandoning the contestatory stance of Diogenes and the revolutionary potential of the Cynic's resolute "NO," the nephew affirms the emerging values of mid-eighteenth-century Parisian commercial society. The Cynic turns cynic *(Zyniker)* where protest ends and acceptance begins.

D'Hondt's point is well taken and illuminating, but it misses a crucial aspect of Rameau's Cynicism by disregarding the comic element in his performance. Lui is delightfully ridiculous as he parades his louis before the eyes of the philosopher, and he knows and wishes himself to be so: his performance belies an ironic distance from the new values he claims to assert. This sets him apart from the moral nihilism of a Fougeret de Monbron, for instance, a figure who on occasion also revisited Cynicism and whom Diderot mentions in his *Satyre première,* with which *Le Neveu de Rameau,* as *Satyre seconde,* forms a pair. Franco Venturi identifies Monbron as a likely model for the nephew.[40] In *Le Cosmopolite, ou le citoyen du monde* (1750), Monbron's first-person narrator travels to England, land of liberty, hoping to find there "not only the man Diogenes sought after, but thousand such men."[41] But his stay in England and his subsequent journey throughout the world leave him sorely disillusioned.

His conclusions outline a new definition of Cynicism and foreshadow the nephew's bitter realism:

> The greatest benefit I received from my travels is to have learnt to hate out of reason that which I previously hated by instinct. I did not know why I found men odious; experience has taught me the cause. . . . I am fully convinced that *uprightness* and *humanity* are in all places only terms of convention that have in actual fact nothing real or true about them; that every man lives only for himself, loves only himself; & that the most honest of men is, properly speaking, only a skillful Comedien who has mastered the great art of swindling under the imposing mask of candor and equity. . . . It is not that I value myself above other men: God forbid I should think thus! On the contrary, I admit in good faith that I am worth precisely nothing; & that the only difference between others & myself is that I am bold enough to unmask and expose myself, & they are not.[42]

Fougeret de Monbron offers a striking precedent for the nephew; yet as Jean Fabre has noted, the nephew stops short of the rakish ways of a Monbron: "Monbron's motto is: *Contemni et contemnere.* Jean-François Rameau will not be so presumptuous, and his Cynicism will always be veiled with indulgence, good humor, and modesty."[43] I would argue that what Fabre terms "good humor" and "modesty" might more accurately be called "bad conscience." Monbron is reconciled with the world as it is; he is, as Diderot puts it in his *Satyre première,* a "tigre à deux pieds," as heartless as the world around him.[44] The nephew, on the other hand, try though he might to adopt the pose of the hardened realist, retains a measure of discomfort with his role as disabused Cynic.

Indeed, despite his claimed allegiance to a morality of self-interest, the nephew seems to have profited little from his own creed: he bows to money in words, but he stays resolutely penniless; he declares life a war of all against all and praises the strong, but he remains, when all is said and done, "sans conséquence," a "raté," a small player in the theater of life, a fool. Although his creed should lead him to positions of great power or to the heights of crime, it does neither, and although the Neveu expresses his most sincere admiration for the sublime Renegade of Avignon, who ruthlessly betrayed his benefactors for profit, he does not rise to imitate him. He narrates the tale with relish and lingers over the renegade's crime "like a connoisseur of painting or poetry examines the beauties of a work of art,"[45] but he does not follow in his footsteps.

The nephew's adherence to a philosophy of self-interest is not as happy as he would have us believe, but nor are his madcap tirades and pantomimes

as harmless as he claims. Rameau cannot be pinned down, his *franc parler* troubles and amuses, unsettling his listeners, but retreats into the pose of folly before it can be used against him or against those he ruthlessly unmasks. It is this restless questioning of Cynicism on the part of the nephew, his refusal to be pigeonholed as a scoundrel Cynic, that causes the philosopher to put his foot down and take up the task of defining Cynicism himself.

Moi's Principled Cynic

The nephew's Cynical performances lead an exasperated Moi to exclaim, "[At least] have the courage to be a pauper": "It would be better to retire to one's garret, live on dry bread and water and discover one's real self."[46] By measuring the nephew against the standard of the truly beggarly Cynic, Moi promises to stabilize the text and to pin down the nephew. Structurally, the dialogue echoes this promise: the exchange between Moi and Lui begins with a reference to Diogenes in the mouth of the nephew, but it ends with Moi's would-be triumphant reclaiming of Cynicism. He steals Diogenes away from the usurping nephew and places him back on his pedestal in the pantheon of Greek sages.

The Cynic makes his return at a crucial moment in the dialogue. He enters the fray and saves the philosopher when Moi is about to give his allegiance to the disillusioned nephew's world-view in the "the pantomime des gueux" scene. A variation on the "world is a stage" topos, the beggars' pantomime presents the world as a theater of beggars and flatterers, in which all men and women dance to the tune of those they court. At first only the poor are implicated in the farce, for they must, by necessity, sing for their bread: "The necessitous man doesn't walk like anybody else, he jumps, crawls, twists himself up, creeps along. He spends his life taking up positions and carrying them out."[47] It is, surprisingly, Moi, and not Lui, who extends the condition of the beggar to all men ("I can't think of anybody who doesn't know a few steps of your dance"),[48] even the king:

> The sovereign? But even then isn't there something else to be said? . . . Whoever needs somebody else is necessitous and so takes up a position. The king takes up a position with his mistress and with God; he performs his pantomime step.[49]

The philosopher gaily takes over the nephew's role as *franc parleur* but retreats before the implications of an all-encompassing pantomimic folly. He puts an

end to the "grand branle de la terre" (*NR* 105; Tancock 123) by invoking Diogenes:

> I: And yet there is one person free to do without pantomime, and that is the philosopher who has nothing and asks for nothing.
> HE: Where does that animal exist? If he has nothing he suffers. If he asks for nothing he won't get anything, and he will go on suffering.
> I: Diogenes laughed at his needs.[50]

The austere Cynic philosopher rises above the social fray as the last independent man.

The nephew responds by dragging the Cynic into the whirlwind of dancing fools. "But you must have clothes . . . it was cold in Athens sometimes" (*NR* 106; Tancock 122). Moi has no choice but to respond, "Less than here" (*NR* 106; Tancock 122), acknowledging against his better self that Diogenes may have been a more plausible character in ancient Greece than in contemporary Paris. When Lui corners Moi into giving an account of Diogenes' sexual practices, Diderot gives yet another inch: he relinquishes the position he held in the article "Cynique," according to which Diogenes was a resolutely abstemious, even asexual figure, and accepts as true the tales of Cynic shamelessness. But he recuperates Diogenes' sexuality only as further proof of his virtue. Whereas the nephew, in the early pages of the dialogue, had mentioned Diogenes and Phryne in the same breath—"I am as impudent as the one and I am fond of consorting with the others" (*NR* 8; Tancock 37)—thereby confusing the two characters and linking the quality of irreverent speech with those of sexual and intellectual promiscuity, the philosopher mentions the two names together the better to separate them. In this Diderot distances the eighteenth-century philosopher from his seventeenth-century precursors, erudite libertines such as Charron and Cyrano de Bergerac, who had sought to defend Cynicism, against its Counter-Reformation detractors, as a sexually as well as intellectually liberating force. Moi is no prude; he grants his philosopher sexual needs but firmly reigns them in: Diogenes may frequent Phryne, but never as a prostitute. He, alone of all citizens, is exempt from paying for her services; more importantly, he knows how to do without her in the masturbatory solitude of his barrel.[51] Under pressure from the nephew, who insists upon bringing philosophy and morality back to the belly, Moi grants his Cynic physical needs, but he does so only to emphasize the firm, impenetrable contours of the Cynic's body. Diogenes incarnates the ideal modern philosopher, a self-sufficient, self-contained, and virtuous thinker.

Moi's philosopher thus finds his seat next to the bold but polite Cynics upheld by Prémontval and D'Alembert. He certainly displays a little more flesh and a little more lust than in certain of his more austere appearances, but in the end he stands for the values of independence and free speech that the eighteenth-century republic of letters identified as the desired characteristics of their modern Diogenes. What makes *Le Neveu de Rameau* worthy of special attention in our pantheon of polite Cynics is this: Moi, try as he will, cannot rest content and secure in his independence. He seems condemned to wear Rameau like a weight around his neck, causing him to slowly stoop and assume a "position" as his fellow human beings do. Critics have often interpreted Moi's irreverent statement against the king as the subversive kernel of the "pantomime des gueux" scene and as proof that Moi, and not the scoundrel Lui, rightfully claims the role of parrhesiast and revolutionary in the text.[52] I argue otherwise. Moi may undermine the king's absolute authority, but it is Lui who, by questioning the model of the independent Cynic, undermines the philosopher's authority. Moi questions the political myth of absolute sovereignty, but Lui questions the enterprise of the philosophes, and this, I submit, constitutes the subversive, disruptive heart of the dialogue. It threatens the social and intellectual program of Diderot and his contemporaries at its very core and shatters the distinction between the true and the false Cynic that the philosophes did their best to uphold.

The Cynical Philosopher and the Cynic Rameau?

Our earliest source on Cynicism, Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* did not distinguish between independence and parasitism as clearly as Moi might desire. Diogenes of Sinope not only begged for his food; he allowed himself to be sold into slavery. Foucault, as we shall see in chapter 8, calls this Cynicism's "reverse eclecticism": whereas Eclecticism gleaned from different philosophies their simplest and most banal tenets in order to create a philosophy acceptable to all, Cynicism takes these same tenets and pushes them to their logical limits, until they become, paradoxically, repulsive and unacceptable:

> Cynicism in Antiquity seems to me to be a sort of reverse eclecticism. By which I mean that if we define eclecticism as the form of thought, of discourse, of philosophical choice that combines the most common, the most traditional traits of different philosophies of an age, it is generally to render them acceptable to all, to make them into the organizing principles of an

> intellectual or moral consensus. That is generally what we mean by eclecticism. I would say that Cynicism is a reverse eclecticism: it takes up certain of the most fundamental traits of contemporary philosophies, but contrary to eclecticism, it makes them into a revolting practice. . . . It installs no philosophical consensus whatsoever; on the contrary, it creates a strangeness, an exteriority, and even a hostility and a war within philosophical practice.[53]

Thus Diogenes adopts the noble principle of independence, but he pushes it to such an extreme that it transforms into its opposite, base dependence. The Cynic thereby projects a parodic, distorted image of the philosophical life. As Foucault puts it:

> Cynicism plays, in a sense, the role of broken mirror for ancient philosophy. A broken mirror in which every philosopher can and must recognize himself, in which he can and must recognize the very image of philosophy, the reflection of what it is and of what it should be; the reflection of what he is and of what he himself would like to be. And at the same time, in this mirror, he perceives a grimace, an ugly, violent, and disgraceful distortion in which he can neither recognize himself nor recognize philosophy.[54]

The nephew functions for Moi as this broken mirror. He is the "grimace of philosophy"; he literally pulls faces in his pantomimes, causing the philosopher to look on with a mixture of admiration and horror.[55] Confronted with the mirror image of the scam artist Lui, the philosopher must admit that the distance that separates him from the nephew is not as great as he might wish. Moi acknowledges, not without shame, that he too, in his youth, "scammed" for money: just as the nephew gave piano lessons to young girls when he knew nothing about music, so the philosopher once taught mathematics "sans en scavoir un mot," earning his bread as best he could and walking the streets, much as our dirty nephew did, "with a frayed cuff, and black woolen stockings darned up the back with white thread."[56]

The errors of youth? No doubt, but the philosopher still exhibits a penchant for roguishness. Caught in the nephew's game, he becomes his accomplice, composing the script of the nephew's next performance as a con artist. We find him, for instance, instructing Rameau on how best to trick Madame Bertin and regain her good graces: "All the same, I should go along with that ravaged face, those wild eyes, shirt torn open, tousled hair, in fact in the really tragic state you are in at the moment. I should . . . glue my face to the ground, and without raising myself address her in a low, sobbing voice: 'Forgive me, Madame, forgive me, I am an unspeakable wretch.' "[57] Moi dictates, and the

nephew performs; the text now presents not one but two fools. Rameau has drawn the philosophes into the looking glass.

The mirror is all the more disturbing because despite the philosopher's attempt to label the nephew an ignorant fool, it soon becomes apparent that the nephew is no imbecile; he is not external to philosophical discourse; he is its product. To Moi's reprimand "Ayez donc le courage d'être gueux" (have the courage to be a pauper) (*NR* 22; Tancock 49), the nephew responds by pointing his finger toward his gaping mouth and exclaiming, "And then there is poverty. The voice of conscience and honour is very hard to hear when your guts are crying out."[58] Unless the philosophes labor to transform the social and political structures of society, their Enlightenment will be vain, an elite word game that keeps its members well fed and complacent, while it closes its eyes to real social need.

Le Neveu de Rameau thus leads us to rethink the relationship between philosophy and society. By giving up the "jester's staff and bells" and adopting a subtler, conversational style, Diderot and his contemporaries sought to create the linguistic and political possibilities for enlightening the age. In his article "Eclecticism," Diderot expressed the hope that the political and religious authorities would support the work of the Encyclopédistes if the latter, in exchange, would relinquish their pugnacious tone and opt for a more conciliatory method of communicating their ideas. The method proved fruitful: Diderot stayed out of prison, if not out of trouble, and the philosophes succeeded in disseminating their ideas and engaging the reading public in debate. *Le Neveu de Rameau* strikes a blow at this positive appraisal; its revolutionary power stems from its irreverent dismissal of even the positive effects of the republic of letters' dominant discursive practice of polite conversation. What Diderot had presented in "Eclecticism" as a clever method of standing outside politics, in a position of respectful independence, looks very much like complacent servitude in *Le Neveu de Rameau.*

"On est dedommagé de la perte de son innocence, par celle de ses prejugés" (You are compensated for loss of innocence by loss of prejudice), the nephew explains (*NR* 59; Tancock 81), speaking of the positive consequences he gleans from the bad company he keeps. But if we turn the phrase around so that it reads, "On est dédommagé de la perte de ses préjugés par la perte de son innocence" (you are compensated for the loss of prejudice by the loss of innocence), it applies to the philosophes' task of demystifying the world. The villains and the philosopher perform, in the nephew's mind, much the same task, robbing people of their prejudices and their innocence only to leave them to fend for

themselves in a world Lui depicts as a war of all against all. The nephew describes here the phenomenon Sloterdijk would analyze in his *Critique of Cynical Reason* as the perversion of Enlightenment practices of demystification into cynicism (lowercase), or "enlightened false consciousness."[59] The debunking of superstitions and the dissemination of knowledge aimed to produce independent, free thinkers, "good Cynics" in the eighteenth-century acceptation of the term, but as the nephew only too readily points out, the task of philosophy does not end with the undermining of prejudice or the definition of *virtue.* It is here that the real work begins.

By framing *Le Neveu de Rameau* with two very different portraits of Diogenes, Diderot seems to ask his readers to choose between the parasitical barefaced fool and the independent, self-possessed philosopher. Yet it is precisely this choice that the exchange between Lui and Moi has rendered impossible. The central question raised by Diderot's text is not, then, which of the two Cynics we shall choose as our model of the philosopher but rather whether we can imagine a different model, a philosophical agency that would neither cling to the myth of independence nor sink to the level of parasitism.

The Philosopher as Fool

One would be hard pressed to hold up the shady, shifty character of the nephew as the paragon of philosophical subjectivity. He is a scoundrel and a good-for-nothing who slips cleverly from one impersonation to the other and sheds responsibility and unity of character in the process. "Nothing is less like him than himself," the philosopher–Moi tells us with disdain, adding for our benefit. "I don't think much of these queer birds myself."[60] Jean Fabre rightly points out that while the nephew achieves a level of freedom in his deft theatrical displays, he ends up caught in his own game, dispossessed of himself, uncertain and discontent. Helen Harth concurs, adding that the nephew's attempts at self-affirmation lead him, paradoxically, to negate his self in a perpetual desire to be other than himself. The nephew expresses this desire verbally ("All I know is that I would like to be somebody else, at the risk of being a man of genius, a great man")[61] and physically: he performs his pantomimes with zeal, becoming in each instance the character he plays, sweating, weeping, carried away by his impersonations. And yet he concludes the dialogue with a mocking taunt directed at the philosopher–Moi: "Good-bye, Mr. Philosopher. Isn't it true that I am always the same?"[62] The taunt signifies "you see, I cannot be reformed, I will always be a good-for-nothing, a buffoon; you, monsieur le

philosophe, have not won me over." But it also implies that for all his shiftiness, the nephew does possess himself. His frankness and his lack of hypocrisy, which so baffle the philosopher, grant him a lucidity that puts him in control of his playacting and his flatterer's poses. His ability to move with dexterity from one position to another enables him to maintain a degree of freedom from social constraint that is denied the philosopher–Moi, who, committed to the role of virtuous citizen and enlightener of the nation, has let himself be lulled into the "tedious uniformity that our social conventions and set politenesses have brought about."[63]

The nephew achieves perhaps no more than an illusory freedom, but he marks the path for a possible liberation from social constraints and the first steps in the task Michel Foucault would claim for the contemporary philosopher, "se déprendre de soi-même" (to get free of oneself).[64] In his prose poem "Clown" Henri Michaux captures more eloquently than any piece of criticism written on *Le Neveu de Rameau* the power of the nephew's foolish philosophizing:

> À coups de ridicules, de déchéances (qu'est-ce que la déchéance?), par éclatement, par vide, par une totale dissipation-dérision-purgation, j'expulserai de moi la forme qu'on croyait si bien attachée, composée, coordonnée, assortie à mon entourage et à mes semblables, si dignes, si dignes, mes semblables.
>
> By blows of ridicule, of disgrace (what's disgrace?), by exploding apart, by emptiness, by a total dissipation-derision-purgation, I will throw out of me the form that is thought to be so well attached, compounded, coordinated, matched to my associates and to my fellow-creatures, my so respectable, so respectable fellow-creatures.[65]

The fool's freedom begins with the work of purgation, a hollowing out, an askesis, as he knocks down social conventions "à coups de ridicules." His lack of possessions (and of self-possession) is the condition for his ability to give as freely as he receives. The ascetic Cynic presented by Moi always risks losing his independence, as Diderot knew only too well: in *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre* he laughingly, but painfully, bids goodbye to Diogenes to take up the role of Aristippus, trading in his tattered dressing gown and his makeshift desk for the fineries his benefactress bestows upon him. With the new clothes come new obligations and the cost of being a well-respected philosophe.[66] Moi repeatedly berates the nephew for the price he pays for his parasitical lifestyle: "The good things of this life have their worth, no doubt, but you have no idea of the price you are paying to get them. You are dancing, you have danced, and

you will go on dancing this vile pantomime," Moi retorts when Rameau scoffs at his austere Diogenes.[67] But is the cost of playing the beggar and scoundrel, the nephews asks, greater than that of playing the philosopher? Lui has nothing to lose, not even his independence or his poverty: his utter dispossession becomes the necessary condition for his generosity and his freedom. It is because he has nothing and owes everything, because he cannot or will not pay his debts, that he can give freely the scraps he has gathered and dare to risk all, even the truth.

What form does this beggar's truth-telling take? The beggar dresses in tattered garments, scraps of clothing he pieces together; his words also consist of rags, gleaned from conversations at the table of riffraff artists, in the stalls of Les Halles, at the coffeehouses of Paris. Moi observes the players at the Café de la Régence, "saying little and listening to as little as I could" (*NR* 4; Tancock 33), keeping his thoughts and his language untainted by the chatter of the crowds. Lui keeps his ears open, absorbs and repeats, mixing registers with verve: "But mine is a hell of a hybrid squawking, half literary world, half fish-market."[68] His pantomimes parody the gestural language of the ancient orators and their rapt enthusiasm. Caught in his own performance, "he noticed nothing, but went on, possessed by such a frenzy, an enthusiasm so near to madness that it was uncertain whether he would ever get over it . . . he [captivated] our souls and [held] them in the most singular state of suspense I have ever experienced."[69] He affects his audience much as the ancient Eclectics had, robbing them of their selves, holding them entranced.

But Lui's public consists here only of the philosopher and chess players, and his eloquent harangues translate the Eclectics' rousing speeches from the forum of public oration to the domestic sphere of the household drama (persuading a young girl to elope with a lover) or the criminal underground. Nowhere does the nephew express more admiration for the talents of the orator than in his description of the Renegade of Avignon, whose ability to bend language to his own ends sends the nephew into rapture. "Don't you sense the affection of the repeated 'losts'?" he asks (*NR* 74; Tancock 95), inviting the philosopher to admire, with him, the skill and power of the abject villain. In the nephew's mouth, the oratorical talents praised in the article "Eclecticism" become the tools of power, the instruments of self-promotion, but, paradoxically, because the nephew parodies eloquence, exaggerating its gestural language and corrupting the unity of style of a well-delivered speech, and because, as he admits with regret, he does not possess the unity of character of the great criminal or the great orator, his performance serves less to gain power than to disrupt. The

Eclectic synthesizes his materials and his thoughts; he gathers them together carefully to offer them to the public as the gift of truth. The hungry Cynic gives only fragments of thoughts: he ventriloquizes, absorbing and regurgitating words and ideas. Like the Eclectic and the Encyclopédistes, he eats from all tables, but his is an encyclopedic knowledge of the streets, thrown together helter-skelter. As Christie McDonald has noted, the satire in Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau* is born from the encyclopedic project so central to the French Enlightenment: "In the Menippean tradition the satirist piles up enormous masses of erudition in a manner both pedantic and playful, such that satire becomes virtually the continuation of the tradition of the encyclopedia. Thus we may say that the parody in satire, at least as it emerges within *Le Neveu de Rameau,* is endemic to the encyclopedic project."[70] Eclecticism breeds Cynicism, in both its satirical and roguish forms.

The nephew, with his linguistic verve, plays within the eighteenth-century republic of letters a role similar to Lucian's Syrian in *The Double Indictment.* Brought to court by the two great rivals, Lady Rhetoric and Old Man Dialogue, the Syrian stands accused by Rhetoric of infidelity (the Syrian has left her for Dialogue) and by Dialogue of corruption (the satirist dared to let the Cynic loose within his court, bringing Dialogue down to the level of the rabble). The Syrian defends himself with vigor, cross-breeding genres and mocking the rhetoric of his accusers with humor and wit.[71] The ancient debate between eloquence and dialogue, florid speech and sober diction, resonates deeply in the second half of the eighteenth century, where academic pomp and schoolroom rhetoric still vie for power with the dialogic, conversational style of the salons and their habitués. The nephew mocks both with panache, claiming his ties to a satirical tradition that not only ridicules individuals but has its roots in a stylistic hodgepodge that questions the pomp and seriousness of philosophy by undermining its linguistic base.

By the 1760s the great eloquence of the ancient philosophers was a thing of the past. The polite style of the salons continued to serve as the dominant discursive practice of the republic of letters, but its insufficiencies and complacencies did not go unnoticed. By allowing the dirty Cynic into the pen, the nephew stirs up discontent, confusion, laughter: he breaks the courteous tone of the dialogue and dares to risk hostility and rupture. In so doing, he begins to reinvent the figure of the philosopher for the eighteenth century. The *Encyclopédie* article "Philosophe" defined the philosopher as a man who "has grazed, as it were, on the leaven of order and rules."[72] He is a virtuous citizen who can do no harm, because "his faculty of action is, as it were, like the string of a

musical instrument tuned to a certain key; it would not be able to produce a contrary one. He is afraid to be off-key, to be out of harmony with himself."[73] Diderot employs a similar vocabulary when speaking about Rameau's nephew and his effect on the philosopher's discourse:

> He is the speck of yeast that leavens the whole and restores to each of us a portion of his natural individuality. He stirs people up and gives them a shaking, making them take sides, brings out the truth, shows who are really good and unmasks the villains. It is then that the wise man listens and sorts people out.[74]

But his yeast, like his musical performances, leads to discord and disorder. He counters the well-tuned string of philosophy with a multitude of sounds and instrumental performances that show up the miserliness of the philosopher's single note. The nephew usurps the role of social critic that the philosopher had traded in, along with his old dressing gown, for public respect and the comforts of a well-furnished home. *Le Neveu de Rameau* is a dialogue between a good-for-nothing Cynic and his virtuous double. It is in this *entre-deux* that the modern philosopher, by refusing to close his eyes to the dark side of the Enlightenment, begins to define himself.

The nephew offers no solutions to the social ills he unmasks; he does not articulate a coherent vision of a better world. But that is because the Cynic operates on a different level. He undermines philosophical language at its base by attacking what Gilles Deleuze has called "l'image de la pensée," that is, "the image that thought gives of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to orient oneself in thought."[75] The Cynic's *ramage saugrenu,* his "hybrid squawking," is the yeast that leavens philosophical discourse, but not at the level of dogmatic assertions. It works more radically at the level of the idea that the philosophers have of themselves.

The nephew's Cynicism is the product of an age of Enlightenment, the unfortunate offspring of the philosophes: Diderot's and his contemporaries' patient unmasking of prejudices seems to have produced either sentimental, moralizing old bores or depraved young rascals. The Eclectic philosopher, deprived of funds and threatened by censorship, seems condemned to retreat into polite moralizing or into cynical discontent. But the nephew's Cynicism exceeds disgruntled self-interest: it functions here as the antidote to the complacency of the well-to-do philosopher and to the unhappy lucidity of the modern cynic. Lui's satirical, promiscuous language, sublime and vulgar in turn, tears the philosopher away from himself, sending him chasing after other

thoughts, "accosting them all, but sticking to none" (*NR* 3; Tancock 33), daring to reinvent himself as he goes along. *Le Neveu de Rameau* reintroduces into the philosophical spectrum the figure of the ambivalent, impure Cynic, a figure at once ascetic and promiscuous, respectable and contemptible. "À coups de ridicules" he dislodges the slowly sedimenting figure of the philosopher and opens up the possibility, in the space within the Cynic and the cynic, of reinventing oneself.

4 *Diogenes' Lost* Republic

From Philodemus to Wieland and Rousseau

As Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau* makes clear, educating Diogenes in the ways of polite society was not always as successful as D'Alembert might have wished. By letting the shifty Cynic into the salons, the philosophes invited trouble. Try though they might to tame him, Diogenes raised provocative questions that could not be easily dismissed. In the previous chapter I considered the philosophical dangers inherent in Cynicism, expressed in the nephew's linguistic deviance and his nihilistic scoffing at all moral values. In this chapter and the next, I turn to the political difficulties that beset the revival of ancient Cynicism in the eighteenth century and take as my test cases the Cynic reflections of three major writers of the period: Christoph Martin Wieland, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the Marquis de Sade.

Cynic Politics: Testimonies from Antiquity

Three distinct attitudes toward politics emerge from a reading of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* book 6, our most complete single source on the ancient Cynics.[1] The first, and no doubt the most well known, is the Cynic's unrepentant opposition to tyranny. Immortalized in Diogenes' brusque dismissal of Alexander the Great ("Get out of my sun"), it runs as a leitmotif throughout the *chreiai,* in witty rebuttals of the imperious demands made by Perdiccas or Philip of Macedon,[2] in biting jabs at those who play lackey to the great,[3] and in direct attacks on despotic government. When asked by a tyrant what bronze he should use for a statue, Diogene answered, "That of

which Harmodius and Aristogiton were molded" (DL 6.50), a reply that gains all its force when we recall that Harmodius and Aristogiton, Athenians lovers, conspired to overthrow the tyranny of the Peisistratid family in 514 BCE.

These anecdotes all share a penchant for wit over rant, and all are pithy. In none does Diogenes stoop to advise the tyrant how he might rule more humanely. He simply dismisses him with a bon mot. "Get out of my sun" (DL 6.38) is a case in point, but the same holds for the several variations on the Alexander-Diogenes motif (DL 6.32, 44, 45, 60, 63, 68), all of which cast Diogenes' irreverent attitude toward the powerful as defiant assertions of independence rather than as arguments for political reform.[4] In support of the notion that the Cynics rejected political engagement, one might quote, "[Diogenes] would praise those who were about to marry and refrained, those who intending to go a voyage never set sail, those who thinking to engage in politics do no such thing" (DL 6.29), or the anecdote in which Crates chooses to face imprisonment rather than allow Menedemos to turn politician: "And once, when Crates stood about [Menedemos] and attacked him for meddling in politics, he ordered certain men to have Crates locked up. But Crates none the less watched him as he went by and, standing on tiptoe, called him a pocket Agamemnon and Hegesipolis" (DL 2.132).

Not all Cynics rejected their rulers and the polis as virulently as did the first Dogs, Diogenes and Crates. John Moles reminds us that among the following generation of Cynics, "Onesicritus accompanied and eulogized Alexander[;] Bion was court philosopher to Antigonus Gonatas . . . Cercidas was a 'politician' and a 'lawmaker.' Dio Chrysostom addressed Cynic doctrines to a Roman emperor."[5] Dio Chrysostom in fact adapted the Alexander-Diogenes anecdote to suit his more civic-minded purpose. In his fourth discourse, *On Kingship,* which he almost certainly addressed to the emperor Trajan, he expands the tale of Alexander's visit into a lengthy dialogue between monarch and Cynic, giving Diogenes ample room to expound on the principles of true kingship and admonish the king to govern more wisely.[6]

The anecdote gained wide popular appeal throughout the early modern period and into the eighteenth century: so emblematic did Diogenes' rebuffal of Alexander become that a 1711 English translation of Plutarch's *Lives* illustrates the "Life of Alexander" with an engraving of his meeting with Diogenes, an admittedly minor episode in the life and conquests of the emperor.[7] We shall see that eighteenth-century writers adopted Diogenes Laertius's or Dio Chrysostom's version as the need required and censorship imposed, but all turned to the tale as a model of courage and autonomy in the face of absolute power.[8]

Cosmopolitanism

The second political notion associated with Cynicism in Diogenes Laertius is cosmopolitanism.[9] Diogenes' rejection of absolute power was matched by an equally adamant refusal of the parochialism of civic attachment. When asked where he came from, Diogenes is said to have replied by coining a new term: "I am a kosmopolitês—a citizen of the cosmos" (DL 6.63). This is important for the history of cosmopolitanism because it is the first time the word appears in Greek. It is also somewhat troubling because the concept, as it appears in the Cynics, is by and large negative.[10] Most scholars agree that cosmopolitism signifies, for Diogenes, a form of a- or antipoliticism. The Stoics would later translate Cynic cosmopolitanism into a moral vision, but the term as it appears in book 6 of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives* seems less to embrace the ideal of a common humanity than to reject the limitations imposed by appurtenance to a specific community or political affiliation. For Tizio Dorandi, "Diogenes' cosmopolitanism must not be understood in the positive sense of the term (as a vision of the cosmos understood as universal fraternity), but only in the negative sense of the term; this conception expresses the complete uprootedness of man with regards to any and all historically constituted community and, by extension, the negation of the very concept of 'nation.' "[11]

Dorandi's interpretation finds strong support in Diogenes Laertius. When Diogenes describes himself, in mock tragic verse, as "A homeless exile, to his country dead, / A wanderer who begs his daily bread" (DL 6.38), he defines cosmopolitanism as the condition of the most wretched of tragic heros, political non-belonging, a condition he rescues from its ignominy by willfully embracing it as the sine qua non of his independence and freedom. Crates, who had lived to see his home city of Thebes reduced to dust by Alexander's army, would later echo this sentiment in one of the most poignant of the Cynic *chreiai:*

> When Alexander inquired whether he would like his native city to be rebuilt, his answer was, "Why should it be? Perhaps another Alexander will destroy it again." Ignominy and Poverty he declared to be his country, which Fortune could never take captive. He was, he said, a fellow-citizen of Diogenes, who defied all the plots of envy. (DL 6.93)

Cynic cosmopolitanism is then, first and foremost, a refusal: the refusal to pay homage to a transient, man-made system of laws; the refusal to contribute to society through work or political office; the refusal to abide by the laws and

customs of the polis; the refusal to respect religious rituals and local traditions.

Certain critics, such as Ragnar Höistad, John Ferguson, and John Moles have argued that Cynic cosmopolitanism should be defined in positive terms and interpreted not as a form of apoliticism but as a "cosmopolitism" in the full sense of the word.[12] Such readings make an important point by stressing the philanthropic dimension of Cynic cosmopolitanism, but this aspect of Cynic thought should not be read as incompatible with the antipolitical nature of Cynic cosmopolitanism evident in the stark analogy between cosmopolitanism and exile and in Diogenes' unrepentant rejection of all civic duties. Whatever positive value one may justly impart to Cynic cosmopolitanism, one must be wary of conflating it with the Stoic vision of the same, and wary, therefore, of early Stoic accounts of Cynic cosmopolitanism, upon which positive accounts of Cynic cosmopolitanism invariably draw.[13]

The *Politeia*

The third reference to Cynic politics in ancient sources is to Diogenes' *Republic,* which Diogenes Laertius lists among the works attributed to the Sinopean.[14] The work has not survived, but traces of it remain, most evidently in Diogenes Laertius's account of the political thought of Diogenes and Crates (esp. DL 6.72–73, 85, 93) and in Philodemus of Gadara's description of the *Republic* in his *On the Stoics,* written in the first century BCE.[15] Much of the charm of Wieland's *Sokrates mainomenos* derives from his tongue-in-cheek claim that he is presenting us with the first published edition of the lost *Republic,* discovered among the manuscripts of an obscure German monastery. Wieland and his contemporaries would not have had access to Philodemus, whose text was rediscovered only in the nineteenth century, but they would have had readily at hand Diogenes Laertius's *Lives,* as well as complementary accounts in the works of Lucian (whom Wieland translated into German), Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, and Epictetus, to name the most widely read early commentators on Cynicism, all of whose works had been readily available since the Renaissance.

None of the sources available to eighteenth-century writers give a full-fledged description of the Cynic *Republic.*[16] Book 6 of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives* does, however, provide key information on the Cynic's political outlook (though not explicitly in relation to the *Republic*), most importantly at 6.63, 72–73 (with regard to Diogenes) and 6.85, 93, 98 (Crates). I have already men-

tioned the cosmopolitan ideal of 6.63 and 6.93. At 6.72–23, Diogenes Laertius reports more fully on Diogenes' views on property, laws, social hierarchies, familial arrangements, and sacred taboos:

> He maintained that all things are the property of the wise. . . . All things belong to the gods. The gods are friends of the wise, and friends share all property in common; therefore all things are the property of the wise. Again as to law: that it is impossible for society to exist without law; for without a city no benefit can be derived from that which is civilized. But the city is civilized, and there is no advantage to law without a city; therefore law is something civilized. He would ridicule good birth and fame and all such distinctions, calling them showy ornaments of vice. The only true commonwealth was, he said, that which is as wide as the universe. He advocated community of wives, recognizing no other marriage than a union of the man who persuades with the woman who consents. And for this reason he thought sons too should be held in common.
>
> And he saw no impropriety either in stealing anything from a temple or in eating the flesh of any animal; nor even anything impious in touching human flesh, this, he said, being clear from the custom of some foreign nations. Moreover, according to right reason, as he put it, all elements are contained in all things and pervade everything: since not only is meat a constituent of bread, but bread of vegetables; and all other bodies also, by means of certain invisible passages and particles, find their way in and unite with all substances in the form of vapor. This he makes plain in the *Thyestes,* if the tragedies are really his and not the work of his friend Philiscus of Aegina or of Pasiphon. (DL 6.72–73)

From this passage, an attentive reader versed in the Cynic tradition (as Wieland was) could draw the following four conclusions, or at the very least probable hypotheses, regarding the norms and behaviors of the citizens of the hypothetical Cynic republic. First, virtue, not social status, defines citizenship in the Cynic republic. In a sharp refutation of the social hierarchies that governed Athens in his day, Diogenes rejects honors based on birth or fame; merit, we infer, is to be founded solely on virtue. The syllogism "all things are the property of the wise" may be understood in this sense.

Second, the Cynic republic is not a political entity. The confirmation of the cosmopolitan ideal ("the only true commonwealth was, he said, that which is as wide as the universe") implies that the Cynic republic was not conceived as a self-enclosed community or as a political unit on the model of, say, Plato's republic. As Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé puts it, Diogenes imagines "une vie commune," not an "organisation politique."[17] The rather obscure syllogism

on law and society might also be interpreted in this vein. We know that Diogenes Laertius glosses the Cynic oracle *parakharattein to nomisma,* "deface the currency," as a wordplay on *nomisma/nomos,* "currency"/"laws," and hence as the command to overthrow all laws *(nomos)* on the basis of nature *(physis).*[18] Diogenes commits himself to overturning every law; by extension, since "it is impossible for society to exist without laws" the syllogism tells us, the Cynic, in defacing the laws, de facto undermines society and the ideal of civilization.[19]

Third, the republic rests on one basic principle: individual freedom. Despite his disregard for Plato, whom he makes the butt of many a Cynic joke, Diogenes echoes Plato's injunction in the *Republic* and the *Laws* that wives and children be held in common.[20] But he does so with a twist. Plato's family laws aimed to deflect discord and jealousy among adults and to ensure that children were raised as loyal citizens, not as factious members of family clans. Diogenes' rejection of marriage and parenthood, on the other hand, is simply that: the rejection of social bonds in the name of individual freedom. Liberty, not social cohesion, defines the Cynic republic. "[Diogenes asserted] that the manner of life he lived was the same as that of Heracles when he preferred liberty to everything" (DL 6.71).

Fourth, the Cynics accept all practices that are not contrary to nature, even those that, like cannibalism, strike us as inhuman. Diogenes' materialist position ("not only is meat a constituent of bread, but bread of vegetables") disturbs the traditional hierarchy of the species and asserts man's animality over and against his civilized self. The fact that Diogenes Laertius mentions Diogenes of Sinope's defense of anthropophagy without condemning it (and Dio Chrysostom, as we shall see below, provides a rationale for the Cynic defense of incest) is important for our discussion of eighteenth-century Cynicism because both authors had been available since the Renaissance and their descriptions would have contributed to the common stock of Cynic images in the period. The absence of any reference to taboo practices in Wieland's version of the *Republic* is a voluntary omission, not the consequence of a lack of sources.

To these hints about the potential content of the *Republic,* one might add the desire for peace and simplicity expressed by Crates in his poem "Pera," on the ideal city of that name:

> There is a city Pera in the midst of wine-dark vapour,
> Fair, fruitful, passing squalid, owning nought,
> Into which sails nor fool nor parasite
> Nor glutton, slave of sensual appetite,
> But thyme it bears, garlic, and figs and loaves,

> For which things' sake men fight not each with other,
> Nor stand to arms for money or for fame. (DL 6.85)

The lyrical evocation of bounty in simplicity and peace in wisdom has led a number of scholars to interpret the poem as an evocation of the ideal Cynic republic, understood as the restricted philosophical community of the wise, or the more inclusive "internationalism of the nameless poor."[21] But as Harold Baldry has deftly pointed out, to take the poem at face value is to miss the irony of the title "Pera," which literally means "knapsack": "For Crates Utopia is a topic for an ironical jest, parodying Homer. The ideal state is Pera, the philosopher's knapsack, symbol of that αὐτάρκεια *through which he is independent of all communities.*"[22]

Humor colors Diogenes' pronouncements on the polis, and much is lost if one fails to appreciate what John Moles calls "the ludic quality" of Cynic thought.[23] Neither "Pera" nor the lost *Republic* is to be taken seriously as a proposal for a new form of political organization. They are parodies and as such signify the Cynic's joyful, irreverent independence from the polis and his rejection of law, religion, and custom.

Diogenes Laertius gives us a fairly good sense of the Cynic's attitude toward politics, but he tells us little about the actual contents of the *Republic.* Our only summary of Diogenes' lost text comes from the Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara's *On the Stoics,* which has survived only in fragmentary form. The text was rediscovered in the nineteenth century among the papyri of the library from Herculaneum and is in places difficult to decipher.[24] What has survived is, moreover, far from unbiased, for the text aims to discredit the Stoics by associating them with the less reputable Cynics (Zeno was indeed the pupil of Crates the Cynic). Philodemus sets out to demonstrate the kinship between Zeno's *Republic* and Diogenes', placing both in a negative light by emphasizing their shared criminality (in particular sexual violence, cannibalism, and murder).

Philodemus was unavailable to eighteenth-century writers, and there is no evidence that either Foucault or Sloterdijk read him. I mention him, however, because although his text was lost, the negative tenor of his text has survived in the reports of certain early church fathers; it colored the anti-Cynic writings of French Counter-Reformation writers such as Guez de Balzac and Garasse (for whom, one should note, Epicureanism had joined the ranks of Cynicism as a sexually perverse philosophy—the Counter-Reformationists' version of the Epicurean garden strikingly resembles Philodemus's depiction of the Cynic

republic). Most importantly for our study, Philodemus's criminal version of the Cynic republic would emerge again in the late eighteenth century, in Sade's own brand of Cynicism. Philodemus's Diogenes resembles a marquis de Sade *avant la lettre,* and it is surely not insignificant that Sade found it apt to give one his most famous libertines, Dolmancé, the epithet "cynique."

I focus here on what Philodemus tells us about Diogenes' *Republic,* keeping in mind the Epicurean bias against Cynicism.[25] Philodemus describes the Cynic republic in chapter 6, columns 16 and 18–20. Column 16 reports on practices that are either confirmed elsewhere or consistent with what we know of early Cynicism, and the polemical tone remains moderate. Philodemus confirms two features present in Diogenes Laertius, the practice of anthropophagy and the suppression of armies (DL 6.73 and 6.85), and adds two more, the abolition of the common currency and the practice of incest. According to Philodemus, bones were to replace coins in the republic, an injunction Goulet-Cazé rightly interprets as a "simple derision" of the value accorded to money and riches, and not as "a new conception of economic exchange in a society of wise men."[26] The reference to incest is by way of allusion to Diogenes' tragedies: "Diogenes himself, in the *Atreus,* the *Oedipus,* and the *Philiscos,* ascribes as his opinions most of the shameful and impious things that are in the *Politeai.*"[27] The reference to the *Philiscos* in this context remains obscure,[28] but the *Atreus* presumably spoke well of cannibalism, while the *Oedipus* play, we are to infer, added to the Cynic repertoire the right to practice incest. Philodemus judges these practices negatively, but his report is consistent with others: Dio Chrysostom, an author intent on depicting Cynicism in a positive light, confirms the Cynic praise of incest in his tenth discourse, *Diogenes or on Servants.*

The second passage is more troubling.[29] Philodemus summarizes here the common characteristics of the Cynic and Stoic republics and portrays Diogenes and Zeno as advocating an anarchical state governed by debauchery and criminal activity. The passage is worth quoting at length:

> Let us now transcribe the fine doings of these two men in such a manner as to waste as little time as possible. It pleases these two saintly men to live like dogs and to use all words freely without limits; to masturbate in public; to wear a double cloak; to abuse the males that are in love with them and constrain by force those not well disposed toward their advances. . . . [They hold] that all children be kept in common . . . [one must] have sexual relations with one's sisters and mother and blood relations, with brothers and sons. [One must] never refrain from participating in sexual activities, even if violence is required. Women [will approach] men and induce them by any

> means possible to couple with them, and if they do not find anyone, they go to the marketplace to seek out those who will satisfy them. And if the occasion presents itself, they will have sexual relations with any and all, man or woman; married men should have relations with their own slaves, and wives with whomsoever they please, abandoning their husbands; women [must] wear the same clothes as men and participate in the same activities without distinguishing themselves from the men; they [should] go to the stadium and the gymnasium naked . . . and exercise in front of all with the men, and the men should be naked . . . [unclear passage] . . . and men must kill their father and not consider theirs any of the cities or laws that we know. [They hold] that all men are children or mad or sick men . . . and consider all friends false and unfaithful and enemies of the gods and themselves. . . . Thus even among those things that they consider beautiful or just, none is so by nature; and to be like young men gone mad, judging just a thing that is in fact shameful and unjust.[30]

Several elements in Philodemus's account are attested elsewhere: doglike behavior, blunt speech, the common guarding of children, even incest and cannibalism. But others are not and seem at odds with our other sources on the early Cynics. Sexual violence, the *obligation* to commit incest, and patricide (in the service of cannibalism) appear to be Philomedus's invention.

Philodemus's account may be unreliable, but it deserves mention because it demonstrates how all interpretations of the Cynic republic and Cynicism in general must hinge upon our understanding of what the Cynics mean by nature. Philodemus succeeds in presenting Cynicism as criminal because he makes the Cynic principle of a life lived according to nature *(physis,* not *nomos)* signify a life lived according to one's basest, most brutal instincts. But not all early commentators interpreted it in this manner. Diogenes Laertius and Dio Chrysostom, for instance, acknowledge anthropophagy and incest as Cynical but not as base or bestial. Instead, they provide a context within which to understand the practices Philodemus all too happily dismisses as "shameful and impious." Diogenes Laertius inserts Cynic cannibalism within a coherent materialist vision of the world that would no doubt have resonated with the more radical among the philosophes, and of which we find echoes in Diderot as well as Sade.[31] The materialist argument in favor of anthropophagy implies, as Goulet-Cazé argues, that Diogenes accepts cannibalism as a necessary consequence of devoting himself to a life lived according to nature, but without necessarily suggesting that cannibalism is either a duty or a desideratum.[32]

Dio Chrysostom's account of the *Oedipus* operates a similar contextualization and tempering of Cynic license. In his tenth discourse, Dio has Diogenes

argue that Oedipus was a fool to gouge out his eyes and bewail his fate; why, it would have been better by far to pronounce incest legal in Thebes! After all, "domestic fowls do not object to such relationships, nor dogs, nor any ass, nor do the Persians, although they pass for the aristocracy of Asia."[33] Dio's Diogenes preaches the decriminalization of incest, not, as Philodemus would have it, to encourage orgies but to limit unnecessary human suffering caused by man-made laws. Seen from this perspective, Diogenes' rejection of the laws of the city and his defense of taboo practices such as cannibalism and incest must be understood as humane, not bestial, practices. Similarly, the misanthropy expressed in the final sentences of Philodemus's text ("[they hold] that all men are children or mad or sick . . . and consider all friends false") is not altogether absent from other sources, but only in Philodemus is it stripped of all philosophical motivation.[34]

What, then, can we say about Diogenes' *Politeai*? Our sources agree in depicting the Cynic republic as a community of loosely associated individuals without laws or distinction of rank, characterized by sexual freedom and the elimination of taboos, what Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé has called, "une anarchie libertaire foncièrement individualiste."[35] It has been interpreted now as a bestial dystopia (by Philodemus), now as communitarian utopia (by Ferguson, for instance, or Sloterdijk, who, as we shall see, although he does not mention the *Republic* explicitly, imagines Cynicism as our best hope for creating "a most communal world").[36] Both interpretations err, however, in granting the *Republic* the status of political project; in this they fail to grasp the essentially ironic and humorous antipoliticism of Cynicism.

Baldry makes a very strong case for interpreting Cynic apoliticism not as an alternative political vision but as a meditation on the right relationship between the wise man and the state:

> For Plato and Aristotle the ideal σοφός [*sophos*] is the product of the ideal πόλις [*polis*]. . . . The philosopher-ruler's wisdom rises out of the city and finds its fulfillment there.
>
> The Cynics, on the other hand, welcomed the conception of the philosopher as the odd man out. The wise man not only does, but should, stand apart from society. He is κοσμοπολίτης [*kosmopolitês*] . . . and owes allegiance to no community but the universe.[37]

Fouad Kalouche takes Baldry's argument one step further. For him, the Cynic rejection of politics concerns not just the wise man but man in general: "what Aristotle described as 'human' (the need to live as a social and political being

with ties to the community regulated through *nomos*) is precisely what the Cynics attempt to distance themselves from through their continual askêsis."[38] Whereas Baldry's interpretation leaves room for reconciling Cynicism with political organization by placing it outside, rather than in opposition to, the state, Kalouche's reading remains, I argue, closer to the spirit of Diogenes: he posits a Cynicism staunchly opposed to politics as such, not to a specific type of political organization but to the very notion of man as political being. It is this latter aspect of the republic that will give eighteenth-century aspiring Cynics greatest pause.

Wieland's Moral Cosmopolitanism

In 1770 Christoph Martin Wieland published a slim, elegant novel entitled *Sokrates mainomenos, oder die Dialogen des Diogenes von Sinope (Socrates out of his senses: or, dialogues of Diogenes of Sinope).* Wieland wittily presents his novel as a translation into German of Diogenes' long-lost writings, the *Dialogues* and the *Republic,* which our author claims to have discovered one fine day in a dusty monastery library, in a Latin translation of an Arabic version of the Greek original.[39]

Wieland's monastery manuscript is of course fictional, but he bases his re-creation of the *Dialogues* and the *Republic* on a number of existing texts, and his choice of sources has serious implications for his interpretation of Cynic political thought. He explains in the preface that the Diogenes he discovered in the monastery manuscript bears no resemblance whatsoever to the scurrilous man we meet in Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus. Dismissing as "so viele ungereimte Geschichten" (so many absurd anecdotes) the impudent anecdotes of both these sources, which portrayed Diogenes as "the most contemptible, the dullest, the nastiest, and the most insupportable fellow," Wieland invites his reader to accept as true the idealized descriptions of Cynicism found in Lucian's *Demonax* and in Epictetus.[40] Epictetus, we recall, eager to make Cynicism acceptable for Stoicism, had gone to great lengths to demonstrate the political engagement and goodwill of the early Cynics:

> "You ninny," [Epictetus scolds an imaginary interlocutor] "are you looking for any nobler politics than that in which [Diogenes] is engaged? Or would you have someone in Athens step forward and discourse about incomes and revenues, when he is the person who ought to talk with all men, Athenians, Corinthians, and Romans alike, not about revenues, or income, or peace, or war, but about happiness and unhappiness, about success and failure, about

> slavery and freedom? When a man is engaging in such exalted politics, do *you* ask me if he is to engage in politics? Ask me also, if he will hold office. Again I tell you: Fool, what nobler office will he hold than that which he now has?"[41]

Likewise Lucian, usually so harsh a critic of Cynicism, gives a glowing portrait of Demonax in which he assures us that unlike Diogenes, the younger Cynic "played his part in society and in politics."[42] His "kind, gentle and cheerful"[43] disposition tempered the outlandish manners and harsh asceticism of his forefathers: Demonax rebuked the Cynic Honoratus for wearing a bearskin and derided Peregrinus Proteus (whom Lucian mocks in his *Peregrinus*) for his excessive attachment to the rigors of Cynicism. Moreover, Demonax "did not cultivate the irony of Socrates" (nor, we may infer, the satire of Diogenes) but instead filled his conversation with "Attic charm."[44] Wieland's Diogenes follows suit in language and in temper. As Niehues-Pröbsting points out, Wieland went so far in his polishing of Diogenes that, conscious of having betrayed perhaps too much of the old hound, he felt obliged to insert one offensive word to lend his protagonist credibility: "The word would not be in my book, if *I* were speaking; however, it is Diogenes the Cynic who speaks and whom I idealized to such a degree that I had to add a trait of Cynicism now and then in order not to distort this man beyond recognition for the scholars."[45]

Like his French contemporaries (who admired Wieland's novel when it appeared in French translation in 1772), Wieland sought, that is, to revive Diogenes as a polite, charming, and educated young man, the ideal intellectual, as Niehues-Pröbsting put it.[46] His hair powdered and his sharp tongue made pliable to the literary tastes of the day, the new Diogenes falls in love, sings the praises of nature, and delivers pointed but never rude critiques of religion and politics. However distant this Diogenes might seem from his gruff and asocial predecessor, Wieland's text nevertheless constitutes a key document for understanding the political uses of Cynicism in the Enlightenment, for Wieland discusses, in turn, the three political notions associated with the ancient Cynics in Diogenes Laertius—Cynic cosmopolitanism, the critique of tyranny, and the ideal republic—and debates their relevance for his time. One of the leading theorists of cosmopolitanism in his day, Wieland upholds his version of moral cosmopolitanism as the true voice of Cynicism and rejects as misguided the utopian and primitivist interpretation of Cynic politics he associates with Rousseau.

Cosmopolitanism

Wieland devoted several essays to cosmopolitanism in the 1780s, most famously "Das Geheimniß des Kosmopoliten-Ordens" (The secret of the cosmopolitan order), of 1788, and "Kosmopolitische Addresse an die französische Nazionalversammlung" (Cosmopolitan address to the French National Assembly), of October 1789.[47] Unlike Kant and later Fichte and Schlegel, Wieland does not advocate a political cosmopolitanism; he argues instead in favor of a moral cosmopolitanism based on the natural equality of all human beings:

> The cosmopolitans carry the designation *citizens of the world* in the most authentic and eminent sense. They regard all peoples of the earth as just so many branches of a single family, and the universe as a state, in which they are citizens, together with innumerable other rational beings, in order to promote the perfection of the whole.[48]

Wieland shies away from imagining a new political world order, but as Pauline Kleingeld has shown, his cosmopolitans are far from apolitical; on the contrary, they seek to reform the state in that they attempt "to reduce the sum of evils that weigh upon humanity, insofar as they can do this *without wreaking havoc themselves,* and to increase the sum of the good in the world, as well as they can."[49] Like his Stoic predecessors, upon whom he models his cosmopolitan ideal, Wieland sees no difficulty in reconciling respect for the state with cosmopolitanism.

Wieland's essays from the late 1780s have received much critical attention. It is rarely mentioned, however, that he had laid out the main tenets of his cosmopolitan theory as early as 1760 in his *Sokrates mainomenos.* In other words, Wieland encounters cosmopolitanism for the first time in dialogue with the Cynics. This is curious because Cynicism is, and always was, an embarrassment to cosmopolitans of future generations. The Stoics sought to distance themselves from the Dogs (hence the force of Philodemus's attack, which reasserts the connection between the Stoics and the Cynics), and subsequent theorists of cosmopolitanism almost invariably dispatch the Cynics in a few lines, preferring to begin the history of the concept with the more communally minded Stoics. Wieland makes a similar move, but instead of glossing over the Cynic position, he rewrites it as a moderate moral cosmopolitanism perfectly compatible with the Stoic position (thereby reversing Philodemus's maneuver: the Epicurean discredits the Stoics by ascribing to them shameful, antipoliti-

cal Cynic practices; Wieland clears the Cynics' name by crediting them with positive, civic-minded Stoic ideals).

In a fictional dialogue between Diogenes and the aristocrat Philomedon (not to be confused with the abovementioned Epicurean Philodemus) Wieland defends Diogenes' rejection of civic and national attachment. He begins by defining cosmopolitanism, or world citizenship, negatively, as the rejection of any allegiance to a city-state and as the right *not* to owe the state anything. Cosmopolitanism signifies the reduction of the social contract to a minimum:

> The least I can ask of them according to the law of nature, is *to live uninjured and untroubled,* at least as long as I do them no mischief. . . . People owe no more to any man than they require of him. Of the Corinthians, and of all Greeks and Barbarians taken together, I desire no more, than as I told thee, that they suffer me to live. And for that reason I owe them no more. I have no possessions, I have no revenues, I want no protection; I don't see what Corinth, or any other particular society in the world could require from me.[50]

Upon this largely negative definition of cosmopolitanism, Wieland builds, however, a philanthropic mission. The world citizen owes nothing to the state, but he does have distinct duties toward his fellow human beings. As a cosmopolitan, he "owes" the Corinthians and all humans far more than nature's law (live and let live) would imply. Two duties in particular compel him: he must provide assistance and compassion to any man in need, and he must give good advice to all who go astray. In the words of Diogenes, the citizen of the world "considers this globe as his native country, and all creatures . . . as his fellow-citizens, or rather as his brethren, who have a natural right to his assistance, when they suffer, to his compassion, when he cannot help them, to his good advice, when he sees them go astray, to his congratulation, when they are happy in their existence."[51]

Wieland's positive gloss on Diogenes' cosmopolitanism owes much to the Stoic account of Cynicism found in Epictetus 3.22. To Epictetus's pronouncement on Cynic politics cited above ("You ninny"), one might add his defense of Diogenes' refusal to marry or procreate: "Who [does] mankind the greater service? Those who bring into the world some two or three ugly-snouted children to take their place, or *those who exercise oversight, to the best of their ability, over all mankind,* observing what they are doing, how they are spending their lives, what they are careful about, and what they undutifully neglect?"[52]

Wieland repeats Epictetus's message, but he exchanges the biting humor of "ugly-snouted children" for a sentimental vocabulary borrowed from the semantic field of sympathy that governed much of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Wieland praises the Cynic philanthropist's "Empfindlichkeit" (sensibility), his "zärtliche[s] Gefühl" (tenderness), his "warmes Herz" (warm heart).[53] These define his ethos, but more crucially they designate the basis of a common humanity and the foundation of a true cosmopolitan state. Like Rousseau, Wieland asserts a shared humanity based on the equality of all men in nature (he speaks of the "ursprungliche Gleichheit," the original equality, of men in the state of nature)[54] and posits a common moral sense grounded in "Empfindlichkeit": cosmopolitanism signifies appurtenance to the moral community of mankind.

And yet Wieland's Diogenes is enough of a realist not to expect all men to acknowledge the cosmopolitan brotherhood of mankind. Rather than attempting to win Philomedon over by appealing to his common humanity, he speaks instead to his self-interest in preserving the status quo:

> Now nothing is more certain, than that for each hundred of thy order in all Achaia, there are at least ten thousand who would rather gain than lose by a change of government. Suppose then, these ten thousand men took it once into their heads to calculate the number of their arms, and the sum of their calculation were, that they made use of their superiority to drive you other rich people out of your possessions, and to undertake a new partition? When the republick is extinguished, the state of nature revives; all things return to their original equality.[55]

Diogenes urges Philomedon to become a better citizen by respecting the terms of the social pact and by reforming it, when necessary, along more egalitarian lines so as to avoid a revolution that would divest him of his privileges. The lesson, then, is not in cosmopolitanism nor, certainly, in a Rousseauesque appreciation of the state of nature; it is a lesson in good citizenship. The cosmopolitan attitude is reserved for a small elite, the few wise men who, having rejected the social bond and its attendant prejudices, self-interests, and hypocrisies, have gained an exceptional status within society and hence an exceptional duty as helpmeet to mankind: "The citizen of the world [understood here in the restricted sense of the term] alone is capable of pure, impartial and genuine love towards mankind."[56] The cosmopolitan plays a special role in society; he stands apart from it to better it, not to dissolve it. As Niehues-Pröbsting has put it, "The Cynic's mode of existence becomes the model for the social position of the modern intellectual."[57]

By inflecting Cynic cosmopolitanism in the direction of Stoicism, Wieland excludes from the concept both a questioning of politics as such, that is, of politics as a good in itself, and a radical questioning of what it is that makes us human. (We shall see that Sade's Cynicism takes aim very specifically at the element both Wieland and Rousseau see as the basis of our common humanity: pity, or sympathy.) Like Baldry's Cynic wise man, Wieland's Diogenes retreats from public office the better to serve mankind. His moral cosmopolitanism seeks to define the right relationship of the *Aufklärer,* or public intellectual, to the state. Cosmopolitanism functions for Wieland, I would argue, much like Kant's public sphere: it expresses foremost the desire for a space divorced from social and civic duties, a space from which one might speak one's mind honestly and openly, in the name of truth.

"Get out of my sun"—If It Please Your Majesty

Wieland defends his moderate Cynic position by playing it off against both a brasher, political version of cosmopolitanism (imperialism) and a political desideratum often associated with Cynicism in the eighteenth century, enlightened despotism. The *Dialogues* conclude with an exchange between Diogenes and Alexander that provides Wieland with the opportunity to meditate on both. To understand the stakes of this dialogue, we must keep in mind that by the time Wieland wrote his novel, the Alexander-Diogenes anecdote had become famous among French and German writers as a trope for enlightened despotism. As Niehues-Pröbsting has shown, Frederick the Great himself made extensive use of Cynic tropes. The Prussian monarch cleverly took possession of a potentially subversive image (the man of letters' contempt for the ruler) and made it serve his own self-image as an enlightened ruler, while simultaneously using it to discipline the men of letters he courted. When D'Alembert left the Prussian court for Paris in 1763, Frederick wrote him to express his regret at having lost "l'homme que [Diogene] a cherché si longtemps."[58] But when Rousseau had the gall to refuse Frederick's offer of political asylum, Frederick employed the Cynic label in a far less flattering manner:

> I believe that Rousseau missed his calling. He clearly had what it takes to become a famous hermit, a Desert Father. . . . He would have performed miracles, would have been canonized, and would have increased the catalogue of martyrs even more. Nowadays, however, he is seen only as a philosophical eccentric who tries to revive the sect of Diogenes after two millennia. It does not pay to eat grass and make enemies of all contemporary philosophers.[59]

The comparison with the Cynic serves here to discredit Rousseau as an untimely man foolishly seeking to revive an outdated model from antiquity. Rousseau's insolent refusal of Frederick's bounty mirrored Diogenes' rebuttal of Alexander too well to suffer admiration. Having discarded his previous identification with Diogenes, Frederick now turns against Alexander for having been too tolerant of the fool's tongue. Recalling Alexander's famous quip, "Had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to be Diogenes" (DL 6.32), Frederick responds with impatience: "Alexander the Great, who truly knew glory, envied the unselfishness and temperance of Diogenes, that insolent Cynic, whom I would certainly not have chosen as a model."[60]

The sense that Cynicism, and the Alexander-Diogenes model in particular, had become outdated, unsuited to an age of absolute rule, was also bitterly felt by Diderot, as we saw in the previous chapter. After his disillusionment at the court of Catherine the Great, he would write:

> Who today would dare brave ridicule and scorn? In our midst, Diogenes would live under a roof, not in a barrel; in no region of our world would he take on the role he played in Athens. He might preserve his independent and firm spirit, but he would never say, even to the pettiest of our sovereigns, as he did to Alexander: *Get out of my sun.*[61]

Wieland, though with less bitterness, echoes Diderot's sentiment. His Diogenes appears mesmerized by Alexander's majesty and by his plan to unite the entire world under his power, a plan Diogenes explicitly links to his own desire to be a cosmopolitan. In Alexander he sees a man capable of translating his moral cosmopolitan ideal into a political reality, and he is tempted to support him. But irony undercuts the fantasy. With biting mock praise, Diogenes dismisses the imperial dream as a chimera. Wieland discredits not only imperialism but also, I would argue, the more modest dream of an enlightened despotism: Alexander fails to hear the ironic undertone of Diogenes' counsel and departs unchanged. Like Diderot, Wieland expresses skepticism about the ability of men of letters to step into the shoes of the ancient Diogenes. Frederick, not the philosophes nor Wieland, would appear to have gained control of the Diogenes-Alexander motif.

The *Republic*

Diogenes' failure to influence the king spells the philosophes' gradual loss of control over the image of Cynicism in the period. Among the rival Cynic

voices that emerged in the late eighteenth century was that associated with Rousseau's primitivism, and it is to this Cynicism that Wieland turns in the concluding section of his novel, his fictional recreation of Diogenes' *Republic.* Written in direct response to Alexander's fantasy of a new, imperial world order, Wieland's *Republic* imagines an alternate social order founded on peace, harmony, and equality. Conceived on the model of the classical utopia—a remote island where peace is achieved by uniformity of manners—it will prove, however, as futile as the philosophes' dream of turning the monarch into an enlightened despot.

The *Republic,* the reader quickly notes, is no original invention of Wieland's but an ironic rewriting of Rousseau's golden "âge des cabanes," complete with young maidens of "complexion all roses and lilies" and innocent, joyous village gatherings.[62] Wieland associated Cynicism with Rousseau in the preface to the novel, but there he treated the French philosopher with respect and deep sympathy. Pay no attention to those who defame the Cynics, he urges his readers, for men always slander those they do not understand. See how they treat Jean-Jacques!

> A man must have but little knowledge of the world, not to know that some few strokes of singularity and deviation from the common forms of moral behaviour are . . . sufficient to set the most excellent man in a false light. In the famous John James Rousseau of Geneva, a man, who is perhaps really but half so singular, as he seems to be, we find this position much corroborated.[63]

But when Rousseau appears again at the end of the novel, as the implicit father of the *Republic,* he no longer commands the same consideration. Irony undercuts every aspect of the republic, which Wieland presents as "eine bloße Schimäre,"[64] a mere chimera, the very word he had used to describe Alexander's dream of world domination. A magic wand is required to call the Republic into existence ("The Devil make a commonwealth of folks as you find them!"),[65] and further magic is required to protect it from the constant threat of corruption:

> In consequence of this tenderness for my creatures, and to remove from them as far as possible all opportunity of disclosing their capacity of greater refinement and perfection, I cannot forbear, for their advantage, one stroke more with my magic rod—to render the whole island for ever and ever invisible. All the trouble your navigators will give themselves to discover it, will be in vain. They will never find it.[66]

Wieland defended Rousseau in the preface for his "singularity"; he now takes him to task for denying mankind this singularity and for forcing all men into a uniform, utopian model that can brook neither change nor deviations in behavior. The republic can exist only at the price of excluding perfectibility and denying history. It can survive, that is, only by violating human nature. Rousseau's critique of civilization is unveiled as an impotent pipe dream, as foolish and potentially harmful in its denial of the basic nature and needs of man as Alexander's imperialist fantasies.[67]

Wieland's critique of Rousseau gains a much richer cultural and philosophical resonance when we recall that the identification of Rousseau with Cynicism was common stock in the period. Frederick the Great had drawn the connection in the early 1760s, and the philosophes too were fond of associating Jean-Jacques negatively with a primitivist version of Cynicism. Wieland partakes, that is, of a larger cultural discourse on the question who has the right to speak in the name of Cynicism. Like the philosophes, Wieland seeks to reclaim Cynicism from Rousseau by countering the primitivist interpretation of the ancient sect with a more "civilized" version of Cynicism, the cosmopolitanism expressed in Diogenes' dialogue with Philomedon. Rousseau's well-known anticosmopolitanism, symbolized here by the geographical isolation of the island republic, may also have directed Wieland's satire against him. With the exception of a youthful praise of "quelques grandes Ames Cosmopolites" in the *Second Discourse,*[68] Rousseau expresses a staunch antipathy toward cosmopolitanism, whether as a political model (as in the *Gouvernement de Pologne,* where he contrasts the effete cosmopolitanism of his times with the healthy patriotism of the ancients) or as a moral category, as when he uses the term as a euphemism for the hypocrisy of his fellow intellectuals: "It is apparent from this what should be thought of those supposed Cosmopolites who, justifying their love of the fatherland by means of their love of the human race, boast of loving everyone in order to have the right to love no one."[69] Wieland's *Sokrates mainomenos* is the cosmopolitan's reply to Rousseau. Turning the tables on Jean-Jacques, Wieland accuses him of having misused his role as public intellectual: by failing to accept the cosmopolitan's realism (witness Diogenes' pragmatic dealings with Philomedon) and his openness to the world, Rousseau, according to Wieland, abandons his role as *Aufklärer* and joins the rank of dreamers.

One anecdote in Lucian's *Demonax,* a source on Cynicism that Wieland praises in his preface, seems to me particularly pertinent to Wieland's rejection of Rousseau. Lucian recounts that "when [the Cynic] Peregrinus Proteus

rebuked [the Cynic Demonax] for laughing a great deal and making sport of mankind saying: 'Demonax, you're not at all doggish!' he answered, 'Peregrinus, you're not at all human!' "[70] For Lucian as for Wieland, humanity trumps doggishness at every turn. Lucian, whose works Wieland spent many years translating, stands for moderation but also for a literary interpretation of Cynicism: best known for his Menippean satires, he represents the literary legacy of Cynicism. Sloterdijk, we shall see, will dismiss him as an aristocratic betrayer of the populist Diogenes and write off his works as a literary gentrification of the lived philosophy of his predecessor.[71] But to do so is to miss the perspective afforded by Lucian's ironic distance from the passions and chaos of human life; it is to this Lucian that Wieland pays homage in the closing pages of his novel, when he places his criticism of Rousseau in the mouth of an imaginary man in the moon, a figure descended directly from the hero of Lucian's *Icaromenippus:*

> This I confess, that for a spectator, who for instance would look down from the moon upon our hemisphere, the sight of its speckled figure with its infinite multifariousness of inhabitants with triangular, quadrangular, round and oval heads, with hawked, flat and turned-up noses, with long or woolly, white, red, and black hair . . . with all their belief in innumerable kinds of benevolent and malevolent gods, with all their masks of false virtues, and imagery of artificial perfections before their faces;—this sight, I confess it, will be an infinitely more amusing shew for a spectator of the moon [who would neither gain nor lose by it], than the sight of so uniform a nation as that of my islanders.[72]

Wieland's Diogenes soon leaves Lucian behind, but the brief excursion to the moon concludes the *Republic* on an ironic note that privileges the literary aspects of Cynicism and reminds the reader not to take too seriously any of the versions of Cynicism put forth in the novel.

Wieland's *Republic* is a reflection on the man of letters' proper function in society, not a political treatise. It was, however, to gain political resonance when the Revolution broke out and claimed Rousseau as its hero. As Niehues-Pröbsting has shown, Wieland then reinterpreted his novel as a distinctly political fable: "If the French had read my *Republic of Diogenes,* they would have been cured from their addiction to republics at once. For there I provided a proof as clear as daylight that the conditions under which the true republic would be possible in this world are not at all sublunar."[73] In October 1789 he penned his "Kosmopolitische Addresse an die französische Nazionalversammlung" in response to the night of August 4, which saw the abolition of the

privileges and titles of the nobility and the clergy, a situation Wieland had unwittingly predicted in his Cynic dialogue with Philomedon some twenty years earlier. Just as Diogenes had urged Philomedon to avoid popular revolt by reforming the social fabric, so Wieland now takes the liberty to advise the French National Assembly; in his capacity as cosmopolitan ("In virtue of the Order, to which I claim allegiance . . . I avail myself of the cosmopolitan freedom to counsel you")[74] he urges the National Assembly to reform the monarchy rather than allow fury to overthrow it in favor of the unproven promises of a republic. Almost against Wieland's will, Cynicism had become a political matter. We shall return to the relationship between Cynicism and the French Revolution in the following chapter, but first let us turn to Rousseau, the Revolution's unwitting hero and Cynic *malgré lui.*

"Je me fis caustique et cynique par honte": Rousseau's Farewell to Cynicism

Wieland's *Sokrates mainomenos* consecrated Rousseau as the republican Cynic of his age. Yet, as any reader of Rousseau will be quick to point out, Jean-Jacques did not particularly favor the Cynics. He preferred more civic-minded or heroic models from antiquity: Cato and Lycurgus, Fabricius and Socrates. How, then, did he come to be associated with Diogenes? What, if anything, did he have to say about the ancient sect? We shall see that the young Rousseau toyed with Cynicism in his two discourses and associated himself with the ancient sect in the *Confessions,* but he ultimately rejected the Cynic model on political grounds, as incompatible with the civic demands of a true republic.[75]

From whom and why, then, did Rousseau gain a Cynic reputation? I have already mentioned Wieland's ironic portrayal of Rousseau as a naive Diogenes in his *Sokrates mainomenos* and Frederick II's description of him as a misanthropic, primitive, and anachronistic Dog. The trend seems to have been instigated by the ever sharp-tongued Voltaire, who scribbled in the margins of the *Second Discourse,* "Singe de Diogène!"[76] an insult he would repeat in various permutations, from "bâtard du chien de Diogène"[77] and "petit valet de Diogène"[78] to the more elaborate "Jean-Jacques descendait en droite ligne du barbet de Diogène accouplé avec une des couleuvres de la Discorde" (Jean-Jacques is a direct descendent of Diogenes' spaniel and the snakes of Discord).[79]

The label would stick. Intent on preserving for themselves the positive image of an independent but polite Cynicism, the philosophes projected onto

Rousseau all the negative elements that a long tradition of anti-Cynic writings had dredged up against the sect. One might say that Cynicism circulated in three movements in the republic of letters. First, as we saw in chapter 2, the philosophes sought to put Cynicism back in circulation after its devaluation at the hands of Counter-Reformation writers. Second, they reminted the Cynic coin by divesting it of its impure allies, a scathing tongue and rude manners. Third, they put the dregs of this reminting back into circulation, employing the label "Cynicism" negatively, as an insult to designate their enemies, Rousseau chief among them.

The *Second Discourse* was perceived by many of its critics as an act of purely negative criticism. "Il prend envie de marcher à quatre pattes quand on lit votre ouvrage,"[80] Voltaire wrote the Genevan, ridiculing Rousseau for his Cynic penchant for brute animality at the expense of any concrete project of social reform. A closer look at the philosophes' writings on Rousseau reveals, however, that they responded negatively not only to his perceived lack of realism (Wieland's chief criticism) but also to his commitment to *live* like the ancient Cynics, outside Parisian society and in direct conflict with the values propagated by the Enlightenment republic of letters. Diderot, as we shall see, reacted violently to his estranged friend's Cynic praise of poverty. Rousseau had betrayed the new Cynic sect forming in the salons of Paris by rejecting a number of values central to their social and intellectual endeavors: politeness, sociability, a certain elegant well-being. He did so, moreover, by embracing characteristics long associated with the Cynics, namely, the love of poverty and the courageous, outspoken critique of civilization. There was no other solution than to depict him as a fake and an imposter, a young *arriviste* masquerading as a Cynic.

Rousseau's association with a negative image of Cynicism was reinforced, in the years following the French Revolution, by conservative British writers such as Burke. As David Mazella has shown, Burke went to great lengths to depict Rousseau as a cynic in the worst sense of the term, a vilification that swept aside the distinction the philosophes had sought to establish between Jean-Jacques and themselves, and indicted the French Enlightenment as the root cause of society's cynicism (lowercase).[81] Yet despite the increasingly widespread image of Rousseau as the scurrilous cynic of his age, a rival interpretation, which saw the philosopher from Geneva as the incarnation of all that was good in ancient Cynicism, soon made itself heard. In his *Lectures on Ethics* Kant associates Diogenes positively with Rousseau on the grounds that both expound the natural goodness of man and praise the simplicity and the reduction of man-made needs:

> The Cynics argued that the Supreme Good springs from nature and not from art. Diogenes sought it by negative means. He argued that man is by nature satisfied with little; he has no wants by nature and therefore does not feel privation (that is, the lack of means), and so it is in conditions of privation that he finds happiness. There is much in this argument; for the more plentiful nature's gifts and the greater our store of the world's goods the greater are our wants. With growing wealth we acquire fresh wants, and the more we satisfy them the keener becomes our appetite for more. So our hearts are restless for ever. That refined Diogenes, Rousseau, holds that our will is by nature good, but that we ourselves became more and more corrupt; that nature provides us with all necessaries, but that we create wants for ourselves.[82]

Schopenhauer would confirm the comparison in *The World as Will and Representation,* where he links his positive assessment of the ancient Cynics to the philosophy of Jean-Jacques: "The Cynic's view of life agrees in spirit with that of J.-J. Rousseau as he expounds it in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité;* for he too would lead us back to the crude state of nature, and regards the reduction of needs to the minimum as the surest path to perfect happiness."[83] Rousseau's positive association with Cynicism can also be seen in an engraving drawn by Moreau le Jeune after the philosopher's death. It illustrates Rousseau's arrival in the Elysian Fields and depicts Diogenes, on the banks of Lethe, snuffing out his lantern, having at last found the man for whom he had searched so long. The inscription reads,

> Arrival of J. J. Rousseau in the Elysean Fields, dedicated to all good Mothers. Drawn by J. M. Moreau the Younger, of the royal academy of painting and sculpture, engraved by C. F. Macret in 1782. Socrates surrounded by Plato, Montaigne, Plutarch, and several other philosophers advance along the banks of the river Lethe to receive Jean Jacques Rousseau. Several Spirits fight for the right to remove the immortal Works of this Philosopher from the skiff of the ferryman Charon. *Diogenes, satisfied that he had at long last found the man he had sought after, blows out his lantern;* on the second plane one sees Tasso and Sapho, the third depicts Homer and the chief warriors of whom he sang, and in the distance Voltaire conversing with a Great Priest. For sale in Paris, by the author . . . with royal privileges.[84]

Rousseau is not only a good Cynic, as Kant and Schopenhauer would have it, but the fulfillment of Cynicism, its point of arrival. For Moreau, Rousseau has won the battle for Cynicism against the philosophes.

Among these contradictory appraisals of Rousseau's Cynicism, one further example deserves mention for its complex negotiation of Cynicism's conflict-

ing valuation in the period. M. L. Castilhon's *Le Diogène moderne,* of 1770, beautifully captures the twists and turns of the philosophes' fraught relationship with Cynicism, while betraying an irresistible admiration for those aspects of the old Dog that Rousseau had come to embody. Castilhon's epistolary novel characterizes Cynicism not simply as *one* of the possible pitfalls of intellectual life but as the scholar's illness par excellence. Turning the tables on the polite and elegant models presented by D'Alembert and Prémontval, Castilhon presents Diogenes as by necessity a disillusioned and embittered man of letters. Glutted with learning and disappointed in love, Woban (a British scholar whose correspondence Castilhon claims to translate) flees to Paris in search of distraction and gay conversation. Finding his Cynic mood little alleviated by French company, Woban writes home to his friends Bedfort, Stewart, and Lady Steelshyre to vent his anger and seek solace in his loneliness. The majority of the letters address literary topics of the time, several of them with strong Rousseauian accents: the debate between the ancients and the moderns, the nature of man and of cultural differences, the meaning of history. Woban is a parodic incarnation of Rousseau, a man mistrustful of the arts and sciences, ill at ease in the polite circles of the philosophical elite, resentful and misanthropic. The plot of the novel enacts the philosophes' attempts to socialize the gruff and disgruntled philosopher. The letters narrate the tale of Woban's Cynic illness (of which his letters on the futility of learning and the baseness of man in society are symptoms) and the efforts by his friends to find a cure for his disillusionment and his bitterness.

In a plot reminiscent of the astronomer's tale in Dr. Johnson's *History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia,* in which a solitary wise man is reawakened to the joys of life through the company and conversation of two young women, *Le Diogène moderne* seeks to bring Woban back into the fold of a polite and commercial society.[85] Various cures for his melancholy misanthropy are proposed: travel, manual labor in the form of farm work, love, self-discipline, and an honest attempt to reform, rather than curse, the world are all pressed upon him as alternatives to his despair. Under the influence of his correspondents, Woban begins to soften his tone. The suicide of his gardener midway through the novel serves as a turning point in the psychological drama of Woban's life. Shocked into awareness of the value of life, Woban attempts to build a new value system based on human relations of love and friendship. Nothing, not even the sudden betrayal of his new friends in Paris (a possible reference to Rousseau's plight), can shake his newfound convictions. By the end of the novel he has repented his bitter ways and prepares to return home in the hope

of winning the love of the fair Polly. In his last letter, which Woban significantly addresses to a woman, Lady Steelshyre, he writes: "I am ashamed and desperate, my good, dear friend; I am cruelly betrayed; life weighs on me, I find men odious; I would curse my existence were it not for the comfort I receive knowing that near you, near Miss Polly, Bedfort & Stewart, I can forget the perfidy I have endured."[86]

Like Samuel Johnson's astronomer and also like Hume, who dispelled his fears and doubts in the *Treatise on Human Nature* by conversing with friends,[87] Woban reenters society after his Cynic exile. His Cynic tone, the ailment of the "learned," has been cured through the "conversible" nature of epistolary exchange. Following Hume's injunction in "Of Essay Writing" (1742), Woban learns to integrate philosophical reflection and sociable interaction under the guidance and saving grace of those Hume called the "Sovereigns" of the conversible world, women.

In his *Correspondance littéraire* Melchior Grimm dismisses Woban's novel as a work of little importance, worthy of note only because it includes a jab at Rousseau, whom Woban accuses, in passing, of plagiarism.[88] But the interest of the novel lies precisely in its ambiguous valuation of Rousseau and of Cynicism, in particular of the relationship of Cynicism to sociability and polite letters. Woban shares many traits in common with the author of the two *Discourse*s, from a passionate criticism of the arts and sciences to a marked distaste for Parisian salon culture. Grimm and his contemporaries dubbed Rousseau the bastard son of Diogenes or Diogenes without a lantern, and they enlisted Castilhon on their side. But it is not at all clear that the asocial Cynic bears the brunt of Castilhon's satirical jabs. In his preface to *Le Diogène moderne,* Castilhon surprisingly informs us of Woban's suicide years later. In other words, the preface predicts the failure of the sociability cure and subverts the plot the epistolary exchange is about to weave. Woban's suicide might indeed be interpreted as a mocking parable of Rousseau's failure to reintegrate the flock of Parisian literati, but it can also be read as a last act of rebellion against the bland conformity of manners and thought that threatens to stall the critical enterprise of the Enlightenment republic of letters. Caught between the philosophes' rash dismissal of Rousseau's Cynic pose and Kant's unwavering praise of his primitive Cynicism, Castilhon invites us to reflect further on the function Cynicism might play in modern life.

The suicidal ending expresses dissatisfaction with the cures proposed by Lady Steelshyre and Bedfort and incites the reader to search for an alternative solution to Woban's plight. If the civilizing forces of epistolary exchange, the

company of women, and a happy reconciliation with the foibles of human nature fail to nurse Woban back to health, where might our protagonist turn for help? The answer might perhaps be sought in Rousseau's own response to his Cynic youth.

Rousseau on Cynicism

Despite the efforts on the part of his contemporaries, whether kindly or not, to label him a Diogenes figure, Rousseau did not initially identify himself with the Cynic sect. He seems to have been less sensitive than his contemporaries to the Cynic accents of his two *Discourse*s, and he dismisses the Cynic outright in the preface to *Narcisse:*

> The first Philosophers made a great reputation for themselves by teaching men the practice of duties and the principles of virtue. But soon these precepts having become common, it was necessary to distinguish oneself by opening up contrary routes. Such is the origin of the absurd systems of Leucippus, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Protagoras, Lucretius.[89]

The situation had changed, however, by the time he wrote his *Confessions.* Rousseau dates his turn to Cynicism to his arrival in Paris:

> Since my stupid and sullen timidity which I could not overcome had as its principle the fear of failing in decorum, in order to embolden myself I made the decision to trample it underfoot. I made myself cynical and caustic out of shame [*je me fis cynique et caustique par honte*]; I pretended to despise the politeness which I did not know how to practice. It is true that since that harshness was in agreement with my new principles it was ennobled in my soul, and acquired the intrepidity of virtue there, and it is, I dare to say, on this august basis that it maintained itself better and for a longer time than one ought to have expected from an effort so contrary to my natural disposition.[90]

Niehues-Pröbsting, who is otherwise an extremely subtle reader of the Cynic tradition, is quick to agree with Rousseau's self-assessment and dismiss his Cynicism as a mere pose. The exclusion can be explained, I believe, by Niehues-Pröbsting's emphasis on Cynicism as a literary movement, rather than a lived philosophy, and his desire to distance Cynicism from too close an association with primitivism of a sentimental variety. In this he is right. But to dismiss Rousseau's Cynicism as psychological opportunism is to underestimate the importance of social alienation as a motor of Cynic criticism throughout

the history of the ancient sect and to underplay the very real impact that Rousseau's Cynic claim would have on the image of Cynicism in the period and on the development of the concept through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Scholars have not infrequently explained the rise of Cynicism in the ancient world as a product of social alienation. K. O. Müller conjectures that because Diogenes was "an outcast from his native city of Sinope . . . his asceticism was, in all probability, a refuge from his forfeited respectability and civic usefulness; and the socialism, which he openly preached, seemed to be inspired by the recklessness of a man who had not character to lose."[91] Höistad speaks of "a sect which in addition, because of its social origins in circles without full political rights, was burdened by social and political discontent which formed an emotional background to a programme for the revision of values."[92] The psychological interpretation of Cynicism is often brandished by those who wish to discredit Cynicism as a legitimate philosophical and social movement (though this is by no means always the case; it certainly is not so in Höistad). Yet to describe Diogenes or Rousseau as a social failure is not to denigrate their philosophy but rather to point out the obvious: that it is often the discomfort born from social marginalization or from the inability to understand the rules of right behavior that enables an individual to perceive as contingent norms and laws that others accept as natural.

Rousseau's awareness of his outsider status created the conditions for a first, superficial conversion to Cynicism (the adoption of a Cynic tone, where Cynicism signifies little more than a blustering rhetoric), which soon became a full-fledged commitment to a mode of life modeled on Cynic poverty. "Je me fis cynique et caustique par honte" acquires new meaning when read in the context of book 8 of the *Confessions,* in which it appears. The book tells two parallel and related tales: the first is an account of Rousseau's literary debut (the Illumination of Vincennes and the success of the *First Discourse*); the second, the story of Rousseau's personal conversion to a life of relative poverty and independence. Book 8 paints the picture of a Cynic *malgré lui,* but it also recounts Rousseau's conscious effort to change the manner in which he lived and to ground his literary and philosophical writings in the Cynic ethos of poverty:

> I renounced forever every project of fortune and advancement. Determined to pass the little time I had left to live in independence and poverty, I applied all the strength of my soul to breaking the irons of opinion, and to doing

> courageously everything that appeared good to me, without bothering myself in any way about the judgment of men.[93]

Determined to live what he preached, Rousseau gave up his whig and silk stockings. He left Parisian society, retreating, Cynic style, from the social and literary demands of the capital. Rousseau may not have had the temperament or the physical vigor of Diogenes of Sinope—his bouts of paranoia and his sentimental daydreaming speak for themselves—but in his anticonformist attitude toward his contemporaries, he revived a facet of Cynicism that had been obscured in eighteenth-century writings, namely, a commitment to *live* the life of the Cynic. Rousseau was not always successful in this, but he was deeply concerned with the problem: his autobiographical texts, and *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* in particular, all seek to bring his life into alignment with his writings and to prove that his actions in no way belie his ideas.[94]

Rousseau's Cynic primitivism troubled the philosophes because it threatened to undermine the social and discursive unity of the Encyclopédistes, but it pricked them also because it stood as a constant reminder of the intellectual and political compromises inherent in the salon culture of the capital. With a touch of arrogance, Rousseau proclaims in his *Confessions,* "It was less my literary celebrity than my personal reform, whose period I mark here, that attracted their jealousy to me: perhaps they would have pardoned me for shining in the art of writing; but they could not pardon me for using my behavior to give an example which seemed to be troublesome to them."[95] Rousseau exaggerates his role, no doubt, but Diderot's violent reaction to his Cynic poverty and independence shows that the threat posed by the usurping Cynic was far from illusory. The brutality of the following invective (which appears, as out of the blue, in Diderot's *Réfutation d'Helvétius*) indicates how deeply Diderot felt the need to justify himself to the new Diogenes:

> Yes, Monsieur Rousseau, I prefer vice refined and cloaked in silk to brute stupidity under a bearskin mantle.
>
> I prefer voluptuousness between gold panels and on the softness of palace cushions to misery pale, dirty, and ugly stretched out on the humid and unwholesome ground and hidden along with fear in the depth of a savage lair.[96]

Gone are all traces of the admiration Diderot had bestowed upon Diogenes' poverty in his *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre* or the esteem he still felt for the ancient Cynic's political courage in the *Essai sur les règnes de Claude*

et de Néron. More than an attack on Rousseau, the passage reads as a self-justification, a means of keeping at arm's length the mirror image of himself represented by Rousseau, that other, dirty Cynic, the Diogenes that Diderot, for all his denials, never ceased to admire.

Diderot's anger at Rousseau can also be explained by his feeling that Rousseau had betrayed the intellectual role he was intended to play in the Enlightenment republic of letters. Rousseau's Cynic attributes—his rejection of polite conventions and his penchant for diatribe—had held the promise of becoming instruments of great power for the philosophes. Jean Fabre argues convincingly that Diderot had hoped to turn Rousseau into the "philosophe de choc" of the Parisian circle, the one among them who dared to speak the truth plainly.[97] At the Salon of 1753 Diderot expressed dismay at the genteel version of Jean-Jacques he encountered in Maurice Quentin Latour's elegant portrait, deeming it a betrayal of Rousseau's indifference and courage.[98] His later attacks on Rousseau as an inelegant and brutish figure suggest, however, that Jean-Jacques had gone too far in his role as literary censor. Like Old Man Dialogue in Lucian's *Double Indictment,* who brought the Cynic to trial for having betrayed his trust and spoiled his philosophical plans, Diderot accuses Rousseau of having backstabbed the philosophes.[99] Like his Syrian predecessor, Rousseau overstepped the acceptable limits of Cynicism within philosophical discourse by making a mockery of his benefactors and their work of social and intellectual critique.

The Rejection of Cynicism

Rousseau dates his turn to Cynicism from his arrival in Paris, where identification with Diogenes enabled him to forge a moral persona opposed to the mores of the capital and the worldly values of its literati. But if Cynicism suited the young moralist, it proved less amenable to the budding political theorist. By the time he penned his *Social Contract,* in the early 1760s, Rousseau had cast off his Cynic cloak. The slow excision of Cynicism from Rousseau's thought can be traced back to the *Second Discourse,* where, beneath the unmistakable Cynic accents that were to earn him Voltaire's scathing insult "Singe de Diogène!" Rousseau begins to distance himself from the Cynic sect.

Among the Cynic overtones of the two *Discourse*s one might mention the critique of the arts and sciences and the attendant condemnation of luxury as antithetical to happiness and virtue;[100] the conviction that freedom depends on reducing one's needs to a minimum; the rejection of birth, rank, and property

as the basis for social hierarchies; the critique of hypocrisy and the praise of transparency; and the use of nature as a basis for critiquing society. Yet Rousseau mentions Diogenes by name only once in the two *Discourse*s.[101] When the Cynic finally makes his appearance, lantern in hand, in the last pages of the *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes,* he does so, moreover, only to immediately cede his place to a more civic-minded model from antiquity, Cato. Having summarized the stages of human development, Rousseau concludes by saying that "every attentive Reader . . . will sense that, the human Race of one age not being the human Race of another, the reason Diogenes did not find a man was that he sought among his contemporaries the man of a time that no longer existed. Cato, he will say, perished with Rome and freedom because he was out of place in his century."[102]

The passage slides seamlessly from Diogenes to Cato, as if placing both men in the same category, that of untimely men. But the juxtaposition of Diogenes and Cato implies something else as well, that the true object of Diogenes' quest is a man who came after him and whom he could therefore not find: Cato, a man both virtuous and patriotic, a symbol of political liberty. In other words, the Cynicism of the first two *Discourse*s, with its ringing primitivism, is and must only be a first step toward a higher goal, the construction of the citizen-man. Cynicism permits a critique of civilization and the state, but it must ultimately give way to a more forward-looking philosophy, a philosophy of progress. As Michèle Duchet put it,

> [The critique of civilized man] has no other function than to denounce the ills suffered by societies founded on inequality and, by this radical critique, to prepare their passage to a contract society. It is only in this new order of things that man, having invented a society worthy of his being and of the divine project, will enjoy the double happiness of being both man and virtuous. Far from being a rejection of sociality, Rousseau's anthropology is, on the contrary, its exaltation: man finds here the vocation . . . to become "a moral being, a reasonable animal, the king of animals, and the image of God on earth." It is not civilization, then, that Rousseau fights against, but a state of alienation that is the very negation of civilization. The question he invites us to ask is not, how can we un-civilized ourselves? but rather, what is a civil society *worthy* of the name?[103]

By the time Rousseau wrote his *Social Contract,* he no longer saw freedom as the prerogative of natural man; instead, he equated freedom with submission to the law and the general will. As early as the dedication of the *Second Discourse,* he had proclaimed, "I would have wished to live and die free, that is to

say so subject to the laws that neither I nor anyone else could shake off their honorable yoke."[104] Whereas the two *Discourse*s still looked back nostalgically to a lost state of nature and a primitive form of Cynicism, the *Social Contract* aims to de-nature man so as to mold him into a true citizen: "One who dares to undertake the founding of a people should feel that he is capable of changing human nature, so to speak; . . . of altering man's constitution."[105] Cynicism has given way to the alienation of the individual in the collective. Diogenes' republic, with its mocking disregard of laws and taboos and its unrepentant celebration of nature over culture, has no place in Rousseau's project for a new republic. Cynicism served him as a foil against which to show up the ills of society; it can take him no further.

It is significant that Wieland, when gently mocking Diogenes-Rousseau's social and political ideal, paints a republic that has little in common with the one we encounter in the *Social Contract.* The republic he portrays resembles the golden age of the *Second Discourse* and the *Essay on the Origins of Language,* in which laws are as yet unheard of and the accents of Cynicism are still audible. For Rousseau, however, republicanism had long left Cynicism behind. Diogenes could serve as an ethical model, but politically he had nothing to offer. The moral qualities of the ancient Cynics that had set Rousseau on his course could take him only so far: they could not suffice when it came to imagining a just and equitable society.

And yet Rousseau's final farewell to Diogenes came not from a deeply felt political conviction but from personal disillusionment. In the eighth *rêverie,* the now aged writer casts himself one last time as Diogenes, only to admit the failure of the Cynic enterprise:

> After having sought ten years for a man in vain, *I finally had to extinguish my lantern* and cry out: "There are no more!" Then I began to see myself alone on earth and I understood that in relation to me my contemporaries were nothing more than automatons who acted only on impulse and whose actions I could calculate only from the laws of motion. Whatever intention, whatever passion, I might have supposed in their souls would never have explained their conduct with respect to me in a way I could have understood. Thus their interior dispositions ceased to be of any importance to me. I no longer saw in them anything but randomly moving masses, destitute of all morality with respect to me.[106]

The Diogenes of the *Second Discourse* was untimely but not without purpose: he laid the groundwork for Cato, just as the young Jean-Jacques cleared the ground for his *Social Contract* and his *Emile.* The Cynic we encounter in the

final *promenades* has neither hope nor faith. Walled in by mechanical men, puppets without souls, he snuffs out his candle and retreats from the world. In the end, what causes the Cynic to cast off his cloak is not censorship or the need for effective social change but the state of humanity, ruined beyond redemption. The Cynic is defeated by the rampant cynicism of his contemporaries: Rousseau bows his head before Rameau's nephew. The path is open for the development of a new form of Cynicism, one that leads from Diderot's mischievous nephew to his dark twin, Sade's *cynique* Dolmancé.

5 *Français, encore un effort!*

Sade's Cynic Republic

As Rousseau's rejection of Cynicism makes plain and Wieland's moderate Cynic cosmopolitanism confirms, Diogenes' primitivism spelled trouble for the social reformer. Both authors are right to argue that the Cynic's shameless and antisocial ways could marginalize the social critic and render his work ineffective, but what is lost in abandoning Cynicism for a moderate republic of letters or a republican model? This was the question that occupied one wayward child of the Enlightenment, the Marquis de Sade.

Sade plays an important role in defining the relationship between Cynicism and the Enlightenment; he stands at a crucial juncture in the growing split between Cynicism in its ancient and modern meanings: he revives key aspects of ancient Cynicism that the philosophes had deliberately written out of the concept even as he lays the foundations for our modern definition of cynicism as disillusioned self-interest. This raises an interesting conceptual and (in English, though not in French) orthographic problem, as it calls into question the clear split the English language has established between the philosophical (uppercase) *Cynicism* and its lowercase counterpart.

Cynic Prefaces

Sade uses the word *cynique* and its cognates sparingly in his work. The term appears with some insistence, however, in the front matter of three of his novels, with increasing intensity. Sade first describes his work as cynical in

the dedication to *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu.* Addressing his virtuous dedicatee, Constance, he writes:

> Detesting the sophisms of libertinage and impiety, combating them ceaselessly as you do in both deed and discourse, not for your sake do I fear the fruit of those scenes necessitated in these memoirs by the manner of persons represented, nor will the *cynicism* of certain [traits] [*le cynisme de certains crayons*]—tempered though it be as much as possible—alarm you.[1]

In a clever double move, Sade simultaneously claims Cynicism for himself and distances himself from the claim by displacing the Cynicism onto his characters and denying its corrosive effects on the reader. But by the time *La nouvelle Justine* came to press he had cast such caution to the wind. Sade excised the dedication from his revised and expanded edition of the text, but he deemed the notion of Cynicism important enough to insert the adjective *cynique* in the revised prefatory pages of the novel. Where the opening pages of the first *Justine* caution,

> Such are the sentiments which are to guide this work, and it is in light of these intentions that we ask the reader's indulgence for the erroneous theories which are placed in the mouths of several of our characters and for the somewhat strong situations which, out of love for the truth, we have occasionally been obliged to present to his eyes.[2]

La nouvelle Justine boasts,

> Such are the sentiments which are to guide this work, and it is in light of these intentions that, uniting *the most cynical language* with the strongest and boldest systems, with the most immoral and impious ideas [*unissant le langage le plus cynique aux systèmes les plus forts et les plus hardis, aux idées les plus immorales et les plus impies*], we will, with a courageous audacity, paint crime as it is, that is, always triumphant and sublime, always happy and fortunate, and virtue as one also sees it, always sullen and sad, always pedantic and always unhappy.[3]

The tone of the prefatory pages changes from one edition to the next, from mock innocence to the proud affirmation of impiety and immorality. Addressing not one virtuous reader but all readers, constant and otherwise, Sade warns us to brace ourselves for the audacity of his novel. The third reference to Cynicism, in the dedication to *La philosophie dans le boudoir,* goes further yet. Warnings give way to appeals as Sade urges his readers ("vous, aimables

débauchés" [you, amiable debauchees]) to take the example of "le cynique Dolmancé," the novel's notorious libertine:

> Voluptuaries of all ages, of every sex, it is to you only that I offer this work; nourish yourselves upon its principles. . . . And you, amiable debauchees, you who since youth have known no limits but those of your desires and who have been governed by your caprices alone, study the cynical Domancé [*que le cynique Dolmancé vous serve d'exemple*].[4]

With each novel, Sade draws the reader further into his inner circle. Constance does not resemble the novel's Cynic characters at all; the readers interpellated in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* do, or will, the text intimates, by the time they close the book. The novels have begun to spread their C/cynicism throughout society.[5]

Few and passing though these references are, their location in the front matter of three of Sade's major works, in direct addresses to his readers, grants them a particular prominence: Sade employs the adjective *cynique* when discussing his own work, inviting us to do the same. What does he mean by the term? The first two uses of the term remain close to dictionary definitions of the period, which apply the adjective *cynique* to an impudent, often obscene tone or style. The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux,* following Furetière's seventeenth-century *Dictionnaire universel,* explains, "The Cynics' impudent manners have given the epithet *Cynic* to expressions that are overly bold and offend propriety,"[6] and it illustrates the definition with the following lines from Boileau: "Régnier du son hardi de ses rimes cyniques / Allarme trop souvent les oreilles pudiques" (For virgin ears there is nothing worse / Than Régnier's bold and cynic verse). Sade is here heir to Régnier's literary cheek; he speaks of "le cynisme de certains crayons" and "le langage le plus cynique," making Cynicism primarily a question of style, the insolent transgressing of social decorum. But in the third case, the dedication to *La philosophie dans le boudoir, cynique* no longer simply denotes a manner of speaking or writing; it describes a character, an attitude or ethos incarnate in the arch-libertine Dolmancé, a philosopher who claims to be a direct descendant of the philosophical luminaries of the eighteenth century, from Voltaire to Rousseau and Buffon. Sade's Cynicism demands to be interpreted in dialogue with the philosophes' uses of the ancient sect.

A brief portrait of "le cynique Dolmancé" will help discern what Cynicism meant for Sade and how it relates to the Cynicism of a Diderot and a D'Alembert. Like most of Sade's libertines, Dolmancé is an elegant aristocrat endowed with a penis of daunting proportions and a decided *penchant* for

boys. With great verve and good humor he introduces the innocent Eugénie to the pleasures of the flesh (from masturbation and cunnilingus to sodomy and flagellation), all the while peppering his demonstrations with philosophical sermons that aim to divest Eugénie of all previously held beliefs. Well-versed in eighteenth-century philosophy, Dolmancé calls upon Voltaire, Rousseau, and Buffon to tear down, one by one, the prejudices that form Eugénie's moral code: modesty, virtue, religion, chastity, beneficence, charity, sensibility. Having philosophically dispatched the virtues, he defends the vices—rape, incest, murder, parricide. Eugénie herself will draw the lesson from Dolmancé's philosophy: "In the light of what you tell me, it seems, Dolmancé, that there is nothing on earth as indifferent as the committing of good or evil; ought not our tastes, our temperaments alone counsel us?" (217; 3:401). Sade's libertines call upon the philosophes only to turn them against themselves, voiding the attack on prejudices of the deeply moral impulse that governed the life work of a Voltaire or a Rousseau. For Dolmancé, relativity of values signifies the negation of all values, and sensualism becomes a principle of unfettered pleasure seeking. Cynicism emerges in Sade as a philosophy of moral nihilism and self-seeking gratification that strongly presages our modern use of the term.

The result, as in Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau,* is a deeply disturbing reflection on the relationship between Enlightenment and Cynicism. Like his predecessor, Sade declares cynicism, in its less savory acceptation, the result, rather than the antithesis, of the philosophes' intellectual and social labor. If we borrow Peter Sloterdijk's definition of the modern cynic as the perverse product of the Enlightenment, the Marquis de Sade is the modern cynic par excellence. He has learnt the lessons of the Enlightenment (the undermining of tradition and authority, the questioning of social and religious codes of behavior, the unraveling of a teleological world), but rather than seek to build a better society on the rubble of the old, he retreats into an attitude of pragmatic opportunism. In Sloterdijk's words, "Modern cynicism presents itself as that state of consciousness that follows *after* naïve ideologies and their enlightenment. . . . Modern cynicism is *enlightened false consciousness.*"[7] As the immediate heir of the Enlightenment and an avid reader of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the French materialists, Sade can claim the honor of being one of the first true cynics in the modern sense of the term, an early, perverse product of the Age of Reason.

Amid the polished Diogenes that peopled the salons of the latter eighteenth century, "le cynique Dolmancé" cuts, that is, a strange and ugly figure. The philosophes claimed to revive Cynicism after its philosophical condem-

nation in seventeenth-century France by purifying it, cleansing it of its too sharp tongue, its rejection of civilization, its shameless sexuality. Sade partakes of this revival, but he does so by reactivating those aspects of ancient Cynicism that the philosophes and Rousseau (despite his contemporaries' efforts to claim otherwise) had deliberately erased. In so doing, he simultaneously shows the limits of the philosophes' would-be Cynicism and transforms the concept Cynicism. We can better understand the work Sade performs on the concept by seeing how, like Rameau's nephew, he remints certain key Cynic principles. In chapter 3 we saw that *Le Neveu de Rameau* effected a subtle transvaluation of three key Cynic values: free speech, a life lived according to nature, and faithfulness to the oracle's injunction *parakharattein to nomisma,* "deface the currency." Sade makes a similar move, though we shall see that he has cast off the nephew's discomfort with the role of disabused, self-seeking rogue; his antisocial antics take him further than Rameau in the exploration of Cynic negativity, and here he comes closer to Diogenes' politics than either Wieland's Cynic cosmopolitanism or Rousseau's own brand of primitivism.

The Site of Cynicism

The ancient Cynics lived in public places, flaunting their rudeness in the marketplace of Athens. They did so to oppose the distinction between the private and public spheres of life and to reveal the hypocrisy of public norms of behavior. The philosophes shifted the site of Cynicism from the marketplace to the salon, a semi-public space temporarily divorced from the demands of daily life but ruled nonetheless by a strict set of behavioral codes. Rather than knock down the opposition between the private and the public, the philosophical Cynic of the eighteenth century sought to define a space (the salon) in which he could negotiate between the private and the public and publish (make public) his opinions. It is significant that D'Alembert's call for the Diogenes of his age to step forth occurs in an essay on "la société des gens de lettres et des grands," in which he aims to define a space for the intellectual (the society of men and women of letters) unfettered by the desires and interests of high society. Diogenes enters the philosophical debates as the man courageous enough to stand up to the rich and the powerful, but as a social reformer inhabiting an intermediary space between the private and the public, he carefully keeps at bay the indecently private (bodily functions but also asocial opinions), which would tarnish his image as a good citizen.

When Sade revives the indecency of Cynicism, he does so not in the streets

of Paris or in the salons but in the privacy of the boudoir. The site of Cynicism in modernity shifts to the private domain. Cynicism slinks out of the public eye, returning to the marketplace only in clandestine publications. *La philosophie dans le boudoir* was printed anonymously as "the posthumous work of the author of *Justine,*"[8] a work whose authorship Sade repeatedly denied. The Cynic now works in secret. The comparison with *Le Neveu de Rameau* is telling: Diderot sets his dialogue in the public sphere, outside a café in the Palais-Royal, as if attempting to broaden the acceptable range of discussion in the salons and coffeehouses, but he never published his novel, nor, as far as we know, did he show it to his contemporaries. Cynicism as a public strategy had failed. The historical reality of censorship had pushed the philosophes to renounce Cynic satire and indecency in favor of a more discreet and reasonable Cynicism. In the writings of Diderot, D'Alembert, and Wieland, the Cynic accommodates himself to historical reality by cleaning up his act; in Sade, he accommodates himself to the reality of the day by *hiding* his act.

Truth-telling

Sade transforms Cynicism from an act of public frankness into the art of hypocrisy. The libertines in the *La philosophie dans le boudoir* teach Eugénie to see through the veneer of our moral codes, but they also instruct her in deceit and subterfuge. She learns the virtues of adultery but also techniques for hiding her infidelities from her (future) husband.[9] The frank Cynic becomes the master of hypocrisy. This ironic perversion of honesty, the Cynic virtue most prized by the philosophes, paves the way toward our modern understanding of the concept, in which cynicism denotes an attitude of pragmatic opportunism and a lucid accommodation with the norms of society. As Cynicism folds inward, into the private space of the boudoir, the Cynic abandons his public gestures of protest. Sade's *Philosophie dans le boudoir* would appear to spell the demise of Cynicism as a means of effective social contestation and its perversion into a tool of social advancement.

Yet Sade's two-faced libertines, by promoting the use of hypocrisy, in fact flaunt the political subterfuges that the philosophes relied upon in the cross references of the *Encyclopédie* and in their other underground activities. Sade, then, does not so much betray the Cynic ideal of free speech as adapt it to the political reality of censorship in eighteenth-century France. This ability to adapt parrhesia to the situation at hand, at the cost of perverting its basic principle, is, somewhat paradoxically, a most Cynic principle. Cynicism is

premised on parrhesia, as in the famous anecdote in which Diogenes rudely dismisses Alexander the Great, but Cynic speech should not be understood as referring only to defiant honesty; the Cynic makes use of a wide repertoire of linguistic strategies, from puns to parody and satire. Sade's ability to adjust the Cynic ideal of free speech to his own political reality is very much in keeping with Cynic adaptability and Cynic rhetoric, which Robert Bracht Branham describes as "a concrete yet malleable demonstration of a *modus dicendi,* a way of adapting verbally to (usually hostile) circumstances. It is this process of invention, this applied rhetoric, that constitutes the Cynic's discourse, a process in which strategies of survival and rhetorical strategies repeatedly converge and coalesce."[10]

The libertines employ hypocrisy not only to get ahead but also as a philosophical exercise, a means of parodying, and thereby calling into question, our fictions of the social. Adept at shifting between personas (from the pose of the virtuous wife to the stance of upright moralist), the libertines reveal social roles to be fictions without inherent necessity; among these roles, that of the good philosopher and trustworthy pedagogue bears the brunt of Sade's critique. By mocking the ideal of the socially respectable and responsible philosophe, Sade exposes the grotesquery of the attempt of some of the philosophes to conflate the demands of *bienséance* with the rigors of courageous philosophical inquiry. Diderot, likewise aware of this danger, places the critique of philosophical respectability in the mouth of an avowed heir to Diogenes, Rameau's nephew. The nephew shares with Sade's libertines the ability to move with dexterity from one position to another. This enables him to maintain a degree of freedom from social constraint that is denied his interlocutor, the philosopher–Moi, who, playing the role of virtuous citizen, has let himself be lulled into the "tedious uniformity that our social conventions and set politenesses have brought about."[11]

The nephew and Sade's libertines after him mock the pieties of eighteenth-century philosophy. They employ a language that is crude and wittily polite in turn (the words *fuck* and *my dear Chevalier* tumble happily together from Dolmancé's mouth, as do philosophical dissertations mingled with cries of ecstasy), thereby offending the conventions of philosophical discourse in eighteenth-century France. In this they revive a key aspect of ancient Cynicism, its humor, which Diogenes aimed readily at Plato but which served more generally as a strategy for exposing social norms as man-made fictions. In Mary Douglas's words, "Essentially a joke is an anti-rite. . . . The message of a standard rite is that the ordained patterns of social life are inescapable. The

message of a joke is that they are escapable."[12] By sullying accepted discursive conventions, even those attached to Cynic parrhesia, Sade stays true to the Cynic motto "Deface the currency."[13]

Sex, Shamelessness, and Animal Nature

Philosophical respectability led the philosophes to deny, at least in their official discourse, any connection with Cynic sexual shamelessness. D'Alembert described Diogenes as a philosopher "who lacked only decency to be the true model of the wise man";[14] Diderot hesitated between flatly refuting all tales of Cynic indecency (as in his article "Cynique" for the *Encyclopédie*) and seeking to account for Diogenes' impudent sexual practices by declaring them techniques for gaining independence (as in Moi's discourse in *Le Neveu de Rameau*). Sade, by contrast, reclaimed the full force of Cynic licentiousness, but he did so, rather disturbingly, by rewriting it as pornography, a concept alien to the philosophy of the ancient Cynics. How, then, are we to understand the relationship between Dolmancé and his Greek ancestor?

A first reading leads one to conclude, solidly though perhaps too hastily, that comparing Sade to Diogenes is absurd. Nothing in the ancient Cynics suggests Sade's sexual games. The Cynics' public displays of indecency functioned primarily as a critique of the social virtue of shame and as means of reclaiming natural bodily needs, and the right to satisfy them, over and against socially created wants and desires. As I argued in chapter 1, Diogenes' commitment to living according to nature had three principal functions. First, as a method of self-perfection, the commitment to animal nature enabled the Cynic to rid himself of socially created wants and desires, while recognizing as natural, and hence worthy of satisfaction, those desires that are, in the words of Lovejoy and Boas, "primary, universal, instinctive and irrepressible . . . shown to be 'natural' by the fact that they can be easily and equally gratified by all men."[15] This definition came to designate a commitment to simplicity (the reduction of needs to a minimum) but also to adaptability and a certain form of pragmatism.

Second, as a method of social critique, the return to animal nature enabled the Cynics to measure the social norms of their day against the simplicity of animal need. They attacked the social distinction between private and public acts, for instance, by eating and urinating in the marketplace, as animals do. And finally, the decision to play the dog served as a touchstone for questioning accepted definitions of what it means to be human. Cynic nature

entailed a fundamental reevaluation of the nature of man and his place in the universe, at the cost of upsetting the key notions of reason and self-mastery often associated with nature in Hellenistic philosophy. The Dogs' attack on human dignity went beyond a critique of social mores in the name of a natural good (and in this sense, far beyond Rousseau). Diogenes pressed the question of animality so far as to mock such sacred prohibitions as cannibalism and incest, two social taboos that Sade would gleefully break.

Sade undeniably transforms Cynic shamelessness by sexualizing it, but he nevertheless remains true to ancient Cynicism insofar as his depictions of sexual acts are deliberately provocative, intended to unseat our sense of what is right, proper, or natural. Like Diogenes, he uses the body to break social taboos and oppose the law (the pamphlet *Francais, encore un effort si vous voulez être Républicains!* is a case in point); again like Diogenes, he refuses to conflate nature with an inherent beneficence. To follow the three functions outlined above, one might say that Sade remains true to the second and third functions of Cynic nature (nature understood as social protest and as a radical unsettling of human nature), while betraying or perverting the first (the reduction of needs to a minimum).

It is in reviving the third aspect of Cynic nature that Sade most forcefully reclaims ancient Cynicism from what might be perceived as the anemic Cynicism of the philosophes. Cynic nature was, by and large, valued negatively by the Encyclopédistes, who tended to associate it (as did Wieland) with Rousseau and, more specifically, with a reductive interpretation of Rousseauesque nature as a primitivistic rejection of progress, civilization, and sociability. We also find Cynic nature associated negatively with materialism, as in Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau.* Here the social parasite and failed artist, Rameau's nephew, is both a declared Cynic and a ruthless materialist who adopts a deterministic materialist pose (the famous "fiber" argument) to defend his pragmatic opportunism. Whether Cynic nature is taken to denote primitivism or fibrous materialism, it is almost invariably decried as antisocial and rejected as antithetical to humanist values. Even materialist sympathizers such as Diderot and Holbach turned their backs on the most radical of French materialists, Julien Offroy de La Mettrie, alarmed by the social implications of his biological determinism and his refusal to make happiness dependent on virtue.[16] They upheld a concept of nature and natural law that had no truck with either asocial primitivism or morally suspect materialism.

Sade turns the work of the philosophes on its head by taking their materialism to its logical conclusion and openly denying any connection between

natural laws and the social good. For this reason, pity and sympathy, two sentiments considered natural and indispensable in eighteenth-century moral philosophy, figure importantly among the principles that Dolmancé urges Eugénie to abandon. In this, Sade goes further than Diderot or Wieland in his mockery of Kant's ideal Cynic, Rousseau: as Marcel Hénaff has argued, it is by an "ironically opposite use of the concept of nature" that Sade overthrows the links between nature and pity and between pity and the social order that were crucial to Rousseau's social system and that marked contemporary theories of the social contract.[17] Rameau's nephew had paved the way for such a position when he defended as natural a Hobbesian war of all against all, thus implicitly rejecting Rousseau's description of the first state of nature. But Rameau's nephew was content to let the Cynic commitment to nature signify a commitment to pragmatic opportunism: the natural designates the ordinary, petty order of the world, and Cynicism, or a life lived according to nature, signifies accommodating oneself to this reality by adopting as one's own the masks and subterfuges of society. Natural man is mediocre man: the nephew admires the sublime, evil actions of the Renegade of Avignon but cannot rise to imitate them. The modern cynic as portrayed by Diderot is a man disabused of his faith in the goodness of humanity yet unable to shake a last vestige of belief in the world he has left behind. Racked by self-doubt and self-loathing, the modern cynic cannot rise above his discontent and join the ranks of monstrous criminals or free spirits.

Sade builds on this position but transforms it by making the Renegade's position, not the nephew's, the emblem of the natural. Nature, for Sade, is not the mediocre, everyday reality of petty social behaviors but the indifferent laws of permanent creation and destruction, of which the Cynic gleefully partakes. Pressing materialist philosophy to its logical conclusion, Sade does more than displace man by establishing a continuity between the vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms; he embraces the perverse and beastly man as natural, thereby mounting a full-fledged attack on the human dignity so central to eighteenth-century thought.[18] Sade stands in relation to the philosophes as Diogenes does to Socrates: he is the philosophe gone mad, threatening, in his staunch critique of all pieties (including belief in the propagation of the human species), to destroy the very possibility of human existence. In his rejection of an anthropocentric view of the universe, in his courage to look the beast in the face, Sade remains true to ancient Cynicism's scandalous undermining of taboos and its radical questioning of what it means to be human.

The question remains, however, how to account for the perverse eroticism

and unflinching cruelty of Sade's prototypical Cynic. A first answer may be gleaned from the history of the reception of Cynicism. In the ancient sources the tales of Diogenes' indecency are simply anecdotes among others, without privileged status. But during the Christian era these episodes took on the full force of scandal: medieval commentators and seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation writers alike censored the Cynics for their shamelessness, and it is within the context of Christianity's repression of the sexual that Sade claims Cynicism as inherently perverse. If Sade privileges sodomy, as Diogenes does not, this is because homosexuality did not bear the stamp of criminality in Athens while in eighteenth-century France it was punishable by the death penalty. If we accept that Cynicism is a philosophy devoted to the breaking of taboos, sex emerges in the eighteenth century as a prime target of Cynic critique.

Second, we must bear in mind that Cynicism continuously accrues meanings throughout its history: early commentators conflate it with Stoicism; seventeenth-century French writers associate it, negatively, with Epicureanism. Sade's Cynicism is strongly colored by Epicurean philosophy as filtered, in particular, through the French libertine tradition, and his emphasis on the maximizing of pleasure makes plain the impossibility of seeking an unalloyed transmission of the Cynic tradition.[19] Third, we must keep in mind that ancient Cynicism did not espouse asceticism for its own sake. The Cynic motto was not "Deny yourself" but "Satisfy your natural needs in the simplest and most immediate manner possible." It is only a step, though a crucial one, from this subtle hedonism to Sade's rampant pleasure seeking.

This step hinges upon Sade's redefinition of Cynic natural need. The ancient Cynics delimited basic human needs through common sense (we quite simply and evidently need a minimum of food and shelter) and through a process of cross-cultural and cross-species comparisons: those desires deemed perverse by civilized Athens that were nevertheless widely practiced among other peoples or other species gained the stamp of "nature" (thus incest, which, Diogenes mischievously reports, is practiced by cocks, dogs, asses—and Persians).[20] Sade employs a similar approach in determining natural desires, but his use of common sense and cultural comparisons is so outrageous that they end up signaling the impossibility of determining what counts as natural. Take, for instance, the following humorous argument in defense of anal sex:

> LE CHEVALIER: in women I really love only the altar Nature indicates for the rendering of an homage.

> DOLMANCÉ: Why, and to be sure, and it's the ass! My dear Chevalier, never did Nature, if you scrupulously examine her ordinations, never did Nature indicate another altar for our offerings than the asshole, but this latter she expressly commands. Ah, by God! were not her intention that we fuck assholes, would she have so exactly proportioned this orifice to fit our member? Is not his aperture circular, like this instrument? Why, then! What person, no matter how great an enemy of common sense, can imagine that an oval hole could have been created for our cylindrical pricks! (264–65; 3:448)

Despite Dolmancé's claims to the contrary, his discourse confirms the suspicion that nature is always determined by human interest. Cross-cultural and, less often, cross-species references function in a similar fashion: they ostensibly justify certain acts as natural (incest, sodomy, murder), but because Sade piles reference upon reference, drawing indiscriminately on all regions and periods of history, the arguments resemble a potpourri, or satire, rather than a serious attempt to distinguish the natural from the cultural. Neither the human body, nor human history, nor even the animal kingdom can properly serve as a touchstone for determining the boundary between nature and culture. "The libertine apology of the physiological determinism of pleasure," writes Jean-Marc Kehres, "points, in fact, and ostentatiously so, to the arbitrariness of all naturalist discourse."[21]

Nature, then, is what the libertine makes of it: his desires and whims are labeled natural and posited as normative for all society. Diogenes relied on nature to limit his desires; Sade calls on nature to justify the loosing of one's passions. In the history of the reception of Cynicism, Sade marks the moment at which the Cynic ethics of simplicity or "reduction" becomes an ethics of "romantic expansion."[22] It ushers in the image of the Cynic as *poète maudit.*

This narrative of the historical transformation of Cynicism from a philosophy of ascetic reduction in Diogenes to one of self-aggrandizement and libidinous energy in Sade is complicated, however, by Sade's theory of apathy. Paradoxically, any reading of Sade as advocate of an unfettered hedonism is contradicted in his texts by his libertines' commitment to a rigorous denial of the passions. The aggressive self-aggrandizing of the libertines through sex is matched by a philosophy of radical dispossession. Dolmancé teaches his pupil to pursue pleasure—to follow her instincts—but he also, and surprisingly, instructs her to mistrust her instincts and to pursue perversion whether or not she feels so inclined. This denial of one's desires is translated as "apathy," a

concept that has strong Cynic and Stoic resonance: "Ah, Eugenie, believe me when I tell you that the delights born of apathy are worth much more than those you get of your sensibility" (342; 3:527).

Philippe Roger has argued that Sade transforms the concept apathy by divorcing it from its primary function in ancient Greek philosophy, that of achieving self-mastery: "Apathy no longer appears as the Stoic virtue that would reintroduce into the libertine discourse an 'ideal' of self-mastery. On the contrary, and this is where the rerouting of the notion seems meaningful, apathy is a mechanical procedure, and its mainspring is the habit of doing evil."[23] I would add that while Sade does indeed pervert the Stoic notion of apathy, in so doing he rejoins Diogenes, whose own use of apathy upset traditional notions of reason and self-mastery. The Cynics pushed the principle of independence to such extremes that it flipped into its opposite: the king of independence is also a beggar, hand outstretched for a crumb. Apathy functions, in Sade as in ancient Cynicism, as a technique for divesting the self of any remaining ties to social conventions. It is a method for stripping the "social" from the libertine's body and hardening oneself against feelings of pity and remorse. As an active and impersonal principle, apathy deals the last blow to the edifice of the ego, such that Sade's pursuit of pleasure becomes the pursuit of a radical dispossession. As Philippe Mengue puts it, Sade "represents, opposite Kantian autonomy, a philosophy of dispossession, which is something that interpreters did not perceive, hypnotized as they were by the all too showy sovereignty of the sadist 'master.' "[24]

And yet it is right to point out that in Sade, apathy, or the stripping away of human qualities, serves primarily to accustom the libertine to doing evil. In this it leaves the ancient Cynics far behind. *La philosophie dans le boudoir* begins as a comical sexual romp involving happily consenting parties, but it turns ugly in the final two dialogues, when Eugénie's mother appears on the scene only to be subjected, against her will, to acts of unspeakable cruelty. This cruelty must be understood as the outcome and last stage of the libertine's training in apathy. When Eugénie brutalizes her mother, her cruelty is the physical manifestation of her successful education, the proof that she has indeed rid herself of all submission to parental authority and to any feeling of pity. The new human is cruel because cruelty is the gauge of one's inhumanity, one's overcoming of common human ties. Cruelty was always latent in Cynicism, as can be seen in the verbal humiliation Diogenes inflicted on his interlocutors. Although Diogenes' cruelty stops short of Sade's cat-and-mouse games,

it functions, as in Sade, as a token of the Cynic's commitment to free speech and as proof of his detachment from social ties. The Cynic motto "Deface the currency," transvalue all values, is a principle of social and moral perversion, with all the ambiguity and scurrility this implies.

Sade contra Rousseau

Whereas Rameau's nephew aimed his barbs chiefly at a parodic version of his Cynic author, Diderot, and his philosophical coterie, Sade, in his apathetic rejection of pity, targets the one key Cynic whom Rameau does not mention and whom the philosophes shunned, Rousseau. My argument is that Sade turns Cynicism against Rousseau and that in so doing, he goes further than Diderot's nephew in undermining the social contract: he operates "une véritable falsification du politique," to borrow an expression Jean-Michel Gros applies to La Mothe Le Vayer and Cyrano de Bergerac's libertine Cynicism, thereby simultaneously betraying the ethical imperative inherent in Cynicism and reviving the full resonance of Diogenes of Sinope's rejection of politics and the polis.[25]

The argument that Sade employs Cynicism against Rousseau may strike one as a rather grand claim given that Sade refers to Rousseau only sparingly in his writings. Roger counts five mentions of Rousseau in the published works and barely more in the correspondence.[26] Yet few scholars will contest that *Justine* and *La nouvelle Justine,* where the word *cynique* first appears, are knowing parodies of *La nouvelle Héloïse.* Rousseau's Julie, a shining example of virtue recompensed, finds her twin counterparts in Sade's virtuous but devastatingly unfortunate Justine and her wicked but prosperous sister, Juliette; and the preface to *La nouvelle Justine* gleefully stands on its head the narrative and moral logic of *La nouvelle Héloïse.* Rousseau promises in his second preface to counter the corruption of the world with examples of virtue: his novels contain, he writes, "not a single evil deed; not a single wicked man to make us fear for the good ones."[27] Sade's works, on the other hand, teem with bad men and bad actions and set out to counter Rousseau's claim by proving virtue vain and crime alone "always happy and fortunate."

Another, subtler connection links Sade's preface to Rousseau's. Élie-Catherine Fréron, in a review of *La nouvelle Héloïse* for the *Année littéraire* in 1761, had criticized the preface for its Cynic tone: "Is this harsh and haughty tone the language of Philosophy? It was that of Diogenes, who judged the universe

from his tub & believed himself an important personage for having insulted Alexander, who was great enough to scorn the monkey Philosopher."[28] Nothing indicates that Sade had read Fréron's review, but the use of the adjective *cynique* in one case and of its correlate, the "tone . . . of Diogenes," in the other to describe two prefaces with opposite intents links Rousseau and Sade and helps chart the changing connotations of the concept Cynicism in the late eighteenth century.

What do our writers mean when they speak of a Cynical language? Fréron's "harsh and haughty tone" designates arrogance, in particular the inflated self-importance of the mediocre man. By setting up a contrast between Diogenes' circumscribed tub and the vast universe he thinks himself worthy of judging, Fréron expresses his disdain for the pronouncements of the commoner who has overstepped the limits of his knowledge and the bounds of his social standing. To speak Cynically means to speak out of turn, arrogantly, and, Fréron implies, erroneously. Diogenes stands for free speech, or parrhesia, but a parrhesia used improperly, without knowledge or concern for truth.[29] A "Cynic" tone, as we saw in Furetière's and Trévoux's dictionaries, was brash, impolite, impolitic, and not infrequently obscene, a definition Fréron applies, we presume, less to Rousseau's sentimental novel than to its first preface, with its vaunt that "this book is not meant to circulate in society, and is suitable for very few readers. The style will put off people of taste; the contents will alarm strict people; all the sentiments will be unnatural to those who do not believe in virtue. It is bound to displease the devout, the libertines, the philosophers."[30] To pair libertines and philosophes was common and a leading strategy of the anti-Encyclopédistes clan, in which Fréron was an important figure; but to throw the *dévots* into the mix was to overstep all bounds. It was morally, if not sexually, obscene.

When Sade describes his style as Cynical in the preface to *La nouvelle Justine,* he uses the term in much the same sense, but he now values the term positively. By associating "the most Cynical language" with "the most immoral and impious ideas," he equates Cynicism with irreligion and criminality and makes the former the literary vehicle of the latter. Cynicism designates the language most fit to express criminal actions. The "langage le plus cynique" is a language turned against sociality, against, in Bataille's words, "loyalty to the other, which is at the basis of language."[31] Sade claims as his own the language that Fréron had ascribed to Rousseau. He steals Fréron's insult away from Rousseau, whom he deems unworthy of it, and parades it as a badge of honor. A letter he addressed to his wife in July 1783 confirms this point:

> Have the good sense to understand that Rousseau may be a dangerous author for bigots of your sort [and of Fréron's as well, one might add] and that he is an excellent book for me. Jean-Jacques is to me what an Imitation of Jesus Christ is to you. The morality and religion of Rousseau are for me very severe, and I read them when I wish to be edified.[32]

Where Cynicism is concerned, Sade seems to say, Rousseau is a novice at best.

Rousseau fares no better in *La Philosophie dans le boudoir.* As Roger has noted, two of the five references to Rousseau in Sade's published works occur in the boudoir, first on the lips of Madame de Saint Ange, then in the pamphlet *Francais, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains!* authored, we are led to believe, by none other than the "cynique Dolmancé." Both reference to Rousseau are taken from *La nouvelle Héloïse:* the first is to his views on adultery, the latter to his position on suicide. Both quote Rousseau against Rousseau, in a mocking debunking of the Genevan's praise of virtue, pity, and humanity. Madame de Saint Ange cites Rousseau approvingly as the only philosopher to have come up with a justifiable defense of fidelity—"But is it not horrible, say our husbands, to lay us open to cherishing as our own children, to embracing as ours the fruit of your licentiousness? The objection is Rousseau's; it is, I admit, the only faintly specious one wherewith adultery may be opposed" (223; 3:407)—a reference to Julie's famous letter on the sanctity of marriage in book 3, letter 18, of *La nouvelle Héloïse.* But Madame de Saint Ange approves of Rousseau's position only to pervert it into the basis for a justification of sodomy and infanticide. She concludes from Rousseau's premise not that one should remain faithful to one's spouse but rather that one must learn how to avoid having children from an adulterous relationship, through sodomy, for instance, or by promptly killing any unwanted offspring: "Well! Is it not extremely simple to surrender oneself to libertinage without fear of pregnancy? Is it not easier yet to check it if through our oversight or imprudence it should occur?" (223; 3:407). Sade turns Rousseau's defense of marriage into a celebration of non-procreation. As Dolmancé puts it, "Thus to cheat propagation of its rights and to contradict what fools call the laws of Nature, is truly most charming" (229; 3:414). One is reminded of Epictetus's defense of Diogenes for refusing to marry or procreate: "Who [does] mankind the greater service? Those who bring into the world some two or three ugly-snouted children to take their place, or those who exercise oversight, to the best of their ability, over all mankind, observing what they are doing, how they are spending their lives, what they are careful about, and what they undutifully neglect?"[33] Sade

turns Epictetus on his head by voiding the defense of non-procreation of its philanthropic mission: *La philosophie dans le boudoir* evokes Epictetus and invokes Rousseau only to spell the rupture of the social.

The second reference to Rousseau is no more respectful to the author of *La nouvelle Héloïse.* It occurs in the closing pages of the revolutionary pamphlet, in a discussion of the last category of duties and crimes, those of man toward himself: "The only offense of this order man can commit is suicide. I will not bother demonstrating here the imbecility of the people who make of this act a crime; those who might have any doubts upon the matter are referred to Rousseau's famous letter" (337; 3:522). The letter in question is Saint Preux's missive to Milord Edouard in book 3, letter 21, of *La nouvelle Héloïse.* Sade sides with Rousseau here, but with a twist: he cares not a jot for the latter's moral, psychological, and political justifications for suicide but only for the freedom of the individual to do as he pleases with his body. He champions Rousseau against the rule of law. As Roger has pointed out, the pamphlet's closing homage to Jean-Jacques is immediately undercut by Dolmancé's injunction to Eugénie, "In this world there is nothing dangerous but pity and beneficence. . . . Never listen to your heart, my child; it is the most untrustworthy guide we have received from Nature" (340; 3:524). In one fell sentence Dolmancé makes a mockery of his pretend Rousseauism by attacking the very heart of Jean-Jacques' moral philosophy.

Both references to Rousseau display a mocking carelessness toward the future (one's own and that of the species) that undermines every notion of community. As we shall see, the pamphlet *Français, encore une effort,* in which the second Rousseau reference occurs, can itself be read as Sade's version of Diogenes' *Republic* and his indirect response to both Wieland's and Rousseau's conception of what a Cynic polis should resemble. The pamphlet is a C/cynical take on the social contract, a nihilist's "scoffing at all that is right,"[34] and a rejection of the very notion of man as a political animal. Sade calls upon Kant's ideal Cynic, Rousseau, philosopher of pity and civic virtue, to proclaim the death of the social.

Sade's Cynic Republic

Midway through *La philosophie dans le boudoir* Dolmancé introduces in the boudoir a revolutionary pamphlet he claims to have found in the streets of Paris earlier that day, and one is led to believe that it is from his pen. The pamphlet, entitled *Francais, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains!* is

presented as a republican and patriotic work, but it is nothing if not an anti-republican tract in which the social contract, which Wieland wished only to reduce to a minimum the better to reform it and which Rousseau sought to found anew, is trampled underfoot. Sade's proposal resembles "une anarchie libertaire foncièrement individualiste," to borrow Goulet-Cazé's definition of the Cynic republic,[35] and ruthlessly undermines every notion of a legitimate contract. For Sade, writes Hénaff, "the reality of power remains intact [under the social contract], for how could power ever flow from reasonable understandings and freely entered agreements? Power is always a relationship based on strength. Pacts do not end wars; pacts manage them, and cynically."[36] Hénaff uses the term *cynically* loosely here, in its modern acceptation, but the choice of adjectives is telling: Sade's Cynicism, one might say, consists in unveiling the cynicism that founds society.

Neither Rousseau's law-bound freedom nor Wieland's intellectual cosmopolitanism passes Sade's test unscathed. Wieland, we recall, had defined Cynic cosmopolitanism as the reduction of the contract to a minimum: *I ask nothing and take nothing, therefore I owe nothing.*[37] Sade's version of the same might read, *I take without asking, and yet I owe nothing.* Theft rules the new republic. The marquis' defense of theft first as a "vertu guerrière" (313; 3:496) and second as a means of ensuring the equality of rich and poor is a double parody of Rousseau. Echoing Jean-Jacques' statement that "you are lost if you forget that the fruits belong to all and the Earth to no one!"[38] the pamphleteer proclaims:

> God forbid that I should here wish to assail the pledge to respect property the Nation has just given; but will I be permitted some remarks upon the injustice of this pledge? . . . I ask you now whether that law is truly just which orders the man who has nothing to respect another who has everything. . . . By what right will he who has nothing be enchained by an agreement which protects only him who has everything?" (313; 3:496)

If we juxtapose this quotation with one of Sade's rare direct references to Rousseau, the praise of equality begins to look a little suspect. In *La nouvelle Justine* Verneuil disdainfully dismisses equality as a paradox that "only a misanthrope like Rousseau could establish . . . because, very feeble himself, he prefers to drag down to his level those to whose heights he dares not rise."[39] Private property is of concern to Sade not because it poses an obstacle to equality but because it is a constraint upon the stronger individual's desire to take what he pleases. The first defense of theft, as a "vertu guerrière," seems the more apt.

Theft signifies vitality and energetic self-assertion, two qualities Sade extols in a parody of Rousseau's classical praise of military valor:

> Is it not by dint of murders that France is free today? . . . Republican mettle calls for a touch of ferocity: if he grows soft, if his energy slackens in him, the republican will be subjugated in a trice. . . . An already old and decayed nation which courageously casts off the yoke of its monarchical government in order to adopt a republican one, will only be maintained by many crimes; for it is criminal already, and if it wish to pass from crime to virtue, that is to say, from a violent to a pacific, benign condition, it should fall into an inertia whose result would soon be its certain ruin. (333; 3:516–17)

Sade defines the republic by its origins (its violent foundational act) and by its means of self-preservation (war). Begun in insurrection, the republic must abide by a system of permanent revolution and upheavals. The libertine's theft (I take and I owe not) mirrors society's thieving origins.

Gilles Deleuze and Hénaff interpret Sade's praise of theft as a fundamental piece in his rejection of the social compact, because it negates the system of reciprocity that grounds the contract. In Hénaff's words, "The one who gives receives nothing in return, and the one who receives simply consumes. This movement is completely intransitive and asymmetrical."[40] The principle of nonreciprocity finds its most striking formulation in *Justine,* when the young heroine encounters the counterfeiter Roland. Counterfeiting is of course a form of theft; it is also the motto of the ancient Cynics, the oracle that Diogenes received at Delphi, making Roland Diogenes' distant cousin.[41] Justine demands of Roland that he repay her for her kindness toward him, but social currency (reciprocity, gratitude) is of no value whatsoever to the counterfeiter:

> "And what right have you," Roland replied to me, "to expect me to sweeten your circumstances? . . . am I to throw myself at your feet and implore you to accord favors for the granting of which you can implore some recompense? *I ask nothing from you, I take.* . . . I ask them who would like to compel me to be thankful *whether a thief who snatches a man's purse in the woods because he, the thief, is the stronger of the two, owes this man any gratitude for the wrong he has just done him.*" (679; 3:327, my emphasis)

Rameau's nephew counterfeited the values to which society paid lip service—"fighting for one's country," "helping one's friends," "having a position in society and fulfilling its duties," "seeing to the upbringing of one's children"[42]—because they were out of touch with reality, blind to the self-interested, moneygrubbing principles that guide the day-to-day behavior of "the whole

of society."[43] Sade outstrips his predecessor by counterfeiting not outdated virtues or individual norms but the notion of virtue itself, not particular social practices but the very idea of the social.

And yet Sade, paradoxically, makes his opposition to the social the founding principle of a pamphlet aimed at reforming the French legal code. *Français, encore un effort* is an anomaly in Sade's work, because it shifts the focus from the individual to the republic and paints a utopian society in which the rule of private caprice must now serve the public good. The pamphlet extends the workings of the boudoir (in which all actors happily assent to the desires of others) to the French Republic as a whole. Wieland's mock-Cynic republic was modeled on the classical utopia, premised on social homogeneity. Sade's version of the same resembles instead what Jean-Joseph Goux has called the postmodern utopia, "a utopia where the heterogeneous, the unlike, the plural would constitute a vortex of beneficent and harmonious creativity rather than a source of injustice or violence."[44] Freed from the constraint of laws, the inhabitants of Sade's new republic revel in the free expression of their libidinal energies. The marquis' republic announces Fourier's ideal society but also Bakhtin's carnival and, as we shall see in chapter 7, Peter Sloterdijk's Cynic state, which he describes as a "most communal world" where life "is experienced by us . . . in love and sexual intoxication, in irony and laughter, creativity and responsibility, meditation and ecstasy."[45] Sloterdijk would bristle at the comparison: he makes only a passing reference to Sade in his *Critique of Cynical Reason,* dismissing him and those who study him as modern cynics in the worst sense of the term: "The enormous interest shown by intellectuals in de Sade betrays a progressive dawning in which bourgeois cynicism begins to recognize itself again in late-aristocratic cynicism."[46] But Sade makes, I believe, an important contribution to the Cynic repertoire and to Cynic critique. When he extends his libertine utopian community beyond the walls of the boudoir, when he breaks the carnival's spatial and temporal limits, he acknowledges the impossibility of his political fantasy: the lawless harmony of heterogeneous desires he had dreamed up for his libertine heroes can survive in society at large only if new laws are introduced to compel all citizens to comply with the fantasies of others. Spontaneity ruled in Madame de Saint Ange's inner room, the whipped happily acquiescing to their *bourreau*'s wish; laws, punishments, and contracts replace spontaneity in the republic. As Hénaff put it, "One moves from libidinal consensus to the contract of prostitution": the "genuine libertine utopia leaves off where the classical political domain begins."[47]

The result is a dystopian society strikingly similar to the one in Philodemus

of Gadara's damning account of the Cynic republic (see chapter 4). According to Philodemus, the Cynics urged their fellow citizens

> to use all words freely without limits; to masturbate in public; to wear a double cloak; to abuse the males that are in love with them and constrain by force those not well disposed toward their advances. . . . [They hold] that all children be kept in common . . . [one must] have sexual relations with one's sisters and mother and blood relations, with brothers and sons. [One must] never refrain from participating in sexual activities, even if violence is required. Women [will approach] men and induce them by any means possible to couple with them, and if they do not find anyone, they go to the marketplace to seek out those who will satisfy them. And, if the occasion presents itself, they will have sexual relations with any and all, man or woman; married men should have relations with their own slaves, and wives with whomsoever they please, abandoning their husbands.[48]

Sade, like Philodemus, makes free sex an obligation, not an option, in the republic, paradoxically robbing its inhabitants of the freedom it had promised them. It is not that Sade is unaware of this contradiction; on the contrary, he employs it parodically. *Français, encore un effort* is a parody *avant la lettre* of Sloterdijk's utopian carnivalesque Cynic state, where relaxation and humor resolve all clashes of interests in a happy harmony. Sade paints the dark underside of sexual intoxication and lawlessness, the fearful side of Cynicism that has haunted the reception of the movement from its inception.

With a knowing wink, Sade consolidates the modern meaning of cynicism as disillusionment. But this shameless negativity is also what ties Sade again firmly to the Cynic tradition. Adorno and Horkheimer's praise of Sade for refusing to accept facile reconciliations seems to me to capture very precisely the Cynic quality of Sade's writing.[49] Sade alone among eighteenth-century Cynics stays true to Diogenes' unrepentant refusal of politics, a refusal that has received a strong defense in recent years in the polemical writings of Lee Edelman. For Edelman, as for Sade and the Cynics, "politics, however radical the means by which some of its practitioners seek to effect a more desirable social order, is conservative insofar as it necessarily works to *affirm* a social order, defining various strategies aimed at actualizing social reality and transmitting it into the future it aimed to bequeath its inner child."[50] The philosophes relinquished Cynicism in the name of social change and the creation of a more just society. Rousseau too turned his back on his youthful Cynic critique so that he might imagine a new social order. Sade, like Diogenes, refuses to imagine a new world, except on the model of parody. His two explicit references to Rous-

seau in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* are to death—to infanticide and suicide. Sade might have titled his work, as Edelman did, *No Future,* spelling his final rupture with the idea of man as a political being. Cynic negativity has troubled critics from the beginning; Sade makes that trouble the point.

Commenting on the function of pity in Sade and Rousseau, Hénaff remarks, "But it must be noted that the locus of articulation changes completely from Rousseau to Sade: for Rousseau this locus is actual sociality; for Sade it is fiction."[51] Could it be that when all is said and done, Cynicism belongs to the realm of fiction? *Français, encore un effort* is a libertine utopia, written on a note of provocation and inscribed firmly within the realm of fiction and parody. That Cynicism and utopia should find themselves coupled here should come as no surprise. Cynicism may denote the realist's scoffing at all that society deems sacred, but it does not propose any practical or realistic solution to the ills of society. Wieland had already noted the intimate relationship between Cynicism and utopia in his own ironic version of Diogenes' *Republic.* Wieland's and Sade's mock utopias are of course polar opposites, the first a static, classical utopia based on the reduction of needs to a minimum and the natural harmony of primitive society, the latter an anarchical sexual revel in which diversity of taste and desire reigns supreme. They share, however, what I see as a central feature of both Cynic and utopian writing: a negative critical function. After all, like Cynicism, utopias most often function less as concrete plans for social reform than as foils against which to measure the follies of society. To ask of Cynicism more than this is to betray its spirit: when it becomes a plan for concrete political action, it must either disappear, as with Rousseau, or give up its bite in favor of a more moderate, reformist plan of action, as with Wieland. In the worst of scenarios, the politicization of Cynicism could lead, as in the French Revolution, to bloodshed: when the Revolution broke out, more than one pamphleteer picked up his pen in the name of Diogenes, claiming the ancient Dog as the popular hero of France's bloody battle.[52] Diogenes, that old *provocateur,* became an actor on the revolutionary scene, a model for concrete political action, his authors unmindful of the irony involved in claiming such a singular, antisocial figure as the head of a new collectivity. Cynicism, for all its biting realism, belongs to the realm of parody: it must perforce give up its spirit when pressed into the service of a cause. This is what Sade knew, and what rendered Diogenes a hero both necessary and impossible in an age of reform.

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PART TWO

Theory Turns Cynical

Diogenes after the Frankfurt School

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6 *Cynicism and the Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Our story of the vexed relationship between Cynicism and the Enlightenment picks up again two centuries later with the unexpected resurgence of Cynicism in the writings of two philosophers deeply involved in assessing the legacy of the Enlightenment for contemporary critique. In the early 1980s Michel Foucault and Peter Sloterdijk independently turned to ancient Greek Cynicism as a model for a new way of doing philosophy and a means of breathing new life into the Enlightenment's "unfinished project." Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft (Critique of Cynical Reason)* was an instant success when it appeared in 1983, selling more copies that any other book of philosophy published in Germany since World War II and giving rise to a heated debate among the German intelligentsia. The two-volume work offers a sweeping analysis of contemporary society as an age of diffuse cynicism (understood here as moral disillusionment and political disaffection), which Sloterdijk interprets as the perverted fruit of Enlightened thinking. He argues that contemporary Western society refuses to take up the challenge that Kant's "exit from immaturity" places on our identities. Instead of using our critical abilities to question set notions about who we are or to define new ways of being in the world, we employ them to guard our identities against those who threaten the status quo. Faced with this bleak reality, Sloterdijk holds up ancient Cynicism as a countermodel to contemporary cynicism and as a means of revitalizing the courageous critical impulse of Kant's *sapere aude,* "dare to know."

Less than a year after the publication of Sloterdijk's book, Michel Foucault delivered five lectures on Cynicism at the Collège de France in March 1984, at

the conclusion of a two-year course on the history of parrhesia, or free speech. He celebrated Cynicism historically, as the last philosophy of the ancient arts of existence, and transhistorically, as a militant critical attitude, or ethos, that is still accessible to contemporary philosophy. The lectures strongly suggest that critique today must reengage with the tradition of blunt free speech and ascetic self-fashioning that characterized the ancient Cynics. Only thus can it carry on the task of philosophy, a task Foucault describes, in his lecture "What Is Enlightenment?" as "a critical ontology of ourselves," "an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed upon us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them."[1] Like Sloterdijk, whom he had not read, Foucault turned to the Cynics as a possible means of carrying on the philosophical project of the Enlightenment.

Two philosophers' independently turning their attention to the same topic is in itself cause for reflection, all the more so in this case because Cynicism had received short shrift in modern philosophy. It would be an exaggeration, no doubt, to say that Cynicism died out at the close of the eighteenth century as the result of the philosophes' failed attempt to revive the movement for contemporary social change. But Cynicism undeniably suffered a fall from grace and memory in the nineteenth century, as evidenced in the gradual semantic shift by which Cynicism came to acquire its current meaning as an attitude of disillusioned self-interest. The *Oxford English Dictionary* attests to the shift in 1814, giving the earliest modern definition of a Cynic as one who has "a disposition to disbelieve in the sincerity or goodness of human motives and actions, and is wont to express this by sneers and sarcasms; a sneering fault-finder."[2] Rameau's cynical nephew bore, that is, more descendants than did his Cynic counterpart, the good philosopher Moi, both in France and abroad.

This largely negative image of Cynicism is of course not an eighteenth-century invention. Rameau's nephew is not the first in the august lineage of scamming, beggarly rogues. The split between an idealized Cynic and his scoundrel double is, we know, as old as Cynicism itself. Epictetus articulated the opposition as early as the first century CE, and the distinction was echoed through the centuries. But whereas the idealized philosophical versions praised by the likes of Epictetus, Julian, D'Alembert, and Diderot had persisted alongside less flattering and usually unphilosophical versions of the old Dog, by the late eighteenth century the latter had all but eclipsed the former. This can be explained in part by the philosophes' overpurification of Cynicism, which in effect so flattened the movement as to render it nearly insignificant as a cat-

egory, but also by a redefinition of the domain of philosophy proper, which led to the excision of Cynicism from the province of philosophy. Where eighteenth-century scholars such as Jacob Brucker and Denis Diderot (and Pierre Bayle before them) had devoted lengthy chapters to the Cynic philosophers in their studies of ancient Greek thought, Hegel, addressing his students and colleagues in the early decades of the nineteenth century, had little patience for the unruly Dogs: "There is nothing particular to say of the Cynics, for they possess but little philosophy, and they did not bring what they had into a scientific system. . . . Antisthenes' principles are simple, because the content of his teaching remains general; it is hence superfluous to say anything further about him."[3]

Hegel's dismissal of Cynicism succeeded, as Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting points out, in all but eradicating the Cynics from serious studies of philosophy throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth.[4] Nineteenth-century historians of ideas, following Hegel's lead, tended to relegate the Cynics to the dustbin of history or at the very least to sweep them out of the holy precincts of philosophy onto the rough terrain of sociology and literature. By expunging the biographical and anecdotal material from the pages of his history of philosophy, Hegel contributed to the demise of Cynicism's rich literary and social traditions. Perceived as unsystematic fools, the Cynics were deemed unworthy of the attention of serious students of human life and thought. Those philosophers and historians of the nineteenth century who sought to rescue the philosophical content of Cynicism by garnering a kernel of morality from the Cynic way of life (the Cynic's asceticism, independence, and freedom of speech) not infrequently compared the school unfavorably with the theoretically and ethically sounder Stoics.[5] Reduced to its philosophical principles, Cynicism, in Hegel's wake, was increasingly treated either as a Greek curiosity or as a weak form of Stoicism. This is not to say that the satirical and literary tradition disappeared altogether: it survived in the work of certain less systematic philosophers, such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who devoted a number of remarks to Cynicism, and in the writings of the German Romantics, including Friedrich Schlegel and Jean Paul, who sought to retrieve the satirical and transgressive edge of the Cynics.[6] The Cynic satirical legacy remained, however, squarely on the margins of serious philosophy.

The twentieth century inherited many of these reservations with regard to Cynicism, though this was gradually to change as a renewed philosophical interest in Cynicism developed in the postwar era and a surge of scholarly research on the ancient sect challenged the one-sided interpretation inherited

from Hegel. Surveying the reception of Cynicism in the twentieth century, Foucault commented wryly that as far as works about Cynicism were concerned,

> we are rather destitute. As far as I know, references to the problem of Cynicism occur only in German texts. . . . In any case, one finds in contemporary German philosophy of the postwar period a real problematization of Cynicism, of Cynicism in all its forms, ancient and modern, and it would no doubt be interesting to study this a bit more closely, to see why they posed this problem and in what terms they pose it.[7]

A study of the philosophical reception of Cynicism reveals that twentieth-century thinkers who turned to Cynicism were less concerned than their predecessors with critiquing the ancient sect's theoretical and moral deficiencies. They focused instead on articulating the distance separating ancient Cynicism from its modern counterpart, cynicism, placing the burden of moral irresponsibility on the latter. Troubled by the atmosphere of cynicism (loosely understood as a generalized feeling of discontent and as moral nihilism) that they felt pervaded the postwar era, thinkers such as Paul Tillich and Klaus Heinrich, to name two of those cited by Foucault, attempted to understand the roots of Cynicism's perversion into cynical disillusionment. In his essay "Antiker Kyniker und Zynismus in der Gegenwart" Heinrich argues that while ancient Cynicism and its modern counterpart share a similar impulse of self-preservation in the face of danger, they differ with respect to the nature of the dangers they counter and the effectiveness of their responses. Whereas the Cynic sought to assert himself in the face of a specific historical and political situation (the crisis that followed the Peloponnesian War), the modern cynic faces the much more diffuse and existential threat of meaninglessness, which he counters with a rebellious cry of self-affirmation.[8] To put the matter simply, Heinrich maintains that while the ancient Cynic offered a politically valid and courageous response to a specific crisis, the modern cynic retreats into a self-absorbed, defeatist, and generalized rebellion against the absurdities of life.

Modern cynicism becomes, that is, a form of existentialist self-assertion, one that Tillich, in his *Courage to Be,* of 1952, describes as the "noncreative courage to be oneself":

> There is a noncreative Existentialist attitude called cynicism. A cynic today is not the same person the Greeks meant by the term. For the Greeks the cynic was a critic of contemporary culture on the basis of reason and natural law; he was a revolutionary rationalist, a follower of Socrates. Modern cynics

> are not ready to follow anybody. They have no belief in reason, no criterion of truth, no set of values, no answer to the question of meaning. They try to undermine every norm put before them. Their courage is expressed not creatively but in their form of life. They courageously reject any solution which would deprive them of their freedom of rejecting whatever they want to reject. The cynics are lonely although they need company in order to show their loneliness. They are empty of both preliminary meanings and an ultimate meaning, and therefore easy victims of neurotic anxiety. Much compulsive self-affirmation and much fanatical self-surrender are expressions of the noncreative courage to be as oneself.[9]

Tillich's discussion, brief though it is, plays an important role in the twentieth-century reception of Cynicism. His distinction between the ancient and modern acceptations of the term and his clear articulation of the link between Cynicism and existentialism sets the tone for Sloterdijk's philosophical investigation of the ancient sect. We shall see that Foucault objects to the sharp opposition that Tillich and, later, Heinrich and Sloterdijk create between Cynicism and cynicism, as well as to their definition of both as forms of existential self-assertion, but he embraces the link Tillich creates between Cynicism and courage, making it one of the central theses of Cynic philosophy. Suffice to say here that twentieth-century philosophical treatments of Cynicism have bound the notion of Cynicism to the concept of existentialism and transformed the reflection on the ancient Greek philosophy into a mediation on the diffuse discontent and lack of moorings of the contemporary era. Foucault and Sloterdijk inherit a conception of Cynicism that is viewed from this vantage point: it is in response to this tradition of "existential" Cynicism that they will offer their own interpretation of Cynicism and its relevance for contemporary philosophy.

Cynicism gained the attention of a small group of philosophers, but it was the revival of a scholarly interest in Cynicism that most importantly influenced, and transformed, twentieth-century interpretations of the ancient sect. A more nuanced reading of Cynicism developed in part thanks to studies such as Donald Dudley's seminal work of 1937, *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the Sixth Century,* which sought to present a balanced picture of Cynicism in all its facets, as "a vagrant ascetic life, an assault on all established values, and a body of literary genres."[10] Thus whereas the *Encyclopædia Britannica* of 1910 still casts a moralizing eye on the Cynics—"it is not surprising," we read under the heading "Cynics," "that the pioneers of such a system were criticized and ridiculed by their fellows, and this by no means unjustly,"—the 1985 edition

excises this judgment, contenting itself with a description of the Cynic life as "unconventional" but "harmless."

Dudley's excellent introduction to ancient Cynicism opened the door to further research in the 1940s and 1950s (by Farrand Sayre and Ragnar Höistad, among others), but scholarly interest in the topic really took root in the last decades of the twentieth century, with two important publications appearing in the 1970s, paving the way for Sloterdijk's and Foucault's work on the movement in the early 1980s. Léonce Paquet's publication, in 1975, of the first French translation and collection of ancient sources on Cynicism, *Les Cyniques grecs: Fragments et témoignages,* gave fresh impetus to French-language studies of Cynicism. In 1979 the German scholar Niehues-Pröbsting published his thorough and insightful study of the reception of Cynicism from the early modern period through the late twentieth century. This work is the only piece of scholarship on Cynicism to which Sloterdijk declares himself indebted,[11] and it is the only twentieth-century work on Cynicism that Foucault unambiguously praises in his lectures. Niehues-Pröbsting offers a subtle reading of the difference between Cynicism and cynicism, tracing their common origins and points of contact. His work emphasizes the literary aspects of the Cynic tradition, its ties to ancient comedy and to satire, and interprets Cynicism less as a philosophy of life or a lived practice than as a satirical-critical literary genre. Foucault and Sloterdijk will seek to bring the two strands together again by depicting Cynicism as a philosophy of life, while stressing the connections between life and art.

The revival of scholarly interest in Cynicism in the twentieth century created a rich tapestry of Cynic portraits: the ancient Greek practice has been interpreted variously as an existential response to angst, a literary form, a political theory of cosmopolitanism, a consolatory philosophy for the "have-nots,"[12] a guidebook for hippies, a praiseworthy critical practice, and a disreputable lifestyle for the lazy and the arrogant. Sloterdijk and Foucault position themselves unambiguously within this hodgepodge of conflicting interpretations. The strength and originality of their work lies in their attempts to recapture Cynicism as a lived philosophy and to uphold it as an ethical practice that would function as a model for contemporary philosophy. They suggest that Cynicism can change the world. For Sloterdijk, Cynicism represents the only valid response to the postwar crisis of meaning and its ensuing climate of disenchantment. His work is inscribed within a tradition of Cynic scholarship and reflection, but more importantly, it is written in response to the perceived failure of the Enlightenment in postwar Germany and the resulting

self-proclaimed impotence of critique, an impotence he designates as cynicism. Foucault's revival of the ancient Greek sect partakes of a similar reflection on the legacy of the Enlightenment and the apparent demise of a critical attitude capable of transforming the social order. As Luis Navia writes in the introduction to his annotated bibliography of Cynicism, after Foucault it is impossible to approach the Cynics without a deep sense of involvement, an inner compunction to change one's life:

> I have been acquainted with the contributions of the Cynics for many years, but only in the last three years during which I have worked on this bibliography have I succeeded in gaining an adequate understanding and appreciation of Cynicism. The Cynics, as Michel Foucault put it shortly before his death, force every philosopher and philosophical oriented person to undertake an examination of his or her relationship with the world in which he or she is compelled to live. This examination, if conducted honestly and courageously, can only lead to a denunciation and a rejection of most of what people deem estimable and valuable. The Cynic's commitment to παραχάραττειν τὸ νόμισμα—alter or deface the moral currency—can only be translated into a style of life which is radically different from that which most people deem desirable, and into a constant frame of mind in which a pervasive commitment to absolute honesty is adhered to with undeviating dedication.[13]

Foucault and Sloterdijk revived Cynicism not simply as a scholarly object of study but as a lived philosophy. They sought to recapture the moral strength of the Cynic ethos as a desperately needed corrective to contemporary philosophy and the last hope for keeping the spirit of the Enlightenment alive.

Cynicism and Enlightenment

To understand Foucault's and Sloterdijk's interest in the Cynics, we need to situate ourselves in the intellectual context of the postwar debates on the Enlightenment. No less than Cynicism, the Enlightenment is a flexible concept, open to a variety of interpretations and conflicting judgments. It refers, of course, to a particular period in Western history, but it also refers to a contested set of principles, values, and ideas at the heart of modernity that have elicited conflicting responses and definitions over the course of the past two hundred years. To quote Dorinda Outram, the Enlightenment is best viewed not as a unified concept but as a "series of debates, which necessarily took different shapes and forms in particular national and cultural contexts." Outram

suggests that we approach the problem of the Enlightenment as "a series of processes and problems" rather than as a monolithic set of principles or a list of clearly defined intellectual and social goals.[14] This proves immensely helpful for understanding Sloterdijk's and Foucault's work on the Enlightenment. Both writers were engaged with a very specific set of Enlightenment problematics developed in the postwar period. Their work must be situated within the context of the reinterpretations of the Enlightenment that emerged in the wake of the Second World War, from Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's trenchant analysis of the intimate relation between enlightenment and domination in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) to Derrida's and Lyotard's critiques of the Enlightenment's predilection for master narratives and its universalizing definition of man.

In 1947, in the wake of the horrors of the Second World War, Adorno and Horkheimer publish their devastating *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* which uncovers the inextricable link that ties enlightenment to domination, striking a harsh blow to the ideals bequeathed to the Western world by the eighteenth century. Their work challenged the belief that one can free oneself from domination and prejudice through the exercise of reason and thus lead humanity on the path of progress. Writing in 1944, in the shadows of totalitarian mass destruction, Adorno and Horkheimer formulated the terrible paradox that has come to haunt the Western world: "Enlightenment," they observed, "has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant."[15] At the heart of their analysis lies the discovery that enlightenment and domination walk hand in hand. The task of demythologizing the world and asserting the autonomy of the reasoning subject, far from creating a better world, entangles subjects in relations of power and domination. Their critique of the Enlightenment takes the form of a critique of reason gone awry, perverted into an instrumental reason that seeks to dominate nature and man at the risk not only of alienating man from himself but also of precipitating the world toward total destruction: in seeking the ascendance of reason, humanity runs headlong toward its ruin.

Despite its apocalyptic tone, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* maintains a desperate faith in the Enlightenment and in the possibility of defining a critical sphere that would escape the seemingly inevitable intertwinement of knowledge and power. The text oscillates between a global critique of reason as a faculty that contains the seeds of its own destruction and a historical analysis of the contingent perversion of reason into instrumental reason under the

pressures of capitalist socioeconomic structures. The two excursuses, "Odysseus, or the Myth of Reason" and "Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality," exemplify this ambiguity.[16] The first locates the roots of instrumental rationality at the heart of the Western tradition, in the myth of Odysseus, whose cunning attempts to outwit the forces of nature and of myth lead him to deploy a rationality that is inherently in the service of self-preservation, self-bondage, and domination. Odysseus overcomes the threat of the sirens by tying himself to a mast, thereby literally putting himself in chains even as he believes he has gained the upper hand over forces larger than himself. He stands as a symbol of the inherently deceptive, instrumental, and alienating nature of human reason. The second excursus mitigates this claim by suggesting that reason is not harmful in itself: it is its perversion into a particular *form* of reason—instrumental or strategic reason—as the result of historical, social, and economic factors that has led to the catastrophes of the mid-twentieth century. Horkheimer's analysis of the bifurcation of reason in the second excursus stops short of a celebratory faith in the rediscovery of the lost path of substantive reason, but the interpretation of contemporary rationality as a form, and not the nature, of reason indicates a fundamental belief in, and commitment to, the principles of self-determination and emancipation.

Incapable of providing a concrete solution to the plight of modernity, yet unwilling to give up the critical function of reflection, Adorno and Horkheimer opt for a negative critique that takes as its task the denunciation of the cold cruelty and ugliness that lie at the base of society. They associate their evaluation of the Enlightenment with the work of those they call the "somber writers of the bourgeois dawn" (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Mandeville, Sade, Nietzsche), who "denounced harmony before it was elevated as the official doctrine by the serene and classical authors."[17] Although dedicated to the task of emancipating man from domination, Adorno and Horkheimer nevertheless retreat into a critical pessimism. They find pockets of resistance only in the courage to refuse facile reconciliations and, for Adorno, in the aesthetic domain of high modernism, which he interprets as the last available locus of a genuinely negative and critical culture.

The central thesis of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* that enlightenment and domination imply each other, became the cornerstone of philosophical discussions on the Enlightenment in postwar Europe. Whether the influence was direct (as in Germany) or indirect (as in France, where similar analyses of the intricate relations between knowledge and power were being carried out by critics who, like the young Foucault, had had no exposure to the Frankfurt

school), the question of the Enlightenment's involvement in domination now stood at the center of reflection. The times called for an investigation of the Enlightenment's role in the development of totalitarianism, Western imperialism, and social anomie and for an analysis of the strategies of exclusion and subjugation that had underpinned the Enlightenment's belief in progress and universal human rights. But even as these Enlightenment ideals stood trial for their involvement in structures of domination, the question remained, Was this intertwining inevitable? Could one sunder the link between knowledge and domination? And if not, how was one to carry on the task of philosophy? Answers to these questions ranged from staunch defenses of the Enlightenment project of emancipation through reason to a complete dismissal of Enlightenment ideals as inherently perverse. Without simplifying a complex debate, we might say that the younger generations of the Frankfurt school, and Habermas in particular, sought to rescue what they could from the shipwreck of the Enlightenment, while French intellectuals of the poststructuralist era—Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard, to name but three—worked instead to deepen the critique of the Enlightenment and the ideals it had come to represent.

Habermas built upon Horkheimer and Adorno's work in an attempt to translate their pessimistic analysis of the perversion of reason into a project for the revival and continuation of the unfinished project of modernity. Where Adorno, faced with the all-pervasive reality of instrumental reason, had given up hope of carrying out a critique of society in the political and economic spheres, locating the work of any possible resistance squarely in the specific cultural domain of the aesthetic, and more specifically of high modernism, Habermas sets out to demonstrate, as early as his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1961), that there *is* a site beyond the cultural aesthetic in which members of society can convene to openly and freely debate issues of public importance. Habermas develops Horkheimer and Adorno's thesis of the perversion of reason into a historical narrative that traces the emergence of a communicative rationality in the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere and its gradual transformation into an instrumental rationality controlled by the imperatives of modern capitalism. Habermas thus gives substance to the notion of a nonperverted rationality, which he describes as communicative reason, a reason defined not as an instrument of knowledge but as a public medium of communication.

Supplementing his historical analysis of this public site of open communication with a transhistorical account of the inherent communicative rationality of language itself, Habermas defends his interpretation of reason against

those who, like Adorno in his treatment of the Odysseus myth, suggest that reason is inherently instrumental. Reason, for Habermas, is essentially cooperative and intersubjective. Language, he argues, binds us together in a community of mutual understanding, for when we speak, we commit ourselves to explaining and clarifying our words to others, reformulating them if necessary until the listeners have understood and responded to our claims. "Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus."[18] Echoing Kant's definition of enlightenment as the way out of our self-incurred tutelage by means of the public articulation and discussion of ideas, Habermas places his faith in free, noncoerced discussion as the sine qua non of a healthy social and political life. His defense of the Enlightenment aims to reconceptualize the political field as a public, progressive arena grounded in non-agonistic rules of debate in which participants come together to legitimate their social cohesion through discussion leading to consensus. The development of a sphere of critical discussion would enable members of society to redeem the promise of the Enlightenment and to work together to achieve a society as free as possible from domination.

If the publication of *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* had little repercussion in France in the years immediately following the Second World War, the writings of Habermas on the emancipatory politics of the Enlightenment did not fall upon deaf ears. Habermas's explicit criticism of the so-called Counter-Enlightenment tendencies of postmodernism, a term he applies equally to Derrida, Bataille, and Foucault, sparked a renewed discussion about the legacies of the Enlightenment.[19] The debate crystallized around the themes of agency, universal norms, and consensus. Habermas criticized the French philosophers and sociologists of the 1970s and early 1980s for reducing the subject to the plaything of impersonal historical and discursive forces and for undermining the possibility of social critique by negating the establishment of transsubjective norms. He accused them of abandoning the ideal of democracy, wittingly or not, in favor of an anarchical and potentially despotic politics.[20] Challenges to Habermas's espousal of Enlightenment ideals in the writings of Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, and Mouffe, among others, bring a similar charge of antidemocratic thinking to bear upon the work of the German sociologist. Habermas's critics analyze the exclusionary tactics at play in any attempt to establish universals and point to the inadvertent cruelty embedded in his consensual politics. They stand in favor of an agonistic forum of debate and argue that setting agreement as the horizon of expectation in a political discussion amounts to exerting the tyranny of the majority and effacing the rich diver-

sity and conflictual interests of the parties involved. This ethical and political opposition to Habermas's proposal for a renewed public sphere goes hand in hand with a linguistic critique of his theory of communicative action. Habermas's critics argue that in proposing free speech as the grounds of democratic consent, he fails to take into account important developments in the theory of language use, from Saussure's to Derrida's analysis of the semantic interdependency that governs all language use. They locate Habermas's ideal of free speech within an outdated notion of autonomous self-possessed subjects who control language and ply it to their wills, unaware of the extent to which all language users are themselves possessed and shaped by language. Seen in this light, communicative action becomes the unwitting perpetuator of the social order that is embedded in accepted semantic and grammatical usage.

By the early 1980s the debate on the Enlightenment had reached a stalemate, what Foucault would call "the blackmail of the Enlightenment,"[21] the necessity of declaring oneself staunchly for or against the legacy of the eighteenth century. Each side fiercely described the weaknesses of the other, but neither responded satisfactorily to the critiques leveled against its own position. We are thus left with a set of unresolved problematics concerning the legacy of the Enlightenment and the function of critique in contemporary society.

Cynicism enters the stage at this point as the possible means of breaking this apparent deadlock and reengaging with a tradition of emancipatory philosophy. Foucault and Sloterdijk celebrate Cynicism as a third way between a blind faith in progress and a nihilistic scoffing at everything society holds valuable. The strength of their reflections on Cynicism lies in their determination to break down the false opposition that the postwar debate on the Enlightenment inadvertently set up between reason and non-reason. They neither attack nor reject rationality as the sly accomplice of domination, but seek to investigate the complex relationships between forms of rationality and power relations with the goal of developing an ethos that would allow us, in Foucault's words, "to play the games of power with a minimum of domination."[22] Foucault and Sloterdijk offer very different analyses of Cynicism, but both locate its strength in Diogenes' decision to *live* in accordance with the principles he proclaims. Central to both Sloterdijk's and Foucault's work is the idea that the tradition of critique inherited from the Enlightenment, though it aims at political change, is first and foremost an ethical activity, a practice of the self on the self. The catchword of this new Enlightenment is neither *reason* nor *progress* but *ethos,* the development of an attitude of care for the self that would give one the courage and the tools to govern oneself and others with a

"minimum of domination." The Cynics as interpreted by Foucault and Sloterdijk embody such an ethos.

It is worth noting that in a short note entitled "The Transformation of Ideas into Domination," appended to *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Adorno and Horkheimer had already alluded, fleetingly, to the possibility that Cynicism might resist the conflation of enlightenment and domination. At stake in the essay is a text by Paul Deussen that compares "the progress made by Indian thought in [the Isa-Upanishad] beyond earlier thinking . . . to [the progress] made by Jesus beyond John the Baptist . . . and by the Stoics beyond the Cynics." For Adorno and Horkheimer the three developments described by Deussen do not signal progress; on the contrary, they exemplify the "betrayal of youthful radicalism and revolutionary opposition to the dominant reality." Stoicism represents, that is, not the fulfillment but rather the debasement of Cynicism and its reduction to "a unified theoretical system," with all the dangers such a systematization implies.[23] Yet Cynicism seems to have only a nostalgic value for Adorno and Horkheimer: the last sentence concludes that "[Deussen's] history of religions and schools like [the history] of modern parties and revolutions teaches us that the price for survival is practical involvement, the transformation of ideas into domination."[24] A philosophy for radicals and loners, Cynicism would appear to be doomed either to disappear or to pervert its oppositional impulse. Without making more out of this brief note than is warranted, one might conclude from these passing remarks on Cynicism that Adorno and Horkheimer would have recognized in Sade (as in Nietzsche and the other "somber thinkers of the bourgeoisie") a true heir of Cynicism, that is, of a non-unified theoretical system, or more pointedly of a willful resistance to "practical involvement" and "organized form."[25] Negative dialectics, like the dissonant music of Schoenberg, might then be read as a form of Cynicism, the last available form of resistance to "the transformation of ideas into domination." Adorno and Horkheimer's reference to Cynicism is made in passing, and neither Foucault nor Sloterdijk comments on it, but it is worth mentioning because it helps underline the originality of Foucault's and Sloterdijk's takes on Cynicism. Foucault and Sloterdijk employ Cynicism to move beyond Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectics. Where the latter celebrate Cynicism's negative moment, Foucault and Sloterdijk will seek to affirm a positive function to Cynicism. They bring Diogenes from the margins of *The Dialectics of Enlightenment* to the center of their philosophical reflections and make him the figurehead of a new Enlightenment.

Yet although Foucault and Sloterdijk interpret Cynicism as a means of car-

rying on the project of the Enlightenment, neither pays much heed to the role Cynicism played in the historical Enlightenment. Foucault mentions Diderot and Sade in passing, and Sloterdijk gives Goethe his due, but their interest in the eighteenth century stops there. Foucault focuses on the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century as the two richest periods of neo-Cynicism, while Sloterdijk privileges the Cynicism of a more unlikely pair, Heidegger and the Buddha. From our study in part I, we can surmise the cause of their silence: the eighteenth-century writers who turned to Cynicism (barring Sade) all attempted to contain the disruptive aspects of Cynicism by carefully legislating the boundaries of the ancient sect within the scope of their social, intellectual, and literary programs. D'Alembert, Wieland, and Diderot kept from Diogenes his independence and his courageous critique of religion and prejudice, but they rejected both the irreverence of Cynic free speech and Diogenes' commitment to living like a dog, in willful opposition to all *bienséance.* They rejected, in short, the asocial and apolitical implications of Cynic philosophy. Foucault and Sloterdijk face a social and political climate in which censorship no longer threatens, allowing the potential of Cynicism to be tapped once again. Their analysis of Cynicism begins from questions very similar to those of their eighteenth-century predecessors. As we have seen, much of the interest generated by Cynicism in the historical Enlightenment arose from internal tensions in the search for an appropriate language for communicating social criticism and from the desire to renew the ethical persona of the philosopher, or public intellectual. These are the very questions that prod Foucault and Sloterdijk to turn to Diogenes, but with very different results: they recuperate those aspects of Cynicism most conspicuously absent from eighteenth-century appropriations of the ancient sect, namely, a philosophy of life and a blunt, satirical tongue, thus rendering a return to eighteenth-century thinkers on Cynicism seemingly superfluous. Both thinkers interpret the doglike lifestyle of Diogenes as the warrant of the Cynic's integrity and the nondogmatic norm based on which he judges and acts. Like their predecessors, they too legislate between an authentic and a false Cynicism, but they do so without divesting the Cynics of their bite and impudence.

For Foucault and Sloterdijk, Cynicism represents, then, in a preliminary analysis, both a model of philosophical agency and a linguistic strategy. They hold that Cynicism could enable individuals to create themselves as the agents of their actions without reference to abstract universal norms (the Habermas fallacy) and without falling prey to the notion of an overdetermined and impotent subjectivity (the "postmodern" fallacy). It could also teach us to employ

language within a critical strategy that holds on to productive dialogue as the ideal horizon of critical discussion but refuses to sacrifice the voice of dissent in the name of peace and social stability. This is no crude compromise between poststructuralism and the Frankfurt school. It represents a concerted effort to reconceptualize the Enlightenment's task of critical reflection and to carry philosophy in a new direction. Adorno had located the future of critique in the restricted sphere of high modernist art; Habermas shifted the site of social resistance to the public sphere; Sloterdijk and Foucault now suggest a third locus of critical empowerment, articulated upon the body of the individual Cynic. Cynicism enables Foucault and Sloterdijk to define a notion of political agency that avoids the traps of both universalism and linguistic indeterminacy. Whether they succeed in the enterprise remains to be determined.

7 *Mystic Carnival*

Sloterdijk's Cynic Enlightenment

Peter Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* appeared in 1983, in the wake of the conservative turn in German politics in the 1970s and in response to the general climate of disillusionment and political disaffection that marked the decade following the uprisings of 1968. Sloterdijk vividly captures the diffuse discontent, or cynicism, of the cultural present. He analyzes it as a direct outgrowth of the "ferment of self-doubt"[1] that succeeded the 1968 student revolution but also, and more importantly, as the consequence of the failure of the Enlightenment and of its twentieth-century successor, ideology critique, to create a just and free world. Like Adorno and Horkheimer before him, Sloterdijk investigates the causes and consequences of the perversion of Enlightenment ideals, but he does so from a different historical standpoint and with a new set of concerns. The fathers of the Frankfurt school had penned their critique of instrumental reason in response to the horrors of the Second World War and with the aim of unmasking the complicity between enlightenment and progress on the one hand and totalitarianism and mass destruction on the other. Sloterdijk, writing some forty years later, confronts a different cultural and political reality in which the threat of totalitarianism has given way to a more insidious form of violence born of complacency and defeatism. Sloterdijk names the threat that faces contemporary society *Zynismus* (cynicism). From this historical perspective, the analysis of the dialectic of Enlightenment in terms of a perversion of reason into instrumental reason no longer suffices to explain or counter the apparent failure of modernity to produce a just and

peaceful society: "The critique of instrumental reason presses for its completion as a critique of cynical reason" (*C* 207).[2]

Sloterdijk defines cynicism as disillusionment coupled with a retreat into self-satisfied egoism. The cynic has learnt the lessons of the Enlightenment (the undermining of tradition and authority, the questioning of moral codes, the unraveling of a teleological world order), and he has effectively protected himself against the threat this poses to his sense of self by adopting an attitude of pragmatic opportunism. Refusing the solace of new ideals or the task of constructing a new morality, the cynic orients himself in a demystified world by focusing his energies on self-preservation and self-advancement. In Sloterdijk's words, "Modern cynicism presents itself as that state of consciousness that follows *after* naïve ideologies and their enlightenment. . . . Cynicism is *enlightened false consciousness*" (*C* 3, 5).[3]

Traditional Enlightenment critique (be it Voltaire's unmasking of errors, the overthrow of prejudices, or Marxist ideology critique) is impotent in the face of a cynicism that has absorbed and neutralized it. How, then, are we to work toward a just and free society? Sloterdijk finds the antidote to the present malaise within cynicism itself, in a return to the ancient Cynicism *(Kynismus)* of Diogenes and his followers.

A note on translations before we turn to the text: Sloterdijk uses the terms *Kynismus* and *Zynismus* to differentiate the older, philosophical concept from its modern counterpart. The English has no such distinction, although it has become common practice to capitalize the term for the ancient concept *(Cynicism)* and leave the term for the modern concept unmarked *(cynicism).* Sloterdijk's English translator, Michael Eldred, has chosen to translate Sloterdijk's couplet as "kynicism" and "cynicism." I have chosen instead to translate *Kynismus* as "Cynicism," in an effort to maintain a consistent vocabulary throughout the book. I use Eldred's "kynicism" when quoting from his translation and when clarity requires.

A similar difficulty arises with the translation of *Aufklärung.* Sloterdijk sometimes employs the word with reference to a particular philosophical tradition grounded in eighteenth-century thought (what in English we commonly refer to as "the Enlightenment"), while at other times he uses the term in a more general sense ("enlightenment," lowercase). By playing fast and loose with the term, Sloterdijk aims, I believe, to free the concept *Aufklärung* from its exclusive association with the Kantian tradition so as to revive the concept

for the twenty-first century. Eldred has therefore chosen to translate the term *Aufklärung* throughout as "enlightenment." I use the lowercase spelling when quoting from Eldred's translation, but in my own discussion of the text I occasionally resort to the uppercase spelling for the sake of clarity and consistency.

An Anatomy of (Lowercase) cynicism

Philosophers and historians have explained the failure of the Enlightenment to produce a just and free society philosophically, as the consequence of reason gone awry; socioeconomically, as the product of a liberal economy spun out of control; or politically, as the collusion of progress and imperialism. But the psychological, or existential, causes of the misadventures of modernity have received less careful scrutiny. Sloterdijk argues convincingly—and herein lie the strength and importance of his book—that our social and critical theories will remain impotent so long as we refuse to account for the psychological consequences brought about by Enlightenment thought. "The failure of a philosopher often consists not in false answers but in neglecting to pose the right questions—and in denying some experiences the right to become 'problems.'" (*C* 256; *K* 2:472). Long dismissed as unworthy of serious philosophical attention, the disillusioned disaffection of Everyman—the cynical consciousness that Sloterdijk identifies as the signature psychological profile of our age—takes center stage in the *Critique of Cynical Reason* as the most pressing philosophical problem of our day.

Sloterdijk argues that the Enlightenment critiques of tradition, authority, and prejudice, far from strengthening the moral fiber of men and encouraging them to think for themselves, have created a psychological complex characterized by apathy, bad faith, and a desperate need for self-assertion. By questioning all values (tradition, religion, the belief in truth, beauty, and goodness), the Enlightenment has unwittingly undermined our will to work toward a better world, giving rise to the paradox, "we are enlightened, we are apathetic" (*C* xxvi; *K* 1:8). As Sloterdijk explains, "Because everything has become problematic, everything is also somehow a matter of indifference" (*C* xxxii; *K* 1:17). In this climate of disabused realism, apathy rapidly leads to an opportunism based in bad faith: since refusing a bribe will not change anything (for in any case, someone else will take it), why not accept it? No enlightened discourse on the abuses of power or the venality of the state will change the cynic's mind: he already knows what the committed philosophe has to say and has decided

to act otherwise. "When they know the truth about themselves and, in spite of this, 'go on as before,' then they completely fulfill the *modern* definition of cynicism" (*C* 102; *K* 1:206). Sloterdijk calls this inner contradiction the cynic's unhappy, or "schizoid," consciousness. Unlike the demonic madman or the hardened criminal, who denies the value of the norms he transgresses, the cynic suffers from a keen awareness of the discrepancy between his deeds and the values he rejects yet nevertheless acknowledges as values. Although Sloterdijk does not explicitly refer to Diderot's novel, we recognize here the psychological makeup of Rameau's nephew and find in *Le Neveu de Rameau* a first expression, and confirmation, of Sloterdijk's definition of cynicism as "that modernized, unhappy consciousness, on which enlightenment has labored both successfully and in vain. It has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, and probably was not able to, put them into practice. Well-off and miserable at the same time, this consciousness no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology; its falseness is already reflexively buffered" (*C* 5).[4]

Cynic apathy and "schizoid" opportunism are matched only by a heightened instinct of self-preservation born from mistrust. Instead of reducing fear by freeing us from superstitions, the Enlightenment has heightened our fears by teaching us to regard all men with suspicion. The cynic responds by putting up defenses. He parodies Descartes' cogito with the syllogism, "I am deceived, therefore I am. And: I unmask deceptions, I myself deceive: therefore, I preserve myself" (*C* 331; *K* 2:604). The psychological profile of the cynic aligns apathy with bad faith and a fragile ego determined to preserve itself at all costs. This "hardened" ego will be the prime object of Sloterdijk's Cynic enlightenment. Because he understands the root problem of modernity as psychological and existential, Sloterdijk makes social emancipation depend upon the rejection of traditional notions of subjectivity. Transforming the economic and political structures of society will not suffice to avoid political catastrophe: the psychological and existential fabric of society must be renewed as well. Reform begins, for Sloterdijk, neither from the base nor from the superstructure but from work on the inner structure.

By analyzing the perversion of Enlightenment critique into cynicism, Sloterdijk carries on a critical tradition that runs from Nietzsche to Adorno and Horkheimer and Foucault. He is receptive to postmodern critiques of universalism and idealism, but he refuses to abandon Critical Theory's faith in the emancipatory power of critique. To do so would mean embracing cynicism. He admires the older generation of the Frankfurt school and its younger heir, Habermas, for attempting "to construe a knowledge that would not be power"

(*C* xxxv; *K* 1:23), but he deems their attempts inadequate and ill construed, pessimistic (Adorno) and utopian (Habermas). Oscillating, as Andreas Huyssen puts it, between "Frankfurt and Paris,"[5] Sloterdijk refuses the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment that Foucault would identify at the root of the miscommunication between French post-Nietzschean writers and Critical Theorists.[6] Rejecting the necessity to declare oneself either staunchly for or against the Enlightenment, for or against a universal reason, he urges instead a certain "light-hearted disrespect in the continuation of the original tasks" of modernity. "As things stand, the only loyalty to enlightenment consists in disloyalty" (*C* 6; *K* 1:39): this disloyalty begins, for Sloterdijk, with redefining "enlightenment." For Sloterdijk, enlightenment will fail if we limit it to the philosophical tradition of rational, emancipatory critique inherited from Kant or to the tradition of discourse ethics Habermas identified at the heart of eighteenth-century English coffeehouse culture and French salons. He argues that the term *enlightenment,* if it is to have any relevance today, must renew with a longstanding though long-buried critical tradition inherited from the ancient Greek Cynics.

The Cynic Cure

Sloterdijk chooses to emphasize two characteristics of the ancient Cynics: Diogenes' cheeky, satirical rhetoric, with its attendant grotesque gestures, and his decision to live in harmony with the doctrines he preached. By reviving Cynicism in these two principal aspects, he intends, first, to give philosophy a language (satire) capable of making critique effective in a cynical society—Cynic rhetoric will exert pressure on Habermas's ideal of a free, unconstrained dialogue and defy the primacy of high theory; and second, to define a model of subjectivity in rupture with the bad faith of contemporary cynic consciousness. Sloterdijk will challenge the Kantian autonomous, universal subject without accepting the reduction of the subject to a plaything of historical forces.

Philosophical Satire

Although Sloterdijk never explicitly claims allegiance to a particular Cynic tradition (he rarely footnotes his sources), his work clearly falls mainly within the Menippean tradition of Cynicism, where satire reigns supreme. He downplays Diogenes' asceticism to emphasize instead the joyfully disruptive power of satirical insubordination. As a rhetorical strategy based on wit and bite,

Cynicism presents an alternative to what Sloterdijk, following Foucault and other critics of the Enlightenment, sees as the tired Enlightenment ideal of a free dialogue grounded in the public use of reason, where truth wins out "through a non-coerced, but compelling, acceptance of stronger arguments" (*C* 13; *K* 1:48). The pretense of a dialogic relationship between equal partners is made to confess its cynical pragmatism and will to power. For Sloterdijk, Marxist ideology critique represents the prototype of this transformation of the better argument into a cruel weapon of destruction: "De facto, the critique of ideology implies the attempt to construct a hierarchy between unmasking and unmasked theory. In the war of consciousness, getting on top, that is, achieving a synthesis of claims to power and better insights, is crucial" (*C* 18; *K* 1:58). Habermas's discourse ethics does not provide a better alternative, for it fails to grasp the structural flaw of dialogic exchange and remains out of touch with a contemporary, cynical society, in which the power of the better argument invariably mutates into a weapon of destruction and domination. The Cynic answers the impotence of a philosophy grounded in the illusion of a free dialogue with the energy of a philosophy based in satirical insubordination. "I want to try to name a source of enlightenment in which the secret of its vitality is hidden," writes Sloterdijk. That source is "cheekiness" *(Frechheit)* (*C* 99; *K* 1:202). Cynicism *(Kynismus)* might, then, preliminarily be defined as an attitude of cheeky, satirical insubordination. By using puns and short, biting verbal assaults, the Cynic attempts to break the rules that govern intellectual conversations so as to dislodge established modes of thought. He tests the truth uttered by respectable theorists and politicians by submitting them to the ordeal of mockery ("For truth is a matter that can stand mockery, that is freshened by ironic gesture directed at it. Whatever cannot stand satire is false" [*C* 288; *K* 2:527–28]), and he invites an irreverent "resistance against the rigged game of 'discourse' . . . in European philosophy" (*C* 102; *K* 1:205).

Despite his wariness toward the rules that govern critical discourse, Sloterdijk does not reject the ideal of an open and free dialogue. As he writes in the opening pages of his book, "To preserve the healing fiction of a free dialogue is one of the last tasks of philosophy" (*C* 14; *K* 1:50). But this fiction must be recognized as such, and its failure circumvented by adopting alternate critical strategies borrowed from the ancient Cynics. "The first in the tradition of satirical resistance, [Diogenes creates] an uncivil enlightenment. He starts the *non-Platonic dialogue*" (*C* 102; *K* 1:205). Satire replaces conversation and the power of the better argument as the means of carrying on the critical project of Enlightenment.

The Cynic Enlightenment

In his critique of Enlightenment discourse, Sloterdijk shares the concerns of a number of his contemporaries, from Lyotard to Foucault and Deleuze, but he differs from them in his emphasis on the humor of Cynic speech. For Cynicism to succeed where traditional rhetorical techniques have failed, the Cynic must first use language in a manner that breaks with established ways of speaking and thinking; but he must also avoid hostility when speaking his mind. A surprising metaphor that makes one see something in a new light may well succeed in unsettling an established way of thinking, but it does only half the work Sloterdijk demands of Cynical rhetoric. Humor performs the rest by dissolving the potential confrontation (between the belief I hold and the joke that shatters it, between myself and the Cynic who mocks me) into laughter. The Cynic disarms me with his humor, relaxes the tension between us, and creates (dare one hope?) the possibility for genuine reflection without hostility.

Cynic Subjectivity

Whether humor can prove to be any less utopian than communicative reason, or less hostile than ideology critique, remains open to debate, and I return to this question in the final section of this chapter. Sloterdijk, for his part, seeks to account for the successful use of satire by grounding the Cynic's rhetorical strategies in an ethos of self-reflection. Whereas the eighteenth-century authors considered in this study attempted to control Cynicism by policing its language, Sloterdijk gives Cynic rhetoric free reign and seeks to contain Cynicism's potential violence from within rather than from without. Satire cannot alone perform the work required of the Cynic: it must be anchored in a particular subject position, that of the Cynic who has succeeded in transgressing the limits of his ego and achieved what Sloterdijk calls a fluid, softened subjectivity. Whatever its shortcomings, Sloterdijk's *Critique* must be understood as a serious attempt to rethink traditional notions of subjectivity. This means revisiting not only the autonomous, universal subject of eighteenth-century discourse but also, more pressingly, its contemporary offshoot, cynic egoism. Cynicism *(Zynismus),* we recall, is Enlightenment critique turned against itself; if it employs reason to unmask errors, it does so no longer with the view of implementing social change but with the aim of getting ahead in the world. Cynic *(zynische)* subjectivity likewise depends on this logic of cunning lucidity: it claims autonomy as a bulwark against the deceptions and instabilities of contemporary reality and transforms the Kantian subject into a subject obsessed with self-preservation. In Sloterdijk's words, "What is called subject in

modern times is, in fact, that self-preservation ego that withdraws step by step from the living, to the summit of paranoia" (*C* 355; *K* 2:650–51). This paranoia manifests itself on the political front in the arms race: taking the nuclear bomb as the symbol of the cynic self, Sloterdijk confronts his reader with a concrete image of the danger cynic subjectivity poses to itself and the world.[7] In arming itself to the teeth against a threat perceived as vague but imminent, the modern subject has itself become the threat it sought to counter: it is the ticking bomb that will inevitably take itself down along with its perceived enemies.

The image is a clever one because it succeeds, where so many contemporary discussions had failed, in making the abstract question of subjectivity relevant, urgent, and graspable. Where Sloterdijk is perhaps less successful is in exposing his solution to our present plight. He calls on us to disarm the subject and urges the softening, or "liquefaction" *(Verflüssigung),* of our egos (*C* 379; *K* 2:695). Drawing upon such diverse examples as Diogenes' insubordination, Heidegger's authenticity, Buddhist meditation, and psychoanalysis, he seeks to define the Cynical antidote to cynic selfhood as a fluid and ecstatic subjectivity. How, amid this eclectic series of examples, are we to understand this new subject?

Sloterdijk is perhaps clearest when he engages directly with Adorno. His interest in the body, and Diogenes' outrageous physical gestures in particular, aims to carry Adorno's sensuous critique one step further. Sloterdijk praises Adorno for attempting "to construe [like the kynic] a knowledge that would not be power" (*C* xxxv; *K* 1:23) and for seeking to replace a critique grounded in objectivity and distance by a critique rooted in the sensuous basis of existence. "To discover the living body as a sensor of the world is to secure a realistic foundation for philosophical knowledge of the world," writes Sloterdijk. "This is what Critical Theory has begun to do, hesitatingly, often aesthetically encoded, hidden in all kinds of squeamishness" (*C* xxxiii; *K* 1:20). Sloterdijk claims allegiance to this project, but he critiques Adorno for reducing the sensuous to "spiritual irascibility" (*C* xxxiv; *K* 1:21) and for jeopardizing his critical potential by bordering on self-complacency in suffering. Only by broadening the sensuous basis of critique from aesthetic sensitivity to the human body itself can the task of Critical Theory be redeemed from its "unintentional" "melancholy stagnation" (*C* xxxvii; *K* 1:26).

Sloterdijk's Cynic outwits melancholy by discovering in socially unacceptable physical gestures, such as sticking out one's tongue, a source of "freedom, awareness, joy in living" (*C* 166; *K* 1:314). Lest this be mistaken, as well it might, for childish self-assertion, Sloterdijk offers two further qualifications.

First, he anchors the Cynic's gestures in the courageous and conscious decision to live differently. The Cynic commits himself to rejecting superfluous social needs, "what civilisation offers by way of comfortable seductions to entice people to serve its ends" (*C* 165; *K* 1:312–13). His acts of physical insubordination partake of a general strategy to outwit what Foucault has called the production of docile bodies. Second, and here Sloterdijk differs from Foucault and from a more traditional interpretation of ancient Cynicism, he grounds this conscious rejection of social norms in a practice of meditation. Through meditation the Cynic frees himself from his position as lonely naysayer and experiences, in Sloterdijk's words, "the demise of the ego in its surrender to the most communal world" (*C* 207; *K* 1:390). To explain what he means, Sloterdijk once again takes Adorno as his springboard.

As Huyssen has noted, Sloterdijk operates a striking rewriting of Adorno's famous analysis of the Odysseus myth in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* reading Odysseus against the grain as a mystic and the first true Cynic.[8] Adorno had interpreted Odysseus's ability to outwit the sirens by tying himself to a mast as a symbol of the inevitable collusion between enlightenment and alienation. Odysseus thus came to represent the mythic origins of an imprisoned subjectivity, the first cynic, to employ Sloterdijk's terminology. Sloterdijk frees Odysseus from his chains by claiming a different facet of the myth, Odysseus's encounter with the Cyclops. Here Odysseus escapes the wrath of the Cyclops by calling back over his shoulder as he flees the cave, "It was nobody who blinded you," a cunning trick that leaves the Cyclops powerless to harm him. Sloterdijk explains the importance of this myth of nobodiness as follows:

> A formal somebody, as bearer of our social identifications, is, so to speak, programmed into us. Our true self-experience in original Nobodiness remains in this world buried under taboo and panic. Basically, however, no life has a name. The self-conscious nobody in us—who acquires names and identities only through its "social birth"—remains the living source of freedom. The living Nobody, in spite of the horror of socialisation, remembers the energetic paradises beneath the personalities. Its life soil is the mentally alert body, which we should not call *nobody* but *yesbody* and which is able to develop in the course of individuation from an areflexive "narcissism" to a reflected "self-discovery in the world cosmos." (*C* 73–74; *K* 1:156)

A strong Nietzschean undertone runs through the Odysseus passage. The "energetic paradises" of the living Nobody evoke images of the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy.* But although Sloterdijk acknowledges the link between Cynicism and Nietzsche's "revaluation of all values," he refuses to identify Nietzsche

as a Cynic, arguing that "Nietzsche ruins the point [made by Diogenes]" by turning "the kynical rejection of power into a will to power; with this he changes sides and provides the powerful with a philosophy of disinhibition" (*C* 211n17; *K* 1:317n). Sloterdijk's dismissal of Nietzsche as a false Cynic is perhaps a bit hasty, but it serves to characterize the Cynical ethos as an ethics of benign interpersonal relations that refuses to conflate enlightened consciousness with the will to domination. Cynical meditation begins at the personal level, with the task of reflecting on one's own identities, but it moves outward in waves, as the Cynic attempts, by satire and crude gestures, to dissolve the relations of domination in the world around him. The aim is not self-fulfillment and self-glorification but harmony with self, nature, and society. Cynicism seeks to bridge the gap that Richard Rorty lays out between "philosophers" of self-creation and "philosophers" of justice, between those who work for personal development and those who fight for human solidarity, between, one might say, postmodernism and Critical Theory. Cynicism emphasizes self-creation, but rather than severing all ties to socialization, it envisions a new society from the perspective of a subjectivity that has surrendered its need for self-preservation and opens itself to a new, mystical form of being with others.

Sloterdijk illustrates the workings of Cynic subjectivity by drawing examples from a wide variety of fields and philosophies: Diogenes' insubordinate physical gestures, which rupture accepted patterns of social behavior and deny his social identity; Freudian excursions into the realm of the unconscious; Heidegger's authentic life, which he interprets as an "intensely conscious," "mentally alert" life opposed to the Anyone-ness of the cynic;[9] and Buddhist meditation, which aims at harmony with the world cosmos. The whirlwind tour of modern Cynics leaves us out of breath, grasping for something to hold on to. We object, as postmodern readers, to what appears to be a naive celebration of the body as the source of freedom; we balk, as scholars, at the equation of Diogenes with Heidegger; and we raise a suspicious, if curious, eyebrow, as children of the Enlightenment, at the call for a mystical union with the universe. But critical frustration is the point: I surmise that Sloterdijk intended us to scratch our heads, bewildered, at his *satura,* or potpourri, until we burst out laughing. For Cynic subjectivity defies logical and philosophical categories. It can be approximated only by analogy and the proliferation of examples and grasped, ultimately, only through the practice of meditation. It aims at the surrender of the ego and represents, for Sloterdijk, the last stage of enlightenment and the only effective way to save the Enlightenment from its perversion into cynicism: "I want to simply suggest for consideration the question whether the

last level of integration in enlightenment does not have to be a kind of 'rational mysticism' " (*C* 61; *K* 1:133–34), for "the critique of egoism . . . constitutes, I think, the core of all enlightenment in which the experience of civilized ego comes to maturity. After it, there can be logically no other *uncovering* critique, but only 'praxis,' conscious life" (*C* 60; *K* 1:131).

Buddhism and Cynicism

Sloterdijk names many Cynics in his pantheon, from Diogenes to Till Eulenspiegel, Heinrich Heine, and Heidegger. But it is the Buddha who best represents his meditative interpretation of Cynicism, so much so that the Buddha begins to replace Diogenes as the central model of Cynic consciousness. Sloterdijk compares Diogenes to Zen masters, who share the Cynics' contempt for followers and practice "teaching through non teaching" (*C* 157; *K* 1:297); he describes Adorno's critique of cognition as "crypto-Buddhist" (*C* xxxiv; *K* 1:21) and the atomic bomb as "the Buddha of the West" (*C* 130; *K* 1:258); and he promises us, in the most general terms, a philosophy that resembles "Asiatic rather than European figures of thought" (*C* 381n18; *K* 2:692n). These references, more often than not frustratingly vague, are meant to suggest that ancient Cynicism is best understood as a form of Buddhism, by which Sloterdijk means a practice aimed at dissolving dichotomies and achieving harmony with self and others. Only through a Cynical, meditative self-surrender can one hope to transform the world and one's relations to others into a "most communal" and peaceful existence.

Sloterdijk's Buddhist interpretation of Cynicism strikes one at first as a very strong reading of Greek Cynicism. Matters are not helped by the fact that Sloterdijk does little to support his claim. He simply posits the comparison between Cynicism and Buddhism and offers little explanation as to which aspects of Buddhist meditation might be pertinent to his study. The result is a frustrating confusion of terms, a pastiche of different traditions, and an uneasy feeling that Sloterdijk is advocating a form of New Age "nonsense" or introducing a transcendental discourse into his work through the back door. To borrow Alan Schrift's description of a later work by Sloterdijk, "Sloterdijk's book is inspired, but like many works of inspiration, it is also erratic. Allegoric and hyperbolic, it drifts from insightful suggestions . . . to hermetic remarks that function within his own thinking but need to be more clearly explained and more firmly tethered to other critical discourses as they function outside his text."[10] Sloterdijk's study lacks a concrete analysis of the relation-

ship between Buddhism and Cynicism. This is problematic, but it should not disqualify his analogy altogether. If we turn to scholars who have carried out research on the historical and philosophical ties between Greek Cynicism and Asian religious traditions, Sloterdijk's claim ceases to appear absurd. On the contrary, his interpretation of ancient Cynicism as meditation is both perceptive and a much-needed corrective to a widespread critical reduction of Cynicism to a reactive oppositional stance. Sloterdijk recuperates a discourse on clarity of mind that was central to the practice of the ancient Cynics but that has been largely underplayed in the history of the reception of Cynicism. We do not encounter it, for instance, in the eighteenth-century reflections on Cynicism by Diderot, D'Alembert, or Rousseau; ironically, Sade's emphasis on Cynic apathy as a method of clearing the mind brings him closer to Sloterdijk than any of the philosophes.

What, then, is the relationship between Cynicism and the religious traditions Sloterdijk associates with it? Can one speak of a historical connection between the early Cynics and certain Indian religious practices? Our earliest evidence dates from imperial Roman times; sources confirm contact between the Cynics and Indian Gymnosophists during Alexander's campaign to India in 326 BCE. The firsthand account by Onesicritus, the Cynic philosopher who accompanied Alexander on his expedition, has been lost, but his tale survives in Strabo's account in the fifteenth book of his *Geography,* as well as in summary form in Plutarch's life of Alexander.[11] The term *gymnosophists*—literally, "naked sages"—seems to have been applied rather loosely to a number of different religious groups.[12] From Strabo we learn that these "sophists of India" were very much like the Cynics: they wore little to no clothing, refused all manner of luxury, and placed nature above the laws of men. Further evidence of possible Indian influence on Cynicism comes from Lucian's *Passing of Peregrinus,* in which the Syrian satirist compares Peregrinus's suicide by flame to the famous suicide of the Indian Brahmin Kalanos, recounted by Onesicritus.[13]

Our sources, however, are scant, and scholars of Cynicism tend to agree that evidence of cross-pollination between Indian and Greek thought (and Cynicism in particular) is too slim and uncertain to be conclusive.[14] Claire Muckensturm has argued, for instance, that Onesicritus, and Strabo after him, very likely interpreted Gymnosophist practices within the framework of Cynic philosophy. She points out that the nature-law opposition that Strabo attributes to the Gymnosophists is a Greek concept alien to the conceptual vocabulary of the Brahmins and the renouncers. She concludes that "a fortuitous occurrence,

the encounter between Onesicritus and Indian sages at Taxila in 326 B.C.E., served as the point of departure for an *interpretatio graeca* that transformed the Indian sages into model Cynics, based on a number of elements both held in common."[15] If Muckensturm is right, then Sloterdijk in effect turns the tables on Onesicritus and posits an "Eastern interpretation" that transforms the Cynics into model Buddhists.

Sloterdijk's interpretation is supported by the work of a minority of scholars who have argued, against the grain, that Indian thought directly influenced Cynic philosophy. August Gladisch, writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, holds that Cynic practice developed from the contact between Greeks and Indian Gymnosophists during Alexander's campaign, while Farrand Sayre, writing a century later, speaks forcefully of Indian influence on Diogenes by way of Asian trade routes to the Black Sea (Diogenes was a native of Sinope, on the southern shore of the Black Sea).[16] He suggests that several "alleged sayings of Diogenes may have been added a hundred years or more after his time in a period when the Greeks had ample opportunity to acquaint themselves with Indian philosophies."[17]

The question of historical relations aside, even scholars skeptical of direct influence insist on the striking similarities between Cynic practices and certain Asian religious practices, such as those of the Pasupatas or the Zen monks. Thomas McEvilley brings to the fore important parallels with the Zen and Ch'an traditions, among them "the shortcut to enlightenment" (like the "sudden school" of Zen and Ch'an, Cynicism avoids lengthy study in favor of a direct, ascetic approach to enlightenment); "emphasis on the present moment and acceptance of it"; "an overwhelming emphasis on teaching by example rather than by discourse"; "the frequent use of perverse, irrational, and/or violent examples (Diogenes, like a Zen master, striking students with his staff to produce sudden insights . . .)"; "the use of shocking and/or enigmatic verbal formulae as teaching devices"; asceticism and frugality; "a mirthful attitude which often expresses itself as ridicule of convention"; and "an extreme self-possession."[18]

The most important similarity, according to McEvilley, concerns the goal shared by Zen, Ch'an, and Cynics of clearing, or silencing, the mind. In Cynic practice this is expressed by the concept of *atyphia,* the state achieved when one has rid one's mind of all *typhos* (illusion; literally, "smoke" or "mist"). McEvilley argues that "*typhos* . . . was the center of [Cynic] ontology and epistemology,"[19] a view shared by the scholar of Cynicism Luis Navia.[20] McEvil-

ley explains, in clear and simple prose, the main idea that guides Sloterdijk's comparison between Cynicism and Buddhism:

> From the central conception of *typhos* the Cynics developed an ethic which again is remarkably like that of the Buddhist schools which are based on the Madhyamika. The *sophos* (sage or saint) who seeks to escape from illusion through the *askêsis kai mache* (the discipline and struggle) of philosophy, must first practice *autarkeia* (self-rule), the great principle of Diogenes, derived from the example of Socrates, whereby all material and social habits and all beliefs connected with them are nullified through a realization of the emptiness, or "smoke like" nature, of all opinions. Cynic sages, like Buddhist monks, renounced home and possessions and took to the streets as wanderers and temple beggars. The related concepts of *apatheia* (nonreaction, non-involvement) and *adiaporia* (nondifferentiation) became central to the Cynic discipline.[21]

By anchoring his argument in concepts such as *"atyphia, askêsis,* and *apatheia,* which were central to the early Cynics, McEvilley gives depth to Sloterdijk's intuitive connection between Cynicism and Buddhism.

Daniel Ingalls and, later, Alexander Syrkin and Michel Hulin make an even stronger case when they relate the Cynics to the Hindu Upanishadic Pasupatas, members of an ascetic Shivaite sect known for their habit of imitating dogs.[22] The *pasupatas,* like the Cynics, held an ascetic contempt for worldly goods and honors and actively sought out contempt, offending others by their antisocial behavior and harsh condemnations and seeking through the practice of dishonor to achieve an unconditioned freedom. Ingalls insists that the two "doglike" sects did not have a direct influence on each other, but the common canine attitude is telling.

The differences between Cynicism and the various Buddhist and Upanishadic practices alluded to above should not go unemphasized, however. These will vary, of course, depending on the particular religious practice being compared, but three key dissimilarities must be mentioned. First, the absence of the transcendent dimension in Cynic asceticism. Second, the public, performative character of Cynic practice: an important difference with the Zen and Ch'an traditions (though not with the Pasupatas) concerns the Cynic's exhibitionism. We do not encounter Diogenes on a secluded mountaintop, but in the Athenian marketplace, imposing his "wisdom" on all and sundry. This leads us to the third dissimilarity, the Cynic's aggressive philanthropy, which is largely absent, in its activist form, from Buddhism. As Foucault will point

out in his lectures, the Cynic is no sage or Buddhist monk seeking enlightenment for himself and a select group of initiates. He brings his wisdom to the heart of the city, doling out his teachings with particular relish to those who care nothing for them. The Pasupatas too bring their shameless ways into the city, but they do so seeking only their own salvation, and seeking it, moreover, at the expense of their fellow human beings, whose good karma they in effect "steal" when they receive their contempt.[23]

Differences aside, the comparison is illuminating because it invites us to reflect on Cynicism from a non-Hellenic perspective and to consider Cynic practice as something more than a revolt against Athenian culture. Many scholars have interpreted Cynicism as a reactive practice that grants the Cynic at best a negative freedom. They understand the Cynic's antisocial behavior as a direct response to a particular historical situation (the crisis that followed the Peloponnesian War, the imperial expansionism of Alexander the Great) or as a stance of permanent revolt.[24] The comparison with ash-covered Pasupatas and Zen masters suggests, however, that Cynic practice is more than revolt. By reducing his needs and rejecting abstract theory, the Cynic achieves a state of *atyphia,* or clarity of mind, from which he can act and speak with insight and spontaneity. The Cynic accesses truth not through reason but through an ascetic training of mind and body, achieving what Daniel Kinney has described as "nonhuman, nonverbal nature at its most receptive."[25] In Sloterdijk's words,

> Although ancient kynicism, with its Socratic conviction that virtue is learnable, seems to stress the efforts of the "subject", it nevertheless knew very well that only through forbearance and tranquillity would subjective reason be capable of hearing an "objective" reason within itself. The great thinking of antiquity is rooted in the experience of enthusiastic tranquillity when, on the summit of having-thought, the thinker steps aside and lets himself be permeated by the "self-revelation" of truth. (*C* 541; *K* 2:941)

Sloterdijk speaks of "the inheritance of a passivistic consciousness without which practical reason cannot really be reason" (*C* 542; *K* 2:943). He fears that our modern philosophy has cut us off from this tradition of meditative reflection and hence from a vital source of practical wisdom. Taking issue with Adorno for grounding critique in *Weltschmerz* and with Habermas for positing quasi-transcendental norms, Sloterdijk finds in Cynic receptivity a nondogmatic and life-affirming ground for action. Whether such receptivity can provide the grounds for a just society is questionable, and I will return to this problem in the concluding section. But I would argue here that Sloterdijk's

meditative Cynicism is most fruitfully understood not as a mystical access to truth in its essence (something Sloterdijk seeks to avoid, though not always successfully, by the heavy use of quotation marks in the passage quoted above) but as a corrective to our age's exclusive reliance on a rational, logical access to truth. Sloterdijk's book is important for contemporary philosophy because it partakes of a desire to return to an older conception of philosophy as a way of life and as the path to wisdom. Sloterdijk seeks to invent a new way of doing philosophy for the twentieth century by rewriting the history of philosophy and recuperating a philosophical tradition, Cynicism, that calls into question the abstract theoretical practice that philosophy has become today.

The Limits of Cynicism

The *Critique of Cynical Reason* is impressive in scope and inspiring in its call for new forms of subjectivity and power relations, but it does not give the reader a real sense of how to put Cynicism into practice. It is tempting to reduce Sloterdijk's work to the injunction, "Hey man, be Zen" and to dismiss it as too vague and impractical a solution to the ills of modernity. Sloterdijk's lack of historical analysis is largely responsible for this frustration. He frames his text with a historical analysis of cynicism, locating its apogee in the late twentieth century and its rise to prominence in the Weimar era, but the body of his text abandons this analysis to concentrate instead on cynicism and Cynicism as "historical constants," opposing forms of polemical consciousness "from above" and "from below" (*C* 218; *K* 2:401). This avoids the Cynical task of testing the limits and possibilities of Cynical gestures within specific historical situations.

One consequence of treating cynicism and Cynicism as historical constants is that it enables Sloterdijk to posit a clear split between the critical strategies of those who are in a position of power (and who use their institutional positions to cynically maintain the status quo) and those who are not (the potential Cynics). This implies the ability to legislate between benign and destructive forms of oppositional violence. Two main difficulties beset Sloterdijk at this juncture. First, he retains a vertical understanding of power relations that fails to take into account the subtle micropolitics of power analyzed by Foucault. He thereby eschews the difficult task of locating the Cynic within a network of power relations that defies the simple distinction between oppressor and oppressed, and he too easily posits the Cynic as residing joyfully outside normative structures. Second, in glossing over the Cynic's relationship to his fel-

low human beings he fails to provide a convincing theory of benign violence. He emphasizes the Cynic's harmony with nature and the cosmos but pays little heed to the very real effects his actions may have on others. In Huyssen's words,

> [Kynicism] nevertheless depends on a logic of hostility that the new reality principle of a softened, flexible subjectivity is supposed to overcome. It is difficult for me to imagine a nonhostile, nonobjectifying satirical laughter, and Sloterdijk never really addresses the question of what kynics actually do to the persons they laugh at. (xx)

By not addressing the question of intersubjective relations on a concrete level, Sloterdijk fails to propose an adequate counterproposal to Habermas's discourse ethics and to his proposal for the creation of a public sphere as the only viable model for collectively implementing effective social change.[26] We shall see that Foucault helps resolve some of these difficulties by defining Cynicism as an intersubjective praxis, "une pratique à deux,"[27] and by placing Cynicism squarely within the disciplinary structures of contemporary society.

Sloterdijk's attempt to legislate the border between an ideal Cynicism and its corrupt cynical counterpart belongs to a longstanding tradition that dates, as we have seen, from the first centuries of our era. Epictetus and Julian invented an ideal Cynicism that would have no truck with the more vulgar, crude, and asocial elements of "common" cynicism. The elements they chose to emphasize as essential to true Cynicism differ from those Sloterdijk privileges—the emperor Julian would certainly have had no patience for Sloterdijk's celebration of bodily shamelessness—but the impulse behind their purifications of Cynicism remains similar: to rid Cynicism of its potential for destructive social violence (or at the very least of its potential to become a will to domination) and to make Cynicism, in Julian's words, a "universal philosophy." For Julian, this meant a philosophy grounded in the dictum "Know thyself";[28] for Sloterdijk, it is a practical philosophy grounded in meditation. This "continuum of being conscious in our existence" (*C* 208; *K* 1:392) is what Sloterdijk terms "the modern equivalent of the dictum 'Know thyself' " (*C* 212n53; *K* 1:392n). Both approaches display an incapacity to deal successfully with the tensions and ambiguities that mark the concrete expression of Cynical practice.

Sloterdijk relies on two related criteria when he distinguishes the Cynic from the cynic: harmony of life and doctrine, or the "non-schizoid" life, and the "continuum of being conscious in our existence," or alertness. These criteria provide the moral ground for the Cynic's aggressivity and legitimate it

as benign. But what of the very real possibility that neither of these criteria suffices to guarantee healthy, nonviolent, and noncoercive relations between individuals? Luis Navia takes issue with Sloterdijk for reducing Cynicism to "authenticity" and argues that a further criterion, "a remarkable passion for virtue and moral freedom," must be added to the mix if the distinction between Cynicism and cynicism is to have any meaning at all.[29] As Diderot well knew, unity of character does not suffice to establish peaceful relations with one's fellow human beings. His own cynic protagonist, Rameau's nephew, seeks to escape his schizoid life by emulating a man renowned for his unity of character: the intensely alert, evil Renegade of Avignon. Harmony of word and deed can lead to murder as easily as to peace and love. Sloterdijk seeks to deflect the Renegade possibility by making Cynic authenticity depend on meditation and self-reflection, but neither is a guarantee of intelligent insight or nonviolent intervention. Voltaire knew this when he gently mocked the Quaker meetings he attended while a young exile in England. He admired the Friends for allowing each member to speak up when the spirit moved him or her, but he reserved the right to doubt that each man's meditative practice led him inevitably and unfailingly to the truth.[30] Sloterdijk's investigation of Cynicism as the last stage of enlightenment is thought-provoking, but it would have been greatly enriched by a direct confrontation with eighteenth-century reflections on the ancient sect and his predecessors' misgivings about Cynicism's viability as a model for effective social change.

A related problem arises from Sloterdijk's celebration of the body as the privileged locus of resistance. His praise of gestures of insubordination relies on an essentializing discourse of the body that neglects the extent to which bodies are themselves historical constructs inscribed within dominant discourses. Huyssen asks the pointed question, "How would Sloterdijk counter a Foucaultian claim that the resistance of the self-conscious body is produced by the culture of cynicism itself as a regenerating and legitimating device?"[31] The same question may be asked of Foucault himself in his late writings on Greek *askêsis* and in his lectures on Cynicism in particular. We shall see that Foucault joins Sloterdijk in making the Cynic body the privileged site for contesting existing relations of power. He does so, however, by rescripting Sloterdijk's essentializing celebration of the body. For Foucault, the body is instead the site of practices of self-fashioning that concretely redefine the subject's position within the social games that fashion our selves.

Many of the difficulties that beset Sloterdijk's Cynic proposal, from its idealization of physical insubordination to its utopian faith in the power of laughter

to dissolve violence, derive from his inflection of Cynicism in the direction of Menippean satire, and more specifically of a Bakhtinian, that is, carnivalesque, interpretation of Menippean satire. Satire was in fact an important feature of ancient Cynicism. Robert Bracht Branham has shown that one is six of the sayings of Diogenes of Sinope collected by Diogenes Laertius includes a pun or a parodic allusion to poetry, while Diogenes' famous follower Menippus developed a literary genre characterized by a seriocomic style and a mock learned wit that Sloterdijk emulates.[32] As we saw in chapter 2, Menippean satire, transmitted through the writings of Lucian, greatly influenced the Renaissance and served to establish satire as the central feature of Cynicism in the early modern period. One of my arguments in this book is that eighteenth-century writers in France and Germany sought to purge the Cynical of its satirical bite as a necessary step toward making Diogenes a useful figure in the Enlightenment republic of letters. Sloterdijk has the virtue of recuperating the satirical bite of Cynicism for philosophy, but he loses a measure of self-reflection on the limits of satire that did not escape his eighteenth-century precursors. Can satire really function, as Sloterdijk claims it can, to relax tensions and create "a most communal world"? Sloterdijk does on occasion admits that the Cynic's rhetorical strategy may encounter resistance:

> Those who take the liberty of confronting prevailing lies provoke a climate of satirical loosening up. . . . But while kynics support their "cheekiness" with a life of ascetic integrity, they are answered, from the side of the attacked, by an idealism with a disinhibition that is disguised as outrage and that, in the most extreme case, can go as far as extermination. An essential aspect of power is that it only likes to laugh at its own jokes. (*C* 103; *K* 1:207–8)

In the narrative economy of his text, however, the celebratory and euphoric descriptions of satire far outweigh the fleeting references to the violence occasioned by the Cynic's biting wit. Even when he acknowledges violence, Sloterdijk never actually considers the very real effects a backlash might have on those who practice kynicism, nor does he ask whether such a backlash would affect the success of their satirical offensive. His version of Cynic satire displays, despite his adamant claims to realism, a utopian faith in the power of laughter, of the breaking of taboos, and of hierarchical reversals, to create a more joyful and free society.

Sloterdijk's work partakes of the widespread fascination with the carnivalesque that swept the critical scene in the 1970s and 1980s, capturing the

imagination of literary and social critics on the left with its promise of a freer social order. Indeed Sloterdijk's Cynicism seems far more indebted to Bakhtin and his carnivalesque version of Menippean satire than to any of the classical writers on Cynicism, from Diogenes Laertius to Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, and Epictetus.[33] Although his explicit discussion of the carnival is brief (he mentions it, along with the city and the university, as one of the three satirical breeding grounds of early modern Europe), the notion of the carnivalesque dominates his text. The *Critique of Cynical Reason* is a paean to Bakhtin and the power of carnival to turn the world, with its hierarchies and "frozen identities," on its head. Downplaying Diogenes' ascetic practices, Sloterdijk emphasizes the Cynic's joyfully disruptive acts. With his comic verbal jabs, his uninhibited farts, his commitment to bringing life "down to earth," his satirical hodgepodge of styles, his often grotesque humor, Sloterdijk's Diogenes seems to have stepped directly out of Rabelais's carnivalesque world, where the grotesque body reigns supreme. Chapter subheadings such as "Tongue Stuck Out," "Breasts," "Arses," and "Shit, Refuse" evoke Bakhtin's celebration of the nonclassical body, with its protruding bellies and open orifices. Bakhtin and Sloterdijk describe very similar strategies for disrupting the social order and breaking prohibitions, and both believe in the power of laughter and the release of libidinal energy to free man from traditional relations of power. The Bakhtinian carnival, like Sloterdijk's Cynicism, aims at something more than comic reversal: it seeks to establish a new way for individuals to relate to one another within a community. In Bakhtin's words, "Carnival is the place for working out a new mode of interrelationship between individuals. . . . People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into a free and familiar contact on the carnival square."[34] When Sloterdijk speaks of Cynicism as the catalyst of a "most communal world" where authentic life "is experienced by us . . . in love and sexual intoxication, in irony and laughter, creativity and responsibility, meditation and ecstasy" (*C* 207; *K* 1:390), his dream is of the same mettle as Bahktin's. The "responsibility" that has slipped into the list remains buried beneath the carnival intoxication. Sloterdijk wants to believe that in the realm "beyond good and evil," beyond conventional morality and conventional rationality, Cynics dance in ecstatic, harmonious joy.

Sloterdijk has fallen prey to what Michael Bernstein has called, speaking of Bakhtin, a "nostalgic longing for a realm of pure spontaneity" and a tendency to "emphasize the positive vigor of the briefly dominant underling" to the exclusion of the more violent manifestations of the carnival's reversal of all values.[35] For all their down-to-earth realism, Bakhtin and Sloterdijk share a

utopian impulse that is not without its dangers and of which Sade, as we saw in chapter 5, offers a parody *avant la lettre:* his C/cynic proposal for a new republic in *Français, encore un effort* at times worryingly looks like the flipside of Sloterdijk's Cynic community. Sloterdijk's dismissal of Sade from the precinct of true Cynics blinds him to a much-needed moment of self-reflection and self-mockery.[36] As Bernstein puts it,

> When we celebrate the carnivalesque and speak so confidently of the utopian longing for a radically open and unfettered relationship, not just toward one another, but toward the conflicting impulses and desires whose interactions shape us, there is a cruel human risk to these idealizations. The viciousness that can be released by the carnival's dissolution of the accumulated prudential understanding of a culture needs to figure in our thinking about the rhetorical strategies and ideological assertions within which utopian theorizing is articulated.[37]

If, as Sloterdijk promises his reader, Cynicism is to offer a concrete solution to the plight of modernity, it must account for the chaos it is likely to unleash. Sloterdijk's praise of the apolitical order of carnival is not unmotivated; it derives from the central insight of his book. He senses that structural, economic, and juridical reforms will not suffice, in our present cynical climate, to "really change anything." He therefore makes social emancipation depend upon a rejection of traditional notions of subjectivity and a correlate rejection of traditional conceptions of knowledge in favor of an "erotic knowledge" based on intimacy between subject and object. Sloterdijk's erotic knowledge is a necessary corrective to the excesses of rationalism and an important reminder that there are ways of knowing—what Sloterdijk calls the wisdom traditions—with which Western cultures have lost touch. On the existential level, Sloterdijk's invitation to meditation is sound and welcome. But when it is presented not as a supplement but as a substitute to political reform, the erotics of knowledge begins to sound worrisome. The difficulty here, in the words of Jacques Bouveresse, is that "to propose that the exception [mystical practices, wisdom traditions, intuition] become the rule is to forget that the problem of the contemporary world is also an enormous problem of organization that will have to be solved, whatever the turn of events, and to whose solution such exalting experiences as those of another state of being are, by nature, incapable of contributing anything whatsoever."[38] Sloterdijk claims to counter idealisms of every type, but his Cynicism resembles a utopian dream of natural world harmony, without government and without compromise. He trusts that if we

surrender ourselves, through Cynic laughter and relaxation, to the "Heraclitian flow" of the universe, we will live in harmony with ourselves, one another, and nature.[39]

The failure to address the concrete realities generated by Cynicism is due in part to the lack of precision enabled by Menippean satire, which allows Sloterdijk to be suggestive without ever having to come down clearly on one side or the other of the debates. His *Critique of Cynical Reason* is a beautiful example of Menippean prose: written in a hodgepodge of styles, it borrows from everyday speech and from the vocabulary of German idealism alike, parodying serious philosophical works with verve and good humor. Carrying on a rich tradition bent on ridiculing the *philosophicus gloriosus,* which Northrop Frye identifies as a key characteristic of Menippean satire, Sloterdijk playfully concocts a pastiche of the great names of German philosophy, from Kant to Nietzsche, Marx, Heidegger, and Adorno. In this he imitates the approach of Lucian to the Greek philosophers, of "Erasmus and Rabelais to the scholastics, . . . Swift and Samuel Butler I to Descartes and Royal Society, . . . Voltaire to the Leibnizians."[40] Huyssen concisely captures the mixed, seriocomic *(spoudogeloion)* tone of Sloterdijk's irreverent prose:

> Sloterdijk could be said to cannibalize a number of different styles and modes of expression—the polished aphorism, the anecdote, the suggestive style of the feuilleton, satire, serious philosophical discourse, the discourses of literary and intellectual history—mixing them in a kind of patchwork that prevents the emergence of a unitary style in the traditional modernist sense and that evades the requirements of a rigorous philosophical discourse.[41]

Sloterdijk's prose can be infuriating in its cleverness and its lack of precision—as Leslie Adelson put it, readers will be excused for feeling the irresistible urge to "throw their hands up and the book (both volumes) out the window"[42]—but it is highly successful in its parodic cannibalism of German philosophy and popular culture. By playing fast and loose with conceptual categories, Sloterdijk aims to disorient us, to surprise us, to make us laugh at our own deep-rooted seriousness. This is provocative, but it carries with it both a political and a philosophical danger. Politically, the slippery playfulness of Sloterdijk's prose is also an easy way to avoid confronting very real and practical problems. Menippean satire has troubling implications when it is put, as it is throughout the *Critique,* in the service of defining a new, Cynical Left. Pastiche and parody allow Sloterdijk, in the words of Bouveresse, to remain comfortably vague

("de s'installer confortablement dans le vague") and eschew the real task of proposing viable alternatives to liberal democracy.[43] Philosophically, laughter notwithstanding, Sloterdijk's joyful parody does not fully succeed in freeing his critique from its entanglement with the tradition of idealist and abstract thought that it claims to leave behind. Sloterdijk aims to disrupt a philosophical tradition centered on the primacy of consciousness by inflecting it in the direction of the "gestural" or "physiognomic" anti-philosophy of Diogenes. But as he slips merrily from one Cynic model to another, from Diogenes to Heidegger and the Buddha, mixing, in good Menippean style, one genre with its opposite, his critique of consciousness turns into a praise of a heightened form of consciousness, mystical meditation. For all his claims to the contrary, Sloterdijk remains caught in the vocabulary of "consciousness" and "morality" that he seeks to reinvent.

Sloterdijk's work remains a brilliant account of the apathy and disillusionment that characterize our age and the cynicism (lowercase) that has come to thwart the tradition of critique inherited from the Enlightenment. The Cynic cure he proposes falls short of providing practical solutions to the ills of modernity, but it has the virtue of instilling a new vitality and energy in a critical tradition that has grown increasingly stagnant. To do Sloterdijk's text justice, we must move beyond an abstract reflection on the categories of power, subjectivity, and Enlightenment and put the call to live Cynically into practice.

8 *Cynicism as Critical Vanguard*

Foucault's Last Lecture Course

A year after the publication of Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason,* Foucault, who had not read Sloterdijk, delivered his last lecture course at the Collège de France; his topic, as in the previous year, was free speech, or "Le courage de la vérité," in the ancient world. Five of the nine lectures analyze ancient Cynicism and uphold Diogenes as a model for contemporary philosophers. Although Foucault is less explicit than his German counterpart in relating Cynicism to the values and ideals associated with the Enlightenment, the lectures develop a portrait of Cynicism as a philosophy in dire need of revival whose particular form of "courage de la vérité" echoes and promises to carry on Kant's *sapere aude* by anchoring the motto of the *Aufklärung* in the courageous ethos of Diogenes of Sinope.[1]

Foucault's Enlightenments

Foucault is well known as a staunch critic of the Enlightenment. In works from *L'histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* to *Surveiller et punir* and the first volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité* he battled against the Enlightenment myths of progress and emancipation. He set himself the task of laying bare the normalizing and disciplinary techniques surreptitiously at work within the apparently humane developments of the social sciences. Foucault's study of prison reforms demonstrates his point clearly. It is true that eighteenth-century transformations of the prison structure, and Bentham's design of the

panopticon in particular, improved the living conditions of the convicts by reducing corporeal punishment and granting each prisoner an individual cell, regular meals, and psychological care. Nonetheless, these reforms did not liberate the criminal from social violence; they exchanged one form of violence (brute force, torture) for another, far more insidious use of power: the creation of docile, disciplined subjects. The Enlightenment has been conceived as progress toward the self-realization of the individual and freedom from oppression. Foucault mercilessly shows its other face as the creation of new technologies for controlling and normalizing subjects. Knowledge, long held to be the key to freedom from domination, is seen to collaborate with regimes of power. As Foucault expressed it, "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[2]

Foucault's assessment of the modern age and his analysis of the intricate connection between power and knowledge echo Adorno and Horkheimer's indictment of the Enlightenment. Unlike Peter Sloterdijk, however, who situates his critique within a German intellectual and social climate strongly influenced by Critical Theory, Foucault acknowledges no direct connection between his early writings and the Frankfurt school, for the simple reason that he did not discover the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer until later in life. When he finally read works of the Frankfurt school, Foucault reacted with surprise and recognition: "Had I read these works, there are many things I would not have had to say, and I would have avoided a number of errors. Had I known the philosophers of this school when I was young, I might have been so seduced by them that I would have done nothing but comment on their work."[3] Foucault recognizes in Adorno and Horkheimer a concern with the central questions that guide his own work: What is the relation between abuse of power and specific types of rationality? How do our practices of liberty in fact produce normalizing and subjectifying discourses? But he distinguishes his work from theirs on at least two key issues, two "seductions" he avoided by virtue of ignorance. The first seduction is a traditional conception of the subject, one "deeply imbued with Marxist humanism,"[4] against which Foucault battles from his earliest works. In an interview with D. Trombadori in 1978, Foucault explained that his intellectual journey, which under different circumstances might have taken root in the Frankfurt school's critique of reason, had begun with the writings of Bataille, Blanchot, and Nietzsche, whose ideas he had developed in reaction to the French intellectual climate dominated by the trilogy of Hegelianism, phenomenology, and existentialism. Foucault's per-

sonal trinity took him on the path of a radical critique of subjectivity, which led him to the very questions posed by Adorno and Horkheimer, but with a different set of concerns:

> The experience of the war was, for us, proof of the urgent need for a society radically different from the one in which we lived. . . . *We wanted to be completely different in a completely different world.* And the Hegelianism that was offered us at university, with its model of the continuous intelligibility of history, was not capable of satisfying us. Nor were phenomenology and existentialism, which maintained the primacy of the subject and its fundamental value. The Nietzschean theme of discontinuity, of a superman who would be completely different from man, and Bataille's limit experiences . . . these on the contrary held an essentiel value. I found in them an alternative to Hegelianism and the philosophical identity of the subject.[5]

Foucault's critique of the Enlightenment presses beyond Horkheimer and Adorno's desire to free the alienated subject from the prison of instrumental reason. It calls for the conceptualization of a completely new type of subjectivity that does not hark back to a lost identity but seeks to produce "something that does not yet exist," something so new that "what it will be we cannot know."[6] A first rift with the Frankfurt school exists, then, on the question of the subject.

The second rift concerns the perversion of reason. Whereas Horkheimer and later Habermas posit a monolithic bifurcation, or perversion, of reason into instrumental reason, Foucault warns against any discourse that relies upon an a priori notion of "reason, in its essence."[7] Philosophical and sociological works that lament the rationalization of culture too often reduce different types of rationality and rationalization processes to a single abstract process. They overlook, for example, the different mechanisms and relations that characterize the rationalization of madness as a psychiatric discipline or the rationalization of sexuality, as well as the shifting forms these specific rationalities take in different historical and cultural contexts:

> For me, no given form of rationality is actually reason. So I do not see how we can say that the forms of rationality which have been dominant in the three sectors I have mentioned are in the process of collapsing and disappearing. I cannot see any disappearance of that kind. I can see multiple transformations, but I cannot see why we should call this transformation a collapse of reason. Other forms of rationality are created endlessly. So there is no sense at all to the proposition that reason is a long narrative which is now finished, and that another narrative is under way.[8]

With this statement, delivered in an interview in 1983, Foucault frees himself from the terms that had defined and delimited the modern-postmodern debate and relegated him to the allegedly irrational camp of French aestheticism.

The refusal to treat reason as substantive and monolithic led Foucault away from *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* but it led him back to the Frankfurt school by another path. In refusing to condemn reason outright, in refusing, in his phrase, "the blackmail of the Enlightenment,"[9] Foucault began to redefine his relation to the Enlightenment and to investigate the possibility of defining a positive task for contemporary critique. If his early writings on madness and criminality give the impression that Foucault advocates a wholesale rejection of the Enlightenment, his later work on Kant, governmentality, and the care of the self suggest otherwise. To the surprise of his critics, Habermas among them, the Foucault of the late 1970s and early 1980s denies being an anti-enlightenment thinker. In three essays devoted to Kant's "What Is Enlightenment?"[10] Foucault celebrates the Enlightenment as a "critical ontology of ourselves" and places his intellectual work within a philosophical tradition inherited from the Enlightenment that runs from "Hegel through Nietzsche or Max Weber to Horkheimer or Habermas."[11] Without denying his earlier thesis that Enlightenment rationalities, though promising freedom, in fact coercively defined the subject within relations of power, Foucault articulates a second definition of Enlightenment, understood not as the forward march of progress (or of subjugation masquerading as progress) but as a critical investigation of our historical present and as a will to revolution. Kant, whom Foucault had previously criticized for his humanist conception of man, now takes center stage as the father of Foucault's critical project, the one who first posed the question that would define the task of critical thinking over the course of the next two hundred years. By asking, "What is Enlightenment?" Kant investigated the present, the "now" that defines us as historically contingent beings, thus initiating a critique that takes the form of "the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed upon us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them." Through his reading of Kant, Foucault defines the Enlightenment not as a period or as a form of rationality but as a "type of philosophical interrogation—one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject." It is this interrogation, and not specific doctrines or fragments of Enlightenment thought, that Foucault wishes to keep alive today. The Enlightenment project of which Foucault declares himself an heir takes the form of an "attitude," "a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a

voluntary choice made by certain people . . . a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an *ethos.*"[12]

With this move, Foucault links his reinterpretation of the Enlightenment with the study of Greek ethics that occupied the last years of his life. This led him from an investigation of ascetic practices of self-fashioning in *L'usage des plaisirs* and *Le souci de soi* to an analysis of ancient Cynicism in his final lecture at the Collège de France. Foucault discovers in Greek philosophies "practices of liberty"[13] and forms of critique that avoid the normalizing effects that our contemporary critical discourses produce. He sees in Greek practices of aesthetic self-fashioning the possibility for individuals to fashion themselves through daily, practical, nontheoretical exercises. Greek ethics thus provides individuals with tools that enable them not only to resist and counter the normalizing pressures of social discourses but also to concretely work toward their ideals and hence to open up the possibility of a positive freedom. The ancient Greeks come to embody an attitude, or ethos, that can serve as a model for a contemporary philosophy that seeks to carry Kant's investigation into our historical present and into the possibility of going beyond the limits of existing relations of power. Far from seeing his later works on ethical self-fashioning as marking a break with his earlier analyses, Foucault describes his work on madness and criminality and his work on self-fashioning as two related steps in his Enlightenment critique. One might say that his earlier genealogies analyze the "limits that have been imposed upon us," while his later work on ethics seeks to define the means by which we might activate "the possibilities of going beyond [these limits]." All his texts partake of an interrogation of the historical present, an investigation, that is, of the relations between subjects and the "truth games" that define the conditions of possibility of thought and action in the present. But whereas his earlier analyses focused on the ways in which the subject is defined by scientific discourses *(Les mots et les choses)* or institutional practices *(Surveiller et punir, La volonté de savoir),* his work on the Greeks and his essays on Kant grapple with how individuals constitute themselves as subjects, how they position themselves with regard to the laws, codes, and attitudes available to them in a given historical context.

Foucault rejects a widespread interpretation of his work as a bleak analysis of a carceral society in which any form of resistance is already coopted by given power structures. His late writings express a new faith in our ability to create a less oppressive society, a faith in what Foucault calls "the patient labor [that gives] form to our impatience for liberty."[14] This new turn develops out

of Foucault's reconceptualization of subjectivity in Greek ascetic practices but also out of his redefinition, or clarification, of what he means by power and by the relations between power and knowledge. In an interview in January 1984, he explicitly differentiated "power relations" from "relations of domination." The former are strategic relations open to transformations and reversal; the latter, congealed relations that preclude the possibility for change. Admitting that he had perhaps been unclear in his use of the term *power* and thus flirted unwillingly with the idea that relations of domination form the horizon of our social relations, Foucault now states his commitment to a philosophical and political critique that "would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination."[15]

Like Adorno, who turned to high modernism as the only remaining locus of resistance and who saw in negative dialectics the last tools of critique, and also like Habermas, who sought to define the site of resistance within the public sphere and proposed the formal rules of communication as the basis of critique, Foucault now seeks to define a site and a set of tools from and with which individuals might combat the congealing of power relations into relations of domination. He suggests, tentatively, that ethics, understood as the relation of self to self, the means by which we constitute ourselves as subjects of our actions, represents today a central (if not *the* central) site of this political resistance. In the late 1970s Foucault had already argued that "political analysis and criticism have in large measure still to be invented—so too have the strategies which will make it possible to modify the relations of force . . . in reality."[16] How he conceived these strategies becomes clear when he contrasts his method of "modifying the relations of force" with Habermas's solution:

> I am interested in what Habermas is doing. I know that he does not agree with what I say—I am a little more in agreement with him—but there is always something which causes me a problem. It is when he assigns a very important place to relations of communication and also a function that I would call "utopian." The thought that there could be a state of communication which would be such that the games of truth could circulate freely, without obstacles, without constraint and without coercive effects, seems to me to be Utopia. It is being blind to the fact that relations of power are not something bad in themselves, from which one must free one's self. I don't believe there can be a society without relations of power, if you understand them as means by which individuals try to conduct, to determine the behavior of others. The problem is not of trying to dissolve them in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the *ethos,* the practice of

> self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination.[17]

Habermas and Foucault agree on the importance of developing political practices that would enable "a minimum of domination." But where Habermas theorizes this practice in the form of a language pedagogy that would teach citizens the formal rules of the game of intersubjective communication, Foucault insists that political change can come about only if one approaches politics "obliquely through ethics"[18] and grounds social change in ethical self-fashioning. The lectures on Cynicism belong to the project of defining this new Enlightenment ethos.

The Lectures on Cynicism

Foucault discovers Cynicism almost by accident in the course of his research on the prehistory of Western confessional practices, to which he devoted his last two lectures courses at the Collège de France (of which "Le courage de la vérité" is part 2). The 1982–83 lecture series analyzes political parrhesia, or free speech, in antiquity; the 1983–84 course traces the historical transformation of parrhesia from a political to an ethical practice under Socrates and its subsequent transformation into a confessional practice under Christianity. The genealogical sketch aims to recapture an alternate model of truth-telling for the West, one divorced from the relationship of obedience and the mistrust of self Foucault associates with the confessional. In particular, Foucault is interested in manifestations of what he calls "the true life," philosophies that firmly root the practice of truth-telling in a rigorous dedication to shaping one's life in accordance with one's principles. It is here that the Cynics come to occupy an unexpectedly central position.

Foucault first turns to Socrates as the prime exemplar of such an alternative model of truth-telling, and he brings up Cynicism only as a secondary illustration: "Without yet knowing where it will lead me, if it will take me to the end of the year or if I will put it aside, I would like to take the example of Cynicism."[19] But Foucault rapidly warms to his subject, filling the remaining four lectures with an insightful discussion of the Cynics and treating Cynicism, we shall see, as far more than a passing example. As he delves into the Greek sources on Cynicism, he begins to treat the movement as an exceptional practice among the Greeks, as the avant-garde or critical front line of ancient philosophy: "[Cynicism performs], within philosophical life,

a particular function, a function at the forefront of philosophy, so to speak, a combat function, a function also of service to humanity."[20] Although Foucault grounds his analysis in a study of ancient sources (Epictetus, Julian, Dio Chrysostom, and Lucian, to name Foucault's central authors), he approaches his topic through a double lens. With one he looks at Cynicism as a movement belonging to the history of ancient philosophy, and with the other he looks at it as a transhistorical attitude, a "moral category in Western culture."[21] He recognizes Cynicism in mendicant orders of the Middle Ages, in revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century, and above all in modernist art of the early twentieth century. Speaking out against scholars who relegate Cynicism to the past, Foucault insists on the enduring vitality of Cynicism as an engaged, militant attitude. He is particularly drawn to the Cynics' marriage of an unflinching commitment to speaking the truth with a rigorous dedication to self-fashioning, a marriage that, as we shall see below, far outstrips Socrates' commitment to living what he preaches. The Cynics' social critique took shape as an unprecedented work on the self. For Foucault, this connection between blunt speech and self-fashioning constitutes the core of Cynic philosophy and its primary interest for contemporary philosophers:

> It seems to me that in Cynicism, in Cynic practice, the imperative of a particular form of life, of a very distinctive form of life, with clearly articulated rules and conditions is strongly tied to the principle of truth-telling, of truth-telling without shame and without fear, of an unlimited and courageous truth-telling. . . . [There is] a fundamental link, essential to Cynicism, between *living in a certain manner and devoting oneself to speaking the truth.*[22]

Taking issue with scholars and philosophers who define Cynicism as an act of individual self-assertion in the face of a political crisis or existential angst (among them Paul Tillich and Klaus Heinrich, whom we encountered in chapter 6), Foucault boldly asserts: "By centering the analysis of Cynicism on the theme of individualism, one runs the risk of missing what, from my point of view, is one of the fundamental dimensions of Cynicism, namely, the problem, at the core of Cynicism, of the interrelation between forms of existence and the manifestation of truth."[23]

It is because they redefine the relation between the self and truth that the Cynics, in Foucault's reading, open up the possibility of redefining the relations between the subject and power and between power and truth. Cynicism thus embodies an attitude or an ethos that would allow the games of power

to be played with "the minimum of domination possible"; that is, it stands as a historical example of the Enlightenment attitude that Foucault trumpets as the task of contemporary philosophy. Cynicism provides Foucault with a model of an attitude grounded in, and devoted to, a permanent critique of our present, which, in its commitment to an uncompromising critique of social institutions, cannot but remind one of Foucault's own lifelong philosophical project.[24]

We can perhaps best understand the role Foucault grants Cynicism by contrasting it to the model presented by Socrates. Both Socrates and Diogenes embody for Foucault the lost practice of "ethical parrhesia," a truth-telling anchored in self-fashioning and dedicated to the ethical well-being of one's fellow citizens. Foucault discusses ethical parrhesia in his first four lectures as a distinctly Socratic practice. But the concluding five lectures reveal the limits of Socratic practice and its transformation by the Cynics into a more pointed critical ethos.

Socrates and Ethical Parrhesia

Etymologically, *parrhêsia* means "all speech," "outspokenness," "frankness." It was originally a political prerogative that granted every citizen the right to voice his opinion at public assemblies. Socrates' originality lies, for Foucault, in having transformed this political practice into an ethical one. Socrates employs frank speech to engage and challenge private individuals not on questions of government policies but on matters that concern their personal lives, their customs, their beliefs. Where the political parrhesiast fought to ensure the "health of the city," the ethical parrhesiast speaks the truth so as to change individual lives, to help shape "the ethos of the individual" and encourage "the formation of a certain manner of being."[25]

Ethical parrhesia is the activity in which one person openly challenges another to face an often difficult or painful truth. In its simplest form parrhesia can be defined as the act of speaking the truth to another person with clear, unadorned words, "without dissimulation or reservation, without set phrases or rhetorical ornamentations that might encode or mask it."[26] But for the relation of truth-telling to qualify as parrhesia, it must fulfill two further requirements: first, the truth uttered must be personal and bear the signature and commitment of the speaker; second, the speaker must risk damaging his relation to his interlocutor and suffering persecution and even death at the hands of those he offends.

> When speaking the truth, the subject must take a certain risk, a risk that concerns his relationship with the one he addresses. For there to be *parrhêsia,* one must, when speaking the truth, establish and confront the risk of wounding the other, of irritating the other, of angering him, and of provoking on his part certain behaviors that can reach extremes of violence. [Parrhesia] is, then, truth in the risk of violence. . . . The parrhesiast always risks undermining the relationship that is the condition of possibility of his speech.[27]

The rhetoric of the parrhesiast is blunt, committed, and courageous: it places critique before consensus and peace.

Foucault, like Sloterdijk, nevertheless holds on to the ideal of a peaceful exchange. But unlike Sloterdijk, who focuses solely on the act of speaking polemically and fails to theorize the relation between the speaker and his interlocutor, Foucault takes the interlocutor into consideration. He describes the parrhesiastic game as a two-way channel, involving both speaker and hearer. Parrhesia comes to full fruition only when it is played as a "pratique à deux"[28] and both the parrhesiast and his interlocutor enter willingly into a game of truth. Parrhesia thus requires not only courage on the part of the speaker but also magnanimity on the part of the listener, Aristotle's "greatness of spirit," which would enable the parrhesiastic exchange to take place without violence, rupture, or war:

> And this is how the true game of *parrhêsia* will be established, from this pact by which if the parrhesiast shows his courage by speaking the truth despite all opposition, well then the one to whom the *parrhêsia* is directed must show his greatness of spirit by accepting that one tell him the truth. . . . *Parrhêsia* is then, briefly put, the courage of truth, the courage of the one who speaks and who in spite of everything takes the risk of speaking all the truth he knows, but it is also the courage of the interlocutor who agrees to receive as true the wounding truth he hears.[29]

Parrhesia promotes the ideal of peaceful exchange, while accepting that reality will often fail to live up to that ideal. Foucault thus challenges Habermas's notion of a free, unconstrained dialogue less for its aim than for its priorities and its methods. Whereas the Habermasian model suggests that one might achieve a state of open debate by learning the rules of sound argumentation, Foucault counters that the game of courageous and challenging discussion can be learned only through the practice of virtues (courage, magnanimity) and the work of self on self.

The parrhesiast challenges his fellow citizens to enter the parrhesiastic

game. He thus plays an active role in the polis, a role that Foucault explains by comparing it to that of the prophet and the wise man. The latter speak only when they so choose or when questioned, and they often speak in riddles; the parrhesiast, by contrast, speaks clearly, openly, and to all, whether or not they wish to hear him. He is, in Foucault's words, compelled to speak: "his duty, his obligation, his responsibility, his task is to speak, and he is not allowed to shirk this task."[30] Parrhesia is thus a mission, a burden, an inescapable commitment to speaking the truth for the good of the polis: "*Parrhêsia* is, after all, something other than a technique or a trade. . . . It is something harder to define, it is an attitude, a way of being that resembles virtue. . . . It is also a role that is useful, precious, indispensable for the city and for individuals."[31] The parrhesiast can play this role, however, only if he lives in harmony with the message he preaches, if, like Socrates, he not only discusses courage but demonstrates courage in battle,[32] not only scorns riches but lives a simple life, not only incites other to reflect on their customs but questions and refashions himself. Parrhesia is thus more than a rhetorical strategy: it is an ethos and a social mission. It functions, for Foucault, as the rhetorical and ethical basis of contemporary critique.

Socrates represents for Foucault the first ethical parrhesiast because he anchors his courageous speech in practices of self-fashioning and employs both for the benefit of the city. He embodies, in a first analysis, the ideal model for the contemporary public intellectual. What need, then, does Foucault have for the Cynics? Little at first. He initially mentions Cynicism as simply a variation on, or an extreme version of, Socratic parrhesia. Whereas Socrates uses irony to unsettle his interlocutors, Diogenes makes use of a richer array of impertinences, from the insult to the obscene gesture. Where Socrates lives simply, Diogenes actively pursues poverty: he lives in a tub, he begs for his bread. But as Foucault explores the Cynic ethos and observes the transformation the Cynics carried out on the Socratic model, he discovers in Diogenes a more militant parrhesiastic attitude. The difference in degree is revealed to be a difference in quality, a critical difference. In the end the Cynic, and not Socrates, provides the model for a new way of doing philosophy, a new means of making critique relevant in the twenty-first century. Three characteristics distinguish the Cynic: his use of the body as an instrument of truth-telling; his militancy (which Foucault opposes to Socrates' less aggressive beneficence); and what Foucault calls "the scandalous banality" of Cynic philosophy.

The First Characteristic of Cynicism: Truth Embodied

Socrates established a harmonious relation between the manner in which he lived and the truths he uttered in public. It was of central importance to his mission that he behave in conformity with the principles he upheld. The Cynic also believes in this "homophonic" relation between word and deed (what Sloterdijk calls the embodied, non-schizoid life), but he does not rest there: the behavioral conformity ("conformité de conduite") characteristic of Socratic parrhesia must be supplemented by the Cynic's "conformité physique,"[33] a physical enactment or manifestation of the Cynic's truth. Where the political parrhesiast and the Socratic parrhesiast risk their lives by speaking the truth, the Cynic risks his own by embodying it. His life becomes, in Foucault's words, "la plastique même de la vérité," the very form of truth.[34] In other words, the manner in which he shapes his existence (his ascetic practices, his rigorous exercises in independence and physical endurance) constitutes an integral part of his quest for, and articulation of, truth. Truth literally takes shape in the Cynic's body; it does not exist as an abstract category, but only as a lived praxis, what Foucault will call "true life."[35]

Foucault ascribes three basic truth functions to the ascetic practices of the Cynic: First, the Cynic's commitment to poverty constitutes the condition of possibility of his access to truth. It is because he has given up all social duties and expectations that the Cynic can devote himself fully to the pursuit of truth. Second, the Cynic's reduction of life to the simplest of principles (those founded in nature and in reason) and his defiant disregard for social norms function as a critique of conventions. His life reveals the superfluity of most obligations and duties: "this way of life, in its reduction of all useless conventions . . . is clearly a general stripping away of life and opinions so as to let the truth appear."[36] Third, as the flip side of this critique of superfluous obligations, the Cynic's reduction of life to its basic needs becomes a test of what is truly essential to life: "this way of life makes life appear as it simply is, and hence as it should be, in its independence and fundamental liberty."[37]

Foucault focuses on the Cynic's body as integral to his critical labor. Sloterdijk also looked to Diogenes' body as the site of resistance, seeing in the Cynic's predilection for masturbating and defecating in public a comico-grotesque celebration of the primitive, the base, and the socially unacceptable. He discovered in the body's free flow of libidinal energy the explosion of unsocialized "naturalness" and freedom. This somewhat naive celebration of the intrinsic erotic wholeness of the body contrasts, however, with Foucault's sober articu-

lation of Diogenes' ascetic practices, which provide the Cynic, in Foucault's reading, with the tools necessary to counter the social production of ourselves as "docile bodies." Foucault devoted much of his life's work to the study of the social and historical construction of our bodies. His study of the micropolitics of power led him to see the body as a prime target of power in the modern age, the favored site for the production of disciplined and cooperative subjects, and the early works seem to present no alternatives to this cooption of the body by the relations of power. This is what Huyssen refers to when he uses Foucault to critique Sloterdijk, arguing that the latter's unruly Cynic body cannot serve as a locus of resistance, because, as Foucault claims, "the resistance of the self-conscious body is produced by the culture of cynicism [i.e., contemporary society] itself as a regenerating and legitimating device."[38] Huyssen is largely right, but his use of Foucault requires two qualifications. First, Foucault does in fact hint at the possibility for physical resistance in his earlier writings, and he does so in a manner not dissimilar to Sloterdijk's celebration of libidinal energy. *L'histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* reads, as Michel Serres noted in 1961, not just as a cold, objective study but "also as a cry."[39] The Wildman still shimmers with an aura of freedom that the institutionalized, disciplined modern mental patient can no longer achieve. Similarly in *Discipline and Punish* the physical insubordination of an angry young man succeeds in disrupting, at least temporarily, the smooth control of the disciplinary society.

Second, these glimmers of bodily resistance take a new form in Foucault's writings on the Greeks. Sudden manifestations of physical unruliness give way to a conscious and arduous work of resistance grounded in self-discipline and training. In Foucault's analysis of the Stoics and Socrates, the body serves as a tool for critiquing existing relations of power only when it is itself crafted through a patient labor of self-fashioning. The Cynics gain a central place in Foucault's analysis because in their radical, physical espousal of the discourse of simplicity and commitment to truth, they most explicitly articulate the relationship between body and truth, life *(bios)* and philosophical discourse.

Foucault's earlier descriptions of physical revolt might be described as Cynical in the sense that Tillich and Heinrich attribute to the term, as acts of existential self-assertion in the face of annihilating power. But this is precisely the definition of Cynicism that Foucault rejects in his lectures. Unruliness gives way to self-fashioning, and self-discipline gains center stage as the only means of countering the discipline imposed on the body by society. One can speak the truth bluntly, one can critique the existing relations of domination, but only through a patient labor of self-fashioning. Quoting Gregory of Nazian-

zus, Foucault explains that the Cynic "has suffered, he has endured. He has deprived himself so that truth might take shape in his own life, might take form in his own body."[40] Sloterdijk celebrates Bahktin's grotesque body as the site of possible Cynic freedom; Foucault might be said to offer an alternative to the Bahktinian distinction between the classical body (which follows the rules of decorum) and the grotesque body (which widely rejects them): the Cynic body of the rugged Diogenes, a body that resembles the grotesque in its blatant disregard for propriety but anchors this impropriety not in ecstatic release but in an arduous labor of self-fashioning.

The Second Characteristic of Cynicism: A Militant Beneficence

Diogenes' physical commitment to poverty and shamelessness sets him apart from Socrates. Foucault first interpreted this as a simple difference in degree between the two ancient philosophers. He now explains it as a fundamental difference in kind, between a "beneficent" (Socrates) and a "militant" (Diogenes) philosophy, between a philosophy that seeks personal calm and happiness and an ethics aimed at nothing less than changing the world. This missionary zeal, which is only secondarily present in Socrates, marks the specificity of the Cynic ethos for Foucault. It explains his interest in the ancient Cynics and clarifies why Diogenes and not Socrates best serves to characterize the parrhesiastic attitude that Foucault claimed as his own.

Usefulness to others, or "beneficence," constitutes for Foucault a central feature of Socrates' parrhesiastic attitude. But as Alexander Nehamas points out in *The Art of Living,* beneficence was by no means Socrates' primary concern. Taking issue with Foucault's reading of the *Phaedo* and the *Apology* in the 1984 lecture course, Nehamas argues that Socrates was concerned far less with the health of his fellow citizens than with his own philosophical quest.[41] He prodded others with his parrhesiastic speech because he wanted to discover truth for himself, not because he wanted to lead men to knowledge. Nehamas has a point, but he overstates his case. Foucault interprets Socrates' service to others only as a side-effect of his concern with his own quest for knowledge, not as a primary motivation. Nonetheless, Nehamas's contention about Foucault serves to bring out an important point, namely, that Foucault displays a marked and by no means necessary concern for the social utility of the philosopher. Nehamas explains Foucault's emphasis on Socrates' beneficence as a consequence of Foucault's discovery, late in life, of the usefulness of his own work. Whereas his earlier works seem to doubt the possibility of social change,

his later writings suggest that local transformations of power relations are indeed possible and that it is the task of philosophy to pave the way for such transformations. If this is the case, it explains Foucault's interest in the social engagement of the Cynics and supports the claim that it is the Cynics and not Socrates who represent the true model of Foucault's philosophical ethos.

Foucault contrasts the "vie bénifique" characteristic of Socrates (but also Seneca and Epictetus) with the missionary zeal of the Cynics. Both groups seek the good of society; Foucault calls this their "obligation." For Socrates and other dominant philosophical sects of the time, this obligation is "in some sense a *surplus,* an *excess,* or rather it is nothing more, nothing less, than the other side of the relationship to one's self,"[42] an almost involuntary consequence of a personal ethics. For the Cynics, the act of caring for others is a primary, and active, concern. Foucault characterizes the Cynic's life as a life of "devotion"; it is neither a choice nor a part-time activity but a *mission* that requires the Cynic to reach out to others in a doctor-patient relationship. This medical relationship must be "interventionist." The Cynic does not wait, as the Stoic might, for men to come to him for advice and training; he goes out into the city, turning his caring, medical mission into a "combat." The Cynic, Foucault writes, is "un philosophe en guerre." He is, so to speak, the marine commando of the philosophical army: "his function is one of service to humanity."[43] Devotion and aggression, service and violence, are inextricably and necessarily intertwined in the Cynic's life:

> One might say that the Cynic is, in a sense, a benefactor, but a benefactor who is essentially, fundamentally, constantly aggressive. An aggressive benefactor, whose principal instrument is, of course, the famous diatribe. . . . You see, then, that the Cynic serves [mankind] not simply by the example of his life or the advice he might give. He is useful because he *fights,* he is useful because he *bites,* he is useful because he *attacks.*[44]

Foucault does not succeed in fully justifying the aggressiveness of the Cynical ethos. His description, in his lecture of February 29, 1984, of the nineteenth-century terrorist revolutionaries as the modern heirs of Cynicism evokes disturbing images that no amount of theorizing will explain away. But Foucault has the courage to account for Cynic aggression, both by suggesting how those who receive the Cynic's blow might cushion their fall through a courageous and magnanimous acceptance of the Cynic's challenge (the parrhesiastic game) and by acknowledging the violence inflicted by and on the Cynic. Unlike Sloterdijk, he does not attempt to distill violence into an ecstatic realm of mystical

experience. Cynic aggression is real, physical, and verbal. It aims to change the world. Where most ancient philosophical sects, Foucault argues, sought only to teach select members the path to a good life, Cynicism reached out to all. It aimed not only to offer individuals the means to a better life but also to transform the world: "It is thus a militancy that aims to change the world rather than a militancy that would simply seek to provide its disciples with the means of achieving a happy life."[45]

Foucault anchors his interpretation of Cynicism as a militant philosophy in the oracle that set Diogenes on his mission: *parakharattein to nomisma,* "deface the currency," with its wordplay on *nomisma* (money) and *nomos* (law, custom). Scholars such as Diels, Eduard Schwartz, and Olof Gigon have shown that Diogenes' mission is a parody of the more respectable oracle associated with Socrates, "Know thyself."[46] For Foucault, it signals the distance that separates Socrates' journey of self-discovery and self-perfection from Diogenes' dirty business, the transvaluation of all values. Here Foucault diverges most strongly from Sloterdijk. Sloterdijk describes the Cynic's mission as meditation, a private practice that softens the ego and creates a new, fluid subjectivity. The meditative Cynic seeks to dissolve tensions within himself in view of relaxing tensions in the world. Like Foucault's Socrates, Sloterdijk's Cynic is "beneficent." His personal practice of meditation "spills over" into social critique. Foucault proposes a far more militant, down-to-earth, and active Cynicism. Furthermore, whereas Sloterdijk addresses the call to Cynicism to all human beings, Foucault reserves the role of the Cynic to a small and select group of individuals. In his lecture of March 21, 1984, he describes Cynicism as a mission requiring courage and endurance to which only a few people are called. Cynicism is not put forth as the model for all philosophers or all human beings. It defines the rigorous ethos of the avant-garde social critic.

Like the beneficent philosopher, the Cynic begins by fashioning his own life, but he always and insistently combines this with a virulent critique of society:

> The Cynic combat . . . is of course the individual's struggle against his own desires . . . ; but it is also a fight against customs, against conventions, against institutions, against laws, against a certain condition of humanity; it is a combat against vices, but these vices are not only those of individuals, they are vices that . . . depend on, or are at the root of, so many habits, laws, political organizations, or social conventions.[47]

This description of the Cynic's fight is also a description of Foucault's lifelong project, his own arduous work to unearth and challenge existing relations of

power. Foucault's interpretation and appropriation of Cynicism as a critical ethos relevant to our age can be summed up in the slogan he ascribes to the ancient Cynics: *Une vie autre pour un monde autre,* "a different life for a different world."[48] The Cynics embody a philosophy that demands a vigilant care of the self as the basis not only of the good life but also of social change.

The Third Characteristic of Cynicism: Scandalous Banality

Diogenes insulted rulers; he masturbated in public; he defecated on the state at Olympus; he lived in utter squalor. He led, in short, an outrageous life. *Une vie autre pour un monde autre* would seem to imply a rebellious, revolting, scandalous lifestyle. But Foucault makes a very interesting and pertinent point: he observes that however extraordinary this "different life" of the Cynics may appear, and however exceptional the status of Cynicism within ancient Greek philosophy, the shocking particularity of Cynicism is in fact nothing other than the banality of philosophy. The Cynic life is outrageous not because it breaks with the philosophical life advocated by more respectable philosophers but, on the contrary, because it puts their talents into practice. Cynicism is, in Foucault's words, "the scandalous banality of philosophy,"[49] for in its radical espousal of the simplest principles of ancient Greek philosophy, it transforms a socially acceptable practice into a grotesque and disturbing one.

I argued earlier that Sloterdijk's Cynicism remains too vague to be put into practice, leaving us with the impression that the Cynic embodies a utopian desire to step outside relations of power. Foucault's analysis sheds light on how Cynicism might transform relations of power from within historical and social constraints. In the lectures of March 7, 13, and 21, he gives a concrete analysis of how the early Cynics achieved agency as social critics not by sidestepping, but by engaging with, the philosophical norms of their day. Foucault selects four principles of truth he sees as common to philosophical sects of the day: truth is (1) that which is not hidden; (2) that which is pure, unalloyed; (3) that which is straight, untwisted, without folds; and (4) that which is identical with itself, immutable. He argues that Diogenes transformed himself and philosophy not by rejecting, but by radically pursuing, each of these principles. The Cynic takes the non-hidden life to its logical extreme in physical nakedness and shamelessness; he transforms the pure, unalloyed life into a principle of dispossession; he disengages the "straight life" from its meaning as conformity with social or philosophical norms and designates instead as straight the life that conforms to animal nature; and he makes the self-identical or sovereign

life so stringent that it begins to resemble the life of the beggar, who accepts the humiliation of his condition as the gauge of his independence. Thus Socrates advocated a life of simplicity and poverty and lived in accordance with this principle, but he did so within the limits of reason. As Foucault has Diogenes say, "Socrates, after all, is someone who has a house, a wife, children, he even has slippers[!]"[50] The Cynic takes the Socratic principle and pushes it to its limits. Diogenes gives up shelter *and* wife; upon seeing a young boy drink from the palm of his hands, he throws away his own drinking cup as an unnecessary luxury. He turns the principle of poverty into an active and unending imperative, searching for ever greater destitution until his life becomes a life of voluntary squalor, until the stench clings to his clothes and he is reduced to begging for his bread or scrounging for scraps amid the refuse.

In Foucault's reading, Cynic practice does not break with tradition; it transforms tradition from within by pressing it to its limits, by making its principles manifest in the Cynic's body. It "falsifies the currency" of philosophy by taking the currency at face value. That, for Foucault, is the true sense of the Cynic oracle. The Cynic's life thus mirrors and distorts the life of the good philosopher; it functions as the conscience or the scourge of philosophy. As Foucault puts it,

> Cynicism plays in a sense the role of broken mirror for ancient philosophy. A broken mirror in which every philosopher can and must recognize himself, in which he can and must recognize the very image of philosophy, the reflection of what it is and of what it should be; the reflection of what he is and of what he himself would like to be. And at the same time, in this mirror, he perceives a grimace, an ugly, violent, and disgraceful distortion in which he can neither recognize himself nor recognize philosophy.[51]

Hegel rejected Cynicism for its banality and its theoretical insufficiency.[52] Foucault makes this banality the critical force of ancient Cynicism. The power of Cynic banality becomes clear when Foucault compares it with the banality of "eclecticism":

> Cynicism in Antiquity seems to me to be a sort of reverse eclecticism. By which I mean that if we define eclecticism as the form of thought, of discourse, of philosophical choice that combines the most common, the most traditional traits of different philosophies of an age, it is generally to render them acceptable to all, to make them into the organizing principles of an intellectual or moral consensus. That is generally what we mean by eclecticism. I would say that Cynicism is a reverse eclecticism: it takes up certain of the most fundamental traits of contemporary philosophies, but contrary to

> eclecticism, it makes them into a revolting practice. . . . It installs no philosophical consensus whatsoever; on the contrary, it creates a strangeness, an exteriority, and even a hostility and a war within philosophical practices.[53]

Cynicism, as the scandalous banality of philosophy, transgresses social limits from within. Its insolence lies in its simplicity, its literal, down-to-earth manifestation of the principles to which society pays lip service. Cynicism takes shape very concretely in the world, working within the limits of the possibilities for self-fashioning available to it in its culture, transforming philosophical tools of self-mastery from within. If Sloterdijk leaves us rather at a loss as to how we might begin to practice a Cynical ethos, Foucault makes the steps clearer. His Cynic carries out his work on concrete materials: his body and the social beliefs, morals, and institutions that constitute his historical reality. He does not rebel against the latter randomly and wildly but adopts them, tests them, twists them until he has made something new and strange out of the cultural possibilities open to him. This critical work takes shape as an arduous and patient labor upon our own lives and on the limits imposed upon us, a practical test of the possibility of going beyond them. Cynicism embodies the critical ethos that Foucault ascribes to the Enlightenment in his essay on Kant: "The thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude . . . a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them."[54]

The banality of Cynicism captures Foucault's imagination because it represents a commitment to living differently as the basis for thinking differently. As a "philosophical life," Cynicism embodies a different way of doing philosophy. Banality reverses the traditional relationship between knowledge and the good life. It topples, that is, the idea, long associated with the Enlightenment, that better knowledge will dispel foolish behavior. Diderot expressed this idea succinctly when he described the *Encyclopédie,* the single most important collective endeavor of the French Enlightenment, as a work aimed at "[collecting] knowledge disseminated around the globe . . . so that our offspring, becoming better instructed, will at the same time become more virtuous and happy."[55] The Cynics outline an alternate route to enlightenment: their educational principle trades the gathering and dissemination of better knowledge for the training of mind and body. In Foucault's terms, they play a different "truth game." The Cynic shuns Plato's metaphysical discourse and focuses instead

on a type of philosophical interrogation that, for Foucault, takes root in the question, "What form of life can there be, such that it would practice truth-telling?"[56]

By turning to the Cynics, Foucault attempts to write a different history of philosophy, one in which philosophy is understood as a way of life and truth is a function of how one shapes one's daily life. In a brief, preliminary sketch, Foucault gives two reasons for the demise of the "true life" as a central concern for philosophy: first, the rise of Christianity, which took over as the principal medium for teaching one how to live; second, the institutionalization of practices of truth-telling in scientific discourse.[57] One can fruitfully link this insight to the argument that Cynicism ceased to figure in histories of philosophy when they abandoned philosophical biography in favor of a clear and succinct exposé of philosophical ideals and doctrines.[58] Hegel's dismissal of the Cynics is possible only when philosophy is no longer seen as a practice that can be taught by example. To revive Cynicism first as the object of historical and philosophical study and second as a potential model for how one might "do" philosophy today means reactivating philosophy as a way of life.

For all their differences, Foucault's and Sloterdijk's proposals for a new Cynicism are both based on a commitment to reviving philosophy as a lived practice. Both philosophers partake of an attempt to define the critical practice most urgently required of our historical present. Writing in the context of postwar debates on the Enlightenment, they ask the question, what form should critique take today if it is not to dissolve into abstract reasoning on the one hand or skeptical inefficiency on the other? Both respond by claiming that the task of critique can be carried on today only of we ground our critical activity (our practices of truth-telling) in an ethos of vigilant self-fashioning that would give us the strength and the courage to contest relations of power. They urge, that is, a rerouting of philosophical inquiry in the direction of a lived philosophy: critique begins with the work of self on self. For both, Cynicism represents the starkest example of such an attitude, for it offers us a model of rhetorical engagement (satire for Sloterdijk, parrhesia for Foucault) that is predicated upon a commitment to self-formation: Cynicism signifies not only thinking and speaking differently but also living differently, even outrageously.

Foucault and Sloterdijk nevertheless offer very different interpretations of Cynic subjectivity and Cynic rhetoric. Sloterdijk suggests meditation as the basis of a new, fluid subjectivity, which would, by relaxing the tensions within

and among individuals, open up the possibility for noncoercive relations. He focuses on the satirical and witty language of Cynicism, which he interprets as the main rhetorical tool with which the Cynic critic seeks to create a new way of being in the world. Foucault, by contrast, grounds Cynical subjectivity not in a mystical "fluidity" or "softening of identities" but in the hard, daily work of ascetic training that gives concrete shape to the Cynic's search for independence and freedom. He privileges the bluntness of Cynic speech over its wit, and militancy over laughter.

While Foucault's discussion of Cynicism raises its own set of problems, it offers, I would argue, a cogent and plausible response to several of the difficulties encountered in Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason.* On the question of Cynic subjectivity, Foucault succeeds in avoiding Sloterdijk's essentializing discourse of an ecstatic, free body by grounding Cynic practice in physical training and practices of self-discipline. And he clarifies the meaning of Cynic agency by giving a concrete indication of how the early Cynics transformed their relationship to themselves by adopting, to the extreme, the philosophical norms available to them in Athens in the fourth century BCE. Foucault offers, that is, a more plausible and concrete description of Cynicism as a critical attitude, one that speaks to us more cogently than Sloterdijk's often rather vague call for the "relaxation" and "liquefaction" of our egos. Many of the difficulties that beset Sloterdijk's proposal for a new Cynicism arose, as we saw in chapter 7, from his conflation of Cynicism with the carnivalesque: his dream of a new Cynic world order in which all human beings would join together in joyful, mischievous revelry resembles Bakhtin's description of the carnival far more than it does any description of the Cynics in the ancient sources available to us. This is problematic, because by focusing on the ecstatic harmony of his Cynic carousers, Sloterdijk fails to deal successfully with the tensions and ambiguities that mark the concrete expression of Cynic practice. Where Sloterdijk dissolves Cynic violence in laughter and harmony with the world cosmos, Foucault, by contrast, seeks to account for the violence of Cynic rhetoric by proposing a concrete, intersubjective model of truth-telling grounded in the virtues of courage and magnanimity (the parrhesiastic game) and by positing violence as a realistic consequence of courageous criticism.

Foucault also offers a more cogent and realistic description of the Cynic's function within society by defining Cynicism as a demanding practice rather than a state of being and by restricting the Cynic role to those few individuals who have the strength and courage to bear its burden. Where Sloterdijk demo-

cratically invites all to be Cynics and to form, together, a new Cynic society "experienced by us . . . in love and sexual intoxication, in irony and laughter, creativity and responsibility, meditation and ecstasy,"[59] Foucault rejects the dream of an alternate Cynic world. He envisions Cynicism instead as the arduous work of a few public intellectuals who have the courage to risk all.

Nor does Foucault idealize the Cynic, as Sloterdijk is tempted to do. Foucault's Diogenes is not omniscient or infallible. He does not lay claim to a mystical knowledge or a heightened consciousness; instead he grounds his actions in an ethos of vigilant self-fashioning that enables him to speak and act locally. Sloterdijk demands that the exception become the norm; Foucault asks only that it work to question the norm, here and now. His Cynic also aims to change the world, but he does so at the risk of error, and always with the possibility of beginning again. As Foucault put it elsewhere: "As to those for whom to work hard, to begin and begin again, to attempt and be mistaken, to go back and rework everything from top to bottom, and still find reason to hesitate from one step to the next—as to those, in short, for whom to work in the midst of uncertainty and apprehension is tantamount to failure, all I can say is that clearly we are not from the same planet."[60] Adopting Cynicism allows the social critic to advance despite hesitations and doubts, to move beyond the paralysis of uncertainty and embrace a philosophy of courageous action. To discover in Cynicism the future of Enlightenment amounts, for Foucault, to declaring the power of poststructuralist thought to effect social change. Cynicism functions as a response to the charges of skepticism leveled at poststructuralist thinkers. By turning to Cynicism, Foucault declares an allegiance to Critical Theory's commitment to social emancipation, but he lays a new groundwork for critique, one based on a deep commitment to living what one preaches and on the courage to begin again.

Foucault's discussion of Cynicism succeeds no more than Sloterdijk's in answering all of the questions raised by the postwar debate on Enlightenment. Neither philosopher adequately addresses society's need for organization, compromise, and negotiation. But both do so from a particular historical vantage point and from the perspective of critics for whom organization and compromise have silenced the voice of dissent. The error is in asking of Cynicism more than it can deliver. Cynicism offers no simple solution to the ills of modernity, but it does have the virtue of reviving the moral fiber of critique. It is here that Sloterdijk and Foucault join together again: in defining Cynicism by its banality and in celebrating it as such. The theoretical insufficiency that Hegel so lamented becomes the backbone of a renewed commitment to

critique. Cynicism demands only that we examine our lives with courage and honesty and that we act upon that courage, whatever the cost—a simple philosophy, but one of potentially tremendous power if one has the strength to carry it through. More than an answer, Cynicism is for Foucault and Sloterdijk a challenge and an imperative: it stands for the urgent demand that we redirect philosophical inquiry in the direction of a lived philosophy.

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Conclusion

In this book I have attempted to articulate the relationship between Cynicism and the Enlightenment and to explain the fascination that Diogenes of Sinope continues to exert on thinkers committed to social change. I hope to have shown that however roguish and marginal a philosophy, Cynicism has remained a vital force in intellectual and literary life and has helped shape the image of the social critic in contemporary society. To speak of the Enlightenment, as of Cynicism, is of course to mobilize a host of conflicting narratives. Our earliest sources on the Cynics postdate the first Dogs by several centuries; Diogenes of Sinope, who came to be seen as the proto-Cynic, is already a literary character, a figure constructed through hearsay, (mis)quotation, and interpretation. Much the same can be said of the Enlightenment. It refers to a particular period in Western intellectual history but also to a contested set of principles, values, and ideas at the heart of modernity that have elicited conflicting responses and definitions over the course of the past two hundred years. The relationship between Cynicism and Enlightenment is thus the tale of shifting appropriations and reevaluations: redefining the one signifies changing the meaning of the other. I have concentrated on two key moments in the Cynical reshaping of the Enlightenment: the philosophes' struggle for self-definition in the latter part of the eighteenth century and Foucault's and Sloterdijk's reevaluations of the Enlightenment legacy two centuries later.

That Cynicism should attract thinkers committed to "changing the common way of thinking" comes as no surprise. Diogenes appeals because of his

unflinching courage, independence, and free speech, which has provided philosophers from D'Alembert to Foucault with a model for provocative and politically engaged thinking and empowered an attitude of revolt and rebellion. Eighteenth-century writers employed Cynicism to challenge the norms of polite conversation and sociability that governed the Enlightenment republic of letters and to shake the yoke of social and political censorship. Their twentieth-century heirs called upon the figure of Diogenes to contest the discourse ethics that Habermas advocated as the true legacy of the Enlightenment and to revive the moral fiber of critique. But if the Cynic motto *paracharattein to nomisma,* "deface the currency," or "alter the social norms," inspired thinkers committed to contesting the status quo, it also sparked a vivid debate on the viability of Cynic critique and invited an important moment of self-reflection. Diogenes' brutal honesty and his complete disregard for convention led even his admirers to criticize Cynic philosophy as a threat to clear and effective social change. Three primary worries haunt the thinkers considered in this book: First, the fear that Cynicism may be ineffective because of its brutal rhetoric, its disregard of human psychology, and its inability to engage in cooperative endeavors to change the social order. Second, the suspicion that Cynicism can do no more than express skepticism with regard to social norms. It is viewed as a form of negative critique that tears down social conventions without proposing anything in their stead. Third, a mistrust of the Cynic's critical premise, that is, the belief that the Cynics lack a standard from which to contest generally accepted values and norms. They can be no more than rogues and scoundrels or, at best, fools. That is why the history of Cynicism in modernity, as I have argued, is best understood as a tale of the repeated attempts to interpret and respond to these threats, threats that lie at the core not only of Cynicism but of any courageous and uncompromising critical undertaking.

The eighteenth-century writers considered in this study, barring Sade, all attempted to contain the darker aspects of Cynicism by carefully legislating the boundaries of the ancient sect within the scope of their social, intellectual, and literary programs. D'Alembert, Wieland, and Diderot put Cynicism back on the table for philosophical discussion after its devaluation at the hands of Counter-Reformation writers, but they altered the Cynic currency by taming the Dogs and purifying the Cynic coin of its shameless and dangerous alloys. They relinquished Diogenes of Sinope's satirical blunt speech and his shameless adherence to nature over law and custom. In so doing, they effectively split the Cynic tradition in two, adopting the independence and courage of the

ancients for themselves and projecting the rude, roguish, and asocial aspects of Cynicism onto the alleged enemies of the Enlightenment, from Rousseau to Rameau's rascally nephew.

The paradox is that by attempting to salvage Diogenes for the Enlightenment, the philosophes unwittingly implicated Cynicism in the failure of the Enlightenment to make good its promise to create a more just and free world, thereby paving the way for the transformation of the concept into its modern counterpart, our lowercase cynicism. In other words, by reviving Cynicism in a purified form, the philosophes helped bring about a conceptual shift that nearly wrote the Cynic tradition out of existence. The attempt to demarcate a domain of pure, unalloyed Cynicism is of course as old as Cynicism itself; several of our earliest sources, Epictetus and Julian most notably, do just that. But the distinction that informs contemporary usage, between the Cynic and his lowercase double, the *Kyniker* and the *Zyniker,* is a product of modernity. The definition of *cynicism* as an attitude of disabused superiority has its roots in the ambiguous moral status ascribed to the ancient Cynics, but it emerges as a separate category, disengaged from its philosophical roots, only in the eighteenth century. Rameau's nephew still refers to Diogenes as the father of his own brand of cynicism; the Marquis de Sade no longer does. That this is so makes Sloterdijk's intuitive interpretation of cynicism as the perverse product of the Enlightenment all the more astute. A study of the history of Cynicism reveals that Sloterdijk's philosophical argument about the perversion of Cynicism does in fact have a historical basis: it is in the eighteenth century, more precisely within the circle of the French philosophes and in the context of debates on what it means to enlighten the world, that cynicism emerges from the vestiges of Cynicism and all but eclipses the ancient, philosophical meaning of the term.

What can account for this paradoxical devaluation of Cynicism in the eighteenth century? Cynicism depends, for its effect, on its moral ambiguity. Julian and Epictetus depict Diogenes as a saint, but the majority of our early sources paint a far less noble picture of the Cynic. Dio Chrysostom calls him a model of virtue, but he also depicts him defecating on the stage at Olympus, or worse, advocating incest. Diogenes Laertius juxtaposes moralizing and scurrilous anecdotes about the proto-Cynic as if the two were perfectly compatible, suggesting that the Cynic is at once a wise man *and* a good-for-nothing, a moralist *and* a scoundrel. His moral-satirical double nature defines him. By purifying Cynicism, the philosophes reduced the movement to one of its faces, in ef-

fect sacrificing irreverent satire to morality. The consequence, which Diderot reveals in *Le Neveu de Rameau,* was that Cynicism degenerated into a form of complacent moralism more concerned with its own righteousness than with the good of society. The good Cynic philosopher Moi unwittingly discovers his affinity with his less savory brother, the modern cynic. Sloterdijk brilliantly captures the betrayal of Cynicism *(Kynismus)* when he defines *Zynismus* as the form that critique takes when it has "put on suit and tie so as to completely assume an air of bourgeois respectability. It has given up its life in satire, in order to win its position in books as 'theory.' "[1] In other words, Cynicism becomes cynical when it amputates the satirical from the moral-satirical alchemy that defined it. *Zynismus* is, paradoxically, the respectable form of Cynicism, or Cynicism turned self-righteous.

In *Le Neveu de Rameau,* Moi's brand of cynicism, born of a desire to do and be good, is matched by a second type of cynicism, born not of an excess of moral righteousness but of the abdication of the Cynic's ethical burden. Niehues-Pröbsting argues, contrary to Sloterdijk, that cynicism arises when one amputates not the satirical but the moral aspect of Cynicism: "When the comic and the moral consciousness enter into conflict with each other, and humor suppresses morality, cynicism inevitably ensues."[2] This, he argues, is the case in *Le Neveu de Rameau,* where the nephew's aesthetic appreciation of his own and others' cleverness drives out moral consideration: as the nephew says of the criminal Renegade of Avignon, "L'atrocité de l'action vous porte au-delà du mépris" (The enormity of the deed carries you beyond mere contempt).[3] I would argue that the two positions—that Cynicism breeds cynicism when it abandons Diogenes' satirical edge (Moi; Sloterdijk) or, on the contrary, that it does so when it betrays his moral purpose (Lui; Niehues-Pröbsting)—are in fact but two sides of the same coin. Moi and Lui paint two aspects of the philosophes' failure to enlighten the world, two sides of the new cynic coin.

Diderot's novel is central to an understanding of Cynicism in eighteenth-century letters because it both partakes of the cultural impulse to cut off the less attractive features of Diogenes by lumping them together in the figure of the false cynic Lui and calls the division into question by showing cynicism, in its less savory acceptations, to be the result, rather than the antithesis, of the philosophes' intellectual labor. I hope to have shown, however, that the split between Cynicism and cynicism was not single, and that Cynicism in fact splintered into several branches in the eighteenth century as a result of the attempt to contain and counter its disruptive qualities. This led to rival and at times overlapping definitions of Cynicism as both a positive and a negative

force, with different parties and positions vying for the right to speak in the name of Diogenes.

By the late eighteenth century, as Diderot's novel makes manifest, Cynicism had come to signify two antagonistic philosophical and ethical positions. Diderot ascribes the two rival types of Cynicism to the parasitic nephew (the cynic in our modern, everyday sense of the term) and to the independent philosopher (the D'Alembert, or Wieland, or Diderot of the day). But this rift was by no means stable: the position of bad Cynic occupied by Rameau is elsewhere ascribed to Rousseau—that "singe de Diogène," as Voltaire was fond of calling him—or, with deeper irony, to the philosophes themselves, as Moi is forced to admit. Each revives aspects of Cynicism that the philosophes sought to expunge, leading to rival definitions of false Cynicism as an attitude of scurrilous self-interest, of misanthropic primitivism, or of self-satisfied moral hypocrisy. Nor was the position of good Cynic as stable as D'Alembert might have wished it to be; by a wonderful irony, Kant, whom history has bequeathed us as the figurehead of the Enlightenment, celebrates Rousseau, not the philosophes, as the true model of Cynic simplicity and Cynic wisdom. D'Alembert's and Wieland's attempts to claim Cynicism for themselves and to promote a cosmopolitan and polite version of the old Dog failed to gain the cultural resonance and historical reach of their "frère ennemi," and their clean-shaven Diogenes soon fell into oblivion, as little more than a pale shadow of more virtuous Stoic models.

In other words, the philosophes unwittingly wrote themselves out of the Cynic game. By seeking to sidestep the moral ambiguity of the Cynic movement, they meant to establish Diogenes as the courageous and virtuous figurehead of their collective endeavor to free society of its prejudices and injustices. Instead, they established this endeavor, which we have come to know as "the Enlightenment project," as the breeder of cynicism in its less savory acceptation. This is what Sade confirms when he claims a direct relation between his "cynique Dolmancé" and the philosophes who inspired him. Like Rameau's nephew, Sade's libertines flaunt their scurrilous cynicism, that disabused, self-interested intelligence, the knowing wink of the realist who has seen through society's hypocrisies and knows how to play them for profit. Both have learnt the lessons of the Enlightenment (the undermining of tradition and authority, the questioning of social and religious codes of behavior, the unraveling of a teleological world order), but rather than seeking to build a better society on the rubble of the old, they retreat into an attitude of pragmatic opportunism. As the immediate heirs of the Enlightenment, Diderot's Rameau and Sade's Dol-

mancé can claim the honor of being the first true cynics in the modern sense of the term, the first, perverse products of the age of critique. But whereas the nephew's cynicism, however proudly he may flaunt it, never ceases to trouble and torment him, Dolmancé's particular brand of cynicism knows neither doubt nor bad conscience: trained in apathy, Sade's libertines feel no pang of remorse, no hesitation, no paralysis. An important shift took place in the interval between *Le Neveu de Rameau* to *La philosophie dans le boudoir,* namely, the eclipse of the so-called good Cynic. Dolmancé has no counterpart in Sade's novel, no Moi to taunt or against whom to measure himself. Dialogue gives way to monologue, and bad conscience to gleeful negativity, sealing the split between the Cynic and his modern double and underscoring the philosophes' failure to redeem Cynicism for social betterment.

Modern cynicism as it emerges in the late eighteenth century signifies a disillusionment with modernity and a bitter acceptance of history's failure to make good the promises of Enlightenment thought. The revival of ancient Cynicism among twentieth-century thinkers signals instead a desire to combat apathy and to breathe new life into the philosophical tradition inherited from the philosophes. For Michel Foucault and Peter Sloterdijk, Cynicism functions as a key to inventing a different relation to the Enlightenment. Writing in response to the perceived failure of the Enlightenment in postwar Europe and the resulting self-proclaimed impotence of critique, they call on Cynicism as an alternative to Adorno's negative dialectics and to Habermas's discourse ethics, a third way of conceiving the philosophical task of modernity. Both declare their commitment to the Enlightenment project, understood in its simplest sense as a philosophical tradition dedicated to the betterment of society, but they agree that the project will fail if it is limited to the tradition of rational critique inherited from Kant. If critique is to have any meaning today, it must ground itself anew. Cynicism enables Foucault and Sloterdijk to revisit and revive Enlightenment philosophy by redefining its epistemological, linguistic, and ethical bases. To the question, how can we, as a society, become enlightened? Kant responded by advocating the creation of a public sphere, a privileged, uncensored arena for reasoned discussion among scholars: "The *public* use of reason must at all times be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men . . . under the public use of reason [I understand] that use which anyone makes of it *as a scholar* [*Gelehrter*] before the entire public of the *reading world.*"[4] When Foucault and Sloterdijk turn to the Cynics, they do so out of the conviction that Kant's scholar will not succeed in really changing

anything and from the deeply felt need for a different definition of the intellectual, the public sphere, and critique.

This was what the philosophes had begun to do, however hesitantly, by taking Diogenes as a model for their own contestatory and emancipatory philosophy. They sought in the Cynics a more engaged type of scholar, one who refused to relegate his critiques to an abstract sphere divorced from the everyday workings of politics and society, but as Diderot was forced to admit, such a figure was unthinkable in the France of Louis XV. Two centuries later, and in a different political climate, Foucault and Sloterdijk pick up, so to speak, where the philosophes left off. They trace the path not taken, reviving for critique those aspects of Cynicism that the philosophes had, in the end, shied away from: a brazen tongue and a shameless existence. Foucault and Sloterdijk offer different interpretations of Cynic philosophy, but both insist on the importance of reinstating the early Cynic's commitment to living like a dog, that is to say, in rupture with society, and with the courage to make one's life and one's body the test of any critique. Like their predecessors, Foucault and Sloterdijk contend with the need to contain the potential scurrility of Cynicism, but whereas the philosophes sought to impose outer constraints on Cynicism, Foucault and Sloterdijk respond to Cynic roguishness from within. Both legitimate Cynicism by anchoring it in a personal ethics and in practices of self-governance that would contain its potential nihilism. Reviving Cynicism means renewing a philosophical tradition that conceives of philosophy as a way of life.

Neither Foucault's nor Sloterdijk's proposal for a Cynic Enlightenment will satisfy all the questions raised by the postwar debates on the Enlightenment. Their attempts to trace a third, Cynic path between a Habermasian commitment to an Enlightenment tradition of universal rights and rational discussion and a poststructuralist questioning of the exclusions and violences that tradition brought in its wake fall short of providing concrete solutions to the ills of modernity or of facing society's very real need for organization and compromise head-on. Their reflections on the Cynics merit engagement with their eighteenth-century precursors, who carefully weighed the cost of Cynicism and confronted without flinching the problems raised by the Cynic's disruptive anti-politics. Diderot, Rousseau, and Sade perform important critiques *avant la lettre* of Foucault's and Sloterdijk's more celebratory revivals of Cynicism. But if Foucault and Sloterdijk are less cautious than their eighteenth-century precursors, they have the merit of pulling Diogenes out of the salon

and of daring to revive also the less politic aspects of Cynicism. They suggest that the Cynic's moral ambiguity, which would seem to disqualify him as a model for "bringing about enlightenment among men," to borrow Kant's expression, is the very quality that singles him out for the task. It is because he is both philosopher and fool, moralist and rogue, that Diogenes has come to claim a crucial role in defining the figure of the public intellectual, a figure that emerged in the eighteenth century and whose proclaimed death in the late twentieth century has awakened the need to rethink the role.

Cynicism's philosophical specificity lies precisely in its troubling combination of the moral and the satirical, the virtuous and the scurrilous. This is what makes Diogenes such an interesting figure for discussing the role of the modern intellectual: he responds to the aspiration to courageously confront the injustices that plague society even as he forces a direct confrontation with the darker aspects of the will to change the world.

Notes

Preface

1. *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed., s.v. "Cynic."
2. Hegel, "Cynic School," 1:479, 481.
3. Plato's quip is from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* bk. 6, sec. 54.
4. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 214. All translations from the lectures are mine.
5. "Changer la façon commune de penser." Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 7:174–262, 222.
6. See Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 329–31.
7. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 45.
8. The question of Cynicism's role in the Enlightenment has been treated in a small number of articles on specific eighteenth-century authors, most notably Diderot and Rousseau. See Harth, "Der Aufklärer und sein Schatten"; Starobinski, "Diogène dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*"; Groh, "Diderot—ein Menipper der Aufklärung"; D'Hondt, "Le cynisme de Rameau"; Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism"; and Scanlan, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Diogenes the Cynic."

Chapter 1. Ancient Rascals

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* vol. 2, bk. 6, sec. 63. Hereafter cited in the text and notes of this chapter as DL.
2. "And he would wonder that the grammarians should investigate the ills of Odysseus, while they were ignorant of their own. Or that the musicians should tune the strings of the lyre, while leaving the disposition of their own souls discordant; that the mathematicians should gaze at the sun and the moon, but overlook matters close at hand; that the orators should make a fuss about justice in their speeches, *but never practice it.*" DL 6.27–28, my emphasis.
3. Plato's quip is from DL 6.54; my translation. Diogenes' reply can be found in Themistius *De anima* 13.68, in Stobaei, *Anthologium,* vol. 3.

4. For primary sources (writings by the early Cynics dating from the fourth and third centuries BCE), see esp. two invaluable collections: Giannantoni, *Socrates et Socraticorum Reliquiae,* Greek and Latin sources with Italian commentary; and Paquet, *Les Cyniques grecs,* French translations of several of the early fragments. A number of critical editions of individual Cynics also exist: for Antisthenes, see Caizzi, *Antisthenis fragmenta,* Greek text with notes; for Crates, see Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus;* for Bion, see Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthenes;* for Teles, see Hense, *Teletis Reliquiae* and the English translation of the fragments in O'Neil, *Teles.*

5. On Diogenes of Sinope's writings, see Fritz, "Quellenuntersuchungen," esp. 54–60. See also Dorandi, "La *Politeia* de Diogène de Sinope." We can glean information about Diogenes' *Oedipus* from Dio Chrysostom 10.29 and must rely on Philodemus of Gadara's polemical *On the Stoics* for an account of Diogenes' *Republic.* See Dorandi, "Filodemo: Gli Stoici (Pherc. 155 e 339)," Greek text with Italian translation and commentary. I discuss Diogenes' *Republic* at greater length in chapter 4.

6. On the *chreia* tradition, see Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric;* and Kindstrand, "Diogenes Laertius and the *Chreia* Tradition."

7. Reich, *Diogenes Laertius,* introduction. On the literary aspect of Diogenes Laertius's work, see also Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 26–28.

8. See DL 7.23, 1.105, 2.68.

9. According to Jan Fredrik Kindstrand, "There is a strong connection between the χρεία and the Cynics, as indicated by an anecdote in Diog. Laert. V.18, where the Cynic Diogenes is described as χρείαν εἴη μεμελετηχώς, which seems to imply the conscious fabrication of a cutting reply. The first known collector of χρεία is also a Cynic, Metrocles (Diog. Laert. VI. 33)." Kindstrand, "Diogenes Laertius and the *Chreia* Tradition," 223–24.

10. Branham, "Cynics," 754.

11. Zeno is said to have studied under Crates, the first follower of Diogenes, who was himself a student of Antisthenes, a disciple of Socrates.

12. Julian *Oration VII. To the Cynic Heracleios* 210b, in *Works,* vol. 2. For Julian on the Cynics, see esp. orations 6 and 7 and the *Letter to Themistius,* in ibid. See also Epictetus, *Discourses and Encheiridion,* esp. 3.22 and 4.8.30–42, both in vol. 2. On Epictetus's and Julian's treatments of the Cynics, see Billerbeck, "Ideal Cynic."

13. Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan,* act 3, in *Complete Works,* 418.

14. Tertullian *Apologeticum* 14.9 and *Ad nations* 1.10, quoted in Dudley, *History of Cynicism,* 119.

15. None of Menippus's works are extant, but the titles of a number of his books have been preserved, including *The Descent to Hades, Exquisite Letters from the Gods, The Sale of Diogenes,* and *Symposium.* For the Menippean tradition, see Branham, *Unruly Eloquence;* Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire;* Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism,* esp. 308–14; and Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 87–149.

16. See Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 22–23.

17. On Cynicism as a philosophical movement, see, e.g., the very different interpretations in Sayre, *Diogenes of Sinope;* Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King;* Goulet-Cazé, *L'ascèse cynique;* Navia, *Diogenes of Sinope;* and Kalouche, "Cynic Way of Living."

18. See DL 6.13: "[Antisthenes] used to converse in the gymnasium of Cynosarges (White hound) at no great distance from the gates, and some think that the Cynic school derived its name from Cynosarges." Kurt von Fritz argues against the derivation of the term Cynic from *Kynosarges,* which he suspects was invented at a later period to ennoble the Cynics. See Fritz, "Quellenuntersuchungen," 47ff.

19. Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 23.

20. Bywater and Milne, "ΠΑΡΑΧΑΡΑΞΙΣ."

21. The first anecdote is from DL 6.69, the second from Dio Chrysostom 8.36, in *Discourses,* vol. 1.

22. Themistius *De anima* 13.68, in Stobaei, *Anthologium,* vol. 3.

23. See Fritz, "Quellenuntersuchungen"; Eduard Schwartz, "Diogenes der Hund und Krates der Kyniker"; Diels, "Aus dem Leben des Cynikers Diogenes" (cited in Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 55). For more on the oracle, see also Dudley, *History of Cynicism,* 20–22; and Navia, *Classical Cynicism,* 88–93.

24. See Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 78; and his source, Gigon "Antike Erzählungen über die Berufungen zur Philosophie."

25. See DL 6.20, quoted earlier.

26. For a very interesting reading of the Socratic and Cynic uses of parrhesia, see Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité.* I discuss Foucault's final course of lectures in chapter 8.

27. Dio Chrysostom 4.167–233, in *Discourses,* vol. 1. I discuss eighteenth-century uses of the Alexander anecdote in chapter 4.

28. Branham, "Defacing the Currency." Diogenes is particularly fond of quoting (and misquoting) Homer and Euripides. See, e.g., DL 6.55: "When breakfasting on olives amongst which a cake had been inserted, he [Diogenes] flung it away and addressed it thus: 'Stranger, betake thee from the princes' path.'" Diogenes addresses the cake, symbol of excess and luxury, in a mock-tragic parody of Euripides' *Phoenicians* 40.

29. Pierre Bayle identified the love of wit as a guiding Cynic principle, but he saw in this predilection for "le bon mot" a source of Cynic excess, "car la passion de dire un bon mot est ordinairement si puissante qu'on aime mieux la satisfaire que de conserver un ami, et de prévenir un fâcheux revers de la fortune" [the passionate desire to speak a *bon mot* is usually so powerful that one prefers to satisfy it than to preserve a friendship or prevent an unhappy change of fortune]. Bayle, "Diogène," 534, my translation. Eighteenth-century writers in France and Germany would expend much energy trying to negotiate a place for the Cynic within the polite world of letters. See chapter 2.

30. Douglas, "Social Control of Cognition," 365, quoted in Branham, "Defacing the Currency," 96.

31. For Nietzsche's relationship to Cynicism see Branham, "Nietzsche's Cynicism"; Jensen, "Nietzsche's Unpublished Fragments"; and Niehues-Pröbting, *Der Kynimus des Diogenes,* 250–78.

32. Plutarch, *Moralia,* 1:77E–78A.

33. Navia, *Classical Cynicism,* 140; see also 139–41.

34. On the two versions of the mouse tale, see Jensen, "Nietzsche's Unpublished Fragments." Other examples of animal anecdotes that teach adaptability can be found, for instance, in Dio Chrysostom 4.30–34, in *Discourses,* vol. 1.

35. See DL 6.54, "To the question what wine he found pleasant to drink, he replied, 'That for which other people pay' "; or 6.66, where Diogenes is scolded for drinking in a tavern.

36. In sexual matters the Cynics were no monks; on the contrary, they became positive models for satisfying one's desires simply and independently. In *Le Neveu de Rameau,* for instance, Diderot presents the masturbating Diogenes as a positive countermodel to the libertine rake in constant need of female company. On Cynic sexuality as it was viewed in the eighteenth century, see chapters 3 (on Diderot) and 5 (on Sade).

37. "Capables d'une disponibilité merveilleuse face au monde ambient. Il ne s'agit pas de 'défaitisme' ou de passivité puérile, mais bien plutôt d'un courage très souple qui permet lentement de se mesurer à toute condition, tout climat, tout défi." Paquet, *Les Cyniques grecs,* 9, my translation.

38. Branham, "Cynics," 755.

39. Stobaei, *Anthologium,* 13.44, in vol. 3, my translation.

40. Dio Chrysostom 8.3, in *Discourses,* vol. 1.

41. For more on the politics of the early Cynics, see chapter 4. See also Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme;* and Dorandi, "La *Politeia* de Diogène de Sinope." For a more positive assessment of Cynic cosmopolitanism, see Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism."

42. Diogenes Laertius notes that the attribution of the anecdote to Diogenes is uncertain.

43. Shakespeare, *King Lear,* in *The Norton Shakespeare,* 3.4.96–97.

44. Julian *Oration VII. To the Cynic Heracleios* 209, in *Works,* vol. 2.

45. See Guthrie, *Sophists,* esp. ch. 4, "The 'Nomos'-'Physis' Antithesis in Morals and Politics."

46. See Dio Chrysostom 10.29–30, in *Discourses,* vol. 1, where Diogenes is quoted as having said, "[Oedipus] knew that he had consorted with his own mother and that he had children by her; and subsequently, when perhaps he should have concealed this or made it legal in Thebes, in the first place he let everybody know the fact and then became greatly wrought up. . . . But domestic fowls do not object to such relationships, nor dogs, nor any ass, nor do the Persians, although they

pass for the aristocracy of Asia." See also DL 6.73: "[Diogenes saw nothing] impious in touching human flesh, this, he said, being clear from the custom of some foreign nations."

47. "Some say that" in answer to the question how he wished to be buried, "[Diogenes] left instructions that they should throw him out unburied, that every wild beast might feed on him, or thrust him into a ditch and sprinkle a little dust over him. But according to others his instructions were that they should throw him into the Ilissus, in order that he might be useful to his brethren" (DL 6.79).

48. McEvilley, "Early Greek Philosophy and Madhyamika," 158–59. I discuss the question in greater depth in chapter 7. See also Ingalls, "Cynics and *Pasupatas*"; Syrkin, "Salutary Descent"; Hulin, "Doctrines et comportements 'cyniques' "; and Muckensturm, "Les gymnosophistes étaient-ils des cyniques modèles?"

49. Riley, *Men and Morals,* 132.

50. For an interesting discussion of Cynicism as a form of primitivism, see Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity,* 117–51.

Chapter 2. Taming Wild Dogs

1. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 264.

2. "Changer la façon commune de penser." Denis Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 7:222.

3. See Matton, "Cynicism and Christianity," 240. Matton notes that one further source, the Arabic *Mukhtâr al-hikam wa-mahasin al-kalim* (1048–49), which contained anecdotes and sayings not present in Latin texts on the Cynics, was translated into Spanish in 1257. For a study of Cynicism in the Middle Ages, see also Kinney, "Heirs of the Dog"; Largier, *Diogenes der Kyniker;* and Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins.*

4. Augustine *De Civitate Dei* 14.20–43.

5. For an in-depth discussion of the parallels between monastic orders and the Cynics, see Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins.*

6. Kinney, "Heirs of the Dog," 307.

7. See Matton, "Cynicism and Christianity," 241, 246.

8. For the Renaissance reception of Cynicism, see Clément, *Le Cynisme à la Renaissance;* and Roberts, *Dog's Tales.* See also Matton, "Cynicism and Christianity"; Kinney, "Heirs of the Dog"; Relihan, "Menippus in Antiquity and the Renaissance"; Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* ch. 4; and Mazella, *Making of Modern Cynicism,* ch. 2. For an interesting reading of Rabelais, see also Szabari, "Rabelais *Parrhesiastes.*"

9. Relihan, "Menippus in Antiquity and the Renaissance," 268.

10. Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 331.

11. Garasse, *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps,* 134–35, my translation.

12. "[Vivait] brutallement, cyniquement, effrontément [es] places publiques, usant des termes pleins d'impiété & faisant des ordures que les tapinambours & les cannibales auroient hontes de faire." Garasse, *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps,* 137, my translation.

13. See Nicolas Caussin, "Traicté 3, Passion unziesme: De la honte," sec. 3, "Excellence de la pudeur, et l'opprobre de l'impudence," in *La cour sainte,* cited in Matton, "Cynicism and Christianity," 261; Balzac, *Socrate chrestien;* and Fléchier, *La fausseté des vertus humaines,* cited in Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 225.

14. Garasse, *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps,* 134, my translation.

15. For an excellent discussion of Cynicism and *libertinage* in the seventeenth century with particular reference to Charron, La Mothe Le Vayer, and Cyrano de Bergerac, see Gros, "La place du cynisme dans la philosophie libertine."

16. See La Mothe Le Vayer, *De la vertu des payens;* and Bayle, "Diogène."

17. "Et nous voyons en effet, que Diogène lui-même a souvent reconnu, qu'il se portait exprès à des extrémités vicieuses pour ramener les autres au milieu de la vertu; disant qu'il imitait en cela les musiciens excellents, qui ne font nulle difficulté dans un concert qu'ils gouvernent, de pousser leurs voix un peu au-delà du ton où ils veulent ramener ceux qui ont discordé" La Mothe Le Vayer, *De la vertu des payens,* 121–22.

18. "Diogène le cynique a été un de ces hommes extraordinaires qui outrent tout, sans en excepter la raison, et qui vérifient la maxime, *Qu'il n'y a point de grand esprit dans le caractère duquel il n'entre un peu de folie*." Bayle, "Diogène," 522, my translation. On Bayle, see also Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 300, 332–33.

19. "Car la passion de dire un bon mot est ordinairement si puissante qu'on aime mieux la satisfaire que de conserver un ami, et de prévenir un fâcheux revers de la fortune." Bayle, "Diogène," 534, my translation.

20. See Ribard, "D'Alembert et la 'société des gens de lettres.' "

21. "Concluons de tout ce que nous venons de dire, que les seuls grands seigneurs dont un homme de lettres doive désirer le commerce, sont ceux qu'il peut traiter et regarder en toute sûreté comme ses égaux et ses amis, et qu'il doit sans exception fuir tous les autres. . . . Je n'ai jamais compris pourquoi l'on admire la réponse d'Aristippe à Diogène: *si tu savais vivre avec les hommes, tu ne vivrais pas de légumes.* Diogène ne lui reprochait pas de vivre avec les hommes, mais de faire sa cour à un tyran. Ce Diogène qui bravait dans son indigence le conquérant de l'Asie, et à qui il n'a manqué que la décence pour être le modèle des sages, a été le philosophe de l'antiquité le plus décrié, parce que sa véracité intrépide le rendait le fléau des philosophes mêmes. . . . Chaque siècle et le nôtre surtout auraient besoin d'un Diogène; mais la difficulté est de trouver des hommes qui aient le courage de l'être, et des hommes qui aient le courage de le souffrir." D'Alembert,

Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie, 1:379–80, modernized spelling, my translation.

22. Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 336.

23. "De la manière la moins offensante qu'il m'a été possible, sans l'affaiblir." D'Alembert, *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie,* 1:323, my translation.

24. For a history of the republic of letters, see Bots and Waquet, *La république des lettres;* and Goodman, *Republic of Letters.* For the origins of the republic of letters, see esp. Bots and Waquet, *La république des lettres,* chs. 1 and 2; and Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* ch. 1.

25. Regardless of gender or social rank in theory at least: the literate class already excluded large sections of the population, and the role of women remained ambiguous. See Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere.*

26. Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* 12.

27. Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.*

28. See Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty.*

29. See Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* ch. 3.

30. Ibid., 3.

31. Constable, *Conversations of Gentlemen Considered,* quoted in Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* 122.

32. "Recevez, mon cher ami, ce fruit de nos conversations philosophiques, qui vous appartient comme à moi." D'Alembert, *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie,* 1:323, my translation.

33. David Hume, "Of Essay Writing," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary,* 534.

34. Ibid., 535.

35. Denis Diderot, *Apologie de l'abbé Galiani,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 20:275.

36. For an excellent study of the relationship between the emerging norm of conversation and the residual practice of eloquence in the first half of the eighteenth century in England, see Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence.*

37. Thomas Dyche and William Pardon's *New General English Dictionary* of 1737 defines *commerce* as "Trade, Dealing, Traffick, Conversation by Word or Letter, Correspondance of any King." Quoted in Copley, "Commerce, Conversation and Politeness," 64.

38. Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* 34.

39. "[Les renvois] opposeront les notions; ils feront contraster les principes; ils attaqueront, ébranleront, renverseront secrètement quelques opinions ridicules qu'on n'oserait insulter ouvertement. Si l'auteur est impartial, ils auront toujours la double fonction de confirmer & de réfuter; de troubler & de concilier. . . ./. . . Cette manière de détromper les hommes opère très promptement sur les bons esprits, & elle opère infalliblement & sans aucune fâcheuse conséquence, secrète-

ment & sans éclat, sur tous les esprits. C'est l'art de déduire tacitement les conséquences les plus fortes. Si ces renvois de confirmation & de réfutation sont prévus de loin, & préparés avec adresse, ils donneront à une Encyclopédie le caractère que doit avoir un bon dictionnaire; ce caractère est de changer la façon commune de penser." Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 7:221–22, English translation by Philip Stewart available online at "Encyclopedia of Diderot & D'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project," http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.004.

40. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Préface à Narcisse ou l'amant de lui-même,* in *Œuvres complètes,* 2:968.

41. "Guirlandes de fleurs sur les chaînes de fer dont ils sont chargés." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur les sciences et les arts,* in ibid., 3:7. The English translation is from Rousseau, *Collected Writings,* 2:5.

42. Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence,* 2.

43. On the *salonniers'* ambivalent response to polite constraint, see Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* ch. 3. On Morellet and Marmontel in particular, see ibid., 99–111; Marmontel, *Mémoires;* and Morellet, *Mémoires.*

44. Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* 109.

45. Antisthenes, the founding father of Cynicism, studied with the rhetorician Gorgias before going over to Socrates and finally branching off on his own, in effect betraying both eloquence and Socrates' witty dialogic method in the process.

46. Branham, "Defacing the Currency," 83, 101, 87.

47. "Die komische Umformung des ernsten philosophischen Dialogs." Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 32.

48. On the evolution of the dialogue form in the eighteenth century, see Sherman, *Diderot and the Art of Dialogue,* introduction.

49. Lucian *The Double Indictment* 33, in *Works,* vol. 3, my emphasis.

50. Prémontval, *Le Diogène de D'Alembert ou Diogène décent,* secs. CLVIII, p. 122, and CLXXVI, pp. 148–49. All translations are mine.

51. Ibid., secs. CXL, p. 103, and CLXIII, p. 117.

52. For further discussion on the German reception of Cynicism, see Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes.*

53. Both journals are quoted in Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 233–36.

54. I am indebted to Starobinski, "Diogène dans *Le Neveu de Rameau,*" for several of the references to Diogenes in the correspondence and the *Salons.*

55. "[Je suis] l'ami Diogène, mais avec un petit bout de draperie bien ou mal attaché. Mais *le Diogène s'en va tous les jours.* Dans huit ou dix ans d'ici, il ne restera pas le moindre vestige." Denis Diderot, "Lettre à Sophie Volland," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Lewinter, 5:720.

56. "Je n'opposerai point à vos reproches l'exemple de Rabelais, de Montaigne, de La Motte-le-Vayer, de Swift, et de quelques autres que je pourrais nommer, qui

ont attaqué *de la manière la plus cynique* les ridicules de leur temps, et conservé le titre de sage. Je veux que le scandale cesse, et sans perdre le temps en apologie, j'abandonne la marotte et les grelots pour ne les reprendre jamais, et je reviens à Socrates." Diderot, *Mémoires sur différents sujets de mathématique,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckman et al., 2:232, my emphasis and translation.

57. "O Diogène, si tu voyais ton disciple sous le fastueux manteau d'Aristippe, comme tu rirais! O Aristippe, ce manteau fastueux fut payé par bien des bassesses! Quelle comparaison de ta vie molle, rampante, efféminée, et de la vie libre et ferme du cynique déguenillé? J'ai quitté le tonneau où tu régnais pour servir sous un tyran." Denis Diderot, *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre,* in *Œuvres,* 4:821, my translation.

58. "O Dieu, je me résigne à la prière du saint prophète et à ta volonté; je t'abandonne tout; reprend tout; oui, tout, excepté mon Vernet; ah! laisse-moi le Vernet." Ibid., 823, my translation.

59. "Je voudrais bien être Caton; mais je crois qu'il m'en coûterait beaucoup, à moi et aux autres, avant que je le fusse devenu. Les fréquents sacrifices que je serais obligé de faire au personnage sublime que j'aurais pris pour modèle me remplirait d'une bile âcre et caustique qui s'épancherait à chaque instant au-dehors." Denis Diderot, "Cynique," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 6:537, my translation.

60. "Dans Athène . . . j'aurais pris la robe d'Aristote, celle de Platon, ou endossé le froc de Diogène." Denis Diderot, *Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Lewinter, 13:338, my translation.

61. "Qui est-ce qui oserait aujourd'hui braver le ridicule et le mépris? Diogène parmi nous habiterait sous un toit, mais non dans un tonneau; il ne ferait dans aucune contrée le rôle qu'il fit dans Athènes. L'âme indépendante et ferme qu'il avait reçue, peut-être l'eût-il convervée, mais il n'aurait point dit à un de nos petits souverains comme à Alexandre le Grand: *Retire-toi de mon soleil.*" Ibid., 295, my translation.

62. Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism."

63. Voltaire, quoted in Havens, *Voltaire's Marginalia,* 21.

64. "D'autre cyniques étonnèrent la vertu, Voltaire étonne le vice. Il se plonge dans la fange, il s'y roule, il s'en abreuve; il livre son imagination à l'enthousiasme de l'enfer qui lui prête toutes ses forces pour le traîner jusqu'aux limites du mal." Maistre, *Les soirées de Saint-Pétersburg,* 1:243, quoted in Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 347.

Chapter 3. Menippus on the Loose, or Diderot's Twin Hounds

1. The quoted phrase is from David Hume, "Of Essay Writing," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary,* 533.

2. Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* 3.

3. See Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason.* I discuss Sloterdijk's work in chapter 7.

4. Sherman, *Diderot and the Art of Dialogue,* 33.

5. "Je n'opposerai point à vos reproches l'exemple de Rabelais, de Montaigne, de La Motte-le-Vayer, de Swift, et de quelques autres que je pourrais nommer, qui ont attaqué *de la manière la plus cynique* les ridicules de leur temps, et conservé le titre de sage. Je veux que le scandale cesse, et sans perdre le temps en apologie, j'abandonne la marotte et les grelots pour ne les reprendre jamais, et je reviens à Socrates." Diderot, *Mémoires sur différents sujets de mathématique,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckman et al., 2:232, my emphasis and translation.

6. On the system of cross references, see Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 7:174–262.

7. Ibid., 221–22.

8. On Morellet and Marmontel, see chapter 2, as well as Goodman, *Republic of Letters,* 99–111.

9. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 214. On Foucault's lectures on Cynicism, see chapter 8.

10. "La raison détermine le philosophe . . . mais ce n'est pas l'esprit seul que le philosophe cultive, il porte plus loin son attention & ses soins . . . la raison exige de lui qu'il connoisse, qu'il étudie, & qu'il travaille à acquérir les qualités sociables." [Dumarsais], "Philosophe," in D'Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie,* 12:510, English translation by Dena Goodman online through "Encyclopedia of Diderot & D'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project," http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.001.

11. "On voit encore par tout ce que nous venons de dire, combien s'éloignent de la juste idée du *philosophe* ces indolens, qui, livrés à une méditation paresseuse, négligent le soin de leurs affaires temporelles, & tout ce qui s'appelle *fortune.* Le vrai *philosophe* n'est point tourmenté par l'ambition, mais il veut avoir les commodités de la vie; il lui faut, outre le nécessaire précis, un honnête superflu nécessaire à un honnête homme, & par lequel seul on est heureux; c'est le fond de la bienséance et des agrémens. Ce sont des faux philosophes qui ont fait naître ce prejugé, que le plus exact nécessaire lui suffit, par leur indolence & par des maximes éblouissantes." Ibid., 510–11, English translation by Dena Goodman.

12. Ibid.

13. On the various versions of the article "Philosophe," see Dieckmann, *Le Philosophe.*

14. The enemies of the *Encyclopédie* were not fooled by the game. As Abraham-Joseph de Chaumeix vehemently protested in his *Préjugés légitimes,* writing of Diderot's essay "Cynique," "Je sais tres bien que saint Paul, les Pères de l'Église, et tous les chrétiens portent des ces anciens philosophes un jugement bien différent de celui-là: mais c'est ce qui fâche beaucoup nos auteurs. Ils se regardent comme

les successeurs de ces philosophes. On voit très bien qu'ils comptent soutenir leur propre cause, en défendant celle des anciens." Quoted in Diderot, *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 6:547n4.

15. See Diderot's *La promenade du sceptique,* as well as his article "Scepticisme" in D'Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie.*

16. "Fouler aux pieds ce qu'il pouvait y avoir de fastueux & d'imposant dans les idées de Socrates." Diderot, "Cynique," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 6:532. All translations from "Cynique" are mine.

17. "D'où l'on voit que la vertu d'Antisthene étoit chagrine. Ce qui arrivera toujours lorsqu'on s'opiniâtrera à se former un caractère artificiel & des mœurs factices. Je voudrais bien être Caton; mais je crois qu'il m'en coûterait beaucoup à moi & aux autres, avant que je le fusse devenu. Les fréquents sacrifices que je serais obligé de faire au personnage sublime que j'aurais pris pour modèle, me rempliraient d'une bile âcre & caustique qui s'épancherait à chaque instant au-dehors." Ibid., 537.

18. "De boufons, d'impudents, de mendiants, de parasites, de gloutons, & de fainéants." Ibid., 535.

19. "ECLECTISME, s.m. *(Histoire de la philosophie ancienne et moderne).* L'éclectique est un philosophe qui, foulant aux pieds le préjugé, la tradition, l'ancienneté, le consentement universel, l'autorité, en un mot tout ce qui subjugue la foule des esprits, ose penser de lui-même, remonter aux principes généraux les plus clairs, les examiner, les discuter, n'admettre rien que sur le témoignage de son expérience et de sa raison; et de toutes les philosophies qu'il a analysées sans égard et sans partialité, s'en faire une particulière et domestique qui lui appartienne." Denis Diderot, "Eclectisme," in *Œuvres,* 1:300. All references to this article are to this edition, and all translations are mine.

20. "Maxime d'Éphèse . . . mettait tant de force dans ses pensées, tant d'énergie dans son expression, tant de noblesse et de grandeur dans ses images, je ne sais quoi de si frappant et de si sublime, même dans sa déraison, qu'il ôtait à ses auditeurs la liberté de le contredire: c'était Apollon sur son trépied, qui maîtrisait les âmes et commandait aux esprits." Ibid., 322–23.

21. "Die Bombe dieses Gesprächs platzt gerade in der Mitte der französischen Literatur." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, 21 Dec. 1804, in Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke.*

22. On Cynicism in *Le Neveu de Rameau,* see Harth, "Der Aufklärer und sein Schatten"; Starobinski, "Diogène dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*"; Groh, "Diderot—ein Menipper der Aufklärung"; D'Hondt, "Le cynisme de Rameau"; and Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism."

23. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau,* 8. The English translation is from Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and D'Alembert's Dream,* 37. Hereafter references to *Le Neveu de Rameau* are to these two editions, with the page from the French edition, abbreviated as *NR,* given first, followed by the page from the English edition, cited as

Tancock. I quote primarily from the English translation, giving the French in the text or in notes where relevant.

24. Jean Starobinski and Ruth Groh suggest as much when they read the text as Diderot's final farewell to Cynicism in both its noble and its scurrilous forms, and his celebration, in their stead, of a third strand of the Cynic legacy, its literary inheritance, Menippean satire. See Starobinski, "Diogène dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*"; and Groh, "Diderot—ein Menipper der Aufklärung."

25. "Il fait sortir la vérité." *NR* 5; Tancock 35.

26. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 5, 3; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:37, 33. For an interesting discussion of Rameau as the first *Zyniker* in Sloterdijk's sense of the term, see Harth, "Der Aufklärer und sein Schatten."

27. "Un ignorant, un sot, un fou, un impertinent, un paresseux, ce que nos Bourguignons appellent un fiéffé truand, un escrot, un gourmand." *NR* 18; Tancock 45.

28. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 9 Feb. 1984, 38.

29. "Je dis les choses comme elles me viennent; sensées, tant mieux; impertinentes, on n'y prend pas garde. J'use en plein de mon franc parler. Je n'ai pensé de ma vie, ni avant que de dire, ni en disant, ni après avoir dit. Aussi je n'offense personne." *NR* 56; Tancock 79.

30. For an excellent discussion of the relationship between the nephew and the Renaissance fool, see Michael André Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival,* 59–83.

31. Harth, "Der Aufklärer und sein Schatten," 103.

32. "Ces manières effrontés [des philosophes Cyniques] ont fait donner l'épithète de *cynique* aux expressions trop hardies, & qui blessent la pudeur." *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin,* s.v. "Cynique," my translation. I quote from the 1771 edition, but the definition is already present in the earliest editions of Trévoux's dictionary; it is in fact lifted directly from Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel,* dating from the late seventeenth century.

33. Jean Fabre, in Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau,* 261.

34. "Dans la nature, toutes les espèces se dévorent; toutes les conditions se dévorent dans la société." *NR* 36–37; Tancock 63.

35. "Très bizarre. On ne naît pas avec cette tournure-là. On se la donne, car elle n'est pas dans la nature." *NR* 95; Tancock 112.

36. Diderot, "Cynique," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Dieckmann et al., 6:534.

37. D'Hondt, "Le cynisme de Rameau," 129, my translation.

38. "De l'or, de l'or. L'or est tout; et le reste, sans or, n'est rien. Aussi au lieu de lui farcir la tete de belles maximes qu'il faudroit qu'il oubliât, sous peine de n'etre qu'un gueux; lors que je possede un louis, ce qui ne m'arrive pas souvent, je me plante devant lui. Je tire le louis de ma poche. Je le lui montre avec admiration." *NR* 92; Tancock 110.

39. D'Hondt, "Le cynisme de Rameau," 129–30, my translation.

40. See Jean Fabre, in Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau,* 173n124.

41. Monbron, *Le cosmopolite,* 4, my translation.

42. "Le plus grand bien que j'ai tire de mes voyages ou de mes courses, est d'avoir appris à haïr par raison ce que je haïssais par instinct. Je ne savois pourquoi les hommes m'étoient odieux; l'expérience me l'a découvert. . . . Je me suis parfaitement convaincu que la droiture et l'humanité ne sont en tous lieux que des termes de convention, qui n'ont en fait rien de reel ou de vrai; que chacun ne vit que pour soi, n'aime que soi; & que le plus honnête homme n'est, à proprement parler, qu'un habile Comédien, qui possede le grand art de fourber, sous le masque imposant de la candeur & de l'équité; . . . Ce n'est pas que je croye mieux valoir que le reste des hommes: à Dieu ne plaise que ce soit ma pensée! Au contraire, j'avoue de la meilleure foi du monde que je ne vaux précisément rien; & que la seule difference qu'il y a entre les autres & moi, c'est que j'ai la hardiesse de me démasquer, & qu'ils n'osent en faire autant." Ibid., 42–43, 45, my translation.

43. "La devise de Monbron est: *Contemni et contemnere.* Jean-François Rameau n'aura pas tant d'outrecuidance, et le cynisme sera toujours voilé chez lui d'indulgence, de bonne humeur et de modestie." Fabre, in Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau,* 174n124, my translation.

44. "Je venais d'entendre un morceau pathétique. . . . Dans le transport de mon ivresse je saisis mon voisin Monbron par le bras et lui dis: 'Convenez, monsieur, que cela est beau.' L'homme au teint jaune, aux sourcils noirs et touffus, à l'œil féroce et couvert, me répond: 'Je ne sens pas cela.—Vous ne sentez pas cela?—Non; j'ai le *cœur velu.*' Je frisonne, je m'éloigne du tigre à deux pieds." Diderot, *Satyre première,* in *Œuvres,* 2:579–93, 584.

45. "Comme un connoisseur en peinture ou en poesie examine les beautés d'un ouvrage de gout." *NR* 76; Tancock 97.

46. "Aiez donc le courage d'être gueux": "il vaudroit mieux se renfermer dans son grenier, boire de l'eau, manger du pain sec, et se chercher soi meme." *NR* 22, 99; Tancock 49, 116.

47. "L'homme necessiteux ne marche pas comme un autre; il saute, il rampe, il se tortille, il se traîne; il passe sa vie à prendre et à exécuter des positions." *NR* 104; Tancock 120.

48. "Je ne connois personne qui ne sache quelques pas de votre danse." *NR* 105; Tancock 121.

49. "Le souverain? encore y a-t-il quelquechose à dire . . . Quiconque a besoin d'un autre, est indigent et prend une position. Le roi prend une position devant sa maitresse et devant Dieu; il fait son pas de pantomime." *NR* 105; Tancock 121.

50. "MOI.—Mais il y a pourtant un etre dispense de la pantomime. C'est le philosophe qui n'a rien et qui ne demande rien. / LUI.—et ou est cet animal la? S'il n'a rien il souffre; s'il ne sollicite rien, il n'obtiendra rien, et il souffrira toujours. / MOI.—Non. Diogene se moquait des besoins." *NR* 106; Tancock 122.

51. Contrast this austere version of masturbation, which emphasizes self-sufficiency over the pleasures of the body, with Cyrano de Bergerac's bold and

humorous defense of masturbation as a natural right, a right he openly asserts against the tyranny of social codes and the hypocrisy of religion: "Par ma foi, y a-t-il quelque place sur votre corps plus sacrée ou plus maudite l'une que l'autre? Pourquoi commets-je un péché quand je me touche par la pièce du milieu et non quand je me touche mon Oreille ou mon talon? Est-ce à cause du chatouillement? Je ne dois donc pas me purger le basin, car cela ne se fait pas sans quelque sorte de volupté; ni les dévots ne doivent pas non plus s'élever à la contemplation de Dieu, car ils y goûtent un grand plaisir d'imagination." *Les états et empires de la lune,* 109, lines 2140–48. Cyrano refers explicitly to Diogenes twice in his dialogue. On Cynicism and the seventeenth-century libertine movement, see Gros, "La place du cynicisme dans la philosophie libertine." The connection between Cynicism and *libertinage* (both of thought and morals) does not disappear in the eighteenth century; it gains instead, as Rameau's nephew and, we shall see, Sade suggest a new twist. See also Fougeret de Monbron's *Margot la ravaudeuse,* where, unlike in his *Le cosmopolite,* Monbron does not explicitly refer to Cynicism or Diogenes, but the frontispiece of the 1784 edition shows Margot sitting in her mending barrel, as if a visual incarnation of Diogenes. The frontispiece is reproduced in Lasowski, *Romanciers libertins du XVIIIe siècle,* 866. See also Pierre François Godart de Beauchamps's curious libertine novel *Aihcrappih* (1748), one of the rare Cynic works to feature as its main protagonist the first female Cynic, Crates' lover Hipparchia (of which *Aihcrappih* is an anagram). My thanks to Marc-André Bernier for bringing this novel to my attention.

52. See, e.g., Albertan-Coppola, "Rira bien qui rira le dernier."

53. "Le cynisme me paraît être au fond, dans l'Antiquité, comme une sorte d'éclectisme à effet inversé. Je veux dire par là que si on définit l'éclectisme comme la forme de pensée, de discours, de choix philosophique qui compose les traits les plus communs, les plus traditionnels aux différentes philosophies d'une époque, c'est en général pour pouvoir les rendre acceptables à tous et en faire les principes organisateurs d'un consensus intellectuel et moral. C'est cela, en général, la définition de l'éclectisme. Je dirais que le cynisme est un éclectisme à effet inversé: éclectisme car il reprend quelques-uns des traits les plus fondamentaux qu'on peut trouver dans les philosophies qui lui sont contemporaines; à effet inversé parce qu'il fait de cette reprise une pratique révoltante . . . qui a instauré, non pas du tout un consensus philosophique, mais au contraire une étrangeté dans la pratique philosophique, une extériorité, et même une hostilité et une guerre." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 214.

54. "Le cynisme jouerait, en quelque sorte, un peu le rôle de miroir brisé pour la philosophie ancienne. Miroir brisé où tout philosophe peut et doit se reconnaître, dans lequel il peut et doit reconnaître l'image même de la philosophie, le reflet de ce qu'elle est et de ce qu'elle devrait être, le reflet de ce qu'il est lui-même et de ce que lui-même voudrait être. Et en même temps, dans ce miroir, il perçoit comme une grimace, une déformation violente, laide, disgracieuse, dans laquelle il ne saurait en aucun cas ni se reconnaître ni reconnaître la philosophie." Ibid., 214.

55. As Lui puts it, "Quand la nature fit Leo, Vinci, Pergolese, Douni, elle sourit. . . . Quand elle fagota [le neveu de Rameau], elle fit la grimace et puis la grimace, et puis la grimace encore; et disant ces mots, il faisoit toutes sortes de grimaces du visage." *NR* 96; Tancock 113–14.

56. "Avec la manchette déchirée et les bas de laine noirs et recousus par derriere avec du fil blanc." *NR* 29; Tancock 55.

57. "Cependant j'irois avec ce visage defait, ces yeux egarés, ce col debraillé, ces cheveux ebouriffés, dans l'etat vraiment tragique où vous voila. . . . Je me collerois la face contre terre, et sans me relever, je lui dirois d'une voix basse et sanglotante: Pardon, madame! pardon! je suis un indigne, un infame." *NR* 20; Tancock 47–48.

58. "Et puis la misere. La voix de la conscience et de l'honneur, est bien foible, lorsque les boyaux crient." *NR* 38; Tancock 63.

59. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 5.

60. "Rien ne dissemble plus de lui que lui meme. . . . Je n'estime pas ces originaux la." *NR* 4–5; Tancock 34–35.

61. "Tout ce que je scais, c'est que je voudrois bien etre un autre, au hasard d'etre un homme de genie, un grand homme." *NR* 15; Tancock 43.

62. "Adieu, Mr le philosophe. N'est il pas vrai que je suis toujours le meme?" *NR* 109; Tancock 125.

63. "Fastidieuse uniformité que notre education, nos conventions de société, nos bienseances d'usage ont introduite." *NR* 5; Tancock 35.

64. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité,* vol. 2, *L'usage des plaisirs,* 9.

65. Henri Michaux, "Clown," in *Œuvres complètes,* 1:709. English translation in idem, *Selected Writings,* 233–34.

66. On *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre,* see chapter 2.

67. "Les choses de la vie ont un prix sans doute; mais vous ignorez celui du sacrifice que vous faites pour les obtenir. Vous dansez, vous avez dansé et vous continuerez de danser la vile pantomime." *NR* 107; Tancock 123.

68. "J'ai un diable de ramage saugrenu, moitié des gens du monde et des Lettres, moitie de la Halle." *NR* 94; Tancock 112.

69. "Lui n'apercevoit rien; il continuoit, saisi d'une alienation d'esprit, d'un enthousiasme si voisin de la folie qu'il est incertain qu'il en revienne . . . [il s'emparoit] de nos âmes, et les [tenoit] suspendues dans la situation la plus singuliere que j'aie jamais eprouvée." *NR* 83–84; Tancock 103.

70. McDonald, *Dialogue of Writing,* 91.

71. See chapter 2.

72. "Paîtri, pour ainsi dire, avec le levain de l'ordre & de la règle." [Dumarsais], "Philosophe," 510.

73. "Sa faculté d'agir est pour ainsi dire comme une corde d'instrument de musique montée sur un certain ton; elle n'en sauroit produire un contraire. Il craint de se détonner, de se désarcorder avec lui-même." Ibid.

74. "Comme un grain de levain qui fermente et qui restitue à chacun une portion de son individualité naturelle. Il secoue, il agite; il fait approuver ou blâmer; il fait sortir la verité; il fait connoitre les gens de bien; il demasque les coquins; c'est alors que l'homme de bon sens ecoute, et démêle son monde." *NR* 5; Tancock 35.

75. "L'image que [la pensée] se donne de ce que signifie penser, faire usage de la pensée, s'orienter dans la pensée." Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* 39, my translation.

Chapter 4. Diogenes' Lost Republic

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* vol. 2, bk. 6. Hereafter cited in the text and notes of this chapter as DL.

2. "When Perdiccas threatened to put Diogenes to death unless he came to him: 'That's nothing wonderful' quoth he, 'for a beetle or a tarantula would to the same.' Instead of that he would have expected the threat to be that Perdiccas would be quite happy to do without his company" (DL 6.44); "Dionysius the Stoic says that after Chaeronea he was seized and dragged off to Philip, and being asked who he was, replied, 'A spy upon your insatiable greed.' For this he was admired and set free" (DL 6.43).

3. One anecdote reports that Plato, having come across Diogenes washing lettuces, rebuked him, saying, "Had you paid court to Dionysius, you wouldn't now be washing lettuces," to which Diogenes calmly replied, "If you had washed lettuces, you wouldn't have paid court to Dionysius." DL 6.58. See also DL 6.45, on Callisthenes and Alexander.

4. Among the several anecdotes that pit Diogenes against Alexander, see, for instance: "Alexander once came and stood opposite him and said, 'I am Alexander the great king,' 'And I,' said he, 'am Diogenes the Cynic' " (DL 6.60). Or again, "When some one was extolling the good fortune of Callisthenes and saying what splendour he shared in the suite of Alexander, 'Not so,' said Diogenes, 'but rather ill fortune; for he breakfasts and dines when Alexander sees fit' " (DL 6.45). Even Alexander's legendary saying, "Had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to be Diogenes" (DL 6.32), though it praises the Cynic, emphasizes the political inconsequence of Diogenes' insolence. Had Alexander not been king (he is glad he is), he would have been a philosopher; he would have chosen, that is, a nonpolitical life, the life of the soul and the mind.

5. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," 108.

6. Dio Chrysostom, *The Fourth Discourse, On Kingship,* in *Discourses,* vol. 1. See also, in the same volume, *The Sixth Discourse: Diogenes, or On Tyranny.*

7. *Plutarch's Lives,* vol. 4, between pp. 212 and 213. I thank Ian Macgregor for bringing the engraving to my attention.

8. The image has not lost its power. As recently as 2003 the Ivorian author and

public intellectual Bernard Dadie made use of the Cynic anecdote to rally political resistance in Abidjan: "Patriotes, hâtez le pas, brûlez les étapes, pour dire enfin à tous les Alexandre du monde entier qui veulent faire de vous d'éternels sujets, sinon des eunuques: 'Ôte-toi de mon soleil!' Diogène savait lui, qu'il valait plus qu'Alexandre et ses cohortes de soudards. La voie est ouverte, le signal est donné, le flambeau vient d'être transmis dans des mains jeunes, nouvelles, inermes, qui ne prétendent pas à s'emparer d'un portefeuille." 19 Mar. 2003. Published as "La crise ivoirienne" on the Web site of Africultures, www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=2836, on 4 Nov. 2003.

9. Explicit references to cosmopolitanism in Diogenes Laertius are to be found at DL 6.63, 72 (on Diogenes) and 6.93, 98 (Crates).

10. Secondary sources giving a negative definition of cosmopolitanism are Giannantoni, *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae,* 4:537–47; Baldry, "Zeno's Ideal State"; Dorandi, "La *Politeai* de Diogène de Sinope"; Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme;* and Kalouche, "Cynic Way of Living." For a dissenting view, see Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism"; and Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King,* 138–52. See also Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World,* 89–97, 204ff.

11. "Le cosmopolitisme de Diogène ne doit pas être entendu au sens positif (en tant que vision du χόσμος compris comme fraternité humaine universelle), mais en un sens uniquement négatif; cette conception exprime le déracinement total de l'homme par rapport à toute communauté historiquement constituée, avec, par voie de conséquence, la négation du concept même de 'patrie.'" Dorandi, "La *Politeia* de Diogène de Sinope," 68, my translation.

12. See the references in n. 10 above; for further references, see Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism."

13. See, e.g., Epictetus *Of the Calling of the Cynic* 2.22.45–48 and *That we ought not to yearn for the things which are not under our control* 3.24.64ff., in Epictetus, *Discourses and Encheiridion,* vols. 1 and 2, respectively. See also Julian *Oration VII. To the Cynic Heracleios* 238b–d, in *Works,* vol. 2.

14. At DL 6.80, Diogenes Laertius gives two lists of works attributed to Diogenes of Sinope. The first includes the *Republic,* the latter (from Sotion) does not. He reports, moreover, that Sosicrates and Satyrus deny that Diogenes wrote at all, casting further doubt on the authenticity of the *Republic.* Kurt von Fritz explains the excision of the *Republic* from Sotion's list as the consequence of the Stoic cleansing of Cynicism; most scholars follow Fritz in accepting as authentic the Cynic *Republic.* See Fritz, "Quellenuntersuchungen," esp. 54–60.

15. Mention of the *Politeia* is also made in Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 4.159c. See Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 11n6.

16. My account of the *Republic* is indebted to the pioneer studies of Harold Baldry, Tiziano Dorandi, and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé. See n. 10 above.

17. Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 28.

18. See DL 6.71: "He acted accordingly, adulterating the currency [*nomisma*] in

very truth, allowing convention [*nomos*] no such authority as he allowed to natural right [*physis*], and asserting that the manner of life he lived was the same as that of Heracles when he preferred liberty to everything."

19. Goulet-Cazé argues in favor of disregarding the syllogism altogether on the basis that it is almost certainly a Stoic saying wrongly attributed to Diogenes of Sinope. See Goulet-Cazé, "Un syllogisme." I see no reason to exclude this particular saying from the often indistinguishable hodgepodge of historical and fictional *chreiai* that constitute book 6 of the *Lives.* The syllogism on law, if read as written with tongue in cheek, sits comfortably with Diogenes' use of syllogistic reasoning throughout book 6 and with the antipolitical stance of the neighboring *chreiai.* For the use of syllogistic reasoning as a form of parody in Diogenes Laertius 6, see Branham, "Defacing the Currency." See also Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," which insists on the importance "not to read the passage [the syllogism on law] at face value" (107n10).

20. See Plato *Republic* 5.457c–d, 4.423e; and Plato *Laws* 5.739b–f.

21. Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King,* 128. See also Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World,* 94–97.

22. Baldry, "Zeno's Ideal State," 14, my emphasis.

23. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," 106.

24. Philodemus's description of the *Republic* has survived in two fragmentary papyri from Herculaneum (PHerc. 155 and PHerc. 339). See Dorandi, "Filodemo: Gli Stoici (Pherc. 155 e 339)"; hereafter references to Philodemus are to Dorandi's edition. For further secondary references on the topic, see Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* esp. 11–13.

25. Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé points out that although Philodemus targets primarily the Stoics, he would have had in mind Epicurus's insistence, in book 2 of "On Types of Life," that the Epicurean would not, "play the dog, he will not beg." Goulet, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 24–25. For the relationship between Epicureans and Stoics, see Gigante, "Cinismo et Epicureismo."

26. Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 35, my translation.

27. Philodemus *On the Stoics,* ch. 6, col. 16, my translation based on Dorandi's edition. See Dorandi, "Filodemo: Gli Stoici (Pherc. 155 e 339)," 102 (Greek), 108 (Italian translation).

28. A certain Philiscus of Aegina was sometimes credited with the authorship of the tragedies ascribed to Diogenes (DL 6.73), but we know nothing of a play by the name, except that it appears in the list of works ascribed to Diogenes by Sotion (DL 6.80), who excises all tragedies from his list.

29. The passage is the subject of some controversy. Tizio Dorandi and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé agree that it refers simultaneously to the *Republic*s of Zeno and Diogenes. Wilhelm Crönert argues, however, that the passage describes only the Cynics (see his *Kolotes und Menedemos,* 63n306), while Malcolm Schofield takes the opposite point of view, ascribing the description to the Stoics alone. Schofield,

Stoic Idea of the City, 144. It seems to me that although the passage contains certain unheard-of practices (patricide, for instance), its Cynic accents are unmistakable, and several characteristics (behaving like a dog, speaking bluntly, wearing a double cloak, contesting the laws, sexual freedom) are corroborated by other early sources on Cynicism.

30. Philodemus *On the Stoics,* ch. 6, cols. 18–20, my translation, based on Dorandi, "Filodemo: Gli Stoici (Pherc. 155 e 339)."

31. Philodemus might be trying to distance Epicurean philosophy from Cynicism by effacing the logical relationship Diogenes sets up between cannibalism (an unacceptable practice) and materialism (an accepted Epicurean principle).

32. Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 77–78.

33. See Dio Chrysostom 10.29–32, in *Discourses,* vol. 1. On the authenticity of this report, see Fritz, "Quellenuntersuchungen," 87–88.

34. For a discussion of Diogenes' misanthropy as depicted in Diogenes Laertius's *Lives,* see chapter 1, 17–19.

35. Goulet-Cazé, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 28.

36. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 207; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:390. I discuss Sloterdijk's proposal for a new Cynic community in chapter 7.

37. Baldry, "Zeno's Ideal State," 14.

38. Kalouche, "Cynic Way of Living," 190.

39. Wieland later renamed his novel *Nachlaß des Diogenes: Aus einer alten Handschrift* (Posthumous works of Diogenes of Sinope: From an ancient manuscript).

40. "Der verachtenswürdigste, tolleste, unflätigste und erträglichste Kerl . . . der jemals der menschlichen Gestalt Schande gemacht hätte." Wieland, *Sokrates Mainomenos, oder die Dialogen des Diogenes von Sinope,* in *Werke,* 2:13. Translated into English by Mr. Wintersted from the 1770 Leipzig edition as *Socrates out of his senses: or, dialogues of Diogenes of Sinope,* 1:xvi, hereafter cited as Wintersted. All references to Wieland are to these two editions.

41. Epictetus 3.24.83–85, in *Discourses and Encheiridion,* vol. 2.

42. Lucian *Demonax* 5, in *Works,* vol. 1.

43. Lucian *Demonax* 10, in ibid.

44. Lucian *Demonax* 6, in ibid.

45. "Das Wort, welches ihr mißfällt, würde nicht in meinem Buch sein, wenn ich selbst spräche, allein Diogenes, der Cyniker ist's, welcher spricht, den ich so verschönert habe, daß ich wohl hie und da einen Zug von Cynismus anbringen müßte." Gruber, *C. M. Wieland's Leben,* 4:569, quoted in Niehues-Pröbsting, "Die Kynismus-Rezeption der Moderne," 528–29; the English translation is from idem, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 336.

46. See Niehues-Probsting's discussion of Wieland in "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 334–39; for the German, see idem, "Die Kynismus-Rezeption der Moderne," 525–33.

47. See Kleingeld, "Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism."

48. "Die Kosmopoliten führen ihren Namen (Weltbürger) in der eigentlichsten und eminensten Bedeutung. Sie betrachten alle Völker des Erdbodens als eben so viele Zweige einer einzigen Familie, und das Universum als einen Staat, worin sie mit unzählichen andern vernünftigen Wesen Bürger sind, um unter allgemeinen Naturgesetzen die Vollkommenheit des Ganzen zu befördern." Wieland, *Werke,* 3:556, English translation in Kleingeld, "Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism," 508.

49. "Die Summe der Übel, welche die Menschheit drücken, so viel ihnen ohne selbst Unheil anzurichten möglich ist, zu vermindern, und die Summe des Guten . . . zu vermehren." Wieland, *Werke,* 3:560–61, English translation in Kleingeld, "Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism," 508.

50. "Das wenigste, was ich nach dem Gesetze der Natur an sie zu fordern habe, ist, daß sie mich ungekränkt leben lassen, wenigstens so lang' ich ihnen nichts böses zufüge. . . . Man ist niemanden mehr schuldig, als man von ihm fordert. Ich fordre von den Corinthiern und von allen Griechen und Barbaren zusammengenommen nichts mehr, als, wie ich dir schon sagte, daß sie mich leben lassen. Ich bin ihnen also nichts weiter schuldig." Wieland, *Werke,* 2:69, 73; Wintersted 2:212, 221, my emphasis.

51. Wieland, *Werke,* 2:74; Wintersted 2:23–24.

52. Epictetus 3.22.77, in *Discourses and Encheiridion,* vol. 2, my emphasis.

53. Wieland, *Werke,* 2:74, 75.

54. Ibid., 72.

55. Ibid.; Wintersted 2:18.

56. "Der Weltbürger allein ist einer reinen unparteiischen durch keine unechte Zusätze verfälschten Zuneigung zu allen Menschen fähig." Wieland, *Werke,* 2:74; Wintersted 2:25.

57. Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 336.

58. Frederick II to Jean Le Rond D'Alembert, 15–16 Aug. 1763, in *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand,* 14:381. See also Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 344–46.

59. Frederick II to Lord George Keith, 1 Sept. 1762, quoted in English translation in Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 344–45.

60. Frederick II, *Briefe Friedrichs des Großen,* 2:169, quoted in English translation in Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 344.

61. "Qui est-ce qui oserait aujourd'hui braver le ridicule et le mépris? Diogène parmi nous habiterait sous un toit, mais non dans un tonneau; il ne ferait dans aucune contrée le rôle qu'il fit dans Athènes. L'âme indépendante et ferme qu'il avait reçue, peut-être l'eût-il convervée, mais il n'aurait point dit à un de nos petits souverains comme à Alexandre le Grand: Retire-toi de mon soleil." Denis Diderot, *Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Lewinter, 13:338, my translation.

62. Compare Rousseau's description of the "âge des cabanes" in the *Essai*

sur l'origine des langues with a description such as the following from Wieland's *Sokrates mainomenos:* "In the evening neighbouring families meet under the trees in some agreeable scene. Music and simple sports shorten the social hours; they look at the plays of their children, and recall to their mind the dream of their own infancy" (Wieland, *Werke,* 2:112; Wintersted 2:116–17).

63. "Man müßte wenig Kenntnis der Welt haben, wenn man nicht wüßte, daß etliche wenige Züge von Singularität und Abweichung von den gewöhnlichen Formen des sittlichen Betragens hinlänglich sind, den vortrefflichsten Mann in ein falsches Licht zu stellen. Wir haben an dem berühmten Hans Jacob Rousseau von Genf, einem Mann, der vielleicht im Grunde nicht halb so singular ist als er scheint, ein Beispiel, welches dieses Satz ungemein erläutert." Wieland, *Werke,* 2:16; Wintersted 1:xxii–xxiii. I have slightly altered Wintersted's translation by omitting a negation he introduces into the text. Wintersted's text reads: "A man must have but little knowledge of the world, not to know that some few strokes of singularity and deviation from the common forms of moral behaviour are not sufficient to set the most excellent man in a false light."

64. Wieland, *Werke,* 2:118.

65. Ibid., 99; Wintersted 2:85.

66. Wieland, *Werke,* 2:120; Wintersted 2:134.

67. We can better understand Wieland's ironic play on Rousseau if we consider that *Sokrates mainomenos* was first published in 1770 as part of a collection of short pieces by Wieland, the *Beyträge zur geheimen Geschichte der Menschheit* (Contributions to the Secret History of Mankind), which included two critical essays on Rousseau, "Betrachtungen über J. J. Rousseaus ursprünglichen Zustand des Menschen" and "Über die Behauptung, dass ungehemmte Ausbildung der menschlichen Gattung nachtheilig sey." See the discussion of these essays in Coignard, "L'idéal républicain."

68. "Quelques grandes Ames Cosmopolites, qui franchissent les barrières imaginaires qui séparent les peuples, et qui, à l'exemple de l'Etre souverain qui les a créés, embrassent tout le genre humain dans leur bienveillance." Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes,* 3:178, hereafter abbreviated as *OC.*

69. "Par où l'on voit ce qu'il faut penser de ces prétendus Cosmopolites, qui justifiant leur amour pour la patrie par leur amour pour le genre humain, se vantent d'aimer tout le monde pour avoir le droit de n'aimer personne." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (Geneva ed.), *OC* 3:287; English translation from Rousseau, *Collected Writings,* 4:81, hereafter abbreviated as *CW.* See also *Préface à Narcisse ou l'amant de lui-même, OC* 2:967, where Rousseau accuses the philosopher of cosmopolitan antipatriotism: "La famille, la patrie deviennent pour lui des mots vides de sens: il n'est ni parent, ni citoyen, ni homme; il est philosophe."

70. Lucian *Demonax* 21, in *Works,* vol. 1.

71. Peter Sloterdijk, "Lucian the Mocker, or: Critique Changes Side," in *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 169–74; "Lukian der Spötter oder: Die Kritik wechselt das

Lager," in *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:319–30. I discuss Sloterdijk's views on Cynicism in chapter 7.

72. Wieland, *Werke,* 2:118; Wintersted 2:130–31.

73. "Hätten die Franzosen meine Republik des Diogenes gelesen, so wären sie auf einmal von ihrer Republikensucht geheilt gewesen. Denn da hab ich's sonnenklar bewiesen, daß die Bedingungen, unter welchen eine wahre Republik auf dieser Erde möglich wäre, gar nicht sublunarisch sind." Karl Böttiger's notes from 26 February 1797 on a conversation with Wieland, in Starnes, *Christoph Martin Wieland,* 2:568, in English translation in Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 338.

74. "Vermöge des Ordens, zu welchen ich mich bekenne . . . ich nehme mir also die kosmopolitische Freyheit [zu raten]." Wieland, "Kosmopolitische Addresse an die französische Nationalversammlung," 193, 195.

75. On Rousseau and Cynicism, see Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism"; Starobinski, "Diogène dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*"; and Scanlan, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Diogenes the Cynic." On Rousseau's reception as Cynic in Great Britain, see Mazella, *Making of Modern Cynicism,* ch. 4.

76. Havens, *Voltaire's Marginalia,* 21.

77. Voltaire to Dr. Tronchin, Mar.–Apr. 1765, quoted in Gouhier, *Rousseau et Voltaire,* 419.

78. Voltaire to Comte d'Argental, 1 Apr. 1761, quoted in ibid., 170.

79. Voltaire, quoted in Gouhier, *Rousseau et Voltaire,* 11. For a list of Voltaire's Cynic insults at the expense of Rousseau, see ibid., 472.

80. Voltaire to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 30 Aug. 1755, in Voltaire, *Complete Works,* 100:259.

81. See Mazella, *Making of Modern Cynicism,* 143–75.

82. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics,* 8.

83. Schopenhauer, "On the Practical Use of Our Reason and on Stoicism," 155.

84. "Arrivée de J. J. Rousseau aux Champs Elysées, dédiée aux bonnes Mères. Dessiné part J. M. Moreau le Jeune, de l'académie royale de peinture et sculpture, gravé par C. F. Macret en 1782. Socrate environné de Platon, Montagne, Plutarque et plusieurs autres philosophes, s'avancent sur le bord du Léthé pour recevoir Jean Jacques Rousseau. Divers Génies se disputent l'avantage de retirer de la Barque du nautonier Caron, les Ouvrages immortels de ce Philosophe. Diogène, satisfait d'avoir enfin trouvé l'homme qu'il cherchait, soufle sa lanterne, sur le second plan on voit le Tasse et Sapho, le troisième représente Homère et les principaux Guerriers qu'il a chanté, et dans l'éloignement Voltaire s'entretenant avec un Grand Prêtre. Se vend à Paris, chez l'auteur . . . avec privilège du roi." My emphasis. The Bibliothèque Nationale de France has a 1782 engraving titled *Arrivée de J.-J. Rousseau aux Champs Elysées* by Charles François Adrien Macret, after Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune. For further discussion of the image, see Herding, "Diogenes als Bürgerheld," esp. 168–71.

85. Like Woban, Johnson's astronomer recants his scholar's ways and embraces a life of sociable companionship: "I can only tell you that I have chosen wrong [said the sage]. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life: I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestick tenderness." Johnson, *Rasselas and Other Tales,* 161.

86. "Je suis honteux, désespéré, ma chère & bonne amie; je suis cruellement trahi; la vie m'est à charge, les hommes me sont odieux; je maudirais mon existence, s'il ne me restait point la consolante ressource d'aller auprès de vous, de Miss Polly, de Bedfort & de Stewart, oublier les traits de perfidie que je viens d'éprouver." Castilhon, *Diogène moderne,* 455, my translation.

87. "Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium. . . . I dine, I play a game of back-gammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hour's amusement, I wou'd return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strain'd, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther." Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature,* 1.4.7.

88. Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire,* 9:49.

89. "Les premiers Philosophes se firent une grande réputation en enseignant aux hommes la pratique de leurs devoirs et les principes de la vertu. Mais bientôt ces préceptes étant devenus communs, il fallut se distinguer en frayant des routes contraires. Telle est l'origine des systèmes absurdes des Leucippe, des Diogènes, des Pyrrhon, des Protagore, des Lucrèce." Rousseau, *Préface à Narcisse, OC* 2:965; *CW* 2:191.

90. "Ma sotte et maussade timidité que je ne pouvois vaincre ayant pour principe la crainte de manquer aux bienseances, je pris pour m'enhardir, le parti de les fouler aux pieds. Je me fis cynique et caustique par honte; j'affectai de mépriser la politesse que je ne savois pas pratiquer. Il est vrai que cette âpreté, conforme à mes nouveaux principes, s'ennoblissoit dans mon ame, y prenoit l'intrépidité de la vertu, et c'est, je l'ose dire, sur cette auguste base qu'elle s'est soutenue mieux et plus longtems qu'on n'auroit dû l'attendre d'un effort si contraire à mon naturel." Rousseau, *OC* 1:368; *CW* 5:309. See also *Confessions,* bk. 1 (*OC* 1:36), where Rousseau describes himself as "cynique, effronté, violent, intrépide" when carried away by passions but the opposite when calm.

91. Müller, "Antisthenes and the Cynics," 177.

92. Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King,* 34.

93. Rousseau, *OC* 1:362; *CW* 5:303–4.

94. See Starobinski's thesis in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau.*

95. "Ce fut moins ma célébrité littéraire que ma réforme personnelle, dont je marque ici l'époque, qui m'attira leur jalousie: ils m'auroient pardonné peut-être de

briller dans l'art d'écrire; mais ils ne purent me pardonner de donner par ma conduite un exemple qui sembloit les importuner." Rousseau, *OC* 1:362; *CW* 5:304.

96. "Oui, monsieur Rousseau, j'aime mieux le vice raffiné sous un habit de soie, que la stupidité féroce sous une peau de bête. / J'aime mieux la volupté entre les lambris doré et sur la mollesse des coussins d'un palais, que la misère pâle, sale et hideuse, étendue sur la terre humide et malsaine, et recelée avec la frayeur dans le fond d'un antre sauvage." Denis Diderot, *Réfutation d'Helvétius,* in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Lewinter, 2:606, my translation.

97. Fabre, "Deux frère enemis."

98. "J'y cherche le censeur des lettres, le Caton et le Brutus de notre âge; je m'attends à voir Epictète en habit négligé, en perruque ébouriffée, effrayant, par son air sévère, les littérateurs, les grands et les gens du monde; je n'y vois que l'auteur du Devin du village, bien habillé, bien peigné, bien poudré et ridiculeusement assi sur une chaise de paille." Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques,* 695, quoted by Fabre in "Deux fréres ennemis," 163. The reference here is to the Stoicism, but a Stoicism understood, as is Cynicism, to refer first and foremost to *franc parler* and to the rejection of social superfluities.

99. See Lucian *The Double Indictment,* in *Works,* vol. 3. On Lucian's piece, see chapter 2.

100. The Cynic rejection of formal learning marks every page of Diogenes Laertius's "Life of Diogenes of Sinope," as when Diogenes "would wonder that the grammarians should investigate the ills of Odysseus, while they were ignorant of their own. Or that the musicians should tune the strings of the lyre, while leaving the disposition of their own souls discordant; that the mathematicians should gaze at the sun and the moon, but overlook matters close at hand; that the orators should make a fuss about justice in their speeches, but never practice it" (DL 6.27–28).

101. One might argue, however, that Diogenes makes a covert appearance early on in the *First Discourse:* when Rousseau praises Socrates as the father of ignorance in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts,* he presents him only in his most Cynic traits. "Un vrai Socrate-Diogène," writes Raymond Trousson in *Socrate devant Voltaire,* 72.

102. "Tout Lecteur attentif . . . sentira que le genre humain d'un âge n'étant pas le genre humain d'un autre âge, la raison pour quoi Diogène ne trouvoit point d'homme, c'est qu'il cherchoit parmi ses contemporains l'homme d'un temps qui n'étoit plus: Caton, dira-t-il, périt avec Rome et la liberté, parce qu'il fût déplacé dans son siècle." Rousseau, *OC* 3:192; *CW* 3:65.

103. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire,* 19, my translation.

104. "J'aurois voulu vivre et mourir libre, c'est-à-dire tellement soumis aux lois que ni moi ni personne n'en pût secouer l'honorable joug." Rousseau, *OC* 3:112; *CW* 3:4.

105. "Celui qui ose entreprendre d'instituer un peuple doit se sentir en état de

changer, pour ainsi dire, la nature humaine . . . [il doit] altérer la constitution de l'homme." Rousseau, *OC* 3:381; *CW* 4:155.

106. "Quand après avoir vainement cherché dix ans un h[omme] il fallut éteindre enfin ma lanterne et m'écrier, il n'y en a plus. Alors je commençai à me voir seul sur la terre et je compris que mes contemporains n'étoient par rapport à moi que des êtres mécaniques qui n'agissoient par des impulsions et dont je ne pouvois calculer l'action que par les loix du mouvement. Quelque intention, quelque passion que j'eusse pu supposer dans leurs ames, elles n'auroient jamais expliqué leur conduite à mon égard d'une façon que je pusse entendre. C'est ainsi [que] leurs dispositions intérieures cesserent d'être quelque chose pour moi. Je ne vis plus en eux que des masses différemment mues, dépourvues à mon égard de toute moralité." Rousseau, *OC* 1:1078; *CW* 8:72, my emphasis. Rousseau portrays a similar snuffing out of his Cynic lantern in his other late autobiographical text, *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques: Dialogues,* dialogue 2, *OC* 1:792; *CW* 1:102.

Chapter 5. Français, encore un effort!

1. "Détestant les sophismes du libertinage et de l'irréligion, les combattant sans cesse par tes actions et par tes discours, je ne crains point pour toi ceux qu'a nécessités dans ces mémoires le genre des personnages établis; le *cynisme* de certains crayons (adoucis néanmoins autant qu'on l'a pu) ne t'effrayera pas d'avantage." Sade, *Œuvres complètes,* 3:51, hereafter abbreviated as *OC.* The English translation is from Sade, *Justine or the Misfortunes of Virtue,* trans. Helen Weaver, xxiv.

2. "Tels sont les sentiments qui vont diriger nos travaux, et c'est en considération de ces motifs que nous demandons au lecteur de l'indulgence pour les systèmes erronés qui sont placés dans la bouche de plusieurs de nos personnages, et pour les situations quelquefois un peu fortes, que, par amour pour la vérité, nous avons dû mettre sous ses yeux." Sade, *OC* 3:56; Weaver 2.

3. "Tels sont les sentiments qui vont diriger nos travaux; et c'est en raison de ces motifs, qu'unissant *le langage le plus cynique* aux systèmes les plus forts et les plus hardis, aux idées les plus immorales et les plus impies, nous allons, avec une courageuse audace, peindre le crime comme il est, c'est-à-dire toujours triomphant et sublime, toujours content et fortuné, et la vertu comme on la voit également, toujours maussade et toujours triste, toujours pédante et toujours malheureuse." Sade, *OC* 6:90, my emphasis. The translation is mine, though I have taken the first line, which Sade leaves unchanged from one edition to the next, from Weaver.

4. "Voluptueux de tous les ages et de tous les sexes, c'est à vous seuls que j'offre cet ouvrage: nourrissez-vous de ses principes. . . . Et vous, aimables débauchés, vous qui, depuis votre jeunesse, n'avez plus d'autre freins que vos désirs et d'autres lois que vos caprices, que le cynique Dolmancé vous serve d'exemple." Sade, *OC* 3:367. The English translation is from Sade, *Marquis de Sade,* 185; all subsequent

English translations are from this source. In text citations, the page references to the English translation is followed by the reference to volume and page in *OC.*

5. I use the somewhat inelegant hybrid forms "C/cynic" and "C/cynical" to indicate the ambiguity at play in Sade's uses of the terms.

6. "Ces manières effrontés [des cyniques anciens] ont fait donner l'épithète de cynique aux expressions trop hardies, & qui blessent la pudeur." *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin,* s.v. "Cyniques," my translation. I quote from the 1771 edition, but the definition is already present in the earliest editions of Trévoux's dictionary, lifted, in fact, directly from Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel*, dating from the late seventeenth century. My translation.

7. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 3, 5; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:33, 37.

8. From the title page of the 1795 edition, as presented in facsimile in Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir,* 35, my translation.

9. See, e.g., dialogue 3, the discussion on adultery, OC 3:406ff.

10. Branham, "Defacing the Currency," 87–88.

11. "Fastidieuse uniformité que notre education, nos conventions de société, nos bienseances d'usage ont introduite." *NR* 5; Tancock 35.

12. Douglas, "Social Control of Cognition," 369–70, quoted in Branham, "Defacing the Currency," 94.

13. For an excellent discussion of lying in Sade and its relation to eighteenth-century philosophies of the social contract and Kant in particular, see Hénaff, *Sade,* ch. 8, esp. pp. 251–57; in the English, pp. 227–33. All references are to these two editions; when both editions are cited, the English reference is given first.

14. Jean Le Rond D'Alembert, "Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands," in *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie,* 1:379, my translation.

15. Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity,* 120.

16. See Thomson, "Le bonheur matérialiste selon La Mettrie."

17. Hénaff, *Sade,* 114; 100.

18. As Ann Thomson has argued in her essay "Le bonheur matérialiste selon La Mettrie," even La Mettrie stopped short of praising the asocially constituted individual as the new model for humanity. He contented himself with justifying his behavior as natural.

19. On the relationship between Cynicism and the libertine tradition in the seventeenth century, see Gros, "La place du cynisme dans la philosophie libertine."

20. Dio Chrysostom 10.30, in *Discourses,* vol. 1.

21. Kehres, "Les leçons de morale expérimentale de Sade," 160, my translation.

22. I borrow the distinction from Lovejoy and Boas, who apply it to versions of primitivism. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity,* 11.

23. Roger, *La philosophie dans le pressoir,* 54, my translation.

24. Mengue, *L'ordre sadien,* 267, my translation.

25. Gros, "La place du cynisme dans la philosophie libertine," 131.

26. See Roger, "Rousseau selon Sade ou Jean-Jacques travesti."

27. Rousseau, *OC* 2:13; English translation by Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché in *CW* 6:8.

28. "Ce ton dur & haut est-il donc le langage de la Philosophie? C'était celui de Diogène qui de son tonneau jugeoit l'univers, & se croyait un être important pour avoir insulté Alexandre, qui fut assez grand pour mépriser le singe Philosophe." Élie-Catherine Fréron, in *L'Année Littéraire* 2 (5 Apr. 1761): 313, quoted in O'Gorman, *Diderot the Satirist,* 178, my translation.

29. On Cynic parrhesia, see chapters 1 (on the ancient Cynics) and 8 (on Foucault's interpretation of the concept).

30. Rousseau, *OC* 2:5; *CW* 6:3.

31. Bataille, "Sade et l'homme normal," 56, my translation.

32. Sade, *OC* 12:397, my translation.

33. Epictetus 3.24.77, in *Discourses and Encheiridon,* vol. 2.

34. Lucian *The Double Indictment* 33, in *Works,* vol. 3.

35. Goulet-Cazee, *Les* Kynica *du stoïcisme,* 28.

36. Hénaff, *Sade,* 231; 255.

37. See Wieland, *Socrates out of his senses.* On Wieland's Cynic views, see chapter 4.

38. Rousseau, *OC* 3:164; *CW,* 3:43.

39. "[Qu'il] n'appartient qu'à un misanthrope comme Rousseau d'établir . . . parce que, très faible lui-même, il aimait mieux rabaisser à lui ceux auxquels il n'osait s'élever." Sade, *OC* 7:211, my translation.

40. Hénaff, *Sade,* 224; 248.

41. The oracle instructed Diogenes to *parakharattein to nomisma* (deface the currency), with a pun on *nomisma* (money) and *nomos* (custom). See chapter 1.

42. *NR* 40; Tancock 65.

43. *NR* 55; Tancock 78.

44. Goux, "Beyond Hopes and Disasters," 101.

45. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 207; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:390.

46. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 210n1; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:295n.

47. Hénaff, *Sade,* 252, 251; 279, 278.

48. Philodemus of Gadara, *Of the Stoics,* in Dorandi, "Filodemo: Gli Stoici (Pher. 155 e 339)," cols. 18–20, my translation.

49. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Excursus II: Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 81–119.

50. Edelman, "Future Is Kid Stuff," 19. See also idem, *No Future.*

51. Hénaff, *Sade,* 100; 115.

52. On Diogenes in the French Revolution, see Herding, "Diogenes als Bürgerheld."

Chapter 6. Cynicism and the Dialectic of Enlightenment

1. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 50. The lecture was originally published in English. A French version is available in idem, *Dits et écrits,* 40:562–78.

2. On the changing definitions of *cynic* in the *Oxford English Dictionary,* see Mazella, *Making of Modern Cynicism,* 15. French dictionaries, which tend to be regulative rather than descriptive and thus less prompt to signal changes in actual usage, are slower to mark the change.

3. Hegel, "Cynic School," 1:479, 481.

4. See Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 329–30; for the German, see "Die Kynismus-Rezeption der Moderne," 519–20.

5. In the mid-nineteenth century, for instance, Eduard Zeller argued that the Stoics preserved the Socratic spirit far better than the Cynics, who only caricatured it. See Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen.* The 1909 edition of the *Enciclopedia universal illustrada Europeo-Americana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1909) reports, under the heading "Cínica (Escuela)," that Stoicism corrected the excesses and "impudentes doctrinas y costumbres" of the Cynics. See also Griffin, "Cynicism and the Romans."

6. Jean Paul's definition of *humor* as "wie die Alten den Diogenes nannten, ein rasender Sokrates" (a Socrates gone mad, as the ancients called Diogenes) celebrates Cynicism as a satirical-critical tool much akin to Romantic irony. Quoted in Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 284. On the reception of Cynicism in German Romanticism and in Nietzsche, see ibid., 243–84. On Nietzsche, see also Branham, "Nietzsche's Cynicism"; and Jensen, "Nietzsche's Unpublished Fragments."

7. "On est un petit peu démuni. Et autant que je sache, je ne vois guère que dans les textes allemands des références à ce problème du cynisme. . . . En tout cas il est certain que vous trouvez dans la philosophie allemande contemporaine, depuis la guerre toute une problématisation du cynisme, du cynisme dans ses formes anciennes et modernes. Et ce serait sans doute quelque chose à étudier d'un peu plus près: pourquoi et dans quels termes les philosophes allemands ont posé ce problème." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 29 Feb. 1984, 165.

8. Klaus Heinrich, "Antiker Kyniker und Zynismus in der Gegenwart," in *Parmenides und Jona,* 129–56.

9. Paul Tillich, "The Courage to Be," in *Main Works/Hauptwerke,* 5:211.

10. Dudley, *History of Cynicism,* xi.

11. Niehues-Pröbsting does not repay the honor: the few pages he devotes to Sloterdijk's *Kritik des zynischen Vernunft* in "The Modern Reception of Cynicism" are harsh, to say the least.

12. I borrow this term from Branham, "Cynics."

13. Navia, *Philosophy of Cynicism,* xi–xii.

14. Outram, *Enlightenment,* 3.

15. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 3.

16. Seyla Benhabib points out that although the two excursuses are not signed, the first was authored by Adorno, the second by Horkheimer. *Critique, Norm, and Utopia,* 20.

17. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Excursus II: Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality," in Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 90.

18. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests,* 314.

19. For a thorough discussion of the debate between Critical Theory and poststructuralism, see Hanssen, *Critique of Violence.*

20. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.*

21. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 45.

22. Foucault, "Ethics of Care," 18; "L'éthique du souci," 727.

23. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 212.

24. Ibid., 214–15.

25. Ibid., 212.

Chapter 7. Mystic Carnival

1. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 11; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:46. Subsequent references to this work in this chapter are from these editions, abbreviated in the text and in notes as *C* and *K,* respectively.

2. "Die Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft drängt darauf, als Kritik der zynischen Vernunft zuendegeführt zu werden" (*K* 1:390).

3. "Der moderne Zynismus stellt sich dar als jener Zustand des Bewußtseins, der auf die naiven Ideologien und ihre Aufklärung folgt. . . . Zynismus ist das *aufgeklärte falsche Bewußtsein*" (*K* 1:33, 37).

4. "Es ist das modernisierte unglückliche Bewußtsein, an dem Aufklärung zugleich erfolgreich und vergeblich gearbeitet hat. Es hat seine Aufklärungs-Lektion gelernt, aber nicht vollzogen und wohl nicht vollziehen können. Gutsituiert und miserabel zugleich fühlt sich dieses Bewußtsein von keiner Idologiekritik mehr betroffen; seine Falschheit ist bereits reflexiv gefedert" (*K* 1:37–38).

5. Huyssen, "Foreword," xiv.

6. See Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 45.

7. See Sloterdijk, "Meditation on the Bomb," *C* 128–32; *K* 1:252–61.

8. See Huyssen, "Foreword," xviii–xix.

9. For Sloterdijk's discussion of Heidegger, see the section "Anyone, or: The Most Real Subject of Modern Diffuse Cynicism," *C* 195–210; "Das Man oder: Das realste Subjekt des modernen diffusen Zynismus," *K* 1:369–96.

10. Schrift, "Staging the End of Individualism," 366.

11. Strabo *The Geography* 15.1.65, in vol. 8.

12. On the gymnosophists, see Muckensturm, "Les gymnosophistes étaient-ils des cyniques modèles?"; and Hulin, "Doctrines et comportements 'cyniques.' "

13. Lucian *The Passing of Peregrinus* 25, in *Works,* vol. 5.

14. See Muckensturm, "Les gymnosophistes étaient-ils des cyniques modèles?"; Hulin, "Doctrines et comportements 'cyniques' "; Ingalls, "Cynics and *Pasupatas*"; and McEvilley, "Early Greek Philosophy and Madhyamika."

15. Muckensturm, "Les gymnosophistes étaient-ils des cyniques modèles?" 239, my translation.

16. Gladisch, *Einleitung in das Verständnis der Weltgeschichte,* 356–77; Sayre, *Diogenes of Sinope,* 39–47; idem, *Greek Cynicism and Sources.*

17. Sayre, *Greek Cynicism and Sources,* 45.

18. McEvilley, "Early Greek Philosophy and Madhyamika," 158–59.

19. Ibid., 155–56.

20. On *typhos* in Greek Cynicism, see Navia, *Classical Cynicism,* esp. 138–41.

21. McEvilley, "Early Greek Philosophy and Madhyamika," 155.

22. Ingalls, "Cynics and *Pasupatas*"; Hulin, "Doctrines et comportements 'cyniques' "; Syrkin, "Salutary Descent."

23. The Pasupata Sutras read: "Engaging in open action / Dishonored / Amongst all beings / ill-treated he should wander / [he thus becomes] free of evil / *Because of the slander of others / He gives his bad karma to them / And he takes their good karma from them.*" Translated in Ingalls, "Cynics and *Pasupatas,*" 286, my emphasis. For a discussion of the Pasupata Sutras and other sources on the Pasupatas see ibid., 283–84.

24. Klaus Heinrich, for instance, explains that Cynicism arose in response to the crisis occasioned by the Peloponnesian War; see his "Antike Kyniker und Zynismus in der Gegenwart," in *Parmenides und Jona,* 129–56. Marroni, "Contestazione cinica et complicità neo-cinica," provides a good summary of scholarly views of Cynicism as a negative, reactive philosophy.

25. Kinney, "Heirs of the Dog," 295.

26. Leslie Adelson deftly takes Sloterdijk to task for his failure to theorize a viable public sphere. See her review essay "Against the Enlightenment"; and esp. her essay "Contemporary Critical Consciousness."

27. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 1 Feb. 1984, 7.

28. For Julian's discussion of Cynicism, see orations 6 and 7 and the *Letter to Themistius* in *Works,* vol. 2.

29. Navia, *Classical Cynicism,* 6.

30. See Voltaire, *Lettres philosophiques,* letter 2, "Sur les Quakers." After hearing a man stand up and speak nonsense in the meeting hall, Voltaire asks his Quaker friend why the Quakers tolerate such foolishness: "Nous sommes obligés de les tolérer, me dit-il, parce que nous ne pouvons pas savoir si un homme qui se lève pour parler sera inspiré par l'esprit ou par la folie" (42).

31. Huyssen, "Foreword," xviii.

32. Branham, "Defacing the Currency," 87.

33. I have located Sloterdijk's work in the tradition of Menippean Cynicism,

but it is telling, I believe, that Sloterdijk glosses over his debt to Menippus and dismisses the most famous Menippean satirist, Lucian, as a *Zyniker* who betrayed the plebeian Diogenes by placing his satire in the service of the cultured elite. Sloterdijk arrives at this conclusion by focusing exclusively on one of Lucian's plays, *The Passing of Peregrinus,* with its mordant contempt for the Cynic Peregrinus, and disregarding the many works in which Lucian gives a far more sympathetic account of the Cynics and of the liberating power of Cynic rhetoric in particular (in *The Double Indictment,* for instance). For a discussion of Lucian's Menippean rhetoric, see chapter 2.

34. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World.* See also Bahktin's discussion of Menippean satire in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 87–149 (note that the earliest edition of Bakhtin's work on Doestoevsky's poetics does not include the discussion of Menippean satire; this was added to the 1963 edition).

35. Michael André Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival,* 17, 18.

36. Sloterdijk makes only a passing reference to Sade in *Critique of Cynical Reason,* dismissing Sade and those who study him as modern cynics in the worst sense of the term: "The enormous interest shown by intellectuals in de Sade betrays a progressive dawning in which bourgeois cynicism begins to recognize itself again in late-aristocratic cynicism" (295n; *K* 1:210n1). See also chapter 5 on Sade.

37. Michael André Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival,* 9.

38. "Proposer que l'exception devienne la règle reviendrait à oublier que le problème du monde actuel est aussi un énorme problème d'organisation qui devra être résolu, quelle que soit la tournure que prendront les choses et à la solution duquel des expériences aussi exaltantes que celles de l'autre état sont par nature incapables d'apporter une contribution quelconque." Bouveresse, *Rationalité et cynisme,* 47, my translation.

39. See Sloterdijk, "Transcendental Polemic: Heraclitian Meditations," *C* 257–381; "Transzendentale Polemik: Heraklitische Meditationen," *K* 2:652–96.

40. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism,* 230.

41. Huyssen, "Foreword," xv.

42. Adelson, "Against the Enlightenment," 630.

43. Bouveresse, *Rationalité et cynisme,* 26.

Chapter 8. Cynicism as Critical Vanguard

1. Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité.* Thomas Flynn was one of the first to write about the 1984 lecture series; his summary introduced the American public to the lectures. See Flynn, "Foucault as Parrhêsiast." See also idem, "Foucault and the Politics of Postmodernity."

2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 27; *Surveiller et punir,* 32.

3. "Si j'avais lu ces œuvres, il y a un tas de choses que je n'aurais pas eu besoin de

dire, et j'aurais évité des erreurs. Peut-être que, si j'avais connu les philosophes de cette école quand j'étais jeune, j'aurais été tellement séduit par eux que je n'aurais rien fait d'autre que de les commenter." "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," 74, my translation.

4. Ibid.

5. "L'expérience de la guerre nous avait démontré la nécessite et l'urgence d'une société radicalement différente de celle dans laquelle nous vivions. . . . *On voulait être complètement autre dans un monde complètement autre.* Aussi bien l'hégalianisme qui nous était proposé à l'université avec son modèle d'intelligibilité continue de l'histoire n'était-il pas en mesure de nous satisfaire. Ainsi que la phénoménologie et l'existentialisme, qui maintenaient le primat du sujet et sa valeur fondamentale. Alors qu'en revanche le thème nietzschéen de la discontinuité, d'un surhomme qui serait tout autre par rapport à l'homme, puis, chez Bataille, le thème des expériences limites . . . avaient une valeur essentielle. Ce fut pour moi une sorte d'issue entre l'hegelianisme et l'identité philosophique du sujet." Ibid., 49, my translation and emphasis.

6. "Quelque chose qui n'existe pas encore et dont nous ne pouvons pas savoir ce qu'il sera." Ibid., 74, my translation.

7. Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 202; "Structuralisme et poststructuralisme," 441.

8. Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 205; "Structuralisme et poststructuralisme," 447–48.

9. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 43.

10. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique / Critique et Aufklärung," originally delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne on 27 May 1978; idem, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?" excerpt from a lecture delivered at the Collège de France on 5 January 1983; idem, "What Is Enlightenment?"

11. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 32.

12. Ibid., 50, 42, 39.

13. Foucault, "L'éthique du souci," 710.

14. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 50.

15. Foucault, "Ethics of Care," 18; "L'éthique du souci," 727.

16. Foucault, "History of Sexuality," 190.

17. Foucault, "Ethics of Care," 18; "L'éthique du souci," 727.

18. Michael Schwartz, "Repetition and Ethics in Late Foucault," 128.

19. "Je voudrais—sans encore savoir jusqu'où je mènerai cela, si ça va durer jusqu'à la fin de l'année ou si je m'arrêterai—prendre l'exemple du cynisme." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 29 Feb. 1984, 152.

20. "[Le cynisme joue], à l'intérieur de la vie philosophique, une certain fonction particulière, fonction de pointe, fonction de combat, fonction aussi de service pour l'humanité." Ibid., lecture of 21 Mar. 1984, 270.

21. Ibid., lecture of 29 Feb. 1984, 163.

22. "Il me semble que dans le cynisme, dans la pratique cynique, l'exigence

d'une forme de vie extrêmement typée—avec des règles, conditions ou modes très caractérisées, très bien définis—est très fortement articulée sur le principe du dire vrai, du dire vrai sans honte et sans crainte, du dire vrai illimité et courageux. . . . [Il y a] un lien fondamental, essentiel dans le cynisme, entre *vivre d'une certaine manière et se vouer à dire vrai*." Ibid., 152–53, my emphasis.

23. "En axant l'analyse du cynisme sur ce thème de l'individualisme, on risque [pourtant] de manquer ce qui, de mon point de vue, est une [de ses] dimensions fondamentales, c'est-à-dire le problème, qui est au noyau du cynisme, de la mise en rapport entre formes d'existence et manifestation de la vérité." Ibid., 166.

24. See Flynn, "Foucault and the Politics of Postmodernity"; and idem, "Foucault as Parrhêsiast."

25. "Le salut de la cité," "l'*êthos* de l'individu," "la formation d'une certaine manière d'être." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 8 Feb. 1984, 61.

26. "Sans dissimulation ni réserve ni clause de style ni ornament rhétorique qui pourrait la chiffrer ou la masquer." Ibid., lecture of 1 Feb. 1984, 11.

27. "Il faut que le sujet, [en disant] cette vérité . . . prenne un certain risque, risque qui concerne la relation même qu'il a avec celui auquel il s'adresse. Il faut pour qu'il y ait *parrêsia* que, en disant la vérité, on ouvre, on instaure et on affronte le risque de blesser l'autre, de l'irriter, de le mettre en colère et de susciter de sa part un certain nombre de conduites qui peuvent aller jusqu'à la plus extrême violence. C'est donc la vérité, dans le risque de la violence. . . . Le parrèsiaste risque toujours de saper cette relation qui est la condition de possibilité de son discours." Ibid., 12, 13.

28. Ibid., 7.

29. "Et c'est ainsi que s'établira le vrai jeu de la *parrêsia,* à partir de cet espèce de pacte qui fait que si le parrèsiaste montre son courage en disant la vérité envers et contre tout, eh bien, celui auquel cette *parrêsia* est adressée doit montrer sa grandeur d'âme en acceptant qu'on lui dise la vérité. . . . La parrêsia est donc, en deux mots, le courage de la vérité chez celui qui parle et prend le risque de dire, en dépit de tout, toute la vérité qu'il pense, mais c'est aussi le courage de l'interlocuteur qui accepte de recevoir comme vrai la vérité blessante qu'il entend." Ibid., 14.

30. "Son devoir, son obligation, sa charge, sa tâche c'est de parler et il n'a pas le droit de se dérober à cette tâche." Ibid., 19.

31. "La *parrêsia* est tout de même autre chose qu'une technique ou un métier. . . . C'est quelque chose de plus difficile à cerner. C'est une attitude, c'est une manière d'être qui s'apparente à la vertu. . . . C'est aussi un rôle, rôle utile, précieux, indispensable pour la cité et pour les individus." Ibid., 15.

32. Foucault discusses the question of Socratic courage in his lecture of 22 Feb. 1984, with particular reference to Plato's *Laches.*

33. *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 28 Mar. 1984, 283.

34. Ibid., 284.

35. Ibid., lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 213.

36. "Ce mode de vie comme réduction de toutes les conventions inutiles . . .

est évidemment une sorte de décapage général de l'existence et des opinions, pour faire apparaître la vérité." Ibid., lecture of 29 Feb. 1984, 158.

37. "C'est ce mode de vie qui fait apparaître, dans son indépendance, dans sa liberté fondamentale, ce qu'est tout simplement, et par conséquent ce que doit être la vie." Ibid.

38. Huyssen, "Foreword," xviii.

39. Serres, "Géométrie de la folie," 176, quoted in Nehamas, *Art of Living,* 174.

40. "[Le cynique] a souffert, il a enduré, il s'est privé, pour que la vérité prenne, en quelque sorte, corps dans sa propre vie . . . prenne corps dans son corps." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 29 Feb. 1984, 160.

41. Nehamas, *Art of Living,* esp. ch. 6, "A Fate for Socrates' Reason: Foucault on the Care of the Self."

42. "en quelque sorte un *surplus,* un *excès,* ou plutôt elle n'est rien de plus ni rien de moins que l'*autre face* du rapport à soi." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 21 Mar. 1984, 251.

43. Ibid., 256, 274, 270.

44. "On peut dire que le cynique est une sorte de bienfaiteur, mais de bienfaiteur essentiellement, fondamentalement, constamment agressif dont l'instrument principal, bien entendu, est la fameuse diatribe. . . . Vous voyez donc que le cynisme rend service tout autrement que par l'exemple de sa vie ou par les conseils qu'il peut donner. Il est utile parce qu'il *se bat,* il est utile parce qu'il *mord,* il est utile parce qu'il *attaque.*" Ibid., 256–57.

45. "C'est donc une militance qui prétend changer le monde, beaucoup plus qu'une militance qui chercherait simplement à fournir à ses adeptes les moyens de parvenir à une vie heureuse." Ibid., 262.

46. Eduard Schwartz, "Diogenes der Hund und Krates der Kyniker"; Diels, "Aus dem Leben des Cynikers Diogenes"; Gigon, "Antike Erzählungen über die Berufungen zur Philosophie." For further discussion on this question, see chapter 1.

47. "Le combat des cyniques . . . c'est bien . . . la lutte de l'individu contre ses désirs. . . . Mais c'est aussi un combat contre des coutumes, contre des conventions, contre des institutions, contre des lois, contre tout un certain état de l'humanité. C'est un combat contre des vices, mais ces vices ne sont pas simplement ceux de l'individu. Ce sont des vices qui . . . s'appuient [sur], ou sont à la racine de tellement d'habitudes, de manières de faire, de lois, d'organisations politiques ou de conventions sociales." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 21 Mar. 1984, 257–58.

48. Ibid., 264.

49. Ibid., lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 214.

50. "Socrate est tout de même quelqu'un qui a une maison, une femme, des enfants, il a même des pantoufles[!]" Ibid., 238.

51. "Le cynisme jouerait, en quelque sorte, le rôle de miroir brisé pour la phi-

losophie ancienne. Miroir brisé où tout philosophe peut et doit se reconnaître, dans lequel il peut et doit reconnaître l'image même de la philosophie, le reflet de ce qu'elle est et de ce qu'elle devrait être. Et puis en même temps, dans ce miroir, il perçoit comme une grimace, une déformation violente, laide, disgracieuse, dans laquelle il ne saurait en aucun cas ni se reconnaître ni reconnaître la philosophie." Ibid., 214.

52. See chapter 6.

53. "Le cynisme me paraît être au fond, dans l'Antiquité, comme une sorte d'éclectisme à effet inversé. Je veux dire par là que si l'on définit l'éclectisme comme la forme de pensée, de discours, de choix philosophique qui compose les traits les plus communs, les plus traditionnels aux différentes philosophies d'une époque, c'est en général pour pouvoir les rendre acceptables à tous et en faire des principes organisateurs d'un consensus intellectuel et moral. C'est cela, en général, la définition de l'éclectisme. Je dirais que le cynisme est un éclectisme à effet inversé: éclectisme, car il reprend quelques-uns des traits les plus fondamentaux qu'on peut trouver dans les philosophies qui lui sont contemporaines; à effet inversé parce qu'il fait de cette reprise une pratique révoltante . . . qui a instauré, non pas du tout un consensus philosophique, mais au contraire une étrangeté dans la pratique philosophique, une extériorité, et même une hostilité et une guerre." Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 214.

54. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 42, 50.

55. "Rassembler les connaissances éparses sur la surface de la terre . . . afin que . . . nos neveux, devenant plus instruits, deviennent en même temps plus vertueux et plus heureux." Denis Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in D'Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie,* English translation by Philip Stewart online through "Encyclopedia of Diderot & D'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project," http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.004.

56. "Quelle peut être la forme de vie qui soit telle qu'elle pratique le dire vrai?" Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité,* lecture of 14 Mar. 1984, 216.

57. Ibid.

58. On the demise of Cynicism in the history of philosophy, see chapter 6; and Niehues-Pröbsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 329–31.

59. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 207; *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft,* 1:390.

60. Foucault, *History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure,* 7. Originally published as *Histoire de la sexualité,* vol. 2, *L'usage des plaisirs,* 13.

Conclusion

1. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 16.

2. "Wo aber das komische mit dem moralischen Bewußtsein in einen ernsthaften Konflikt gerät und in einem solchen Fall der Witz die Moral verdrängt, da

entsteht unweigerlich Zynismus." Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes,* 244.

3. *NR* 76; Tancock 96.

4. Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" Translated by James Schmidt. In Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?* 58–64, 59–60.

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