



## Hayden White

AN ACADEMIC TEACHER

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According to Jean-François Lyotard, we live in a postmodern era characterized by the collapse of “grand narratives,” associated not only with a crisis of belief in truth and a crisis of metaphysics, but also with a crisis of the university. In his *Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard makes much of the commercialization of knowledge, pointing out that in the postmodern era the main factors which legitimate knowledge are its efficiency and usefulness. The goal of research is “not to find truth, but to augment power.” The cognitive function of science is thus inseparable from its socio-political function. Under the control of those who manage its financial resources, the role of the university changes: it is expected to produce competent researchers, not to generate ideals.<sup>1</sup>

Many historians claim that the declared crisis of history is of an institutional or technical rather than epistemological character. The arguments they use to support this claim are similar to Lyotard’s: changes in the ways of financing institutions of higher education; the reduced autonomy of universities, controlled by authorities that promote particular kinds of research and provide funds for it; the commercialization of historical science (the heritage industry; the past as an object of trade which can be purchased and sold); the reduced number of history classes in elementary and high schools (the supposed uselessness of the humanities; the tendency toward specialized education); fewer funds allocated for education; the mass character of higher education (producing job seekers

with university degrees; college studies as a means of preventing unemployment among young people); the deteriorating quality of education; the lessened status of historians, who used to be widely respected intellectuals and have become experts invited to television quiz shows and talk shows; the decreasing number of young people employed in historical institutions, which leads to gerontocracy, etc. While this approach to the crisis of history treats epistemological crisis as an effect of institutional crisis, the fact is that the two should be considered together.<sup>2</sup>

This essay does not discuss Hayden White's work in the context of the epistemological crisis of history, with which he is often associated. Instead, it draws attention to the crisis of the university and White's reactions to situations in which this crisis has manifested itself. It will focus on an issue rarely addressed in scholarly essays on White: the ways in which his style and engagement as a teacher and mentor embody a desirable model of intellectual work.

### The Stanford Incident

On April 6, 2006, Stanford University organized a discussion of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's book *The Production of Presence*.<sup>3</sup> Hayden White, Gumbrecht's longtime friend and department colleague, was among the participants (as was the author of this essay). Instead of a debate, however, the meeting proceeded in a series of lavish compliments on Gumbrecht's book. Having listened for almost two hours, White spoke up angrily, harshly criticizing not so much the book itself as the uncritical and congratulatory tone of the whole event. Over the next few days White and Gumbrecht exchanged many e-mails. In a message of April 7, 2007, White wrote:

My tone? Yes, irritated. But not so much with you as with the atmosphere of these kinds of events—advertised as discussions—which are so genteel and so self-congratulatory and so self-satisfied that there is no room or time for self-reflection and serious thinking. . . . If these kinds of occasions were intended to be serious intellectual events, they would not be regulated so rigorously, would be more open-ended, and would go on for as long as anyone wanted to speak.<sup>4</sup>

This incident can serve as a starting point for reflection on Hayden White's integrity as an academic teacher. His intervention was a response to the

violation of the idea of serious academic debate. His sense of responsibility for the education of undergraduate and graduate students, who attended the event in large numbers, prompted him to rebuke a scholar as distinguished as Gumbrecht, whom he had often treated with a fatherly sort of care. It was a disappointed mentor's reaction to the behavior of a disciple who betrayed his teachings.

Everyone who has attended White's seminars and lectures knows that White loves teaching and thinks of himself first and foremost as a teacher whose principal aim is to provide a model of a certain kind of intellectual work, not produce disciples who promote his own views. White has not created his own school and has never aspired to do so; however, he played a major role in creating the History of Consciousness program at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), which was a place for interdisciplinary, critical, and "rebellious" work.

The History of Consciousness program was founded in the mid-1960s at UCSC by Page Smith, Maurice Natanson, and Albert Hofstadter. Hayden White was the first full-time appointee in the program, in 1978, charged with the task of reorganizing and sustaining it. He was supposed to do this alone, but appointed James Clifford, then an instructor in history at Harvard. With the aid of the new dean of humanities, Helene Moglen, White expanded the department, adding two people in women's studies—Donna Haraway and Teresa de Lauretis—and two scholars from other departments—Barbara Epstein and Gary Lease. Before White left the program (1995), two more were added to the faculty: Victor Burgin in cinema and Angela Davis in critical studies. They expanded the student base and embarked on a program of recruiting ethnic minorities. By the late 1980s, HistCon had produced more ethnic minority PhDs in the humanities than all the other campuses of the UC system combined. Thus, as I observed above, there is no "school of Hayden White" because the knowledge he disseminates is supposed to liberate his students as co-workers rather than restrain them. White does not want his students to absorb and apply his theories but to develop their own approaches and modes of expression. HistCon is a proof of this attitude. White did not hire his followers or former students, but rather a set of strong people who shared a fierce commitment to interdisciplinary work and to a socially and politically engaged academy, but who had various visions and priorities and were definitely not afraid to defend their differences.

Hayden White has many independent disciples who continue and

extend his mode of studying history and also, more importantly, his way of thinking about people and the world, as well as his way of teaching. Above all, White teaches his students how to rebel, so that in the future they can create a world in which human beings can be themselves. White approaches education as the practice of freedom.<sup>5</sup>

For White, “to be a historian is not a choice of career; it is an existential choice.”<sup>6</sup> In his own case, this choice has determined his ethical approach as well as his attitude toward teaching. White does not only want to study the past. He wants to shape the future by educating new generations of scholars. His preferred audience is not made up of other professors, but of students, since, as White often says, students are still open to teaching and their views are not completely shaped, while mature scholars are mainly preoccupied with getting others to accept their views. Teaching students to be responsible for their existential choices and to respect other people, to act professionally and engage in critical but friendly debates, are White’s main goals in his pedagogical work. Thanks to his teaching philosophy, those of us who pride ourselves on being his disciples see White not only as a professor but also as mentor, friend, and advisor. White’s pedagogical talent may be an aspect of his personality, but it is also a product of his own education. He was fortunate to have an excellent teacher.

### William J. Bossenbrook as a Model Mentor

Hayden White went to college at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. It was there in the late 1940s that he met the person who exerted an immense influence on his way of thinking: William J. Bossenbrook, professor of history. In a way, Bossenbrook created Hayden White.

Arthur C. Danto, who attended Wayne University at the same time as White, admits that his own interest in history was inspired by Bossenbrook, “a powerful and visionary teacher.” Danto mainly remembers Bossenbrook’s courses in medieval history and the Renaissance, which he found “tremendously exciting”:

Bossenbrook read very widely in philosophy, and brought his reading to bear on the subject at hand. The immediate post-war years brought Existentialism to America, and I found that philosophy very compelling, especially in the way

Bossenbrook used it to illuminate the past. His classes are impossible to describe, but one felt that nothing was irrelevant, and that everything he saw somehow connected with everything else. . . . He was really like some sort of shaman.<sup>7</sup>

In his preface to the *Festschrift* for Bossenbrook, White expressed gratitude and admiration for his mentor. “We saw him as Olympian,” White wrote. “He bewitched us.”<sup>8</sup> The charismatic power of Bossenbrook’s intellect allowed him to liberate students from conventional approaches to history as well as shape their thinking. He taught “wisdom” rather than “information.” Indeed, Hayden White’s research interests show the fundamental influence of his mentor. White’s understanding of history and his interest in particular thinkers are largely Bossenbrook’s heritage.

White came to share Bossenbrook’s interest in the philosophy of history and high regard for Kant, Hegel, Toynbee, Spengler, Collingwood, and Croce. He also came to share Bossenbrook’s appreciation for the great “reflective” historians like Huizinga and Burckhardt. Moreover, as Giorgio Tagliacozzo observes, White was “Vichianized” by Bossenbrook, himself a devotee of Vico. White’s indebtedness to his charismatic teacher is evident in his early writings, which address such issues as the rationale for the study of history, history’s social function, its status as a discipline and its relation to other disciplines, aspects of intellectual history and different theories of the historical process, the changing concept of history, and intellectual rebellions against positivistic notions of history, as well as specific historical problems such as the crisis of Western culture and its secularization, the anthropocentric or humanistic understanding of the world. Finally, there are the ethical issues, such as choice and freedom. Those interests demonstrate how much of White’s entire intellectual formation is owed to Bossenbrook. But Bossenbrook also influenced White’s teaching style.

Bossenbrook was *sans pareil* as a teacher. I never met anyone else like him. But his was a style that was openly and even aggressively “masculinist,” even “macho.” As Danto said, he was like a wizard who had the capacity to conjure up ideas as if they were living presences. He strode the lecture room, moving amongst the students, sometimes laying a hand on a shoulder to emphasize a point, using the blackboard as a vast canvas on which a whole dialectic unfolded before our very eyes. One was exhausted after the two-hour sessions he typically held. How could one—especially a young male—not wish to emulate him?<sup>9</sup>

“[Bossenbrook] always insisted that the principal aim of the college teacher of history was to help prepare young people to come to grips with the world of affairs, not to populate the globe with scholars,” White wrote.<sup>10</sup> Each of White’s students, including myself, can certainly say the same about White’s own idea and practice of teaching.

But there was another influence on White that was equally strong: that of certain feminists whom he encountered on the West Coast teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of California, Santa Cruz, from 1978 to 1996. As White recollects:

My first classes at UCSC were attended by three remarkable women who have subsequently become well known in historiography and critical history: Susan Foster, Sharon Traweek, and Chela Sandoval. I am honored that all three of these remarkably talented women have publicly cited me as one of their mentors. But they taught me much more than I taught them about tone, style, mood, and tact in the classroom situation. Perhaps they were unaware of the changes wrought in my sense of my own pedagogical technique by their gentle coaching of my masculinist impulses into something more responsible to difference than they had formerly been. And of course my wife, Margaret Brose, herself a great teacher of Dante, has constantly over our thirty-some years of marriage been indefatigable, patient, and loving in her efforts to curb my congenital narcissism and tendency to go for effect rather than substance in public performance. Speaking of performance, I believe that teaching in the humanities has to be something more akin to acting a role than to “communication” of a content. It goes without saying, that the acting has to be “authentic” rather than “fake” and the teacher subordinated to the “role” rather than to his or her own ego-needs or *amour propre*. After all, a teacher is, in the final analysis, a medium rather than a message incarnated.<sup>11</sup>

Just as Bossenbrook “bewitched” White, White has “bewitched” many of his students. When I attended his seminars as a Fulbright fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1995–1996, I was seeking, more or less consciously, an alternative to the Communist model of school as factory, where the teacher is a technician producing submissive citizens. I was looking for a professor who would continue the work of my previous teachers, who in the 1970s and 1980s were involved in the Solidarity movement and taught me to rebel against the repressive system. In Hayden White, who teaches and supports rebellion and who attempts to liberate the minds of his students rather than subjugating them, I saw an embodiment of the familiar model of rebel teacher, faithful to himself

and the idea of education, and not to the school encapsulating the Althusserian “ideological state apparatus.”

Back in the mid-1990s, just as today, I believed that the creation of a new society—which is the task of the young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe—must be founded upon the education of free, responsible, and open-minded individuals whose sense of identity involves a critical approach to reality rather than passive submission to the mind-controlling state apparatus. I thus joined those intellectuals who criticized the idea of the university as an institution producing graduates eager to acquiesce to the demands of authority. I think that today’s crisis of the university reveals the need for “new teachers.” Thus, it is the academic education of students, some of whom will become teachers, and of academic teachers themselves that should be debated. If a field is to be revolutionized, those who want to revolutionize it should first rethink and revise their own values. “Novelty” should not refer to the object that is expected to produce (the effect of) novelty, such as a change of political system, a change of government, or any other change of context. Rather, “novelty” should apply to the subject who is talking about it. In other words, for the university to be renewed and reinvigorated, we need a new kind of academic teacher, teachers who can become models for those who will later create the new university. In his work as a professor, Hayden White presents an example for those who care about the future of the university as an institution that both conducts research and educates the younger generation.

### The Pedagogical Body as “Docile Body”

In his *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault argues that power and knowledge are inseparably connected: “Power produces knowledge.”<sup>12</sup> Foucault emphasizes the fundamental importance of the power/knowledge dyad to the development of individual subjectivity and the definition of the limits and conditions of cognition. The power/knowledge relation also affects bodies, both biological and institutional. As Foucault argues,

The body is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. . . . [T]he body is invested with

relations of power and domination; . . . the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.<sup>13</sup>

The history of the last few decades has demonstrated that the pedagogical body at different levels of education is a “docile body,” a body that can easily be trained to adopt certain behaviors. In the course of the current debate about educational reform, it would be worthwhile to examine the weak points of this “body,” in which power and knowledge intersect. Perhaps the very mode of the debate about reform demonstrates its control by the structures of power. Education is a field controlled by the state, and unless we become aware of those relations, we will not be able to formulate the goals of the “renewed university.”

Poland is now undergoing the process of corporatization and the difficult social accommodation to capitalism. Drawing upon Foucault, Stephen J. Ball observes that in education, corporatization manifests itself in the “industrialization” of schools and universities. Governed by managers who follow the “efficiency imperative,” schools and universities induce their technician teachers to produce “submissive and well-trained” bodies of professionals. Industrial models are adopted in education (management, training, and evaluation of personnel). Management itself is a mode of power. “Management,” Ball writes, “is also an imperialistic discourse. . . . The language of management deploys rationality and efficiency to promote control.”<sup>14</sup>

Of course, it is impossible for Poland to bypass capitalism, but Polish people are fortunate to be able to learn about its dangers from the experience of those countries that have a long history of capitalism. In the debate about “new schooling,” it would be worthwhile to seek less limiting alternatives. In the following part of this essay I propose one such alternative as I suggest a different way of thinking and talking about the renewed university, the academic teacher, the student, and learning. Such an alternative discourse would use “live metaphors” and would have a different goal and point of reference than the modern conception of the world and the human being, governed as it is by the technological metaphors of mechanism, machine, objectification, and management, whose values are violence, control, and manipulation.



### The Liminal Phase, or the Pedagogical Body as a Close-Knit/Open Body: *Communitas*

The phase of social life which Poland has been undergoing for almost two decades can be described as liminal: it is a transformation, the passage from one system to another. The concept of liminality, which the U.S. anthropologist Victor Turner borrowed from Arnold van Gennep's theory of rites of passage (*rites de passage*), refers to the middle stage of those rites. It occurs between the preliminary and postliminal phases, which are marked, respectively, by a rite of exclusion (for example, a symbolic death) and a rite of inclusion (a symbolic rebirth). Turner emphasizes the importance of the liminal state to individual development, arguing that it is a state of the individual's ontological transformation related to a change in his/her gender or social role: maturity entails a higher social status. Liminality, which Turner also describes as a "betwixt and between," is a positive phase, a phase when the old structure is reevaluated and its elements form a new pattern. Turner then applied those observations to social life at large.

The liminal phase of social life is marked by the appearance of *communitates*. They are opposed to structures, defined by Turner as a system of hierarchical positions in which individuals are important to the system insofar as they play the role assigned to them by those in power, in other words, insofar as they become personae in the narrative of power. Structure thus corresponds to the culture of the mask, and in the context of this essay can be related to the model of the university as a factory or company. In contrast, *communitas* is a certain utopia, a renewed university which individuals and communities should strive to bring into being. Turner writes:

[Communitas represents] the desire for a total, unmediated relationship between person and person, a relationship which nevertheless does not submerge one in the other but safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonness. Communitas does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion.<sup>15</sup>

In relation to structure, *communitas*, which arises in the liminal phase, is an antistructure, a body whose freshness, vigor, and spontaneity threaten

the existing order. But *communitas* is actually a positive force, an opportunity for the old, stagnant structure to be reinvigorated. The phase of *communitas* is a transitional, liminal phase that exists between one structure and another. It is a time of chaos, opening, and transgression, a time of new ideas, new birth, entering a new world and creating it. *Communitas* and liminality provide favorable conditions for the emergence of new conceptual archetypes, new root metaphors, and new paradigms.

People involved in the life of a structure are absorbed in playing their roles, while the repressive truth of the authority they have to obey forestalls speculation and free intellectual play, enforcing movement within binary oppositions. By contrast, the liminal state encourages creativity and uses masks only for the purpose of dialogue with an archetype (Turner speaks of “the liberating masks of liminal masquerade”). *Communitas* is related to spontaneity and freedom, whereas structure involves duty and law. In contrast to the culture of the mask, *communitas* is a culture of the face, a culture which promotes self-creation and authenticity, rejecting games, labeling, and structural segregation, and which expresses itself through simplicity, sincerity, and friendliness. Relationships within a *communitas* are not structural or institutional, but existential.

Liminality and the emergence of *communitas* (anti-structure) would be a desirable state for the old educational system (structure), a state that would prepare the ground for the appearance of new teachers (anti-teachers). However, the utopian hope for a *communitas* of teachers following an idealist vocation is only a first step toward “novelty.”

In a neophyte’s experience, the liminal state involves a duality: something is neither this nor that, it is both this and that; someone is no longer a boy and not yet a man. The liminal state describes an individual at a transitional stage, which Turner terms “a transitional being” or “a liminal persona.” The rites of passage related to the liminal phase are important for the present argument as rites of identity, which emerges through dialogue with an archetype. The liminal phase involves a peculiar symbolism since a person in the process of metamorphosis is difficult to classify. Neither alive nor dead (zombie), neither male nor female (androgynous), this person has a dual nature. The archetypes defining a neophyte are therefore hybrid beings. Liminality is the realm of monsters. Monsters, as Turner argues, are invented in order to teach neophytes how to recognize different elements of their culture and understand them in

ways adopted by this culture.<sup>16</sup> Monsters help develop critical thinking and distance toward one's own culture because they inspire reflection about those elements of a culture that were previously regarded as natural. As Turner argues, "One classical prototype of this revealed duality is the centaur Chiron, half wise old man, half stallion, who in his mountain cavern—epitomizing outsiderhood and liminality—instructed, even initiated, the adolescent sons of Achaean kings and princes, who would later occupy leading positions in the social and political structure of Hellas. Human wisdom and animal force meet in this liminal figure, who is both horse and man."<sup>17</sup>

I believe that the mythical figure of Chiron can serve as an alternative to the owl, a traditional symbol for education. The owl as symbol of wisdom has become a dead metaphor of education for two reasons: firstly, the modern school-as-factory has little relation to wisdom, and secondly, the owl represents solitude, passivity, boredom, secular teaching, rational knowledge, homeliness, sorrow, and melancholia, as well as darkness and the demon. In addition, the owl is believed to presage death. It is thus an appropriate symbol for the old kind of school, which stifles creativity and imposes the norm, but is inappropriate for the new kind. Chiron can become the new archetype that shapes the student's individual subjectivity through dialogue, as well as an archetype of the desired attitude of the academic teacher. The self can be defined through a set of symbols in the course of the neophyte disciple's dialogue with the archetype represented by the teacher. In the final stage of initiation (the doctoral defense as a sign of intellectual maturity), as the student puts on the mask of a monster, s/he acquires the monster's features and becomes the monster.

### Chiron as an Archetype of Mentor/Sage

Chiron (Gk. Χείρων, Lat. *Cheiron*) was the divine centaur: half man, half horse, the son of Philyra (daughter of Okeanos) and Kronos, who, surprised by Rhea, changed into a stallion and fled, leaving his semen in the nymph's womb. He was the only centaur to have the status of a god and hence immortality, and the only one to have a family. Unlike the other centaurs, who were represented as wild, violent, cruel, and intemperate, Chiron was kind and restrained, and, most importantly, wise, knowledgeable, and just. He was a prophet as well as an accomplished

healer, warrior, hunter (specializing in archery), practical moralist, and musician. Greek gods and heroes left their children in his care, asking him to raise and teach them. Chiron helped the children discover their destiny and develop their potential, which became their future strength. His disciples included Achilles (Chiron's foster son), Asclepius, Jason, Heracles, Aeneas, and Odysseus. It was Heracles, Chiron's beloved disciple and friend, who accidentally shot him in the knee with a poisoned arrow. Chiron prepared a medicine to heal the wound, but it could not serve as an antidote for the poison of the Hydra's blood. Because he was immortal, he suffered in his cave, doomed to eternal agony.<sup>18</sup> However, Heracles learned about Prometheus's curse, which was to be lifted when an immortal gave Prometheus his eternal life. Using Heracles as messenger, Chiron transferred his immortality to Prometheus and died. Zeus placed him in the sky as the constellation of Sagittarius. He can be seen there as a centaur archer preparing to shoot.<sup>19</sup>

As an archetype, Chiron combines animality (intuition, the unconscious) with humanity (reason, consciousness). He manifests the desired fusion of the human and animal worlds. He also symbolizes the dichotomies of barbarism/civilization, body/spirit, physical strength/intellectual power, passion/rationality, natural law/human law, violence/kindness, all of which refer to the fundamental opposition of nature and culture. Like any other hybrid, the centaur tests the liminality of the oppositions, demonstrating the liminality of opposites and intimating ways of transcending them. As neither man nor horse, he is the "liminal persona" Turner describes. Chiron transcends the limitations of his species and is thus a symbol of transgression: the process that is necessary for the development of a culture at the liminal stage. At the same time, Chiron symbolizes problems with self-realization because his difference alienates him from the other centaurs.

Chiron is also a monster. In the context of this argument, a monster, especially in hybrid form, is a positive phenomenon, a dialectical "other." The symbolic "return of monsters" resembles the Freudian "return of the repressed," revealing our fears, hopes, and desires, and shows the neurotic condition of contemporary culture, which addresses questions of its identity, tolerance, and openness to visitors from its margins. Monstrosity thus becomes a kind of cultural discourse where the hybrid refers us to the archetypal past, and points toward the future it heralds.<sup>20</sup>

Combining human wisdom with animal strength, the centaur is an ideal figure to inspire abstract thinking about the standards of normalcy and the boundaries between the opposite qualities he embodies. Chiron taught heroes how to attain a multilevel (hybrid) personality and how to transcend and exploit the limits of duality effectively. His way of teaching emphasized the integrated physical, spiritual, ethical, and intellectual development of his students, this integration being the only way for the hero to recognize his true nature, his destiny, and the meaning of his life. Chiron was a teacher, healer, sage, and prophet. He can be considered an archetype of the mentor, guru, and leader.<sup>21</sup>

### Conclusion

Referring to the liminal phase in which the Polish society has found itself, I seek “new” archetypes and fresh metaphors which could help us change our way of thinking, create a new discourse, and speak differently when talking about the rebirth of the university and the desired model of academic teacher. I assume that there are academics interested in finding an alternative to the university-as-factory paradigm, that we are aware of how education is entangled in politics (power), and hence, that many of us sympathize with “rebellion”: we do not want to be the kind of teachers the state tries to make us, as it applies a variety of instruments of control (low education subsidies, low teacher salaries, low social status of teachers, high enrollment limits imposed on many schools and colleges, very large classes, etc.). We do not want to become office workers in the service of the state: we want to be faithful to ourselves and our institutions. We want our subjectivities and those of our students to be constituted through active choice rather than passive acceptance, however convenient the latter would be. We are unwilling to think about the pedagogical body as a docile, controlled, objectified body. We prefer to think of it as a “close-knit/open body,” a self-constituting, subjective body, a community. We realize that by shaping the views of the younger generation, the teacher is shaping the future.

Of course, I am aware of my idealism and the utopian character of this project. However, I believe that the debate about college education needs a different language, a different discourse, and different symbols. Perhaps it is worth thinking again about education not as the produc-

tion of specialists but as an initiation rite which should bring about the metamorphosis of the individual. An examination could be imagined not as a test of knowledge and exercise of power but as a step toward finding one's own self. It depends on us whether the teacher will be a technician or a mentor and whether the student will be a small wheel in a machine or a neophyte. Every teacher has a choice, as implied by the very word *education*. The Latin *educare* means to feed and cultivate, but also to take care, to bring up. It is a choice between the university as factory and the university as "Chiron's cave." However, the anagram of the word *monster* is *mentors*, the synonym of pedagogues, caregivers, and wise advisors.

Many of us who were fortunate to work with Hayden White find ourselves in a "Chiron's cave" having long face-to-face discussions that begin with intellectual matters and end with existential problems. White does not fit the model of an ideal mentor such as Socrates, who always wins in his arguments with others, whom he purports or pretends to treat as equals but whom he always "reduces" to something less than fully mature and free. Never too tired to listen, never impatient with our questions, sensitive to various forms of oppression, White taught us how to say "no." However, Hayden White himself is critical of his pedagogical skills. He said: "I have had many failures as a teacher. I have not always succeeded in conforming to my own ideal of what a great teacher should be and do. I have alienated students and, inadvertently, to be sure, hurt some of them. It turns out that teaching is no more of a science than medicine, and even less of an art."<sup>22</sup> Thus, if we follow in Hayden White's footsteps, adopting his way of teaching and attitude toward students, we must realize that the possibility of becoming a mentor like him involves the danger of becoming a monster.

## Notes

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 46–53.

2. Cf. James Vernon, "Thoughts on the Present 'Crisis of History' in Britain," *Reviews in History*, November 1999, <http://www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Whatishistory/vernon.html>. Similar questions are addressed by Gérard Noiriel in his *Sur la "crise" de l'histoire* (Paris: Belin, 1996).

3. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

4. E-mail message from Hayden White to Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, April 7, 2006. The incident of April 6 echoed far and wide, not only among Stanford intellectuals. One thread of the White-Gumbrecht debate, concerning Gumbrecht's book *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*, which White criticized, was published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Gumbrecht's book describes sports as an aesthetic experience, while White objects to the commercialization of college sports. See "The Place and Value of College Sports: 2 Views": Hayden White, "They Have Betrayed Their Educational Purpose," and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "They Have a Powerful Aesthetic Appeal," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52, no. 42 (2006): B10.

5. Cf. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

6. Ewa Domańska's notes from Hayden White's course Rhetoric/Culture/Society, University of California at Berkeley, September 19, 1995.

7. Ewa Domańska, "An Interview with Arthur C. Danto," in *Encounters: Philosophy of History After Postmodernism*, ed. Ewa Domańska (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 166.

8. Hayden White, preface to *The Uses of History: Essays in Intellectual and Social History*, ed. Hayden V. White, with a foreword by Alfred H. Kelly (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968), 10.

9. Hayden White, interview by Ewa Domańska, April 5, 2007. Authorized by Hayden White.

10. White, *The Uses of History*, 9.

11. White, interview.

12. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 27.

13. *Ibid.*, 25–26.

14. Stephen J. Ball, "Management as Moral Technology: A Luddite Analysis," in *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*, ed. Stephen J. Ball (London: Routledge, 1990), 157. On the "corporatization" and "managerialism" of universities, see also: Ian Curry and Janice Newson, eds., *Universities and Globalization. Critical Perspectives* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998); and Nicholas C. Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres, eds., *Globalization and Education. Critical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

15. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 274.

16. Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 105.

17. *Ibid.*, 253.

18. This is why Chiron is an archetype of the wounded healer who wants to heal his wounds and finds a remedy that cannot help him but will help others.

19. On centaurs and Chiron, see Hesiod's *Theogony* and Homer's *The Iliad* (6.219; 11.832; 26.143; 19.391). See also Page duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987); Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths: Complete Edition* (London: Penguin, 1993); Judith J. Kollman, "The Centaur," in *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures*, ed. Malcolm South (New York: Greenwood, 1987); Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, "The Centaur: Its History and Meaning in Human Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture* 27, no. 4 (1994).

20. I refer to Derrida's observation that the future can only herald and present itself as monstrosity. In an interview, Derrida said that the monster (hybrid) is a figure of the future. To be open to the future is to be open to the arrival of monsters, to show hospitality to everyone and everything that is different, strange, and unfamiliar. It is an attempt to domesticate this otherness and make it part of the household, an acceptance of different customs which will mingle with our own and create a new quality. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 5; and Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Weber, "Passages—From Traumatism to Promise," in *Points-Interviews 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 386–87.

21. John Updike's novel *The Centaur* (1963), winner of the National Book Award, describes the relationship between a father, a high school teacher of natural science, and a son, who also becomes a teacher. For his son, the father becomes a Chiron, the symbol of caregiver, teacher, and mentor. The son, Professor George W. Caldwell, becomes such a symbol for the narrator. The book begins with Caldwell being shot in the leg during class by one of his students, just as the mythical centaur was.

22. White, interview.