Introduction

The entry on *error* in the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot and D'Alembert's great compendium of Enlightenment knowledge, presents the reader with a stern warning: it is futile to try to defeat error by taking on its numerous and diverse forms. Even if such a Herculean feat could be accomplished, new errors would never cease to emerge, for the mind (*l'esprit*) is wont to exchange one error for another, just as a sick man who recovers from one illness is often prone to contract a new one. The only way to eradicate error once and for all is to "retrace it to its source and to stem it at its point of origination [*remonter à leur source même et la tarir*]." What the entry claims to find as the first cause at this site of origination is the following:

> In tracing our errors to the origin that I have just indicated, we enclose
> them within a single cause. If our passions give us cause to err [*occasionnent
> des erreurs*], it is because they misuse a vague principle, a metaphorical ex-
> pression, or an equivocal term, applying them to allow ourselves to deduce
> an opinion that is flattering to ourselves. Therefore, if we fool ourselves,
> then these vague principles, metaphors, and equivocations are causes that
> are anterior to our passions. Consequently, renouncing this empty language
> [*ce vain langage*] would suffice to dissipate all the artifice of error.[1]

The forms into which error can evolve might be legion, but its elimination must begin with dispelling the confusion caused by vague understanding, ambiguous signs, and metaphor. This work can, however, only be initiated by an act of willing sacrifice: one must be ready to renounce the "empty language" of error.

The *Encyclopédie* directs the reader who wishes to know more about error to Condillac's *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, from which the entire entry is, in fact, taken almost verbatim. Condillac's work is an extended exploration of the entangled relationship between language and thought that supposedly lies at the origin of error itself. The idea that language, with its unreliability and potential for ambiguity, is responsible for the errors of thought had already been prominently formulated in Locke's 1690 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Due largely to energetic interlocutors such as Condillac, it became a recurrent theme in eighteenth-century philosophy. Like error itself, these discussions about the interpenetration of words and ideas took on many forms, but one important claim resonated throughout these debates: equivocation and metaphorical language, both stemming from the intrinsic possibility of one word meaning more than a single idea or thing, could only have deleterious effects on the clear and distinct thought that philosophy aims to establish.

The call for the enclosure of error's multiple forms "within a single cause" in order to eradicate it indicates another important co-implication in the eighteenth century, which was fascinated with the project of telling reliable histories about origins, trajectories, and destinations. To trace error back to a single origin is already to begin the work of clarification, because it allows us to perceive a unified starting point for the history of error, and to thereby reduce the multiplicity of error's forms to a coherent narrative about divergence, mutation, and escalation. To be able to narrate a genealogy (however convoluted and diverging) of a concept and to master it are, in other words, one and the same thing. Once sites of origin are located, development or historical movement can be described and narrated, whether it be about the genesis of ideas in the mind, the origin of language, the formation of subjectivity, or the establishment of proper criteria for moral and aesthetic judgment.

Much is at stake, therefore, in the attempt to retrace our steps to where we first began to err. Knowledge in the Enlightenment was often imagined as a journey, as David W. Bates notes in *Enlightenment Aberrations: Error and Revolution in France*, and Condillac's discussion of error could

certainly be read as an exemplary attempt to secure a starting point for the itinerary of thought itself, a place from which to begin a reliable narrative about knowledge and error. The problem, however, is that the site to which the word *error* returns us contains just the sort of linguistic equivocation that frustrates clarification: the Latin *errare* means both "to wander freely" and "to wander from the right path." The former meaning is neutral, and could be used to describe, for example, the movement of a person or animal. The second meaning is the pejorative one that became prevalent in English usage after the seventeenth century.[2] In the Romance languages and in German, the neutral meaning of error as mere "moving about" survived much longer, even though the connection to some sort of intellectual or moral aberration also prevails in current usage. An instructive example of the coexistence of error's two meanings is the ambiguity of the French *errant* that persisted into the eighteenth century: the *chevalier errant* (the knight-errant) was imagined in the medieval period as one who sets out courageously looking for adventure, and was therefore a positive figure, while the *juif errant* (the Wandering Jew) was seen as a perpetual exile straying from redemption and truth.[3]

How can we enclose error's diversity "within a single cause" when what lies at the root of error is a nonunity, an equivocation between what Bates calls "the merely accidental deviation" and "the more productive aberration that held out the promise of some future discovery" (xi)? This undecidability strikes at the hope for a productive itinerary of thought that would begin once the source is clarified. The difficulties introduced by error's originary ambiguity are perhaps even more radical than Bates's examples of the *chevalier errant* and the *juif errant* suggest: error might name two kinds of movement (aimless wandering and deviation from a given path), but it is not clear that the former is the less threatening and more productive of the two. For a model that relies on the clear distinction between truth and error, pure wandering without logic or purpose could represent a more serious challenge precisely on account of its nonsystematic and nonsystematizable character. A movement that can be clearly identified as deviation from a norm would, in fact, reinforce the stability of the norm through the implicit suggestion that deviation could be excluded or even rehabilitated. The difference that divides error at its origin does not, in other words, allow for a simple distinction between the productive and the nonproductive.

The tracing of error therefore cannot begin with a single stroke of disambiguation, from which would issue the possibility of describing clear lines of

development from a clarified origin.[4] To read error's movement in the eighteenth century as I propose to do would be to undertake a different kind of tracing, one that resembles neither genealogical explanation nor systematic definition, but rather the kind of infinitely laborious task that dismayed the *encyclopédistes*: an examination of multiple and repeated attempts at distinction that fail to foreclose entirely the possibility of new uncertainties and errors. The result will be neither an encyclopedic knowledge of error nor a conventional *history* of error. The figuration of knowledge as an itinerary assumes the coherence, systematicity, and productivity of movement, making it amenable to historical description, but this is precisely what error does not allow. Error shadows the history and the itinerary of thought at all times, establishing not a diametrically opposed but an *alternative* movement, constituted by the constant possibility that movement itself will be interrupted or undone through arrest, reversal, return, overflow, and other forms of nonsystematic wandering. To write a history of error would be to traverse the path of knowledge in order to arrive at the truth or meaning of error, but to do so one would have to first drastically reduce the full complexity and danger that error represents.

Although error names a fundamental uncertainty between random and directed movement (even in the form of clear deviation) that is subject to constant chiastic reversal, its tracing also cannot take the form of a dialectical description. An insistence on a strictly binary opposition between error and truth, coupled with an acknowledgment of error's boundless power to invert such oppositions, would only produce a story much like the one told by Adorno and Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Such a narrative is indeed remarkably effective as a critique of progressive knowledge, but it institutes a logic of inversion that is curiously static and totalizing in its iterability. A binary understanding of the difference between rationality and irrationality, knowledge and superstition, Enlightenment and myth, can only generate constant reversal around a single turning point. This again produces a narrative that ignores error's ability to unsettle even the very logic on which such dialectical reversals depend. While some of error's more obvious manifestations put it in direct opposition to truth, its most radical manifestations confound exactly the logic of such oppositions; among the many things that error names, in other words, is the unreliability of the very distinction between truth and error.

The texts discussed here will be drawn primarily from the literary, philosophical, and aesthetic writings of Britain and Germany in the eighteenth

century, a period during which the relationship between knowledge and various forms of error was interrogated with particular fervor. The writers that take on this problem seek to clarify and delineate the proper contours and itinerary of knowledge, and in order to do so, they suggest how to identify errant deviation and digression. They also, however, reveal error at work in some of the less systematic ways suggested above: as uncontrollable and uncontainable movement, as unpredictable convulsions in the machinery of knowledge production, as a troubling thirdness that undoes dialectical opposition and resolution, and as an originary and recidivist contamination. The aim of this study will be to trace the irresolvable tensions that constitute these texts: on the one hand, they make claims about a reliable production and distribution of knowledge about language, cognition, subjectivity, and value; and on the other, they reveal an alternative movement that does not merely oppose or reverse the first but generates the insuperable possibility of incoherence, corruption, contingency, and randomness.

Condillac's suggestion that language's danger is related to its metaphoricity indicates an important anxiety for the eighteenth century that will be explored in the chapters that follow. The frequency with which eloquence and figural speech were attacked in the period attests to the increased stakes in regulating language once its co-implication with thought had been established. If words are more than mere means for conveying ideas, if they interpose themselves already in the process by which ideas are formed, then the question of how to limit improper speech can no longer be confined to handbooks of oratorical practice; rather, it becomes the business of philosophy itself. Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke and Kant are often read as having excluded rhetoric from the field of philosophy, but their texts patently rely on the very same rhetorical practices that they denounce. Such an observation is facile, though, and leaves the complexities of the relationship between rhetoric, error, and philosophy unexamined. It would be more fruitful to consider exactly how rhetoric functions in these texts as a generator of both knowledge and risk, and how these authors attempt to regulate the risk of error through various representative and persuasive strategies.

The classical system of rhetoric claims, in fact, to be just such a system of error management. The Greek *schēma* and *tropos* and the Latin *figura* all designate some sort of deviation from a norm, conceived either as a movement of turning or a gesture of deliberate shaping. In this respect, they resemble error: as Quintilian points out in *Institutio oratoria*, the figure of speech "originates from the same sources as errors of language," because it begins

with a violation of the norms of language.[5] The figure thus functions like a body that has little grace when held upright but which "gives an impression of action and animation" when artfully posed through deliberate curvature or deviation (2.13.9). There is more at stake, however, than mere aesthetics, for this violation or departure from the norm also gives figure its power to "lend credibility to our arguments" and allows them to "steal their way secretly into the minds of the judges" (9.1.19), just as an expert swordsman need only incline his body slightly in order to "lure his opponent's weapons from their guard" and slip in for the kill (9.1.20).

Although figure's power stems from its errorlike curvature, there is a limit to the amount of deviation that a figure can sustain before it fails. Here, Quintilian lays down a general rule of thumb rather than specific prescriptions: a figure succeeds as long as it can be recuperated back into virtuous speech, but if it deviates too much, it will no longer simply resemble but actually become error. Each instance of virtuous speech that is cataloged in classical rhetoric is therefore usually accompanied by its alter-ego—a corresponding fault or vice.[6] In the words of Horace, *virtus est vitium fugere* (virtue is to escape vice). Virtue is not the mere absence of vice (or "error," which *vitium* also translates) but the active movement of recovery following an exposure to vice. Virtue is constituted, in other words, only in the approach toward and subsequent recovery from error. The economy that produces virtue begins as an approach toward vice, or one could say, the suggestion of a resemblance to error. At the last minute, though, once as much energy or profit as possible has been extracted from this resemblance, there is a subsequent recovery or withdrawal from danger. By exposing itself to the possibility of error but emerging unscathed, figural language is able to tap into a source of energy or power. From vice, we get virtue, and from error, profit. This is the central paradox at the heart of classical rhetoric: a system seemingly devoted to the regulation of proper and excellent speech turns out to be dependent on the improper or erroneous.

Quintilian gives this discussion of figure a final charming twist by noting that the statement *virtus est vitium fugere* is itself an example of an effective flirting with error. According to the guidelines of good Latin style, Horace has overburdened the copula by forcing it to serve as a link between a nominal construction ("virtue") and a verbal one ("to flee vice"). This is, strictly speaking, an infraction of the rules of classical Latin. Quintilian provides two alternative formulations that would be perfectly grammatical, but points out that Horace's figure, which itself approaches but finally withdraws from

linguistic error, is far more "vigorous" than either (9.3.10). A figure thus gains something important when it returns after being exposed to error: it is now able to refer to the very processes by which it is itself constituted as linguistic excellence. Because Horace's figure is like error but also somehow distinguishable from it, it can function as a sign that points to the passage from dangerous resemblance to safe difference. In this sense, every figure, regardless of its domain of semantic reference (that is, the actual semantic fields from which both the "literal" meaning as well as the "figurative" one are drawn), contains the potential to account for and reflect on its own genealogy, which is the passage from norm to deviation and back again. In other words, every figure points, to a certain extent, to its own figurality.

The kinds of error that will be discussed in this book, however, precipitate an uncertainty between the two things that error names: either a movement that can be directed and regulated by the difference between norm and deviation, origin and goal, or a movement that is aimless, wandering, and indeterminate. The classical account of figure and its relationship to error is ultimately a complex extension of the former sort of movement. Rather than simply showing that error is a departure from the norm of virtue, it demonstrates that deviation and the process by which it is resolved are precisely what constitute virtue. This still, however, assumes the predictability and manageability of error's movement from safety to risk and back again, which is exactly what the ambiguity that adheres to the word *error* puts into question. The possibility of error as a nonsystematic wandering instead of a clearly recognizable deviation creates, in other words, a radical suspension of any simple opposition between literal and figural, proper and improper—an opposition from which one can reap rhetorical profit. Its uncertainty contaminates even the economy by which *vitium* is converted into virtue, error into power, offering only the possibility of risk without a corresponding guarantee of recompense.

The rhetoric of error to which my title refers must therefore have to do with more than the persuasiveness of such regulatory models of conversion. My focus will instead be on the nonsystematic movement of error that I call *errance*, which includes contaminating reflux, treasonous desertion, unpredictable circulation, violent irruption, and other movements which place simple oppositions and coherent itineraries under erasure or suspension. The model of rhetorical analysis adopted here cannot simply assume systematicity or attenuate error in order to produce a cogent narrative; reading rhetorically will have to mean, simply put, more than indulging only in

risk that is destined to yield profit. Instead, it must entail the tracing of a
movement that could, in the end, turn out to be utterly incommensurate
to any model of conversion and empowerment. Such a mode of reading
seems to be suggested in Paul de Man's essay "Semiology and Rhetoric,"
which calls for moving beyond dialectical oppositions similar to the ones
discussed above, such as inside and outside, domestic and foreign, literal
and figural. In their place, de Man proposes the intriguing new coupling
of grammar and rhetoric. The former provides rules for combination and
transformations of syntactical units, and thus appears to be compatible with
logic and understanding, while the latter "radically suspends logic and opens
vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration."[7] This critical intervention
is itself, however, a risky one: it can only succeed if grammar and rhetoric do
not end up constituting yet another coherent and symmetrical opposition,
for that would merely reiterate the problems of the binary logic that they
supposedly undo. De Man's task is therefore to unsettle the simple difference
between the two without resolving them into an equally fallacious compat-
ibility or harmony.

   This is exactly what is attempted in the famous aporetic face-off that he
stages, with Archie Bunker and Yeats in one corner and Marcel Proust in
the other. De Man first shows, using the example of the rhetorical ques-
tion, that rhetorical reading disrupts the "authority of the meaning en-
gendered by the grammatical structure" (12) and makes it impossible to
decide if literal or figurative meaning prevails. Then, he demonstrates how
Proust's assertion of metaphor's mastery over metonymy ends up revealing
the power of "the mechanical, repetitive aspect of grammatical forms" to
bring about the "destruction of metaphor and of all rhetorical patterns
such as mimesis, paronomasia, or personification" (15–16). These readings,
both of which de Man calls "rhetorical," thus illustrate, respectively, the
rhetorization of grammar and the grammatization of rhetoric; de Man
seems to suggest a clear difference that could be described in terms of their
relationship to error:

> The former ended in indetermination, in a suspended uncertainty that was
> unable to choose between two modes of reading, whereas the latter seems to
> reach a truth, albeit by the negative road of exposing an error, a false pre-
> tense. After the rhetorical reading of the Proust passage, we can no longer
> believe the assertion made in this passage about the intrinsic metaphysical
> superiority of metaphor over metonymy. We seem to end up in a mood of
> negative assurance that is highly productive of critical discourse. (16)

If the point of rhetorical reading is to produce "negative assurance," then criticism would be tantamount to exposing rhetoric as error. De Man shows, however, that this second alternative, in which rhetoric is reduced to the rigors of grammar and to knowledge about error produced, could be further extended: the syntactical structure within which Proustian metaphor is given and which seems to show the superiority of grammar has, as its subject, "a voice whose relationship to this clause is again metaphorical" (18). The negative assurance of a grammatization of rhetoric is, in other words, itself rhetoricized to yield suspended ignorance.

What de Man describes is, one could say, *knowledge about error* turning out to be *itself in error*, but only if one remembers that error never names just one thing in such a description. In the first occurrence ("knowledge about error"), it indicates the kind of deviation that opposes itself to truth. In the second occurrence (the realization that this knowledge about error is itself "in error"), it indicates two possibilities: that this supposed knowledge stands in relation to "real" knowledge as error stands in relation to knowledge (once again, a deviation from the right path), but also, that this knowledge is set into perpetual errance, consigned to a ceaseless and aimless wandering that takes the form of suspension and infinite repetition or recursion. In the former case, the exposure of error in knowledge about error would resolve into negative assurance, while the latter would mean being able to hold on to suspended ignorance, at least until the next iteration of error's inevitable irruption. For de Man, this difficult choice corresponds to the doubleness of rhetoric: on one hand, it names a vertiginous opening up of meaning that is opposed to the univocity and rule-based structure of grammar, but on the other, it names the suspension of this very opposition itself.

To read the rhetoric of error in a set of texts therefore means two kinds of reading at once. The first is a reconstruction of the rhetorical strategies that such texts employ to produce the category of "error" and to allow for its containment or conversion into gain. The second is an examination of how error itself produces a vertigo-inducing suspension of the strategies revealed by the first reading. To conduct both of these readings simultaneously involves a close consideration of the thematics of these texts as well as their rhetorical registers, but the goal is not thereby to arrive at the knowledge of one's superiority over the other, or even to maintain a consistent opposition between the two. Each could function as a site of reliable knowledge from which the other is exposed as "error" in the sense of nontruth, but the

crossings and interruptions that take place continuously between them also generate a restless and nondirected potentiality that always carries this first possibility away toward the prospect of further errance.[8]

The names that appear in the title of the book—John Locke and Heinrich von Kleist—do not therefore designate an unambiguous starting point or a definitive ending. In fact, the chapter that opens this book with a reading of Locke's *Essay* will be about the impossibility of telling reliable beginnings apart from false starts, and the final chapter will explore a set of radical challenges to closure and conclusion. The chapters in between discuss some of the most significant twists and turns of error in such eighteenth-century authors as Leibniz, Horne Tooke, Coleridge, Adam Smith, Goethe, and Kant, but the aim of my readings is to show error's disruption of models of influence, borrowings, or continuity without reinvoking these as heuristic or critical tropes. While the selection of texts is taken mainly from the extraordinary volume of eighteenth-century literary and philosophical writings about error, the earliest and the latest publication dates of its primary sources (1690 and 1808) do not designate strict boundaries. Instead, these accounts of error are explored in relation to older texts such as the *Histories* of Herodotus and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and also in relation to more recent ones drawn from cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis, and contemporary postcolonial studies. "From Locke to Kleist" names, in other words, a course of reading that is itself open to the risk of a certain wandering or straying that mimics rather than explicates the movement of error.

I begin with a reading of Locke's *Essay* and its controversial claims about the relationship between language and thought. Although Locke recognizes the impossibility of extricating language and its inherent unreliability from the origination of ideas in the mind, he insists that the epistemological consequences of language's potential for error are minor. The *Essay* attempts to sustain this difficult claim through a complex network of figures, centered on the distinction between origins and mere mechanisms of distribution, or as Locke vividly puts it, between fountains and pipes. A reading of his remarks on language, gold, and exchange in the *Essay* and in some of his pamphlets on money reveals, however, that this figural logic is constantly confronted with the threat of loss and contamination, causing both a destabilizing regression or corruption of origins and an exposure to hazardous distribution that cannot be regulated. The necessary dependence of this model on exchange and circulation mirrors a similar reliance in language and money: Locke recognizes that value or meaning is constituted

only in such unsafe activities, and that the same mechanisms that make linguistic and monetary value possible also open them up to error, corruption, and devaluation.

Chapter Two turns to the continuation of Locke's work on language and thought by G. W. Leibniz and John Horne Tooke, who attempt to come up with principles for a rigorous and scientific study of etymology. They assert that it is not philosophy that must clarify language, but rather it is a rigorous study of language that must correct philosophy's errors and guide it to truth. Once freed from its slavish subservience to the aim of communicating thought as clearly as possible, language can finally reveal its own structure and systematicity. The success of this new etymological system is therefore predicated upon its ability to formulate reliable principles that can describe the diachronic movement of language as a series of predictable transformations and turns. The very principles that Leibniz and Tooke identify turn out, however, to be designators for the irresolvable ambivalence of error, revealing both the possibility of systematization and the constant undercutting of this possibility through unpredictable errance. The chapter concludes with a reading of "Frost at Midnight" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was fascinated with the promise of eighteenth-century etymology. Rather than celebrating the union between mind and language, the poem dramatizes the unbridgeable gap between movements of thought and movements of word, and shows how errant movement undoes the work of animation, making vitalism indistinguishable from death. The poem's impasse will be read alongside an entry from Coleridge's notebook, in which he reflects on one of Tooke's more disturbing etymologies.

Chapter Three examines the "as if" prescription contained in the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant and its relation to what he calls the "error of subreption." Although resemblance is recognized by Kant as a dangerous source of confusion for reason, it is nonetheless a necessary precondition of thought, and the limits of its effects must be regulated with care. This makes judgment, which necessarily involves more than one faculty, a particularly precarious exercise: transcendental ideas such as freedom, for example, have no analogues in nature, but in judgment, we are compelled to use an "as if" that has, strictly speaking, no ground. The impossible analogy that underpins the so-called regulative use of transcendental ideas is, however, constantly threatening to make it slip into error. I examine the unstable distinction between analogy and error in Kant's philosophy through a discussion of Pheng Cheah's reading in *Spectral Nationality* of the organismic

metaphor for the political body. Cheah's analysis relies on the reversibility of the gift-economy that obtains between reason and nature in Kant, but he does not take into account the fact that what become transferred in the putative acts of giving are analogy and its double, error. The gift-economy itself is thus opened up not just to reversal but also to sheer impossibility, as indicated in Kant's comments about heautonomy. To ignore this impossibility is to generate a series of lurid specters of alterity, when what Kant's text is haunted by is itself—that is to say, error as reason's ghostly double. I end the discussion with a parallel reading of Jacques Derrida's remarks on the exemplarity of literature and Kant's use of literary examples in the *Critique of Judgment*.

The question of how literature intervenes in the debates about language and thought is explored further in the final two chapters. Chapter Four considers the significance of error in Goethe's paradigmatic novel of subject-formation, *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*. One of the novel's claims about *Bildung* is that knowledge is arrived at when error cancels itself out through further error. The job of both teacher and pupil would then be to let error run its course and complete its work of self-correction. I connect this understanding of error with Aristotle's concept of the virtuous middle and its influence on Adam Smith's remarks on sympathy. The theatricality of Smith's moral sentiments points to two forms of the middle—moderation and mediality—that work in harmony to produce the possibility of sympathy. His remarks on fashion and utility as deleterious influences on judgment reveal, however, that the middle is also associated with a certain mechanistic efficacy and momentum that disrupts the relationship between means and ends, particular and general. This fundamental unreliability of the middle is also at work in Goethe's novel, where it challenges the self-correcting logic of error and produces a chain of alternative movements in the text. I explore this problem by describing two forms of the middle in the novel, one represented by the figure of the physician and the other by the circulation of ribbons throughout the story. The failure of Wilhelm's *Bildung* is not, I argue, the result of his failure to fulfill the demands of a pedagogical program, but rather the product of an internal contradiction in the model that guarantees the canceling out of error through further errance.

Chapter Five deals with an unlikely pairing of texts—the *Histories* of Herodotus and the tragedy *Penthesilea* by Heinrich von Kleist—in order to examine how their representation of the misspeaking Amazon reveals error's ability to render all pairings unlikely. The failed figure called "so-

lecism" that Herodotus and Kleist attribute to the Amazon disrupts various forms of coming-together that produce union, meaning, and closure. It also names the possibility of an insistent return of originary violence and thus undermines the coherence of hermeneutic and political models that depend on the unilateral movement from origin to destination. Solecism thus stages the catastrophic failure of the rhetorical resolution of tension claimed by writers such as Quintilian, and generates the possibility of uncontainable and unpredictable errance. This reading concludes with a return to something that Leibniz claimed as a reliable marker in the reconstruction of language's history: the names of rivers. The origin narratives offered by Herodotus and Kleist share the name *Tanaïs*, which simultaneously names and fails to name a river, and this unreliability indicates the impossibility of reducing errance to a coherent fluvial course.

In the Conclusion, the book turns to some remarks about Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*, where we find a system for dirt's neutralization and its conversion into symbolic power. The workings of this system parallel those of a recuperative rhetoric of error, but the examination of error undertaken in the chapters described above makes it unclear that such a mechanism can ever prevent the repeated irruption of that which is to be neutralized. The book closes with a discussion of how an indelible dirtiness persists in the texts of Herodotus and Kleist, and suggests a similar anxiety about hygiene and waste disposal in the text discussed in the opening chapter, Locke's *Essay*.