

EPISTEME

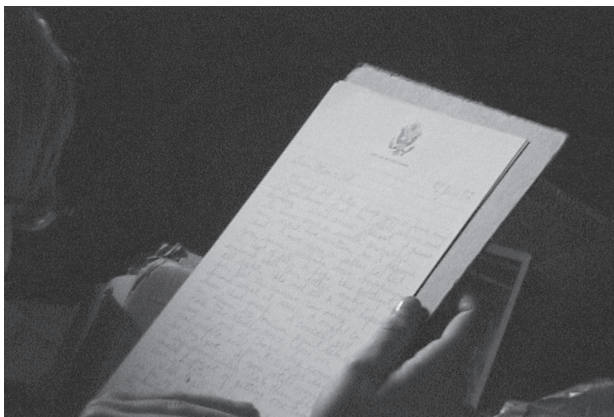
Concept associated with Foucault's early work, especially *The Order of Things*, 1966. (See Giambattista Vico.) This is about knowledge, more specifically how we know what we know, more specifically how knowledge creation and use is controlled by a set of shared assumptions at particular moments in history. Foucault organized his own reflexive, imaginative studies of the past around *epistemes*, periods of time determined by the particular way in which power disciplines, determining how knowledge is organized and deployed. Each episteme is made up of foundational ideas that define knowledge. Foucault imagined a structure whereby periods of time are determined by shared assumptions that unify disciplines of knowledge—always the expression of power operating, determining, organizing and deploying the knowable. Used to designate how a culture acquires and organizes knowledge in a given historical period, it is a particular structure of thought based on a set of assumptions about knowledge. *"History must be self-reflexively engaged with its own philosophy, always asking how we know what we know. Looking into the language, knowing its significance."* You should encourage historians to celebrate reflexivity and literary interpretation. Metaphor trumps evidence as especially delicious evidence. How many narratives are available to the historian? Tropes: *Progress, Resistance, Decline*. Assumption: The past can never be as it really was. How you say that matters.

EE MILLER

EPISTOLARY

... for as the dead exist only in us, it is ourselves that we strike without respite when we persist in recalling the blows that we have dealt them . . . I felt that I did not really remember her except through pain, and I longed for the nails that riveted her to my consciousness to be driven yet deeper.

Proust



BILLY GOMBERG

Dear Dead,

We would like to be with you. It is hard about you dying. Not that we can't live without you, but that you were here before meant a great deal to us. We miss even the pain you caused, which has been replaced by a different, related, intermittent yet feelingly permanent pain, sometimes combined with fright.

We live with our selves, and the so-called future, about which you know better. We sometimes go by a little kitchen timer.

We thought, we should just go by intuition and faith—dreams.

We thought, we should look ahead, be pragmatic—plans.

We couldn't agree.

We did agree there was a limited amount of time; we could all see the little timer.

We thought as a result of the time limit that we should relax and enjoy.

We argued that due to the lack of time we should be as productive as possible.

We are in love with finding signs. We are all semioticians.

We are not looking for "simple truths."

We suspect all moralisms and cures.

We vacillate between rhetoric and prayer.

But these are no longer the types of questions you are concerned with, as you are beyond moods.