

Sartre,
Foucault,
and
Historical
Reason

Thomas R. Flynn VOLUME TWO
A Poststructuralist
Mapping of
History

The University
of Chicago Press
CHICAGO & LONDON

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The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637

The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

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Printed in the United States of America

10 09 08 07 06 05

ISBN: 0-226-25470-4 (cloth)

ISBN: 0-226-25471-2 (paper)

Library of Congress has catalogued volume 1 as follows:

Flynn, Thomas R.

Sartre, Foucault, and historical reason / Thomas R. Flynn.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Contents: v. 1. Toward an existentialist theory of history.

ISBN 0-226-25467-4 — ISBN 0-226-25468-2 (pbk.)

1. History—Philosophy. 2. Sartre, Jean Paul, 1905—
—Contributions in philosophy of history. 3. Foucault,
Michel—Contributions in philosophy of history. I. Title.
D16.8.F628 1997

901—dc21

97-5137

CIP

ISBN 0-226-25470-4 — ISBN 0-226-25471-2 (pbk.) [volume 2]

⊗ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

For Charles and Carlyne Beard

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Preface

The present volume is an attempt to think with Foucault about Foucault. It resists following the standard developmental approach to his thought, not because that method is fruitless or invalid but because Foucault avoided such developmental models in the various “histories” that he crafted. In fact, he would have found it a typically “modern” enterprise. It is widely acknowledged that he had a penchant for spatial models and metaphors, though the nature and extent of such spatialized reasoning is seldom recognized. By turning the protractor and compass on his own work, I adopt a heuristic which, I hope, will reveal dimensions of his thought that have been overlooked or given slight attention. In the process, I intend to undertake a rational reconstruction of the philosophical histories that Foucault left us as I search for the elements of a “theory” of history in the writings of this avowed antitheoretician.

My aim in this two-volume study has been to compare and contrast the implicit theories of history employed by two of the leading French intellectuals of their respective generations. What makes this comparison promising is, among other things, that these figures knew each other personally and

strongly rejected each other's concepts and methods, while sharing active political commitments. Generational considerations aside, each saw the other as the defender of either an outdated philosophy (Foucault on Sartre) or an obtuse positivism (Sartre on Foucault). In many ways, they personify the cultural movements of existentialism and poststructuralism respectively as do their "theories" of history.

The subtitle of the previous volume is "Toward an Existentialist Theory of History." A close and comprehensive reading of the Sartrean corpus reveals an understanding of history that is committed, dialectical, and focused on the existentialist psychoanalysis of historical agents in their anguished freedom and responsibility. The problem of relating biography and history lies at the core of such a theory. "Living" history, like a well-crafted novel, it is argued, should reflect the experience of the protagonists in their concrete situations: the risk of choice and the pinch of the real.

Volume two is subtitled "A Poststructuralist Mapping of History." In what looks like a point-for-point contestation of existentialist features, at least at first blush, I assemble the basics of the Foucauldian approach: a critique of dialectical reasoning and the history of ideas, the purgative practice of historical nominalism and attention to the event rather than to the agent in historiography (part 1). I then focus on the visual and spatialized character of Foucault's studies, culminating in the contrasting pyramidal and prismatic models of historical reason that emblemize Sartre and Foucault, respectively. This articulates the "axial" reading of Foucault's histories that I am proposing and the possibility of which I have been evidencing throughout the volume (part 2). I then undertake an explicit comparison and contrast of Sartre's approach to historical reason with that of Foucault, starting with an attempt to "map" existentialist concepts and categories across the "quadrilateral" that Foucault insists sets the parameters of modernist knowledge. At stake is the degree to which Sartre's thought is captured and confined by this figure whether, in effect, he is "a man of the nineteenth century trying to think the twentieth," as Foucault once asserted. The last chapters bring our comparison into sharper focus by setting in contrastive juxtaposition each author's understanding of related concepts in their respective historiographies: experience and the lived, violence and power, fearless speech and authenticity, committed and effective history (part 3). With both dossiers complete, I can then draw some final conclusions about a

“postmodern” Sartre and an “existentialist” Foucault both in philosophy generally and in the specific domain of historical reason.

Because my discussion of Foucault’s major “historical” texts requires that I return to the same works to illustrate new issues discussed in succeeding chapters, let me preclude the suspicion of needless repetition by sketching the progression of my argument chapter by chapter.

In the opening chapter I situate Foucault as a philosophical historian in the context of what was called the “new” history of his day as against the narrativist history of battles, treaties, world historical figures, or even the intellectual history (history of ideas) with which one is tempted to identify his “histories.” Though he often sided with the new historians against their more traditional counterparts, in the final analysis Foucault was in a class by himself. He was what historian Paul Veyne called a revolutionary in contemporary historiography.

At the conclusion of chapter 1, I append as an excursus an overview of what are commonly seen as three stages in Foucault’s thought: the archaeological, the genealogical, and the problematizing. This is done to familiarize the reader encountering the Foucauldian corpus for the first time with the basic concepts, texts, and arguments that we shall discuss at length in subsequent chapters. I have also appended a glossary of basic terms for that same reason. Readers already familiar with this material may prefer to bypass the excursus and move immediately to chapter 2.

In chapters 2 and 3, I attend to features of Foucault’s approach that serve to justify Veyne’s characterization, namely, his nominalism and his event orientation. Foucault pushes to the extreme the nominalist proclivities of historians to attend to the singular and nonrepeatable. This tendency respects the empirical and suspects the abstract. It also inverts the received “causal” accounts in a Nietzschean move to free us from the tyranny of false causes and vague relationships, such as the concept of influence, so prevalent in the history of ideas. Nominalism leads him, for example, to claim that “power” as such does not exist; there are only individual instances of action on the action of others.

Similarly, Foucault emphasizes the concept of “event,” both in contrast with the non—event-oriented studies of many structuralist historians yet without adopting the action or univocal event orientation of more traditional thinkers. Against both groups, he proves himself very much a philosopher of the event—but by distinguishing many kinds and levels of event.

My approach in these chapters is spiral in the sense that I return to the same texts on several occasions to exemplify an additional aspect not previously discussed. Here and in subsequent portions of my study, the effect is cumulative and not needlessly repetitive. From chapter to chapter I hope to enrich our appreciation of texts previously studied from different perspectives as I introduce additional ones along the way.

Having charted the conceptual coordinates of Foucault's historiography in part 1, I turn to what I take to be characteristically poststructuralist about his approach, namely, his emphasis on space over time both in the metaphors he employs and especially in the arguments he mounts. I locate this "spatialized" reasoning in the context of a general movement against the hegemony of vision in Western thought (chapter 4). I argue that here, too, Foucault distinguishes himself not by any wholesale rejection of the visual (as might be expected of a critic of phenomenology) but by championing a diacritical vision that is neither phenomenological nor antivisual in nature. I turn to *The Birth of the Clinic* to illustrate this approach and extend it to the comparativist vision of archaeology in general. Of course, *Discipline and Punish* continues to be mined for apt examples of spatialized reasoning here as well.

Turning to *The History of Madness*, Foucault's first major work, in chapter 5, I examine this text in light of the spatialized reasoning introduced in the previous chapter. That concept is now elaborated with an extended discussion of two terms ingredient in Foucault's archaeological method: "transformation" and "displacement." Though mentioned earlier and employed throughout his work, these terms receive thorough treatment at this juncture both because of their spatial character and especially due to their pivotal function in advancing Foucault's arguments.

I develop Foucault's antidialectical, spatialized reasoning in chapter 6 by considering the "anthropological quadrilateral" central to *The Order of Things* as constitutive of the grid of scientific intelligibility (the episteme) in the modern era. I analyze the relation between the various epistemes that Foucault uncovers in Western thought since the Renaissance, arguing that an aesthetic relation of "fittingness" obtains among them that offers a kind of unity and intelligibility to archaeological history while respecting the empirical and aleatory nature of the discontinuities that fragment such an historical account. Again, Foucault offers a new alternative, this time to the choice between Hegelian or Marxist historical necessity and the positivist historian's "one damn thing after another."

The culmination of my argument in part 2—and the cardinal chapter of the book—is the elaboration of an “axial” reading of the entire Foucauldian corpus in chapter 7 and its contrast with the dialectical spiral of Sartrean history. Summarizing the evidence for such a reading thus far and graphing the emerging characteristics along each of three axes (that of knowledge/truth, power/governmentality, and ethics/self-constitution), I argue that every one of Foucault’s “histories” can be read along each of these axes and according to the methodology appropriate to each, namely, archaeology, genealogy, and problematization. To illustrate this method, I undertake such a reading of an arguably “preaxial” work, *The History of Madness*, while offering sketches of axial readings of his other historical studies.

In part 3 I intensify my comparison with the Sartrean model first by attempting to map his existentialist historiography across the modern episteme in chapter 8. As I have said, the success or failure of this process will determine whether Sartre can escape the confines of nineteenth-century (modern) thought to which Foucault and others have assigned him.

In contrasting Sartre’s category of “the lived” (*le vécu*) with Foucauldian experience as it emerges from the matrix of the three axes (experience being the space enclosed by the prism formed by the planes connecting the three poles charted in chapter 7), I argue in chapter 9 that “experience” has been a major concept in the Foucauldian repertory from his early *The History of Madness* to the two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* published just before his death. Our axial reading of his corpus confirms that Foucault is a philosopher of experience—which will be news to many readers.

Also little known until recently is Foucault’s interest in courageous speech (*parrhesia*), which formed the topic of his last courses at Berkeley and at the Collège de France. Though the latter lectures have yet to be published, I was privileged to attend them and so have drawn from notes and tapes to present the basic features of truth-telling both among the classical Greeks and as a defining feature of a kind of philosophical (parrhesiastic) history that Foucault endorses, namely, one that incorporates all three poles of our prism in its analyses. In chapter 10, I compare parrhesia with Sartrean authenticity as well as parrhesiastic history with “authentic” history as reconstructed in volume 1 of our study.

Both Sartre and Foucault link the intelligibility of history with the intelligibility of struggle. And each offers an analysis of the relations of violence that usually accompany such warfare. In chapter 11, I analyze how

each understands violence, its conditions and possible eradication and how this affects their respective accounts of the meaning of history.

We are now ready to address specifically their alternative understandings of the nature of historical reason, the general subject of our two volumes. In chapter 12, I consider the consequences of Foucault's claim that reason itself is not one or even dual, as Sartre allowed, but multiple and subject to the vicissitudes of history. In other words, if there is reason to history, reason itself has a history, which Foucault has undertaken to graph.

THOUGH THE two volumes form the complete argument that I wish to make, each is relatively autonomous and can be read satisfactorily by itself. The first, primarily Sartrean text, despite several promissory notes to be redeemed in the present book, provides an overview of the leading Foucauldian criticisms of Sartre and an exposition of basic theses of his alternative position. Conversely, I have incorporated enough material from the previous volume in summary form in the present one to make the contrast with Foucault's ideas and claims intelligible to someone unfamiliar with Sartre's argument in the earlier work.

Acknowledgments

As I explained in the first volume, the two books that constitute this project reflect the support of several foundations and institutions in addition to the many individuals from whose insights I have benefited over the years. The latter are too numerous to name, but the former include the American Council of Learned Societies, which awarded me the initial senior research fellowship that allowed me to follow what turned out to be Foucault's final lectures at the Collège de France. A grant from the Mellon Foundation through the National Humanities Center and several years later another from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Institute for Advanced Study—as well as the ideal research conditions provided by each institution—enabled me to write an initial draft of one of these volumes at each. Emory University has given me considerable support both through an award from its Faculty Research Council and by means of a Dobbs Professorship that enables me to pursue research every summer. I am deeply appreciative of the financial and moral support of the administrators, faculty, and staff of these organizations, without whose assistance I could never have completed this work.

During the years that intervened between the appearance of the first volume of this work and the second, I have tested my ideas in essays and book chapters that constituted earlier versions of parts of the present volume. Parts of chapter 2 are revised from “Foucault and Historical Nominalism” in *Phenomenology and Beyond: The Self and Its Language*, ed. Harold A. Durfee and David F. T. Rodier (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989); reprinted with kind permission of Springer Science and Business Media. Parts of chapter 3 are revised from “Michel Foucault and the Career of the Historical Event” in *At the Nexus of Philosophy and History*, ed. Bernard P. Dauenhauer (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987); copyright 1987 by the University of Georgia Press, reprinted by permission of the University of Georgia Press. Parts of chapter 4 previously appeared in “Foucault and the Eclipse of Vision” in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. David Michael Levin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); 273–86; copyright 1993 The Regents of the University of California. Parts of chapter 5 are revised from “Foucault and the Spaces of History,” in “The Ontology of History,” ed. Joseph Margolis, special issue, *The Monist* 74, no. 2 (April 1991); copyright 1991, *The Monist: An International Quarterly Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry*, Peru, Illinois, 61354, reprinted by permission. Parts of chapter 11 previously appeared in “Foucault as Parrhesiast: His Last Course at the Collège de France (1984)” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 12, no. 2-3 (summer 1987); copyright 1986 Sage Publications, reprinted by permission of Sage Publications Ltd. Appearing throughout the book are quotes from “Foucault’s Mapping of History,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press. I thank the editors and publishers for permission to reprint.

Though I have resisted the temptation to list by name the many people who have, sometimes unwittingly, helped further this project over the years, I shall not break this resolve by acknowledging the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript in its earlier form. Their care and critical sense have improved this work significantly and I thank them for it. Responsibility for its remaining defects are admittedly my own. Still, one exception to my rule cannot be denied. I owe an immense debt of gratitude to T. David Brent of the University of Chicago Press, without whose steadfast support this extended project would not have reached completion.

Works Frequently Cited

FOUCAULT

The major collection of Foucault's works other than books is the four-volume *Dits et écrits*, abbreviated *DE* with volume and page number. Many of these are translated in the three-volume *Essential Works (EW)* followed by volume and page number or in other collections such as *Foucault Live (FL)* or *Politics, Philosophy, Culture (PPC)*. When an essay is cited from any of these collections, after its initial complete reference, its abbreviated title is given as well as its location in the collection. Thus "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History" (NGH) appears in *EW* 2:343–91. English translations are cited where available. If the translation has been emended, the original source is listed as well. Abbreviations of the more frequently cited works are as follows:

<i>AK</i>	<i>Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language (DL)</i>
<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975 [Anormaux]</i>
<i>BC</i>	<i>The Birth of the Clinic</i>
Circle	"On the Archaeology of the Sciences: Response to the Epistemological Circle"
<i>CS</i>	<i>The Care of the Self (History of Sexuality, vol. 3)</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Dits et écrits</i>
<i>DL</i>	"Discourse on Language"
<i>DP</i>	<i>Discipline and Punish</i>
<i>EW</i>	<i>Essential Works</i>
<i>FL</i>	<i>Foucault Live</i>
<i>FR</i>	<i>Foucault Reader</i>
<i>FS</i>	<i>Fearless Speech</i>
<i>GE</i>	"On the Genealogy of Ethics"
<i>H</i>	<i>L'hérméneutique du sujet: Cours au Collège de France, 1981–1982</i>
<i>HF</i>	<i>Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique</i>
<i>HS</i>	<i>History of Sexuality, vol. 1</i>

- IDT "Interview with Michel Foucault" (Ducio Trombadori)
- IP *L'impossible prison*
- Madness *Madness and Civilization*
- MC *Les mots et les choses*
- NC *Naissance de la clinique*
- NGH "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History"
- OT *The Order of Things*
- P/K *Power/Knowledge*
- PPC *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*
- PP *Le pouvoir psychiatrique: Cours au Collège de France, 1973–1974*
- QM "Questions of Method"
- SD *Society Must Be Defended [Il faut défendre la société]: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*
- SP "The Subject and Power"
- SPS "Structuralism and Poststructuralism"
- TJF "Truth and Juridical Forms"
- TP "Truth and Power"
- UP *The Use of Pleasure (History of Sexuality, vol. 2)*

SARTRE

- BN *Being and Nothingness*
- CDR *Critique of Dialectical Reason, 2 vols.*
- EH "Existentialism Is a Humanism"
- NE *Notebooks for an Ethics*
- PI *Psychology of the Imagination*
- Schilpp Interview in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp
- SM *Search for a Method*
- WL *What Is Literature?*

OTHER

- BSH *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow
- CA *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 7 vols., ed. Barry Smart
- F *Foucault*, by Gilles Deleuze
- FI *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson
- SME *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism*, by Thomas R. Flynn
- Vol. 1 *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason*, vol. 1, *Toward an Existentialist Theory of History*, by Thomas R. Flynn

PART ONE

Conceptual Coordinates

I write my books in a series: the first one leaves open problems on which the second depends for support while calling for a third without there being a linear continuity between them. They are interwoven and overlapping.

Michel Foucault,
Interview with Ducio Trombadori

Chapter One

Foucault and the Historians

All of Foucault's books are histories of a sort, which makes Foucault a historian of a sort. The challenge is to determine what sort of historian he is, the better to understand what these diverse and complex texts are about. This is not simply a matter of professional identity. As he famously put it, he defers to the bureaucrats and police to determine whether his papers are in order. The issue concerns what these texts and their various methods can tell us about what Sartre would call our present "condition" and perhaps about the nature of historiography itself. For the distinguished French historian Paul Veyne claims that Foucault has revolutionized historical study in our day.¹

Trained as a philosopher and psychologist, his first published works were in the history and philosophy of science. Significantly, they exhibited what he would later dismiss as a youthful dalliance with existentialism. Reflecting toward the end of his life on his first published book, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, he gives an overview, one of many, of his life's work that is worth quoting at length, for it offers the guiding thread for our investigation in this volume.

To study the forms of experience . . .
in their history [as he was about to do in

We are doomed historically
to history.

Michel Foucault,
The Birth of the Clinic

The studies that follow, like
the others I have done
previously, are studies of
"history" by reason of the
domain they deal with and
the references they appeal
to; but they are not the work
of a "historian."

Michel Foucault,
The Use of Pleasure

the last two published volumes of *The History of Sexuality*] is an idea that occurred with an earlier project, in which I made use of methods of existential analysis in the field of psychiatry and in the domain of “mental illness.” For two reasons, not unrelated to each other, this project left me unsatisfied: its theoretical weakness in elaborating the notion of experience, and its ambiguous link with a psychiatric practice which it simultaneously ignored and took for granted. One could deal with the first problem by referring to a general theory of the human being, and treat the second altogether differently by turning, as is so often done, to the “economic and social context”; one could choose, by doing so, to accept the resulting dilemma of a philosophical anthropology and a social history. But I wondered whether, rather than playing on this alternative, it would not be possible to *consider the very historicity of forms of experience*. This entailed two negative tasks: first, a “nominalist” reduction of philosophical anthropology and the notions which it serves to promote, and second, a shift of domain to the concepts and methods of the history of societies. On the positive side, the task was to *bring to light the domain* where the formation, development, and transformation of forms of experience can situate themselves: that is, a history of thought.²

In this retrospective view of his career, Foucault was facing a dilemma similar to that which confronted Sartre with regard to historical intelligibility, namely, choosing between phenomenology and historical materialism (anthropology and social history). But where Sartre sought a synthesis of these two in his progressive-regressive method, Foucault opts for a *tertium*, the domain of “thought” where the formation, transformation, and displacement of “forms of experience” can be charted and compared. In preparation for this conversion of interest, Foucault will subject humanist discourse to a nominalist cleansing and the social sciences to “historical” analyses that problematize their basic assumptions and invert their claims to legitimacy. Many of the key concepts of our investigation occur in this dense programmatic paragraph. Because the following chapters serve as a kind of gloss on these remarks, we shall repeat them in our concluding chapter where their full import will be manifest. These observations shall serve to bookend the Foucauldian material in this volume and to focus the contrast we wish to draw with the Sartrean approach to reason in history, exhibited in volume 1.

Although “historicity” (our essentially time-bound character) was a

central term in existentialist parlance, the historicity of “forms” of experience was not. In effect, as the quotation indicates, Foucault was introducing a quasi-structuralist concept into his quest for historical intelligibility. This move had doubtless been prepared by Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s initiation of Foucault’s class at the Ecole Normale into Saussurian structural linguistics.³ And it was certainly reinforced by Foucault’s study with the Marxist structuralist, Louis Althusser, and his friendship with the protostructuralist, Georges Dumézil.⁴ Further, Foucault’s search for a “domain” in which to “situate” the “formation, development and transformation” of these forms of experience delineates the realm inhabited by a family of concepts that he employed in an uncommon manner such as statement, archive, historical a priori, and discursive practice that his archaeology would analyze as an alternative to traditional “history.” These are matters to be considered in due course. But at the outset we should note his concentration on the matter of *experience*: both Foucault’s perception of the theoretical weakness of the method of existential analysis to elaborate its notion and his alternative project of examining the historicity of its “forms” in their proper domain. For, despite Pierre Macherey’s insistence that the concept of experience stands “at the center of all of Foucault’s thought,”⁵ the notion of experience in his work has not been studied in the detail it deserves.⁶ Yet any examination that would compare his thought with that of Jean-Paul Sartre cannot fail to mine this field for promising similarities and contrasts since Sartre in his own way was doubtless a philosopher of experience.

Delaying a discussion of Foucault’s nominalism for my next chapter and an analysis of “experience” for chapter 9, at this point, I wish to emphasize his entrance into the “history of thought.” Note, he does not say “history of ideas.” The distinction is crucial. A much broader term than “ideas,” “thought,” Foucault explains, “is . . . the very form of action.”⁷ It comes to denote that realm of human activity which deals with knowledge in the basic sense of the true and the false as well as the relations that obtain between knowledge and the knowing subject. The term gradually embraces the entire realm of what we shall call discursive and nondiscursive practices (the sayable and the seeable, as Deleuze would put it), including practices of self-constitution. He baptized his post at the Collège de France, “Chair in the History of the Systems of Thought.” It is the

“history” of these “systems” of “thought” that begins to concern him as he distances himself from the philosophical anthropology of his predecessors and the Marxist economism of his contemporaries.⁸

THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

Making me out to be someone who denies history is really ludicrous.
I don't do anything *but* history.⁹

Michel Foucault, *Essential Works*

What does Foucault dislike about the history of ideas as it has been practiced in his day? As Mark Poster observes, “Foucault is an anti-historical historian, one who in writing history, threatens every canon of the craft. One can ask, therefore, if there is a theory of history in Foucault’s texts. Can one discover, against the grain of Foucault’s anti-systematic writing, a set of concepts or categories that reveals the basis of his powerful and shocking accomplishments?”¹⁰ In fact, one can ascertain a dozen charges in his case against the history of ideas, each of them indicative of the counterposition he is in the process of formulating at the time. Were one to reread these critical remarks in light of the following chapters, one would discover a certain negative image of the positions that Foucault would adopt across the various phases of his career. Whether they constitute a “theory” of history in any totalizing sense is doubtful for reasons that will become clear as our study progresses. But they do afford us several lines of investigation that contribute to the intelligibility of history even as they reveal its complexity. As an introduction to his “histories of the systems of thought,” let us briefly trace twelve lines that sketch the negative outline of his approach like the contrasting field of a silhouette. What does he wish to “correct” in the history of ideas as it was traditionally practiced?

Continuity. At the head of his list of objections stands “the postulate of continuity.” This entails a set of loosely defined but functionally clear concepts such as “tradition,” “influence,” “development,” “evolution toward a normative stage,” “mentality,” and “spirit of the age” that are familiar to anyone working in the field. The allure of such notions for intellectual historians is their ready-made ordering of a set of events prior to their close examination. It is common for the history of ideas to appeal to such concepts as explanations when, Foucault believes, they are too vague to explain anything in particular. Instead, he counsels an intellectual asceticism that would set such a priori notions aside and begin with a

population of dispersed events (see *EW* 2:302). What we shall be calling Foucault's "positivism" and "nominalism" clearly inspire this objection.

Teleology. Historians traditionally are great storytellers. But links between continuity, narrativity, and teleology seem particularly irksome to Foucault. François Furet expresses the traditional view when he remarks that "narrative history is . . . a history of events. And all history of events is a theological history: only the 'ending' of the history makes it possible to choose and understand the events that compose it."¹¹ In our first volume we have observed Sartre's commitment to a "dialectical" approach to historical understanding that is event-centered, narrativist, and telic. Sartre characterized dialectical reasoning in terms of "the action of the future as such."¹² The purpose or end gives unity, meaning, and direction to an action. But Foucault is intent on fragmenting these unities and reintroducing chance into history.¹³ Though the chance motif is equally Sartrean (who speaks of a historical "dialectic with holes in it" [Vol. 1:48]), Foucault will have nothing to do with the "totalizing" praxis that renders history intelligible for Sartre in terms of the (ideal) ending it projects and the narrative it thereby engenders. As we shall see in chapter 3, Foucault too is a philosopher of "events." But, pace Furet, his "histories" of such events are decidedly nonteleological.

Collective Consciousness. It is the tacit appeal to a collective consciousness of some sort that bothers Foucault about the postulate of consciousness in the history of ideas. In his response to a set of questions submitted by a distinguished group of French intellectuals apropos his major archaeological writings, he observes:

Continuous history is the correlate of consciousness: the guarantee that what escapes from it can be restored to it; the promise that it will some day be able to appropriate outright all those things which surround it and weigh down on it, to restore its mastery over them, and to find in them what really must be called—leaving the word all its overloads of meaning—its home. The desire to make historical analysis the discourse of continuity, and make human consciousness the originating subject of all knowledge and all practice, are two faces of one and the same system of thought. Time is conceived in terms of totalization, and revolution never as anything but a coming to consciousness.¹⁴

All this, Foucault insists, occurs in oblivion of what the actual practice of historians has been for some time: "We must be prepared to understand

what has become history in the real work of the historians: a certain controlled use of discontinuity for the analysis of temporal series" (*EW* 2:300, Circle).

Neglect of the Nonstandard. Corresponding to its conceptual strictures, Foucault finds that the history of ideas as commonly practiced is intolerant of phenomena that do not fit its preestablished categories: anomalies, marginalities, exceptions, and the like. Already in 1964 he displays an interest in the irregular and the abnormal that will characterize his work for the rest of his career. As he writes in a footnote to a review essay published that year, notably in *Annales*:

One encounters a similar problem in the domain of what is called the history of ideas. The conservation of documents brings to light a mass of texts from sciences, philosophies and literatures that are erroneously treated as false sciences, quasi philosophies or poorly expressed opinions, or else as the initial sketch and the subsequent reflection of what is going to be and what was formerly literature, philosophy or science. In fact, here too it is a matter of a *new cultural object* that awaits its definition and its method and that refuses to be treated in the analogical mode of the "quasi."¹⁵

Again we see the nominalist's sense of the singular and the positivist's distrust of the a priori. As his alternative study of history will reveal, Foucault is sensitive to those fractures and breaks in historical continuity through which the new, the irregular, and the unexpected can emerge. He would later devote his entire course of 1974–1975 at the Collège to the question of the abnormal, "*Les Anormaux*."¹⁶

His concern with the "quasi" in history, whether it be the "soft" sciences, the ambiguous social category, or the "minor" literature, is a form of genealogical critique of the power of social norms as much as it is the expression of his interest in the marginal and the excluded. Like Sartre, Foucault evinces a keen sense of the exploitation and oppression institutionalized in our social practices, though he may be less justified than his compatriot in opposing them—a frequently raised objection and a matter we shall reserve for later reflection.

Suppression of Discontinuity. In his introduction to the English translation of his mentor Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, Foucault observes that this distinguished historian "brought the history of science down from the heights (mathematics, astronomy,

Galilean mechanics, Newtonian physics, relativity theory) toward the middle regions where knowledge is much less deductive, much more dependent on external processes (economic stimulations or institutional supports) and where it has remained tied much longer to the marvels of the imagination.”¹⁷ Rather than the story of the cumulative progress toward the Truth (Hegel’s “The truth is the whole”), Canguilhem’s analyses are praised for being “discontinuist” and in search of “normativity within different scientific activities such as they have effectively been brought into play” (*Normal*, xv). Speaking of traditional history with its implicit postulate of continuity, Foucault remarks: “Discontinuity was the stigma of temporal dispersion which it was the historian’s duty to suppress from history” (*EW* 2:299; *DE* 1:698, Circle). Although he resisted the appellation, as he did all attempts to categorize his thought, Foucault came to be known as the “philosopher of discontinuity.”

Dialectic. It is his opposition to the continuity postulate as well as to its implicit commitment to a transhistorical subject that sets him against the Hegelian dialectic in its various avatars from Marx to Sartre. Speaking of the “neurosis of dialectics,” for example, Foucault observes that, despite its apparent commitment to the play of differences in its unfolding, Hegelian dialectics “does not liberate differences; it guarantees, on the contrary, that they can always be recaptured. The dialectical sovereignty of similarity,” he explains, “consists in permitting differences to exist, but always under the rule of the negative, as an instance of non-being. They may appear as the successful subversion of the Other, but contradiction secretly assists in the salvation of identities” (*EW* 2:358, *Theatrum*).

Primacy of the Philosophical. Another objection to the history of ideas, in Foucault’s assessment, and one to which he finds both Wilhelm Dilthey and Ernst Cassirer vulnerable, is that it accords a primacy to philosophy and to reflection that it never bothers to question, “as if the thought of an epoch had its preferred place . . . more in a theory of the world than in a positive science, more in aesthetics than in the work of art, more in a philosophy than in an institution.”¹⁸ Whereas the task of the new history of thought, which he calls “archaeology,” is “to learn how to recognize thought in its anonymous constraints, to trace it in all the things or speechless gestures that give it a positive figure, to let it unfold in that dimension of the ‘one’ where each individual and every discourse forms nothing more than the episodes of a reflection” (*DE* 1:548).

In other words, archaeology resists the humanist urge behind traditional history.¹⁹

Humanism. This rejection of the “humanist” commitment to the conscious subject is a critical theme running through the whole of Foucault’s work. In *The Order of Things* he describes humanism as issuing from the “anthropological slumber” that characterized nineteenth-century thought. Such humanist thinking (notably that of Sartre) conceives historical time in terms of totalization and historical meaning as relative to a meaning-giving subject.²⁰ And when it cries that the “structuralists” have murdered history, Foucault insists, “what is mourned for so loudly is in no sense the obliteration of history but the disappearance of that form of history which was secretly, but in its entirety, transferred to the synthetic activity of the subject. All the treasures of the past had been hoarded in the ancient citadel of this history. It was . . . the last bastion of philosophical anthropology [*la pensée anthropologique*]” (*EW* 2:302; *DE* 1:700, Circle).

Biological Model. Foucault objects further that the history of ideas comprises a set of mental habits which entail belief “that history must be a long linear story often punctuated with crises, that the discovery of causality is the *ne plus ultra* of historical analysis, and that there is a hierarchy of determinations extending from the strictest material causality to the more or less flickering glimmer of human freedom.” While admitting that this expressed “a certain way of understanding Marxism,” Foucault finds the prevalence of this biological model, reinforced by evolutionary theory, to be grounded in the bourgeois notion that while change is inevitable revolution is not—scarcely an orthodox Marxist view of the matter.²¹

Rationality. History, with a Hegelian “H,” its proponents argue, presumes a unique form of rationality that governs the historical process. Foucault, on the contrary, insists on multiple forms of rationality that often have a plurality of interconnections among themselves and that may appear in displaced forms but without any isomorphism among them (see *DE* 4:450). His archaeological alternative is to constitute series of events and series of series (tables) with their specific time and chronologies. “It questions the themes of convergence and cumulation; it has doubted the possibility of creating totalities. It has led to the individualization of different series, which are juxtaposed to one another, follow one another, overlap and intersect, without one being able to reduce

them to a linear schema.” He thinks that this multiplicity of rationalities is the working hypothesis of many historians practicing today when he concludes:

Thus, in place of the continuous chronology of reason, which was invariably traced back to some inaccessible origin, there have appeared scales that are sometimes very brief, distinct from one another, irreducible to a single law, scales that bear a type of history peculiar to each one, and which cannot be reduced to the general model of a consciousness that acquires, progresses, and remembers.²²

In place of the numerous dyadic oppositions such as tradition/innovation, old/new, dead/living, closed/open, static/dynamic and the like that populate the history of ideas, Foucault would substitute “the analysis of the field of simultaneous differences (that define the possible dispersion of knowledge [*savoir*] in a given epoch) and the successive differences (that define the ensemble of transformations, their hierarchy, dependency and level).” In other words, he proposes “to tell the story [*raconter l’histoire*] of perpetual difference; more precisely, to tell the story of ideas as the ensemble of specific, descriptive forms of non-identity.”²³ He hopes thereby to free history of the triple metaphor that he believes has burdened it for more than a century, namely, the *evolutionist*, which forces it to divide between the regressive and the adaptive, the *biological*, which does the same for the inert and the living, and the *dynamic*, which opposes movement and the immobile. If he is a philosopher of comparisons and discontinuities, Foucault is not a devotee of binary oppositions.

The Devalued Discursive Domain. Perhaps Foucault’s chief criticism of the history of ideas and the one that carries the most far-ranging significance for his own archaeological project is its discounting [*dénégation*] of the proper domain of discourse itself, an implicit denial of its consistency and its autochthonous law. By “discourse” he means, roughly, the series of statements [*énoncés*] that follow a set of rules constituting a certain communicative domain. The discourse of the rational/irrational in the sixteenth century, for example, reveals how people could and could not think of certain individuals under the descriptions made possible by this contrast. He sees this devaluation exhibited in several ways, all of which amount to a reduction of the properly discursive to other models such as the psychological, the linguistic or rhetorical, or

the semantic. The net effect is that discourse is regarded as superfluous to the fields of thought and practice.²⁴

Foucault hopes to free from their uncertain status that ensemble of disciplines known as history of ideas, history of sciences, history of thought, history of knowledge, of concepts, or of consciousness. In his view, they display among themselves a remarkable indeterminacy of proper domain, specific object and relation to other, more determinate areas of historical inquiry such as social, political, or economic history. He would remedy this indeterminacy by attending to what he calls discursive practices. "Discursive practices," he explains, "are not purely and simply modes of manufacture of discourse. They take shape in technical ensembles, in institutions; in behavioral schemes, in types of transmission and dissemination, and in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them."²⁵ The analysis of discursive practices, he believes, will help order the space between the history of ideas, on the one hand, and social, political, and economic history on the other. I shall consider the nature and success or failure of this project later in this study, for it entails an assessment of archaeology as such. But at this stage it must suffice to note what Foucault sets as the locus and goal of his archaeological project.

This intent to distance his enterprise from the history of ideas persisted throughout his career. In an interview given a month before he died, Foucault was still distinguishing the history of thought (or, as he began to call it in later years, "of problematizations") from the history of ideas and even from the more recent history of "*mentalités*," pursued by the third wave of *annalistes*. By then he was characterizing the history of ideas as "the analysis of systems of representations,"²⁶ an expression reminiscent both of Jean-François Lyotard's description of postmodernism as the critique of representational thinking and of Foucault's own thesis toward the end of *The Order of Things* that "the human sciences

have been unable to find a way around the primacy of representation."²⁷ Still, the persistence with which Foucault insists on distancing himself from the historians of ideas suggests that he doth protest too much. Could it be that his last two published volumes of the history of sexuality, at least, are themselves studies in the history of ideas? The suspicion has been raised; we shall review the question at the conclusion of our inquiry. In any case, we now have the start of an answer to Mark

Poster's query whether there is a theory of history in Foucault's texts, namely, the negative image of what Foucault is about as a historian of the "systems of thought."

FOUCAULT AND THE NEW HISTORIANS

Today we are witnessing the return of events to the field of history.

Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, "Dialogue sur le pouvoir"

Foucault's intellectual impact has been greater on historians and social scientists in general than on philosophers. *Annaliste* Jacques Revel wrote that "the work that has perhaps most profoundly marked French historians since the 1960s is not that of one of their own; it's that of a philosopher, Michel Foucault."²⁸ In the English-speaking world, part of this doubtless is due to his being aligned, in the eyes of many if not in his own, with the Continental trend in philosophical thought.²⁹ But part must be ascribed as well to his attack on the "history of the philosophers" and, specifically, to his historicizing of the Marxist dialectic.

In his controversy with Sartre, which we surveyed in volume 1, Foucault took the part of what were then the "new" historians of the *Annales* school of French historiography. The rise and fall (or at least fragmentation) of that group has been charted many times.³⁰ But when Foucault began his polemic with the "philosophers' history," the school was in its third successful generation. Founded in 1929 by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the review that gave the group its name, *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, gradually emerged as the arbiter of historical fashion for three generations of French intellectuals. This was especially true of the period after World War II, when the journal significantly removed "histoire" from its title and became *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations*.³¹ From the start, the editors and those who published in it were critical of traditional "narrativist" history with its accent on political history ("battles and treaties" or history as national biography), its rage for brute "facts" and its focus on individual agents and their intentions. The author of the most famous work to emerge from that school (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*) and editor of the review for over a decade, Fernand Braudel, in his inaugural address at the Collège de France listed the most decisive innovation of the *Annales* historians as that of "transcending the individual and the particular event."³² As one of their number, François Furet, observed, it

was now common to distinguish event-oriented [*l'histoire événementielle*] from nonevent-oriented history [*l'histoire non événementielle*] and to attend to the latter at the expense of the former. He insists that “traditional historical explanation obeys the logic of narrative” in which atomic “events” demand to be embedded: “What comes first explains what follows” (*Workshop* 8), and he characterizes the move from traditional to the “new” history as one “from narrative history to problem-oriented history.”³³ In fact, what came to be called “serial history,” Furet observes, “offers the conclusive advantage, from the scientific point of view, of substituting for the elusive ‘event’ of positivist history the regular repetition of data selected or constructed by reason of their comparability” (*Workshop* 42). In other words, serial history is *comparative* in nature as we shall find Foucault’s archaeologies to be. Echoing Foucault’s misgivings about traditional history, Furet observes that “in order to be intelligible, the event needs a general history apart from itself and independently determined. Hence the classic conception of historical time as a series of discontinuities described in the mode of continuity—that is, as narrative. Serial history, on the other hand,” he points out, “describes continuities in the mode of discontinuity: it is a problem-oriented history instead of a narrative one” (*Workshop* 49).³⁴

In an interview published in 1967, Foucault offers his own fourfold summary of the basics of the new history that clearly links him with the movement even as it starts to fill in the “positive” of the negative that we have sketched above:

1. The new historians revived the difficult problem of periodization by pointing out that the traditional method that highlighted political revolutions was not always the best way to mark things out.
2. “Each periodization marks out in history a certain level of events, and, inversely, each layer of events calls for its own periodization . . .” So one will have to delimit different periodizations according to the level one chooses. “Thus one accedes to a complex methodology of discontinuity.”
3. “The old traditional opposition between the human sciences and history [between structure and change] disappears: change can be the object of analysis in terms of structure, and historical discourse is populated with analyses borrowed from ethnology, sociology, and the human sciences.”

4. "One introduces into historical analysis many more types of relationship and modes of linkage than the universal relation of causality through which one had formerly wanted to define historical method."³⁵

By these criteria, the Foucault of the sixties could be counted among the "new historians" of his day.

Foucault's first major work, the *grande thèse* for his state doctorate, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, after being refused by Gallimard, was published in a series edited by Philippe Ariès.³⁶ Though not an *Annales* historian himself, Ariès was a precursor of the *mentalités* approach to historiography who recognized the innovative character of Foucault's work: "One fine day, a fat manuscript reached me: a philosophy thesis on relations between madness and unreason during the classical epoch, by an author who was unknown to me. When I read it, I was dazzled."³⁷ Once published, the work received a favorable review in *Annales*, followed by a note of approbation by Braudel himself, which begins: "I am adding a few lines to the preceding review to stress the originality, the pioneering nature of Michel Foucault's book." In an observation that predicts the polyvalence of Foucault's subsequent investigations, he adds that "this difficult pursuit required a mind that is capable of being in turn a historian, a philosopher, a psychologist, and a sociologist—never simply one of these."³⁸ Positive reviews by Blanchot and Barthes were forthcoming as was an article on the work by Michel Serres. So from the very start, Foucault was appreciated by leading French intellectuals and by members of the trend-setting *Annales* school. This continued to be true for the remainder of his career.

But as his work progressed and his fame increased, so too did the opposition to his ideas. The next, more explicitly archaeological studies, namely, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Words and Things*, were met with vitriolic attacks, especially by enemies of structuralism or defenders of humanism or both. It was in this context that Foucault's first negative encounter with Jean-Paul Sartre occurred.³⁹

At times, Foucault was rather immoderate in his defense, as we saw in volume I. One of his more balanced responses was given in an interview published in the book review supplement of *Le monde* shortly after the appearance of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). There he explicitly

allies himself with the new historians of the *Annales* school against critics like Sartre:

I am completely opposed to a certain conception of history that takes for its model a kind of grand continuous and homogeneous evolution, a sort of great mythic life. Historians now know very well that the mass of historical documents can be combined according to different series [*séries*] that have neither the same direction [*repères*] nor the same type of evolution. The history of material civilization (agricultural techniques, dwellings, domestic implements, means of transportation) does not unfold in the same way as the history of political institutions or the history of monetary fluctuations. What Marc Bloch, Fèbvre and Braudel have shown for history *tout court*, can be shown, I think, for the history of ideas, of knowledge and of thought in general. So while it is possible to write a history of general paralysis [or] the history of Pasteur's thought, one can also undertake at a level heretofore rather neglected the historical analysis of medical discourse in the nineteenth century or in the modern era. This history would not be that of discoveries and mistakes, it would not be one of influences and originalities [as in traditional history of ideas], but would be the history of the conditions that have made possible the appearance, the functioning and the transformation of medical discourse. (*DE* 1:787–88; *FL* 66, "The Birth of a World," translation altered)

But this strategic alliance with the *Annalistes* should not be taken as complete identification. As I warned at the outset, Foucault is a historian *suo modo*. In the course of our study we shall observe him blazing his own methodological trail distinct from that of Marxists, traditionalists, or members of the *Annales* school.⁴⁰

Despite his opposition to an evolutionary model of historical explanation, Foucault's own trail was not blazed in a day. Mention of "discourse," which by 1969 had become almost synonymous with Foucault's work, suggests that we conclude this chapter with a brief summary of the major steps in his career. This overview of his thought will both introduce us to the works that we shall discuss in detail in subsequent chapters and prepare us to appreciate the centrality and scope of the two "conceptual coordinates," namely, nominalism and the event, by which we shall order the whole of his thought.

EXCURSUS: STAGES ON FOUCAULT'S WAY

Although I shall be discussing each of Foucault's major works on different occasions as their relevance arises, it may be helpful early in our study

to survey the curve of his thought across his career as a whole.⁴¹ This will enable me to offer initial clarifications of several technical terms that emerge in the course of his writings and to orient the reader along the path Foucault's reflection is taking. *Because much of what follows constitutes an extended promissory note, the reader may wish simply to move to the following chapters and consult the glossary for the meaning of technical terms as they arise.*

It is common to demarcate two phases in Foucault's mature thought, the archaeological and the genealogical. But I believe it helpful to distinguish a third phase, that of "problematization," to characterize his final works. There, the issue is not so much power, as in his genealogies, or knowledge and truth, as with his archaeologies, but the cognate issue of how a practice shifts from the unexceptionable to the problematic in the cultural life of a community. As I shall argue in chapter 8, these so-called phases are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they allow for parallel charting along distinct axes running throughout Foucault's major works. So with this caveat in mind, let us conclude this chapter with a brief overview of these moments in his career.

Archaeology

To distinguish his approach from traditional, narrativist history, Foucault chose the term "archaeology." In what some call his "discourse on method," *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), he discusses four of the main considerations that differentiate archaeology from the history of ideas, namely, the attribution of *innovation*, the analysis of *contradictions*, *comparative descriptions*, and the mapping of *transformations* (AK 138). Again, it is a matter of elaborating the positive of the negative sketched earlier in this chapter to reveal a fuller image of archaeology as Foucault understands it. These topics will reappear at various junctures in the following chapters.

Whereas the history of ideas attends to the problem of origins with regard to every element of history in each of its stages, Foucault objects that the question of originality is context dependent and, specifically, relative to a series of "enunciative regularities" that cut across the standard dualities of old/new, traditional/original, and standard typical/deviant that mark history of ideas. It is the task of archaeology to map those discursive fields and in so doing to suggest alternative unities and relations for consideration. Hence, the evolutionary model of historical explanation is fragmented, as we discover in the famous epistemic breaks that parcel *The Order of Things*.

The history of ideas, on Foucault's reading, distinguishes surface and fundamental *contradictions*, seeking to remove the former and to uncover the latter as the principle of its historicity. The paradigm, no doubt, is the notion of basic contradiction as the moving force of Hegelian dialectic. Archaeology, on the contrary, considers contradictions as objects to be described for themselves rather than as appearances to be overcome or hidden principles to be uncovered. In describing the extent and form of the gap that separates the contradictories (their various types, levels, and functions), archaeology charts what Foucault calls "a space of multiple dissensions" that he terms a "discursive formation" (AK 155). Archaeology is the analysis of such discursive formations or groupings of "a whole population of statement-events" (EW 2:321, Circle).⁴²

"Archaeological study," Foucault insists, "is always in the plural" (AK 157). In his archaeology of medical perception, *The Birth of the Clinic*, he speaks of "the diacritical principle of medical observation: *the only pathological fact is a comparative fact.*"⁴³ Earlier in the same work he contrasts modern medicine with eighteenth-century "medicine of species" much the way we have contrasted archaeological comparisons with phenomenological intuition. The former "is not related to a specific absolute of which it is the more or less modified manifestation: it is perceived solely in the relativity of difference by a gaze that is in some sense diacritical" (BC 27). In other words, unlike phenomenology, archaeology is comparative in nature. On several occasions, Foucault speaks of it as "diagnostic," a term by which he describes contemporary philosophy itself. Consider the following from an interview regarding his relation to Sartre:

You were asking me a while ago how and in what way philosophy has changed. Well, perhaps one could say this: philosophy from Hegel to Sartre has essentially been a totalizing enterprise, if not of the world or of knowledge [*savoir*], at least of human experience. I would say that perhaps if there is now an autonomous philosophical activity, if there can be a philosophy that is not simply a sort of theoretical activity within mathematics or linguistics or ethnology or political economy, if there is a philosophy free or independent of all these domains, then one could define it as a diagnostic activity. To diagnose the present is to say what the present is, and how our present is absolutely different from all that is not it, that is to say, from our past. Perhaps this is the task for philosophy now.⁴⁴

Note that this characterization links philosophy with history (of the present) and sets the present against its other, not in an effort to reach its essence (as in phenomenological reduction to an essential insight) but in order to establish a limited and regional set of analogies and differences among a set of discursive formations in a certain period. We shall see, in our reading of *The Order of Things*, that his analysis of the epistemic conditions shared by General Grammar, Analysis of Wealth, and Natural History in the eighteenth century, rather than pointing to a world view, stems from what he calls “a region of interpositivity” among these disciplines, by which he means that these conditions establish both the criteria for what counts as evidence and the appearance of objects of study previously unavailable for investigation.⁴⁵ In stark contrast with the Sartrean view, he concludes:

The horizon of archaeology, therefore, is not a science, a rationality, a culture; it is a tangle of interpositivities whose limits and points of intersection cannot be fixed in a single operation. Archaeology is a comparative analysis that is not intended to reduce the diversity of discourses, and to outline the unity that must totalize them, but is intended to divide up their diversity into different figures. Archaeological comparison does not have a unifying, but a diversifying effect. (AK 159–60)

Fragmentation, not totalization; multiplicity, not unity; the richness of the singular, not the monotony of the universal; attention to the actually employed statement, not to the timeless meaning—such are the fruits of Foucault’s “positivism.”

The mapping of transformations is the final feature that Foucault lists on the positive side in contrasting archaeology with the history of ideas. Since this feature is particularly pertinent to my general thesis, witness the subtitle of the present volume, I shall discuss it only briefly at this introductory stage. It is under this rubric that Foucault defends archaeology against the Sartrean accusation of having “murdered” history by ignoring the temporal for the spatial. Though admittedly it shatters the universal time of totalizing history, archaeology, he insists, reveals the *multiple temporalities* of discursive formations. What he calls the enunciative level (the level of statements and discursive formations at which he is working) “has its own temporal articulations” which he calls “‘enunciative periods’ that are articulated, but without being confused

with them, upon the time of concepts, on theoretical phases, on stages of formalization and of linguistic development" (AK 148). This seems analogous to the various temporal "speeds" appealed to by the new historians.⁴⁶ Thus, "far from being indifferent to succession, archaeology maps the *temporal vectors of derivation*" (AK 169, emphasis his). As we shall see, archaeology scarcely ignores the historical "event" as has often been charged. What archaeology suspends is the theme of succession as an absolute to which discourse in its finitude is subject. It seeks to free us from two models of temporality dominant in the history of ideas, namely, the linear model of speech and the cumulative model of a stream of consciousness. "Discourse, at least as analyzed by archaeology, that is, at the level of its positivity," he insists, "is not a consciousness that embodies its project in the external form of language [*langage*]; it is not a language [*langue*], plus a subject to speak it. It is a *practice* that has its own forms of sequence and succession" (AK 169, emphasis added).

We shall speak of these transformations at greater length elsewhere. But we should note at this juncture that "the contemporaneity of several transformations does not mean their exact chronological coincidence: each transformation may have its own particular index of temporal 'viscosity'" (AK 175). For example, the diverse speeds with which Natural History, General Grammar, and the Analysis of Wealth were constituted in the course of the seventeenth century—though they formed a domain of interpositivity—were linked to a great many conditions and nondiscursive practices. So we should keep this temporal (event-oriented) character of transformation in mind when we are tempted by the antihistorical rhetoric of either side in the controversy over Foucault's alleged "historicide."

Foucault described his first three major works, namely, *The History of Madness (Madness and Civilization)* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), and *The Order of Things* (1966), as "archaeologies" (see *EW* 2:310, Circle). He insisted that his use denoted not the uncovering of layers of material evidence for dead civilizations, much less the search for the origin [*archē*] of a society, but the study of the *archive* of a society in a particular period. "I shall call an *archive*," he explains, "not the totality of texts that have been preserved by a civilization or the set of traces that could be salvaged from its downfall, but the series of rules which determine in a culture the appearance and disappearance of statements, their retention and their destruction, their paradoxical existence as *events* and

things" (*EW* 2:309, Circle). As he remarks briefly in a response to the members of the Epistemology Circle of the Ecole Normale Supérieure and at greater length in his methodological *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969),⁴⁷ the proper domain for this investigation is the statement or utterance [*l'énoncé*], which is neither the sentence of linguistics nor the proposition of logic but something approximating the speech act of ordinary language philosophers.⁴⁸ Statements are gathered into a *discourse*, which Foucault describes as "the always finite and temporally limited ensemble of those statements alone which were formulated." In other words, it is "the set of all effective statements (whether written or spoken) in their dispersion as events and in the immediacy that is proper to each." Foucault describes archaeology as "the project of a *pure description of the facts of discourse*" (*EW* 2:307, 306, Circle).

This descriptive analysis differs from the formalist approach of structuralism as well as from the interpretive method of hermeneutics. The former is essentialist in character, basing social intelligibility on atemporal structures that define in advance the nature of empirical relations. The latter presupposes a "deeper" or implicit meaning on the part of a subject that can be uncovered by what is often called "understanding." As we saw in volume 1, this method of historical *Verstehen*, favored by Raymond Aron, was later adopted and adapted by Sartre. We shall find that Foucault's archaeological method historicizes the structuralist forms into rules of transformation and displacement, while setting aside the hermeneuticists' deep "meanings" and the consciousness that constitutes them. In fact, Foucault seems radically to reject the hermeneutical method for its reliance on the "anthropological quadrilateral" that circumscribes modern thought. It is the aim of his archaeology of the human sciences in *The Order of Things* to help free us from this "anthropological prejudice."⁴⁹

The statement exhibits the paradoxical properties of an *event* and a *thing*. As an event, the statement is singular and historical. It can erupt like a chance occurrence, countermining the necessity of a logical progression, or serve as the exception to any would-be rule. It is linked to the act of writing or the articulation of a speech and yet it can obtain "a residual existence in the field of memory or in the materiality of manuscripts, books, and any other form of record." The statement is linked to the situations that give rise to it and the consequences it gives rise to as we shall see when we discuss nondiscursive practices. But it is also connected "at

the same time and in a quite different modality, to the statements that precede it and follow it" (*EW* 2:308, Circle). It is the materiality of the statement that gives it its characteristics as a thing. As such, it can be rendered scarce or exclusive, becoming the object of competition and grounding an entire "economy" of evaluation and exchange, of domination and control.

To make these exceedingly abstract accounts more concrete, let us consider briefly how this translates into Foucault's first archaeological study of madness. Though less explicitly archaeological than his two following works, it constitutes a kind of argument a fortiori for archaeological analyses in these other texts.

He discounts the standard unities from the history of ideas (namely, such "anthropological categories" as author, object, oeuvre, and the like) to arrive at a plurality of discourses unified "by the common space in which diverse objects stand out and are continuously transformed." This reveals that, in the case in point,

the unity of the discourses on madness is not founded on the existence of the object "madness," or on the constitution of a unique horizon of objectivity; it is *the series of rules* which make possible, during a given period, the appearance of medical descriptions (with their object), the appearance of a series of discriminatory and repressive measures (with their particular object), and the appearance of a set of practices codified in prescriptions or medical treatments (with their specific objects). It is thus the set of rules which takes account of the object's non coincidence with itself, its perpetual difference, its deviation and dispersion rather than of the object itself in its identity. (*EW* 2:313, Circle).

In other words, what traditional history would read (and has read) as the account of the evolution of insanity from madness to mental illness, starting with the inability of the Age of Reason to come to terms with what previous ages had accommodated as madness in its variety and suggestive richness, leading to its exclusion and confinement in the eighteenth century and its "medicalization" in the nineteenth—such a straight-forward historical account is now read as the "space" where a multiplicity of discursive and nondiscursive practices work their way out in accord with rules of formation and transformation that are unconsciously applied by those who exercise these practices.⁵⁰ This fragmentation of substantial unities and their concatenation in series of events and

practices is the first example of what in the next chapter we shall discuss as Foucault's "nominalism," the traditional epistemological focus on individuals along with a dismissal of would-be universal concepts as mere general names. One of several anti-Platonic themes that recur throughout Foucault's work, this nominalistic understanding of a rule as a "space of dispersion" rather than as an essential or conceptual unifier will greet us several times throughout our study.

Genealogy

Following *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault's next two books assumed a different tack, focusing on relations of power and in general paying greater attention to the nondiscursive than had previously been the case. It is no coincidence that these volumes, *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1976), are more accessible than his previous works. The vocabulary is less technical and the argument less convoluted.

Inspired by Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, this phase of Foucault's writing is equally anti-Platonic in character.⁵¹ In fact, Foucault insists "it is necessary to master history so as to turn it to genealogical uses, that is, strictly anti-Platonic purposes. Only then will the historical sense free itself from the demands of a suprahistorical history" (*EW* 2:385, NGH). Taking the term in its common usage, one might expect Foucauldian genealogy to reach back to an absolute beginning or origin, but genealogy is as antifoundationalist as its archaeological predecessor. "If the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms." Revealing an overlap with a basic feature of archaeological investigation, Foucault continues: "What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity" (*EW* 2:371–372, NGH). In other words, genealogy resists traditional historiographic unities (author, text, movement) as strenuously as does archaeology.

This approach continues the war on anthropologism initiated by Foucauldian archaeology: "Where the soul pretends unification or the self fabricates a coherent identity, the genealogist sets out to study the beginning—numberless beginnings whose faint traces and hints of color are

readily seen by an historical eye.” The reason for this attention to “numberless beginnings” may well be, as Henri Iréné Marrou insisted, because the historian is by profession a nominalist, attached to the singular and unrepeatable. Though such a claim might require modification in the age of serial history described earlier, its antimetaphysical bias remains intact.⁵² “The analysis of descent [as distinct from origin],” Foucault explains, “permits the dissociation of the Me, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events” (*EW* 2:374, NGH). If the ideal of metaphysics from Aristotle to Hegel has been to grasp the many through the one (a claim that led the former to deny history the status of a science and the latter to redefine the nature of “scientific” history), such poststructuralist thinkers as Foucault and Deleuze have reversed this project, seeking to fragment traditional unities and reveal the “numberless beginnings” without end that cover our historical landscape. Not only does this constitute a radical restatement of the question of the nature and meaning of “history,” it redirects the method and reframes the locus where one might seek an answer.

How are these two methods, archaeology and genealogy, related to each other? From the vantage point of his later work, Foucault offers a response. Addressing his then current interest, he refers to the fact that “the archaeological dimension of the analysis [of a history of truth] made it possible to examine the forms themselves” whereas “its genealogical dimension enabled me to analyze their formation out of the practices and the modifications undergone by the latter.”⁵³ In other words, archaeology is related to genealogy, roughly, as the analysis of discursive to that of nondiscursive practices. Where archaeology studies the rules of formation and transformation of discursive practices, genealogy analyzes the strategies of domination and control that obtain among the actions of self and others. Of course, this distinction is imperfect; the discursive, though distinct, can scarcely be separated from the nondiscursive, as we shall see. And Foucault never resolved the question of their precise interrelation except by implicit appeal to a characteristically spatial metaphor (“diagonally”).⁵⁴ But the distinction holds throughout Foucault’s work and, as we shall see, it serves a valuable methodological purpose.

The theme that has become synonymous with Foucauldian genealogy is *power*. If the archaeological accent is on discourse, the genealogical is on relations of power. By now it is well known that Foucault understands

this term to denote a set of relations, positive and constructive as well as negative and dominating, among individuals and/or groups rather than a substance or quality that anyone could be seen as possessing. Again, in the nominalist sense that pervades his thinking, “power” as such does not exist; only particular relations of domination or control are said to be real; that is, what he describes as relations of “action on an action” of others.⁵⁵

Foucault will later argue that the question of power had been with him from the start, and I shall be defending that claim. But its explicit treatment occurs in works dating from this second phase of his career. Among the first of these is the essay from which I have been quoting, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” One commentator considers it “perhaps Foucault’s key methodological essay after his break with archaeology.”⁵⁶ Note that it is only the negative, dominating character of power relations that is mentioned here. For example, Foucault notes that “genealogy . . . seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection [rather than the myth of some metaphysical origin]: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations” (*EW* 2:376, NGH). In fact, in an interview given several years later, he will insist that historical intelligibility is not a matter of a hermeneutical quest for meaning but of the genealogical focus on struggle. He speaks of “a refusal of analyses couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures, and a recourse to analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic developments, and tactics.” And he draws the methodological moral: “Here I believe one’s point of reference should not be to the great model of language [*langue*] and signs, but to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning.”⁵⁷

In volume 1 I registered Sartre’s insistence that the intelligibility of history is the intelligibility of struggle. This is a major thesis of volume 2 of his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.⁵⁸ Foucault is seconding this opinion. But in contrast to Sartre, he insists that dialectic will never afford us that intelligibility: “‘Dialectic’ is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton” (*EW* 3:116, “Truth and Power”).

Foucauldian genealogy departs from the Sartrean approach to historical intelligibility in yet another respect. Whereas Sartre offered as a hy-

pothetical goal of history the imaginative “as if” of the “city of ends” where each freedom respects every other in a relationship of positive reciprocity, Foucault explicitly rejects such utopianism, apparently even as a practical ideal:

Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. (*EW* 2:378, NGH)

This sounds much more like Sartre’s well-known claim in *Being and Nothingness* that “the essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Musein*; it is conflict.”⁵⁹ But where Sartre will subsequently resolve this conflict by appeal to dialectical reason in the *Critique*, Foucault rejects any such dialectical rationality. A mark of Foucault’s political thought that has disconcerted critics over the years is its emphasis on the possibility of change without the promise or even the hope of ultimate goals again his resolute nominalism. A thesis of beginnings without end, Foucauldian history is open at both extremes.⁶⁰

Problematization

It seems to me that there was one element capable of describing the history of thought [as distinct from that of ideas or of mentalities]: this is what one would call the element of problems, or more precisely, problematizations. The work of the history of thought would be to rediscover at the root of these diverse solutions the general form of problematization that has made them possible

Michel Foucault, “Problemativity,” *Foucault Live*

In a gesture that we said Foucault would repeat on several occasions, he reflects on his prior work in light of his current interest and reads the former as in some sense anticipating the latter. Thus, in an interview with his assistant at the Collège de France, François Ewald, toward the end of his life, he reflects: “What serves as a common form to the work I’ve done since *The History of Madness* is the notion of *problematization*, though I have not yet sufficiently isolated this notion” (*DE* 4:669; *FL* 457, “The Concern for Truth”). He goes on to explain:

Problematization doesn’t mean the representation of a preexistent object, nor the creation through discourse of an object that doesn’t exist. It denotes the set of discursive or *nondiscursive* practices that makes

something enter the play of the true and false and constitutes it as an object for thought (whether under the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge [*connaissance*], political analysis, or the like). (*DE* 4:670; *FL* 456–457, emphasis added)

Although he did speak of “problematizing” some years earlier,⁶¹ it is only with his final works, the second and third volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, namely, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, that the term emerges explicitly to denote his approach to history. Thus, in the introduction to volume 2, he distinguished between the interdiction of certain sexual conduct as well as the pleasures attached to it and the moral problematization of the same:

It seemed to me . . . that the question that ought to guide my inquiry was the following: how, why, and in what forms was sexuality constituted as a moral domain? Why this ethical concern that was so persistent despite its varying forms and intensity? Why this “problematization”? But, after all, this was the proper task of a history of thought, as against a history of behaviors or representations: to define the conditions in which human beings “problematize” what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live. (*UP* 10)

The problematizing of sexual matters (*ta aphrodisia*, the works of Aphrodite) in Greek and Greco-Roman culture became the focus of his last two published volumes. It was a matter of analyzing “not behaviors or ideas, nor societies and their ‘ideologies,’ but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought—and the *practices* on the basis of which those problematizations are formed” (*UP* 11). But, as we noted, he extends the focus of these problematizations across the entirety of his major works:

There was the problematization of madness and illness arising out of social and medical practices, and defining a certain pattern of “normalization”; a problematization of life, language, and labor in discursive practices that conformed to certain “epistemic” rules; and a problematization of crime and criminal behavior emerging from certain punitive practices conforming to a “disciplinary” model. (*UP* 12)

Turning to his present work, he adds: “And now I would like to show how, in classical antiquity, sexual activity and sexual pleasures were problematized through practices of the self, bringing into play the crite-

ria of an ‘aesthetics of existence’” (UP 12). I shall delay discussion of Foucault’s adoption of an aesthetic criterion for “ethical” judgment till later in our study. But as I conclude this excursus, I should explain why I am treating problematization as another phase in his thinking, one distinct from archaeology and genealogy strictly speaking.

The Specificity of Problematization

Many commentators seem to treat problematization as simply a more refined form of genealogy. There is textual support for this view. But there are several reasons for distinguishing the two. First, they employ distinctive vocabularies and address different issues. The signal term of genealogy, “power,” occurs relatively rarely in the last two published volumes of the history of sexuality⁶² and the issue addressed is not the control of populations (biopower) but the care of the self, specifically, the constitution of the moral self. Second, though he sometimes seems to speak of problematization as a form of genealogy, Foucault explicitly describes it as a kind of complement to archaeological and genealogical methods. Thus, he observes that “to speak of ‘sexuality’ as a historically singular experience also presupposed the availability of tools capable of analyzing the peculiar characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that constitute [this experience]: (1) the formation of sciences [*savoirs*] that refer to it, (2) the systems of power that regulate its practice, (3) the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to recognize themselves as subjects of this sexuality” (UP 4). What he calls “practices of the self” in general and, specifically, a “hermeneutics of desire” (in the Christian era) offers this third, complementary ingredient. I am arguing that it is the “problematization” of these practices and subsequently of the objects of desire that constitutes the work of Foucault’s last phase. Third, in describing what I have called the “stages” in his thought, Foucault denotes three “theoretical shifts,” those corresponding to archaeology and genealogy and “a third shift, in order to analyze what is termed ‘the subject.’” It seemed appropriate in this third move, he explained, “to look for the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject” (UP 6). This, I am arguing, is the task for the problematization of the ethical and the constitution of the moral self. Though he refers to this third theoretical shift as a “genealogy,” he places the term in scare quotes, which I take to be indicative of his accommodated use of the word. Finally, in an inter-

view published the year of his death, he speaks of problematization as what we might call the bridge concept between his study of sexuality and his more recent concern with “techniques of the self,” adding that the work to be done nowadays is “a work of problematization and perpetual reproblemation.” He now insists that “if the work of thinking [*la pensée*] has a meaning—different from that of reforming institutions and codes—, it consists in reconsidering at its root the way people problematize their behavior (their sexual activity, their punitive practice, their attitude toward madness, and the like).”⁶³ In other words, he is willing to reread his earlier studies under the aspect of problematization, a project that we shall pursue at length when we reconstruct the Foucauldian “triangle” and its resultant “prism” in chapter 7.

It is clear that, like thinking [*la pensée*] itself, “problematizing” has its practical dimension. In fact, both terms seem to precede the traditional theory/practice distinction. As such, they cannot be dismissed as merely “theoretical” concepts. So, for example, Foucault can speak of the prison reform movement (the *GIP*) in which he was involved in the 1970s as “an enterprise of ‘problematization,’ an effort at rendering problematic and doubtful the evidences, practices, rules, institutions and habits that had been sedimented for decades and decades.”⁶⁴ In this last remark we grasp both the ambiguity of the term in Foucauldian discourse, once we adopt the theory/practice mode in our standard communication, and what will emerge as the *critical* nature of the entire Foucauldian enterprise, a point to be addressed at length later in our study.

As we conclude this excursus and the chapter as a whole, we must face the pragmatic question: What is at stake in this distinction? What difference does it make to speak of a distinct, third phase in Foucault’s career? The full meaning of what is at issue will be appreciated only when we address Foucault’s “triangle” and “prism” in chapter 7. But, to anticipate somewhat that more detailed argument, let us note that the point of distinguishing a third “theoretical” or, better, “methodological” shift in Foucault’s work is to resonate with the three axes that will guide our examination of his thought for the most part (if not as a whole). For we have already seen that one can reconsider his major works as problematizations, and I shall argue that they can be read archaeologically or genealogically as well. What does it contribute toward historical intelligibility to read problematization as *complementary* to archaeology and genealogy? No doubt, the space enclosed by the operations of truth,

power, and self is not threatened by this methodological controversy. Still, Foucault assures us, “the study of (modes of) problematization (that is, of what is neither an anthropological constant nor a chronological variation) is thus the way to analyze questions of general import *in their historically unique form*.”⁶⁵ This has been the goal of numerous French philosophers at least since Jean Wahl voiced that ideal with his *Vers le concret* in the 1930s. Not only concreteness but methodological variety follows from this distinction. The resultant ability to play off problematization against archaeology and genealogy *sans phrase* serves to increase the potential combinations and permutations in a way congenial to Foucauldian nominalism with its plurality of intelligibilities.

Having surveyed Foucault’s main criticisms of traditional intellectual history and gained an overview of his suggested alternatives, we are prepared to advance in a spiral motion that carries us toward a more determinate understanding of his historiography. First, we shall assess the nature and import of nominalism as it functions in Foucault’s approach to historical intelligibility (chap. 2). We can then address the complexity and richness of his appeal to the “event” as we move still closer to the specificity of his project in chapter three.⁶⁶

Chapter Two

Foucault and Historical Nominalism

Sartre once claimed that existentialism was “nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusion from a consistently atheistic position.”¹ One could characterize Foucault’s reading of history as an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently nominalistic position. For the “archaeologies,” “genealogies,” and “problematizations” of human discursive and nondiscursive practices that issued from his pen over the quarter century preceding his untimely death are united by their aggressively anti-Platonic and individualist stance. Foucault noted this proclivity on several occasions.² Given the privileged place of history in his writings (as noted at the outset, all of his major works are “histories” of a sort), if the nominalist position is so central to his thought, it should afford us a valuable perspective on his work in general and especially on his understanding of reason in history. For the fragmenting force of nominalism (the ancient doctrine that only individuals exist, that general terms and concepts are mere “words”) serves to dissolve historical or any other “Reason” into a plurality of “reasons.” We have already begun to notice that this is a defining feature of Foucault’s approach.

Nothing is more reasonable than a nominalist conception of history.

Paul Veyne,
Writing History

Overturning Platonism: what philosophy has not tried?

Michel Foucault,
“Theatrum,”
Essential Works

By common consensus, Foucault is a difficult and elusive thinker. We have seen that he is also a multifaceted and evolving one. I am not suggesting that there is a single key for unlocking his thought, much less that what Paul Veyne calls “historical nominalism” provides it. But I do wish to argue that historical nominalism as I shall describe and exemplify it in this chapter stands as one of the consistencies in his protean enterprise—providing an ironically functional equivalent to that historical unity which Sartre sought in dialectical Reason. But in Foucault’s case, it is a unity without identity, a “multiplicity,” sustained only by his unwavering decision to construct a history of reason. A review of the nature and extent of his nominalist commitment will help clarify several obscurities that critics have rather commonly noted in his writings.³

So, after having defined “historical nominalism” as well as certain kindred concepts in Foucault’s lexicon, I shall focus on his genealogies of the carceral system in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and of modern sexuality in *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1976), where his nominalism is most explicit, as extended instances of historical nominalism in practice, in order to assess how appeal to this epistemic and ontological thesis helps resolve some well-known problems in his writings.⁴

HISTORICAL NOMINALISM

What Foucault endorses as “nominalism” is perforce a kind of *methodological* individualism.⁵ It treats collectives such as socioeconomic class and the State or abstractions like “man” and “power” as reducible, for purposes of explanation, to the individuals that comprise them. Indeed, failure to respect his underlying nominalism has frustrated critics who have complained about the elusive character of his concept of power. Yet here as elsewhere, Foucault will not stand still for critical categorization. His archaeological concepts of the *episteme* (roughly, grid of intelligibility) and of the historical a priori, for instance, are scarcely reducible to individual mental events as one would expect of a typical nominalist. In fact, the whole archaeological project assumes the possibility of “coming face to face with order in its primary state,” as Foucault remarks in *The Order of Things* (xxi). Like so many aspects of his thought, Foucault’s “nominalism” will be of its own kind.

Ian Hacking, who admits to having made use of “the early ‘archaeological’ work of Foucault” in formulating his “historical ontology,” in a

book by that title proposes a “dynamic nominalism,” which he describes as the claim that “in some cases our classifications and our classes conspire to emerge hand in hand, each egging the other on.” He does not go so far as to deny the existence of natural kinds like horses or planets as a robust nominalist might do, but his study of statistical reasoning and Foucauldian archaeology inspires a certain interactive nominalist stance.⁶ He admits that “Foucault propounds an extreme nominalism: nothing, not even the ways I can describe myself, is either this or that but history made it so.” This is what Veyne seems to mean by “historical nominalism.” Hacking’s more moderate view limits itself to the social classifications that Foucault insists constitute their own subjects: the mentally-ill, the delinquent, the pervert. None of these subjects existed prior to the social constitution of the category that denominates them. In other words, Hacking is a social constructivist as is Foucault. The categories we employ to tame the wild profusion of our experiences are not timeless Platonic forms; rather, they are grids of intelligibility whose emergence and decline can be mapped by Foucauldian “histories.”

Against the accusation of extreme nominalism, at least, it might be countered that Foucault’s appeal to nominalism is merely rhetorical, a strategic move to avoid the tendency to read a “vitalist” metaphysics into his discourse of power. This appears to be Etienne Balibar’s suggestion⁷ and it resonates with Foucault’s antidialectical position, not to mention his Heideggerian distrust of metaphysics. But his equally Heideggerian mention of “being” throughout his writings leaves such a purely rhetorical or even a simply methodological usage in doubt.

Deleuze offers what is perhaps a more adequate interpretation of the matter when he observes that Foucault’s nominalism is not a question of distinguishing universals and particulars on behalf of particulars (as the standard doctrine holds) but one of drawing the line between constants and variables in favor of the latter:

It matters little if general terms are used in order to reflect on apparatuses [*dispositifs*]: they are names given to variables. All constants are done away with. The lines which make up the apparatuses demonstrate continuous variations. There are no more universals that is to say, there is nothing except lines of variation. General terms are the co-ordinates which have no meaning other than to make possible the estimation of a continuous variation.⁸

This reading seems more adequate if you take seriously the metaphysical implications of a nominalist stance. Deleuze clearly does. Foucault, on the other hand, was considerably less interested in metaphysics than was his erstwhile friend. Hence his slighting of any discussion of relationality, though the concept figures centrally in his work.⁹

THE NOMINALIST HISTORIAN'S TASK

Hayden White contends that “wherever Foucault looks, he finds nothing but discourse.” It would be more accurate to say he finds nothing but *practices*, discursive and nondiscursive, the former predominating in his archaeological works and the latter in his genealogies, though both are acknowledged throughout these writings.¹⁰ What does he mean by “practice”?¹¹ In general, the term refers to a preconceptual, anonymous, socially sanctioned body of rules that govern one’s manner of perceiving, imagining, judging, and acting. Foucault describes practices as “places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect” (*EW* 3:225, QM). Neither a disposition such as Bourdieu’s “habitus”¹² nor an individual occurrence like an act, a practice forms the intelligible background for actions by its twofold character as *judicative* and “*veridicative*.” On the one hand, practices establish and apply norms, controls, and exclusions; they are instruments of power. On the other, they render true/false discourse possible; they open a field for what Foucault will later call “games of truth.”¹³ As such, the same practice can be charted along distinct axes—a point I shall argue in chapter 7. Thus the practice of legal punishment entails the interplay between a “code” that regulates the ways of acting—how to discipline an inmate, for example—and the production of true discourse which legitimates these ways of acting (*EW* 3:230, QM). With the emergence of the third axis of “subjectivation” in Foucault’s last works, we can chart this same carceral practice along the axis constitutive of a certain kind of subject: the con, the delinquent, the recidivist.¹⁴ So the famous power/knowledge dyad in Foucault’s general schema merely denotes respectively these judicative and veridicative dimensions of “practice.”

What then, for Foucault, is the nominalist historian’s task? To lay bare these practices in their plurality and their contingency in order to reveal the *fields* that make an otherwise heterogeneous collection of objects and events intelligible. There are no atomic facts, no acontextual givens in

Foucault's account that might constitute the foundation for a social or cultural whole. Neither are there causal chains linking the recent with the more distant past. As Foucault's friend and colleague the classical historian Paul Veyne argues, there are no "natural" objects at all. Indeed, history as it has been traditionally construed "does not exist."¹⁵

It is a certain discursive practice that Plato was exercising when he "routed the Sophists" not a source of unalloyed joy for Foucault. What was "natural" and "rational" for a fourth-century Athenian, Foucault claims, should not be expected to count as such for a twentieth-century Parisian. Not only is there no perduring human nature to "normalize" their respective discourses, the practices of the historian and the philosopher are themselves historical, subject to the descriptive and interpretive techniques that Foucault labels "archaeology" and "genealogy." I have offered an initial sketch of these techniques in chapter 1. Let us review Foucault's nominalistic practices concretely in two genealogical studies, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*.

As a prelude to this undertaking, consider how nominalism enters into his quasi definition of the cardinal genealogical concept of power: "By 'power' it seems we should understand first of all the multiplicity of relations of force which are imminent to the domain where they are exercised and which are constitutive of their organization."¹⁶ While this serves as a good initial attempt, it fails to distinguish power from force and so lacks the nuance he will provide elsewhere.¹⁷ After adding several features to characterize the term, he pauses as if for breath to confess: "[In order to arrive at] a grid of intelligibility of the social order . . . one needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name which one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society."¹⁸ As he says elsewhere, there are "capillaries" of power throughout the social body. Historiography itself, though commonly conceived as seeking the truth about the past, could well be charted along the power axis and not just in the shallow sense that it is the narrative of the victors; that is, its genealogy could fruitfully be read as a "microphysics of power."

NOMINALISM IN PRACTICE: *DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH*

With accustomed irony, Foucault once referred to this as his "first book," though we have seen that it ranks rather far along the line of his pub-

lished works. It is a genealogy, that is, an uncovering of the space and conditions for the emergence of nineteenth-century penal reform, which he finds, not in the high-minded humanitarianism of its proponents, but in an entire “carceral system” that encompasses military training, scholastic discipline, and the organization of individuals in factories, hospitals, and other institutions. As with its predecessors, this book notes a crucial transformation beginning in 1790; in this case the transformation is of penal practices.

His pervasive nominalism counsels that we use the plural, speaking of archaeologies, genealogies, and “problematizations” in Foucault’s work. The first two concepts are commonly associated with his writings; the last, as I noted in an excursus to the previous chapter, requires some explanation and defense. *Discipline and Punish* is a prime example of what Foucault offers as a “history of problems and not of periods.”¹⁹ Recall that historian François Furet appealed to problems to distinguish the new from the traditional history in France.²⁰ But Lord Acton had anticipated the distinction several decades earlier with his celebrated prescription that historians address themselves to problems rather than periods. What is distinctive about Foucauldian “problematization” is its emphasis not on the problem itself but on how it became problematic, its contrast with another era for which it was scarcely a problem at all. Thus the contrast between the “desiring subject” in the Christian era of confessional practices differs from the “subject of venereal acts and pleasures [*ta aphrodesia*]” in classical Greece or even from confessional practices in the Hellenistic world.²¹ Study of a period would require an exhaustive treatment of all available material as well as a broad and general chronological distribution of the inquiry. In this volume Foucault makes no attempt to undertake such a task. Study of a problem, on the contrary, involves “choice of the material as a function of the givens of the problem, a focusing of analysis on elements capable of being resolved, and the establishment of relations that allow this solution.”²² The problem in the case at hand is to account for the fact that from about 1791 a vast array of penal methods was replaced by one, incarceration. What made this displacement so hasty (within twenty years)? Why was it so readily accepted, even withstanding subsequent political upheavals? These questions could be asked by the historian or the sociologist. What is unique about Foucault’s concept of problematization employed here is the response he seeks and offers us.

What Foucault finds in answer is a *new rationale* at work—what he terms “punitive reason”—as well as a *new set of practices* (recall his larger undertaking of writing a history of “reason”). These constitute the anchor points for a strategy of regimentation, a calculus that includes dimensions of power, knowledge, and, in retrospect at least, subjectivation. He notes a mutual reinforcement between practices of surveillance and punishment, on the one hand, and the rise of the human sciences on the other. In this context of strategies and power, these disciplines appear as tactics of *control* and *normalization*, indeed, of control by normalization.

One of his most brilliant analyses in this book is of the practice of the “examination” [*l’examen*]. It is no coincidence that this term covers the spectrum from physical inspections and military drills to performance tests and qualifying exams. For, as the object of a genealogical investigation, the exam underscores the vulnerability of our bodies to a “normalizing gaze.” If the Sartrean look [*le regard*] fastened on our bodily condition as being-for-others, it was in order to capture, objectify, and (in the exploitative society described in *Being and Nothingness*) alienate the other’s existence. The Foucauldian look is more oblique, though no less controlling. Above all, it does not issue from a for-itself or consciousness, though it does objectify: “At the heart of the procedures of discipline, [the gaze] manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected” (*DP* 184–85). It is the perfect example of the convergence of knowledge and power in a ritual of surveillance “that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (*DP* 184). Power is exercised through a “normalizing gaze.” It is “the power of the Norm” that appears through what Foucault calls the “disciplines” (*DP* 184).

Unlike the Sartrean gaze that “alienates” (in the disputed sense that equates objectification with alienation), Foucault’s “normalizing” gaze renders the individual an “object” for scientific investigation and “subjects” him or her to various forms of social control. In both cases the relation between seer and seen is one of domination. And in each instance a certain resistance (Foucault) or a turning of the tables (Sartre) is a necessary possibility. Both would agree that there is no exercise of power without freedom between both parties. There is even a similarity with regard to the constitutive power of the objectifying gaze for each author. The Sartrean look “fixes” another by conferring on its actions a meaning over

which it has no control just as “the dead are prey to the living,” in his apt phrase. Of course, the Foucauldian gaze also constitutes a certain type of individual, the “disciplinary individual,” for example (*DP* 308), by imposing social demands and limits on its possibilities. But whereas Sartre’s approach with its looking/looked-at relationship is modeled on consciousness and the conflict of subjectivities, Foucault’s is assiduously structural in nature. His is the product of a functional analysis rather than the achievement of an eidetic phenomenological reduction as is Sartre’s.²³ In fact, as Michel de Certeau has noted, Foucault uses the gaze to undermine what Martin Jay calls “ocularcentrism” in Western thought.²⁴

The examination exercises the power of the norm in at least three ways. First, it transforms the “economy” of visibility into the exercise of power. If the “show of power” was integral to its exercise in an earlier age (the public execution, the display of the instruments of torture, the gunboat in the harbor), now “disciplinary power is exercised through invisibility” while at the same time imposing “on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility” (*DP* 187). The hospital at the end of the eighteenth century becomes an “examining” apparatus, the school a mechanism of uninterrupted examination that duplicates along its entire length the operation of teaching, the army the locus of inspections and endlessly repeated movements that marks the development of an immense tactical knowledge that has its effect in the period of the Napoleonic wars.²⁵ Second, the examination introduces individuality into the field of documentation, a network of writing to be accumulated in an archive that fosters the emergence of the “clinical sciences” of the individual (contrary to Aristotle’s interdiction), a phenomenon examined at length in *The Birth of the Clinic*.²⁶ One has a file; indeed, for purposes of surveillance and control, one *is* one’s file. Finally, and as a result, “the examination, surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a ‘case’: a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power” (*DP* 191). It is this last feature that opens the door for the social sciences that, on Foucault’s reading, are sciences of the Norm par excellence, constituting their objects by their power of inclusion/exclusion and control. As Foucault interrelates these characteristics:

The examination is at the center of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowl

edge. It is the examination which, by combining hierarchical surveillance and normalizing judgment, assures the great disciplinary functions of distribution and classification, maximum extraction of forces and time, continuous genetic accumulation, optimum combination of aptitudes and, thereby, the fabrication of cellular, organic and combinatory *individuality*. With it are ritualized those disciplines that may be characterized in a word by saying that they are a modality of power for which individual difference is relevant. (*DP* 192, emphasis added)

With their emphasis on individual differences rather than on nomological similarities, their case-study method, and their power to constitute the objects of their examination, the “sciences of man” are specific technologies of power that Foucault calls “disciplines” and the disciplines, pace Durkheim, are basically nominalistic in character. As Foucault remarks apropos the shift from the classical medicine of species to the clinical medicine of sites: “The clinical gaze effects a nominalist reduction on the essence of the disease.”²⁷ Henceforth, it is the individual, not the disease, that is being treated.

Although Foucault describes it as a history of the modern “soul,” the focus of *Discipline and Punish* is primarily on the body, albeit, as Foucault remarks, on the body as prisoner of the soul (see *DP* 30). First of all, it is about that physical body which can be trained, whipped into shape, rendered a docile, productive tool of industrial society. As Jeremy Bentham’s panoptic model attests, it is the self-disciplining body that is the vehicle, if not the goal, of penal reform in the nineteenth century. But the book is about the “body politic” as well, a term which gains new meaning at Foucault’s hands, namely, “a set of material elements and techniques which serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the *power and knowledge* relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge [*savoir*]” (*DP* 28). In its avowed pursuit of the common weal, the State apparatus “serves” the body politic which it likewise fashions by the employment of recently developed instruments of power and knowledge, chief of which are the human sciences (what the French call the “sciences of man”).²⁸ Of course, the relationship is reciprocal, a multiplicity of power relations bubbling up under the illusory cover of State sovereignty. Indeed, Foucault argues that the outmoded image of sovereignty and judicial-disciplinary relations from the top down must be replaced by what is now the political reality, namely, numerous relations of subjection in their re-

gional and local forms and institutions: “not relations of sovereignty but relations of discipline” (*DP* 208). The individual and the social effects of power coalesce in the constitution of individuals:

Rather than asking ourselves what the sovereign looks like from on high, we should be trying to discover how a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of *subjects*.²⁹

In other words, a first step toward greater understanding and perhaps emancipation is to liberate ourselves from the classical sovereign model of political power; to acknowledge the harsh reality of our disciplinary society and the constitution of the subject of knowledge-power. In effect, finally to “cut off the head of the king” (*HS* 89).

This understanding of practices as *strategies of power* places Foucault’s reading of the social sciences in a different light. Like Habermas, with whose thought his own invites comparison and contrast,³⁰ Foucault questions the ideal of “disinterested” knowledge. Unlike Habermas, he does not see an emancipatory use for power/knowledge other than in the strategic liberation from specific situations of domination but, in such cases, without hope of final or even lasting deliverance from power relations in general. Elsewhere, Foucault questioned whether group action such as that proposed by Sartre, Hannah Arendt, and Habermas can escape the relation of domination that he sees implicit in all power relations.³¹ In what is surely one of Foucault’s original contributions, the social sciences emerge in this light, not as tools of ideology but as instruments of *strategy*, serving the current rationality, “punitive reason” and its corresponding carceral practices, to turn the individual into an *object* of knowledge so as to “subject” him/her to social control. This constitutes the present-day scientifico-legal complex whose genealogy Foucault is tracing.³² By *unmasking* the “ground, justification and rules” of the power to punish in our society, Foucault offers us a history of the present. By situating this justification and these rules in the matrix of carceral practice and not in the self-image of a collective consciousness, he overcomes the limitations of Marxist accounts that rely on ideology and class interest. Indeed, he can locate these latter concepts among the tactics of the social sciences themselves, a serious positive critique of Marxist social theory.

Early in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault observes that, besides a study of the physical and the political body, “this book is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justification and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity” (*DP* 23). The “exorbitant singularity” of this power to punish, which Foucault hopes to unmask, is a function of a *transformation* in a set of practices and a *displacement* (in a quasi-psychoanalytic sense and not just as a gestalt shift) by which the body itself is invested with power relations. We shall consider these pivotal concepts at greater length in chapter 5.

The play of these transformations of practices is an example of what has been called Foucault’s “kaleidoscopic” approach to history.³³ He begins with a common pattern of description/explanation such as the liberal-utilitarian interpretation of the reason for penal reform in the early nineteenth century, and then shifts the perspective in so basic a manner that the received opinion is first of all contradicted and subsequently absorbed into the new account. In other words, Foucault explains why the actual exercise of power must mask itself under high-minded rationales like the “betterment” of the working classes or the curbing of “disso-lutive practices.” One must admit, however, that this *necessity* is a systematic feature of the strategic model of historical interpretation, not a conscious act on the part of the parties in question. Thus it differs significantly from Sartrean “bad faith” and the corresponding moral judgment which this enables Sartre to introduce into the equation. Once it is established that the utilitarian justification of punishment is the effect rather than the cause of “carceral reason,” for example, a series of practices that made incarceration seem the normal form of punishment appears in a different light. Where the Sartrean would look for the responsible parties to be held accountable for such practices, the genealogist opts for the other term of the Sartrean dialectic and recognizes that “the meanness is in the system.”³⁴

NOMINALIST REVERSAL: *THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY*

In his programmatic inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault sets forth a methodological “principle of reversal” that entails “the negative activity of the cutting-out and rarefaction of discourse,” rather than the easy appeal to such positive concepts as “author,” “discipline,” and “will to truth.”³⁵ His works abound with such arguments. John

Rajchman aptly calls such reversals “nominalist.”³⁶ Typically they involve the inversion of the standard causal account of a phenomenon in cultural history with the result that the presumed cause is seen rather to be a function of what had been taken to be its historical effect. Nietzsche was a master of such maneuvers. What makes the move nominalistic is its break-up of the presumed unities, which are nothing but hypostasized names [*nomen fit numen*]. Thus, the “repressive hypothesis” concerning the inhibitive character of Victorian sexuality is reversed by showing how extremely concerned and verbal Victorian society was about “sexuality,” the very term dating from that era and connoting the control of populations with the help of medicine and the social sciences: “‘Sexuality’: the correlative of that slowly developed discursive practice which constitutes the *scientia sexualis*” (*HS* 68). In other words, “sexuality” with all it connotes of our Western “will to truth” issuing in a “science of sex” and the exercise of “biopower” (the surveillance and control of populations) is more a function of such power than the reason for its exercise. In one of the numerous reversals that often resemble a Nietzschean “transvaluation of values,” Foucault insists that it was not sex that gave rise to sexuality and against which power must continuously battle, but the reverse. In Foucault’s view, sex is “a complex idea that was formed inside the deployment of sexuality” (*HS* 152) which, in turn, is a function of a biopower that it serves to mask.

We must not make the mistake of thinking that sex is an autonomous agency which secondarily produces manifold effects of sexuality over the entire length of its surface of contact with power. On the contrary, sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures. (*HS* 155)

Again, in a manner reminiscent of Nietzsche’s famous critique of the slaves’ “transvaluation” of the masters’ values, which then called for a reverse transvaluation, Foucault diagnoses an inversion that invites a counterreversal:

The notion of sex brought about a fundamental reversal; it made it possible to invert the representation of the relationships of power to sexuality, causing the latter to appear, not in its essential and positive relation to power, but as being rooted in a specific and irreducible urgency which power tries as best it can to dominate; thus the idea of

“sex” makes it possible to evade what gives “power” its power; it enables one to conceive power solely as law and taboo. (*HS* 155)

Like Nietzsche, Foucault is calling for a reversal of this reversal. Rather than exorcising the demon of repression (as Wilhelm Reich and the Freudo-Marxists were trying to do but which, in Foucault’s view, merely intensified the “monarchy of sex”), Foucault points out the need to uncover the covert domination of the human sciences and the medical model operative in the original reversal, along with its implicit racism and biologism. Indeed, Balibar claims that this “troubling proximity of biologism or energism to racist ideologies themselves” was the Achilles heel of the Freudo-Marxists, whom Foucault is targeting throughout the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*.³⁷ Foucault exposes this relationship of biopower to racism in volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality* but especially in his course of 1976, “Society Must Be Defended” [*Il faut défendre la société*].³⁸

We have just observed a similar reversal in the matter of penology. The ruling model of sovereignty and law, what Foucault labels the “juridico-discursive” model of power, sees sovereignty as a thing possessed by another reification, the Sovereign, and exercised with all the trappings of the public sphere. All crime is a violation of the Sovereign and its punishment must be exhibited as visible redress. Foucault marks a transformation of this model from one of sovereignty to one of discipline at the end of the eighteenth century. In a corresponding nominalist reversal, he inverts the causal relationship commonly accepted in the cultural history of Victorian sexuality. Rather than ascribing the new social situation to repressive Victorians, in the one case, or to utilitarian reformers in the other, he reverses the relationship both in the politics of sexuality and in that of penal reform. Each presumed cause is unmasked as a result of the emerging, impersonal biopower (control of populations) assigned to the “police” in the previous century and increasingly assumed by the paternalistic State after the Revolution.³⁹ In other words, in a nominalist reversal, what was commonly taken for the cause was in fact the effect, though Foucault would not usually speak in terms of causal relations.⁴⁰

He draws an implicit parallel to his argument in *Discipline and Punish* when he observes in the case of sexuality:

In short, it is a question of orienting ourselves to a conception of power which replaces the privilege of the law with the viewpoint of

the objective, the privilege of prohibition with the viewpoint of tactical efficacy, the privilege of sovereignty with the analysis of a multiple and mobile field of force relations, wherein far-reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced. The strategical model rather than the model based on law. (*HS* 102)

The fragmentation and multiplication of relations as well as the displacement of law by strategy exhibits his nominalistic stance. Laws are abstract and general, prescinding from individual cases whereas strategies are concrete, contextual, and particular. It is an exchange of models of intelligibility that he is proposing and his preferred model is nominalistic.

Foucault has already made a similar claim in *Discipline and Punish*, contrasting the eighteenth-century use of taxonomic tables to distribute the population under consideration with the nineteenth-century disciplinary orderings of the same:

Whereas natural taxonomy is situated on the axis that links character and category [see *OT* 138ff.], disciplinary tactics is situated on the axis that links the singular and the multiple. It allows both the characterization of the individual as individual and the ordering of a given multiplicity. It is the first condition for the control and use of an ensemble of distinct elements: the base for a micro-physics of what might be called a "cellular" power.⁴¹

Epistemically and ontologically, Foucault's nominalism, we said, is a form of social constructivism.⁴² Social reality and the individuals that inhabit it are not there to be found "in themselves" but are the product of systematic relationships and chance events. He claims that "discipline 'makes' individuals" and it does so primarily via the mechanisms of normalizing power, especially the examination (*DP* 170). In fact, if his genealogy of the penal system is a tactical move, it is incorporated in the strategic project of uncovering the kind of individual our industrial society has constituted and, critically, to open the possibility of acting otherwise (the freedom of resisting). So there is something of the rebel's call in summaries like the following:

I am not saying that the human sciences emerged from the prison. But, if they have been able to be formed and to produce so many profound changes in the episteme, it is because they have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power: a certain policy of the body, a cer-

tain way of rendering the group of men docile and useful. This policy required the involvement of definite relations of knowledge in relations of power; it called for a technique of overlapping subjection and objectification; it brought with it *new procedures of individualization*. The carceral network constituted one of the armatures of this power-knowledge that has made the human sciences historically possible. Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytical investment, of this domination-observation. (DP 305, emphasis added)

Though we shall later urge that this and earlier texts may also be read along the axis of “subjectivation,” one should already note that the question in *Discipline and Punish* concerns the constitution of the *individual* and occasionally the “subject” but never the “self.” This term occurs at a later point along this axis. But the conditions on which the modern individual is constituted are multiple as befits a nominalist account:

What ultimately presides over these mechanisms is not the unitary functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy. . . . Consequently, the notions of institutions of repression, rejection, exclusion, marginalization, are not adequate to describe, at the very center of the carceral city, the formation of the insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties, small acts of cunning, calculated methods, techniques, “sciences” that permit the fabrication of *the disciplinary individual*. In this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations, bodies and forces subjected by multiple mechanisms of “incarceration,” objects for discourses that are in themselves elements for this strategy, we must hear the distant roar of battle. (DP 398, emphasis added)

If the foregoing does not suffice to dislodge the impression that Foucault’s kaleidoscopic move is merely a generalization from one instance, let me mention in passing the remainder of his four-volume history of sexuality.⁴³ We have just seen how, in the first volume, the received view of Victorian sexual repression is negated and “sexuality” is redescribed in terms of biopower and the will-to-knowledge [*vouloir-savoir*]. The evidence is resituated in a context of exclusion and control. Similarly, in the succeeding volumes Foucault shifts our view of the relation between Christian sexual ethics and its Greek and Hellenistic antecedents by challenging three basic assumptions that rule this debate, namely, that the former differed from the latter in terms of severity, degree of moral ele-

vation, and emphasis on moral codes.⁴⁴ Foucault registers a change in the *problematization* of sexual activity (*aphrodisia*, “things pertaining to Aphrodite”) in classical antiquity from so-called categories of self-care [*techniques de soi*] to the moral realm, and from the latter to the “man of desire” of Christian ethics. How did an “aesthetic of existence” focused on governance of self and others become a “hermeneutic of desire” and subsequently the “ethic of sexuality” that prevailed from the seventeenth century to the Victorian era? As we have come to expect, Foucault’s response in these volumes and in unpublished lectures indicates a *plurality* of shifts and no single trajectory. If Aristotle propounded the ideal of understanding many through one, Foucault reverses this goal as well, proposing we grasp the “one” through the many, appealing to what elsewhere he calls in nominalist fashion a “polyhedron of intelligibility” (*EW* 3:227, QM).

FOUCAULT AS PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORIAN

Foucault is the greatest modern philosophical historian.

Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories*

“My books,” Foucault avowed in a round table discussion with professional historians, “aren’t treatises in philosophy or studies of history; at most, they are philosophic fragments put to work in a historical field of problems” (*EW* 3:224, QM). The foregoing texts will be mined along with others in subsequent chapters to uncover additional aspects of Foucault’s multidimensional work. Although we are still at an early stage of our investigation, the preceding remarks and the “fragments” they examine enable us to discern a certain *pattern of argumentation* that Foucault will continue to employ throughout his “histories.” The fruit of his historical nominalism, the elements of this configuration can serve as a point of review and preview as we conclude this stage in our analysis.

Six features common to his treatment of historical issues have emerged thus far. First, Foucault always describes the facts so as to set up a *manageable problematic*; that is, cosmic perspectives, speculative generalizations, and the like associated with philosophies of history in the grand style are studiously avoided. Second, he sees the matrix of his solution in a *transformation/displacement* of discursive and nondiscursive practices. Opposed to totalities and totalization, he is not looking for efficient or final causes. This appeal to transformation and displacement

is so essential to his work that we shall consider it at length in the following chapter. Next, he charts these practices along *three axes*: power, knowledge, and subjectivation.⁴⁵ While we shall continue to note the presence of each axis as we analyze his works, the axes themselves and their interrelation merit a chapter of their own. Fourth, the rationality that each “genetic” charting yields often *subverts* the solution received from the history of ideas by undercutting the rationality of that solution while accounting for the latter’s rise to authority. This is the strategy of the “nominalist reversals” just illustrated. An additional feature of his approach is that no strict separation of axes is possible, a point to be elaborated in chapter 7. Though conceptually distinct and yielding an intelligibility of its own as befits what he will call a nominalist “polyhedron of intelligibility,” each axis of analysis complements the other two. This is obvious in the power-knowledge conjunction though it has yet to be exemplified with regard to the axis of subjectivation. Finally, the resultant “history” provides hypothetical necessities (epochal and post factum) grounded on objective possibilities and impossibilities. At this stage in our argument this claim is more of a hypothesis to be confirmed by a close reading of *The Order of Things* in chapter 6.

THE LINK between Foucault’s skeptical stance and his “light-footed” positivism is forged by his historical nominalism. It is this last which constitutes the real challenge he levels against the philosophical enterprise as it has been practiced since Socrates. His “histories” ascribe a critical function to philosophy much closer to that associated with the social sciences since Marx. Foucault seems willing to acknowledge this implication when he represents the task of philosophy in our time as a “diagnostic” of what is going on today.⁴⁶ But the power of such histories to cast more than suspicion and to issue more than warnings of social harm is hampered by this very nominalist commitment, as we shall see—a diagnosis that would not have surprised Socrates.

Chapter Three
The Career of the
Historical Event

The inevitable polemics surrounding the rise of the new history (“nonevent-oriented history” [*histoire non événementielle*]) tended to dichotomize the field of historiography into the chronological and the achronological and to belittle the former for its interest merely in “battles and treaties,” for being political and nationalist in origin and motivation, and later, in France at least, for having devolved into a kind of “Stalino-Marxist historicism.”¹ One of the casualties of this conflict has been the “responsible agent” of classical humanism and modern existentialism; hence Sartre’s harsh criticism. In its place these historians favor anonymous forces and impersonal constraints, glacier-like movements, demographic tables, and economic curves. Little wonder, then, that they should be linked with the structuralists, whose fashionability in the sixties they shared. Small wonder, too, that Foucault’s “histories” of madness, of clinical medicine, and especially of the epistemic shifts between the classical, modern, and postmodern ways of sense-making should place him in their number in the eyes of many, including Sartre.

This controversy underscores the second

The two fundamental notions of history as it is practiced today are no longer *time* and the *past* but *change* and the *event*.

Michel Foucault,
Essential Works

What is an event? This is a problem of philosophical dimensions, the *pons asinorum* of historical epistemology.

Roland Barthes,
The Rustle of Language

address in this introductory portion of our study, namely, his interest in the “event.” For the popular image of a “structuralist” Foucault must be seriously revised once we consider the import and the pervasiveness of the “event” in his histories. Admittedly, his early archaeological writings displayed a quasi-structuralist character. He gained notoriety in the sixties by arguing against the historicist pretensions of the modern *episteme* and the humanism it engendered. Foucault’s neo-Nietzschean proclamation of the “death of man,” that is, that the concept of the individual, finite subject had lost its centering function with the passing of modernism, raised a barrage of antistructuralist fury in the name of humanism and of history itself.² But the fire was misdirected. Foucault had long since left the target area, if indeed he had ever stood there. With typical acerbity he reviled his critics for locating him among the structuralists. By characterizing structuralism in *The Order of Things* as “the troubled consciousness of modern thought” (OT 208), he seemed to assume a poststructuralist stance even in his most “structuralist” book.³

In fact, we have already seen that Foucault’s relationship to structuralism and to the new history as history of the nonevent is ambiguous. But this very lack of definition affords him the *Spielraum* to develop his own approach to the history of discursive and nondiscursive practices. So let us survey how the concept of the event figures centrally in each of Foucault’s three “methodologies”—archaeology, genealogy, and problematization—as we establish the second of the coordinates (after historical nominalism) for mapping his approach to historical reason in part 2. Though our overview will cite instances from a number of his works, we shall return to *Discipline and Punish* for a detailed study, this time focusing on the concept of the historical event in its variety and significance. I intend to show how the very meaning of “event” has been broadened by Foucault so as to span the chasm marked by new historians between the “eventworthy” and the “noneventworthy.”

EVENT AND THE NEW HISTORIANS

Distanced by several thousand miles from the combat zone of Parisian intellectual life, Foucault once explained to a Japanese audience “how certain methods currently employed by historians make it possible to give a new meaning to the notion of event.” Correcting the simple dichotomy between event- and nonevent-oriented history that we have just offered, he points out that “for several decades historians have been

practicing a so-called serial history, in which events and sets of events constitute the central theme.”⁴ Citing the example of a then recent study of shipping to and from the port of Seville during the sixteenth century,⁵ Foucault explains that “serial history” defines its object on the basis of such documents, for example, the commercial archives of a port, in order to establish on the basis of the documents at its disposal “a certain number of relations.” In this case, those relations enable the historians to plot the curve of development of trade between certain ports, describe economic cycles, and the like. By this method, “the historian can reveal events that would not have appeared in any other way.” Foucault has in mind such events as changes in demographic curves or a sharp rise in the quantity of proteins consumed by Europeans during a given period. Unlike the battles and treaties of traditional history, such events are “invisible, imperceptible for the contemporaries, and are of completely different form.” Serial history, he points out, “makes it possible to bring out different layers of events, as it were, some quite obvious, others invisible to their contemporaries. . . . It is the historian’s task to uncover this hidden layer of diffuse, ‘atmospheric,’ polycephalic events that determine, finally and profoundly, the history of the world.” Echoing Braudel, he explains, “it is quite clear to us now that the reversal of an economic trend is much more important than the death of a king” (*EW* 2:428, RH).

The concept of “layers of events multiplying” suggests a richer understanding of the standard notion of historical event. And talk of layers connotes differences and discontinuities: “History appears then not as a great continuity underneath an apparent discontinuity, but as a tangle of superimposed discontinuities.” Moreover the “time” of such various events is itself varied. Foucault mentions economic “cycles,” longer “trends” and what French historians call “*inerties*,” that is, “large-scale phenomena operative over centuries and centuries.” For him, therefore, “history is not a single time span [*durée*]: it is a multiplicity of time spans that entangle and envelop one another”:

So the old notion of time should be replaced by the notion of *multiple time spans*, and when the structuralists’ adversaries tell them ‘You’re neglecting time,’ these adversaries do not seem to realize that it’s been a long time, if I may say so, since history got rid of time, that is, since historians stopped recognizing that great unitary time span which would sweep up all human phenomena in a single movement. At the root of historical time, there is not something like a biological

revolution that would carry away all phenomena and all events. In reality there are multiple time spans, and each one of these spans is the bearer of a certain type of events. The types of events must be multiplied just as the types of time span are multiplied. That is the mutation that is occurring at present in the disciplines of history. (*EW* 2:429–30, RH, emphasis added)

Foucault doubtless has in mind Braudel's famous distinction of three levels of historical time: *structure* (long-term duration), *conjuncture* (medium-length units of ten, twenty, or even fifty years), and finally, *événement* (the event or short-term occurrence).⁶ As we shall see, a broadened view of event actually supports the discontinuities that punctuate Foucauldian history.

THE EVENT IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Recall that Foucault's strategic criticism of the history of ideas centered on the postulate of continuity and its various manifestations such as tradition, oeuvre, influence, and "spirit of the age" as well as on the hermeneutical commitment to an "already said" in every manifest discourse and the related conviction that "it is never possible to find the irruption of a genuine event in the order of discourse" (*EW* 2:305, Circle). His archaeological project begins by setting aside such unregulated syntheses in order to set free a whole domain of discourse: "An immense domain, but one that can be defined; it is constituted by the set of all effective statements (whether spoken or written) in their dispersion as events and in the immediacy that is proper to each." As the sociologist must have a proper object for a specific field of inquiry, so the archaeologist has his or her own métier, namely, "a population of events in the space of discourse in general." These statement-events constitute an "initial neutrality" prior to their subsumption into "a science, a novel, a political discourse, or the work of an author, or even a book." In effect, archaeology is "the project of a *pure description of the facts* [statement-events] of discourse" (*EW* 2:306, Circle).

Like Husserlian *epoche*, Foucault's first step in archaeological analysis is the systematic effacement of merely given units of discourse such as the book, the paragraph, or even the sentence. His aim is "to restore to the statement its singularity as an event." However banal or seemingly unimportant it may seem, "a statement is always an event that neither language nor meaning can completely exhaust." Again, this marks his

sharp difference with phenomenology. Foucault avows that the statement is

a strange event, certainly: first because, on the one hand it is linked to an act of writing or to the articulation of a speech but, on the other hand, opens for itself a residual existence in the field of a memory or in the materiality of manuscripts, books, and any other form of record; then, because it is unique like every other event, but is open to repetition, transformation, and reactivation; finally, because it is linked both to the situations that give rise to it, and to the consequences it gives rise to, but also at the same time and in quite another modality, to the statements that precede it and follow it. (*EW* 2:308, Circle)

But not all events are discursive. Foucault explains that the enunciative event has not been isolated from language and thought in order to deal with it in itself “as if it were independent, solitary, and sovereign.” On the contrary, the aim of archaeology is “to grasp how these statements, as events and in their so peculiar specificity, can be *articulated* to events that are not discursive in nature, but may be of a technical, practical, economic, social, political, or other variety” (*EW* 2:308, Circle, emphasis added). Note that Foucault speaks of the relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive as one of “articulation.” In chapter 6 we shall consider the meaning and import of such a claim.

Foucault called his first three major works “archaeologies.” He has insisted that the term denotes the uncovering of those cognitive and evaluative limits that map the region in which certain kinds of discursive and nondiscursive practices can occur. But these limits are also conditions that make such practices possible. Archaeology as such is not interested in the persons involved in such occurrences or their biographies, but in how, for example, it was possible to conceive of both “physiocratic” and “mercantilist” knowledge in interlocking and simultaneous forms—a question Foucault addressed in *The Order of Things*. His concern is with practices, not actions, and this Wittgensteinian term, gallicized by Pierre Bourdieu, immediately directs him away from the “battles and treaties” of event history toward nonevents like madness as a practice of exclusion and clinical medicine as adoption of a certain perceptual code. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where he presents his quasi “discourse on method” for these archaeologies, Foucault’s aim is to define “a method of analysis purged of anthropologism” (*AS* 26; *AK* 16). In that work he

proceeds to evict a host of notions dear to conventional event-oriented historians, including the theme of continuity with its attendant concepts of origin, tradition, influence, development, and evolution. In their stead he offers us discursive regularities which will emerge from the “pure description of discursive events” that he proposes as an initial phase of his archaeological project (see *AS* 38–39; *AK* 27). As the vocabulary suggests, Foucault’s thought takes a decidedly linguistic turn in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

Two aspects of archaeology have particular relevance for our topic: Foucault’s interest in the “statement-event,” as he calls it, and his questioning, not the grammar of the statement, but “how it is that *one* particular statement appeared rather than another,” what we might call the issue of “objective possibility” (*AK* 27).

Statement as Event

The statement [*l’énoncé*] for Foucault is the basic unit of communication.⁷ It is an ordering of material traces and hence, though unique as event, is repeatable as thing. Without pursuing the obscure track of the Foucauldian *énoncé*, let us merely note his reason for speaking of the statement as event, namely, to restore the specificity of its occurrence and show that discontinuity characterizes the simple fact of the statement (*AK* 28). The discontinuity of events is also *difference*. With statements as with all differential events, individuation consists in a contrastive relation to other events in a series. Though I used the word “unit” to describe the statement, neither it nor any event should be considered an atomic entity.⁸ Events are relative and susceptible to a merely differential analysis, as Saussure argued.⁹ The series in which the statement-event gains its differential identity is called a *discursive practice*. It is discursive and nondiscursive practices such as the separation of the mentally ill from the healthy and its concomitant adoption of the medical model and vocabulary for communicating with and about the insane that has captured Foucault’s attention from his first major work to his very last.

Still, discursive practice, especially in the *Archaeology*, enjoys a “relative” autonomy, as the Marxists would say, vis-à-vis nondiscursive phenomena. In words of caution that some of his commentators have failed to note, Foucault warns that archaeological description of discourses “is deployed in the dimension of a general history; it seeks to discover the whole domain of institutions, economic processes, and social relations

on which discursive formations can be articulated; it tries to show how the autonomy of discourse . . . [does] not give it the status of pure ideality and total historical independence" (AK 165). The inscription of discursive and nondiscursive practices in a broad general history is most evident in his histories of madness, the clinic, the prison, and sexuality.

Since discourse has "its own forms of sequence and succession" (AK 169), discursive events, whether statements or practices, need not be confined to the linear time of traditional history. Like a comparative social scientist (one thinks of Weber's study of the city through the ages¹⁰) the archaeologist brings to light the fissures, the breaks, the gaps as so many "events" at right angles to the standard temporal line of evolution or development.¹¹

Objective Possibility

The second aspect of Foucault's archaeology important to the topic of the historical event is his question of how one statement appears rather than another. I take this to be a form of the search for objective possibility that has interested social theorists since Marx and Weber.¹² But the chief arbiter of possibility for Foucault is neither social nor economic, much less is it transcendental. This objective possibility is what he calls the *archive*, "the general system of the formation and transformation of statements," whether as events or as things (AK 130). Archaeology, in Foucault's mind, is not a form of mental geology (the analysis of substrata) nor a search for beginnings [*archai*]. Rather, it is the description of the archive, the repository of the historical a priori of a given period which conditions the practices of exclusion and inclusion that are ingredient in all social exchange: the true and the false, the normal and deviant, the evident and the unthinkable, and so forth. As he remarks to Raymond Bellour: "My object is not language but the archive, which is to say, the accumulated existence of discourses. Archaeology, as I understand it, is the analysis of discourse in its *archival* form."¹³ He explains:

I shall call an *archive*, not the totality of texts that have been preserved by a civilization or the set of traces that could be salvaged from its downfall, but the series of rules which determine in a culture the appearance and disappearance of statements, their retention and their destruction, their paradoxical existence as *events* and *things*. To analyze the facts of discourse in the general element of the archive is to consider them, not at all as *documents* (of a concealed significance of a

rule of construction), but as *monuments*. (*EW* 2:309 10, Circle, emphasis his)

It is characteristic of the history of ideas, as Foucault criticizes it, to interpret historical phenomena as “documents” concealing a meaning, whether intended or unintended by the agents that produced them, which the historian deciphers and incorporates in a narrative. In a by now well-known phrase, he insists that whereas traditional history undertook to “memorize” the monuments of the past, transforming them into documents, “in our time, history is that which transforms *documents* into *monuments*” (*AK*7).

Although one’s own archive remains accessible only indirectly, since it is the necessary condition for describing other archives, these others are available for comparison and contrast. Indeed, of all the “events” the archaeologist describes, the most important and the rarest are what Foucault calls transformations or *ruptures*, of which the most radical bear on the general rules of one or several discursive formations (*AK*177). The famous epistemological “breaks” analyzed in *The Order of Things* are examples of such ruptures. But we should note that he refers to these radical breaks as “events” even as he allows that “archaeology distinguishes several possible levels of events within the very density of discourse” (*AK*171).

The rather bitter polemic between Sartre and Foucault occasioned by the publication of *The Order of Things* was joined by Foucault’s usually moderate *Doktorvater*, Georges Canguilhem. In response to the attacks by Sylvie le Bon and Michel Amiot in *Les temps modernes* that we discussed in volume I (240–44), Canguilhem wrote a review in *Critique* that was harsh in its assault on “the children of Mary of existentialism” who “accuse [Foucault] of positivism, the supreme offense.”¹⁴ In the course of his otherwise excellent essay, Canguilhem underscores the fact that archaeology, while giving up attempts to “reconstitute a lost past [*une passé dépassé*],” has not abandoned the event: “Despite what most of Foucault’s critics say, the term ‘archaeology’ says exactly what it means. It is the condition for an *other history* [*une autre histoire*], in which the concept of event is preserved but where events affect concepts and not men” (*CA* 1:360). His point is that “archaeology” is not the magic lantern show that Sartre feared was replacing the moving picture of history.¹⁵ Rather, it recognizes breaks of a different kind from those of traditional history,

what Foucault describes as an “event in the order of knowledge [*savoir*].” An example of such an event would be “the simple fact that man, whether in isolation or as a group, and for the first time since human beings have existed and have lived together in societies, should have become the object of science” (*OT* 345). This cognitive event, Foucault explains, “was itself produced in a general redistribution of the episteme” that consisted of abandoning the space of representation (*OT* 345). This last, epistemological break, Foucault calls a “fundamental event” (*OT* 220, 248). It necessitated the constitution of that set of sciences which he denotes by the general term “anthropology.” Failure to recognize the constructed nature of the “sciences of man” is what Foucault calls “anthropological slumber.” Canguilhem sees *The Order of Things* as playing the same role of epistemic alarm clock to some future Kant that Kant himself had famously accorded Hume (see *CA* 1:368).

Event and Series

We gain a further insight into Foucault’s understanding of the relation between his archaeological description of events and the so-called new history when we return to his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France. After noting the logophobia that marks our society, its fear of the proliferation of disorderly discourse, he suggests three remedies, the third of which is “to restore to discourse its character as event” (*DL* 229). As befits an inaugural address, he elaborates the point in programmatic fashion: “We frequently credit contemporary history with having removed the individual event from its privileged position and with having revealed the more enduring structures of history.” But he cautions: “I do not think one can oppose the identification of the individual event to the analysis of long-term trends quite so neatly.” In fact, he thinks it is by “squeezing the individual event” that those massive phenomena emerge. “What is significant,” he continues, “is that history does not consider an event without defining the series to which it belongs, without specifying the method of analysis used, without seeking out the regularity of phenomena and the probable limits of their occurrence, without enquiring about variations, inflections, and the slope of the curve, without desiring to know the conditions on which these depend.” History has long since abandoned its attempt to understand events in terms of cause and effect in the formless unity of some great evolutionary process, he assures us.

Still, its search is not for structures alien and hostile to the event. Rather, it seeks to establish “those diverse converging and sometimes divergent, but never autonomous *series* that enable us to circumscribe the ‘locus’ of an event, the limits to its fluidity and the conditions of its emergence” (AK 230, emphasis added).

The series and the event emerge as the pivotal concepts on which Foucault’s histories will henceforth turn. The series will establish the intelligible contours, a certain regularity without continuity. Foucault admits it is a paradoxical concept, this discontinuous systematization (one might consider the image of dot matrix printing!). It is the sheer positivity of the event, its factual occurrence as incorporeal yet material, that requires Foucault to appeal to the concept of chance in the production of events. So Foucault’s necessities are hypothetical: if an event occurs within a series, it must be of this character and not of that; but whether it occurs or not is quite unpredictable. And since the series itself is a higher-level event, this relationship obtains among series–events as well. So we may call these divisions among series as well as the epistemic shifts of Foucault’s archaeology “archaeological events” or simply “epistemic events,” if the archaeology is one of knowledge. This accords with Foucault’s reference to an “event of a quite different kind.”¹⁶ If Foucault is known as a philosopher of discontinuity, it is doubtless due to the prominence of such breaks in his archaeological writings. So if he can claim that no one is more a philosopher of continuity than he,¹⁷ some distinctions must be made. The paradox is softened considerably by his frequent appeal to “transformation,” which we have noted along the way and which we shall examine in detail later in this chapter as well as in chapter 5.

This is hardly rationalism. Yet neither is it the irrationalism with which Foucault had been branded over the years. Antifoundationalism? Yes; we are always in *medias res*. Methodological anarchy? No. If we decide to sweeten our coffee, to paraphrase Bergson and Leibniz, we must all wait for the sugar to dissolve.

THE EVENT IN GENEALOGY

It is in this same inaugural lecture, delivered December 2, 1970, that Foucault distinguishes between the critical and the genealogical “ensembles” of analysis which he proposes for his subsequent work. In fact, his next essays and book-length studies constitute genealogies whose Niet-

zschean inspiration he freely admits. Let us briefly review genealogy in terms of the historical event before turning to its application in *Discipline and Punish*. Three of its features are of particular relevance.

First, genealogy as a method is concerned not with origins, which Foucault sees as linked with Platonic essentialism, but with the course of descent [*Herkunft*] of a series of events. Unlike the foundations and continuities of a theory of origins, genealogy stresses the jolts and surprises of history, its chance occurrences, the better to “maintain passing events in their proper dispersion” (*EW* 2:374, NGH). In this it resembles archaeology.

The second and third features are that genealogy “poses the problem of power and of the body (of bodies), indeed, its problems begin from the imposition of power upon bodies.”¹⁸ As Foucault notes in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *Herkunft* (also translated as “stock”) “attaches itself to the body . . . and everything that touches it: diet, climate, and soil” (*EW* 2:375, NGH). His genealogy of the “carceral system,” as we shall see, centers on the way “the body as the major target of penal repression disappeared” at a certain point in history. Likewise, chapter 2 of the second volume of his history of sexuality, which appeared just before he died, is entitled “*Diététique*” and underscores the concern of the classical Greeks for matters of diet and physical regimen; sex is placed in that context, rather than in a primarily moral sphere.¹⁹ His concern in that volume is to determine precisely the conditions for the transformation of sexual practice and its problematic in the classical, Hellenistic, and Patristic eras.

Power relations underwrite all Foucault’s genealogies. This translates “history” from the realm of meaning and communication toward a “micro-physics of power,” in Foucault’s telling phrase. Though he never accords us a clear definition of power, as befits a self-proclaimed historical nominalist, he does characterize it as pervasive, positive, productive, and operating through “capillaries” in the social body. Though elusive as such—indeed, we have seen that power “as such” does not exist—“power” serves several functions for Foucault’s genealogies, of which the most important for us is methodological: mechanisms of power constitute a “grid of intelligibility for the social field.”²⁰ Specifically, the concept of power enables us to understand relations in history in terms no longer of knowledge and meaning but of strategy and tactics. In *Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History*, history is thus seen as

the locus of the “hazardous play of dominations” (*EW* 2:376, NGH), where war, not law [*le droit*] is the fruitful model of intelligibility. In volume 1, we saw Sartre too arguing that the intelligibility of History hangs on the intelligibility of struggle. But his conviction that such conflict is grounded in what Klaus Hartmann called the “transcendental” fact of material scarcity lends his theory of history both a kind of origin that Foucault refuses and a kind of hope that the latter abjures.²¹

If the historical “documents” are now to be read in terms of strategy and tactics, the historical event assumes the guise not only of chance discontinuity but of “opportunity,” or better, “occasion.” (Of course, the existential “strategist” of history seems to have been relieved of duty; the events are differentials of practice.) To the “what” of the superficial occurrence, such as the torture of a would-be regicide or the building of a reformatory, must be added the strategic or tactical question of the *form of subjection* and of “subjectification” operative here.²² What relations of power are at work in these events? What makes them seem so obvious to their agents as to be practically invisible? What kind of individual is being constituted by this practice? It is such questions that he poses with regard to the penal system in *Discipline and Punish*.

We have called *Discipline and Punish* a “genealogy,” that is, an uncovering of the provenance [*Herkunft*] of nineteenth-century penal reform, not in the high-minded humanitarianism of its proponents but in a disciplinary rationality whose goal is efficiency and whose outcome was an entire “carceral system.” As we said, this rationality extended beyond prisons to include military training, scholastic discipline, and the organization of individuals in such institutions as factories and hospitals. As with its predecessors, the book centers on a crucial *transformation* in rationality, this time in the practice of legal punishment, beginning in 1790.

But the work is also an “archaeology” of those impersonal relations that make it possible, indeed natural, to speak of surveillance, reeducation, and training—words from military and scholastic vocabularies—in the context of judicial punishment. As with his earlier archaeological studies, a new object appears for a new science; the science is criminology, the object is the delinquent. And in a characteristically nominalistic inversion, he argues that the science of criminology is not so much the response to the problem of the delinquent as its very condition. Indeed, the prisons of the carceral system produce that gray stratum of society, half-legal and half-illegal, composed of informers, ex-cons, people with

a police dossier, and other dangerous “types,” in order the more effectively to control the more dangerous elements of society.²³ Foucault asks: “Is not the supposed failure part of the functioning of the prisons?” (*DP* 271).

The descriptive aspect of his investigation reveals a rather rapid and widespread change in the penal practices of the European and North American communities between 1791 and 1810.²⁴ Prior to that, governments inflicted on criminals any of a vast array of punishments, most of them corporal. These ranged from flogging and the pillory to the gruesome torture and execution of an attempted regicide, an account of which opens Foucault’s book. Yet within two decades this multiplicity of punishments had been reduced chiefly to one: detention. Foucault asks why.

Traditional social history would examine the historical period in great detail, describing precisely the ideological movements, economic conditions, political changes, and, of course, the individual agents that influenced this dramatic shift in practice. We observed Sartre sketching such an approach with his example of a strike in the 1930s.²⁵ Foucault, in contrast, is concerned, not with a period (e.g., the political and social context of penal reform in early nineteenth-century France) but with a problem: What made this transformation possible? Why was it so quickly and so thoroughly adopted? Description has yielded a radical break, an epistemic event, the kind that interests the (Foucauldian) archaeologist, who will analyze it to discover a transformation of discursive and nondiscursive practices. But the nature of the evidence in relation to the questions asked warrants the method of the genealogist as well, who seeks a new economy of power relations beneath the surface of this penal reform.

The Greco-Roman historian Paul Veyne, Foucault’s colleague at the Collège de France, remarked that the new historian should question what a particular society takes for granted, what its own chroniclers believe “goes without saying.”²⁶ He called this “the optics of the sources” and warned historians to take it into account. This would apply in particular to the archaeologist/genealogist, who queries the very normality of a practice as well as, in the present case, the practice of normalization itself.

What people came to take for granted during this crucial twenty-year span was a new rationale, what Foucault terms “punitive reason” (he often claims to be writing primarily a history of reason), as well as a new set of practices of surveillance and punishment (*DE* 3:14). Rationale and

practice reinforced each other as knowledge and power respectively. Indeed, it is one of Foucault's recurring theses that the human sciences, which rose to prominence after this break, are themselves instruments of normalization and control, indeed of control through normalization.²⁷

THE EVENT OF PROBLEMATIZATION

The concept of event did not recede as Foucault's attention focused on problematization of ethical questions and the constitution of the moral self. We have noted his attention to historical problems rather than periods throughout his career. This continues in his last works. Consider the movement from Stoic to Christian asceticism in the Greco-Roman world as described in the second and third volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, for example. Whether to register breaks in the way people conceived of themselves and the objects of their concern or to mark changes in their nondiscursive environment, such "transformations and displacements" exhibit a refined sense of the variety of "events" that continue to populate this historian's domain. But mention of the continued presence of telltale transformations and displacements in his methodology urges us to accord these concepts the attention they deserve. So let us begin by locating them in the context of the history/structure debate in which Foucault was immersed.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND DISPLACEMENTS

As the structuralist sun was beginning to set, three prominent anthropologists met to discuss, among other things, the relation between structure, event, and history.²⁸ The controversy turned on the irreducibility of the historical event as something "exterior" to social structures and functions and to the transformations and displacements of those structures themselves. The conversation underscored both the importance of the "laws" of transformation of social relations and the brute facticity of the historical event. Marxist anthropologist Maurice Godelier spoke of a kind of "structural causality" (an Althusserian concept)²⁹ by which he seemed to mean the condition of possibility that a system establishes for occurrences of a certain kind and hence at most the probability but not the necessity that such events will occur (see 181, 184). He argued: "to couple a structural morphology with a structural physiology [of a given society] seems to me to be one of the conditions for an analysis of history, conceived, to be sure, not as a necessary sequence along a single line but

as multiple sequences of passage, or displacement of the site of functions and hence of structural arrangement” (180). Claude Lévi-Strauss responded that, in addition to structural transformations that can be charted diachronically, there is the ineluctable event that is the basis for the distinction between anthropology and history. Godelier countered by questioning the common understanding of “event.” After insisting on the importance for many disciplines in addition to anthropology of “develop[ing] a theory of structural transformations,” he added: “I do not wish to reduce the event to structures nor time to the conditions of compatibility among structures.” But he suggested that “perhaps one should question the notion of the event as a punctual fact, never reproducing itself, unique” (181). It is in this context that he made the point that “the event makes sense [*sens*] only in terms of a structural analysis, an analysis of structural transformations” (182). Summarizing his view of the structure/event dichotomy in a way that reminds one of the various forms of disequilibrium that punctuate Foucault’s works, Lévi-Strauss observed:

Every system linguistic or otherwise is in constant disequilibrium with itself. That is the motor of its internal dynamism. But, for me, that is not the site of history, at least not of all of history. That’s the dimension of the evolution of structures that, in our jargon, we call “diachronic.” No one disputes this. But in addition there is something else that we can never reduce. History is there in front of us like some thing absolute before which we must bow. (183)

This echoes remarks that Foucault makes, especially in his archaeological writings, about what we might term “productive imbalance” in the epistemic domain. Consider, for example, his claim that the old vocabulary in a new episteme functions like gears “one cog out of alignment” (*OT* 30) or his admission of “that infinitesimal discontinuity” between what he says and where he is now speaking (*EW* 2:311, Circle). Curiously, despite such Foucauldian talk of systematic disequilibrium, Lévi-Strauss in this conversation sounds more like Sartre defending the “absolute event” while leaving room for structural conditioning at the level of the “practico-inert.”³⁰ It is the Marxist, Godelier, whose position resembles Foucault’s with its denial of events as “punctual facts” and insistence that events make sense only in terms of structural analysis (in what we have seen Foucault call “series”) and their transformations.

The two terms that stand at the head of Foucault’s archaeological lex-

icon, as we have noted in chapter 2, are “transformation” and “displacement.” They pervade all phases of his work, from *The History of Madness* to the volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. Though they have relevance to other contexts and will be reconsidered in chapter 5 under their spatial aspect, we examine them here because each is a form of historical “event.” In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault had pointed out that he “held in suspense the general, empty category of [historical] change in order to reveal transformations at different levels” (AK 200). We have remarked that his opposition to traditional history is in part the rejection of a uniform model of temporalization. In *Discipline and Punish*, an avowedly genealogical work, Foucault is noting a transformation in the way the body itself is related to power. What had made penal incarceration along with its panoply of public apologists and social and psychological “experts” so natural an option in the early nineteenth century was an unconscious but real shift in what Foucault terms the “political technology of the body” (DP 24). Such a transformation is a radical event in the language of the *Archaeology*. It is not attributable to any one agent, such as a founder or a reformer, and yet its temporal parameters can be charted with relative precision.

This new “political anatomy” which expressed itself by the ease with which incarceration and the disciplinary motif were accepted by the greater public also appeared in the numerous petty forms of coercion that gradually took root in society in the previous century. Typically, Foucault cites examples from eighteenth-century military training, scholastic discipline, and worker regimentation on which to map this “micro-physics of power.” What we may term “micro-events” of coercive behavior “converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method” (DP 138).

Alongside this political anatomy another, ideological view was forming that was to gain prominence in the history of ideas, namely, that of the perfect society of eighteenth-century philosophers and jurists, based on some form of social contract. But the political anatomy that genealogy reveals had its own ideal. Foucault calls it the “military dream society,” and observes the convergence of these two visions, the juridical and the military, in the Napoleonic regime with its double Roman allusion: citizens and legionnaires, guided by law and tactical maneuvers (DP 169). Again, such a transformation is “an event of a quite different type” (AK 172) which confers a new intelligibility on the political and social

occurrences of early nineteenth-century France. Foucault elaborates this vision and the new principle of historical reason that it introduces in his lecture course of 1976, *Society Must Be Defended*. There he again contrasts the earlier “philosophico-juridical discourse organized around the problem of sovereignty” with a “historico-political discourse” geared to the strategies of victory. The latter “makes war the permanent basis of all institutions of power” (*EW* 1:61, course summary). The former is universal in its appeal to a state of nature, a social contract and the like; the latter, nominalist in its historical particularity and inversion. “We are dealing,” he insists, “with a discourse that turns the traditional values of intelligibility upside down.” For instance, this latter discourse supports the thesis that, “for Hobbes, it is *non*war that founds the State and gives it its form.”³¹

He finds precedents in the racist and nationalist theories about English history as an ongoing war of Saxons and Normans (for liberation from the “Norman yoke”) and the analogous French account (propounded by politically reactionary French historian Henri de Boulainvilliers) of French history as a struggle between noble Franks and servile Roman-ruled Gauls, ancestors of the Third Estate. Foucault notes here a *transformation* of the technologies of power (see *DS* 220, missing in English translation) and a *displacement* of the speaking subject of history and of the very object of the narrative (see *SD* 113; *DS* 116). The transformation, roughly speaking, was from sovereign power to what in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was known as “police” power. It was from one series of related concepts, namely, “body-organism-discipline-institutions,” to another, “population-biological processes-regulating mechanisms” (*DS* 223), what Foucault henceforth will call more broadly “biopower.” The effect of this transformation was to transfer attention, as he put it cryptically, from death to mortality (see *SD* 248; *DS* 221).

But these accounts displace the subject in whose name historical narrative is voiced from the sovereign to the group whose legitimation is being defended or questioned and they correspondingly displace the objects of these historical accounts from the State to the “nation” and the race. Linking such displacement with the transformation of the technologies of power, Foucault concludes that “two types of decipherment of history will develop in the nineteenth century: one will be linked to class struggle, and the other to biological confrontation” (*EW* 1:64, course summary).

Summarizing the first course he delivered at the Collège in 1970–71, “The Will to Knowledge,” Foucault explains “the specific modes of transformation” proper to discursive practices. They are not simply changes of outlook [*mentalité*] as some of the new historians might suggest; nor are they merely shifts in attitude or state of mind.

The transformation of a discursive practice is tied to a whole, often quite complex set of modifications which may occur either *outside* it (in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions), or *within* it (in the techniques for determining objects, in the refinement and adjustment of concepts, in the accumulation of data), or *alongside* it (in other discursive practices). And it is linked to them in the form not simply of an outcome but of an effect that maintains its own autonomy and a set of precise functions relative to what determines the transformation.³²

The context is still explicitly archaeological. But one can already gather indications of the presence of power relations at least amid these “extra-discursive” conditions. And the triple distinction of regions of modification that constitute a transformation exemplifies once more the relation of “articulation” that Foucault detects between the discursive and the nondiscursive realms.³³

The notion of “displacement” is attractive to Foucault because of its military as well as its psychoanalytic uses. It belongs to the vocabulary of conflict rather than to that of simple meaning. And when it does denote a transfer of meaning, it does so in a contrary, often violent context. In psychoanalytic discourse the term refers to “the fact that an idea’s emphasis, interest or intensity is liable to be detached from it and to pass on to other ideas, which were originally of little intensity but which are related to the first idea by a chain of associations.” This presupposes “an economic hypothesis of a cathetic energy able to detach itself from ideas and to run along associative pathways.”³⁴ The military connotation resonates with both Foucault’s adoption of the conflict model of historical intelligibility and his proclivity for spatial metaphors, a feature to be discussed in chapter 6.

Foucault joins his former teacher, Louis Althusser, in employing the Freudian term “displacement” to characterize this new “economy of power.” Althusser had observed an epistemological break between the early and the later works of Marx, wherein the discourse ceased to be philosophical and humanistic and became scientific, and where the earlier

terminology, even if it persisted, assumed a new meaning.³⁵ Foucault, who disagrees with this interpretation of Marx, nonetheless notes in *Discipline and Punish* a similar displacement of the vocabulary and the very objects of practical and theoretical concern by the “punitive reason” that become operative in the early nineteenth century and the “carceral system” which it served to legitimate. What he calls the “technology of power” mediates the humanization of punishment and the rise of the human sciences. For instance, the object of punishment is ostensibly the body of the criminal just as before the displacement. But now that body is confined for the sake of discipline, and “discipline” implies a concomitant transformation of the mind. It is the individual’s body as social instrument that must be rendered a docile and pliable tool of social productivity (a “productive member of society” is the received phrase); this, rather than the vengeance of the sovereign, is the goal of these new techniques of punishment. With the help of those “sciences of man” that render “man” the object studied as well as the subject studying, an entire disciplinary society arises to carry out this transforming and displacing project. As we have seen, *a new kind of individual* is to be produced, one that will conform to present-day societal norms and meet current socio-economic needs.

Transformation as Structuralist “Change”

In his inaugural lecture Foucault also acknowledges the role of the well-known historian of mythology, Georges Dumézil, in his intellectual formation: “It is he who taught me to analyze the internal economy of discourse quite differently from the traditional methods of exegesis or those of linguistic formalism. It is he who taught me to refer the system of functional correlations from one discourse to another by means of comparison. It was he, again, who taught me to describe the transformations of a discourse, and its relations to the institution” (*DL* 235). The paradigm for these transformations is Dumézil’s comparative study of the Roman legend of Horatio with the Irish myth of Cuchulain.³⁶

In an important address to a Japanese audience, “The Return to History,” Foucault explains Dumézil’s study as an example of how “change” has replaced the notion of “time” as a fundamental historical category in recent scholarship. The first feature of Dumézil’s analysis that draws Foucault’s attention is that its subject is “not a resemblance [between the two myths] but a difference and an interplay of differences.” He adds:

“Dumézil’s analysis is not content with drawing up a table of differences; it establishes the system of differences, with their hierarchies and their subordination” (*EW* 2:425, RH). The Roman hero, for example, is a soldier who relies on the help of his two brothers to defeat his three adversaries whereas the Irish hero is a young child endowed with magical powers. But the “structuralist” move occurs when Dumézil advances beyond systematizing these differences to indicating the conditions of their transformation. In the present case, the Roman transformation of an old Indo-European myth is the result of transformation within Roman military society itself from one of aristocratic individualities to a more “democratic” but state-controlled collective. Indicating a more irenic position in the history-versus-structure debate, Foucault concludes:

You see that a structural analysis like that of Dumézil can be linked to a historical analysis. On the basis of this example, it could be said that an analysis is *structural* when it studies a *transformable system* and the conditions under which its transformations are carried out. (*EW* 2:426, RH, emphasis added)

One of the conclusions to be drawn from this and similar remarks is that the terms “transformation” and “displacement,” but especially the former, in Foucault’s vocabulary usually serve as flag words for quasi-structuralist analysis. So we should be on the lookout for such indicators throughout his works, even to the final essays and books. For they support our thesis that one can chart the entire Foucauldian corpus along the archaeological axis.³⁷

But a more immediate conclusion concerns the history/structure debate. Foucault draws it himself in the same address where he resists the strict dichotomy while exposing the political motivation behind the traditional opposition:

By metamorphizing history on the analogy of life, one thus guaranteed that human societies would be incapable of revolution. I think that structuralism and history make it possible to abandon this great biological mythology of history and duration. Structuralism, by defining transformations, and history, by describing types of events and different types of duration [*durée*], make possible both the appearance of discontinuities in history and the appearance of regular, coherent transformations. Structuralism and contemporary history are theoretical instruments by means of which one can — contrary to the

old idea of continuity really grasp both the discontinuity of events and the transformation of societies. (*EW*2:431, RH)

Doubtless, this is the basis of his dismissal of Sartrean revolutionary statements as “mere changes of consciousness.”³⁸

But Foucault supported this thesis earlier in his career as well. Discussing the relation of linguistics to the social sciences at the University of Tunis in 1968, he treats the issue in terms of structuralist linguistics and historical philology. Admitting that the viewpoint of structural linguistics is synchronic, he denies that this makes it ahistorical or a fortiori antihistorical. “To choose synchronicity is not to choose the present over the past or the immobile over the evolving” for at least two reasons:

First, succession is but one dimension of history. After all, the simultaneity of two events is no less a historical fact than their succession. One should not identify history and [temporal] succession, as is naively done. One must admit that history is as much simultaneity as succession.

Second, the synchronic analysis that linguists make is not at all the analysis of the immobile and the static but, in reality, that of the conditions of change. So when the old successive analysis asked the question: Given a change, what could cause it? synchronic analysis asks: For a change to be able to occur, what other changes must be equally present in the field of contemporaneity? It’s thus a question of a different way of analyzing change and not at all of a way of denying this change for the sake of immobility.³⁹

As if to allay the fears of those who have taken his own criticism of historical causality too strictly, he assures us that, even if such analysis does not attend to causes as such, “only synchronic analysis allows one to localize something that could be ascribed as a cause” (*DE* 1:827). As we have just noted, events occur in series. And this relation between structure and cause is reinforced when it’s a question of practical interventions. Then I must know what to change in the practical field in order to intervene in an effective manner.

Foucault assures that same group of Tunisian social scientists:

First, let me confide to you something that seems not yet to be known in Paris, namely, that I am not a structuralist. Except for several pages that I regret, I have never used the word “structure.” When I speak of structuralism, I am referring to an epistemological object with which I

am contemporary. That said, there is a method in linguistics that does interest me, the one that M. Maamouri presented to you a moment ago and which has been baptized with the name of “generative or transformational grammar.” It is this method somewhat that I am trying to introduce into the history of ideas, of sciences and of thought in general (*DE* 1:838, *Linguistique*).

In other words, “transformation” should be understood in a sense close to the use of that term in structural linguistics.⁴⁰

The general conclusion of this discussion is that history is to be renewed, not destroyed, by this interchange between the causal and the structural. And the vehicle for this renewal is a keener sense of transformation: “It seems to me that an important renewal has occurred in all the disciplines that study change: they have introduced the notions of discontinuity and transformation” (*DE* 1:827, *Linguistique*).

UNCOVERING HISTORICAL EVENTS

Nowhere does the centrality of “event” for Foucault’s historiography come more clearly into view than in that formal discussion he had with a group of professional historians on the theses of *Discipline and Punish* mentioned in chapter 2. For in defending himself from the old charge of a structuralist neglect of history, he insists that he has always tried to work in the direction of an “eventualization” [*événementialisation*]. A neologism in French and a barbarism in English, “eventualization” or, better, “event orientation” denotes a procedure very much like the archaeology and genealogy we have just described. As the word counsels, this method stresses the “singularity,” the rupture with accustomed interpretations of the evidence. Thus, it is not so obvious (or should not be) that delinquents be incarcerated, that the mad are mentally ill, or that the causes of illness are to be found by “opening up a few bodies.” These are indeed the common sense of the period, the “taken for granted” of the sources. This initial phase is a rupture and reversal of the evidence on which our received understanding and practices rely; their nominalist “reversal.” Foucault terms this the “theoretico-political” function of event orientation.⁴¹

After this rupture and reverse interpretation of the evidence, the next step in this process of historical reasoning, which he calls causal “gearing down” [*démultiplication*], though complex, is really a continuation of the methodology with which we are now familiar. It consists of “rediscover-

ing the linkages, encounters, dependencies, blockages, plays of force, strategies and the like, that at a given moment have formed what will subsequently function as evidence, universality, necessity” (*DE* 4:24, *La poussière*). Translated into the vocabulary of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, “gearing down” implies uncovering those conditions, practices, and chance events whose conjuncture at a certain point constitutes the archive, the historical a priori, of a given period. Again, one cannot fail to notice the “nominalist” fragmentation of what historians of ideas (Hegel, Dilthey, or Sartre, e.g.) might call “objective spirit” into a plurality of factors bound by de facto usage. Even the “necessities” that historical agents encounter are immersed in this historical matrix. What is uncovered by such “downshifting” is not only what he calls elsewhere a “discursive formation . . . [which] groups together a whole population of statement-events” (*EW* 2:321, Circle)⁴² but a multiplicity of nondiscursive objects, events, and practices.

This concept of a downshift reveals how radically antifoundationalist Foucault really is. In the face of his frequent references to the event as differential within a series, it would seem reasonable to ask whether the event or break does not presuppose a continuity as its prior condition. But he urges that gearing down is centrifugal, that it multiplies rather than reduces aspects of intelligibility in endless profusion. In terms of the preceding chapter, “downshift” is a characteristically nominalist expression.

Foucault harkens back to the logophobia of his inaugural discourse when he speaks of inscribing, around the singular event analyzed as process, a *polyhedron of intelligibility*, the number of whose sides is necessarily without limit. He advises the historians to proceed “by progressive and necessarily unfinished saturation” (*DE* 4:24, *La poussière*, emphasis added). As we have seen in the case of the “carceralization” of the penal practice, the more closely we examine it, the more we are led to correlative practices such as those of the school or the military barracks. As a rule of thumb, Foucault observes that “internal decomposition of the process and multiplication of analytical ‘salients’ go hand in hand” (*DE* 4:24, *La poussière*).

One is left with an increasing polymorphism as the gearing-down proceeds. Foucault notes a threefold polymorphism in this process, namely, that of elements, of relations, and of domains of reference. On the list of polymorphous elements that regard the prison, for example, he suggests

that we must consider such items as pedagogical practices, the rise of professional armies, British empiricism, the techniques of firearms, a new division of labor and the rest. As for the relations themselves, we might focus on the transfer of technical models such as the architecture of surveillance, or examine the tactics of response to a particular situation like the disorder provoked by public torture, or examine the application of such theories as utilitarianism regarding behavior, and so forth. Finally, we encounter a polymorphism in the very domains of reference—their nature, generality, and the like. Here, Foucault points out, it is not merely a matter of technical changes regarding details but also “involves *new techniques of power* which are coming to play in a capitalist economy and all that they require” (DE 4:25, *La poussière*).

One is perhaps dismayed by the complexity of these phenomena and could be tempted to question whether an adequate account of the rise of the prison system is even possible. At this point the Foucauldian historian might respond by suggesting that the investigators lower their expectations, abandoning any search for “natural” closure and rest satisfied with what the inquiring community is actually seeking. In other words, as the Pragmatists have long assured us, one need not offer “ultimate” explanations in order to be satisfied with adequate accounts. What I am calling “adequate” would be a function of the epistemic standards of the present discursive community—or, in the case of “revolutionary” concepts, of what a virtual extension of that community might understand and accept. Though these last remarks are glosses on the previous quotations, I consider them reasonable extrapolations of what Foucault will later say about the modus operandi of the so-called “good” Cynics (see below, chap. 10).

The point of this typically Foucauldian schema is precisely to counter the structuralists’ insistence on a single mechanism, a nonevent which is as unitary, necessary, and inevitable as possible, like a demographic curve or an anthropological tree. As Foucault admits, his methodological program offers the new historians too much and too little: too many diverse relations, too many lines of analysis; but not enough unitary necessity—again, a typically nominalist menu. We are left, then, with a plethora of intelligibilities and a lack of necessity. But he resolutely refuses, as he puts it, to place himself “under the sign of unique necessity” (DE 4:25, *La poussière*).

DISCOURSE, EVENT, POWER

If Foucault distances himself from structuralism by his emphasis on the event, he uses the latter as the vehicle to introduce the notion of power into the archaeological concept of discourse. As he explains in an informal discussion with some American college students:

The notion of structure makes no sense to me. What interests me in the problem of discourse is the fact that someone said something at a given moment. It's not the meaning [*sens*] that I want to bring to evidence [as in phenomenology], but the function that can be assigned to the fact that this thing was said at that moment. This is what I call *event*. For me, it's a matter of considering discourse as a series of events, of establishing and describing the relations that these events, which we can call *discursive events*, maintain with other events that belong to the economic system or the political field or to institutions. (*DE* 3:467, *Dialogue sur le pouvoir*, emphasis added)

And while this indicates that there are nondiscursive events (raising the problem of their interaction with the discursive, which we shall discuss in chap. 6), of more immediate relevance to our topic is his remark that "power is something that operates across discourse, since discourse is itself an element in a strategic deployment [*dispositif*] of power relations." When asked whether power was the meaning [*sens*] of discourse, he responds in the negative, but adds: "Discourse is a series of elements that operate within the general mechanism of power. Consequently, one should *consider discourse as a series of events, as political events* across which power is transported and directed" (*DE* 3:465, emphasis added). One consequence of this claim is that the discourse on which archaeological analysis focuses should be able to be charted along the genealogical axis of power relations as well. This, again, is a major thesis we shall defend in chapter 7.

We now have a better understanding of the place of Foucault's "histories" and the events they constitute in the debate between the old historians and the new. From the start he has distanced himself from the former. His rejection of the concepts of consciousness, of underlying continuity, and of historical progress seems to leave him nothing but the nonevent. Indeed, the archaeologies of mental illness, medical perception, and the social sciences seem to avoid any but illustrative roles for the "great initiators" of these disciplines. It is now evident, with the retrospective in-

sight that history affords, that Foucault's studies have always tended toward the proliferation of "causes" that he is calling "event orientation" and which *Discipline and Punish* so amply exemplifies. And this supports his claim not to be offering a theory of power. Though it has been present throughout, "power" is not enlisted as a causal explanation in any of these works.

Finally, we can read his reference to the event as an appeal to chance over necessity in historical "explanation."⁴³ In a pivotal essay written several years before *Discipline and Punish* and which, I noted, marked his shift from archaeological to explicitly genealogical analysis, Foucault discusses Nietzsche's "effective" history [*wirkliche Historie*] in terms that anticipate the process we have just described. "Effective history," he writes, "differs from traditional history in being without constants." It transposes the relationship ordinarily established between "the eruption of an event and necessary continuity" (*EW* 2:380, NGH).⁴⁴ Regarding our general topic, he argues: "An event consequently is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the *reversal of a relationship of forces*, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax. The forces operating in history . . . always appear through the singular randomness of events" (*EW* 2:380–81, NGH, my emphasis). This final sentence could well serve as the motto of Foucauldian historiography in its genealogical dimension: to search for the "forces of domination" operating in history by a painstaking and inventive analysis of innumerable heterogeneous events. If one recognizes that "domination" is the negation of freedom and that its reduction is a value that Foucault obviously favors and fosters, then the "crypto normativity" of which Habermas and others accuse him is scarcely "crypto" at all; and what I have just proposed as the motto for his genealogical historiography carries an open ethico-political message, not unlike that of Jean-Paul Sartre. This will become increasingly clear as our investigation continues.

By concentrating on the event, Foucault has succeeded in underscoring the weakness of structuralist accounts of historical reality. But by giving "event" a rather uncommon meaning, he has avoided reviving the shopworn battles-and-treaties understanding of traditional historians. We are now in a position to summarize the foregoing by addressing the role of the problematic Foucauldian event in his historiography.

THE EVENT IN FOUCAULDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

It should be evident that the Foucauldian event is a multifaceted concept, which accounts for its theoretical versatility. In an interview published in 1977, he states the issue succinctly:

One can agree that structuralism formed the most systematic effort to evacuate the concept of event, not only from ethnology but from a whole series of other sciences and in the extreme case from history. In that sense, I don't see who could be more of an anti structuralist than myself. But the important thing is to avoid trying to do for the event what was previously done with the concept of structure. It's not a matter of locating everything on one level, that of the event, but of realizing that there are actually a *whole order of levels of different types of events* differing in amplitude, chronological breadth, and capacity to produce effects. (*EW* 3:116, "Truth and Power," emphasis added)

In this, he resembles Braudel, who, as we saw, insists on diverse historical "times" or rhythms, including but not limited to that of the long term for which he was famous. But Foucault reveals his characteristically Nietzschean pedigree when he adds:

The problem is at once to distinguish among events, to differentiate the networks and levels to which they belong, and to reconstitute the lines along which they are connected and engender one another. From this follows a refusal of analyses couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures, and a recourse to analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic developments, tactics. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language relations of power, not relations of meaning. (*EW* 3:116, "Truth and Power")

We have noted the differential nature of events, their intrinsic reference to a series, and we have remarked their discontinuous and aleatory character. We observed that the materiality of the statement-event was constituted by being the relation of material "traces." We can now say that this applies to the concept "event" in general as we consider Foucault's attempt to define the concept in his inaugural lecture: "An event is neither substance, nor accident, nor quality nor process; events are not corporeal. And yet an event is certainly not immaterial; it takes effect, becomes effect, always on the level of materiality. Events have their place; they

consist in *relation to* . . . the cross-checking accumulation and dispersion of material elements” (DL 231).

In an interview with a Japanese professor, he repeats this “definition” but with an emphasis that underscores what I shall be calling his nontemporal or “spatialized” notion of the event. Agreeing with his interlocutor that the problematization of space arose as French colonialism was coming to an end, he explains:

First of all, that European space is not space in its entirety. One lives in a series of polymorphous spaces and, second, that there is not just one history, that there are several, several times, several durations [*durées*], several rates of change [*vitesse*s] that get entangled with one another, crisscross and precisely form events. An event is *not a segment of time*. Basically, it is the *point of intersection* between two durations, two rates of change, two evolutions, two lines of history. (DE 3:581, “La scène de la philosophie,” emphasis added)

This last remark reminds one of Aristotle’s definition of “chance” as the intersection of two lines of causality or cause in the plural.⁴⁵ It is probably no coincidence that Foucault, whose project was to slip “this slender wedge” of “chance, discontinuity and materiality” into the history of ideas (DL 231), should do so via this conception of the event.⁴⁶

A TYPOLOGY OF EVENTS

Given Foucault’s claim that there are different types of event, let us offer a brief typology of Foucauldian events as we bring this discussion to a close. We should mention first the “micro-events” (a term that resonates with his concept of a micro-physics of power). Discussing the film version of the diary of Pierre Rivière, an eighteenth-century matricide, that he had discovered and edited,⁴⁷ Foucault speaks of the cinematographer René Allio’s ability to capture “the eternal present of what is most fugitive, that is, the everyday.” Like Bertolt Brecht, but in a different aesthetic context, Allio faces the questions: “What is this strong, dramatic signification of the everyday and what is its mode of permanent presence beneath the indefinite flight of these micro-events that don’t deserve even to be mentioned and that fall as if outside of all memory?” Foucault explains: “Our historical unconscious is made of these millions, billions of tiny events that, little by little, like raindrops, furrow our body, our

way of thinking, and then chance sees to it that one of these micro-events leaves traces and can become a kind of monument, a book, a film.”⁴⁸ These micro-events denote the dust of the historical cosmos—transfers or blockages of power, for example, which would scarcely be noticed except that they are where we normally leave off giving a historical account. Since Foucault is no foundationalist, micro-events are neither ultimates nor are they building blocks of some total explanation. As we noted, the intelligibility of the event is in principle without limit.⁴⁹

Next we must mention the “statement-event” discussed earlier, which figures so prominently in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*. This is the most elusive of the set. In “Theatrum Philosophicum” Foucault describes it as the meaning-event when discussing Gilles Deleuze’s writings on a similar topic. As meaning-event it exists “at the limit of words and things, . . . as neutral as the act of dying, . . . and as singular as a throw of the dice” (*EW* 2:350, 354). Inspired by Deleuze, Foucault explains that the meaning-event is incorporeal, although it is the relation of material traces; it is a meaning, but without reference to an intending subject; and it is free of that temporality which understands the future as rising out of a past essence. In other words, like any Foucauldian event, the meaning-event is incorporeal, but material, anonymous, and aleatory.

Occasionally, Foucault mentions what he calls the “limit event.” He has in mind the challenge of Descartes’s hypothesis of an evil genius who would deceive us in our firmest convictions. What is at stake is the very validity of philosophical reasoning, that initial division which enables the philosopher from within philosophy itself to recognize an event exterior to philosophy that necessarily excludes madness [*la folie*], if he or she will remain a philosopher. It is the singularity of such events, Foucault claims, that eluded Derrida in their famous quarrel over the exclusion of madness from Cartesian doubt. “How could a philosophy of the trace, pursuing tradition and the maintenance of tradition, how could it be sensitive to an analysis of the event?”⁵⁰ “For Derrida,” he insists, “what happened in the sixteenth-century could be only a ‘specimen’ (that is, the repetition of the identical) or a ‘model’ (that is, the inexhaustible excess of the origin): he knows nothing of the category of the singular event; so it is useless—and doubtless impossible—to read what concerns the essential portion, if not the whole, of my book: *the analysis of an event*” (*DE* 2:283, *RD*, emphasis added). Though I shall not read *L’histoire de la folie* as an analysis of an event, much less pursue the controversy be-

tween Foucault and Derrida regarding the interpretation of Cartesian doubt and madness in that work, it is worth noting that an event-oriented reading of the text is possible and, indeed, recommended by Foucault himself.

Major portions of Foucault's books are devoted to a class of events that we have called *practices*, whether discursive or nondiscursive. The discourse of mental illness or sexuality, the various disciplinary techniques—these are so many practices, events of a different amplitude and productive capacity than either the statement or the micro-event. These are the objects of the descriptive phase of Foucault's method. But their appearance is certainly an event and, it would seem, their repetition, a series of micro-events.

We observed that a practice is a preconceptual, rule-governed, socially sanctioned manner of acting. In *L'impossible prison* Foucault employs a characteristically spatial metaphor to describe practices as "places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect."⁵¹ Obviously, this description promotes that unity of theory and practice, or, in Foucault's case, of knowledge and power, that Marxists and pragmatists likewise have valued. As we noted in the previous chapter, a practice is neither a private quality like a habit nor an individual ascription like an act. What we may now term a "practice-event" is the intelligible background, that is, the serial unity, for micro-events by its twofold character as "judicative" and "veridicative." Recall that as "judicative," practices establish and apply norms, controls, and exclusions; as "veridicative," they are productive of truth, that is, they render true/false discourse possible. So the practice of medical and social classification of sexual "perversions" and their exclusionary effects in the Victorian era were warranted by the rise of a *scientia sexualis* and the sexual discourse that it invited. Again, the famous power-knowledge tandem in Foucault's overall schema simply extends these judicative and veridicative dimensions of the statement-event of archaeology to the nondiscursive and discursive practice-event respectively. In other words, features he had ascribed earlier to the statement as event now seem applicable to nondiscursive practices in Foucault's genealogical analyses. Similar analyses could be applied to each of his other "histories."

Passing over the "initiator event" of someone like Marx or Freud,⁵² and the "dynastics" (as Foucault terms it) of those solemn events by

which traditional historians canonize the national biography (Veyne), let me complete this table by mentioning those “radical events” which Foucault describes variously as epistemological breaks, transformations of practice, and displacements of vocabulary, meanings, and objects. We know the interest these events carry for the Foucauldian historian. It is to reach them that he “reverses evidence” and questions the obvious. They account for why it was natural to incarcerate in the nineteenth century while in the eighteenth the practice was relatively rare; why pathologists perceived differently in the classical and in the modern periods; and why sexuality, far from being repressed, was never so discussed as in the Victorian Age—and why we have wanted to believe the opposite. These “macro-events,” as we might term them, reveal a shift in strategy, the advent of a new differential lending definition to a plurality of other events. In sum, an event of the greatest amplitude, if not of the widest chronological breadth, and of the most far-reaching capacity to produce effects—such is the archive as macro-event.

Finally, and in a way that links his notion of event to his nominalism, there is the “truth-event,” the event of truth. Hearing this expression today, one is reminded of Heidegger’s *Ereignis* and his attempt to separate himself from the confines of metaphysics and technological distortion.⁵³ And, indeed, we have noted that the presence of Heidegger in Foucault’s thought is not negligible even though he claims “it was Nietzsche who won out” (*DE* 4:703). But the victorious Nietzsche bears a distinctively Foucauldian resemblance (and vice versa). For instance, elucidating Nietzsche’s famous claim that all knowledge is a matter of perspective, Foucault links this with his own discourse of conflict and strategy. “The perspectival character of knowledge,” he insists, “derives not from human nature but always from the polemical and strategic character of knowledge. One can speak of the perspectival character of knowledge [*connaissance*] because there is a battle and knowledge is the effect of this battle” (*EW* 3:14, TJF). “Knowledge” [*connaissance*], he points out, “is an event that falls under the category of activity” (*EW* 3:13, TJF, emphasis added).

The following year, in a similar vein, he contrasts two notions of truth, “profoundly anchored in our civilization.” The scientific thesis, shared with philosophy, is the belief that truth is “out there” awaiting our discovery. The other view claims that

truth, like a lightning flash, does not await us wherever we have the patience to be on the lookout and the ability to surprise it. Rather, it has propitious moments and privileged places not only to emerge from the shadows but entirely to be *produced*. If there is a geography of truth, it is that of the sites where it resides (not only places where one stands the better to observe it); its chronology is that of the conjunctions that allow it to occur like an event (and not that of moments of which one must profit to perceive it, as if between two clouds). One could find in our history an entire “technology” of this truth: the mapping [*repérage*] of its sites, the calendar of its occasions, the knowledge [*savoir*] of the rituals in which it is produced.

So one can suppose in our civilization and over the centuries an entire technology of truth which scientific practice and philosophical discourse have gradually disqualified, recovered and driven out. [Such] truth is of the order not of what is but of what happens: *event*. It is not ascertained but stirred up [*suscitée*]: production instead of apophantic. It is not procured by means of instruments, it is provoked by rituals; it is attracted by ruse; one grasps it as the opportunity presents itself [*selon des occasions*]: strategy and not method. The relation of this event produced in this way to the individual who awaits it and is struck by it is ambiguous, reversible, combative for mastery, domination, and victory: *a relation of power*. (DE 2:693, “*La maison des fous*,” emphasis added)

Such gnomic remarks again suggest the later Heidegger, not the “positivist” Foucault. But closer scrutiny reveals a genealogical dimension that moves from geography (archaeological spaces) to production, from site to power. As we have already noted and will see again, Foucault is interested chiefly in the “effects” of truth, not its nature; in truth as occurrence, not its definition; in the pragmatics of truth, not its ontology.

If the model of the carceral society is Bentham’s Panopticon, the instrument of total and unblinking surveillance where each inmate becomes his own guard, the model of Foucault’s histories, as we have suggested, could well be the kaleidoscope.⁵⁴ Each particle-event, though discrete, is identified by a differential relation to every other. The pattern is aleatory but coherent nonetheless. Whatever permanence a pattern may assume is limited by a spatial, “before” and “after” the turn of the instrument (like the “here” and “there” of a trajectory). Each transfor-

mation is a new creation. No theme or subtext perdures. There is sequence but not causal influence among the patterns. Even the unity of the question posed in a Foucauldian “history” is merely apparent, since its meaning adjusts with each transformation.

THE RETURN OF THE EVENT

Several French historians have spoken of the “return of the event” in historiography. Indeed, Jacques Le Goff has remarked that the “structure versus event” contrast is a false dilemma. And Paul Veyne, as Ricoeur notes, has “undramatized” the contrast.⁵⁵ My thesis in this chapter has been that Foucault’s “event” confirms Le Goff’s suspicion, that the Foucauldian “event” is a functional concept which serves to introduce differential relations and chance occurrences into the very core of historiography. The structure/event dichotomy is simply replaced by the series/event relationship, and series are conceived as events of a higher level, enjoying their own duration and succession. “The fact that I consider discourse as a *series* of events,” Foucault reminds us, “automatically places us in the dimension of history” (*DE* 3:467, “Dialogue sur pouvoir”).

If his differential analyses and decentering of the subject have linked Foucault with the new historians, his insistence on “event orientation” and on the possible service of archaeology and genealogy to a number of broad historical processes reminds us of his ties to the old (recall his remark about the nonevent being “squeezed” out of quite common events like birth and death). We have witnessed his practice confirm his claim that the event/nonevent dichotomy is exaggerated. Here again, Foucault has chosen to go his own way.

PART TWO

Spatialized Reasoning

What . . . currently seems to be taking place in some of the most fertile fields of literary, cultural and philosophical studies is a gradual yet thorough displacement from text to territory.

Bruno Bosteels, "A Misreading of Maps"



The Eclipse of Vision?

Michel de Certeau was stating the obvious when he remarked that Foucault favors an ocular style in his writings. Among the tables and illustrations that abound in Foucault's works, de Certeau has identified in *Discipline and Punish*, for example, three variants of optical figures: representative tableaux like the horrifying account of the execution of a would-be regicide in the eighteenth century, analytic lists of ideological rules and principles relating to a single phenomenon, and figurative images such as seventeenth- to nineteenth-century engravings and photographs. But de Certeau drew a less obvious conclusion when he noted that Foucault uses vision to undermine vision: under his critical gaze, "the panoptical space of our contemporary scientific language is colonized and vampirized."¹

This opinion is shared by Martin Jay, who detects a certain ambivalence regarding the ocular in Foucault's writings. At times, Foucault used the disruptive power of images, "especially against the claims of language to represent a perfectly self-contained and self-sufficient system." But Jay's thesis is that Foucault "remained very much in thrall to the antivisual discourse so pervasive in French thought in this century."²

If we forget the theory of visibilities, we distort Foucault's conception of history, but equally we distort his thought and his conception of thought in general. There are only practices, or positivities, which are constitutive of knowledge: the discursive practices of statements, or the non-discursive practices of visibilities.

Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*

Employing what we have seen are technical terms from Foucault's histories, I now wish to consider the extent to which Foucault's ocular epistemology constitutes the *transformation* of an earlier visual approach and entails a *displacement* of the temporalizing logic of the subject by a spatializing rationality that could be called "postmodern." In response to Jay's thesis, I shall review Foucault's use of "transformation" and "displacement" to understand the hegemony of vision in the modern era narrowly understood, concentrating on his "archaeology of medical perception" in *The Birth of the Clinic*, and again briefly on his later "genealogy of the penal system" in *Discipline and Punish*.³ I shall then examine such transformation and displacement in Foucault's own thought, concluding with some observations about the viability of the middle way that he has been attempting to chart between structuralism or what he calls "formalism" and dialectics.

If Foucault has joined many of his French contemporaries in combating an ocular epistemology that extends from Descartes to phenomenology, he does so with the aid of a method that looks suspiciously ocular itself. That his method is itself spatial and ocular raises more than the usual self-referential objection and must be addressed in its turn. In any case, the shift from a detached, contemplative view to a dominating gaze is essential to Foucault's conception of modernity. Continuing our spiral movement, let us flesh this out with extended archaeological and genealogical examples.

FROM HISTORY TO GEOGRAPHY: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MEDICAL PERCEPTION

We said at the outset that Foucault was a kind of historian but that, like every other potential label, this one must be applied to him with qualifications. In place of traditional history, as we have seen, he offers "archaeology," which describes the "archive" or set of effectively enunciated discourses that in fact establish the historical a priori (the rules of formation and transformation) for a given science, discipline, or practice. It is a method assiduously purged of all anthropologism, devoid of reference to the sovereign, totalizing subject.

Like his other archaeologies, Foucault's descriptive analysis of the medical gaze [*le regard*] centers on the difference and contrast between what the French call the classical period (roughly 1650–1800) and the

modern (1800–1950), and deals with a level of discourse where “seeing and saying are still one” (BC xi). Classical medicine was “nosological”; it was a medicine of species. True to Aristotle’s dismissal of any science of the singular, this medicine treated the disease, not the patient. The doctor’s perception of the symptoms led him to the essential characteristics that called for the generalized treatment. Like the natural historian, the classical doctor was interested in penetrating the vagaries of the individual instance to get at the necessary structures of the disease itself.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century the mind’s eye of the physician, with its abstractive vision, gave way to the clinician’s physical eye. Significantly, the latter brought to the object of investigation “nothing more than its own light” by means of which it “flickers around solid objects” (BC xiii, xiv). The enumeration of cases and probabilistic reasoning enter the scene. The case method allows the individual, pace Aristotle, to emerge as the object of scientific investigation, a situation which we saw would be exploited by penology in the following decades.

But the shift was not simple. According to Foucault, the look gained its perspective from the political ideology of the Revolution:

The ideological theme that guides all structural reforms from 1789 to Thermidor Year II is that of the sovereign liberty of truth; the majestic violence of light, which is itself supreme, brings to an end the bounded, dark kingdom of privileged knowledge and establishes the unimpeded empire of the gaze. (BC 39)

He describes this as “the great myth of the *free gaze* . . . a purified purifying gaze that, freed from darkness, dissipates darkness.” He is quick to note that “the cosmological values implicit in the *Aufklärung* are still at work here” (BC 51–52). It is his thesis that the chief obstacle to the introduction of pathological anatomy into clinical medicine during this period was not religious intransigence or moral scruple but clinical thought itself. The clinicians were “interested in history, not geography” (BC 126).

What was called for was a “new, coherent, unitary model for the formation of medical objects, perceptions and concepts” (BC 51). The probing, cumulative, probabilistic gaze of the investigator would become the accepted practice, once the physician had learned how to see anew. The temporal exclusion of death from the discourse of pathology

had to be overcome and a new spatiality of organs, sites, and causes introduced in order to bring pathological anatomy to the center of clinical medicine. As Foucault explains:

The conflict [between anatomy and the clinic] was not between a young corpus of knowledge and old beliefs, but between two types of knowledge. Before pathological anatomy could be readmitted to the clinic, a mutual agreement had to be worked out: on the one hand, *new geographical lines*, and, on the other, a *new way of reading time*. In accordance with this litigious arrangement, the knowledge of the living, ambiguous disease could be aligned upon the white visibility of the dead. (*BC* 126, emphasis added)

In effect, what is required and instantiated in Foucault's account is what in the previous chapter we called a "fundamental event," an epistemic break. In sum, "it is not a matter of the same game, somewhat improved, but of a quite different game" (*BC* 137).

It is commonly supposed that the revolution in nineteenth-century medicine was brought about by the introduction of pathological anatomy, itself launched in 1801 by Xavier Bichat's magisterial counsel to "open up a few corpses." Foucault's concern is with the epistemic change that made this advice possible. He sees it in the "spatialization" of the object of investigation. It was François Broussais who completed this basic change, creating a "new organization of the medical gaze" by reversing Bichat's emphasis on the visibility-localization relationship: "It is because disease, in its nature, is local that it is, in a secondary way, visible. Disease exists in *space* before it exists for sight" (*BC* 187, 188) a point to be recalled when we attend to space in chapter 5. We have seen how this inversion of the commonly accepted relation between the conditioned and its conditions (the nominalist reversal) came to be a characteristically Foucauldian move in both his archaeologies and his genealogies.

Despite the error that the appearance of his general theory made "structurally necessary" (Foucault makes a similar remark about Cuvier in the history of biology),⁴ Broussais's physiological medicine, the medicine of sick organs, brought nosological medicine to an end. Anticipating concepts and terminology from *The Order of Things*, Foucault concludes: "Broussais had fixed for his period the final element of *the way to see*. Since 1816, the doctor's gaze has been able to confront a sick organ-

ism. The historical and concrete a priori of the modern medical gaze was finally constituted" (BC 192).

"The anatomico-clinician's gaze has to *map a volume*" (BC 163). Its new semiology requires a sort of "sensorial triangulation" in that the ear and touch are added to sight. The invention of the stethoscope, for example, contributes to this "gaze" as does the active enlistment of the tactile surface. Still, Foucault insists, "the sensorial triangulation indispensable to anatomico-clinical perception remains under the dominant sign of the visible": first, because sound and touch merely make do in expectation of the "triumph of the gaze" which is the autopsy; second, because anatomy is concerned primarily with "spatial data that belong by right of origin to the gaze" (BC 165). Foucault speaks of the "absolute limit" set for anatomical analysis by the gaze (BC 167). The principle of visibility has its correlative in the differential reading of *cases* (BC 168), not as the mere instantiation of a rule or generality but as the constant possibility of an individual modulation. So "the figure of the visible invisible organizes anatomico-pathological perception" in the form of the knowledge of the individual (BC 170).

It may seem ironic that the victory of "geography" over "history" by which Foucault characterizes the revolution in modern medicine should likewise distinguish the "postmodern" method of this "new cartographer" himself.⁵ His histories draw "new geographical lines" and present us with "a new way of reading time." How does one reconcile this apparent opposition between the "spatialized" thinking of anatomico-clinical perception and the totalizing, "temporalized" thought of the modern episteme as described in *The Order of Things*? Similarly, is there any significant difference between the clinical gaze correlative to this spatial field emerging in the nineteenth century and the vision whose hegemony Foucault is intent on combating?

The answer lies in the *diacritical*, comparative nature of the clinical view, a stance we have observed Foucault adopt in his "diagnostic" histories as well. He appeals to "the diacritical principle of medical observation: *the only pathological fact is a comparative fact*" (BC 134) in charting the difference between anatomical and traditional clinical observation. The peculiarity of anatomico-clinical experience, he argues, lies in having applied the diacritical principle to a much more complex dimension: "that in which the recognizable forms of pathological history and the visible elements that it reveals on completion [viz., the cadaver] are articu-

lated" (BC 135). Unlike the nosological intuition of his predecessors, Bichat's gaze operated on the surface, traversing the space of the disease that death had made coextensive with the organism and pursuing a differential reading of the cases.

We have seen Foucault describe his own method as "diagnostic," by which he means that it yields "a form of knowledge that defines and determines differences."⁶ Thus his account of the specificity of the anatomico-clinical gaze, for example, gains its intelligibility precisely to the extent that it stands in contrast to the nosological view of the medicine of species. What he describes in the case of Bichat and Broussais is a *transformation* of the "absolutist" vision of classical medicine to the comparatist gaze of anatomy and physiology. Yet this is the kind of transformation his archaeologies exemplify as well, shifting from the *Wesensschau* of the phenomenologist and the intentional horizons of the hermeneuticist to the differential knowledge of the archaeologist.

In parallel fashion, there is a *displacement* of temporalizing accounts of the history of a disease in classical medicine effected by the *spatializing* gaze of the anatomoclinician. The question from the medicine of species, "What is wrong with you?" is supplanted by another from the medicine of sites, "Where does it hurt?" "The notion of *seat* has finally replaced that of *class*" (BC 140). This shift in the twin gears of seeing [*le visible*] and saying [*le disible*] on which the whole of Deleuze's reading of Foucault turns, is indicative not only of an epistemic revolution in nineteenth-century medicine but of the postmodern nature of Foucault's own thought. When he prefaces his study of clinical medicine with the injunction that "we must place ourselves, and remain once and for all, at the level of the fundamental *spatialization* and *verbalization* of the pathological" (BC xi), he is characterizing his general approach to history as well.⁷

"The gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates" (BC 39). As if to counter the liberating pretensions of Enlightenment vision and to anticipate his subsequent genealogical claims regarding the correlation between knowledge and power, Foucault enunciates this thesis in his archaeology of medical perception. Gone is the transcendental subject whose perspectiveless view reveals the essences of things. Gone, too, is the detached, disinterested *conscience de survol* as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty called that awareness which seemed to hover above its objects. But

Foucault does not pursue the nondiscursive dimension of the “loquacious view” in this work as he will do in his genealogies.

THE DOMINATING GAZE: THE PANOPTICON

A fear haunted the latter half of the eighteenth century: the fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths. The new political and moral order could not be established until these places were eradicated. . . . A form of power whose main instance is that of opinion will refuse to tolerate areas of darkness. If Bentham’s project aroused interest, this was because it provided a formula applicable to many domains, the formula of “power through transparency,” subjection by “illumination.” In the Panopticon, there is used a form close to that of the castle—a keep surrounded by wells—to paradoxically create a space of exact legibility.

Michel Foucault, “The Eye of Power,” *Power/Knowledge*⁸

Rather than containing the hegemony of vision in the modern period, the marriage of power and visibility that Bentham’s panoptic principle achieved served to expand and intensify it. Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, subtitled in obvious parallel with his earlier work, offers a genealogy of the “carceral system” of which the prison formed the most obvious, but scarcely the most effective, instrument.

In a way that complements rather than counters his archaeological method, Foucault’s genealogies draw our attention to the power relations operative at every phase of life in society. Bearing a prima facie resemblance to the “participant” theory of knowledge formulated by John Dewey and others, his genealogical accounts differ from those of classical pragmatism to the extent that they emphasize the dimension of domination and control of other agents that practices of knowing entail. Like Darwinian pragmatism, genealogy sees struggle or warfare, not ideology or communication, as the proper model of social intelligibility. But like archaeology, it is rigorously nonteleological; it is especially hostile to the myth of social progress. So if Foucault continues to be a historian, it is now as genealogist, laying bare the embarrassing secret of domination and control concealed by our most high-minded purposes and stated intentions [*pudenda origo*].

It is in this context that he undertakes his genealogy of the penal system. Typically, his analysis reverses the cause-effect relation usually attributed to penal reform, especially the utilitarian motivation of social

betterment and reeducation through the ministrations of newly generated human sciences. On the contrary, he sees the mass effort throughout the nineteenth century toward discipline and normalization—thoroughgoing instruments of observation and control—as expressing the self-custodial drive of a “carceral society.” The question he asks is how detention could change within the course of a few years from a rare punishment, reserved for the noble, the insane, and the vagabond, to the accepted and preferred form of judicial sanction. What does this say about the epistemological status of crime, criminal, and court in the modern era?

The flag words of archaeology, “transformation” and “displacement,” already operative in the study of the clinic, continue to propel this genealogy. In fact, their continued presence supports our larger thesis that this text can support an archaeological analysis as well. What Foucault is charting is a *displacement* in the point of punishment from body to body-*and*-soul in nineteenth-century practice as well as “a whole new system of truth,” of knowledge, techniques, and “scientific” discourses concomitant to this displacement, which becomes entangled with the exercise of the *power* to punish.

His method aims to determine whether this focus on the soul, and with it the insertion of a body of “scientific” knowledge into the legal practice, is not the effect of a *transformation* of the way in which the body itself is invested by power relations (*DP* 24). In fact, he sees an entire “political economy” of the body surfacing as the condition and context for the reformed systems of punishment that appear in the nineteenth century.

Foucault’s book is noted for introducing the “micro-physics of power” that in avowedly nominalist fashion ferrets out those instances where power is “expressed rather than possessed” (*DP* 26). His point is that “power” is not some abstract entity exercised by sovereign states in juridical, legislative, and executive manner. Rather, it names an indefinite complex of relations of domination and control, positive as well as negative, that connects every facet of society. The Rousseauian ideal of a fully transparent society that inspired the ideology of the Revolution of 1789, a view that Sartre seems to have shared,⁹ was but the incomplete articulation of this economy. It took the cool calculation of the utilitarian Bentham to link this with the power of surveillance. As Foucault remarks, “the tendency of Bentham’s thought is archaic in the importance it gives to the gaze” (*P/K* 160, Eye).

The visibility of public executions in the seventeenth century was an exercise in sovereign power: the ruler displayed for all to see “the power relation that gave his force to the law” (*DP* 50). Foucault uncovers a whole “technology of representation” behind the art of punishing in the classical age: images linked by associations so disadvantageous as to rob the idea of crime of any attraction. This technology figured in the “economy of publicity” that was operative at the time. And, of course, it appealed to the representative character of the sign, which defined the “classical” episteme in *The Order of Things*.

The stated goal of punishment in the nineteenth century was the reform and reeducation of the criminal, his or her reconstitution as a productive member of society. Correspondingly, “the point of application of the penalty is not the representation, but the body, time, everyday gestures and activities; the soul, too, but insofar as it is the seat of habits. The body and the soul, as principles of behavior, form the element that is now proposed for punitive intervention” (*DP* 128). By a calculated control and apportionment of time (work schedules, periods of eating and rest, of schooling and prayer) and of space (the construction and allotment of spaces that permitted the greatest amount of potential surveillance), the bodies of the inmates of institutions (whether hospitals, factories, barracks, schools, or prisons) were rendered supple and docile, ready for the regimentation demanded by an industrial society. Not that there is a Marxist narrative afoot in Foucault’s account; on the contrary, the rage for discipline *precedes* the demands of industrialization and to a large extent makes them possible — again, the Foucauldian reversal. To be sure, Marx once said that a society only raises the kinds of problems it can solve. But in this case the answer is disciplinary, not economic; power, not productivity, is the great unthought of modernity.¹⁰

For modernity, vision has become supervision. The “hegemony” of vision in Foucault’s modernity is the hegemony of power — a redundancy! Bentham’s Panopticon, the architectural model for an institution in which the inmates are exposed to the possibility of constant surveillance so that they internalize this supervision as *self-control* — this is the ideal, not only of the “carceral archipelago” (*DP* 297) that dotted the landscape of industrialized nations over the last two centuries but also of the entire “carceral society” that has arisen on this model and the “disciplinary individual” who is both its creature and its apologist.¹¹

The vehicles of this disciplinary economy are surveillance, normal-

ization, and their synthesis, the examination. By “surveillance” Foucault means “hierarchical observation,” like that facilitated in the layout of military camps, hospitals, workshops, asylums, and schools. By “normalizing judgment” he denotes the juridico-anthropological function of disciplinary power that joins the Law, the Word and Text, and Tradition by imposing new delimitations on each of these powers in modern society.¹²

We saw that in one of the most brilliant passages from *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses the normalizing gaze of the examination, which combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy with those of a normalizing judgment. From the daily rounds of the physician to reviews, tests, and qualifying exams in barracks, schools, and professional associations, here are united “the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (*DP* 184). The various aspects of the power-knowledge dyad come to bear with the Benthamite principle of visibility: “The examination transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power” (*DP*, 187). The hegemony of vision is not so much terminated as permeated by a more subtle exercise of power. Disciplinary power, unlike traditional sovereign power, is exercised through its invisibility while imposing compulsory visibility on its subjects—the grades are posted and/or the failed reveal themselves by their absence. Moreover, like the “clinical” sciences generally, the examination makes each individual a “case.” But in this new economy “describable individuality became a means of control and a method of domination,” a fact that was only implicit in *The Birth of the Clinic*. Each individual has a mass of documentation that fixes him or her for scrutiny. At this early stage such codes are crude anticipations of the thorough electronic “formalization” of the individual within the power systems that obtain today. The examination belongs to a modality of power for which individual difference is relevant (*DP* 192). In a disciplinary regime, power is exercised “by surveillance rather than ceremonies” (*DP* 193). It is such power and knowledge, Foucault has argued throughout his genealogies, that *constitute individuals* as correlatives.

When we consider later the much-discussed “return” of the self in Foucault’s thought, we should remember that he speaks here of constituting “individuals,” not “selves,” and that he stresses the socioeconomic and specifically the “disciplinary” formation of the “disciplinary indi-

vidual” even as he sets forth the possibility of a “nondisciplinary power” (*SD* 39). The emergence of the “self” (self-constitution and technologies of the self) in his last works must be distinguished from the constitution of the individual, though in this matter, the interplay between the axis of power and that of subjectivation is clearly relevant.¹³ And the construction of the “subject” of social scientific analysis serves by its ambiguity to mediate the reference to individuals and selves along the axis of subjectivation — again, a thesis I shall defend in chapter 7.

Elsewhere, Foucault has assumed the role of social critic by decrying the kind of individuality to which our society limits us.¹⁴ Here he links that individualization to the hegemony of vision formalized in the examination. If the social contract has been regarded as the ideal foundation of law and political power in an individualistic age, he reminds us that “panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion.” “The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle,” he explains, “was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines.” Drawing a moral for which he became well known, Foucault adds: “The ‘Enlightenment,’ which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines” (*DP* 223).

DIACRITICAL VISION

The ocular paradigm which Foucault believes has organized modernity transforms and displaces concepts of the visual that marked the classical period and earlier. The language of the eye that dominated Western epistemology since the ancient Greeks became the language of the “I” in the *Cogito* and in the politics of possessive individualism. Foucault’s archaeology of the medical gaze traced the transformation of that later vision and the displacement of its space in the modern episteme. His genealogy of the penal system revealed the transformation of the publicity of punishment into the subtle, normalizing gaze of the inspector and supervisor and the displacement of its object from the physical body to the body-soul as the stuff of which subjects are constituted.

In the course of these accounts, Foucault’s own ocular proclivities have come to the fore. We are thus faced with the paradox mentioned earlier: that, in using the visual to undermine the visual, he disqualifies his own approach as well. We know that Foucault is no stranger to such ob-

jections. How, in this case, does he avoid the self-referential force of his own argument?

The answer, I have suggested, lies in the *diacritical nature* of his visual method, whether archaeological, genealogical, or problematizing. We noted that he adopts as his own the diacritical principle of medical observation that “the only pathological fact is a comparative fact” (*BC* 134). Recall that in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France he credited George Dumézil for having taught him “to refer the system of functional correlations from one discourse to another by means of comparison.” From Dumézil he also learned “to describe the transformations of a discourse and its relations to the institution.”¹⁵ This nominalistic method freed vision from its Platonic perspective and held itself to the “surface” of events and practices, away from all the attributions of intention or influence that have muddied traditional intellectual history. By staying on the diagonal, following the comparatist lead of general geographers, as Paul Veyne suggests,¹⁶ Foucault’s diacritical vision *transforms* the intuitionist and foundationalist claims of ocular epistemologists without sacrificing the power of imagistic reasoning. In fact, it is precisely the *force* of the image that he exploits in his generous use of spatial metaphors.

But there is a concomitant *displacement* of the temporal by the spatial in Foucault’s “histories.” Just as geography (a medicine of sites) had to replace history (a medicine of the progressive uncovering of a species) if pathological anatomy was to gain general acceptance in the clinic, so the spatialized “arguments” of *Las Meninas*, the Panopticon, and the various “triangles” and “quadrilaterals” that populate his writings are employed to replace the ordering temporality and totalizing subjectivity of the history of ideas. In the previous chapter we remarked that the very term “displacement” is a spatial word that connotes a power relationship as well. The resultant reasoning which I am designating “postmodern” proceeds more by association and juxtaposition than by causal attribution. And when necessities are appealed to, as they sometimes are, it is often retrospectively by pointing to “gaps” and “spaces” left by chance conjunctures or unexplained events. Even the strategical model employed in his genealogies implies power relations which are “both intentional and nonsubjective” (*HS* 94), not unlike the social “habitus” of his colleague at the Collège, Pierre Bourdieu.¹⁷

What I have termed his “postmodern” spatialization of reason, with

its diacritical vision and spatial paradigm, is Foucault's alternative to the leading methodologies of modernity, namely the formalism of the structuralists and the dialectics of the humanists. It is to counter the axiomatization of the former and the totalizing character of the latter, I have been arguing, that he takes this spatializing turn. Not that he neglects time. Pace Paul Veyne, one could scarcely write history without it. But he dethrones Time and History from their ordering role in the human sciences in favor of the chance event, the contingent a priori and the comparative fact. Earlier we noted him distinguish a plurality of times corresponding to a variety of epistemes and discursive practices. The Dionysian character of time is thus restored.¹⁸

John Rajchman points out a link between spatialized reason and Foucault's historical nominalism:

Foucault's archaeology of the "spatializations" of madness or illness, while it disputes simple observational realism, nevertheless does not lead, in a parallel way, to the sort of "pragmatic realism" which says: if you can cure a patient, then the illness you have seen in him is real. On the contrary, it leads in the opposite direction of a sort of nominalism; and in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, for example, Foucault talks of "de presentifying" the very things of which he writes the "archaeology." (CA 1:232)

Now "presentification" [*Vergegenständlichung*] is a technical term in Husserlian phenomenology, often translated as "making present" or "presentification." Foucault is explicitly distancing himself from phenomenological method by inverting this basic phenomenological activity. In fact, he has described archaeology as an attempt to liberate history from phenomenology, a claim we shall address in our concluding chapter.

Foucault connects this diacritical vision with his concept of archaeology as diagnosis in the following gloss on Nietzsche: "History has a more important task than to be a handmaiden to philosophy, to recount the necessary birth of truth and values; it should become a *differential* knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes. Its task is to become a curative science" (LCP 156; also EW 2:352, NGH). The editor of that volume, Donald Bouchard, comments that "this conception [of history as diagnostic] underlies the task of *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* even though it is

not found as a conscious formulation until *The Archaeology of Knowledge*” (LCP 156 n. 51). If Foucault’s diacritical vision is diagnostic, it is neither purely theoretical nor uncommitted. It is motivated by a concern to make a difference, to address a situation that he finds personally “intolerable.”¹⁹

HISTORICAL VISIONS

[For Foucault,] to think always meant to think about the limits of a situation. But it also meant to see. Foucault was an extraordinary seer, as evidenced by the way he perceived people, the way he saw everything, whether it was comic or horrible. This seeing power was very much linked to his writing power.

Gilles Deleuze, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*

All the forms of Foucauldian vision that we have reviewed are diacritical, but that does not imply that they are homogeneous. In fact, at least four modes can be distinguished among these ways of comparative viewing, namely, the “diagnostic,” the “panoptic,” the “kaleidoscopic,” and the “heterotopic.” As we conclude this chapter, let us briefly consider each.

The first two forms require little further elaboration. But it is important to distinguish the diagnostic from the panoptic uses. To be sure, there is frequent overlap in practice. As one should expect from a nominalist, these classifications are best seen as practical rules-of-thumb rather than as clearly evident divisions. Again, “the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates.” But the “curative” strategy is not simply the dominating one. No doubt, one must be able to control in order to treat, just as the disciplinary individual of panopticism is likewise a product of the medical model that issues in the “biopolitics” of the human sciences. But, analogies aside, a sick individual is not the same as a “sick” society; neither is an unruly one. And though a nominalist would be more inclined to press the analogy if not simply to reduce its collective term it is clear that diagnostic vision is no more reducible to panoptic vision than is knowledge reducible to power, an irreducibility that Foucault has strenuously maintained. We are beginning to touch on the alternative axes along which Foucault’s entire work can be charted, namely, knowledge, power, and subjectivation. If such an axial reading of his oeuvre (a term he disliked) is possible and illuminating, then its presence will be intimated throughout our investigation, as indeed it has. But, again, we reserve a full consideration of this matter for chapter 7.

What I am calling kaleidoscopic vision is an application of Paul Veyne's metaphor. I have remarked that Foucault is a philosopher of the "minuscule displacement" (*OT* 238). He turns (often reverses) the kaleidoscope of our received views to produce new, frequently liberating perspectives. The emergent reconfigurations, including the "fit" of one episteme into the spaces of a prior one, yields an altered vision of Western cultural history. It complements (and sometimes seemingly replaces) the standard organic models of historical development so widespread today. It is to this kaleidoscopic vision, I believe, that Hayden White is appealing when he lists Foucault among the "speculative" philosophers of history along with Vico, Hegel, and Spengler. And to the extent that Foucault "raises the question of whether there is an inner logic in the evolution of the human sciences similar to that which historians have purported to find in the development of their counterparts, the physical sciences," I agree with White.²⁰ In the following chapter I shall appeal to an aesthetic sense of "fittingness" as an indication of the kind of "logic" one can find at work among the epistemes themselves. Another kind of necessity (the epistemic) rules within a particular cognitive field, often producing strange bedfellows such as Cuvier and Darwin or the Mercantilists and the Physiocrats.²¹ But it is the combination of Foucault's nominalism with his stringent rejection of organic models, cyclical images, and evolutionist metaphors that removes him from the illustrious company in which White would place him. Appeal to the aesthetic, I shall be arguing, while avoiding the prophetic character of well-known philosophers of History, offers a kind of postdictive intelligibility to Western histories that respects the aleatory and the novelty of each radical break. The Owl of Minerva may not spread its wings till the parting of the day. But, in Foucault's case, what it surveys as it takes flight is aesthetic fittingness, not dialectical necessity; the coherence of the struggle, not its inevitability.²²

A fourth type of vision operative in Foucault's histories is "heterotopic." Foucault employs the term as a contrast with utopian thinking. Fredric Jameson has pointed out that "a whole range of properly spatial Utopias" sprang up after the events of May 1968, "in which the transformation of social relations and political institutions is projected onto the vision of place and landscape, including the human body."²³ Mention of the human body does suggest Foucauldian genealogy and its dream of new "bodies and pleasures." We know that Sartre plays with the utopian

“as if” of his “city of ends.” But Foucault is explicitly opposed to utopian thinking of any kind. There is doubtless a functional similarity between utopian and heterotopic visions: both serve to criticize the status quo and to suggest an alternative view. Foucault describes them both as “emplacements” that “suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented [*réflechis*] by them.”²⁴ But whereas “utopias,” as their name suggests,²⁵ exist “no-where” and are ideal projections of theoretical possibilities, “hetero-topias” exist “elsewhere,” in some sense contesting the established social order. They are real places, but places apart — like libraries, theaters, retirement homes, vacation villages, and sailing vessels, “the heterotopia par excellence” (*EW* 2:179, Spaces).

What I have been describing as Foucauldian “reversals” reflect a heterotopic vision. They guide our attention in the opposite direction of our accustomed narrative path: effects are seen to be causes, justifications become question-begging, and the narrative landscape is inverted — *die verkehrte Welt* of Hegel and Tieck in the service of social critique.

WHOEVER SAYS “vision” says “space.” Foucault’s transformation of phenomenological insight into diacritical visions such as those we have just described constitutes an invitation to displace a certain kind of history by a certain kind of “geography.” The resultant “spatialized” reasoning contributes to the “revolution” in historical analysis to which Paul Veyne referred. But the force of this transformation and displacement cannot be appreciated until we have pursued the “spaces” of historical analysis that Foucault’s investigations both generate and examine in our next chapter. Only then shall we be able to view Foucault’s “cartographical” approach to historical phenomena, the topic of the following chapter. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 form a triptych of vision, space, and map, from which will emerge the full picture of Foucault’s “histories” in chapter 7.

The Spaces of History

As we pursue our analysis of “spatialized reasoning” in Foucault’s histories, we move from the four types of diachronic vision he employs (the diagnostic, the panoptic, the kaleidoscopic, and the heterotopic) to the various “spaces” they reveal. It is not a matter of seeking a corresponding space for each form of vision, though each reveals its object from its proper perspective; like searchlights, they overlap the same territory. Rather, our concern is to illuminate Foucault’s manner of arguing that appeals to relations of division, juxtaposition, incongruity, strategy, and opposition. We are considering and relating the trio of vision-space-map in chapters 4 through 6 in order to complete our image of Foucault’s own histories in the pyramidal model in chapter 7 that culminates part 2.

HISTORY/PHILOSOPHY AS DIAGNOSTIC

Recall that when Foucault characterizes his method as “diagnostic,” he means that it yields “a form of knowledge that defines and determines differences.”² The example he cites is a physician determining a disease by comparing the symptoms with those of other diseases. We concluded that he seems

A critique could be carried out of this devaluation of space [in our century]. Did it begin with Bergson, or before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.

Michel Foucault,
“Question on Geography,”
*Power/Knowledge*¹

to have adopted as a general rule what he characterized in *The Birth of the Clinic* as “the diacritical principle of medical observation,” namely, that “the only pathological fact is a comparative fact” (*BC* 134). This, of course, would accord with his kaleidoscopic (what we shall now term “spatializing”) thought. It grounds what we called more generally his “diacritical vision” in the previous chapter.

But in addition to comparing differences, philosophy as diagnostic turns away from eternal verities toward present-day concerns. If Foucauldian history is “history of the present,” Foucauldian philosophy is likewise “philosophy of the present,” which is probably one reason why it has been so influential among social scientists in recent years. At the height of the structuralist wave in France, Foucault gave an interview published in the Tunisian press in which he distinguished structuralism as a method that “studies ensembles in their present equilibrium rather than processes in their history” from structuralism as a philosophical activity. The latter, he explains, sees philosophy as a kind of diagnostic: “The philosopher in effect has ceased wanting to tell us what exists eternally. His task now is the more arduous and more transient one of telling us what is going on. To that extent one can certainly speak of a kind of structuralist philosophy that would be defined as the activity which enables us to diagnose what is going on nowadays [*ce qu’est aujourd’hui*].” He adds: “In effect, the philosopher can be conceived as a kind of analyst of the cultural conjuncture, taking ‘culture’ in the broad sense to include not only the production of works of art but equally political institutions, forms of social life, prohibitions and various constraints.”³ Elsewhere but in the same year, he repeats the claim that ever since Nietzsche “the task of philosophy has been to diagnose and no longer to seek a truth that could hold for everyone and for all time.” Assuming this task himself, he admits: “I am seeking to diagnose, to realize a diagnosis of the present: to say what we are today and what it means today to say what we say. This job of excavating under our very feet has characterized contemporary thought since Nietzsche, and it is in this sense that I can claim to be a philosopher.”⁴ Whereas “philosophy from Hegel to Sartre has been essentially an enterprise of totalization,” Foucault sees his task as undertaking “a diagnostic of the present.”⁵ Turning autobiographical for a moment, he admits: “Ideologically, I remained historicist and Hegelian until I read Nietzsche” (*DE* 1:613, *Qui êtes-vous?*).

We appreciate that Foucault’s diagnostic method is that of a historical

nominalist. His entire project has been radically anti-Platonic and favorable to those like the Sophists and Cynics in classical antiquity who have been marginalized by the official history of Western philosophy. Thus his interest in contrast and difference does not imply commitment to an underlying unity. True to his nominalist proclivities, he urges:

The freeing of difference requires thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation; thought that accepts divergence; affirmative thought whose instrument is disjunction; thought of the multiple of the nomadic and dispersed multiplicity that is not limited or confined by the constraints of similarity. What is the answer to the question? The problem. How is the problem resolved? By displacing the question. We must think problematically rather than question and answer dialectically. (*EW*2:359, *Theatrum*)⁶

This emphasis on “problematization” on how it came about that sexual thoughts as well as practices, for example, became a major moral matter, displacing considerations of diet and even civic duty in order of importance though most explicit in his second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, was already present in his earlier writings, a fact worth noting when addressing the unity of Foucault’s thought. Problematization, as we are about to see, likewise expresses the spatialization of language in Foucault’s later work.

Because of his comparative method, Foucault should be seen as less a revisionist than a *counterhistorian*. Each of the “histories” he constructs, whether archaeological, genealogical, or problematizing (the last two volumes of his *The History of Sexuality*, e.g.), are dependent on prior histories against which they define themselves in a differential manner. As the signs in Saussure’s system of language derive their meaning through a relationship of contrast with other signs, so the statements in Foucault’s histories gain their significance, not only from mutual differences but from the ongoing distinction drawn between the set of statements being described and a contrasting set in question. It is not simply that the set of statements constituting the modern discourse of sexuality, for example, displays a coherence that makes some statements possible and excludes others or even that the discourse of sexuality creates a space in which such statements may proliferate; rather, it is that the entire “discursive formation” (the set itself and the rules that govern it)⁷ assumes its meaning as a mechanism of social control in contrast with alternative

discourses that assign sex a less decisive, less cognitive role in constituting social subjects. Accordingly, the alternative “bodies and pleasures” that Foucault speaks of at the close of his first volume on sexuality have the force of resistance to currently dominant discursive practices by virtue of their very possibility (*EW* 2:359, *Theatrum*). Things can be otherwise, he is reminding us, not merely in the utopian sense of imaginative constructions, but in the diagnostic contrast that “heterotopias” proffer.

HETEROTOPIAS

I recall having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space, of something that I called at that time “heterotopias,” those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. The architects worked on them, and at the end of the study someone spoke up a Sartrean psychologist who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then.⁸

Michel Foucault, “Space, Knowledge, and Power,” *Essential Works*

In the previous chapter, we spoke of Foucault’s “heterotopic” vision, a form of the diacritical vision by which he undermines the dianoetic, essentialist insight of traditional philosophy and the history of ideas. In a lecture entitled “Different Spaces,” delivered the year after *The Order of Things* was published, Foucault undertakes a brief “history” of space in support of the thesis that whereas history was the great obsession of nineteenth-century thought, our present age could well be termed “the epoch of space.” He employs his diagnostic method to distinguish “heterotopias” (other places) from “utopias” (“good places/no places”). The former, which is a constant of every human group, includes such spaces as cemeteries, gardens, and museums, as well as the “space” of fairs and vacation villages, of libraries and colonies. One might have located here as well Fredric Jameson’s artistic spatial “utopias,” which he takes to be emblematic of postmodern thought, except that their “reality” is what Sartre calls the “derealized reality” of the artwork.⁹ What makes this curious essay interesting, in addition to the characteristic force and pertinence of Foucault’s descriptions, is its use of the method of contrast to underscore the “space of contestation” that heterotopias

inevitably introduce into a society. Although they have a specific function proper to each society within which they exist, in general these “different spaces” silently question the space in which we live. And they usually are linked with a “heterochronia” of their own. We should recall this critical function of “other spaces” in Foucault’s thought when it is being labeled “indifferent” or “reactionary.” In a remark that anticipates his genealogy of the “carceral society” in *Discipline and Punish* several years later, he concludes: “The sailing vessel is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without ships the dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police that of the corsairs” (*EW* 2:185, Spaces).

But the subversive nature of heterotopic discourse is not limited to its spatial character. It serves the function of nominalist fragmentation as well. In his preface to *The Order of Things*, which opens with Jorge Luis Borges’s well-known citation from “a certain Chinese encyclopedia” in which “animals” are distinguished according to classes that do not sustain the distinctions, Foucault remarks:

[Unlike utopias], heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter and tangle common names, because they destroy “syntax” in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things . . . to “hold together.” This is why utopias permit fables and discourses: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the *fabula*; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences. (*OT* xviii)

THE SPACE OF FREEDOM

Again, the diagnostic method illuminates the fact that “we live inside an ensemble of relations that define emplacements [*emplacements*] that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable” (*EW* 2:178, Spaces). Here the searchlight analogy just employed fails; Foucault is not seeking a “fusion of horizons” in the manner of hermeneuticists like Hans-Georg Gadamer.¹⁰ Diagnosis concerning the nature of the present, “by following lines of fragility in the present . . . in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is,” in-

evitably opens up what Foucault calls “a space of concrete freedom, i.e. of possible transformation.”¹¹ In a manner reminiscent of Sartre’s existential humanism, Foucault avows: “I am simply saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is the possibility of resistance. We are never trapped by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy.”¹² (Parenthetically, let us note that such “possible transformation” denotes one of several uses of “freedom” that occur throughout Foucault’s work, a matter to be examined in chapter 7.)

This revelation of the radical contingency of discourses is another reason why Foucault’s “histories” are forms of social critique, a fact seemingly lost on such critics as Jürgen Habermas and Richard Rorty. And it is “space,” or rather the spatialization of language and reason, I wish to argue, that fills the organizing role in postmodern thought played by “order” and “history” in the early modern (what Foucault calls the “classical”) and modern epistemic grids respectively.¹³ To the extent that this reading is correct, one can consider Foucault’s archaeologies, but also his genealogies and his problematizations, as illustrating the very postmodern thought from which his “histories” of modernism emerge. In other words, far from being a merely stylistic quirk, the discourse of these studies exemplifies the postmodern spatialization of history in its analysis of modern and premodern practices. As Jameson observes, “postmodernist theory is itself an example of what it claims to anatomize.”¹⁴

In an essay on Maurice Blanchot, whose thought he admired, Foucault speaks of “experience of the outside” [*l’expérience du dehors*], which historically was lodged in negative theology and in the writings of such social outsiders as the Marquis de Sade and Friedrich Hölderlin, as reappearing “at the very heart of the language” of our culture with the works of Nietzsche, Stéphane Mallarmé, Antonin Artaud, Georges Bataille, Pierre Klossowski, and Maurice Blanchot (members of Foucault’s pleiad). Such experience seeks a language that excludes the subject, eschews dialectical attempts to recoup otherness, and shows an affinity for space, “which is to fiction what the negative is to reflection (while dialectical negation is tied to the fable of time).”¹⁵ Indeed, this could describe Foucault’s “ethnology” of his own society as undertaking an experience (experiment) of (from) the outside.¹⁶ Characterizing with approval Blanchot’s literary work, Foucault insists that language is “neither truth

nor time nor eternity nor man, but the ever defeated form of the outside" (*EW*2:168, TO).¹⁷ It is in "spatialized" language that Foucault seeks liberation, not only from the suzerainty of a homogeneous and universal time and the phenomenology, whether pure or hermeneutical, that is its interpretant, but from the metaphor of depth: Foucault's is a geography, not a geology—or, better, a geopolitics of the regions he surveys.

Recall the excellent example of Foucault's spatializing method in his archaeology of medical perception, analyzed in the previous chapter. Already in his first major work, Foucault had undertaken an archaeology of the classical perception of madness. Even at this early stage in his career, he is displaying an awareness of the complex of perceptions, categories, objects, attitudes, and practices entailed by the shift from the preclassical to the classical understanding of madness. As he would later analyze how it came to be obvious in the nineteenth century that criminals should be incarcerated, he raises a similar question with regard to the mad in the Age of Reason: Why should they be the ones to fill the former leprosaria recently emptied by the relative extirpation of that disease? Clearly, he is analyzing a "radical event" when he writes: "What is for us merely an undifferentiated sensibility must have been, for those living in the classical age, a clearly articulated perception. It is this mode of perception which we must investigate in order to discover the form of sensibility to madness in an epoch we are accustomed to define by the privileges of Reason."¹⁸

Remember that Foucault is focusing upon what he calls "practice," both discursive and nondiscursive. He insists that the task that *The Order of Things* has set itself is one of no longer "treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (*AK* 49). In other words, he is not simply indulging in semiotics. But he is quick to insist that "the discursive formation is characterized not by principles of construction but by a dispersion of fact, since for statements it is not a condition of possibility but a law of coexistence" (*AK* 116). Presumably, a condition of possibility is generic and "transcendental" in the Kantian sense, whereas a law of coexistence, in Foucault's usage, is particular and existential; the former is predictive and scientific, the latter at most postdictive and historical.¹⁹

He has admitted that his use of "discourse" in the *Archaeology* is rather ambiguous (see *AK* 107). The same might be said for "discursive forma-

tion,” which is a condition of existence but not a condition of possibility (AK 117), except that here he seems to have adopted this distinction to keep his project “positive” and not “transcendental” (see AK 230). Indeed, this distinction between conditions of existence and conditions of possibility expresses his “principle of exteriority” enunciated in the inaugural lecture to the effect that, rather than burrowing to the supposed hidden core of discourse, as hermeneutics might counsel, one address the discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, and “look for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to chance series of these events and fixes its limits” (AK 229). Foucault’s aim is not to constitute a realm independent of the nondiscursive but to reveal how these formations function *at the limit* between discursive and nondiscursive practices not as representing some extralinguistic reality, but as establishing a proper domain and a specific object of investigation.²⁰

As if to offer a gloss on Saussure while distancing himself from phenomenology, Foucault summarizes his method in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

What, in short, we wish to do is to dispense with “things.” To “de-representify” them . . . [the antithesis of the Husserlian ideal, as we saw]. To substitute for the enigmatic treasure of “things” anterior to discourse, the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse. To define these *objects* without reference to the *ground*, the *foundation of things*, but by relating them to the body of rules that enable them to form as objects of discourse and thus constitute the conditions of their historical appearance. (AK 47–48)

The point of Foucault’s analyses in each of these works is to reveal the contextualized nature and the radical contingency of our most prized certainties. By examining Veyne’s “optics of the sources,” the commonplaces and takens-for-granted of a particular discourse, institution, or set of practices, Foucault is able to reveal unsuspected affiliations that challenge the adequacy of our standard readings of the phenomena in question and, more important, constitute new phenomena of their own and, most important, open a space for freedom as “possible transformation.” As he says with ironic modesty of his history of sexuality, “I would like to refocus the perspective somewhat: seizing in any case the entire complex of operative mechanisms.”²¹ In effect, he wishes to turn the kaleidoscope.

SPATIAL ARGUMENTATION: *HISTOIRE DE LA FOLIE*

"If Michel Foucault approached his *Maladie mentale et personnalité* as a clinician," wrote Michel Serres in an early review, "he approaches *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*²² as a historian. It is, however, and in many ways, an unusual kind of history."²³ What Serres finds most strikingly original about the work is Foucault's style that "seems to have created the structures—both the most immediate and the most profound—that organize the work and its object. These structures," he explains, "are clearly of a 'geometric' nature; they cover the historical ensemble under consideration with a highly developed network of dualities. It is necessary to deploy these 'binary' structures across every possible level of experience—to get a picture of the rigorous organon guiding the organization of this book" (*FI* 37, *Geometry*). That said, Serres undertakes a survey of the work whose challenge is to give voice to the speechless by reflecting it off the discourse of "rationality" as the latter's mirror image and "other." Photographically speaking, the result is another positive of rationality in the Age of Reason and a negative of the silenced realm of the insane.

Of particular relevance to our topic of spatialized reasoning is Serre's thesis that "Foucault has chosen to write this book in the language of geometry—geometry understood in what we might call its earliest form. . . . In fact," he continues, "if we consider the terms and vocabulary, the style, the logic, the organon of the work, we will see clearly that they are drawn from a meditation on the primary qualities of space, on the immediate phenomena of *situation*." Of course, Serres's use of a well-known Sartrean term tempts us to seek a bridge toward the existentialist view, but that must wait for later. "The problems of unreason are perfectly explicable following such a [spatialized] schema of language and logic. Because the most substantial experience of unreason—and historically the most frequent—the *iron law*, is precisely that of the segregation of dementia in a contained, isolated, closed, and distinct space" (*FI* 39, *Geometry*).

Foucault's "argument," as we would now expect, is a comparative one, inspired by the work of Georges Dumézil, whom he acknowledges in the preface to the first edition (*DE* 1:167, *Folie*). It describes the variations of structures that it is possible to locate in this kind of double space, namely, the space of "freedom" and the space of "rejection." Far from

being a chronicle in the traditional sense, Serres observes, “the history of madness is a history of the variation of dual structures located in the two spaces of reason and nonsense” (*FI* 41, Geometry). In fact, he concludes that “the only essence of madness is situation itself,” specifically, the situation of exclusion from the realm of reason-freedom and of inclusion in “the space of all possible negatives, all purifications” again, the negative of reason’s positivities (*FI* 47, Geometry). As Foucault observes: “A rational hold over madness is always possible and necessary to the degree that madness is non-reason.” “There is only one word that summarizes this experience,” he continues, “*Unreason*: all that, for reason, is closest and most remote, emptiest and most complete; all that presents itself to reason in familiar structures authorizing a knowledge, and then a science, which seeks to be positive and all that is constantly in retreat from reason, in the inaccessible domain of nothingness” (*Madness* 107). In other words, madness [*la folie*] is being reconstituted and perceived as unreason [*la déraison*], the obverse of the glorious reason of the classical age.²⁴

An instance of his writing a “history of the present,” Foucault affirms that, if there was any common language between these two realms before they were sharply distinguished and separated in the Age of Reason, whatever imperfect dialogue remained was squelched by the constitution of madness as a mental illness at the end of the eighteenth century. “The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language,” he insists, “but rather the archaeology of that silence” (*Madness* xi; *DE* 1:160). Indicative of Foucault’s ambiguous assessment of Freud and psychoanalysis in general is his crediting Freud with restoring to medical thought “the possibility of a dialogue with unreason” (*Madness* 198). The ambiguity of that dialogue mirrors the ambiguity of Foucault’s evaluation.

Overriding Foucault’s disclaimers and voicing an opinion shared by many, Serres concludes: “This *Folie et déraison* is thus, in fact, a history of ideas. It is a history found in the mirror of the asylum’s microcosm, disfigured certainly, silent and pathetic, but rigorously organized by virtue of the reversals that we now understand” (*FI* 56, Geometry). Recalling Foucault’s reasons for refusing to be associated with the history of ideas, we shall assess Serres’s judgment in our concluding chapter, once all the evidence is at hand.

SPATIAL ARGUMENTATION: SPATIAL TECHNIQUES

So it is not only his comparative, differential method that I wish to pursue, though this is integral to the counterhistory he is practicing. Foucault's marked preference for spatial metaphors is indicative of his synchronic manner of conceiving the relations he analyzes. Indeed, rather than refer to the precedents and influences that a more temporally ordered discourse might employ, he makes liberal use of such terms as displacement, field, position, emplacement, site, domain, and limit to convey his grasp of the altered relations that his kaleidoscope reveals. His writings show a marked preference for lists, tables, geometrical configurations, and illustrations that not only constitute his particular style of exposition but are integral to the argument itself.

Next to the Panopticon paradigm of *Discipline and Punish*, *The Order of Things* offers us the most striking examples of such spatial arguments. In response to a Canadian interviewer who had cited the "vivid spatial metaphors" of *The Order of Things*, Foucault replied:

It is quite possible that since I was interested in the problems of space I used quite a number of spatial metaphors in *The Order of Things*, but usually these metaphors were not ones that I advanced but ones that I was studying as objects. What is striking in the epistemological mutations and transformations of the seventeenth century is to see how *the spatialization of knowledge* was one of the facts in the constitution of this knowledge as a science. If the natural history and the classifications of Linnaeus were possible, it is for a certain number of reasons: on the one hand, there was literally a spatialization of the very object of their analyses, since they gave themselves the rule of studying and classifying a plant only on the basis of that which was visible. They didn't even want to use a microscope. All the traditional elements of knowledge, such as the medical functions of the plant, fell away. The object was spatialized. Subsequently, it was spatialized insofar as the principles of classification had to be found in the very structure of the plant: the number of elements, how they were arranged, their size, etc., and certain other elements, like the height of the plant. Then there was the spatialization into illustrations within books, which was only possible with certain printing techniques. Then the spatialization of the reproduction of the plants themselves, which was represented in books. *All these are spatial techniques, not metaphors.* (EW 3:362-63, QM, emphasis added).

My claim throughout part 2 of our study is that a large number of Foucault's so-called spatial metaphors are in fact what he has called "spatial techniques" and, as such, are integral to his argumentation.

Turning, then, to *The Order of Things* in support of this claim, let us consider first, the analysis of Diego Velasquez's painting, "Las Meninas," with which the work begins. In the manner of an art critic, Foucault leads us along the path of argument by repeatedly calling our attention to aspects of the singular image before us. Without entering into the details of his examination, suffice it to note that the placement of the figures both in and, *by visual implication*, outside the work draw us to the graphic conclusion that representation cannot represent itself, that "the very being of that which is represented is now going to fall outside representation itself" (OT 240). Foucault's visual "argument" has more than art-historical significance. It is archaeological in nature. It charts an epistemic break, a radical event. Analogously, the works of Adam Smith in economics, of the first philologists, and of Antoine de Jussieu and of Jean Baptiste de Lamarck in biology reveal that a "*minuscule displacement*" has occurred in the space of representation, "which toppled the whole of Western thought: representation has lost the power to provide a foundation . . . for the links that can join its various elements together" (OT 238-39). The "space of order, which served as a common place for representation and for things" in the classical period is shattered. Henceforth there will be things and their representations, but their mutual adequacy will have to be established and the "fit" will not be perfect. On the threshold of modernity, critical philosophy and positivism will seek to occupy that space created by the displacement of being with regard to its representations.

Spatialized reasoning permeates this "archaeology of the human sciences," the subtitle of the work. Whether he is describing the "anthropological quadrilateral" in nineteenth-century thought (namely, the archaeological model whose four sides comprise finitude, the Kantian empirical/transcendental doublet, the unthought underlying the Cogito, and historicity)²⁵ that defines the mode of being of "man" on which the social sciences are founded, or the epistemological trihedron (formed by the deductive sciences, the empirical sciences, and philosophical reflection) generating the space of the social sciences in the modern period, or the open-ended classical "quadrilateral of language" centering on the naming relation between thing and its representation, Foucault's argu-

ments rely on these configurations in more than a metaphorical sense (see *OT* 201). They *place* the human sciences, for example, within the boundaries set by mathematics and physical science on one side, empirical science on the second side, and philosophy on the third. This iconic mode of argument brings to our attention not only the “essential instability” of the human sciences but their inherent danger to the “pure” disciplines that form their boundaries. Thus, “psychologism,” “sociologism,” and what Foucault generically terms “anthropologization” pose a constant threat to the natural sciences and philosophy from the human sciences (see *OT* 348). Like Kant’s geometrical arguments that relied on figures for their formulation and not merely for their illustration, Foucault’s quadrilaterals, trihedrons, and the like serve to “explain” the limits and possibilities created by the relevant epistemes as well as the permanent danger, in the case of the trihedron, for example, of “anthropologizing” these three planes of knowledge.²⁶

Foucault’s trilateral icon makes this precarious relationship visible by spatializing the relations that constitute the modern episteme into a volume open in three dimensions. The first side locates the deductive and linear linking of evident or verified propositions in mathematics and physical science. The second is the space of discontinuous but analogous elements linked by causal relations and structural constants (such as the nineteenth-century sciences of linguistics, biology, and political economy). The third dimension is that of philosophical reflection “which develops as thought of the Same” (*OT* 347). Foucault illustrates three intermediary points in his argument: that the human sciences have no place in any of these dimensions, that they are located in the volume defined by all three, and that, as such, they “touch” each of the three planes without being inscribed on any.²⁷ In other words, the human sciences can employ mathematical formalization, undertake empirical investigation, and focus on the being of man that is equally the object of philosophical reflection. And as Foucault explains:

It is perhaps this cloudy distribution within a three dimensional space that renders the human sciences so difficult to situate that gives their localization in the epistemological domain its irreducible precariousness, that makes them appear at once perilous and in peril. Perilous because they represent, as it were, a permanent danger to all the other branches of knowledge . . . [which, if the latter deviate from their rigorously defined planes, tumble] into the domain occupied by the

human sciences: hence the danger of “psychologism,” of “sociologism,” of what we might term, in a word, “anthropologism” which becomes a threat as the relations of thought to formalization are not reflected upon correctly, for example, or as soon as the modes of being of life, labor, and language are incorrectly analyzed. (OT 347-48)

“Anthropologization,” he warns in what may be the moral of his book, “is the great internal threat to knowledge in our day” (OT 348). The challenge he poses to the phenomenologist and the hermeneuticist is whether one can formalize without anthropologizing (see OT 324).

Though Foucault is careful to distance himself from deductivist or formalist approaches, his archaeological method brings to our attention the *necessities* that these relationships produce. The relations are a priori, albeit “historical” or regional a priori. Once the archaeologist has established the discursive practices, formations, and rules of formation from the empirical evidence, he or she attempts to answer the question, “How is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?” (AK 27) and asks why contrasting practices and formations are excluded.

Setting his archaeological account against the “tangled network of influences” that constitutes the standard history of ideas, Foucault remarks:

But if we question Classical thought at the level of what, archaeologically, made it possible, we perceive that the dissociation of the sign and resemblance in the early seventeenth century caused these new forms—probability, analysis, combination and universal language system—to emerge, not as successive themes engendering one another or driving one another out, but as *a single network of necessities*. And it was this network that made possible the individuals we term Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume, or Condillac. (OT 63, emphasis added)

Why one network succeeded another is a matter of chance, a throw of the historical dice. But why one appeared with the form it possessed is a function of the “spaces” left vacant by its predecessor. I shall elaborate this point in the following chapter. At this juncture, let it suffice to note that the “quasi transcendentals” of life, labor, and language analyzed in *The Order of Things*, for example, filled the gap in the representational schema of the classical period (see OT 206–9), just as the latter displaced the resemblance scheme of the Renaissance at the point of its greatest in-

adequacy. Likewise, the famous eighteenth-century debates between mercantilists and physiocrats in economics or between practitioners of the Method versus the System (evolutionists versus “fixists”) in biology, are just “surface disturbances” when viewed archaeologically in comparison, for instance, with “the network of necessity which at this point rendered the choice between two ways of constituting natural history as a language both possible and indispensable. The rest is merely a logical and inevitable consequence” (OT 139–40). If traditional history of ideas attends to the controversy between evolutionists and fixists in biology or between mercantilists and physiocrats in the history of economics, an archaeological approach addresses the epistemic configuration that rendered just these options possible.

One might call this history “critical” in its concern to uncover the basic rules of sense-making in a specific field of discourse throughout a commonly delineated historical period. But it is not “scientific” history, since its purpose, at least as an archaeology of “knowledge” rather than of other discursive practices, is to determine the conditions for what qualifies for that honorific “science” in the classical and the modern ages. Other objects of archaeological inquiry are conceivable. Foucault names several in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* but they too will operate at the levels of discursive practices.

But if there is post factum necessity and intelligibility in these archaeologies, they float on radical contingency, on the “fundamental event” that introduces chance into historical accounts. “The forces at play in history,” Foucault observes, “obey neither goal nor regulative mechanism, but follow the luck of the battle. They do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention nor do they assume the guise of an effect, for they always appear through the singular randomness of events.”²⁸ Accordingly, the archaeologist must respect the empirical evidence that manifests such events. This is the “positivist” dimension of the enterprise.

GENEALOGICAL SPACE

Reference to “battle” lifts us to the next level in the spiral of Foucault’s methodological progression, that of genealogy.²⁹ In its opposition to any concept of historical “origins,” its emphasis on the pivotal role of chance occurrences to “maintain passing events in their proper dispersion” (*EW* 2:374, NGH), and its Nietzschean nominalism, genealogy resembles ar-

chaeology. But its apparent difference lies in the fact that, as his assistant at the Collège de France observed, genealogy “poses the problem of power and of the body (of bodies), indeed, its problems begin from the imposition of power upon bodies.”³⁰ In retrospect, Foucault insists that he was always dealing with the issue of power, and a glance at *Histoire de la folie* and, above all, *The Birth of the Clinic*, would support the claim. But the later method complements the earlier one by interpreting all social relations in terms of the interplay of forces of domination, resistance, and control. Not meaning-giving but warfare becomes the proper model for historical intelligibility; social relations are to be read in terms of strategy and tactics. The separation from phenomenology (and structuralism) is even more pronounced.

Foucault brings to the fore the complementary nature of the archaeology/genealogy relation when, shortly after publishing *Discipline and Punish*, he in effect redefines the task of archaeology in “genealogical” terms:

The archaeology of the human sciences has to be established through studying the mechanisms of power which have invested human bodies, acts and forms of behavior. And this investigation enables us to rediscover one of the conditions of the emergence of the human sciences: the great nineteenth century effort in discipline and normalization. (*DE* 2:759; *P/K* 61, “Body/Power”)

It was this condition that *The Order of Things*, despite its promotion as “an archaeology of the human sciences,” overlooked. His next two genealogical studies supplied it. And yet we must not lose sight of the complementary nature of these approaches to historico-cultural intelligibility. In no way is it a matter of one method supplanting or even superseding the other as some authors have claimed. Indeed, the introduction to the second and third volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, published just before his death, continues to speak of genealogy and archaeology as distinct but complementary approaches to the topic in question (see *UP* 3–32).

Now it may seem that a major casualty of this move from archaeology to genealogy is the concept of space itself. One reputable critic, for example, has simply asserted that “in his writings of the 1970s Foucault abandons the notion of ‘space’ even the entirely superficial space of an ‘order of discourse.’”³¹ On the face of it, this is a curious claim, given

that *Discipline and Punish* adopted the paradigm of the Panopticon in 1975. But it does lead us to ask what in fact genealogy has to do with the spatialization of history. Does not its introduction signal rather a return to genetic and hence to temporal issues? In an interview given to a publication for geographers, Foucault responds:

People have often reproached me for these spatial obsessions, which have indeed been obsessions for me. But I think it was through them that I came to what I had basically been looking for: the relations that are possible between power and knowledge. *Once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power.* There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory. And the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military and the administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse.³²

It is, in fact, this very spatialized discourse that enables Foucault to bring into relation the power/knowledge dyad that comes to characterize his genealogical works, especially *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. “Displacement,” for example, is a military term, as explained earlier, and “field” and “region” are economic-juridical and administrative notions respectively. We can now say that his earlier, “archaeological” vocabulary carried an implicit reference to relations of domination and control in addition to serving as common terms for cognition. Indeed, Foucault believes that “anyone envisaging the analysis of discourse solely in terms of temporal continuity would inevitably be led to approach and analyze it like the internal transformation of an individual consciousness. Which would lead to his erecting a great collective consciousness as the scene of events.” So the use of spatial metaphors avoids the “anthropological” bias of modern philosophies of history while enabling one “to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power” (*P/K* 69–70, QG).

Foucault is aware that his valuation of space has been read as antihistorical, but he attributes such criticism to “those who confuse history

with the old schemas of evolution, living continuity, organic development, the progress of consciousness or the project of existence.” What such critics failed to realize was that “to trace the forms of implantation, delimitation and demarcation of objects, the modes of tabulation, the organization of domains meant the throwing into relief of processes—historical ones, needless to say—of power. The spatializing of descriptions of discursive realities,” he insists, “opens on to the analysis of related effects of power” (*P/K* 70–71, QG, translation modified; *DE* 3:34).

Foucault’s best-known example of spatialized argumentation that relates power and knowledge in a more than metaphorical sense is, as we have seen, his use of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon to characterize the self-custodial nature of our modern, “carceral society.” The marriage of norm and surveillance that this interplay of architecture and human science exhibits is brilliantly revealed in Foucault’s descriptions. Again, the demonstrative force of his analyses depends on the spatial organization of the institutions he discusses. *The argument is in the architecture*. As with the Velasquez painting, one is constantly referred back to the visual evidence, to the plans, the prospects, the models. But now the line of sight is *strategic*, not just illustrative or descriptive; the contours inscribe relations of control, not just forms of intelligibility. We are invited to view these practices, institutions, and sciences as techniques for mastering self and others. This theme of self-mastery as self-constitution and vice versa moves us up to the final turn of Foucault’s methodological spiral, that of problematization.

THE SPACE OF PROBLEMATIZATION

“A few years ago,” Foucault observes, “historians were very proud to have discovered that they could write not only the history of battles, of kings and institutions, but also of the economy. Now they’re all dumbfounded because the shrewdest among them learned that it was also possible to write the history of feelings, of behaviors and of bodies. Soon they’ll understand that the history of the West cannot be disassociated from the way in which “truth” is produced and inscribes its effects” (*FL* 215, Monarchy). At the time of his death, Foucault was said to be working on a projected study of the history of the “production of truth” to have been published in a series under the direction of Paul Veyne.³³ His lectures the last four years at the Collège de France on truth and subjectivity, the hermeneutics of the subject as well as truth-telling (plain speaking, *parrhesia*) all may well have been part of that project.³⁴

Recall his definition of this new approach to history, “problematization,” as “the ensemble of discursive and non-discursive practices that makes something enter into the play of the true and the false and constitutes it an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis or the like).”³⁵ Characteristically, he claims that problematization is what links all of his writings since *Histoire de la folie*. That work, for example, is now viewed as discussing how and why at a particular moment madness “was problematized via a certain institutional practice and a certain cognitive apparatus.” Likewise, *Discipline and Punish* is read as having dealt with changes in the problematization of relations between penal practices and institutions at the end of the seventeenth century. The object of his last two books accordingly is “to show how, in classical antiquity, sexual activity and sexual pleasures were problematized through practices of the self” (UP 12). As I have noted elsewhere, at each spiral of his research, Foucault reads the previous turn as in fact dealing with what the next professes to study.³⁶ The relation between truth, self-constitution, and problematization is so elaborated in Foucault’s later writings that he can avow in a volume published just before his death that his abiding interest had always been a “history of truth” (UP 6).

It is noteworthy that Foucault, the acknowledged apostle of discontinuity, has been so keen on seeking retrospectively a coherence throughout his published works. Not that he glories in the traditional intellectual values of consistency and completeness; on the contrary, he loves to surprise us and himself as he follows what he describes as the ethos of the intellectual: to think otherwise than before [*se déprendre de soi-même*].³⁷ But there has been an identifiable line of advance running through his major writings, I have been arguing, that charts the spatialization of discourse characteristic of Foucault as a so-called postmodern thinker. (In light of the axial reading of his corpus that we shall recommend in chapter 7, we should caution that this “advance” is one of emphasis and a not matter of dialectical totalization or even progress toward a goal. At most, it approximates Veyne’s view of historical “progress” as simply “lengthening the questionnaire.”)³⁸ If the claim of increasingly spatialized reasoning required some defense in the case of his genealogical studies, it would seem most vulnerable with regard to his “problematizations.” What then does problematizing thought have to do with spatialized discourse/reasoning?

It is in the contrast Foucault paints between dialectical and “problem-

atical” thinking that the spatialization of discourse becomes evident. Dialectical thought, he argues, is essentially temporalizing thought, to borrow a phrase from Sartre. It seeks a unity and a totality in consciousness, whether individual or collective, which is itself diachronic. We noted his care to distinguish study of a *problem* from that of a *period* in history. We suggested that this anticipated his explicit appeal to “problematization” in his later works. So too did his counsel to “think problematically rather than question and answer dialectically.”³⁹

SPATIALIZED REASONING: TRANSFORMATION AND DISPLACEMENT REVISITED

We have argued that the twin terms “transformation” and “displacement” have governed Foucault’s methods in all of his histories and constitute essentially spatial techniques. Both terms are intended to free our understanding of history from the “general, empty category of change,” its “uniform model of temporalization” (*AK* 200) and traditional reliance on consciousness and subjectivity as well as from its dialectical subsumption of otherness and multiplicity in some overarching purpose or end. In other words, the terms serve to mediate history and “system” in such a way that the notion of a structuralist history need not be the oxymoron that Sartre and many others take it to be. Let us conclude this discussion of spatialized reasoning by viewing these concepts one last time to register the pivotal role that they play in five other issues that have become identified with Foucauldian history.

Logic, Linguistics, and Historical Discourse. Two months before the famous “events of May, 1968” (which Foucault missed because he was in Tunisia), he picked up the gauntlet that Sartre and others had thrown before the author of *The Order of Things*, namely, the seeming incompatibility of structure and history. In the discussion with a number of social scientists in Tunis mentioned earlier, Foucault addressed this topic, among other matters, under the theme of relating linguistics and the social sciences. Specifically, the issue revolved around the question of a “logic of the real” that was neither causal-determinist nor dialectical-totalizing but which would furnish a “rationalization” of the empirical field in line with the relations of symbolic logic, a fundamentally atemporal organon (see *DE* 1:824–25, *Linguistique*). In symbolic logic, it has always been a delicate matter to “translate” without remainder the relations of ordinary language into formal notation. Though we find no evi-

dence in his published work that Foucault had a particular interest in symbolic logic, one gathers that he was a careful student of what has come to be known as the philosophy of logic and related issues in the philosophy of language and linguistics. Accordingly, he displays a clear sense of the problem of translation when he asks whether one might not find “the same relational form not only among phonemes, but between the elements of a narrative [*récit*] or even among the individuals who co-exist in the same society.” If so, an alternative vehicle for making sense of historical change would be at hand, namely, the detection and description of transformations of the relevant structures. For our purposes, then, the chief question is whether “transformation” (as in “transformational grammar,” Althusserian Marxist transformations, and the like) is an adequate replacement for historical causality and/or change.

I argued in chapter 3 that transformation is proposed as an alternative to historical change. Foucault anticipates this claim a year earlier in a conversation with Paulo Caruso when he observes that “people are just now in the process of introducing relations of a logical type into the historical field. From the moment that one introduces into historical analysis relations of a logical type such as implication, exclusion and transformation, it is evident that causality disappears. But one must rid oneself of the prejudice which claims that a history without causality would no longer be a history” (*DE* 1:607, *Qui êtes-vous?*) So he can be polemical or irenic in discussing the relations between structure and history

Although he does not mention his archaeologies by name, this implicit defense of *The Order of Things* in particular against its early critics is transparent in these remarks. Henceforth we should read “transformation” of various formal structures in Foucault’s works as neither ahistorical nor antihistorical in his specific understanding of those terms. And as if to confirm what he will later say about his histories being part of “general” (thought not “total”) history, he adds: “only synchronic analysis enables us to locate something as a causal ascription. In order that the search for causality not get lost in a more or less magical haze, it is necessary first to define what the conditions are that will permit the change” (*DE* 1: 827, *Linguistique*). And that, presumably, is the task for the transformations and displacements of archaeology.

For Foucault, the notions of discontinuity and of transformation are part of a renewal of the disciplines that study change. The challenge is for specialists to follow the example of linguistics, of history, and of eco-

nomics “to introduce finally into the human and social sciences the rigorous analysis of change and of transformation. In any case, they must not turn away from linguistic analyses as if they were incompatible with a historical perspective” (*DE* 1:827, *Linguistique*). While avowing once more that he is not a structuralist and that he speaks of it only as a contemporary epistemological object, Foucault acknowledges that what goes by the name of “generative or transformational grammar” is the method “that [he] is trying to introduce into the history of ideas, of the sciences and of thought in general” (*DE* 1:838, *Linguistique*).

History and Discontinuity. In fact, Foucault insists that the essential task of his archaeology is not to register breaks the signs of which one notices through careful observation, but to uncover transformations: “the final goal of [archaeological] analysis for me does not consist in saying where a break occurs; starting with these curious phenomena — be they rapid changes or misalignments — it consists in asking about the level at which the transformation is situated that made them possible. The point of analysis finally is not to assign a break that it then reverences indefinitely, but to describe a transformation” (*DE* 2:58, *Cuvier*).

It is on the basis of this concept of transformation, we suggested, that Foucault plausibly refuses the label “philosopher of discontinuities.” Faced with the fact that medical texts from the 1750s, for example, are regarded as folklore whereas those of some seventy years later, despite their errors, remain part of the same type of knowledge as our own, he remarks: “In *Les Mots et les choses* I set out . . . from this self-evident discontinuity and tried to ask myself the question: is this discontinuity really a discontinuity? Or, to be precise, what was the transformation needed to pass from one type of knowledge to another type of knowledge? For me, this is not at all a way of declaring the discontinuity of History; on the contrary, it is a way of posing discontinuity as a problem and above all as a problem to be resolved. My approach, therefore, was quite the opposite of a ‘philosophy of discontinuity’” (*PPC* 100, “On Power”).

The Times of History. Foucault’s most extended discussion of changes and transformations occurs in a chapter by that title in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. In addition to elaborating most of the claims that we have just discussed, he pursues the temporal aspect of transformations while insisting on their more spatial character. “Far from being indifferent to

succession,” he insists, “archaeology maps [*repère*] the *temporal vectors of derivation*” (AK 169, F 221). Recall his claim that various types of discourse have their own historicities (see AK 165). Describing the analysis of transformations, he points out that the disappearance of one positivity and the emergence of another (as in his example of the two medical texts mentioned earlier) “implies several types of transformation,” some of which he proceeds to delineate. He lists an array of transformations associated with the rise of clinical medicine, charted in *The Birth of the Clinic*, for example, that extends from variations in the employment rate to changes in the relation between the perceptual field and the use of diagnostic instruments, to how “biology modified the order and dependence that Natural History had established between the theory of characterization and the analysis of temporal derivations,” to the way the relations between various “positivities” were transformed, specifically, to “how the relations between philology, biology and economics transform the relations between General Grammar, Natural History and the Analysis of Wealth” (AK 172).

Allowing that “the contemporaneity of several transformations does not mean their exact chronological coincidence: each transformation may have its own particular temporal ‘viscosity’” (AK 175), he points out that the sequence of these transformations and the chronological advance of traditional narrative history often do not coincide: “We have seen [in *The Order of Things*] that the order of statements based on archaeological derivation did not necessarily reproduce the order of successions: one can find in Beauzée statements that are archaeologically anterior to those to be found in the *Grammaire* of Port-Royal” (AK 167). In such a case, the calendar of historical narrative is suspended, not to undermine temporal succession but “precisely to reveal the relations that characterize the temporality of discursive formations and articulate them in series whose intersection in no way precludes [standard historical] analysis” (AK 167).

We must keep in mind such remarks when tempted to see Foucault as trying to replace traditional history with his analyses of transformations and displacements. Indeed, the orders of derivation and of historical succession may be so mutually independent that an archaeological appeal to a historical event such as “the French Revolution” would entail “a complex, articulated, describable group of transformations that left a number

of positivities intact, fixed for a number of others rules that are still with us, and also established positivities that have recently disappeared or are still disappearing before our eyes” (AK 177).

It is in this nominalist sense that Foucault speaks of the transformations and displacements of a historical period:

The period [*epoche*] is neither [Archaeology’s] basic unit [*unité*], nor its horizon, nor its object: if it speaks of these things, it is always in terms of particular discursive practices, and as a result of its analyses. The Classical age, which has often been mentioned in archaeological analyses, is not a temporal figure that imposes its unity and empty form on all discourses; it is the name that is given to a tangle of continuities and discontinuities, modifications within positivities, discursive formations that appear and disappear. Rupture [what else where he calls “radical event”] is the name given to transformations that bear on the general rule of one or several discursive formations. (AK 176 77; AS 230 31)

In other words, even traditional historical periods, though Foucault makes generous use of them throughout his writings, should not be taken in a strictly diachronic sense that appeals to a unified and unifying temporality. These terms denote a melange of transformations and displacements with their multiple temporal “viscosities” that can be charted along lines that converge and diverge but that do not totalize in any Sartrean or Marxian sense.

Dismantling the Dialectic. But if the notion of “transformation” carries a certain spatial connotation, the term “displacement,” as we noted in the previous chapter, is more overtly spatial. As Roland Barthes remarks apropos the “modernity” of Michelet’s historiography: “All of Michelet’s oeuvre postulates—and often achieves a truly new science, which is still being fought for. We do not yet call it the science of the unconscious, nor even more broadly symbolics; let us call it by the very general name Freud gave his *Moses: the science of displacement: Enstellungswissenschaft*.”⁴⁰

I have argued earlier that Foucault’s spatialized reasoning is a positive alternative to what he calls “the neurosis of dialectics” (EW 2:358, Theatrum). It has been claimed that “in Derrida’s writing, displacement almost always figures as an alternative to the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. . . The word is *déplacement* not *dépassement*.”⁴¹ This holds true of Foucault as

well, except that his use of the term bespeaks a more general, spatialized reasoning which Derrida's usage only suggests.

The Author Function: The Case of Cuvier. Foucault appeals to the concepts of transformation and displacement in light of his earlier remarks about the "author function" in an address to a gathering of scientists organized by Canguilhem on the work of Georges Cuvier.⁴² He begins by appealing to an example from the history of biology to illustrate what he means by "epistemological transformation." He defends the claim that it is impossible to jump from the theories of Jussieu and Lamarck to those of Darwin without "a reorganization, a redistribution of biological knowledge [*savoir*]" such as that provided by Cuvier. In other words, "the critique of species offered by Lamarck and his contemporaries is absolutely not isomorphic or superposable on the critique of species as found in Darwin" (*DE*2:31, *Cuvier*). This is fundamentally a restatement of Foucault's position in *The Order of Things* (see *OT* 263–79). But one notes a similar argument for the transformation of medical perception in *The Birth of the Clinic*. In both cases it is a matter of the failure of the established scientists to respect the scientific import of the individual. They continued to abide by Aristotle's ancient prohibition against any "science of the singular." In the present example, "classical taxonomy was essentially a science of species. The entire edifice of classical taxonomy begins with the specific difference and tries to define higher differences at the level of specific difference." As evidence of this attitude, he cites Linnaeus to the effect that "the knowledge of individuals and of varieties pertains to the florist, not the botanist" (*DE*2:31, *Cuvier*).

By appealing to comparative anatomy, Cuvier removed the ontological threshold between species and genus, conferring the same ontological degree on species, genus, order, and class. He directed attention toward the reality of anatomico-physiological functioning rather than on abstract categories in hierarchical order. "Henceforth, ontological homogeneity extends from the individual to the species, the genus, the order and the class, in a continuity with interruption" (*DE*2:34, *Cuvier*). On Foucault's reading, this opened up two fields of knowledge that intersected in the concrete living individual: comparative anatomy, which examines the ensemble of correlations physiologically compatible with an individual organism, and paleontology, which studies the real life of the individual in its conditions of existence, the milieu in which it breathes and feeds.

Foucault calls this the “Cuvier transformation” (*DE* 2:36, *Cuvier*). From a philosophical perspective, we could call this the triumph of nominalism in biology as well as history.⁴³

Despite his commitment to teleology and fixism, Foucault argues, it was Cuvier’s transformation of the epistemological landscape by breaking the species-genus logjam that made Darwin’s discoveries possible: “The ontological and epistemological thresholds were removed. Likewise, one sees how that rendered possible [the work of] Darwin” (*DE* 2:35, *Cuvier*). In fact, he goes so far as to claim that “in order to pass from the Linnaean state to the Darwinian state of biological knowledge [*savoir*], the Cuvier transformation was necessary” (*DE* 2:58, *Cuvier*). The “necessity” is presumably epistemological, not logical, and obtains within a set of prior conditions described in archaeological analysis such as *The Order of Things*. When challenged to account for the nonepistemological conditions for such transformations, Foucault insists that these were not his primary concern but that he did in fact discuss them in studies of psychiatry and clinical medicine.⁴⁴

A distinctive feature of this discussion is Foucault’s addressing the question of attribution. We saw his treatment of the topic in “What Is an Author?” and noted his apparent ambivalence in assigning authorship of a concept, theory, or oeuvre to a particular individual. He now explains this reluctance in the present context. After pointing out that the epistemological analysis of a concept or a theory usually deals with a “meta-individual” phenomenon, he elaborates:

When it is a case of studying discursive levels or epistemological fields that comprise a plurality of concepts and theories (whether the plurality be simultaneous or successive), it is evident that the attribution to the individual becomes practically impossible. Likewise, it is difficult to refer the analysis of these transformations to a precise individual. The reason is that the transformation in general passes through the works of different individuals and that this transformation is not some thing one discovers a proposition, a clearly formulated thought explicitly given within a work but the transformation is established by the one who seeks it as being operative [*mise en oeuvre*] within different texts. Hence, the description that I try to make should by and large do without any reference to an individuality or rather, should return completely to the problem of the author. (*DE* 2:60, *Cuvier*)

This leads him to revise his use of proper names in *The Order of Things*: “When I said ‘Cuvier,’ ‘Bopp,’ ‘Ricardo,’ I was trying to use the name, not to designate the totality of a work that would answer to a certain delimitation but to designate a certain transformation that takes place in a given period and that can be seen at work at a certain moment and in particular in the texts in question.” This is why it would have been better to have spoken of the “Ricardo transformation” the way one speaks of the “Ramsey effect.” “For my problem,” he explains, “is to map the transformation. In other words, the author does not exist” (*DE* 2:60–61, *Cuvier*).

Appeal to transformation and displacement continues in his “problematization” of sexual morality in the volumes published just before his death. He notes, for example, a transformation of the problematic in fifth-century Athenian culture from a “stylistics of freedom” in which pleasure and its dynamic [*chresis aphrodision*] are the concern to the Socrato-Platonic erotic in which desire is directed to its real object, truth, by recognizing desire for what it is in its true being (see *UP* 243). The former asked a deontological question: What is the fitting and honorable thing to do?; the latter, an ontological one: What is love in its very being? This transformation of “ethics” (in Foucault’s special sense of “practices of the self,” “forms of subjectivation”) into a metaphysics entailed a corresponding displacement of the very object of discourse from the beloved and the honor of the loved one to the loving subject and the life of truth itself.⁴⁵ So the spatialized discourse of transformation-displacement continues to dominate Foucault’s histories to the very end.

VISION-SPACE-MAP

If Foucault’s peculiar approach to history assumes a comparative, diachronic vision and reasons with the help of spatial techniques that, while scarcely ignoring the temporal, shatter it into numerous “viscosities,” one would hardly be amazed were he to second Paul Veyne’s suggestion that comparative history has more in common with comparative geography than with what Foucault calls “the thin line” of narrative.⁴⁶ Deleuze fixed the image when he labeled Foucault a “cartographer.” So it is to the third panel of our triptych that we turn as we complete our preparation for the “axial” reading of Foucault’s works.

The Philosopher-Historian as Cartographer

So Foucault is a spatializing thinker. Even if he had not admitted it, the multiplicity of spatial metaphors that punctuate his writing, the numerous tables and geometrical figures (axes, diagonals, circles, triads, quadrilaterals, and the like) that appear at crucial junctures in his thought would have given him away; not to mention the powerful iconic arguments that usher in, sustain, and advance his histories. We have already observed his parsing of Velasquez's *Las Meninas* in *The Order of Things* and his well-known analysis of Bentham's Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*, the image of which has become emblematic of the carceral or disciplinary society itself.

In the present chapter I propose that we consider such spatialized reasoning first as a *method* of historical understanding, then as a *strategy* in Foucault's ongoing struggle against traditional intellectual history, and finally as a *self-referential tool*, sketching an initial turn of the compass and sextant on his own work the better to understand the "spaces" charted by his life-long project, a matter to be pursued at length in the following chapter.

I'm going to describe certain aspects of the contemporary world and its governmentality; this course will not tell you what you should do or what you have to fight against, but it will give you a map; thus it will tell you: if you want to attack in such-and-such a direction, well, here there is a knot of resistance and there a possible passage.

Paul Veyne quoting
Foucault, *Foucault
and His Interlocutors*

BEYOND METAPHOR: A SPATIALIZED LOGIC

I have been arguing throughout this study that Foucault's recurrent uses of spatial terms, diagrams, and iconic arguments are likewise chiefly a matter of spatial techniques, not simply metaphors. They are not just illustrations or mere rhetorical devices, though they often serve these purposes as well. As with a geometrical demonstration or the model of a scientific theory or Linnaeus's drawings, these spatial images are often ingredient in the very argument itself. And when Foucault speaks of "mapping," we can see this as an analogue for the discourse in practice. Usually it is a matter of discourse about another discursive practice. In both cases we are dealing with a complex instrument that bridges the semiotic (signs) and the semantic (meanings), without being reduced to either but with an obvious pragmatic dimension as well.¹ If both Sartre and Foucault read history as theater, a distinctively spatial art form, the former does so as dramaturge, the latter as director [*metteur en scène*].²

Recall Michel Serres's remarks about the "geometric" nature and binary logic of Foucault's argument in *Folie et déraison*. After parsing these "spacial" moves in some detail, Serres suggests: "It would be useful to apply these last themes more broadly. To use in this way the most elementary structures of space—that is to say, the rigorous structures closest to the aesthetic—is to institute, through this example, a remarkable methodology of pure description" (*FI* 43). While I do not wish to pursue this as far as Serres's proposed new family of "morphological sciences," which I take to be a halfway house between phenomenology and structuralism not unlike Foucault's archaeology, I do wish to continue examining Foucault's increasingly formalized and refined spatialized reasoning in his subsequent writings. Specifically, I shall focus on three examples taken from three successive works, *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and *Discipline and Punish* to illustrate *in praxi* and assess this spatialization of reason (and rationalization of space).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL QUADRILATERALS

In an insightful essay, Bruno Bosteels points out that "Foucault . . . never uses the metaphor of 'map' [by which I presume he means *la carte* or *le plan*] in the French original of *Discipline and Punish*. In the English version, however, a single cartographic metaphor translates two quite different French terms. On the one hand, Foucault uses the term *quadrillage*

critically to describe forms of panopticism, as in the . . . case of ‘a closer penal mapping of the social body’ [DP78]. On the other hand, however, ‘mapping’ also translates the term *repérage* with which Foucault repeatedly[,] even to the point of monotony, characterizes his own discourse especially in opposition to the classical historical approach” (*Signs* 128–29). He adds that Baudrillard judges Foucault exclusively from the point of view of cartography as a panopticon [*quadrillage*], whereas Deleuze honors Foucault primarily with regard to the utopian dimension of cartography as a rhizome [*repérage*] (*Signs* 129).

While I appreciate the distinction and agree that Foucauldian “mapping” demands more nuance than a single English term is capable of rendering, I would resist linking *quadrillage* (a map grid) exclusively with panopticism, though that use seems unrivaled in his texts of the 1970s. No doubt this is its strategic use in *Discipline and Punish* and in works associated with it or with the movement for prison reform (*GIP*) with which Foucault was associated (the expression “*le quadrillage policier*” is common in that context). But it also carries an epistemic meaning (“the same mapping [*quadrillage*] of the perceptual field” [DE 1:712]) and sometimes refers to “grids of intelligibility” made famous by Foucault’s earlier work. It is in this latter sense that I am now discussing the “quadrilaterals” of *The Order of Things*.³

Though he vigorously denied the association, much of the incredible success of *The Order of Things* came from the fact of its riding on the wave of the French structuralist movement in the mid 1960s, for which this text was seen as a kind of manifesto. It is not my intent to defend the details of Foucault’s incredibly rich and far-ranging discussion in this masterful work. Rather, I wish to chart the *form* of his argument, specifically, his analyses of the epistemic breaks wherein our scientific constellation shifted at several critical junctures in Western history. In particular, I shall underscore a feature of his argument that has generally been overlooked but which exhibits his characteristically spatialized reasoning in another mode. It concerns the relation among those epistemic breaks themselves.

Like his professor at the Ecole normale, Louis Althusser, Foucault adopts Gaston Bachelard’s concept of an epistemic break [*coupure épistémologique*] for his archaeological analyses of the human sciences. Although he is rather unsure of the extent of his claim that there is but one “episteme” or unconscious set of conditions for denoting discursive prac-

tices as “scientific” that is at work in a particular historical period (he affirms it in *The Order of Things* but denies it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*),⁴ it is clear that these “grids of intelligibility,” as they are popularly conceived, do not succeed one another as haphazardly as is often believed. In other words, though one cannot predict *that* one episteme will follow another—this is an empirical fact to be registered, not deduced—Foucault is quite explicit in determining the conceptual configurations that establish *where* such breaks will occur, if in fact they do. These are the “fissures” in discourse to which he occasionally refers. But these lines of vulnerability are not themselves amorphous. They establish a pattern that opens spaces where such breaks can occur. In analyzing these openings, I wish to clarify what I take to be the “necessity” to which he alludes in describing the epistemic transformations in his archaeologies.

Consider the following example from *The Order of Things*. Discussing the site of the break between the classical (that is, early modern) and modern epistemes, Foucault sets out a complex pair of quadrilaterals that he describes as “the general organization of empirical spheres” for each period (OT201). These are the spaces that condition a priori the existence of what will count as knowledge in that epoch. Though it is easy to adopt a Kantian conception of this process,⁵ Foucault insists repeatedly that his is not a “transcendental” move; that he is charting the conditions of the existence of “scientific” practices that are already on the scene, not deducing the conditions of possibility of knowledge *überhaupt*. The classical quadrant is formed by the four functions of the verbal sign, namely, attribution, articulation, designation, and derivation, that distinguish it from all other forms of representation. These functions enclose the space of nomenclature and taxonomy in the sense that naming relations order the various sciences of the classical era and classification remains one of their chief goals—one need only think of the “medicine of species” described in *The Birth of the Clinic*. Indeed, the ideal of such relations is a complete isomorphism of word and object, language and the world. Foucault sees the name as “the principle of a general taxonomy of representation” because “to name [in the classical period] is at the same time to give the verbal representation of a representation, and to place it in a general table.” In sum,

it is the Name that organizes all Classical discourse; to speak or to write is not to say things or to express oneself, it is not a matter of play-

ing with language, it is to make one's way towards the sovereign act of nomination, to move, through language, towards the place where things and words are conjoined in their common essence, and which makes it possible to give them a name. (OT 116 17)

A functionally equivalent role is played by the concept "Man" [*anthropos*] in the modern epistemic quadrilateral, except that this figure, like the subject in the Velasquez painting, is conspicuous by its absence or, rather, by its existence at the perspectival vanishing point.⁶

The classical quadrilateral, Foucault argues, was strongest scientifically precisely where it was strongest metaphysically, namely, where it was a matter of applying the principle of the continuity of being according to a representational concept of the verbal sign as in general grammar, natural history, and analysis of wealth (OT 206). Thus there was a conceptual and "geometrical" relation between the classical epistemology of representation and its metaphysics of the Great Chain of Being, on the one hand, and the sciences of grammar, nature, and wealth on the other. Again, at the center was the Name. As Foucault's diagram exhibits, the contrasting modern quadrilateral fills in the empty space of its classical antipode by an epistemology that abstains from representing being in itself and consigns transcendent metaphysics to the realm of practical necessity, limiting itself to the positive knowledge of life, language, and economic production. The paradigm of this shift, of course, is the Kantian architectonic. The strengths of the classical quadrilateral, namely, its rage to classify and order, on the one hand, and to quantify and analyze [*ars combinatoria*], on the other, were *transformed* and *displaced* by nineteenth-century methods of interpretation and formalization respectively. Archaeology, in contrast with the modern episteme, he notes elsewhere, is "a method that is neither formalizing nor interpretative" (AK 135). Rather than "postmodern," however, we have suggested that archaeology might better be designated a "countermodern" investigation.

NECESSITY, FITTINGNESS, CHANCE

The purpose of these charts, the spaces they fill and, more important, the spaces they leave unfilled, is that they are meant to render history intelligible without appeal to traditional concepts of evolution, development, or even influence. The method is one of *comparative systems of thought*,

as if one had placed a set of transparencies for an overhead projector on top of one another and examined the illuminated structures without appeal to the unifying factor of temporal progression or collective subjectivity (as in the traditional notion of history as national biography, e.g.). In fact, one could make equivalent comparisons by merely shuffling the sheets. This is probably what Paul Veyne had in mind when he likened the new history to comparative geography and claimed that “time is not essential to history.”⁷ So when Foucault can conclude that “what algebra is to *mathesis*, signs, and words in particular, are to *taxinomia*: a constitution and evident manifestation of the order of things” (OT 203), he is verbalizing the relations that were spatially diagrammed in his quadrilateral. From this he concludes:

It is now possible, from a distance, to characterize the mutation that occurred in the entire Western *episteme* towards the end of the eighteenth century by saying that a scientifically strong moment was created in just that area where the Classical *episteme* was metaphysically strong; and that, on the other hand, a philosophical space emerged in that very area where Classicism had most firmly established its epistemological grip. (OT 206)

This enables him to make the concrete application that puts him in conflict with more evolutionary or developmental historians:

Philology, biology and political economy were established, not in the places formerly occupied by *general grammar*, *natural history*, and the *analysis of wealth*, but in an area where those forms of knowledge did not exist, in the space they left blank, in the deep gaps that separated their broad theoretical segments and that were filled with the murmur of the ontological continuum [viz., the Great Chain of Being?]. The object of knowledge in the nineteenth century is formed in the very place where the Classical plenitude of being has fallen silent. (OT 207, interpolation added)

In other words, it is not a case of the modern sciences of philology, biology, and political economy having “evolved” from the classical fields of general grammar, natural history, and the analysis of wealth respectively. Rather, Foucault is using his quadrilateral to demonstrate that this shift is a matter of *transformation* and *displacement*. The modern replaced the classical in the spaces left empty by the sciences of the earlier era; the task of archaeology is not simply to note the transformation but to chart

those spaces. His strategy is then to perform an analogous operation on the modern episteme and its unifying figure of man [*anthropos*].

"Inversely," he argues, "a new philosophical space was to emerge in the place where the objects of Classical knowledge dissolved." In other words, interpretation displaced taxonomical ordering and formalization dislodged the classical problem of *mathesis universalis*. It is not simply a matter of registering differences. It is a case of showing the *fittingness* of the displacements that occurred. I say "fittingness" rather than "necessity" because I think the overall coherence of these epistemes among themselves is "aesthetic" in the broad sense that the subsequent episteme slips "appropriately" into the space unfilled by its predecessor but that its appearance could not have been deduced before the fact by some logical or even epistemological necessity. The quadrilateral model is explanatory in the way that any model would be, namely, it enables us to visualize a set of relations whose "logic" is spatial in nature. More of a "monstration" than a demonstration, as Gabriel Marcel might say.

So Jean Piaget was mistaken to seek structuralist transformations and displacements of epistemic fields in *The Order of Things*. He complained that:

[Foucault's] *epistemes* follow upon, but not from one another, whether formally or dialectically. One *episteme* is not affiliated with another, either genetically or historically. The message of this "archaeology" of reason is, in short, that reason's self transformations have no reason and that its structures appear and disappear by fortuitous mutations and as a result of momentary upsurges. The history of reason is, in other words, much like the history of species as biologists conceived of it before cybernetic structuralism came on the scene.⁸

Rather, we are insisting that the radical "events" which Foucault registers in *The Order of Things*, for example, while not logically (much less "dialectically") deducible from prior conditions, do exhibit a "fittingness" to the anterior epistemic field. There is a retrospective propriety to the current state in relation to its antecedent; one can say that *if* the event occurs, this is the locus where the transformation "fits." There is an aesthetic link among these epistemic fields, which does not reduce their chance occurrence but which lends their facticity an intelligible character that would otherwise have eluded it. It also serves to undermine or at least to counter "evolutionist" models of intellectual history. If the ne-

cessity that obtains within an episteme is by definition “epistemic,” the “necessity” that obtains among the epistemes themselves and that is registered in terms of transformations and displacements, I am arguing, is “aesthetic.” The fissures, misalignments, and gaps of which Foucault speaks are “invitations,” as it were, to radical events that may never occur but which, having happened, are seen to have been “called for” by the prior condition.⁹

NEITHER TRANSCENDENTAL NOR SIMPLY RHETORICAL

Hayden White’s “tropological” reading of Western historiography generally and of Foucault’s histories in particular can serve as an illuminating gloss on this claim of epistemic fittingness. Summarizing Foucault’s argument in *The Order of Things*, he remarks:

As metonymic language is to synecdochic language, so the human sciences of the eighteenth century are to the human sciences of the nineteenth century. In other words, Foucault does have a system of explanation and a theory of the transformation of reason, or science, or consciousness, whether he knows it or will admit it or not. Both the system and the theory belong to a tradition of *linguistic historicism* which goes back to Vico, and beyond him to the linguistic philosophers of the Renaissance, thence to the orators and rhetoricians of Classical Greece and Rome.¹⁰

What I am suggesting is that the connection between these different epistemic fields is “structural” in the accommodated sense just described. Because White draws a tropological link among the epistemes that Foucault charts, he leaves their connection a matter of rhetorical modes of expression. This doubtless respects the aleatoric character of the breaks which Foucault wants to underscore, but it scarcely provides the “system of explanation and theory of transformation” that White insists is at work here. For if the theory of tropes successfully labels each item, it scarcely connects them except by affixing them to a tropical chart or applying another label called “rhetorical tradition.” My suggestion of “fittingness” articulates the relationship that Foucault has noted between the “gaps” and “incongruities” of one epistemic situation and the operation of another. Scarcely a tight connection, but more promising than the positivists’ “one damn thing after another.”

These spaces do not play the transcendental function of Kantian categories. Indeed, Maurice Blanchot believes that, among the many reasons for Foucault's sensitivity at being labeled a structuralist, "the simplest (if it may be so called) is that he could sense in structuralism a residual whiff of transcendentalism."¹¹ But if not transcendental categories, they might be likened to Weber's "objective possibilities" that Marx had anticipated, though not *nominatim*, as structural methods of making sense of the success and failure of certain historical undertakings. The point would be to explain how certain discursive practices that were "unthinkable" under one episteme became commonplace in another. But in Foucault's example these epistemes are the limits to discursive practice and sense-making, not to political activity or socioeconomic revolution as with Weber and Marx, even though they "articulate" such nondiscursive practices, as we have already noted.

Admittedly, Foucault speaks in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* of other archaeologies that he might have undertaken: archaeologies of sexuality, of ethics, of painting, of political knowledge, and of history itself (see *AK* 192). But the historical a priori that he uncovers and the episteme that underlies it figure along the cognitive axis of Foucault's thought. That they have political and subjectifying correlates on the respective axes of "power" or "government" and subjectivation respectively is something I shall argue at length in chapter 7.¹² But this simply means that one can chart a given discursive practice and the episteme that limits and conditions it along alternative axes, much the way a Wittgensteinian could offer alternative descriptions of the same event in different language games. Of course, the concept of "the same" remains problematic for Wittgenstein as, I believe, it does for Foucault. But I would argue that one can mount a "political" account of the discursive and nondiscursive practices in Foucault's archaeologies without reducing knowledge to power or vice versa. In this respect, Weber's "objective possibilities" might be read as hybrids of Foucauldian power and knowledge. But in the final analysis, the two thinkers are writing on different pages. Discourse analysis was not an instrument in the toolbox of the German theorist.

THE DIAGONAL

Though his thought took a distinctively linguistic turn in his archaeological writings, Foucault never discounted what, in *The Archaeology of*

Knowledge, he would call “nondiscursive” practices. Only there does he address the inevitable question of their relation to the discursive practices that had captured most of his attention up to that point. Nonetheless, his earlier works abound with references to the effective presence of nondiscursive practices.¹³ He was clearly aware of the debate among Marxists about the relation between the material conditions of history (the economic base) and the ideological superstructure. Was it a strictly causal one moving from base to superstructure with its material conditions being the ultimate cause of social change “in the long run”? And, if so, was the superstructure nothing more than the “expression” of the material conditions at work in an unconscious manner? Or was the relationship between base and superstructure reflexive and reciprocal? Foucault does not want to adopt a dialectical answer to such questions. We have been claiming that part of his strategic choice of the spatial was to circumvent the Hegelian dialectic. But he opts for neither a horizontal (causal) nor a vertical (expressive-interpretive) model to exhibit the relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive domains. The image he selects must be one that respects the autonomy of the discursive realm, for archaeology, in the final analysis, is a form of discourse description and analysis. As he points out in the summary of the first course that he gave at the Collège de France, “Empirical studies relating to psychopathology, clinical medicine, natural history, and so forth, have allowed us to isolate *the distinctive level of discursive practices*. Their general characteristics and the proper methods for their analysis were delineated under the heading of archaeology.”¹⁴ If the discursive were reducible to the nondiscursive, if signs, for example, could be interpreted without remainder as matter in motion, then archaeology too would be subsumable by a higher physics.

The model he adopts is characteristically spatial. If the proper domain of archaeological description and analysis is that of the statement [*l'énoncé*], the statement nonetheless gathers around itself three spaces (what Gilles Deleuze calls “three unstable circles”¹⁵) that constitute dimensions of different value. First there is a “collateral space” of other statements that, rather than a context, are precisely what makes context possible (see *AK* 98). Foucault calls this space the “associated field” and it consists of a network of other statements. As he explains, “there is no statement that does not presuppose others; there is no statement that is not surrounded by a field of coexistences, effects of series and succes-

sion, a distribution of functions and roles.” Like the event discussed in chapter 3 (and the statement is an event though not every event is a statement), the statement does not occur in atomic isolation.

The second dimension of the statement is what Deleuze calls “correlative space,” though Foucault does not use that term. This denotes “the discursive order of places or positions occupied by subjects, objects and concepts in a family of statements” (*F* 9). Foucault is well known for proposing that the individual “author” of a text be replaced by an “author function”¹⁶—a claim that is not as lethal for the subject as one might think but that does serve to illuminate the social role of the term “author” in that relatively recent field called “literature” (see *OT* 299–300). We observed Foucault extend this problem of attribution to the Cuvier and the Ricardo “transformations” in the previous chapter.

But it is the third spatial circle that is of greatest relevance here, what Deleuze calls “complementary” space and which Foucault simply refers to as “non-discursive domains.” Foucault writes:

Archaeology also reveals relations between discursive formations and non discursive domains (institutions, political events, economic practices and processes). These *rapprochements* [he warns us] are not intended to uncover great cultural continuities, nor to isolate mechanisms of causality. Before a set of enunciative facts, archaeology does not ask what could have motivated them (the search for contexts of formulation); nor does it seek to discover what is expressed in them (the task of hermeneutics); it tries to determine how the rules of formation that govern it . . . may be linked to non discursive systems: seeks to define specific forms of *articulation*. (*AK* 162, emphasis added)

Now “articulation,” in addition to being one of the four forms of the classical verbal sign mentioned earlier, carries a *spatial* denotation. In the lexicon it refers to “the manner of being jointed or systematically interrelated into a whole, as in ‘A sketch showing the articulation of the limbs’”; and, second, a joint or juncture between two parts capable of spontaneous separation.¹⁷ Foucault appeals to such a spatial meaning when he contrasts articulation in the classical era as the patterning of words on the things they represent “without a hiatus between them” with the modern usage wherein “the analysis of the *empirical-transcendental reduplication* shows how what is given in experience and what renders experience possible correspond to one another in an endless oscillation” (*OT* 336). The “diago-

nal” relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive in his thought, mentioned earlier, could well be described as “endless oscillation” without dialectical subsumption or other resolution.¹⁸

Speaking of the relation between medical discourse and the political practice of a particular society (an issue he examines, though in the main obliquely in *The Birth of the Clinic*), Foucault observes:

It is not a question . . . of showing how the political practice of a given society constituted or modified the medical concepts and theoretical structure of pathology; but how medical discourse as a practice concerned with a particular field of objects, finding itself in the hands of a certain number of statutorily designated individuals, and having certain functions to exercise in society, is *articulated* on practices that are external to it, and which are not themselves of a discursive order. (AK 164)

Indeed, what Foucault says of the locus of his archaeology of medical perception could be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of articulation in general: “We must place ourselves, and remain once and for all, at the level of the fundamental *spatialization* and *verbalization* of the pathological, where the loquacious gaze with which the doctor observes the poisonous heart of things is born and communes with itself” (BC xi–xii).

In a somewhat irenic fashion, Foucault concludes:

The archaeological description of discourses is deployed in the dimension of a general history [not a “total” one];¹⁹ it seeks to discover that whole domain of institutions, economic processes, and social relations on which a discursive formation can be *articulated*; it tries to show how the autonomy of discourse and its specificity nevertheless do not give it the status of pure ideality and total historical independence; what it wishes to uncover is the particular level in which history can give place to definite types of discourse, which have their own type of historicity, and which are related to a whole set of various historicities. (AK 164–65)

Foucault anticipates this abstract ordering of the three “spaces” in which the statement is located when, in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), he distinguished three orders of “spatialization” for the medicine of species, the dominant form of medicine in the eighteenth century. Primary spatialization denotes the abstract area of the disease itself situated in a homologous space “in which the individual could receive no positive status.” What he calls “secondary spatialization,” on the other hand, “require[s] an acute perception of the individual, freed from collective med-

ical structures, free of any group gaze and of hospital experience itself” (BC 15). Regarding what he will later describe as the field of nondiscursive practice, he remarks:

Let us call tertiary spatialization all the gestures by which, in a given society, a disease is circumscribed, medically invested, isolated, divided up into closed privileged regions or distributed throughout cure centers, arranged in the most favorable way. It brings into play a system of options that reveals the way in which a group, in order to protect itself, practices exclusions, establishes the forms of assistance, and reacts to poverty and to the fear of death. . . . In it, a whole corpus of medical practices and institutions confronts the primary and secondary spatializations with forms of a social space whose genesis, structure, and laws are of a different nature. And yet, or, rather, for this very reason, it is the point of origin of the most radical questionings. It so happened that it was *on the basis of this tertiary spatialization* that the whole of medical experience was overturned and defined for its most concrete perceptions, new dimensions, and a new foundation. (BC 160, emphasis added).

The relation between these forms of spatialization is not established except to say that the third is not a derivative of the others and to note the basic role that social space plays in the overturning of primary spatialization. The relation, if not directly causal, is more than symptomatic and, as we noted earlier, could well be described with Deleuze’s expression: a “diagonal movement” (F 10).

This basic role played by tertiary spatialization reminds us that what Foucault would soon be calling “epistemes” and designating their transformations archaeological “events” may not be as aleatory as he implies in *The Order of Things*. Could it be that, having rejected simple economic determinism, he continues to flirt with a kind of social determinism? He clearly acknowledges the play of socioeconomic conditions on several occasions up to and including his final book on sexual ethics in the Hellenistic and Roman epoch.²⁰

THE PANOPTICON

I spoke of “iconic” arguments at the outset and have mentioned several in the preceding chapters. Let us return briefly to the most famous of these, Foucault’s analysis of Bentham’s Panopticon as the model for the carceral society in *Discipline and Punish*. What makes this panoptic argu-

ment iconic is not only its visual immediacy but the close link that Foucault forges between its logical progression and the physical disposition of the image itself. Again, the argument is in the architecture. Foucault simply “articulates” it, uncovering its functional essence and extending the same to Western society in the industrial age.

This visual argument needs little modification to be applied to institutional surveillance in general, “thought” control, and internalization of norms. We have witnessed Foucault do so brilliantly in his discussion of the “examination” where the related concepts of the expert, physical and mental docility, and the power of normalization are explained and brought into play. As he summarizes the matter: “The Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building; it is the *diagram* of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form. . . . it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use” (*DP* 205–6, emphasis added).

As a *detachable diagram*, the Panopticon may be seen as a visual model for relations of power within the carceral society. And like such models, it is not a mere adjunct to the theory it characterizes, something to illustrate a point established independently of that model, but rather enters into the very understanding of the theory itself. Though in Foucault’s case, since he denies offering us a “theory” of power—his nominalism excludes such pretensions—his “account,” to borrow a neutral word, of how social relations exercise dominance and control (two of the leading features of “power” as he describes it) makes implicit and often explicit appeal to the panoptical model. In other words, he gives us a new way of seeing ourselves, a diagrammatic map of our political field. Of course, this model also reveals its limitations once one recognizes that Foucault’s more general account about the “micro-physics” of power insists that power relations extend not only or even primarily from the top down, as the Panopticon might suggest, but percolate from the bottom up in “capillaries” of power that extend rhizomatically (to borrow another spatial model, this time from his friend Deleuze) to the far reaches of society.

PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AS CARTOGRAPHY

I’m shocked that one could call me a writer. I am a seller of instruments, a concocter of recipes, an indicator of targets, a cartographer, a surveyor of plans, an ordinance man.

Michel Foucault, “Sur la sellette,” *Dits et écrits*

We noted Foucault's claim that if contemporary philosophy is to be more than a kind of theoretical activity within mathematics, linguistics, ethnology, or political economy, "then one could define it as a diagnostic activity." "To diagnose the present," he explains, "is to say what the present is, and how our present is absolutely different from all that is not it, that is to say, from our past. Perhaps this is the task for philosophy now."²¹ In other words, philosophy, if it would free itself from its modern servitude to the sciences, should become a kind of "history" in the sense of pursuing a differential study between our present and our past. And this calls for a "mapping" of the spaces maintained by that difference and an articulation of the fields of force that they circumscribe. In this sense, Foucault is continuing the project of Kantian Enlightenment, namely, to think the present,²² but, of course, in his own way. He is doing so via a comparative geography, a mapping of differences, not in order to arrive at an essential identity but to uncover, as he puts it, that "dispersion which we are and make" (*AK* 131).

Of the many consequences of this kaleidoscopic shift, let me conclude by mentioning three of particular relevance at this stage of our investigation. They are epistemic, political, and ethical respectively in line with the three axes along which we are about to chart the trajectory of his thought. As sides of the "Foucauldian triangle," none is confined to the intelligibility of one field alone; each consequence could be plotted along the other two axes without confusion or reduction among the alternative spaces. In a draft for the introduction to the second volume of his *History of Sexuality, The Uses of Pleasure*, for instance, a text that we shall study at length in the following chapter, Foucault speaks of his effort "to treat sexuality as the correlation of a domain of knowledge, a type of normativity, and a mode of relation to the self" (*FR* 333).

A major epistemic consequence of the kind of spatialized reasoning that we have seen at work in Foucault's histories is that it precludes any "higher viewpoint," any claims to synoptic "vision," including its own. In other words, it seems committed to a kind of pragmatism that takes each problem as it arises without hope of ever understanding, much less solving, them all. It thus combines a certain fallibilism with a profound distrust of universal or even permanent solutions. Despite the appearance of a worldview from a point outside of its own culture, spatializing thought (which I am taking as shorthand for archaeology, genealogy, and problematization) is modest and particularist—constituting what Fou-

cault, in typical pragmatist fashion, offers as a “toolbox” to be employed as necessary and convenient (see *P/K* 65, QG). The Wittgensteinian “games of truth” that captured his attention in his later years were concerned with the “effects” of truth, not with the traditional conflict between correspondence and coherence theories. By focusing on the spaces opened for the utterance and decisiveness of “knowledge,” Foucault brings Platonic truth back down to earth, giving it a history, an object, and a site. Making it, as he says, “a thing of this world.”²³

Another epistemic effect of the mapping technique that entails with equal force the exercise of power is the resultant problem of borders that arbitrarily select inclusions and exclusions, while leaving no space for the ambiguous. Part of the tragedy of *Herculine Barbin*, the nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite, for whose memoirs Foucault wrote the introduction, was that s/he was forced into the either/or of a discursive space that could not suffer ambiguity. This is an object lesson not only in Foucauldian freedom as the possible transgression of limits but in the “biopower” of modern society that established and enforced those normalizing limits in the first place.

Of course, maps are instruments as well as icons of control. Louis XV is supposed to have complained that the royal cartographers had lost more of his territory than the royal army could ever hope to win. The transfer “from text to territory”²⁴ that mapping effects, invites the phenomenon of “transgression” that figures centrally in Foucault’s thought. This is an epistemic matter, no doubt, but it is also and primarily political, centering on the power to cross a boundary, to countermand an order, to disobey a prohibition—in sum, to *resist* domination or control. We watched Foucault underscore the military and administrative invasion of the discourse of space. By “articulating” spatial relationships, the map or, more generically, the diagram not only describes but also constitutes the objects and areas it covers. So not only does the resultant space represent a field of force (the locus of “action on action,” as Foucault has described the relation of power) but it is itself an instance of domination, construction, and/or control. If someone faced Foucault with the *tu quoque* of logical self-reference, he would in all likelihood agree, but add, “So what?”

Finally, one of the ethical consequences of his spatialized reason is the resultant sense of contextualization in the aesthetic of existence. Though Foucault’s “care of the self” does resemble the Sartrean notion of exist-

tential authenticity (a matter to be treated in chap. 11), it does so only if you allow for a deeper conception of *situation*: not “existential situation,” which is heavily consciousness- and thus time-oriented, but what we might call “Foucauldian situation,” denoting that shift in the spatial configuration of the individual and the body which fosters such a project in the first place. I am thinking of his suggestion of the possibility of “a different economy of bodies and pleasures,” for example, freed from “that austere monarchy of sex” that would open a space to problematize the aesthetics of existence (*HS* 159) or the possibility of “a new right that is both antidisciplinary and emancipated from the principle of sovereignty” (*SD* 40). Although this, too, resembles the chastened sense of existential situation that occurs in the later Sartre, it resonates equally with Foucault’s critique of the confining structures of the disciplinary society and the carceral individuals it produces. Its ethical significance arises from the realization that these different forms of rationality, for example, the carceral, “reside on a base of human practice and human history and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made” (*EW* 2:450, *Structuralism*).

BRAUDEL CONCLUDES his monumental study with an account of the death of Philip II, adding:

These are all sufficient reasons why the long agony [of the King] was not a great event in Mediterranean history; good reason for us to reflect once more on the distance separating biographical history from the history of structures, and even more from the history of geographical areas.²⁵

And yet, as Sartre might have pointed out, Braudel concludes his masterwork with the death of the king, as if nothing less would bring this tale to proper cloture.²⁶

Pyramids and Prisms:
Reading Foucault in 3-D

It is time to apply the spatial argument to Foucault's own works. We have broached the subject of an "axial" reading at various points in our discussion. Now let us follow this tack in detail as a culmination of our treatment of Foucault's "mapping of history" and the start of a longer comparison and contrast with Sartre's existentialist alternative in part 3.

I have claimed that Foucault's repeated use of spatial metaphors is not just symptomatic of his rhetorical inclinations. Rather, his reliance on spatial terms enters into the very arguments themselves. The tables, triangles, and quadrilaterals that intersperse his archaeological studies, the "capillary" action of power relations in his genealogies, and even the subjectivizing "spaces" of his later problematizations serve not merely to illustrate but to further their respective arguments. I have noted how these spatial images are ingredient in the working of the argument itself, like the imaginative models of a scientific theory. Not just metaphors, I have argued, they are "spatial techniques" (*EW* 3:63, SKP).

I have underscored the spatialization of reason at work in Foucault's texts. But his spatialized reasoning does not merely juxtapose

In the rumbling that shakes us today, perhaps we have to recognize the birth of a world where the subject is not one but split, not sovereign but dependent, not an absolute origin but a function ceaselessly modified.

Michel Foucault,
"The Birth of a World,"
Foucault Live

Develop action, thought and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization.

Michel Foucault,
preface to *Anti-Oedipus*

pose, as Edward Said suggests; it compares and contrasts, as Georges Dumézil instructed. Paul Veyne likened it to comparative geography and viewed it as the wave of historical studies in the future.¹ I have claimed that spatialized reasoning provides Foucault's positive alternative to the "neurosis of dialectics" (*EW* 2:358, *Theatrum*) from which he seeks to deliver us.

Since Sartre's theory of history is in large part indebted to the concept of dialectical reason, it is appropriate to ask what some of the effects of such an attack on the dialectic might be. I shall do this in the concluding section of this chapter as we prepare to undertake a detailed comparison in part 3. But first let us attend to another spatial directive that Foucault offers us and follow it to its conclusion by applying this spatializing maneuver to Foucault's own writings. To phrase our question with a spatial model: Should we regard the ensemble of his works as a pyramid or as a prism? In Sartrean terms: Shall we totalize or not?

AN AXIAL READING

What I have been proposing throughout this study is an *axial* reading of Foucault's major works. That is, I am suggesting that we read the entire oeuvre, an expression he disliked, along each of the three axes to which he referred in his late writings, namely, the respective axes of *knowledge* or truth, of *power* or governmentality, and of *subjectivation* or ethics. Not that the alternative to each term, namely, "truth," "governmentality," and "ethics" is simply synonymous with its respective disjunct. Rather, the second term in each pair serves to elucidate and extend the application of the first. Thus, "games of truth" as well as what he calls "truth effects" come to clarify and concretize the rather abstract category of "knowledge" in the Foucauldian lexicon. Similarly, "the government of oneself and of others" moves us one step closer to particular instances of that "action on action" which helps define Foucault's relations of power. But it also invites interaction with the axes of power and subjectivation, as we shall see. And "ethics," in Foucault's special sense of that term, focuses our attention on a specific area of subjectivation, namely, the constitution of the "moral" self. It too directs our attention toward the other axes, especially the axis of games or "regimes" of truth. For Foucault insisted near the end of his life that he had "always been interested in the problem of the relationship between subject and truth."² So while we

shall usually refer to each axis by the first term in its denominating pair, the others remain equally available and usually applicable.

But again, let me caution that these are the sets of a historical nominalist, which means, among other things, that one should not expect these categories to be “carved at the joints” as Plato proposed and William James repeated. Nor should one be surprised at discovering slippage and seepage from and among these classifications. Such is the concreteness and the ambiguity of the nominalist project.

Each axis, I am arguing, answers respectively to one of the three dimensions in Foucault’s applied methodology, namely, archaeology, genealogy, and problematization, and is most properly studied by that particular method. Although he acknowledged the possibility of undertaking archaeologies of other fields such as the ethical, the aesthetic, the political, and history as such (see *AK* 192–95), his explicit archaeologies have focused primarily on cognitive practices and games of truth. Even his “archaeology” of sexuality deals with the emergence of a “science” of sexuality in the West as distinct from an *ars erotica* in the East.³ “What archaeology tries to describe,” he explains, “is not the specific structure of science, but the very different domain of *knowledge [savoir]*” (*AK* 195; *AS* 255). Similarly, *though he admits that the term “power” is not universally applicable, that is, that there are regions beyond its grasp*,⁴ each of the genealogies he mounts is seemingly exhaustive in its pursuit of relations of domination and control. And though the expression “problematization” comes to prominence only in his later works, we have observed him prepare the way for this expression some years earlier by distinguishing between the history of a period and that of a problem.⁵ So when we speak of the axes of power, knowledge, and subjectivation, we are opening paths for archeological, genealogical, and problematizing discourses and, conversely, when we undertake an archaeological or a genealogical or a problematizing investigation, we will direct our attention toward modes of *savoir*, *pouvoir*, or *subjectivation* respectively.

Foucault warrants such an axial undertaking on several occasions both generally and in a specific manner. In general, we have remarked how he frequently assessed the entirety of his previous works in light of his most recent concern. Thus, after the appearance of *Discipline and Punish*, asked when he had become interested in power relations, he replied that his earlier archaeologies had been about power all along.⁶ And later, with

the publication of the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*, he avowed that his abiding interest was “a history of truth” (UP 12). For someone reputed to be a philosopher of discontinuity and gaps, this apparent need to present a continuous object of intellectual interest, we suggested, appears puzzling, if not inconsistent. Our earlier discussion of transformation and displacement should remove some of the apparent inconsistency regarding breaks and continuity in his histories. I hope to remove the remaining misgivings by showing how this talk of abiding interest and continuous intellectual concern constitutes an invitation to undertake the kind of axial reading that I am sketching.

A more explicit invitation is proffered in the introduction to volume 2 of the *History of Sexuality*⁷ where Foucault observes apropos the subject of that text:

To speak of “sexuality” as a historically singular experience also presupposed the availability of tools capable of analyzing the peculiar characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that constitute it: (1) the formation of sciences [*savoirs*] that refer to it, (2) the systems of power that regulate its practice, (3) the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to recognize themselves as subjects of this sexuality. (UP 4)

He goes on to explain how he forged the tools to analyze this topic along the first two axes in his archaeology and genealogy respectively and that it was now a matter of doing the same for subjectivation in the present work. And in that same introduction, he undertakes a summary review of his earlier works along all three axes, but especially under the aspect of problematization, thereby giving us an initial diagram of the kind of axial reading I am proposing. He writes:

I seem to have gained a better perspective on the way I worked . . . on this project, whose goal is a history of truth. It was a matter of analyzing, not behaviors or ideas, nor societies and their “ideologies,” but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought and the *practices* on the basis of which these problematizations are formed. The archaeological dimension of the analysis made it possible to examine the forms themselves; its genealogical dimension enabled me to analyze their formation out of the practice and the modifications undergone by the latter. There was the problematization of madness and illness arising out of social and medical prac

tices and defining a certain pattern of “normalization”; a problematization of life, language, and labor in discursive practices that conformed to certain “epistemic” rules; and a problematization of crime and criminal behavior emerging from certain punitive practices conforming to a “disciplinary” model. And now I would like to show how, in classical antiquity, sexual activity and sexual pleasures were problematized through practices of the self, bringing into play the criteria of an “aesthetics of existence.” (UP 11–12)

This is the *Foucauldian triangle* to which we have been referring in previous chapters. Formed by the lines connecting these axes, it affords an insight into the distinctions and the relations between them. By way of illustration, I shall consider Foucault’s first major work once more, his *grand thèse* for the *doctorat d’état*, *The History of Madness*,⁸ under each of these aspects. This should be especially informative since, unlike his subsequent works, this initial study is not explicitly archaeological, much less genealogical or problematizing. It may be considered “pre-axial” in character, if you will. So let us see what an initial axial reading of this text reveals.

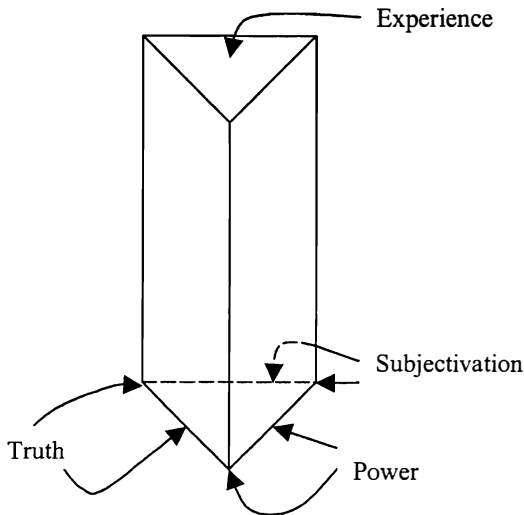


FIGURE 1. Foucauldian triangle (prism)

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF MADNESS

Foucault sets the agenda for following the first axis when, in the preface to the first edition entitled *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, he describes the silence to which the language of psychiatric medicine has reduced madness as “a monologue of reason about madness” and avows: “I have tried to write, not the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence” (DE 1:160). In other words, almost from the beginning of his career, Foucault is distinguishing archaeology from history and professing to practice the former. He is investigating the knowledge [*savoir*] that divides reason and unreason out of the undifferentiated magma of historical madness, the “forms” that, as he says, belong to a realm that is “neither the history of knowledge, nor history itself” but one “where what is in question is the *limits* rather than the identity of a culture” (DE 1:161, emphasis added).

In a sense, all of Foucault's works are the study of limits and even the study of what he already calls in this early work “limit-experiences.” “To interrogate a culture about its limit-experiences,” he writes in this same preface, “is to question it at the confines of history, about a tearing [*déchirement*] that is like the very birth of its history. Thus the temporal continuity of a dialectical analysis and the revelation [*mis au jour*] of a tragic structure at the gates of time find themselves in confrontation, in a tension that is always in the process of coming unraveled” (DE 1:161). His favoring of the tragic over the dialectical serves to unravel this tension still further. He cites Nietzsche approvingly on the refusal of tragedy as the characteristic mark of history in the West and he holds that the corresponding division of reason and unreason was one of the basic features of Western culture. Significantly, it is in this refusal of the tragic relation between reason and unreason that Foucault registers the experience of madness in the classical period, a silencing that is reinforced by the concept of mental illness in our day. Although he later drops a long note on Zarathustra from the second edition of this work, the Nietzschean presence along with its tragic vision remains a constant in Foucault's subsequent writings.⁹

So several years before *Les mots et les choses* appeared with a splash at what was arguably the high-water mark of the structuralist movement and two years before the publication of his “Archaeology of Medical Perception,” *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault seems ready to place his

History of Madness securely within the archaeological and perhaps even the structuralist ambit.

What, then, is an “archaeological” reading of this text and what does it yield that might elude a more traditional historical approach? Let us take once more as a working definition of archaeology Foucault’s characterization of it as “*the description of the archive,*” where “archive” is understood as “the mass of things spoken in a culture, conserved, valorized, re-used, repeated and transformed. In brief, this whole verbal mass that has been fashioned by men, invested with their techniques and in their institutions and woven into their existence and their history.”¹⁰ Of course, the object of archaeological inquiry is not simply this verbal and institutional “mass.” Its proper object is the ordering mechanism of this mass, what Foucault calls the “system” of this de facto collection. Its project is primarily to discover and describe the particular types of discursive practice that hold sway in a given period and the relations among them. In this respect, archaeology resembles eidetic phenomenology more than Foucault might wish to admit. The crucial difference lies in Foucault’s claim that these ordering rules are factual—that the a priori is historical. Husserl’s famous prioritization of essence over fact is subjected to another nominalist reversal.¹¹ Still, Foucault seems to waffle between attention to the rules of formation and transformation (the structuralist side of the equation) and positivist concentration on the archival mass (the historical side) when explaining the nature of archaeological investigation.

But archaeology also shows an affinity with the Marxist thought that it likewise seeks to replace when Foucault adds that it investigates the relationship that obtains between discursive and such nondiscursive practices as the political, the social, or the economic. We noted that he sometimes calls this relation “articulation” and distinguishes it both from the vertical, Marxist base-superstructure image and the horizontal positivist causal chain. And we observed Deleuze employ in Foucault’s regard a characteristically spatial metaphor to describe this problematic relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive as “diagonal” in nature. While that image does warn us away from simplistic causal or “reflective” relationships, it serves more to locate the problem than to answer it. Foucault seems to have thought that reference to transformations and displacements sufficed for explanation in the archaeological domain.

Finally, archaeology resembles structuralism both in its reliance on

the unconscious constraints on the sayable and the evident [*le visible et le disible*] an expression that we observed Deleuze exploit in his study of Foucault,¹² though it occurs already in *The Birth of the Clinic*—and by its focus on transformations rather than causal relations in its historical accounts. The properly archaeological question is, “How does it happen that at a given period one could say this and that something else has never been said?” In other words, “What are the historical conditions that account for what one says or of what one rejects, or of what one transforms in the mass of spoken things?”¹³ So despite its announced concentration on discourse, archaeology does not ignore the crucial role of nondiscursive practices in its account.

The telltale archaeological transformations and displacements in *The History of Madness* occur at the junctures of the Renaissance, the classical and the modern eras respectively. In fact, the seeming persistence of certain practices once considered diabolical, later purely irrational, and more recently simply sick, he attributes to a “transformation of the field of experience” called “unreason” and not to some collective unconscious (HF 120–21). The relations which classical culture had established with unreason, are not so much abandoned as “displaced” in the modern age (HF 177). Despite a frustrating ambiguity in his use of the terms “madness” and “insanity” [*folie* and *déraison*] throughout this text, Foucault wishes to uncover the limits of what counts for madness in each epoch as well as the correlative constitutions of a particular type of subject (e.g., the “man of unreason” in the classical era, the “abnormal” or “pathological” subject, who is also the “object” of scientific investigation, in modern times). In what we have come to recognize as a typically archaeological move, Foucault describes how it was natural in the classical age to exclude the mad from the society of rational people because the period had come to define itself in terms of this excluded other, the irrational [*déraisonnable*]. What is excluded is the right to speak [*discourse*], to be taken seriously, to enter into contracts, indeed, to be granted membership in the human community as such. Correspondingly, what is defined is more a limit than the identity of a culture. To be sure, there is no mention of epistemes or the historical a priori (though on one occasion he speaks of an “a priori of medical perception” [HF 548]), but the archaeological question is being asked and answered: Why is it that madness was banished from the company of reasonable people in the classical age (the Great Confinement)¹⁴ whereas it was brought into scientific study as

mental illness in the modern era? Why was it silenced in the former period and ventriloquized by psychiatric monologue in the latter? Mutatis mutandis, these are the questions that Foucault continues to pose along this axis throughout his career: why was the invisible or unproblematic in one era so obvious or scrutinized in another?

There is no need for me to underscore the spatialized reasoning at work in *History of Madness*. We can thank Michel Serres for having performed that task with care. Recall his remark that “if we consider the terms and vocabulary, the style, the logic, the organon of the work, we will see clearly that they are drawn from a meditation on the primary qualities of space, on the immediate phenomena of *situation*” (FI 39). He continues: “Suddenly, we understand that the only essence of madness is situation itself,” namely, the closed world of the insane that is at once their condition and their truth (FI 41). No doubt a major difference between the classical and the modern uses of this situation is that the former excludes without hope of inclusion whereas the latter seeks to bring about the internalization of this condition of otherness as a means of effecting a cure. As with theories of punishment that Foucault will analyze later, the goal in the latter case is “normalization” achieved with the help of the human “sciences.”¹⁵

A GENEALOGY OF MADNESS

Turning to the power relations that percolate throughout society when viewed along the genealogical axis, we encounter numerous implicit references to domination and several explicit ones across this “preaxial” text. The power of inclusion and exclusion, of acceptance and refusal is perhaps the most obvious. Of course, these relations can be seen as epistemic as well, but their character and import change when viewed from a genealogical perspective. Thus, in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, which along with the essay, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” we said can be considered to have launched his overtly genealogical investigations, Foucault lists three forms of exclusion which a society employs “to avert the powers [of discourse], and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality” (DL 216; OD 11). One of these is the opposition: reason and madness [*raison et folie*]. Against the objection that modern medicine gives ear to the long-silenced voices of the insane, Foucault responds that this “ear” is professionally formed (or deformed?) and that “it is in this [attentive silence]

that the division lingers” (*DL* 217). In a manner that he will elaborate in *The Birth of the Clinic* and in the openly genealogical study of institutions of confinement in *Discipline and Punish* some fourteen years later, Foucault underscores the formidable power of the doctor in the modern mental asylum. He calls this the “apotheosis of the medical personage” and links this dominant role of the doctor with the rise of the asylum much as he will later connect the controlling power of the physician with the birth of the clinic (*HF* 523). If the tragic division of the classical period is seemingly reversed, only the tragedy is forgotten; the rejection remains in place though displaced by the category of the abnormal/pathological.¹⁶

To the extent that genealogy treats of the *nondiscursive*, both *History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic* qualify as genealogical studies. Each makes explicit reference to the political dimension of the changes it is charting. Thus, the reason for “reform” of the houses of confinement in favor of asylums, Foucault insists, was a function of a new consciousness of madness: “a political more than a philanthropic consciousness” (*HF* 418). He once admitted that he addressed the “external conditions” of development in the *History of Madness* whereas in *The Order of Things* he focused on the internal analysis of scientific discourse “without taking into account the historical context in which it was played out.” As he explained:

The example of madness or the example of sickness the example of psychiatry and the example of medicine seemed to indicate to me that it is from the side of power relations within a society rather [than from relations of production or of ideology] that one should encounter the external rootedness of the organization and development of a knowledge [*savoir*]. (*DE* 3:583, *La scène de la philosophie*)

Genealogy, which Foucault characterizes famously as a “history of the present,” in the case of *History of Madness* is what Serres calls “a sort of generalized ‘psychoanalysis’ of psychoanalysis itself” (*FI* 50). Far from the “presentism” of which Habermas and others accuse it, genealogy is a critique of the evolutionist and progressivist narrative with which the present congratulates itself. In the case at hand, its critical bite consists in revealing the false image that psychoanalysis projects to cover its own ambiguous pedigree. As what Rudi Visker calls a genealogy *avant*

la lettre (GC 13), *History of Madness* shows more affinities to *Discipline and Punish* than to works closer to it in time.¹⁷ Indeed, Foucault confirms this perspective when he reflects: “When I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about, in *History of Madness* or *The Birth of the Clinic*, but power? Yet I’m perfectly aware that I scarcely ever used the word and never had such a field of analysis at my disposal” (EW 3:117, TP). An axial reading serves to warrant the pursuit of genealogical theses and themes in these earlier works without apologies for being premature.

PROBLEMATIZING MADNESS:
INDIVIDUAL, SUBJECT, SELF

There’s no more any return to the subject in Foucault than there’s
a return to the Greeks.

Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*

Did Foucault grow “soft” in his critique of subjectivity in his later works? Did the subject make a return toward the end of his career after being banished from the scene in the 1960s? Many of the earlier expositions and assessments of Foucault’s thought claimed that the Foucauldian subject was “dead.” Indeed, Foucault occasionally lent credence to this view.¹⁸ But his more balanced opinion cautions against such hasty dismissal. In an important interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, he explains:

I don’t believe the problem [of power] can be solved by historicizing the subject as posited by phenomenologists, by fabricating a subject that evolves through the course of history. One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that is to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. This is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make references to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness [*identité*] throughout the course of history. (EW 3:118, TP)

My hypothesis of arguing along the axis of subjectivation and self-constitution presumes that the subject was never banished, though the

Cartesian Subject in company with the transcendental Ego had left the French scene long before Foucault appeared. You find it already exiled by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre—yes, Sartre! But that is another story.¹⁹

With a view toward charting this axis, I recommended earlier that we differentiate between the “individual” and the “self.” The former has a more functional character in Foucault’s vocabulary and is immediately ascribable to structural relations. “The individual,” he explains, “is not power’s opposite number; the individual is one of power’s first effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted” (*SD* 30). “Self,” on the other hand, is closer to the experiential and “moral” realm in the older sense of “moral philosophy,” “moral science,” and “moral certitude.” As with Sartre, it is a relational term, a reflexive: the relation of self to itself. Foucault speaks of a “fold” in this regard as do Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze. In Deleuze’s view, the Foucauldian self entails a “doubling” of the play of forces, “of a self-relation that allows us to resist, to elude power, to turn life or death against power.”²⁰ In an analogous context, Levinas offers the apt image of the Möbius strip.

We should distinguish both individual and self from “subject,” which, Foucault explains, has two meanings: “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.” He admits that “both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to.”²¹ And we would add that each meaning can refer to “individual” and “self” respectively. Consequently, “subject” often serves as an umbrella to cover both individual and self.²² The fruitful ambiguity of “subject” is that it can bridge the axes of power and subjectivation insofar as it denotes both government of others (individualization) and government of self (self-constitution). Indeed, its use also extends to the axis of knowledge to the extent, for example, that subjects likewise serve as “objects” for social scientific investigation, a major thesis of *The Order of Things*. Though occasionally Foucault uses the terms interchangeably, especially “individual” and “subject,” it appears that sensu stricto I am an individual if impersonal practices or institutions constitute me as such but a self only if I so constitute myself.²³ The term “subject” can cover both. It would follow that the subjects of the “water cure,” for instance, discussed in *Madness and Civilization* (in which the patient is subjected repeatedly to cold showers), though con-

stituted as individuals by virtue of their confinement and separation, become “selves” only when they “admit” they are insane.²⁴ This is a hypothesis that I propose to help ease our way through the tangled uses of these terms that speckle Foucault’s writings.²⁵

Foucault was quite explicit in his reference to the constitution of individuals in our society—the “docile bodies” of industrial capitalist society, for example—in his explicitly genealogical works, but he was usually careful to avoid mention of “existential” selves or responsible agents. Still, if we assume his understanding of “ethics” as “that component of morality that concerns the self’s relationship with itself,”²⁶ that is, as embracing “the forms and modalities of the relation of the self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject” (*UP* 6), we can survey the various forms of becoming a subject and of individualization along the axis of his works extending back to the *History of Madness*. And just as absence of the word “power” in the early works does not invalidate their being fruitfully read under that aspect as we have observed him doing, so scarcity of reference to “self” in those same volumes does not preclude their being accurately charted along the axis of subjectivation.

In his important essay, “The Subject and Power,” Foucault remarks, characteristically, that his goal during the past twenty years “has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects” (*EW* 3:327, SP). Those three modes are basically: the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences (the topic of *The Order of Things*); the objectivizing of the subject in what he calls “dividing practices” (the dichotomies studied in *History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *Discipline and Punish*); and the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject (as in *The History of Sexuality*). He concludes: “Thus it is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of my research” (*EW* 3:327, SP). Of course, this opens his entire corpus to analysis along the axis of subjectivation.

While not explicitly subscribing to our axial reading of these texts, Deleuze does observe that “this idea of subjectivation in Foucault is no less original than those of power and knowledge: the three together constitute a way of living, a *strange three-dimensional figure*, as well as the

greatest of modern philosophies (and I say this without joking).”²⁷ What is proper to subjectivation, he insists, is its designation of a locus for transcending knowledge and resisting power:

A process of subjectivation, that is, the production of a way of existing, can't be equated with a subject, unless we divest the subject of any interiority and even any identity. Subjectivation doesn't even have anything to do with a "person": it's a particular or collective individuation characteristic of an event (a time of day, a river, a wind, a life . . .). It is a mode of intensity, not a personal subject. It's a specific dimension without which we can't go beyond knowledge or resist power. Foucault, true to his method, isn't interested in returning to the Greeks, but in *us today*: what are our ways of existing, our possibilities of life or our processes of subjectivation; are there ways for us to constitute ourselves as a "self," and (as Nietzsche would put it) sufficiently "artistic" ways, beyond knowledge and power?²⁸

What indications of self-constitution, then, do we encounter in this early work? On the "Ship of Fools" in Sebastian Brant's poem by that title, Foucault explains, there were no individuals, only types: the slothful, the debauchee, the drunkard, the calumniator (*HF* 36). The most obvious example of self-constitution in this work has already been mentioned: the formation of that category of individual called the madman, and its counterpart, the man of reason in the classical period. But this division and separation, which Foucault considers a defining characteristic of that era, is both practical and conceptual. The practical constitution of the madman, as Serres observed, is his physical exclusion (the Great Confinement); his conceptual removal "is necessarily mixed with a certain political, juridical and economic conception of the individual in society" (*HF* 191). "Insanity" [*la déraison*], the counter concept to classical reason, becomes the term for this properly classical experience of madness [*folie*]. This constitutive exclusion is echoed by the category of the abnormal (the pervert, the mentally ill, the hysteric, and the like) which the medicalization of madness introduced in the modern era. Such individuals become "selves" in the sense just explained when they "internalize" these categories, adopting a point of view on their situation. But this state is anticipated by the ethical judgment of the classical era when madness is perceived as a moral fault (see *HF* 85, 96ff.), and comes to full realization with medical "treatment" in the modern age, when Philippe Pinel, for example, insists that the cure is effected once the "subject" admits his or her abnormal condition for what it is.

Foucault already distinguishes two forms of individuation in this early work. Centering on the early modern (“classical”) period, he finds that the madman is constituted “insane” by the confluence of two distinct experiences in the eighteenth century. The first concerns the old juridical notion of the “person as subject of the law”; the other arises from the experience of the “individual as social being” (HF 144–45). The former lends a moral aspect to the phenomenon: the insane person is incapable of meeting the demands of the law and to that degree merits exclusion from the community of “reasonable” beings. The latter constitutes the individual as “other,” “alienated,” “abnormal” or “normal,” according to a “normative and dichotomous social experience of madness” that, unlike the former, knows of no degrees (HF 147). Foucault sees in the latter the creation of the “normal man” that he will later expose as the vehicle of disciplinary power and modern individuation in *Discipline and Punish*. But he finds these two modes existing in a tension throughout the classical age, giving rise to two experiences of alienation: one based on a determinist anthropology that delimits the confines of the person’s responsibility; the other, concerned with the individual as stranger to the brotherhood of men, assumes the character of ethical condemnation (see HF 149). When the nineteenth century decides to hospitalize the insane, it forces the product of these two experiences into a therapeutic unity that abandons the madman to the outer reaches of civilization: insanity [*la déraison*] is treated medically; madness is left to the poets, the misfits, and other perpetual outsiders.

Denying the interpretation of his “book about madness as if [he] had written that madness does not exist,” Foucault rejoins:

[My book] is not a critical history which has as its aim to demonstrate that behind this so called knowledge there is only mythology, or perhaps nothing at all. My analysis is about *the problematization of something which is real*, but that problematization is something which is dependent on our knowledge, ideas, theories, techniques, social relations and economical processes. What I have tried to do is to analyze this kind of problematization as it conforms to the objectives which it presupposes. (FL 418, Problematics, emphasis added)

So his first major work can be approached in terms of problematization and charted along the axis of subjectivation, provided we are careful not to conflate “individual,” “subject,” and “self” to the extent that the texts

support the distinction. The issue is as protean as it is important, so let us return to these terms once more.

INDIVIDUAL, SUBJECT, AND SELF

French Hellenist Jean-Pierre Vernant cites three uses of “individual” and “individualism” in the Hellenistic and Roman world according to the later Foucault. He counters these with three of his own from classical antiquity.²⁹ Foucault’s trio is itself proffered as a correction of the popular belief that, in the Hellenistic and Roman world, “more and more importance [was accorded] to the ‘private’ aspects of existence, to the values of personal conduct, and to the interest that people focused on themselves” (CS 41). While admitting that “not everything is false in a schema of this sort,” Foucault warns that any talk of “individualism” in different epochs must make certain distinctions, three of which are the following:

- (1) the individualistic attitude, characterized by the absolute value attributed to the individual in his singularity and by the degree of independence conceded to him vis à vis the group to which he belongs and the institution to which he is answerable;
- (2) the positive valuation of private life, that is, the importance granted to family relationships, to the forms of domestic activity, and to the domain of patrimonial interests;
- (3) the intensity of the relations to self, that is, of the forms in which one is called upon to take oneself as an object of knowledge and a field of action, so as to transform, correct and purify oneself, and find salvation. (CS 42)

Allowing that “these attitudes can be interconnected,” he insists in cautious nominalist fashion that “these connections are neither constant nor necessary” (CS 42).

Before turning to Vernant’s alternative list, let us consider these three “attitudes” in light of the distinction we have made among individual, subject, and self in Foucault’s lexicon. Recall that he advances these considerations for clarifying “individualism” in any age, though the immediate context is classical antiquity. As one might expect, the “fit” is not neat. Members of the first two classes could be “individuals” in the sense we have specified, namely, constituted by social or epistemic conditions. And the “self” is ready-made for Foucault’s third category of intensified, transformative action on oneself. But given the flexibility or comprehen-

sive character of “subject” in this discourse, that term could apply to members of all three classes. So Foucault’s distinctions seem to support our individual/self contrast while leaving “subject” in what we have called “fruitful ambiguity.”

With Vernant, the fit becomes tighter. His alternative triad consists of:

(1) The individual *stricto sensu*. His place and role in his group or groups; the value accorded him; the margin of movement left to him; his relative autonomy with respect to his institutional framework.

In ancient Greece this surfaces particularly in the legal system with its recognition of private property, wills and testaments, and individual legal accountability.

(2) The subject. When the individual uses the first person to express himself and, speaking in his own name, enunciates certain features that make him a unique being.”

Vernant associates this with a variety of ways of expressing “I” in Greek society but showcases both the sensibility of the lyric poet, whose subjective perspective on reality is indicative of one’s own life, and the individual’s experience of lived time, with its peculiar rhythm, advancing inexorably onto old age and death.

(3) The “ego” or person. The ensemble of psychological practices and attitudes that give an interior dimension and a sense of wholeness to the subject. These practices and attitudes constitute him within himself as a unique being, real and original, whose authentic nature resides entirely in the secrecy of his interior life. It resides at the very heart of an intimacy to which no one except him can have access because it is defined as self consciousness. (Individual 321)

While the Greeks obviously experienced their egos, Vernant agrees with those who insist that this ego was basically an *alter ego*, the reflection of oneself in the mirror of the other. He cites Hermann Fränkl to the effect that the ego of archaic and classical periods “is neither bound nor unified; it is an open field of multiple forces” (Individual 327). It seems closer to what I shall call the “prismatic self.”³⁰

Turning to the literary genres for clarification, Vernant likens the individual to biography, the subject to autobiography, and the ego or person to the diary and the confession. And he concludes that from the classical

periods onward the “Greeks were familiar with some forms of biography and autobiography,” but they lack confessions and diaries. Indeed, he insists, “their existence was unthinkable” because “the individual in Greek autobiography allows no ‘intimacy of the self.’” (Individual, 321–22).

Vernant points out that Foucault speaks of Marcus Aurelius’s *askesis* as “not an exercise in solitude but a true social practice” (Individual 331 [see CS 51]). The implication is that the individuals of this period were subjects but not egos or persons in the modern sense of the word: “There is no introspection” in this world (Individual 331). Quoting Bernard Groethuysen, Vernant agrees that self-consciousness for the ancient Greeks “is the apprehension of self in a ‘he,’ and not yet in an ‘I.’” Only around the third or fourth century AD did “concern for the self” emerge, and it did so in the form of the inner struggle between the forces of good and evil in the soul as we see with Augustine. Vernant concludes that “here is the point of departure for what we perceive as the modern self the modern individual” (Individual 332).

How does this affect Foucault’s third class, the “self”? Even if we allow for a certain inconsistency in Vernant’s remarks—the “I” is actually a “he” and the “interior life” is in fact the reflection of “external” judgments and other conditions—it certainly confirms the commonly received view that the “self” in ancient Greek and Hellenistic thought is not the Cartesian *ego* or even the Augustinian “deep self” [*intimus meus*]. It challenges us to avoid anachronism when parsing the Foucauldian self of “self-constitution” at the far end of his spectrum of subjectivation that begins with the individual. I shall be arguing that a “prismatic” self can meet these conditions of self-constitution without introducing the “inner life” or “absolute” that gradually became the “modern soul,” whose genealogy Foucault claims to be graphing. The test case for this issue of a self that is “not yet an ‘I’” is the problem of freedom and its relation to power and subjectivation.

SUBJECTIVATION AND FREEDOM: THE SPECTER OF HEGEL AGAIN?

But what is the relation between “problematization” as a method and “subjectivation” as a process of self-constitution? Before proceeding further along this axis, we must get clear on this matter. Is Foucault succumbing to the Hegelian allure after all? Is the method affecting the methodist such that the “freedom” requisite for its pursuit is constitutive

of the subjectivity of the pursuer? That would be a cruel irony for a thinker like Foucault. In less dialectical terms, does the problematizer achieve a correspondingly greater degree of subjectivity as the problematization advances? One might then conclude in a Hegelian manner that the problematizer is significantly “freer” than the genealogist or especially the archaeologist and perhaps more of a “self” as well. That would certainly turn the kaleidoscope not merely around but on end!³¹

The very thought is scandalous to “orthodox” Foucauldians, if that is not an oxymoron. So before entertaining it, we should review the terms. Like archaeology and genealogy before it, “problematization” is seen as a way of pursuing the “history of thought,” itself an alternative to the history of ideas and the history of mentalities. As Foucault explains:

It seems to me that there was one element that was capable of describing the history of thought: this was what one would call the element of problems, or more precisely, problematizations. What distinguishes thought is that it is something quite different from the set of representations that underlies a certain behavior; it is also something quite different from the domain of attitudes that can determine this behavior. *Thought* is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is *what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting*, to present it to oneself as an object of thought [*sic*] and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions and its goals. *Thought is freedom in relation to what one does*, the motion by which one *detaches* oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and *reflects* on it as a problem. (FL 421, Problematics, emphasis added)

Several features of this description of “thought” merit close attention. First, “thought” belongs to a constellation of terms that includes “freedom” and “problematization.” Though we have already seen that Foucault has several other uses for the term,³² here “freedom” denotes the ability to “pull back” or “disengage” from an activity in order to gain perspective on it, that is, to make it an object of thought rather than an “unthought” behavior. This “freedom” as the capacity for “reflective withdrawal” (*reflective freedom*, if you will) is a quite standard usage in the history of philosophy. Arguably, it is at least as old as Aristotle’s use of “choice.” Indeed, Foucault finds it in Plato’s early *Alcibiades Major*.³³ Foucault calls it “the ontological condition of ethics,” explaining that “ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by

reflection" (*EW* 1:284, ECS). But again, we must respect his nominalist scruples: he is speaking of "practices of freedom" and not of "freedom" as denoting some abstract quality or essence.

Regarding Plato, Foucault observes: "In the Platonic current of thought, at least at the end of the *Alcibiades*, the problem for the subject or the individual soul is to turn its gaze upon itself." He asserts that "the concern with freedom was an essential and permanent problem for eight full centuries of ancient culture" (*EW* 1:285, ECS). Still, this historical freedom was more political than ethical, if one can sustain this distinction for those centuries, consisting basically in the absence of slavery to another individual or group. Of course, this freedom from "slavery" came to include slavery to one's passions and desires, vices and ignorance certainly the message of Socrates. So a second use of "freedom" emerges in the context of ancient society. Let us call it "political freedom" in the fluid sense that such freedom denotes: negatively, absence of slavery to another and, positively, control of one's enslaving dispositions, tendencies, and nescience. It is in this "political" use of "freedom" that "governance" of self and freedom from the domination of others converge. This is what we meant by calling "governmentality" a "bridge" concept between the axes of power and subjectivation. One cannot properly govern others unless and until one has learned to master oneself—the lesson of the *Alcibiades* that was lost on its interlocutor.

We have noted another use of "freedom" in a previous chapter. In that example, "freedom" denotes a "plurality of options," as when Foucault claims that the reduction of a subject's choices to one is tantamount to robbing it of its freedom and thereby reducing a relation of power to one of force or constraint: "Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains" (*EW* 3:342, SP).³⁴ In an interview, he relates the terms "diagnosis," "fragility," and "possible transformation" to what he calls "concrete freedom." Describing "the function of any diagnosis concerning what today is," he explains:

It does not consist in a simple characterization of what we are but, instead by following lines of fragility in the present in managing to grasp why and how that which is might no longer be that which is. In this sense, any description must always be made in accordance with these kinds of virtual fracture which open up the space of freedom un

derstood as a space of concrete freedom, that is, of possible transformation. (*EW* 2:449–50, *Structuralism*)

In Sartrean terms, we would also call this “concrete freedom,” and the term seems appropriate to Foucault as well. It is distinct from freedom of thought (in Foucault’s sense), which approximates what Sartre would describe as “ontological freedom” or “freedom as the definition of ‘man’” (see my *SME* 3–17).³⁵ In the Sartrean sense, concrete freedom is situation-specific. In contemporary industrialized society, for example, an illiterate or someone without financial resources is not as “free” as someone who enjoys such advantages. What Foucault’s notion adds to the Sartrean view is an archaeological or structural dimension with its reference to “transformation.” This is the kind of freedom that enables one not simply to act otherwise but to exploit the fractures in a social unit, to work to change the system, to open a space of freedom.

Foucault is alluding to concrete freedom when he cites the example of the housewives in Victorian society whose “freedom” is reduced to a few options: “They could deceive their husbands, pilfer money from them, refuse them sex. Yet they were still in a state of domination insofar as these options were ultimately only stratagems that never succeeded in reversing the situation” (*EW* 1:292, ECS). What is called for are various forms of individual and collective resistance that will bring an end to specific relations of domination. When such action is seen as a live option, we are dealing with concrete freedom.

We have begun to indulge in translating these Foucauldian uses of “freedom” into the language of Sartrean consciousness. The “pull back” of “reflective freedom” suggests that the prior state could be designated “prereflective” or “nonreflective” activity. The “split” in the subject would then occur between the prereflective and the reflective. Whatever “unity” the subject possessed would be product, not preamble. And this reflective withdrawal would be not abstract but concretely problem-oriented. At this juncture, the language of existentialism and of pragmatism can be seen to overlap in the Foucauldian discourse. For a classical pragmatist, whether Peircean or Deweyan, the occasion for such “rehearsing” of a solution is one’s encounter with an objectively “problematic situation.”

While such indulgence in translation is perilous (among other things, it violates Foucault’s studied avoidance of appeals to “consciousness”), it does underscore a suspicion that I want to raise, namely, that what

Sartre calls a “limit to reflective recoil” as a description of “immanence” or equivalently “subjectivity”³⁶ is being smuggled into Foucault’s discourse under the guise of “subjectivation.” This occurs, for instance, in *The Use of Pleasure*, where he speaks of “self-constitution” precisely in terms of “action on oneself” (*UP* 28) and “techniques of the self” (*UP* 11). And we just encountered it in his reference to one meaning of “subject” as “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.”³⁷ In the context of the previous lengthy citation, Foucault explains that “to say that the study of thought is the analysis of a freedom does not mean one is dealing with a formal system that has reference only to itself.” In other words, though it may be a form of consciousness, as we are suggesting, thought [*la pensée*] is no more a matter of Proustian “inner life” for Foucault than it was for Sartre.³⁸ The “prismatic” self does not require it.

Sounding like a classical Pragmatist, Foucault continues: “Actually, for a field of action, a behavior, to enter the domain of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity, or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it. These elements result from social, economic or political processes” (*FL* 421, *Problematics*). In other words, a condition for entry into the “domain of thought” is that a number of nondiscursive factors render a situation objectively problematic. Undoubtedly, this is a far cry from the epistemic gaps and incongruities over which *The Order of Things* moved. Nondiscursive practices and institutions come to the fore in this account of problematization. But appeal to archaeological transformation remains in force: “This development of a given into a question, this transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response, this is what constitutes the point of problematization and the specific work of thought” (*FL* 421, *Problematics*).

Again, there is a quasi-existentialist resonance in his insistence that the objective difficulties serve only as “instigators” for the production of possible solutions by thought. “And when thought intervenes,” he allows, “it does not assume a unique form that is the direct result or the necessary expression of these difficulties; it is *an original or specific response* to these difficulties, which are defined for it by a situation or a context and which hold true as a possible question” (*FL* 421, *Problematics*, em-

phasis added). The originality of the response is not the mere product of the obstacles encountered instigation is not causal determinacy. Rather, the specificity of the response is clearly linked to the (reflective and concrete) freedom of the problematizing subject, claims familiar to readers of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* or to Dewey's *Experience and Nature*.

Foucault is facing what, in Sartre's case, we have described as the ambiguity of the "given" and the "taken" in any concrete situation. What they both want to avoid is any appeal to a subject as substance or even as self-identical. The latter Sartre dismisses as exemplifying the bad-faith effort to be what one is "the way a stone is a stone" and to avoid responsibility with the plea "That's just the way I am!" Foucault, for his part, explains that the subject "is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself." He cites the differing self-relations that obtain when one is voting as a political subject or fulfilling one's desires in a sexual relationship: "In each case, one plays, one establishes a different type of relationship to oneself. And it is precisely the historical constitution of these various forms of the subject in relation to the games of truth," he adds, "which interests me" (*EW* 1:290–91, ECS).

There is doubtless a certain savor of German idealism (a tradition that fostered both American pragmatism and French existentialism) in this talk of freedom as reflective withdrawal and original response to objectively problematic situations. But by explicitly distancing himself from "meaning" and "representation" in these quotations, Foucault finesses express involvement in any philosophy of consciousness. At least, this seems to be his intent. Moreover, the clear distinction he maintains between the discursive and the nondiscursive, as well as his allusion to the social, the economic, and the political conditions of cultural transformation is evidence of what Bertrand Russell would call his "robust realism." It separates him from the neo-idealism that Deleuze and others see invading recent French thought.³⁹ So if we admit that there is a functional subject at work in Foucault's writings, we must allow that its defining function throughout the task of problematization is that of reflective, critical withdrawal and corresponding self-constitution. With this in mind, we can recognize the phenomenon of subjectivation implicit in Foucault's problematizing of madness, physical illness, and so forth. And we can appreciate the "bridging" functions of the concepts "sub-

ject” and “governmentality”⁴⁰ of self and others as spanning the distance between the axes of power and subjectivation

PURSUING THE AXES IN OTHER WORKS

Having initiated this process with the axial reading of a preaxial text, we can at most merely sketch the outline of similar readings of subsequent writings. To that end, let us consider evidence of each axis in Foucault’s other major works. A detailed examination of the entire corpus would require another book. It must suffice for our purposes to uncover evidence of other axes operative in works typically charted along another line. The treatment will be brief because the point is simply to demonstrate the possibility of such an undertaking, the better to reflect on its significance for our general topic of “reason in history.”

We have already found evidence of power relations in the archaeology of medical perception, *The Birth of the Clinic*. Whether as domineering physician or as dominating gaze, such evidence abounds in that work. But the constitution of the individual as a *case* and the concomitant emergence of his or her individuality as the subject of scientific knowledge is a feature of subjectivation that this work shares with the better-known examples from *Discipline and Punish*.

Although *The Order of Things* is archaeological by subtitle, and despite Foucault’s admission that this work, unlike the two previous ones, does not attend to the nondiscursive conditions of epistemic transformation, there are numerous implicit references and several explicit ones to power relations throughout the book. He opens the door for a genealogical reading of modern thought when he concludes: “[Modern thought] cannot help but liberate and enslave. . . . Superficially, one might say that knowledge of man, unlike the sciences of nature, is always linked, even in its vaguest form, to ethics and politics; more fundamentally, modern thought is advancing toward that region where man’s Other must become the Same as himself” (OT 328). A genealogical reading of modern thought, especially as it employs the social sciences to comprehend “man,” would study the power-relations that in fact “liberate and enslave” precisely the program of his next two books. Moreover, the numerous inclusions and exclusions charted in *The Order of Things* can be read as relations of power either in their epistemic character or in the quiet violence with which they divide and disqualify one group from another.

One can likewise observe power relations at work in the problematizing of an objective possibility that instigates an epistemic response of which the social sciences are the fruit. In this respect, Foucault concedes that

the historical emergence of each one of the human sciences was occasioned by a problem, a requirement, an obstacle of a theoretical or practical order: the new norms imposed by industrial society upon individuals were certainly necessary before psychology, slowly, in the course of the nineteenth century, could constitute itself as a science; and the threats that, since the French Revolution, have weighed so heavily on the social balances, even on the equilibrium established by the bourgeoisie were no doubt also necessary before a reflection of the sociological type could appear. (OT345)

But he immediately adds that “though these references may well explain why it was in fact in such and such a determined set of circumstances and in answer to such and such a precise question that these sciences were articulated, nevertheless, their intrinsic possibility, the simple fact that man should have become the object of science that cannot be considered or treated as a phenomenon of opinion: it is an *event* in the order of knowledge” (OT345, emphasis added). In addition to being enriched by the use of several technical terms that we have discussed previously, these remarks address the nondiscursive dimension of the archaeology of the social sciences and the problematization of those sciences by these nondiscursive practices as well as the constitution of “man” as subject/object of these sciences that in his next work he will denominate “disciplines.”

The Archaeology of Knowledge is problematic because of its uncharacteristic form and style, almost as if another had a major hand in its final redaction. Here too one can find a textual foothold for both genealogical and problematizing analyses. Foucault invites a genealogical analysis when he discusses the scarcity of statements and what he calls “enunciative poverty.” Discourse, he notes, “appears as an asset—finite, limited, desirable, useful—that has its own rules of appearance, but also its own conditions of appropriation and operation; an asset that consequently, from the moment of its existence—poses the question of *power*; an asset that is, by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle” (AK 120, emphasis added). The exteriority and materiality of discourse

grounds this scarcity, a function of the statement as “thing.”⁴¹ And while Foucault, unlike Sartre, does not make material scarcity the foundation of violent historical struggle, we have seen him appeal to warfare as the model for historical intelligibility.⁴²

The problematizing dimension of this work could exploit the dispersive character of the apparatus that Foucault introduces here as well as the “difference which we are and make” (*AK* 131) to which we have referred in previous chapters. As the product of “a decentering that leaves no privilege to any center” (*AK* 205), this is a clear expression of that “divided subject function” that he had already introduced in the *History of Madness* and which he will elaborate in his last volumes on sexuality.

The next two major works, *Discipline and Punish* and the *History of Sexuality*, volume 1, are openly genealogical in nature. But they obviously presume the archaeological analyses of the social sciences in *The Order of Things* and they each make frequent use of the archaeological mechanisms of transformation and displacement. The *History of Sexuality* even refers to “the classical episteme” (*HS* 143). Foucault speaks of “Sexuality” as “the correlative of that slowly developed discursive practice which constitutes the *scientia sexualis*” (*HS* 68) and observes that “the history of the deployment of sexuality, as it has evolved since the classical age, can serve as an archaeology of psychoanalysis” (*HS* 130). As for problematization and subjectivation, both books offer ample evidence of the “individuating” power of the disciplines, as we have noted. And they raise the problem of becoming a subject (subjectivation) thanks to such mechanisms [*dispositifs*] of social control as the “dangerous” (*DP* 252) or the “abnormal” individual.⁴³ Foucault speaks of “the numberless family of perverts who were on friendly terms with delinquents and akin to madmen” (*HS* 40), implying that they could all be charted along the same subjectivizing axis. Of course, they could also be graphed along the axes of power and knowledge: “The project of a science of the subject has gravitated, in ever narrowing circles, around the question of sex. Not, however, by reason of some natural property inherent in sex itself, but by virtue of the tactics of power immanent in this discourse” (*HS* 70). In other words, a certain tactical “logic” is at work in the move to a “science” of sex, which he captures with the Nietzschean phrase “will to knowledge” [*La volonté de savoir*], the French title of *History of Sexuality*, volume one. But the techniques of normaliza-

tion and control exhibited in these two books are constitutive of certain classes of individuals as well.

As we turn to the last two published volumes of his study of sexuality, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, the Foucauldian “triangle” springs into full view. Earlier we observed him state programmatically at the very start of the first of these works:

To speak of “sexuality” as a historically singular experience also presupposed the availability of tools capable of analyzing the peculiar characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that constitute it: (1) the formation of sciences [*savoirs*] that refer to it, (2) the systems of power that regulate its practice, (3) the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to recognize themselves as subjects of this sexuality. (*UP* 4)

He proceeds to devote a summary chapter to each of the first two “tools” in the remainder of the introduction, before turning to “Moral Problematization of Pleasures,” the title of part 1. So an axial approach to these texts is already under way with Foucault himself.

Such an “axial” reading of the major books reveals the persistence of certain issues throughout the totality of Foucault’s works and the fruitfulness of addressing the same or similar questions to the diverse topics that he treats. Not that these topics remain identical across the historical epoch he explores or even that the “relative autonomy” of each axis means that nothing is lost by tracing one line with complete indifference to the others. An interviewer asked whether “these pairs of concepts—power-knowledge and subject-truth [were] complementary in some way.” To which Foucault responded, as we have come to expect: “I have always been interested in the problem of the relationship between subject and truth. I mean, how does the subject fit into a certain game of truth?” (*EW* 1:289, ECS) He then clarifies that the first problem he examined was “why madness was problematized, starting at a certain time and following certain processes, as an illness falling under a certain model of medicine.” Contrary to the appeal to ideology common among historians at the time, Foucault discovered that “there were practices . . . that sent [him] back to the problem of institutions of power much more than to the problem of ideology.” As he explained: “This is what led me to pose the problem of knowledge and power, which for me is not the fun-

damental problem but an instrument that makes it possible to analyze the problem of the relationship between subject and truth in what seems to me the most precise way" (*EW* 1:290, ECS).

Resisting the temptation to totalize Foucault's thought as the odyssey of someone in search of "the truth of the subject and the subject of truth," I shall simply observe that, by faithful pursuit of our axial reading, we can gain perspective on each of the planes generated by a particular axis while acknowledging the close connection and mutual enrichment among these fields of practice. We thereby respect Foucault's own nominalist and dispersive proclivities without betraying his genuine interest in the "polyhedron of intelligibility" (*EW* 3:227, QM) even as we remember his not completely ironic insistence that "no one is more of a continuist than [he]." ⁴⁴

THE MATRICES OF EXPERIENCE

What I have been drawing is the sketch of a reading of Foucault's first major work along each of three distinct axes that he enunciated toward the end of his life. Such a reading resists the developmental model that the traditional history of ideas applies to his thought while affording a perspective from which to view aspects of his writings that are commonly overlooked by commentators who treat what we have been calling "axes" as "phases," whether cumulative or not. It also suggests an approach to other cultural phenomena that have commonly been studied according to dialectical spirals or along chronological tracks. An axial reading does not mean that one must follow an individual axis in absolute neglect of the others but rather that one consider it in its relative autonomy, as the Marxists used to say. This avoids the error of reducing truth to relations of power, for example, while still allowing for the enriching practice of considering these two axes in tandem. In addition, an axial approach invites a parallel reading of the power and subjectivation axes with the insights that such mutuality might convey. We have just witnessed two such insights in the examples of the subject and of governmentality as bridges between individual and self and between power and subjectivation respectively. As we remarked, Foucault himself was employing this tactic when he read "governmentality" as government of self taken as the condition for government of others—a concept he happily gleaned from classical Greek ethics and politics.

Such an axial reading fosters the nuances and connotations of a partic-

ular vehicle without slipping into a crude reductionism. So the consideration of Foucault's works *sub specie potestatis*, for example, may link him with Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud as one of Ricoeur's "Masters of Suspicion" in that it suggests we unmask the power-relations at work in such ostensibly innocent undertakings as psychological classifications or penal reform. But it does so without reducing him to a proponent of economism, biologism, libidinism (to coin a term) or "puissantism" (to coin yet another).

Finally, such a reading allows what we might term "bivalent" phenomena to emerge and be analyzed as such. I have in mind "governmentality" and the "subject" just mentioned, as a category and a concept that associate power and subjectivation. But one could likewise mention the "examination," the genius of which lies in its focus of knowledge and power on the embodied individual. And then there is the bivalent phenomenon of sexual "identity," where the self enters into "games of truth" in which sexuality is taken as the key to an individual's deepest singularity.⁴⁵

An axial reading also precludes a "dialectical" totalization of the lines of interpretation from some "higher viewpoint." One can open a space for subjectivation, for example, without getting caught up in the whirlwind of transcendental subjectivity—the subject that cannot be an object. In fact, Foucault explicitly seeks "to overturn the philosophic procedure of moving back toward the constitutive subject in which one is seeking an account of what any object of knowledge in general may be."⁴⁶ This intellectual *askēsis* is clearly in the spirit of Foucault's thought, but it encounters a major difficulty when one turns from the three planes generated by the triangle to consider the space they enclose, namely the additional plane of "experience." In fact, so important is this concept and the problems it generates that we shall discuss it at length in chapter 9.

Is experience or its distillate, then, the peak of the pyramid? Or is it simply another transverse slice of the prism? And what difference would it make? Before addressing these questions in concluding this chapter, let me point out, if it were not already obvious, that we are now treading ambiguous waters. Foucault relates experience, thought and practice in a rather problematic way. "Practice" in this relationship is understood "simultaneously as modes of acting and of thinking" (*Companion*, 318). "Thought" (a major category since he often describes his life's work as

the attempt to study the history of thought, not of ideas) is taken to be “every manner of speaking, doing or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as subject of learning, as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others” (*Companion*, 334–35); in other words, thought is the domain in which forms of experience could situate themselves.⁴⁷ And “experience” might seem to function, though problematically, as the primitive datum in this association.

From the pragmatists to the empiricists to some metaphysical idealists, experience has often played this “foundational” role (the scare quotes are out of respect for the pragmatists). But when Foucault describes the three axes and the planes they generate as the “matrices of experience,” this seems to imply that experience is generated by them, not the converse; in other words, that experience is not the “primitive” that positivists and others were seeking. And if we accept the claim that Foucault is a social constructivist,⁴⁸ then talk of “primitive data” seems inappropriate. In defense, one could counter that the term is being used functionally here and epistemically, not ontologically. I raise this issue here as a precautionary gloss on the use of terms that, though mutually associated, do not fit neatly together. It is an invitation to pursue the matter at greater length in chapter 9.

Foucault believes that his notion of practice “provides the key to understanding the correlative constitution of subject and object.”⁴⁹ These revolving relationships of acting and thinking offer the individual the possibility of mutual subject-object constitution along each of the axes he has established but without need for an acontextual subject-that-cannot-be-an-object (a transcendental ego) or a subsistent consciousness to unify the experiences (a “deep” self). In this respect, Foucault seems to be edging toward the Humean self as a “bundle of experiences” or even (*mirabile dictu*) the Sartrean notion of presence-to-self. Because of the mutual implication of the concepts of subject and object or, better, the circularity of their employment, Foucault can also insist that his project seeks to consider “the very historicity of the forms of experience” (*FR* 334, Preface).

PYRAMIDS OR PRISMS?

A moment ago we asked: Is experience or its distillate the peak of a pyramid, or is it simply another transverse slice of a prism? And what difference would it make? If we draw the contrast in terms of so-called pure

positions, we are left with the alternatives of a Sartrean social ontology with its pyramidal totalizations but liable, however unfairly, to accusations of political totalitarianism, on the one hand, and a poststructuralist open-ended series of events or multiplicities that invites dismissal, albeit precipitously, as theoretically impotent and anarchistic, on the other. In the one case we retain *unity* as a regulative principle, if not an actuality; in the other, we glory in *multiplicity*, a mathematical term that we noted can be found in Nietzsche, Husserl, and Bergson and which is much favored by Foucault and Deleuze because of its rejection of the logical principle of excluded middle (see *F* 13). We shall return to this concept when we consider the “prismatic self” in our discussion of Foucault and Sartre on the nature of experience in chapter 9.

More specifically, whether the guiding model is pyramidal or prismatic, what difference does it make? A glance at the literature generated by Foucault’s histories reveals the many differences that it makes in fields as diverse as history, technology, and identity theory. I merely note its existence as I focus briefly on one that is pivotal to Foucault’s work as a whole and the object of the present study: the matter of historical intelligibility.

AFTER FOUCAULT: IS HISTORY A THING OF THE PAST?

Of the many objections to which Foucault’s approach to historical intelligibility gives rise, perhaps the most telling, in my view, is the accusation that all this talk about “experience” amounts to what one author has designated “the anthropologizing of history.”⁵⁰ Foucault, of course, was the arch foe of the anthropological slumber that he thought had settled over the modern age. And it would be the consummate irony if he slipped into that somnolence himself. And yet, on the face of it, this centrality of the concept of experience coupled with his so-called return to the subject makes one wonder whether Foucault’s poststructuralist resolve has not weakened with the result that he is sliding back into the categories of his existentialist and phenomenological youth. Louvain professor Rudi Visker, for example, speaks rather tentatively of an “existentialist” Foucault.⁵¹

If this were so, he would find support from some of his admirers. The distinguished philosopher of history Frank Ankersmit cites *Les mots et les choses* as the twentieth-century history book that he most admires (*En-*

counters, 87). And yet that same Ankersmit later remarks: “This obsession with language and discourse has become boring. We’ve been talking about language for almost a hundred years. It’s time to change the subject. Personally, I am in favor of the category of *historical experience*” (*Encounters*, 262). Could there be something about Foucault’s understanding of “experience” that keeps it from devolving into anthropological categories of traditional plot-oriented history? On one occasion, Foucault did muse: “Perhaps I am a historian of ideas after all!” (*AK* 136).

I suggest that this rather cumbersome and circular trio of *thought*, *practice*, and *experience*, especially when this last is reinforced by the concepts of reciprocity and multiplicity as we shall do in chapter 9, may serve to keep the anthropological sandman at bay, though it does so in a rather awkward and imprecise manner. The challenge is to parse “experience” with the utmost care, something I have begun to do, if only in a hypothetical and inchoate manner, and shall continue to do by contrasting it with the Sartrean notion of “lived experience” in chapter 9. Just as the constituting subject is both constituted and contextualized by each of the axes along which one charts its course, so whatever “history” one may choose to construct around it or on its behalf will reflect the impersonal structures and cultural reciprocities, including the specific temporal “viscosity,” that modify the constituting subject’s practices. As a multiplicity, I shall argue, this subject is a *prismatic* individual itself, refracting the various events that open its possibilities and mark its limits rather than the “singular universal” of Sartre’s dialectical totalizations. This reconceptualization of the historical “subject” is a major effect of Foucault’s rejection of dialectical syntheses or, better, a strategic move in that process.

Does this lead to a Sartrean reflection reflecting “all the way down”? Is stanching this hemorrhage (Hegel’s “bad infinite”) the price of saving “history” as it has been traditionally conceived? Perhaps. But if we are to believe Foucault’s polemical remarks on several occasions, that history is over and done with. It is now time to think of history after Foucault. And doubtless away from Sartre. But first we must place these philosophical antagonists in direct confrontation, for their dossiers are now sufficient to warrant a fruitful comparison and contrast. An appropriate starting point would be an attempt to “map” existentialist categories and concepts on Foucault’s anthropological quadrilateral. If the fit is close, existentialist history can perhaps be left to hang there along with the human sciences of the nineteenth century as interesting pieces of intellectual history.

PART THREE

Diaries and Maps

This is precisely the challenge to Western philosophy: [To determine] how the world which presents itself as an object for knowledge [connaissance] in terms of mastering a *technē* can at the same time be the place where it reveals itself and where the self [*soi-même*] is tested as the ethical subject of truth. . . . If the task bequeathed by the Enlightenment . . . is to question the basis of our system of objective knowledge [*savoir*], it is also to investigate the basis of the modality of self-experience [*l'expérience de soi*].

Michel Foucault,
L'herméneutique du sujet

Mapping Existentialist History

Existentialism is the paradigm of philosophy done in the “anthropological slumber” from which Foucault claims we are awakening. It is unabashedly centered on the human. It seeks to personalize our life-defining projects and even our space and time—time being qualified as “ekstatic temporality” and space as “hodological,” the lived time and space of our daily practices and concerns. In both cases, the contrast with ordinary usage is between the human and the nonhuman, the lived and the mechanical, the qualitative and the quantitative. Despite hints that occur as early as Pascal, Augustine, and even Socrates, existentialism is clearly nineteenth-century in inspiration. Which is one of the reasons Foucault could dismiss Sartre as a nineteenth-century mind trying to think the twentieth. So it would seem that Sartre’s philosophy in general, and his theory of history in particular, like Marx’s economic view, to paraphrase Foucault, take to the nineteenth century like a fish to water (see *OT* 262) but are found flopping futilely on the sands of contemporary thought.

Before we relegate them to the aquarium of philosophical curiosities, however, let us examine the essential claims of Sartre’s theory of history, which we shall then submit to

In Western culture the being of man and the being of language have never, at any time, been able to coexist and to articulate themselves one upon the other. Their incompatibility has been one of the fundamental features of our thought.

Michel Foucault,
The Order of Things

detailed Foucauldian critique. Specifically, pursuing our spatial model, I wish to locate existentialist history within Foucault's anthropological quadrilateral—the historical a priori of modern thought—and then chart it along each of the three axes we have studied in the previous chapter.

SARTRE'S THEORY OF HISTORY REVISITED

Let me offer in summary fashion four general features that I take to be essential to any existentialist theory of history in order to see if it remains hostage to Foucault's modern quadrilateral. In other words, is Foucault justified in labeling Sartre a man of the nineteenth century trying to think the twentieth?

No doubt the initial defining characteristic of such a history is its search for the responsibility of the historical agent (especially clear in *What Is Literature?* and *Notebooks for an Ethics*). This is simply the application of Sartre's maxim: "You can always make something out of what you've been made into" (*Situations* 9:101), which I proposed as the motto of Sartrean humanism. Sartre devoted the first half of his professional life convincing us that we could always choose otherwise and the second half uncovering the situational limits of such a choice (the "what you've been made into").

Against the positivists' value-free social science, Sartre insists that history is both a fact and a value, and should be viewed and pursued in this stereoscopic form. At the center of his discussion in the posthumously published *Notebooks*, for example, is the question of the relation between ethics and history. But throughout his works, and especially after it has spoken its name in *What Is Literature?* we are faced with the problem of commitment and of a history that I call "committed" history parallel to the issue of committed literature first introduced in that work.¹ This places Sartre in the middle of any number of debates in recent metahistory regarding "objectivity" and the role of literary tropes in historical explanation. In other words, his reflections on the nature of historiography are scarcely passé.²

This search for responsibility, second, presumes an appropriate *social ontology* that will retain a place for the individual agent in the midst of impersonal processes (like colonialism or industrial capitalism) and group activities (like the storming of the Bastille or the operation of a Resistance cell). Sartre fashions and begins to apply that ontology in the first

volume of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, especially with the help of the concepts of praxis (purposive action in its sociocultural context), the practico-inert (sedimented past praxis), and the mediating third party (the group member as such). Far from the rather knee-jerk reactions to current injustices that they are popularly conceived to be, Sartre's social criticisms presume a subtle and well thought-out theory of social agency. It is unfortunate that the verbose and often convoluted prose of the *Critique* has left it a closed book for so many who would profit from its careful consideration.

The third characteristic of an existentialist theory is that history as we've known it, Sartre insists (with a good amount of empirical support), is a tale of struggle and violence. Accordingly, the intelligibility of history will hang on the *intelligibility of conflict*. This is why he devotes the first 183 pages of *Critique II*, subtitled "The Intelligibility of History," to the question "Is Struggle Intelligible?" (admittedly, these titles were introduced by his editor, Arlette Elkāim-Sartre, but the classifications are accurate). Starting with a phenomenological and dialectical account of a boxing match, he focuses on the "singular universal" of this match, this evening, in this venue between just this pair of boxers as "incarnating" the state of professional boxing at that time and as "enveloped" by the larger issues of class struggle and socioeconomic exploitation. The problematic (for me and others) "totalization without a totalizer" that Sartre believes constitutes historical intelligibility at its highest degree (the "truth of History" of which he sometimes speaks) is not the God's-eye view of the matter—which Sartre has famously rejected—but rather consists of this very dialectic of praxis as internalization and externalization and of incarnation and enveloping totalization that he calls "dialectical Reason" itself. The perplexity regarding the expression "totalization without a totalizer" arises from the fact that, if one accepts Sartre's postulational atheism, it does not make sense to speak of the "totality" of living history. But, of course, Sartre knows that history as totality is dead history, the kind that could exist only for some extrahistorical entity. That is why he speaks of "detotalized" totalities—those of which we are an active part—and of "totalization," the work of organic praxis. But in both instances we find free, organic agents of totalization—"totalizers," if you will—serving as the ontological basis of this unifying practice.

Several commentators have found Sartre's talk of "totalization with-

out a totalizer” to be incompatible with his basic ontology and have rejected it as a futile hypothesis. Still, despite the primacy of individual praxis in his social ontology and his consistent rejection of a Durkheimian collective consciousness, Sartre is willing to claim that this totalizing movement which is our struggle for freedom, incarnated in concrete lived choices but enveloped by relations whose “evidence” we experience as “dialectical necessity” that the proper rationality of such conflictual relations is not some Hegelian “cunning of Reason,” nor is it the Marxian inevitability of structural change such as the proletarian immiserization. Rather, totalization without a totalizer is what he sometimes calls the “logic” of praxis, namely, dialectical Reason itself.

The final feature of this existentialist theory that I wish to mention is the close relation it forges between *biography* and *history*, specifically, between existentialist psychoanalysis that seeks to uncover the defining project of a person’s life and the dialectical rationality that thinks in terms of wholes, contradictions, and mediations. This brings us back again to the current debate over the relation between history and literature. As a thinker whose life work was carried out in the space of mutual overlap among ontology, ethics, and literature, Sartre’s existentialist approach to historical intelligibility reflects that very conjuncture. It enables him to employ a term such as “objective spirit” and to describe French society during the Second Empire as exhibiting the equivalent of

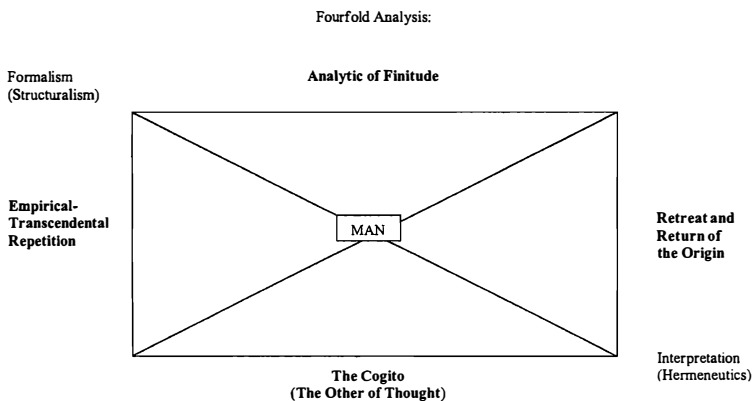


FIGURE 2. The anthropological quadrilateral: “Man’s mode of being and the reflection addressed to him” (OT 328)

what I call “collective bad faith.” It makes generous use of what he terms “creative disclosure”³ that introduces a “poetic” and indeed a “poietic” dimension into his theory of history. As “news” is produced by our newscasters, so, on this account, is “history” produced by our historians. So let us see how such a theory fits when stretched over Foucault’s anthropological quadrilateral.

EXISTENTIALISM AND THE QUADRILATERAL

Primarily epistemological in character, the quadrilateral that we observed Foucault generate in *The Order of Things* to graph the modern episteme consists of a pair of intersecting diagonals; the one is “philosophical,” comprising hermeneutics and formalism at its respective termini, the other explicitly epistemological, reaching at its extremes the positive sciences and their respective objects.⁴ “Interpretation and formalization,” he insists, “have become the two great forms of analysis of our time. In fact, we know no others” (OT 299). At each of the corners of this diagram is one of the four functions of any linguistic sign as he has described it earlier in the book: attribution, articulation, designation, and derivation. Given the linguistic focus of Foucault’s analysis, these functioned in the classical quadrilateral as well. But in their modern usage, they cut and join “four theoretical segments, namely analyses of finitude, of empirical-transcendental repetition, of the unthought, and of origin” (OT 335). Though Foucault notes a superficial resemblance between these modern segments and the four subordinate domains of general theory of language in the classical age (that is, of the linguistic sign), he insists that their respective relationships are completely inverted in the empirical realm and that their corresponding bases in the representative function of language and the primacy of the naming relation are entirely subverted.⁵ Stated spatially, the reason for as well as the effect of these transformations is the displacement of the “Name” (in the classical episteme) by “Man” (in the modern episteme) at the node of their respective diagonals. In a by now familiar maneuver, Foucault considers this displacement as much a function of the transformations as the converse. In other words, he is resisting appeal to causal ascriptions of the kind that abound in standard histories of ideas

It is not so much that finite Man is the source of these various limits revealed by the oscillation between the empirical and the transcendental (Kant) or the Cogito and its shadow, or the temporal expanse that has

neither absolute beginning nor a consummatory end. As Gilles Deleuze observes, “Foucault does not at all say that life, labor and language are forces of man which he knows constitute his own finitude. On the contrary, life, labor and language emerge *first of all* as finite forces external to man, which impose upon him a history that is not his own. It is only at a later stage that man appropriates this history for himself, and makes his own finitude into a grounding.”⁶ The profoundly antidialectical nature of Foucault’s analytical instrument comes to the fore when we realize that these planes of finitude are themselves the loci of oscillation between extremes, not their synthesis.

Of course, the history of the modern episteme in one sense is the history of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic. But the quadrilateral is meant to convey the structural limits to totalizing praxis, which, we know, forms the heart of Sartre’s social ontology and theory of history. So the question reduces to whether there is a place for dialectical reasoning in the quadrilateral. Insofar as Sartre’s theory relies on “comprehension” [*Verstehen*] as the “consciousness of praxis,” it is hermeneutical. Yet to the extent that it is not primarily linguistic but rather praxis-oriented, *it is not fully circumscribed by the four modalities of the linguistic sign*. Not that it floats above (or burrows beneath) the linguistic landscape, untouched by the codes of communicative discourse. But Sartrean theory is realist and materialist in its emphasis on the practico-inert and the struggle generated by material scarcity and human need. This resistance of Sartre’s theory or practice to linguistic reductionism constitutes the first major obstacle to this mapping project. For existentialism, the map is *not* the territory.

In terms of the opposing sides of the figure ascribed to modern philosophy, then, Sartrean existentialism slides to the hermeneutical and historical half of the dichotomy. Recall Foucault’s division of the French heirs of Husserlian phenomenology into two strains, the formalist and existentialist strains, with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on the latter side and Bachelard and Canguilhem on the former.⁷ Besides suggesting a Husserlian presence in Foucault’s own work, this division reminds us of the structuralist or, as Foucault preferred to say, “formalist” dimension of eidetic phenomenology generally and of Sartre’s version in particular. In Sartre’s case, this extends to his later philosophy of praxis, where the first phase of the progressive-regressive method of historical analysis and explanation consists of a close phenomenological description of the matter

at hand.⁸ So Sartre does not even fit neatly into the hermeneutical camp, especially in light of his respect for the “formalist” aspects of analytical Reason.

Still, if one accepts the dichotomy that Foucault draws among the French post-Husserlians—between those who focus on experience and *sens* and those who opt for concept and system—Sartre’s location on the side of experience-meaning is more accurate. Yet even here, the persistence of analytic Reason makes an either/or inappropriate. Indeed, Foucault notes that “it is [in the being of language as it was constituted on the threshold of the modern age] that structuralism and phenomenology find, together with the arrangements proper to them, the general space that defines their *common ground*” (OT 299, emphasis his). But he detects a potentially destructive fissure in their relationship when he notes the ambiguous nature of the dichotomy between interpretation and formalization (“the two great forms of analysis of our time”): “[these] two branches are too contemporaneous for us to be able to say even that it is prescribing a simple option or that it is inviting us to choose between the past, which believed in meaning [*sens*] and the present (the future), which has discovered the signifier [*signifiant*].”⁹ What I have called the three-fold primacy of praxis in Sartre’s social thought does, however, award the palm to meaning, interpretation, and dialectic in the final analysis.¹⁰

The Analytic of Finitude. But when we move from the “philosophical” plane to the “four theoretical segments” distinguished and united by the modalities of the linguistic sign, the fit with existentialism is much closer. The first of these, the analysis of finitude, a sign of Sartre’s (and Foucault’s) Heideggerian heritage, certainly captures the nature of Sartrean existentialism. Whether in the dramatic feeling of nausea before the facticity of existence or the boredom that conveys the contingency of our necessity, Sartrean existentialism underscores the “nothingness” that pervades our lives. Yet even here there is no complete equivalency between human reality (Sartre’s version of Heideggerian *Dasein*) and the givens of our situation. Sartre rejected the Heideggerian concept of being-unto-death, arguing that the concept of “my” death reduced to my psychological substitution of myself for another whose death I could witness or at least imagine. On the contrary, he located “my death” among the “unrealizables” of my factual condition (see BN 547). And so the incorporation of death into life that Foucault proposes insightfully as ingredient in the modern clinical perception of the body

(see *BC* 158ff., 196–99) would be read by Sartre as referring to “death in general,” and not to “my death,” as Heidegger insisted. The category of being-unto-death is missing in Sartrean phenomenology. The latter is far more Spinozist than Heideggerian in this respect.

But there is a basic form of finitude, essential to Sartre’s theory of history, that finds an interesting parallel in Foucault’s analysis of political economy in the nineteenth century. We have seen that the “transcendental fact” of material scarcity, in Sartre’s account, renders history as we know it a tale of competition and violence (Vol. 1:124). Foucault similarly underscores Ricardo’s account of scarcity: *Homo oeconomicus* lives “in a perpetual and fundamental situation of scarcity” (*OT* 257). It is not the representation of needs that generates economic endeavor (as in the classical account), but the struggle for life against death that marks “economic man” in the nineteenth century. Ever since Ricardo, Foucault insists, “economics has rested upon an anthropology that attempts to assign concrete forms to finitude” (*OT* 257). Assuming the viewpoint of someone standing at the fault line of the modern episteme, Foucault insists that this finitude, its anthropological foundation and its utopian dream of an end to History came to grief in the Nietzschean conflagration: “It was Nietzsche . . . who burned for us, even before we were born, the intermingled promises of the dialectic and anthropology” (*OT* 263).¹¹

Three lines of “experience,” in Foucault’s account, herald man’s finitude (each of them the object of existentialist analysis), namely, “the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language” (*OT* 315). As Foucault points out, “man’s finitude is outlined in the paradoxical form of the endless; rather than the rigor of a limitation, it indicates the monotony of a journey which, though it probably has no end, is nevertheless perhaps not without hope.”¹² The analytic of finitude leads one from these experiences of limitation to their “foundation” in man’s being (*OT* 314). Rather than reading these experiences off the metaphysics of the infinite via a theory of contraction and representation (as in the classical notions of finitude), the “analytic” in a back-and-forth motion, returns to man himself as the foundation of these dimensions of finitude. Foucault sees in this repetition from empirical to transcendental and back the opening in which new, nonmetaphysical foundations will be laid for life, labor, and language respectively. He is sketching at the archaeological level the historical a priori for nineteenth-century philosophies of life

(Nietzsche, Dilthey), of labor (Marxism), and of culture (Cassirer, et al.) that proclaim the end of metaphysics even as they ascribe an ontological ultimacy to these respective domains (see *OT* 347). Yet the distinctive difference of the modern episteme is that it offers a “to and fro” of continuous repetition in place of the unilateral foundation in a metaphysics of infinite being that the classical episteme required. “Our culture crossed the threshold beyond which we recognize our modernity when finitude was conceived in an interminable cross-reference with itself.” At the archaeological level, Foucault explains, “modern man . . . is possible only as a figuration of finitude. Modern culture can conceive of man because it conceives of the finite on the basis of itself” (*OT* 318). The being of Man, in effect, has supplanted the being of language (discourse) from the classical era.

The aim of Foucault’s quadrilateral transformations is to show the necessary displacement of classical representational theory by the “Man” that exercises the linguistic functions by his or her constitutive consciousness. In other words, it is a question of “the incompatibility that reigns between the existence of classical discourse (based on the unquestioned evidence of representation) and the existence of man as it is presented in modern thought (and with the anthropological reflection that it sanctions).” In fact, Foucault concludes: “Something like an analytic of man’s mode of being became possible only after the analysis of representative discourse had been dissociated, transferred, and inverted” (*OT* 338). He suspects that the being of man and the being of language may never be reconciled: “There may be, as it were, an inerasable hiatus at that point (precisely that hiatus in which we exist and talk), so that it would be necessary to dismiss as fantasy any anthropology in which there was any question of the being of language, or any conception of language or signification which attempted to connect with, manifest, and free the being proper to man” (*OT* 339).

Although he couches his prognosis in the subjunctive, Foucault is unequivocal when he diagnoses our present condition:

It is perhaps here that the most important philosophical choice of our period has its roots—a choice that can be made only in the test of a future reflection. For nothing can tell us in advance upon which side the through road lies. The only thing we know at the moment, in all certainty, is that in Western culture the being of man and the being of language have never, at any time, been able to coexist and to articulate

themselves one upon the other. Their incompatibility has been one of the fundamental features of our thought. (OT 339)

Foucault's point is that language in its classical reflection had a unity of its own, sustained by the certitude of representation, centered on the naming function of the noun and issuing in the ordering table (see OT 310–11). With the weakening of that unity, "the being of language became, as it were, fragmented" (OT 306). Another source of unity appeared amid the break-up of the assumed isomorphism of language and the world. The sense of this sought-after unity was revealed in the fourth of Kant's famous philosophical questions, "What is man?"¹³ As the center of the modern quadrilateral is starting to dissolve, the challenge is to discover a new form of linguistic unity—one not tied to the representational model of classicism. "The whole curiosity of our thought," he insists, "now resides in the question: What is language?" (OT 306). But this dispersion of language, he points out, "is linked, in fact, in a fundamental way, with the *archaeological event* we may designate as the disappearance of Discourse." Whether any attempt to reconstitute the lost unity of language is merely the culmination of nineteenth-century thinking (the modern episteme) or whether it "might be just as decisive a leap towards a wholly new form of thought as to draw to a close a mode of knowing constituted during the previous century" remains to be seen (OT 307, emphasis added). Foucault believes that Nietzsche and Mallarmé anticipated the advent of another episteme when Nietzsche asked "Who is speaking?" and Mallarmé responded "the word [in its materiality]" (see OT 305).

The same year that *Les mots et les choses* appeared, Foucault published a major essay on Maurice Blanchot, "The Thought of the Outside." Drawing contrary implications of the "I speak" and the "I think," he concludes that, whereas the latter leads to the indubitable existence of the "I," the former "distances, disperses, effaces that existence and lets only its empty emplacement appear." Extending this to our entire Western culture as he was doing in his book, Foucault observes:

The breakthrough to a language from which the subject is excluded, the bringing to light of a perhaps irremediable incompatibility between the appearing of language in its being and consciousness of the self in its identity, is an experience now being heralded at diverse points in culture. . . . We are standing on the edge of an abyss that had

long been invisible: the being of language only appears for itself with the disappearance of the subject. (*EW* 2:149, Thought)

This historical “choice” that faces us between the being of man (read “consciousness, identical self”) and that of language with its “subject function” seems to place the existentialist squarely on the side of the Cogito and the subject, even if the concept of “identity” is readily negotiable. We should keep this essay and its option in mind, especially its allusion to the “still vague possibility” of the advent of a “thought that stands outside subjectivity” (*EW* 2:150, Thought), when we address the question of experience without a subject in the following chapter.

Prescinding momentarily from Sartre’s fit into the modern episteme and the quadrilateral that charts it, it seems that, in the archaeological context, Foucault is correct to assert that the “choice” we face in the present age lies between the being of man and the being of language. In fact, Sartre would heartily agree. But he would insist that this choice is not merely epistemic; it is equally political and ethical in nature, as is the choice of rationalities that he discusses in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.¹⁴ Our axial reading could meet this challenge from a Foucauldian perspective by charting the “choice” along each of the three axes. But the outcome would be at most an “inclusive disjunct,” not a synthesis; a prism, not a pyramid.

Empirical-transcendental Repetition. The second segment of the anthropological quadrilateral, analysis of empirical-transcendental repetition, articulates the explicitly Kantian context of the modern episteme. Kantian man, as the creature of two realms, empirical necessity and transcendental freedom (Foucault’s famous “empirico-transcendental doublet”), infects the resultant anthropology with a duality either side of which was pursued by positivism and eschatology (read “Marxism”) respectively and which phenomenologists, for example, sought to mediate by appeal to lived experience [*le vécu*].¹⁵ But here as at similar junctures in Foucault’s argument, he reads the opposing camps and their would-be mediation as surface phenomena of a common historical a priori that at an archaeological level makes them both possible. The recent rapprochement between Marxism and phenomenology, he observes, “is not in the order of a tardy reconciliation: at the level of archaeological configurations they were both necessary—and necessary to one another—from the moment the anthropological postulate was constituted, that is, from

the moment when man appeared as an empirico-transcendental doublet."¹⁶ From that moment man emerges as both the subject and the object of scientific knowledge in the "human sciences." The question that would put all parties to the controversy on the defensive addresses that doublet itself: "Does 'man' really exist?" Foucault believes that rumblings of this question can be heard in the doctrine of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, which is why it continues to fascinate us with its threat and its promise.

Sartre subscribes fully to a phenomenological understanding of language as intentional and of consciousness as meaning-giving. But he famously rejects appeal to a transcendental ego and, with it, Foucault's "empirico-transcendental doublet." In other words, Sartre is not a Kantian dualist. Still, the concept of lived experience [*le vécu*] assumes a major role in his later thought.¹⁷ It moves him beyond a philosophy of consciousness to a dialectical philosophy of praxis. In his second or "dialectical" ethics, Sartre raises the question of "integral man" as an ideal for moral choice in an immoral society. And he has always opposed bourgeois humanism and the normative "man" it champions. But the issue in Sartre's case is as much ethical as it is ontological. It centers on the assignable responsibility of agents whether as individuals or as group members. There is little doubt, however, that the Sartrean "subject" is not a self but a presence-to-self, by virtue of which he or she is "difference" (as Foucault would have it [see *AK* 131]) as well as identical (as ascriptions of responsibility require). In other words, the doublet of which Foucault speaks, is, on a Sartrean reading, either an invitation to dialectical totalization or an excuse for ethical indifference. *Whether one can wage an ethical war on an archaeological battlefield* would be Sartre's question to Foucault. It may be that Sartre is bound by this side of the quadrilateral as well. But his raising of the ethical question to paramount status leaves the adequacy of this figure in question. And it leaves Foucault's later move toward a theory of ethical "subjectivation" more problematic or at least in need of reconciliation with archaeological "systems." Once again, the axial reading we have proposed in chapter 7 may help resolve this Foucauldian dilemma. It certainly raises the issue of Foucault's own association with a philosophy of "experience," as we shall see in our next chapter.

Analysis of the Unthought. The third side of the quadrilateral, analysis of the unthought, addresses the issue of the "Other" of thought, which includes more than just the unconscious. The "unthought" denotes those

reaches of being that elude our conscious gaze Hegel's *An sich*, Schopenhauer's *Unbewusste*, Marx's alienated man, Husserl's sedimentation, and what Sartre would call "being-in-itself" and, less abstractly, the "facticity" of our thinking. "Man and the unthought," Foucault claims, "are, at the archaeological level, contemporaries" (*OT* 326). Just as the gears linking "the graphics of the world" with its natural resemblances were "one 'cog' out of alignment" (*OT* 30) to the detriment of the Renaissance episteme, and as the act of representing was conspicuously but necessarily missing in Velasquez's depiction of the elements of representation itself, so the inevitable and insuperable presence of the unthought as the Other of Man marks the fissure Foucault is seeking in the modern episteme. Insisting on the practical nature of modern thought, Foucault points out that thinking will never quite capture its Other, but rather, that thought distances it from itself the more it tries to assimilate it into its categories: "What is essential is that thought . . . should be both knowledge and a modification of what it knows. . . . It cannot discover the unthought, or at least move towards it, . . . without causing man's own being to undergo a change by that very fact, since it is deployed in the distance between them" (*OT* 327). Sartre, it should be noted, had made a similar claim when he remarked: "The only theory of knowledge which can be valid today is one which is founded on that truth of micro-physics: the experimenter is part of the experimental system" (*SM* 32n). And yet, having displaced the question of (Kantian) transcendence, Foucault insists, "contemporary thought could not avoid reviving the theme of the *cogito*" (*OT* 323). But this is not the Cartesian move toward full transparency of consciousness. Rather, the modern *Cogito* brushes incessantly up against the nonthought "from which man is perpetually summoned towards self-knowledge" (*OT* 323). "A form of reflection is established," Foucault observes, "far removed from both Cartesianism and Kantian analysis, a form that involves, for the first time, man's being in that dimension where thought addresses the unthought and articulates itself upon it" (*OT* 325). Indeed, "the whole of modern thought is imbued with the necessity of thinking the unthought" (*OT* 327).¹⁸

As if to address the objection just raised, Foucault draws the ethical implications of this necessary and ineliminable presence of the Other in modernity and of the necessarily productive character of modern thought. Appealing to the distinction between ethics and morality that will figure so importantly in his last works, Foucault proclaims: "Modern

thought, in fact, has never been able to propose a morality" (OT 328). In fact, "for modern thought, no morality is possible" (OT 328). There has not been an original nonreligious morality, he insists, since the Stoics. Of the two ethical forms the West has known, the Stoic-Epicurean and the "modern," only the former produced a morality, that is, a code of action that was universal in character. (He sees the Kantian ethic as a bridge between modern thought and the unthought, relying on the self-imposition of a universal moral law by the subject. But why this does not count as an original morality is unclear. Perhaps Foucault has implicitly subscribed to the Nietzschean thesis that Kantian morality is merely "Christian ethics secularized.") His reasoning seems to be that modern thought, being essentially "a certain mode of action," cannot enjoy the detachment that ancient theories posited as necessary for moral responsibility. We moderns are always in *medias res*. As Sartre has said, before we choose to act, "the chips are already down" in the sense that the very decision to act or to forbear is itself an action for which responsibility must be assumed.¹⁹ The difference, of course, is that Foucault, at least at this stage of his career, seems to see such thought-action as impervious to ascriptions of moral responsibility. Instead, they advance toward the impossible conflation of the unthought Other in our individual Same: "Modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself" (OT 328). Were this not short-circuited by the very ambivalence of the modern Cogito (what Hegel would call a "bad infinite"), we could again see Hegel waiting for us at the top of the modernist staircase.²⁰

While he certainly made the in-itself a major category of his ontology and endowed it as "practico-inert" with features of counterfinality and unpredictability, Sartre never could bring himself to accept the Freudian unconscious as he understood it. To be sure, his attitude toward the unconscious became more refined over the years, to the point that he admitted finding Lacan's notion of the unconscious structured as a language less objectionable.²¹ This implies that the unconscious, had he explicitly embraced it, would have been a function of the practico-inert like language itself. But there was always the apparent incompatibility of Freudian "determinism" with Sartrean responsibility that thwarted any reconciliation. Again, it is Sartre's "ethics" that counsels the overcoming of situations of violence by addressing socioeconomic change (facing the material Other of alienation), thereby fostering mutual cooperation

(mastering the ontological Other of conflicting projects). But he has no illusion about overcoming “otherness in all its forms” as he believes the Hegelian ideal promises.²²

The Retreat and Return of the Origin. The analysis of the origin, its retreat and return, constitutes the final segment of Foucault’s anthropological quadrilateral which he describes as “man’s mode of being and the reflection addressed to him” (OT 328). Its revival of the theme of temporal finitude serves to close the geometrical figure even as it gives the enclosed space a markedly Heideggerian aspect. In accord with his diagnostic, that is, comparative, method, Foucault contrasts the classical search for origins in an ideal “likeness” of the representation to the represented with the modern plurality of historicities of things that both posit and block access to their respective origins. And though related to the latter, the original in man points not to an ideal of the same but to the fact that “man, as opposed to things whose glittering birth time allows to show forth in all its density, is the being without origin” (OT 331–32). Whether it is as a living or a laboring or a speaking being, “it is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve for him as origin.” But unlike the historicity of entities, “the original in man is that which articulates him from the very outset upon something other than himself. . . Paradoxically, the original, in man, does not herald the time of his birth, or the most ancient kernel of his experience: it links him to that which does not have the same time as himself; and it sets free in him everything that is not contemporaneous with him; it indicates ceaselessly, and in an ever-renewed proliferation, that things began long before him and that for this very reason, and since his experience is wholly constituted and limited by things, no one can ever assign him an origin” (OT 331).

We recognize here a fine description of what Heidegger calls the “having been” or “thrown” aspect of our ekstastic temporality.²³ Rather than measuring his origin and duration from things, “it is in [man] that things (those same things that hang over him) find their beginning: rather than a cut made at some given moment in duration, he is the opening from which time in general can be reconstituted, duration can flow, and things, at the appropriate moment can make their appearance.” In sum, man is “that rent, devoid of chronology and history, from which time issued” (OT 332). What Foucault calls “the problematics of origin” is proper to the modern episteme. It consists in the fact that “modern thought estab-

lished a relation to the origin that was inverse for man and for things,” which he takes as evidence of “the fundamental asymmetry that characterizes modern thought of origin” (OT 333). The infinite task of pursuing the origin that reveals that man “is within a power that disperses him, draws him far away from his own origin, but promises it to him in an imminence that will perhaps be forever snatched from him; . . . this power is that of his own being. *Time* the time that he himself is cuts him off not only from the dawn from which he sprang but also from that other dawn promised him as still to come.” This retreat and return of the origin is the fundamental time that characterizes the human and is the deep mark of man’s finitude, a finitude that Foucault now agrees with Heidegger “is the insurmountable relation of man’s being with time” (OT 335, emphasis added).

Summarizing this closure and the four segments that comprise “the great quadrilateral” that emerges as the classical episteme is breaking up and that “define(s) for us man’s mode of being,” Foucault concludes: “It is in the analysis of that mode of being and no longer in the analysis of representation, that reflection since the nineteenth century has sought a philosophical foundation for the possibility of knowledge” (OT 335). Before advancing to the three axes of the Foucauldian triangle, let us consider how snugly Sartrean epistemology and subsequently his theory of history fit into this quadrilateral, in other words, how inextricably Sartre is a person of his (now fading) time.

SARTRE, A MAN OF HIS TIME?

Foucault’s aim in his archaeologies is to uncover “an autonomous domain which would be that of the unconscious of science [*savoir*] with its own rules just as the unconscious of the human individual has its own rules and determinations.”²⁴ Specifically, the archaeology proper to *The Order of Things* (we have noted that other objects of archaeological inquiry are possible) is directed toward the human sciences [*les sciences humaines*]. It investigates the formal conditions that enable biology, political economy, and philology to emerge as “sciences” with the methods, objects, and social force that attend that status.

Sartre’s concern is to determine “what we can know about a man in the present state of our knowledge.”²⁵ His interest is epistemological but we have observed that it is equally moral in nature. His theory of knowledge, we have argued, is really an amalgam of two: the one, a Husserlian

phenomenology of insight or vision, the other, a pragmatic and dialectical theory of praxis.²⁶ And he supports two rather distinct ethical positions corresponding to each of his respective epistemological stances.²⁷ To the extent that Husserl and Hegel-Marx are located within the modern quadrilateral, one can assume that Sartre's epistemology belongs there as well and, indeed, under each of its two aspects.

But the attempt to fit Sartre's epistemology and social ontology into the Foucauldian quadrilateral encounters serious difficulties when we reflect on the realist character of Sartre's endeavor. He is not unaware of the "signifier" nor ignorant of the challenge of Saussurian linguistics (see Vol. 1:302 n. 27). He is, however, unwilling to be incarcerated in the prison-house of language, as Jameson reminds us.²⁸ Though Sartre never formulated an explicit philosophy of language, he allowed that one could be rationally reconstructed from the body of his writings. He even acknowledges the work of Lacanian analysis with its emphasis on the linguistic, while situating its formalism in the enveloping context of dialectical Reason.²⁹ But what resists "linguistification" in the Foucauldian mode is Sartre's insistence on the primacy of praxis as lived, organic, dialectical, and free. This, of course, is possible, Foucault would retort, only within the space from which he would liberate it; in other words, only within the anthropological quadrilateral. Once again we encounter the mutual incompatibility of the being of man and the being of language. Indeed, Foucault could cite Sartre's failure to formulate a theory of language as evidence of this very incompatibility.

Still, the "transgressive" [*dépassement*] nature of Sartrean consciousness and praxis suggests that it resists such "quasi-transcendental" moves to enclose it in any quadrilateral. With the banishment of the transcendental ego from Sartre's earliest work, it would seem, goes the Kantian architectonic as well, including the a priori (historical or otherwise). Late in life, Sartre admitted that he was mistaken in taking Husserl for an epistemological realist, insisting that "he is much closer to Kant" (Schilpp, 25).

But the matter of Sartre's own "Kantianism" remains unresolved. He never rejected phenomenology with its apodictic certainties (a function of the a priori) even if he supplemented it with the progressive/regressive method in his later works. And indeed that method, though formulated explicitly in the 1950s, is an elaboration of his earlier appeal to "analytic-regressive/synthetic-progressive" arguments in the 1930s,

which bear a distinctly Kantian character.³⁰ To be sure, Sartre is committed to dialectical Reason and the processive epistemology and ontology it legitimates. And for that very reason he is attached to a historical view that looks for large movements and counterfinalities, though not at the expense of human action and responsibility (the indelible mark of an existentialist theory). Accordingly, he well might have located the Foucauldian quadrilateral itself in the realm of the practico-inert and the analytic reason that studies it.

The upshot of this phase of our investigation is that Sartrean existentialism, despite its supposed immersion in the modern episteme, is only imperfectly capable of being circumscribed by the anthropological quadrilateral or of being plotted along an archaeological axis.

DESTRUKTION OF THE QUADRILATERAL

In the aftermath of his failed attempt to gain access to Being via an analytic of *Dasein* in its average everydayness in *Being and Time*, Heidegger turned to the history of philosophy. If the former required that we do “violence” to our ordinary language and everyday experience, the latter called for a “*Destruktion*” of the canonical texts in the history of philosophy. His aim was not to lay waste the philosophical tradition but to uncover what lay concealed by the standard, metaphysical readings of these fundamental works. The resulting lectures on major figures in the history of philosophy, if historically questionable, were philosophically original and profound.

Foucault seems to be making an analogous move against “anthropology as an analytic of man” and the metaphysics it generates by his proposed “destruction,” not of ordinary language or the history of Western philosophy, but of the modern anthropological quadrilateral itself. This is potentially a more lethal attack, since it would seem to disqualify Heidegger’s early and “middle” work as well.³¹ More than a radicalization of the Heideggerian move, Foucault’s strategy undermines the epistemological presuppositions that make a Heideggerian hermeneutics possible in the first place.

At the conclusion of the penultimate chapter of his archaeology of the human sciences, Foucault contrasts the Heideggerian project, which he calls generically “the Nietzschean experience,” with his own:

In order to awaken thought from such a sleep . . . in order to recall it to the possibilities of its earliest dawning, there is no other way than to

destroy the anthropological “quadrilateral” in its very foundations. We know, in any case, that all efforts to think afresh are in fact directed at that obstacle: whether it is a matter of crossing the anthropological field, tearing ourselves free from it with the help of what it expresses, and rediscovering a purified ontology or a radical thought of being [the Nietzschean experience]; or whether, rejecting not only psychologism and historicism, but concrete forms of the anthropological prejudice, we attempt to question afresh the limits of thought, and to renew contact in this way with the project for a *general critique of reason*. (OT324, emphasis added)

Foucault reads the Nietzschean phase as “the first attempt at this uprooting of Anthropology” where the death of God entails the demise of man and as the threshold beyond which contemporary philosophy can begin again to think.

But the form of “thinking” that Foucault undertakes is exhibited in this text itself, namely, an attack on concrete forms of the anthropological prejudice as exhibited in the human sciences. This “renews contact” with his project of a general critique of reason that has taken the form of a “history of reason” since his earliest major works and will continue to the very end. Reflecting on his work late in his career, Foucault remarks that already in the 1950s he had been bothered by the question whether “the phenomenological, transhistorical subject [was] able to provide an account of the historicity of reason” (*EW* 2:438, SPS). He characterizes his first genealogical book, *Discipline and Punish*, as “a chapter in the history of punitive reason” (*IP* 33). And, with Habermas in mind, among others, he notes that the charge “either you accept rationality or you fall prey to the irrational” is a form of coercion that precludes the very possibility of a critical inquiry into the history of rationality (see *EW* 2:441, SPS). As we shall observe in our concluding chapter, the history of reason in any of its Foucauldian forms, whether archaeological, genealogical, or problematizing, is the register of a series of transformations and displacements without benefit of a transcendental subject, a collective consciousness, or an invisible hand.

THE WRECKING BAR OF WESTERN REASON AND ETHNOLOGY

In our earlier volume we raised the question of Sartre’s and Foucault’s respective Archimedean points. We observed that Sartre, despite a cer-

tain ambivalence throughout his career, adopted as his *locus standi* dialectical Reason itself and freely admitted the inevitable circularity of a critique of such Reason that employs this very reason in the process. Foucault, in contrast, seemed indifferent to any such paradox. In fact, he simply refused to accept any “foundationalist” challenge (see Vol. 1:250–53). But we concluded that Foucault, by questioning the anthropological quadrilateral and with it the standard ideas of “authorship,” individuality, interpretation, formalization, and the like that characterize modernity, is undertaking *an ethnology of his own society*. “We can perfectly well apprehend our own society’s ethnology,” he insists (OT 377).

Still, one may question the reasoning that sustains these arguments and which seems to be emerging on the “other” side of the epistemic gap with modernity. Toward the end of *The Order of Things* Foucault makes a forthright, relevant observation that bears careful scrutiny:

Ethnology has its roots, in fact, in a possibility that properly belongs to the history of our culture, even more to its fundamental relation with the whole of history, and enables it to link itself to other cultures in a mode of pure theory. There is a certain position of the Western *ratio* that was constituted in its history and provides a foundation for the relation it can have with all other societies, even with the society in which it historically appeared. Obviously, this does not mean that the colonizing situation is indispensable to ethnology: neither hypnosis nor the patient’s alienation within the phantasmic character of the doctor is constitutive of psychoanalysis; but just as the latter can be deployed only in the calm violence of a particular relationship and the transference it produces, so ethnology can assume its proper dimensions only within the historical sovereignty always restrained, but always present of European thought and the relation that can bring it face to face with all other cultures as well as with itself. (OT 377; MC, 388)

Rather than opting for a “neutral” point outside our present discourse, Foucault admits the peculiar possibilities and dangers of “Western *ratio*” (doubtless one of the latter being its tendency to view itself as monolithic). Such “chastened” rationality stands far from the “irrationalism” that is often ascribed to him. Neither is it a kind of historicism with which his work is often saddled. The relation of ethnology to European thought, he insists, “does not imprison it within the circular system of actions and reactions proper to historicism; rather, it places it in a position to find a way round that danger *by inverting the movement that gave rise to*

it" (OT 377, emphasis added). The inversion consists in viewing the problem of relating nature and culture ("the general problem of all ethnology") in terms of the three great positivities (life, need and labor, and language) to ascertain "the mode of historicity that may occur within [a particular culture] and the reasons why its history must inevitably be cumulative or circular, progressive or subjected to fluctuations, capable of spontaneous adjustments or subject to crises." He concludes: "Thus is revealed the foundation of that historical flow within which the different human sciences assume their validity and can be applied to a given culture and upon a given synchronological area" (OT 378).

In fact, the "ethnology" that he describes toward the end of this book as succeeding the breakdown of the anthropological quadrilateral that it likewise witnesses resembles nothing so much as Foucauldian archaeology itself! Along with its companion "counterscience," psychoanalysis, ethnology "ceaselessly 'unmake[s]' that very man who is creating and recreating his positivity in the human sciences." Foucault betrays this resemblance, if not identification, of ethnology and archaeology when he imagines "what prestige and importance ethnology could possess if, instead of defining itself in the first place—as has been done until now—as the study of societies without history, it were deliberately to seek its object in the area of the unconscious processes that characterize the system of a given culture." "In this way," he observes, "it would bring the relation of historicity, which is constitutive of all ethnology in general, into play within the dimension in which psychoanalysis has always been deployed. . . . It would define as a *system of cultural unconscious* the totality of formal structures which render mythical discourse significant, give their coherence and necessity to the rules that regulate needs, and provide the norms of life with a foundation other than that to be found in nature, or in pure biological functions" (OT 379–80). Recall Foucault's description of his own archaeological project as laying bare the scientific unconscious of a society.

Of course, Foucault complements this reformed ethnology with a similarly revised psychoanalysis that resembles the Lacanian model. Not surprisingly, he sees the two countersciences intersecting at right angles, the relations of signification that constitute the unique experience of the individual intersecting perpendicularly with the formal system that opens and delimits such possible significations. Sartre would have allowed as much, though insisting that the relationship was dialectical, not

perpendicular; a spiral rather than a right angle. But where the two writers would differ is on the “constitution” of the individual that Foucault ascribes to the structural relations (the “system”). Sartre would grant the contribution of the practico-inert in such an “individualizing” situation but would hold to the decisive role of human freedom/choice in its constitution (the primacy of praxis).

In a way that underscores the mutual incompatibility of the being of language and the being of man, Foucault introduces linguistics as a third counterscience near the conclusion of *The Order of Things*. As structural, it provides a formal model for the other two countersciences. But insofar as it raises again the question of the being of language, linguistics sustains a literature (e.g., Kafka, Bataille, Blanchot) that gives prominence to the fundamental forms of finitude. “From within language experienced and traversed as language,” Foucault explains, “in the play of its possibilities extended to their furthest point, what emerges is that man has ‘come to an end,’ and that, by reaching the summit of all possible speech, he arrives not at the very heart of himself but at the brink of that which limits him; in that region where *death* prowls, where *thought* is extinguished, where the promise of the *origin* interminably recedes” (OT 383). We recognize three of the sides of the quadrilateral that held “Man” in counterbalance, what Foucault calls the “frontier-forms” of the human sciences (OT 381), being contested by the experience of the unconscious, of historicity, and of language in its purity that formalizes the other two but without the slightest reference to “Man.” “For linguistics no more speaks of man himself than do ethnology and psychoanalysis” (OT 381). Once more we encounter that infinitesimal but decisive incongruity: “that narrow, imperceptible displacement, that recession in the form of identity, which are the reason why man’s finitude has become his end” (OT 385).

He concludes these observations with a question that seems to articulate the challenge that arises from our having discovered the fissure in the anthropological quadrilateral: “Since man was constituted at a time when language was doomed to dispersion, will he not be dispersed when language regains its unity? And if that were true, would it not be an error—a profound error, since it could hide from us what should now be thought to interpret our actual experience as an application of the forms of language to the human order?” These, as he insists, are not affirmations: “They are at most questions to which it is not possible to re-

ply; they must be left in suspense, where they pose themselves only with the knowledge that the possibility of posing them may well open the way to a future thought" (*OT* 386). Having charted the fault line, Foucault leaves us with the possibility that another *archaeological event* may shatter the structure of the modern episteme and with it, the figure of "Man."

AWASH IN THE FOUCAULDIAN TRIANGLE

In a second move, let us now chart Sartre's theory of history along the three axes of what we have called "Foucault's Triangle," the three sides of which are knowledge, power, and subjectivation. The exercise will open new perspectives on Sartre's thought while exposing the deep differences that distinguish the two thinkers.

Sartre along the Knowledge Axis. As I mentioned earlier, Sartre subscribes to two theories of knowledge in successive portions of his career, adopting the second, however, without relinquishing the former in the course of his writing. In the phenomenological aspect of his reflections, he subscribes to a rather standard concept of truth as the intuitive grasp of the thing in its corporeality [*Leibhaftigkeit*]. This is the stage at which he claims that "there is only intuitive knowledge" (*BN* 172; *EN* 220) and that "the *cogito* must be our point of departure" (*BN* 73). So he is committed to the kind of "knowledge" that Foucault locates in the modern episteme or earlier.³² But even in *Being and Nothingness* he intimates another approach to knowledge when he claims that knowing is a doing: "The viewpoint of pure knowledge," Sartre writes, "is contradictory; there is only the viewpoint of *committed* knowledge. This amounts to saying that knowledge and action are only two abstract aspects of an original, concrete relation" (*BN* 389; *EN* 370).

In fact, Sartre's approach to history, once it has paid its dues to phenomenological description in the first stage of the progressive-regressive method, becomes interpretive and dialectical. Actually, when he introduced existential psychoanalysis toward the end of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre pointed out that its method should include a hermeneutic of the signs of an individual's project. So the interpretive approach of German *verstehende Soziologie* was already attractive to Sartre, at least at the level of an individual life, in his vintage existentialist days. Foucault is correct to underscore the promise of an eschatological alternative to phenomenology offered by dialectical thought. Sartre characterizes the dialectic as "the action of the future as such" on present praxis. That "fu-

ture” is an imaginative projection of the ideal term in a practical surpassing of the givens of a situation. What Foucault fails to mention but what is central to Sartrean epistemology (and to his understanding of history from the agent’s point of view) is this essential role of *imagining* consciousness in the creation and sustaining of practical ideals. Indeed, as I pointed out in the first volume (Vol. 1:96), imagining consciousness is paradigmatic of consciousness in general for Sartre. It is the locus of possibility, negativity, and lack (see *PI*243–45). It does not cease to function in this way when consciousness is subsumed into his subsequent philosophy of praxis.

In his now classical statement of “committed literature,” *What Is Literature?* (1948), Sartre addresses the hybrid nature of the literary work as depending on the cooperation of the author and the reader: the artist invites the audience to recreate the aesthetic object in accord with the directives set forth in the artwork. As elsewhere in Sartre’s thought, the appreciation of an artwork is a synthesis of perception and imaginative creation on the part of the spectator and, of course, on the part of the artist as well. Both subject and object are essential to this phenomenon. “The object is essential because it is strictly transcendent, because it imposes its own structures, and because one must wait for it and observe it.” As we saw in volume 1, Sartre extends this recalcitrance of the object (the fact) to his philosophy of history. One must accommodate oneself to the given of a situation under whatever rubric Sartre may define it, whether as “facticity,” “being-in-itself,” or the “practico-inert.” But, he continues, “the subject is also essential because it is required not only to disclose the object (that is, to make *there be* an object [in the phenomenological sense of “constituting” it]) but also so that this object might *be* (that is, to produce it). In a word, the reader is conscious of disclosing in creating, of creating by disclosing.”³³ We have assessed the possibilities and the limitations of history, both written and read, as such a dialectic of *creative disclosure*.³⁴

But by the time he writes the *Critique* and especially *The Family Idiot*, Sartre has moved toward a more pragmatic notion of truth and a more creative view of knowledge. After assuming the model of the experimenter as inevitably part of the experimental system, he explains: “This is the only position which allows us to get rid of all idealist illusion, the only one which shows the real man in the midst of the real world. But this realism necessarily implies a reflective point of departure; that is, the *rev-*

elation of a situation is effected in and through the *praxis* which changes it" (*SM* 32 n, emphasis his). The most the Sartrean historian can expect to achieve under this archaeological description is an appropriation of his or her existential situation, with its finite perspective, and from this viewpoint, to articulate the historical agent's choice of freedom or its abdication in the event under review. "Truth," then, emerges as a moral as well as an epistemic value, "true-to," in the sense that authentic history fosters that narrative which portrays the ontologically free action in its multifaceted nature.³⁵ In the case of the Sartrean project, it seems impossible even to distinguish, let alone separate, the axes of knowledge and subjectivation (ethics).

The Axis of Power. The notion of committed history elaborated in volume 1 is, as we noted, an application of Sartre's famous theory of committed literature introduced in *What Is Literature?* There he writes: "Our job is cut out for us. In so far as literature is negativity, it will challenge the alienation of work; in so far as it is a creation and an act of surpassing, it will present man as *creative action*. It will go along with him in his effort to pass beyond his present alienation toward a better situation. . . . [We should ask:] What are the relationships between ends and means in a society based on violence? The works deriving from such preoccupations will present a world not 'to see' but 'to change'" (*WL* 163–64). Translated to committed history, such a view invites inscription along the axis of power understood as "action on the action of others."

Yet Sartre was not unaware of the power of what Foucault calls "truth effects" even in his explicitly existentialist reflections. In his *Notebooks for an Ethics*, for example, he remarks, "Reasoning has a human air. And it is not merely the objective presentation of arguments (as in a philosophy class): it is also *struggle and tactics*. There is a will in that voice which wants to find me wrong."³⁶ One could object that such an example merely highlights the psychological character of Sartre's remarks. As Foucault has pointed out, there is a proximity of phenomenology to psychologism, despite its explicit disavowal of the same, that neither Husserl nor his followers entirely escaped (see *OT* 325–26). On this reading, whatever exercises of "power" Sartre may allude to are simply the emotional accompaniment of purely epistemic relationships. Though such an objection might have touched the early Sartre as he was growing accustomed to phenomenological discourse, it could scarcely apply to the

Sartre of the later works or even to the proponent of “committed” knowledge just discussed. And reference to “struggle and tactics” sounds characteristically Foucauldian. So it is quite possible to map Sartrean discourse along Foucault’s second axis. Knowing as praxis may well involve action on the action of others, that is, relations of power.

The Axis of Subjectivation or Ethics. To the extent that Sartre was always a moralist and that ethical considerations stood paramount in his mind from his earliest phenomenological reflections, this axis is most congenial to a survey of Sartre’s written work. So, too, might be the concept of subjectivity and even of constituting a subject as the locus of moral ascriptions. But what of “subjectivation” in the sense that Foucault has given to this neologism? What of becoming “subject” to another and a governor of one’s self and others? That sounds very much like “alienation” to Sartrean ears. After all, to display a certain inevitable mixing of the discourses, Sartre describes authority as “the other in us,” and writes as if it could be avoided, at least in the ideal cases of immediate evidence.³⁷

We have observed Foucault distinguish “morality” as a universal code of permissible conduct from “ethics” as a style of comporting oneself and of relating to oneself. In the face of his Communist and Catholic critics after the Second World War, Sartre introduced a universalist character to his existentialist values. In his famous lecture, “Existentialism Is a Humanism” (1945), he insists that each agent ought to say to himself: “Am I he who has the right to act such that humanity regulates itself by my acts?”³⁸ Given Sartre’s antipathy to legalism, one can and, I believe, should read this as an appeal to a value-image of “what a person ought to be like” rather than as a nomological statement about a rule.³⁹ Though Sartre uses Foucault’s two terms, “moral” and “ethical,” with rough equivalence, his appeal to “authenticity” as the prime and perhaps sole existentialist moral “virtue” approximates the later Foucauldian ideal of an “aesthetics of existence.” So strong, in fact, is this resemblance that Charles Taylor, Hubert Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow questioned Foucault about it. His response was as evasive as it was mistaken in its reading of the Sartrean term:

Q: But if one is to create oneself without recourse to knowledge or universal rules, how does your view differ from Sartrian existentialism?

A: I think that from the theoretical point of view, Sartre avoids the idea of the self as something which is given to us, but through the moral notion of authenticity, he turns back to the idea that we have to be ourselves to be truly our true self. I think that the only acceptable practical consequence of what Sartre has said is to link his theoretical insight to the practice of creativity and not of authenticity. From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: *we have to create ourselves as a work of art*. In his analyses of Baudelaire, Flaubert, etc., it is interesting to see that Sartre refers the work of creation to a certain relation to oneself the author to himself which has the form of authenticity or of inauthenticity. I would like to say exactly the contrary: we should not have to refer the relative activity of somebody to the kind of relation he has to himself, but should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity. (*EW* 1:262, GE, emphasis added).

In this Foucauldian reversal, he seems to have forgotten one of the best-known statements from Sartre's lecture, namely, "You are free, therefore choose that is to say, invent" (EH 297–98). And while warning that he is not propounding an aesthetic morality, Sartre offers: "Let us say that the moral choice is comparable to the construction of a work of art" (EH 305). That "authenticity" presumes admitting the "truth" about ourselves, namely, of our freedom, is precisely equivalent to accepting the invitation to create our selves. The predictable Foucauldian reversal, in this case, merely converts an equivalency. From a Sartrean perspective, the creative activity *is* the relation the authentic agent has to him- or herself.

Sartre and the Space of Experience. Is there room for Foucauldian "experience" in the Sartrean repertoire or the converse? Having abandoned a philosophy of consciousness for one of "lived experience [*le vécu*]" and praxis, has Sartre simply incorporated and "materialized" conscious life or has he discovered a kind of experience that need make no mention of consciousness? In view of his resolute, if eventually chastened, resistance to any notion of the unconscious as well as his revival of the discourse of *Being and Nothingness* in his Flaubert study, it is clear that Sartrean experience remains "conscious," that is to say, it is intentional in the Husserlian sense. Whether it is sufficiently subtle to accommodate the constraints and "impersonal" strategies of a Foucauldian conception remains to be seen.

This is not yet the place to raise the question whether Foucault's notion of "experience" should include an intentional component as well (a matter to be pursued in our next chapter). But we must admit that Foucault's appeal to "experience" seems redolent of the very "anthropologization" from which he sought to free us in *The Order of Things* (see *OT* 348). Although he makes no mention of the *Jemeinichkeit* (Heidegger) or *moitié* (Sartre) that might account for the personal or pre-personal dimension of experience, it seems that experience, insofar as it is capable of being charted along the axis of subjectivation, at least opens the door for such a personalization because a major condition for the ascription of responsibility is now in place. Where Sartre and Foucault part company (in this hypothetical exchange) is in the former's need and the latter's unwillingness to totalize or unify these conditions in a psychological or moral whole. This seems to weaken the role of the moral agent and thus of the historical agent in Foucault's thought as well. So key to our comparative study of historical reason is the topic of experience that it merits a chapter of its own.

AN ETHNOLOGY OF ONE'S OWN SOCIETY

In volume one, we raised the Archimedean question of Sartre's site from which to criticize dialectical reason and found it in a nonvicious circularity. One must employ such reason in self-critique. But the experience of "dialectical necessity" serves to validate its explanatory adequacy while leaving Sartre to waffle between Husserlian foundationalism and its pragmatist other.⁴⁰

In Foucault's case, the issue is both simpler and more complex. He certainly is no foundationalist and, as the occasion arises, displays no discomfort in admitting that his critique of the modern episteme threatens the validity of his own principles. In such moments, he seems to accept Rorty's counsel "to decry the very notion of having a view [on the Archimedean question], while avoiding having a view about having views."⁴¹ This would, indeed, constitute a kind of pragmatism "all the way down." Or better, the refusal even to address the question of epistemological origins.

But the question assumes a particular urgency not only in the archaeological context where one feels the need to press the matter of Foucault's epistemic *locus standi* (is it in some sense "extra" modern?) but also along the genealogical tack of his investigations (if power relations invest

every cognitive undertaking, then Foucault's own project can be read and perhaps dismissed as a kind of power play). As we remarked, he often simply finesses the question. When he does address it, his responses veer in two distinct directions, matching his strategy to the difficulty raised.

To the objection that he conflates knowledge and power, Foucault simply denies the assumption and goes on to distinguish power relations from relationships of communication and both of these from what he calls "objective capacities." He admits that "it is a question of three types of relationships which in fact always overlap one another, support one another reciprocally, and use each other mutually as means to an end" (*EW* 3:337–38, SP).⁴² But that is a far cry from the reductionist position so often attributed to him. Yes, he is conceding, one can usually plot a truth claim along a power axis as well. Speech acts do things. But "overlap" is not identity, and the truth *effects* that come to capture his interest are still effects of "truth," features of discursive and even nondiscursive practices as "veracious," the results of moves in "games of truth." While Foucault is reluctant to offer a definition of "truth" (he is a nominalist, after all), he is quite keen on uncovering the conditions and the effects of veridical acts.⁴³

It is in response to the problem inspired by his archaeologies that he makes a bolder and more interesting move. He conceives his own work as a kind of ethnology of his society. We noted his claim that "we can perfectly well apprehend our own society's ethnology" (*OT* 377). But he did not clarify how this could be done. How does one render oneself sufficiently "foreign" to one's own culture to examine it with the "objectivity" or at least the "detachment" expected of the ethnologist? In Foucault's case, this is accomplished by a certain denial and/or reversal of several major convictions that guide and unify Western culture in our day. We have encountered a number of them along the way. His unraveling of the line of evolutionary understanding and of historical narrative, his fragmentation of Enlightenment Reason and of History, his reduction of the author to a function, of change to transformation, and of subjective unity to multiplicity,⁴⁴ and his general use of a "principle of reversal"—these are the moves that serve to distance him from the wisdom of the tribe. They are the stuff of archaeology in a nontechnical sense. Directed toward one's own space and time, they constitute an "ethnology" of one's own society. If not precisely the sought-after Archi-

medean point they are after all themselves functions. of Western *ratio* they are ingredient in a strategy that uncovers unconscious systems of thought and action and opens up possibilities heretofore ignored or denied by one's contemporaries.

In an interview given at the height of his archaeological "phase" (1967), Foucault reflects:

It's true that history holds a privileged position in my inquiry. . . . But this doesn't mean that history has to play the role of a philosophy of philosophies here, that it can claim to be the language of languages, as was thought by a nineteenth century historicism that tended to endow history with the lawgiving and critical power of philosophy. If history possesses a privilege, it would be, rather, insofar as it would play the role of an *internal ethnology of our culture and our rationality*, and consequently would embody the very possibility of an ethnology. (*EW* 2:292-93, WWH, emphasis added)

He concludes that "it is a matter of pulling oneself free of that modern age," which he notes begins around 1790 to 1810 and adds, rather recklessly, "goes up to about 1950." The difficulty of extracting oneself from one's own culture, of "questioning words that still resonate in our ears, that are mingled with those we are trying to speak" requires a certain violence—as it did for Heidegger: "then archaeology, like Nietzschean philosophy, is forced to work with hammer blows" (*EW* 2:293). An ethnology of one's own society is neither easy nor painless.

The project of such an ethnology has attracted the attention of several other authors. The Habermasian Axel Honneth makes this a major thesis of a book.⁴⁵ And, comparing the investigations of Barthes and Foucault with that of Lévi-Strauss, historian François Furet phrases the issue precisely:

Their fields of work are very different, but the methodological inspiration is the same: it is to try to obtain an ethnological view of contemporary societies and cultures. Foucault, imitating the use of the ethnologist's cultural telescope *and reversing it*, tries to gain more light from it that way. Lévi Strauss mingles the Jivaro world with his European outlook, while Foucault sets out to consider European culture from a Jivaro angle in order to conjure away its presence at last and turn it into a scientific object. He tries to describe not individual patterns, which pertain to the study of opinions, but the conceptual struc

tures that in each period make those opinions possible; the present intellectual revolution consists in his view in the breach with historicism and the end of humanist anthropo-centrism. This makes Sartre the last “nineteenth-century philosopher” which cannot be pleasing to him. (*Workshop* 34–35, emphasis added)

Whether its implication pleased Sartre or not, of greater relevance to our topic is the viability of such a “reverse ethnography” and its adequacy as a response to the Archimedean challenge from an archaeological perspective. This “reverse ethnography” is simply a concise description of Foucauldian archaeology itself. As such, it is as valid and successful as is that approach to historical reason. We are in the process of working out an assessment of that matter and must leave the result for our concluding chapter when the evidence can be weighed in full. As for its sufficiency in answering the question of epistemic legitimacy, it is clear that Foucault proffers this reverse ethnology as the best one can hope for in a counter-modern world.

Experience and the Lived

Our axial reading of Foucault's spatialized reasoning has opened an area that lay hidden from most readers of his explicitly archaeological and genealogical volumes. The domain of experience, extending from *The Birth of the Clinic* to the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, receives scant attention from most scholars of his work.¹ No doubt, the structuralist bias of the archaeologies and the antihumanist intent of nearly all of his histories distracted attention from a concept that traditionally has been associated with philosophies of consciousness, especially the phenomenology from which Foucault's generation wished to extract and distance itself. This made the apparently sudden appearance of the term "experience," much less its central position in the next two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, unexpected. And yet this ostensible shift toward the discourse of subjectivity prompts us to reread his initial "archaeological" opus, *The History of Madness*, for signs of "experience" even as it raises the question of the return of a repressed subjectivity from Foucault's early and embarrassed existentialist past in the later work. But just as our axial reading has uncovered the presence of all three poles of the Foucauldian triangle

We have just broached the analysis of a concept that lies at the center of Foucault's thought: it's that of experience.

Pierre Macherey,
Aux sources

throughout his major works, so his description of them as the “matrices” of experience urges us to review the circumscribed space of experience not only in that early work but throughout the rest of his “histories.” For if the matrices are present from the start, it is reasonable to expect that the experience which they condition is operative there as well. Conversely, if we encounter explicit appeal to experience in one of his works, should we not expect to find its necessary matrices functioning at least implicitly in that same text? It is this heuristic that governs the following pursuit of “experience” within the Foucauldian prism.

But another, strategic concern motivates our turn to experience at this juncture in our investigation. After drawing occasional comparisons and contrasts between Sartre and Foucault throughout this volume, we began our extended consideration of their lines of parallel interest and mutual critique in the previous chapter. Reflection on their respective appeals to “experience” and “the lived” [*le vécu*] moves us to the center of their methods, values, and ontological commitments, the better to assess their characteristic approaches to historical reason—the general theme of our two volumes.

After noting briefly the ambiguity of the term in philosophical discourse, I shall focus on the prominence of “experience” in *The History of Madness*, recall its role in the last two major works published in Foucault’s lifetime, and point out several uses of the term in the intervening years. We should not expect that “experience” is any exception to the now familiar nominalist fluidity of Foucauldian terminology. And yet one aspect stands out as definitive of his use of that expression and in stark contrast with the Sartrean, namely, the notion of *experience without a constitutive subject*. This is the critical issue that both problematizes the distinct roles of each axis in Foucault’s oeuvre and occasions a comparison with the Sartrean concept of “lived experience” [*le vécu*]. Such an explicit consideration will be the first of three points of specific contrast in this and the next two chapters, thereby bringing our ongoing conversation between these two “historians” into sharp focus in preparation for a final assessment in our concluding chapter.

THE AMBIGUITY OF “EXPERIENCE”

Hans-Georg Gadamer has called the concept of experience “one of the most obscure we have.”² No doubt one reason for its obscurity in English and in French is that the term translates two German words, *Erlebnis* and

Erfahrung. The former is favored by Dilthey and the hermeneuticists, including most existentialists, whereas the latter is preferred by Kant, Hegel, and the idealist tradition as well as by the empiricists. *Erlebnis* is commonly translated into English and French as “lived Experience” and “*le vécu*” respectively, to distinguish it from “experience” *sans phrase*. Whereas “lived experience” is usually ascribed to a subject whose “inner life” it articulates, unqualified “experience” [*Erfahrung*], starting with its Hegelian usage and continuing through Dewey and the pragmatists, is arguably prior to any subject/object dichotomy and so is amenable to Foucault’s use that avoids reference to a constitutive subject. But the ambiguity arises when “experience” [*l’expérience*] is used to translate both German words. When Foucault, for example, distinguishes the French heirs of Husserl into the party of experience [*l’expérience*] and the party of the concept, it is *Erlebnis* that he has in mind, because *Erfahrung*, as we shall see, could easily have served as inspiration for the party of the concept.³

THE EXPERIENCE OF SEXUALITY

Before embarking on this leg of our journey, we should note the risks involved. Foucault’s use or, better, nominalist uses of “experience,” while pervasive, are not equivalent.⁴ The same philosopher who denied that any homogeneous “power” existed, could scarcely be expected to support a one-size-fits-all concept of experience. And he explicitly refuses the “commentators” (read “hermeneuticists”) appeal to “the living plenitude of experience” (AK 48). Still, he relates many of the features of his historical enquiries to this concept when he claims, for example, that “a certain technical control of illness conceals rather than points to the movement that closes the experience of madness upon itself.” And when he adds that the so-called disappearance of madness [*la folie*] in our day does not mean that “the general form of transgression, whose visible face madness has been for centuries, is also disappearing. Nor does it mean that this transgression is not giving rise to a *new experience* even as we are asking ourselves what madness is.”⁵

The authoritative text for understanding Foucault’s later use of “experience” is found in the introduction to volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality, The Use of Pleasure*. There, Foucault avows: “What I planned was a history of the *experience* of sexuality, where experience is understood as the *correlation* between fields of knowledge, types of norma-

tivity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture” (*UP* 4, emphasis added). The operative term is “correlation.” Experience is not a quality of a substance like the *Cogito*, though it may be constitutive of subjects. Neither is it simply a form of knowledge, whether as scientific [*connaissance*] or, as epistemic conditioning [*savoir*], though it entails a cognitive dimension. And it is not a simple will to power, though there is no experience, so it seems, that does not include an aspect of power. To speak of it as the “space enclosed” by these three axes or as their mutual “correlation” suggests that experience is the result, but not the source, of these three phenomena conjointly. In other words, one must resist the temptation to hear in Foucault’s use of the term an echo of F. H. Bradley’s Hegelian “experience” as prior to all differentiation or of William James’s or John Dewey’s pragmatist “experience” as correlative to nature and the matrix of culture. Indeed, Foucault speaks of “the [three] axes that constitute any matrix of experience” as if to resist such “foundationalist” uses of the term (*EW* 1:204, Preface). And he continues to employ spatialized discourse strategically to short-circuit the philosophical tendency to resolve these relations dialectically. In that sense, one might call his experience “postmodern”: it leaves us with a plurality of correlations that are irreducible and nonsubsumable into a larger whole. Whether this “inclusive disjunct” (Deleuze) of power, knowledge, or subjectivation is coherent, is another question. Recalling Foucault’s nominalist caution against substantializing these axes or, by implication, the experience they inscribe, we might consider reading them as alternative modes of describing one and the same phenomenon, a procedure recommended in chapter 7.

As an example of such “conditional” use of experience, consider Foucault’s description of his plan “to analyze sexuality as a historically singular form of experience”:

It means an effort to treat sexuality as the correlation of a domain of knowledge [*savoir*], a type of normativity, and a *mode of relation to the self*; it means trying to decipher how, in Western societies, a complex experience is constituted from and around certain forms of behavior: an experience that conjoins a field of knowledge [*connaissance*] (with its own concepts, theories, diverse disciplines), a collection of rules (which differentiate the permissible from the forbidden, natural from monstrous, normal from pathological, what is decent from what is not, and so on), and a *mode of relation between the individual and himself*

(which enables him to recognize himself as a sexual subject amid others).
(*EW* 1:199–200, Preface, emphasis added)

It is the analysis of such “historically singular” forms of experience, I wish to argue, that forms a guiding thread through the whole of his work. Recall his recognition of the start of this thread in his initial, “existentialist” essays when he admits: “To study forms of experience in this way in their history is an idea that originated with an earlier project, in which I made use of the methods of existential analysis in the field of psychiatry and in the domain of ‘mental illness’” (*EW* 1:200, Preface). We shall see why he turned from this project, but not from experience, which he continued to pursue in his *History of Madness*.

One recognizes the three axes at work in this example. But something previously unnoticed has moved to center stage. Foucault’s study is described not as the history of sexuality (as its general title announces) but as the history of the *experience* of sexuality. And that experience, we emphasized, is understood as the *correlation* among our three axes. Indeed, it is in this same preface that he even refers to these three lines as the “matrices” of experience (*EW* 1:204). This last is especially problematic both due to its ambiguity and because it suggests that Foucault may be less prismatic and more pyramidal than I am claiming. But I would counter that this would be so only if he had stated the converse, making “experience” the matrix of these three lines of analysis. That would indeed be a plausible idealist or even pragmatist claim. In fact, we are encountering here another case of Foucauldian reversal of the more likely account. Which is not to say that it makes the matter any easier; it never did before. In fact, such a reversal complicates the issue. For what kind of “experience” arises out of knowledge, power, and subjectivation? Are they not themselves forms of experience? Is not “experience,” like “consciousness” in another but related tradition, a “primitive” concept, irreducible to any of its “elements” or conditions without remainder?

RECIPROCITY AND MULTIPLICITY

In response, I wish to introduce two terms from the Foucauldian vocabulary: reciprocity and multiplicity. The beginning of an answer to the problem of the nature of such a nonsubjective experience lies with some appeal to *reciprocity*, if not dialectic, among the planes on which each axis is inscribed and the plane they enclose, namely that of experience. What

I am proposing simply as a hypothesis would accord with Foucault's appeal to the "experience" of madness in his (proto)archaeology, to the experience of the normalizing gaze and confessing activity in his genealogies (where the word "experience" is conspicuously absent though the concept abounds), and to the experience which emerges in his problematizing final works. Each of the axes modifies, indeed enriches, the experiential plane ("structures" the experience [HF 416 n. 1]) and conversely such that experience becomes "adjectival" to all three while they, in turn, elucidate and concretize an otherwise abstract, "pure" experience. Of course, a Sartrean account would see these axes as adjectival to experience and not the converse, a view that Nietzsche might lament as evidence of our continued servitude to grammar. But it would be a typically Foucauldian nominalist reversal to suggest that we speak of experiential truth, power, and subjectivation, cautioning that these substantives are likewise relational terms. Of course, Foucault does not speak this way. I am simply suggesting that such discourse would underscore the admittedly matricial role of these terms.

This would align Foucault with the poststructuralist critics of an ostensibly foundational notion of experience. Relating the concepts of subject and experience, Martin Jay notes that such critics claim that "the assumed lessons of post-structuralist thought . . . fatally undermine the notion of coherent subjectivity subtending any belief in the self-evidence of experience. For such critics," he continues, "despite the occasional nuance of their formulations, discourse, textuality, language, and structures of power provide the matrix out of which experience emerges, not vice versa. To posit experience as itself a ground is thus a misleading attribution of a constructive capacity to what is itself only a rhetorically or discursively constructed category."⁶

But the Foucauldian usage does not fit as easily under the broad poststructuralist umbrella as might be supposed. To be sure, historian Joan Scott's claims that "experience is a linguistic event" and that "subjects are constituted discursively" could be graphed nicely along the first, archaeological axis of the Foucauldian prism.⁷ But this occurs at the price of ignoring the nondiscursive line of power relations, not to mention the pesky dimension of subjectivation that, as Foucault reminds us, belongs to the integral concept of experience. To focus on relations of power, for instance, the different forms of experience—reason, unreason, and madness—that Foucault traces throughout *The History of Madness* are

not only discursive in character, though, of course, they bear that mark. They are also forms of inclusion and exclusion, of domination and control, of constituting standards of “normalcy” and the like. No doubt there is always a linguistic dimension to these events (the point of the triadic analysis was to respect this constant possibility), but, to borrow a Heideggerianism, the three axes are “equiprimordial.” One might even go a step farther and say that Foucault, inspired by Maurice Blanchot, operates at the limits of language and that these other axes (power and subjectivation) simply articulate that nonlinguistic aspect. Indeed, Martin Jay confirms that for “at least two of the major thinkers ordinarily given a central place in the post-structuralist canon, Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault, experience understood in a specifically non-psychological manner that was often lost in translation was a term far more honorific than pejorative” (Limits 156).

Foucault addresses this issue directly in an interview given to Paul Rabinow shortly before his death. Asked whether his work centers on the relation between ethics, politics, and the genealogy of truth, Foucault is precise: “I don’t want to remain at that level; rather, I am trying to see how these processes may have interfered with one another in the formation of a scientific domain, a political structure, a moral practice.”⁸ After discussing psychiatry, delinquency, and sexuality as respective examples of each, he concludes:

So that in these three areas—madness, delinquency, and sexuality—I emphasized a particular aspect each time: the establishment of a certain objectivity, the development of a politics and a government of the self, and the elaboration of an ethics and a practice in regard to oneself. But each time I also tried to point out the place occupied here by the other two components necessary for constituting a field of experience. It is basically a matter of different examples in which *the three fundamental elements of any experience* are implicated: a game of truth, relations of power, and forms of relation to oneself and to others. (*EW* 1:117, Polemics, emphasis added)

So it appears that, whatever the focus of a historical investigation, be it epistemic, political, or moral, the other two aspects, lines, foci are waiting in the wings, and are ingredient in the integral notion of experience. The concept of experience is no stranger to these studies.

That certainly seems to call for a synthesizing totalization of these el-

ements of experience such as Sartre might offer. What saves Foucault from such a dialectical resolution is his appeal to the concept of “multiplicity” that both he and Deleuze borrow from Husserl, Bergson, and, ultimately, the mathematician, Bernhard Riemann.⁹ A term we have mentioned along the way, it now calls for closer consideration.

In his study of the philosopher, Gilles Deleuze remarks that “Foucault’s book [*The Order of Things*] represents the most decisive step yet taken in the theory-practice of multiplicities” (F 14). He explains: “the core of the notion is the constitution of a substantive in which ‘multiple’ ceases to be a predicate opposed to the One, or attributable to a subject identified as one.” It is beyond the traditional metaphysical problem of the one and the many and especially beyond the problem of “a subject who would think through this multiplicity, give it conditions, account for its origins, and so forth.” In effect, a multiplicity short-circuits, as Sartre would say, the need for a transcendental ego. We recognize here Foucault’s functional concept of the subject as a multiplicity but, Deleuze insists, the term applies to other “cumulable, repeatable and self-preserving regularities” as well. In sum, “multiplicity is neither axiomatic nor typological but topological” (F 14). In other words, it denotes a multilayered “space” in a relational set. It is a tool of spatialized reasoning.¹⁰

Inspired by Maurice Blanchot as he believes Foucault was in this regard,¹¹ Deleuze extends “multiplicity” to historical periods as well: “As long as we continue to contrast history directly with structure, we persist in believing that the subject can gather, build up and unify matter. But this no longer holds true if we think of ‘epochs’ or historical formations as being multiplicities. The latter escape from both the reign of the subject and the empire of structure” (F 14). For that reason they are the proper object of an archaeology that resists the common alternatives of formalism (structuralism) and interpretation (hermeneutics). Neither one nor many, it is such a “multiplicity,” I am claiming, that translates Foucault’s “experience” as the space enclosed and constituted by the axes of truth, power, and subjectivation. It is such multiplicity, likewise, that expresses the nonidentical unity of what I have been calling the “prismatic self.” “Multiplicity” in Foucault’s usage, I would argue, denotes “unity without identity.” Once again, “spatialized reason” has finessed dialectical rationality.

This hypothesis is also in line with Foucault’s nominalist opposition to epistemic foundations:

Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society. That is why nothing irritates me as much as these inquiries which are by definition metaphysical — on the foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of a society, etc. These are not fundamental phenomena. *There are only reciprocal relations*, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another. (*EW* 3:356, SKP, emphasis added)

This is a partial echo of Sartre's claim that "there are only men and real relations between them" (*SM* 76), on which he bases his "dialectical nominalism." A crucial difference, of course, is Foucault's careful avoidance of reference to "subjects" while speaking of intentions. We know that, for him, "power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective" (*HS* 94).¹² But the point I wish to stress is the role of Foucault's appeal to reciprocity as an alternative to dialectic in undertaking social analyses and to multiplicity in charting unities that are not metaphysical identities.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MADNESS

Foucault wishes to show that these two successive images [of the fool in Shakespeare and of the irrational person in the following century] do not resemble each other and are equally arbitrary. That is not an explanation of events but an example that leads to skepticism regarding our ideas just like the examples and historical anecdotes about human variations and contradictions in the work of Montaigne.

Paul Veyne, *Le quotidien et l'intéressant*

Whatever the larger issue regarding the recent revival of interest in experience on the part of French philosophers and philosophically minded historians,¹³ it certainly figures centrally in Foucault's later writing. Apropos Foucault's genealogies, Lawrence Kritzman comments that "Foucault was concerned, above all, with the idea of experience" (*PPC* xviii). But an axial reading, we have insisted, directs us to review this concept in his earlier works as well. And there we find the expression at almost every turn. In fact, in an interview, Foucault admitted that the *History of Madness* was primarily about "experience" — the differing experiences of madness [*la folie*] in several periods of Western history. In a sense soon to be explained, he refers to it as an "experience book" (*EW* 3:246, IDT).

Returning to the *History of Madness* one last time, we discover nu-

merous references to the “experience” of madness but curiously none to that of rationality. On further reflection, this should not be surprising. Foucault’s entire project of a “history of reason” is being pursued, in the epoch in question, at least, by attending to its counterconcept, “unreason” [*déraison*]. Like the term “real” in John L. Austin’s famous essay, “reason” in the classical period is one of those words used only “to rule out the suggestion of some form or all of its recognized antitheses.”¹⁴ So the very meaning of “reason” and its cognates is at stake in the constitution of “unreason” and its distinction from madness [*la folie*] in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

At the start of the preface to the first edition, Foucault speaks of reaching “that degree zero of the history of madness where it is [an] undifferentiated experience, experience not yet divided by the division itself [into reason and unreason],” a pure experience that he admits is no longer accessible to us (*DE* 1:159). (Parenthetically, one is reminded of his appeal to “the pure experience of order and of its modes of being” in his preface to *The Order of Things* [*OT* xxi], except that the latter presumably *is* available to the archaeologist.) His project, he explains, is to study the “structure of the experience of madness,” which, he adds, is entirely that of history as well, but at its confines where it is decided (*DE* 1:164). He goes on to characterize the experience of madness in each historical epoch and to contrast it with that of the other periods. Of primary importance are what he calls “fundamental experiences,” defined as “those in which a culture risks the values that are proper to it—that is to say, engages them in a contradiction” (*HF* 192). This existentialist-sounding term that resonates with the notion of limit-experience, also found in that preface, will figure centrally in his later works (not to mention in James Miller’s biography¹⁵). If the term, in Miller’s usage, is openly existential, in *History of Madness* it is more clearly epistemic (read “loosely phenomenological”) for Foucault, but for that very reason, it never operates far from the psychological.

And yet Foucault warns us that, faced with “evidence of new forms of experience that are in the process of coming to life” during the French Revolution, we must set aside all ideas of progress and teleology (which certainly accompany the Hegelian concept of experience [*Erfahrung*]) in order to “determine general structures that carry along the forms of experience in an indefinite movement open only to the continuity of its pro-

longation and which stops for nothing, not even for us" (HF 445–46). So the experience seems more determined by than determining of any structure we might propose.

What is one to make of this centrality of experience? Can there be a notion of experience that is not the experience of a "subject"? Again, the British philosopher F. H. Bradley thought so, but then, he was a Hegelian. ¹⁶ In his insightful little study of Foucault and madness, Frédéric Gros refers to what he takes to be the curious achievement of the *History of Madness*, namely, to have studied both madness and writing [*l'écriture*] as "experiences without a subject."¹⁷ Others see the irreducible character of the axis of subjectivation as evidence of a perhaps repressed transcendental urge in the final Foucault.¹⁸ Indeed in one infelicitous interview Foucault did opine: "I cannot exclude the possibility that one day I will have to confront an irreducible *residuum* which will be, in fact, the transcendental."¹⁹ On this account, the axis of subjectivation has, or should have, greater ontological significance than the other two, in accord with the demands of the Copernican revolution. That would be a "return of the (Kantian) repressed" indeed.

Foucault will have none of this. We have just seen him reject transcendental subjectivity. But does this leave him with a subjectless experience, as Gros concludes? Not at all. For Foucault warns:

Here again one has to be careful: to deny the philosophic recourse to a constitutive subject does not amount to behaving as if the subject did not exist nor to setting it aside in favor of a pure objectivity [a structuralist tactic]. The aim of this refusal is to bring to light the processes proper to *an experience in which subject and object "form and transform themselves"* in relation to and as functions of one another. (*Companion*, 317, emphasis added)

In other words, the discourse of mental illness, for example, opens up a "field of experience in which subject and object alike are constituted only under certain simultaneous conditions, but in which they go on changing in relation to one another, and thus go on modifying this field of experience itself" (*Companion*, 317–18). This observation from his pseudonymous entry about himself in a philosophical dictionary affirms the *reciprocity* between experience and the axes, specifically insofar as they condition subject and object alike.²⁰ Elsewhere, he explains that "it is these three axes and the play between types of understanding, forms of

normality, and modes of relation to oneself and others which seemed to me to give individual cases the status of significant experiences" (*EW* 1:202, Preface). In other words, merely individual cases become "significant experiences" insofar as they can be charted along the axes of knowledge, power, and subjectivation. Foucault's interest is not primarily in the individual case as such (an existentialist concern), and even less is it in the individual case as an instantiation of a species or type (as was the interest of an eighteenth-century physician); it is instead in the individual as the locus of free play among these axes: not the individual as such but the individual as a field across which the practices and events of these three axes play and interplay—that is what interests him. Were the relations dialectical, Foucault might be approaching something like Sartre's "singular universal"; but they are simply reciprocal and inclusively disjunctive,¹ which yields a subject as multiplicity and, at most, a "prismatic" self.

EXPERIENCE OVER CONCEPT?

Recall his description of the fork in the road that separated the French readers and intellectual heirs of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* from one another. In one direction veered the champions of "a philosophy of experience, of meaning [*sens*] and of the subject" while in the other marched the partisans of "a philosophy of knowledge [*savoir*], of rationality and of the concept" (*DE* 4:764, *L'expérience*). The first group was the party of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty; the second included Jean Cavaillès, Gaston Bachelard, Alexandre Koyré, and Canguilhem.²¹ The foregoing reflections on experience in Foucault's work raise anew the question of whether he has crossed the line to the side of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Even if he has not grown soft on the subject (assuming that the prismatic self is the terminus of subjectivation) or adopted a philosophy of meaning-bestowing consciousness (accepting the paradox of nonsubjective intentionality and meaning as encountered, not constituted), is not the prominent role accorded experience in the process of thought a sign of lingering "existentialist" proclivities, at least in his final works? Could it be that, like King Solomon's wives, Foucault is discovered harboring amulets of his earlier, existentialist idols in the luggage he brought to the promised land of system and concept?

I suggested that a Foucauldian understanding of experience as *Er-fahrung* might differ from the Sartrean interpretation as *Erlebnis* [*le vécu*].

So let us examine this “existentialist” employment of “experience” to ascertain whether it is as vulnerable to the criticisms that Foucault has leveled against it. More to the point, let us determine what similarities Sartre’s use of the term may bear to that of Foucault in the passages just discussed. For Sartre could ask why one needs to name a space that is distinct from and yet intrinsically related to these axes. What function does “experience” perform in the Foucauldian “system”? Specifically, how does it differ from the Sartrean “presence-to-self” and the “circuit of selfness” that delineates the dynamic, nonsubstantial space in which a world of meanings is appropriated and a horizon of responsible agency generated? Can Foucauldian “experience” serve these functions? Should we expect it to do so?

LIVED EXPERIENCE [*LE VÉCU*] IN SARTRE

A major thesis of volume 1 was that Sartre broke the conceptual logjam that had blocked his constructing a satisfactory social theory when he moved from a philosophy of consciousness to one of praxis.²² Though consciousness remained operative in his subsequent works, it metamorphosed into “lived experience” [*le vécu*], where, among other things, it assumed functions commonly ascribed to the Freudian unconscious which he continued to reject. Sartre admits such a shift of view:

The conception of “lived experience” marks my change since *L’Être et Le Néant*. My early work was a rationalist philosophy of consciousness. It was all very well for me to dabble in apparently non rational processes in the individual, the fact remains that *L’Être et Le Néant* is a monument of rationality. But in the end it becomes an irrationalism, because it cannot account rationally for those processes which are “below” consciousness and which are also rational, but lived as irrational. Today, the notion of “lived experience” represents an effort to preserve that presence to itself which seems to me indispensable for the existence of any psychic fact, while at the same time this presence is so opaque and blind before itself that it is also an absence from itself. Lived experience is always simultaneously present to itself and absent from itself. (*BEM* 41–42)²³

In volume 1, I cited a passage from *The Family Idiot* that bears repetition in the present context.

[Comprehension] is itself lived experience [*vécu*]. And I shall call it *prereflective* [*préréflexive*] (and not unreflected [*irréfléchi*]) because it

appears as an undistanced redoubling of internalization. Intermediary between nonthetic consciousness and reflexive thematization, it is the dawning of a reflection. But when it surges up with its verbal tools, it frequently falsifies what is “understood”: other forces come into play, which will divert it or compel it to replace meaning [*sens*] with a network of significations, depths glimpsed through verbal and superficial generalities. (*FI* 3:429; *IF* 2:1544)

Exemplifying one of what Iris Murdoch called Sartre’s “great inexact equations,”²⁴ he identifies comprehension with lived experience and seems to distinguish both of them from prereflective consciousness *simpliciter* as, presumably, the obfuscal from the perpetually clear. I’m assuming this last as a consequence of Sartrean “rationalism” that must leave the subject some unfailing source of self-correction (and hence responsibility) amid its most deceptive and confusing situations. Agreeing with those who read “experience” in a foundationalist sense, Sartre denies that appeal to lived experience introduces opacity into his “translucid” consciousness. He seems to sense that this is a problem and he reaches for a metaphor to resolve it, speaking of comprehension as a “compression” of consciousness. We have the understanding but lack the words to communicate it (Schilpp 23). He has in mind Flaubert’s reference to the “unsayable” or what would be called the inexpressible today (see *L/S* 128). He explains: “Flaubert constantly speaks of *l’indisable*, which means the ‘unsayable,’ only the word does not exist in French. He means precisely this kind of comprehension of oneself which cannot be named and which perpetually escapes one” (*BEM* 41). This resembles closely one of the sides of Foucault’s anthropological quadrilateral, namely, the “Other” of the modern Cogito.

Sartre’s point in introducing the category of lived experience is strategic. He wishes to “surpass the traditional psychoanalytic ambiguity of psychic facts which are both teleological and mechanical, by showing that every psychic fact involves an intentionality which aims at something, while among them a certain number can only exist if they are comprehended but neither named nor known” (*BEM* 42). The intentionality of consciousness is preserved, the Freudian mechanical “hydraulic” model is rejected, and, again, individual responsibility is defended. But the defense of responsibility, I have cautioned, seems to require that we distinguish comprehension and lived experience from prereflective consciousness as such, a discrimination that Sartre fails explicitly to make.

Now the limit of this presence-absence, in Sartrean vocabulary, is the “self” as presence-to-self. Recall Sartre’s assertion that “man is free because he is not a self but a presence-to-self” (*BN* 440; *EN* 516). He describes immanence as “the smallest recoil [*recul*] that can be made from self to itself” (*BN* lxxv; *EN* 32). In other words, “subjectivity” in *Being and Nothingness* is another word for the impossibility of one’s being an object for oneself: “I am the one who cannot be an object for myself” (*BN* 241). Ontologically speaking, this “inner distance” is the basis of temporalization. Human reality is temporally extended, which is the reason for the many paradoxical statements that Sartre makes in its regard throughout *Being and Nothingness*. This subject that cannot be an object is, of course, not a transcendental ego as it is for Husserl and Kant. Rather, it is another way of describing the presence-to-self that is the ontological ground for Sartrean freedom and responsibility.²⁵

But that vintage existentialist notion of “subjectivity” changed in his later work. By 1969, he insists: “What you call ‘subjectivity’ in *Being and Nothingness* is not what it would be for me now, the small margin in an operation whereby an interiorization re-externalizes itself in an act.” And he continues in a manner that Foucault might find attractive: “But ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ seem to me entirely useless notions today, anyway. I might still use the term ‘objectivity,’ I suppose, but only to emphasize that everything is objective. The individual interiorizes his social determinations: he interiorizes the relations of production, the family of his childhood, the historical past, the contemporary institutions, and he then re-externalizes these in acts and options which necessarily refer us back to them. None of this existed in *L’Être et Le Néant*” (*BEM* 35).

EXPERIENCE AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL

Certainly, Foucault’s appeal to “experience” gives a kind of *unity* to an otherwise disparate set of occurrences. But is that unity merely methodological or is it likewise ontological in nature? In other words, is the final Foucault slipping into categories of being despite himself? And if so, how distant is he now from Sartre’s existential phenomenology? Specifically, how marked is the difference between Sartre’s presence-to-self and Foucault’s “mode of relation between the individual and himself”?

In her recent study of Foucault’s “*ontologie manquée*,” Béatrice Han distinguishes two different concepts of experience at work in Foucault’s

later thought. One is the “objective structure (a ‘correlation’), anonymous and general (‘in a culture’) that connects not two but three elements” [what I would call “prismatic relationships”]; the other, elaborating the third, subjectivizing structure, “presupposes in reality another conception of experience in terms of which one can reinterpret the structure itself in return” (*Ontologie*, 250, 253; *Critical*, 154, 156). This latter, more traditional use is reflective; it is experience as self-relation. It also resonates with the concept of freedom as reflective withdrawal that we noted above. It exists both as the correlation among three axes that we have discussed and as identified with the subjectivity of the third axis in a manner that accords the other two the status of conditions of possibility for subjectivation-experience.²⁶ It is this latter use of “experience” as “reflective process of self-constitution,” she argues, that both breaks with the tripartite correlative experience and ushers in the discourse of self-constitution as moral subject that characterizes Foucault’s last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. In our vocabulary, the self of the former experience would be prismatic; that of the latter, more pyramidal. Pursuing the spatial metaphor, however, we would have to admit that the apex of this pyramid (the “unified though nonidentical self”) would be an ideal object, an “as if” serving to guide decisions and practices, not unlike the ideal in-itself-for-itself of Sartrean ontology. Were this ideal self a multiplicity, as we have been suggesting, we would have repeated the prismatic self, though perhaps to a more intense degree (to speak like Deleuze).²⁷

I find Han’s interpretation attractive and admit that it serves to resolve several problematic texts. Above all, it underscores the close relations that obtain between the concepts of experience and subjectivation in Foucault’s work. But I think that the concepts of reciprocity and multiplicity do so as well, and they have the added advantage of not assigning Foucault two distinct and, by her own admission, mutually contradictory concepts of experience. In addition, Han’s move from the second, more humanist uses of “subject” and “experience” to ascribing to Foucault an implicitly transcendental position directly contradicts Foucault’s explicit denial:

I do indeed believe that there is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very skeptical of this view of the subject and very hostile to it. I believe, on the contrary, that the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a

more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, in ventions to be found in the cultural environment.²⁸

This last remark is redolent of Sartre's well-known assertion that we are free, but "only in situation." But again, Sartre has the advantage of the quasi-Hegelian dialectic whereas Foucault is limited to a seemingly endless series of reciprocal relations; limited, that is, to the back-and-forth of what we might call a Kierkegaardian dialectic (one without mediation).

Still, there are several considerations to warrant the appearance of such a "pyramidal" self along the axis of subjectivation. So let us examine Foucauldian "experience" in greater detail.

FOUCAULT'S EXPERIENCE OF WRITING

We warned that Foucauldian "experience" should not be taken in a univocal and universal sense. Before settling accounts between Foucault and Sartre on this matter, we must consider another use of the term that Foucault applies to himself. In an important interview with a correspondent for the Italian Communist daily *L'Unità* (1978), he remarks: "My books are for me experiences, in a sense, that I would like to be as full as possible. An experience is something that one comes out of transformed" (*EW* 3:239, IDT).²⁹ He contrasts Bataille, Nietzsche, Blanchot, and Klossowski with "these great philosophical machines called Hegelianism and phenomenology." What impressed him about the former, on the contrary, was that "their problem was not the construction of a system but the construction of a personal experience" (*EW* 3:241, IDT). When asked to distinguish the phenomenological meaning of "experience" from that of Bataille and company, which he favors, he responds:

The phenomenologist's experience is basically a certain way of casting an introspective [*réflexif*] glance on some object of lived experience [*du vécu*], on the everyday in its transitory form, in order to grasp meanings [*significations*]. For Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot, on the contrary, experience is trying to arrive at a certain point in life that is as close to the "unlivable" as possible. What this requires is the greatest degree of intensity and of impossibility, at the same time. Phenomenological work, on the contrary, consists in deploying the whole field of possibilities related to everyday experience.

Moreover, phenomenology attempts to recapture the meaning

[*signification*] of everyday experience in order to rediscover the sense in which the subject that I am is indeed responsible, in its transcendental functions, for founding that experience together with its significations. On the other hand, for Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot, experience has the function of wrenching [*arracher*] the subject from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself, or that it is brought to its annihilation or its dissolution. This is a project of *de-subjectivation*. (*DE* 4: 43; *EW* 3:241, IDT, emphasis added)

He concludes that it is such “limit experience” (which wrenches the subject from itself) that interests him in these authors.³⁰ In fact, he confesses: “I haven’t written a single book that was not inspired, at least in part, by a direct personal experience” (*EW* 3:244, IDT).

This is a distinctively nonegological sense of experience. And yet it presumes a “subject” from which to distance oneself. But this distancing is not only a matter of overcoming the narcissistic subjectivism of Romantic authors. “This experience,” he argues, “must be capable of being linked in some measure to a collective practice, to a way of thinking. That’s what happened, for example, with a movement like anti-psychiatry, or with the prisoners’ movement in France.” Sounding like Sartre, who described his writings as communications among freedoms, Foucault adds: “My books . . . are more like invitations or public gestures” (*EW* 3:244–45, IDT).

AN EXPERIENCE BOOK

At this point, “experience” assumes a critical and, indeed, a political hue. Foucault continues: “An experience is something that one has completely alone but can fully have only to the extent that it escapes pure subjectivity and that others can also . . . go through it themselves.” Citing the effect that his book on prisons had on the reading public, he remarks: “They sensed that something in present-day reality was being called into question.” Reading the book was an experience that changed their relation to their world. They found themselves involved in a process that was, in effect, “the transformation of contemporary man with respect to the idea he has of himself. And the book,” he concludes, “worked toward that transformation. To a small degree, it was even an agent in it. That is what I mean by an *experience book*, as opposed to a truth book or a demonstration book” (*EW* 3:245–46, IDT).

This notion of writing/reading as self-transformation converges with his remarks about the Greek ideal of an *aesthetics of existence* when he observes in an interview the year before his death:

For me intellectual work is related to what you could call aestheticism, meaning transforming yourself. I believe my problem is this strange relationship between knowledge, scholarship, theory, and real history. This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. (*PPC* 14, "The Minimalist Self")

Indeed, such transformation reflects the Stoic *askēsis* understood as "mastery over oneself through the acquisition and assimilation of truth." As Foucault condenses it: "*Alētheia* becomes *ēthos*. It is a process of the intensification of subjectivity,"³¹ a characterization as worthy of Kierkegaard as of Seneca.

With the emergence of the category of the "experience" book, we find ourselves on new terrain. Foucault's "histories" assume a character that leaves them curiously outside the pale of "factual" history without slipping them into the class of historical novels. Though the psychosocial effect may be similar, *Discipline and Punish* cannot simply be likened to *Les Misérables* or *Hard Times*.

Like Sartre, Foucault insists that his "fictions" have something to do with the truth. Just as Sartre explained that he chose to write on Flaubert, among other reasons, because of the vast amount of archival material available,³² so Foucault maintains that he makes use of the most conventional methods: "demonstration or, at any rate, proof in historical matters, textual references, citation of authorities, drawing connections between texts and facts, suggesting schemes of intelligibility, offering different types of explanation. . . . From this standpoint, what I say in my book can be verified or invalidated in the same way as any other book of history" (*EW* 4:242, IDT).

FACTIVE/FICTIVE EXPERIENCE: HISTORY AS NOVEL THAT IS TRUE

With the mixture of personal confidence and astute insight that characterizes many of his observations about Foucault, Paul Veyne remarks:

Each of Foucault's books is only a small sampling of human change ableness according to Montaigne. Foucault doesn't write general his

tory; he lets us feel his skepticism about invariables. To that extent, he is not a historian in the ordinary sense of that word. To say that *The History of Madness* doesn't completely survey the facts or that his history of Ancient love is mistaken for not addressing patrimony or marriage is to have understood nothing of the book and to take Montaigne for a manual of Ancient history. (*Le quotidien*, 211–12)

Just as Montaigne offers us examples and historical anecdotes concerning human variability and contradictions, so Foucault's examples of the Great Confinement or even the Panopticon give us not an explanation of events but an example to generate skepticism about our unexamined ideas. In other words, he is inviting us "to share an experience," as he puts it, "of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed" (*EW* 3:242, IDT).

Recall that Raymond Aron referred to narrative history [*l'histoire-narration*] in general as "*un roman vrai*" (a novel that is true).³³ Sartre adopts this phrase to describe his Flaubert work: "I would like my study to be read as a novel because it really is the story of an apprenticeship that led to the failure of an entire life. At the same time, I would like it to be read with the idea in mind that it is true, that it is a *true* novel [*un roman vrai*]" (*L/S* 112; *S* 10:94). I have argued in volume 1 that this expression could describe Sartre's existentialist approach to historiography as well.

And what of Foucault's "histories"? Could at least some of them be read as "novels that are true"? He admits as much in the case of his *History of Madness*. After insisting that his books can be verified and falsified like any volume of history, he concedes that people have a point in claiming that his works are really just fiction:

If I had wanted, for example, to do the history of psychiatric institutions in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, obviously I wouldn't have written a book like *The History of Madness*. But my problem is not to satisfy professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. Which means that at the end of the book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue: the I who wrote the book and those who have read it would have a different relationship with madness, with its contemporary status, and its history in the modern world (*EW* 3:242, IDT)

Setting aside for our concluding chapter the obvious parallel with the Sartrean notion of “committed” history, one cannot avoid being struck by the sense that this is a different kind of history, namely, one that aims to transform the reader and not simply describe a subject matter.

But in both cases, we are a great distance from what Fredric Jameson calls “postmodern fantastic historiography.” Though each approach bears an aesthetic aspect that might make one suspicious, and Foucault might be seen as applauding the “death of the referent,” neither could seriously be accused of an allergy “to the priorities and commitments, let alone the responsibilities, of the various tediously committed kinds of partisan history.”³⁴ Again, the ground of Foucault’s “partisanship” has often been questioned. But we have been arguing that it is foursquare on the side of individual freedom and opposed to domination of every kind.³⁵ If “partisan” means “committed,” Foucault’s “histories” are unambiguous invitations to liberating self-transformation.

It would be instructive to read Foucault’s *History of Madness* in tandem with Sartre’s *Family Idiot*. Having alluded to the possibility, we must settle for a brief comparison and contrast of these two “novels that are true,” the better to assess the kind of history being produced by each. Both works are *imaginative reconstructions* from data available to the scholarly public. They aim to be faithful to that material. Each treats of psychoanalytical abnormalities, whether unreason and madness (Foucault) or individual hysteria and collective neurosis (Sartre). Both present themselves as “histories” of a series of practices (of stigmatization, exclusion, and co-optation by the medical profession [Foucault]) or of literary and political *habitus* (“neurotic art” and the institutional bad faith of French authors and their reading public in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century [Sartre]). And they focus on a certain way of perceiving and being perceived, whether of the madman or of the literary artist, even as each addresses the experience of “madness” proper to a certain epoch or series of epochs. But whereas Foucault deals with the kinds of transformation and displacement that mark this process and move it along, Sartre centers on the spiral of Flaubert’s “personalization” in order to understand the “singular universal” which is Gustave as the author of *Madame Bovary*. This yields a Sartrean history that totalizes like a good story in contrast to a Foucauldian account that approximates what Agnes Heller calls a “philosophy of history in fragments.”³⁶ Of course, to the extent that Foucault’s production is always a history of

the “present,” it retains the unity-without-identity of our present age; in other words, it exemplifies a multiplicity.

AT THE close of his first Tanner Lecture, Foucault asks: “In what way are those fundamental *experiences* of madness, suffering, death, crime, desire, individuality connected—even if we are not aware of it—with knowledge and power?” He then responds: “I am sure I’ll never get the answer; but that does not mean that we don’t have to ask the question” (*EW* 3:311, “*Omnes et Singulatim*,” emphasis added).

Chapter Ten

Sartre on Violence, Foucault on Power: *A Diagnostic*

On several occasions we have alluded to the similarity between Sartre's theory of history as a tale of violence and oppression and Foucault's appeal to strategy and tactics as the conceptual vehicle for making sense of history. Let us now examine the nature and ground of these claims in detail, locating them in the broader context of each author's reflections on violence and/or power. In both cases, they have immediate relevance to our general problem of the nature of historical reason. As we have seen, each has sought historical intelligibility in *conflict* rather than in the pacific interchange of ideas and interests. Our task is to parse that conflict in comparative fashion, "in the plural," as Foucault says of archaeological inquiry, the better to understand how the philosophical thought of each joins and separates along this path.

When one considers the theme of violence in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, one thinks immediately of the locus classicus in that respect, his preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. There, in the hyperbolic fashion characteristic of his polemical pieces, Sartre addresses the issue in terms of the racist violence implicit in colonialism and the bourgeois humanism that seeks to

Power can in no wise be decoded. For power has no code. . . Power has only strategies. In the case of power, signifier and signified coincide in the shape of violence and hence death.

Henri Lefebvre,
The Production of Space

We are much less Greek than we believe. We are neither in the amphitheater, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism.

Michel Foucault,
Discipline and Punish

justify it. Rereading that essay, I could not help recalling Sartre's bitter dispute with Albert Camus over Algerian independence. It is as if Sartre had just read the following pacifist passage from the character Tarrou in *The Plague*: "All I maintain is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences,"¹ and then scribbled the following gloss in the margin: "A fine sight they are too, the believers in nonviolence, saying that they are neither executioners nor victims. Very well then; if you're not victims when the government which you've voted for, when the army in which your younger brothers are serving without hesitation or remorse have undertaken race murder, you are, without a shadow of doubt, executioners."² Written in the full heat of the Algerian crisis and at the height of his growing sense of collective responsibility, this text is the terminus ad quem of an evolution in a philosophical theory of violence that had occupied Sartre for some time and which, it seems clear, he never resolved to his satisfaction. In his final interview with Benny Lévy, *Hope Now*, Sartre admits that "fraternity and violence" are two equally necessary aspects of the social bond that he had never succeeded in reconciling.³ Each is ingredient in his theory of history.

I shall begin by addressing the terminus a quo of this theory, Sartre's posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*. If not his precise point of departure (one could cite Sartre's analysis of sadism and masochism in *Being and Nothingness* several years earlier, e.g.), this work at least constitutes one of his earliest extended discussions of the topic. Specifically, I want to examine what we could call Sartre's "sketch for a theory of violence" found in the first of these two published notebooks. This will enable us to situate his thoughts on violence, struggle, and the intelligibility of history. I shall then turn to Foucault's reflections on violence in the context of his analysis of power relations as the background for his remarks about the intelligibility of history in terms of conflict, strategy, and tactics. Supplementing our earlier reflections on experience, this will afford us yet another perspective from which to compare and contrast these two thinkers on the character and function of historical reason.

Such an undertaking approximates what Foucault would call a "diagnostic" in that it seeks to illuminate, though not capture the essence of, a discursive practice (in this case, the discourse of violence) by means of an assessment of the play of difference that obtains in the respective

spaces inhabited by Foucauldian and Sartrean discourses. The topic of violence is one of a number of areas where the interests and writings of these two major theorists overlap. In proposing these reflections, I hope to cast some light, not only on the nature and forms of violence and their relevance to historical understanding but also on the larger question of the possibilities and limits of dialogue between existentialist and post-structuralist philosophers in general.

SARTRE ON VIOLENCE

In an interview with Madeline Chapsal (1959), Sartre admits that his generation had lived through two periods of “sacred violence,” namely, the “holy” war of 1914 and the “holy” revolution of 1917. Many, including himself, had “interiorized” this sacred violence and had redirected the violence of war to that of revolution. “Most of us,” he confesses, “were very mild and yet we became violent beings.” In a sense that reflects his concomitant dilemma of reconciling fraternity and terror, he continues: “for one of our problems was this: could a particular act be described as one of revolutionary violence or did it rather go beyond the violence necessary for the revolution? This problem has stayed with us all our lives,” he muses, “we will never surmount it.”⁴ In other words, he is disturbed by the age-old question of necessary evil, namely, “How much?”

In the same interview, he speaks with dismay of the “senseless” violence of the next generation of rootless youth that indulged in “an absolutely pure and unconditioned violence.” Such violence, he points out, “never calls itself into question. It makes no effort to criticize itself. It is in love with itself.” As he explains, “one used to think—or at least we thought—of violence as born of exploitation and oppression, and as directed against them. . . . In our view, violence could be justified if it were being used to safeguard the interests of the masses, a revolution, etc. But for these delinquents, violence can never be put to use: it is good only when it’s senseless” (*BEM* 24). In other words, Sartre is far from propounding violence for its own sake or even from espousing an uncritical, voluntarist use of force as a self-justifying vehicle of social change. As we have come to expect with Sartre, these remarks issue from a theoretical account that he is in the process of formulating at the time (in this case, the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*) and from ideas worked out imaginatively in his plays (here, *The Condemned of Altona* and *The Devil and the Good Lord*). But they employ ideas already articulated in his *Note-*

books a decade earlier, and it is these that interest me here. Sartre was always an ontologist, a philosopher of the imagination, and a moralist. It is under these descriptions that I wish to consider his mini treatise on violence in the *Notebooks*.

The Ontology of Violence. Sartre said that it was his continued interest in the question of being that separated him from Marxist philosophers.⁵ Certainly, whatever theory of violence he begins to fashion in the *Notebooks* springs from his well-known phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness*. Ontologically speaking, human reality is both object and consciousness, thing and no-thing (freedom), inertia and spontaneity. This is the source of his claim that the ground of violence consists in the fact that the agent of violence “is man (pure destructive consciousness) when he destroys the given in itself of the world, and he is thing when he destroys man” (*NE* 176). This seems most appropriate for “physical” violence, as he will characterize it shortly. But Sartre’s primary concern is what we shall call properly “existential” violence, that which occurs between free beings insofar as they are free. This is why he can claim that “in violence one treats freedom as thing while recognizing its nature as freedom” (*NE* 193). We notice here the mark of violence in the sadomasochism that qualifies our “concrete relations with others” in *Being and Nothingness*. In other words, the phenomenological essence of existential violence is precisely that manipulation of another’s freedom so that it is both captive and free, indeed, captive *insofar as* it is free. This is why his frequently employed image of the ambush is so appropriate for his ontological understanding of violence: freedom is being used against itself by another freedom.

While admitting it is “an ambiguous notion,” Sartre tenders the following definition of “violence” in the *Notebooks*:

To make use of the facticity of the other person and the objective from the outside to determine the subjective to turn itself into an inessential means of reaching the objective. In other words, [to] bring about the objective at any price, particularly by treating man as a means, all the while preserving the *value* of its having been chosen by some subjectivity.

As he explains, “the impossible ideal of violence is to constrain the other’s freedom to choose freely what I want.” “In this sense,” he continues, “the lie is closer to the ideal of violence than [is] that of force. With

force, it is clear that I constrain the other, therefore his freedom appears more purely as a refusal of this constraint. In lying, on the contrary, I fool myself for I make myself take the deceived freedom, the freedom set out of play, as free will" (*NE* 204). Sartre is adding a psychological dimension to his account that we shall see Foucault striving to avoid. In this case, that dimension appears, not in his admission (with Foucault) that constraint and freedom, seen as refusal, go together, but in his insistence that there is a form of constraint, for example, the lie, that masks the victim's freedom-refusal in the liar's bad faith. This last reaffirms Sartre's continued emphasis on the role of individual praxis, and hence of moral responsibility, in social phenomena.

Violence and the Imaginary. We have pointed out that imaging consciousness is paradigmatic of consciousness in general, for Sartre. Recall that in his *Psychology of Imagination*, he claims it is the locus of possibility, negativity, and lack (*PI* 242–45). It is our ability to "derealize" perceptual objects that enables us to consider possibilities, to create mere appearances, and to dissemble. The violence of the boxer's feint or the hunter's trap is a frequent topic of Sartrean discussion. As we noted earlier, he devotes a large portion of volume 2 of the *Critique* to an analysis of the institution of boxing (what we shall call "material" violence) in order to explain the intelligibility of struggle and hence of history as we know it. There is a violence at work in the practical jokes that the young Flaubert loved to play on his friends, an upsetting of the established order, as Sartre puts it, that is reestablished only by the self-conscious laughter of the victim (*Family Idiot* 3:204–8). All this is the work of the imagination as the "faculty" of derealization and deception. Although not all uses of the imaginary entail violence, it seems that most, if not all, cases of existential violence rely on the imaginary.

THE LIE

Before turning to the moral aspect of Sartrean violence, let us pause to examine what he takes as its model: the act of lying, for it incorporates both the ontological and the psychological (imaginary) in its structure. "The lie," he explains, "transforms man into a thing. But at the same time it wants to keep him free, at least in most cases" (*NE* 198). "The lie places the other's freedom in parentheses," he explains. "It does not destroy it, it isolates it, withdrawing it from the world by an emptiness, and it is the master who decides whether the object it intends is imaginary or real" (*NE* 199). As Sartre concludes in a somewhat compressed fashion:

So we find the following ideas in a lie (which belong to the essence of violence): treating freedom *at the same time* as an end and a means, through the superiority of Being or the State over becoming or the dialectical process, therefore wanting to realize the end immediately, and by any means, guaranteeing oneself against a free consciousness by transforming it into a thing, yet in a way depending on his recognizing this. At the same time, there is an element of destruction, but the *reverse* of the one we find in physical violence. In physical violence, one appropriates the freedom and the refusal of the human-reality-in-the-world by crushing it with the world, that is, [physical] violence affirms the superiority of the world over consciousness in a lie one appropriates this freedom and refusal by destroying the world for-the-consciousness-of-the-other, one destroys it subtly by hiding it by means of the imaginary. One takes one's necessary point of mooring from this freedom, and it gets transformed into a dream of transcendence. That is, into pure immanence and passivity. Finally, the lie stems from a failure (real or predicted; the impossibility of getting the truth evaluated for what it is). (NE 199–200)

The lie, then, is a kind of compendium of the elements of Sartrean violence. So let me summarize it as such, focusing on five aspects characteristic of both:

(1) Like the lie, violence exhibits an option for the *inertia and passivity* of the victim as thing. He or she is manipulated in quasi-causal fashion as in the ambush or the practical joke. Violence both exploits the ambiguity of Sartre's in-itself/for-itself ontology of human reality and inherits its ultimate failure—the victim remains (impossibly) both inert and spontaneous under the same aspect, and the perpetrator wishes it so.

(2) The lie entails a *denial of temporality*, specifically the dimension of the future, which Sartre insists is ingredient in every act of violence. In a manner reminiscent of his analysis of emotional consciousness in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* where one literally “jumps for joy” in a quasi-magical attempt to possess a good “all at once,” Sartre insists that violence is a negation of time in the sense of a refusal of being-in-the-world in favor of immediacy.⁶ (He accepts Heidegger's thesis that being-in-the-world and ecstatic temporality are coextensive, if not identical.) But immediacy, in Sartre's view, is the “timeless” time of nature, of things.

Sartre sees two equivalent ways of negating time in the violent act. The first is by appeal to analytic necessity—for example, the mathe-

mathematical rigor of physical nature indifferent or hostile to human intentions, carried over into the identity and essence of the violent man who simply acts automatically. An apt example of such “logical violence” would be the quasi automatic application of punishment without consideration of potentially mitigating circumstances. Such would be the violence of justice unseasoned by fairness or mercy.

The second manner of negating temporality in violence occurs by the sheer power of a will that devastates: pure universal freedom for the agent but destructive consciousness for others. In fact, we recognize here the lived ambiguity of the existential “situation,” translated into the context of destruction: “[The violent individual] vacillates perpetually between a refusal of the world and a refusal of man” (*NE* 177). The refusal of the world is the symbolic destruction of my facticity by way of the destroyed world that I may exist as total transcendence, as “pure nihilating power, pure freedom” (*NE* 175). One thinks of the “September 11” terrorists who crashed their planes into three buildings as if they were passing through some fiery hole from time into eternity (total transcendence). To be sure, such in part was their intent.⁷

(3) The element of *destruction* that Sartre finds in any lie is ingredient in violence as well. In fact, he claims that “violence does not know how to put things together,” that the destructive person is claiming, in effect, to be the “Anticreator” (*NE* 175). Again, this remark reminds one of an observation Sartre made apropos the work of Jean Genet: “The same insufficiency enables man to form images and prevents him from creating being.”⁸ The “nihilating” power of consciousness in the case of the violent individual becomes symbolically an “annihilating” force through the imagination, but one that spills over into relationships in the real world.

Some have pointed out an apparent shift of position, if not outright contradiction, in Sartre’s claims about the nonconstructive character of violence.⁹ While claiming in the *Notebooks* that “violence does not know how to put things together,” Sartre is equally emphatic in the Fanon preface and in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that “this irrepressible violence . . . is man recreating himself” (Fanon Preface 21). Such “counterviolence,” it is argued, is clearly productive.

In response, I would point out that what we shall find Sartre calling “counterviolence” is by its very nature only indirectly constructive in the sense that it removes the obstacles to living a fully human life. What is positive throughout such violence is “the implicit comprehen-

sion of the human” on the part of the slaves (*NE* 405); in other words, the “preunderstanding” that the oppressed and exploited have of what they could be: “When his rage boils over, [the native] rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self” (Fanon Preface 21). This becomes a standard theme in Sartre’s criticisms of colonialism and other forms of social and economic exploitation in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, the cry “We too are human!” becomes the quasi mantra of Sartre’s defense of the oppressed during these decades.

(4) The violent person lives in *bad faith* because “however far he carries his destructions, he counts on the richness of the world to support them and perpetually to provide new things to be destroyed” (*NE* 175). But this is true of the liar as well, as the Epimenidean paradox reminds us. For the very possibility of lying depends for its meaning on there being something like truth to which it forms the counterconcept.

(5) Finally, the lie (and the violence it incarnates) is a form of self-defeating behavior [*conduite d’échec*]. It joins the magical world of emotional consciousness and the imaginary in Sartre’s vocabulary as a way of evading the harsh demands of praxis and the real. The “neurotic art” of Flaubert’s nineteenth-century aestheticism was a form of failure behavior. Indeed, Sartre often insists that, in art, one must lie to tell the truth. To the extent that such aesthetic deception is not innocent, that is, insofar as it aims to undermine or betray another’s freedom (as, e.g., in the malevolent “choice” of the imaginary by Genet and Flaubert in Sartre’s version of their lives), it is equally violent.¹⁰

Violence and the Moral. As I said, Sartre was at heart a moralist much as was Albert Camus, but Sartre was never a moralizer. He was perhaps inadvertently composing his own epitaph when he wrote of Camus on the occasion of the latter’s death: “In this century and against history he was the representative and the present heir of that long line of moralists whose work perhaps constitutes what is most original in French literature.”¹¹

The matter of violence was clearly ingredient in his ethical reflections. We glimpsed its image in the question of how much necessary evil could be permitted in the name of socioeconomic change. Biographically, he admitted that he went through a period of “amoral realism”¹² during which he subscribed to the revolutionary maxim that “one cannot make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.” And there occurred an evolu-

tion in his ethical thinking that has been nicely charted by Thomas Anderson.¹³ Relevant to our topic, it suffices to note that the issue of being moral in a society of oppression and exploitation has engaged Sartre ever since his famous footnote to *Being and Nothingness* mentioning the possibility of an ethics of authenticity (*BN* 70 n). In the *Notebooks*, which was to deliver that promised ethics, he contrasts violence with “positive reciprocity” as methods that thwart and further the advent of History and of the properly ethical respectively (see *NE* 21–22).¹⁴ While we shall observe him speak of an “ethic of violence” just as he sometimes refers to a “bourgeois ethic,” it is clear that the ethical—properly speaking, the set of relationships between free agents mutually respecting and fostering one another’s freedom—that this ideal, at least in our present socioeconomic condition, remains just that. Of course, in the *Critique* Sartre introduces the quasi-transcendental fact of material scarcity that turns history as we know it into a warring camp. Henceforth he will describe “violence” as “interiorized scarcity” and link it to socioeconomic conditions. By then, Sartrean violence has expanded from the psychological to the social. But already in the *Notebooks* we detect a dimension of social violence in several of his ethical concepts. Let us consider three of the best known.

(1) *The Spirit of Seriousness*. Anyone familiar with *Being and Nothingness* will recognize this inauthentic attitude. This is the mind-set of the moral absolutist and especially that of the believer in transcendent moral values or norms. Resisting moral creativity such as Sartre proposes in *Existentialism Is a Humanism* and Foucault in *The Use of Pleasure*, this serious individual slavishly follows external rules to which he or she willingly sacrifices personal goals or interests and at times even his or her very self. So Sartre can write that the spirit of seriousness is a form of violence because it posits values as transcendent to freedom, posits them as demands *on* freedom rather than as demands *of* freedom, as the existentialist proposes (see *NE* 211–12). The result is what we have seen Foucault call “subjection” [*l’assujettissement*] to the legal order rather than self constitution for its own sake (see *H* 304).

(2) *The Ethic of Rights and Duties*. If the social aspect of the previous example is peripheral, it is central to this one. Both Sartre and Foucault have been critical of the theory of human rights that grew out of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Sartre insists that the “rights of

man" are bourgeois "rights" and that the "man" they denote is the bourgeois individual. Foucault points out that the same Enlightenment that brought us the "liberties" (the theory of rights) also brought us the "disciplines" that he exposed as techniques of surveillance, normalization and control in our modern carceral society (*DP* 222). He echoes Sartre's critique by referring to the "calculable man" that emerged with the scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms of the human sciences in the nineteenth century (*DP* 193).¹⁵

As we are about to see with Sartre, Foucault links theories of rights with contractarianism and the rise of the bourgeoisie, though he allows that the rights of the monarch had been a leading concern of political theorists since the Middle Ages. Since then, "the essential role of the theory of right has been to establish the legitimacy of power; the major or central problem around which the theory of right is organized is the problem of sovereignty" (*SD* 26). The point of linking sovereignty with right, Foucault insists, is "to dissolve the element of domination in power and to replace that domination, which has to be reduced or masked, with two things: the legitimate rights of the sovereign on the one hand, and the legal obligation to obey on the other" (*SD* 26). And this leads him to frame his own approach in terms of yet another reversal:

[My general project over the past few years] was, basically, to invert the general direction of the analysis that has, I think, been the entire discourse of right ever since the Middle Ages. I have been trying to do the opposite, or in other words to stress the fact of domination in all its *brutality* and secrecy, and then to show not only that right is an instrument of that domination . . . but also how, to what extent, and in what form right . . . serves as a vehicle for and implements relations that are not only relations of sovereignty, but relations of domination. (*SD* 26–27, emphasis added)

If we take "brutality" as a form of violence, we can say that the discourse of rights is an instrument of violence in at least some of its contexts. And if we associate domination in general with violence as Sartre would certainly do and as Foucault seems to do as well, the range of violent relations in Foucault's histories expands considerably. He concludes that right must also be seen as an apparatus of domination in a society that appeals to the "normalizing" sciences to "produce" individuals that are themselves the products of power relations even as they exercise that power as links in a chain that acts on them as well. This new, nonsovereign "disciplinary power," which Foucault

considers “one of bourgeois society’s great inventions,” imposed “a tight grid of disciplinary coercions” on society, but “cannot in any way be transcribed in right.” Indeed, the theory of sovereignty and the organization of a legal code centered upon it “have made it possible to superimpose on the mechanism of discipline a system of right that concealed its mechanisms and erased the element of domination and the techniques of domination involved in discipline, and which, finally, guaranteed that everyone could exercise his or her own sovereign rights thanks to the sovereignty of the State.” Hence the juridical systems that have enabled sovereignty to be democratized have done so by appeal to “mechanisms of disciplinary coercion” (*SD* 36–37). Assuming the close association of violence and domination, it is not inappropriate to label this kind of violence “structural,” though Foucault fails to use the term.

In the *Notebooks*, Sartre is equally outspoken in his criticism of rights talk: “There has never been any violence on earth,” he asserts, “that did not correspond to the affirmation of some right” (*NE* 177). To understand this claim, we should note that Sartre sees absolute right as that which demands compliance regardless of whatever factual objections or harm might ensue in its pursuit: *Fiat iustitia, ruat coelum*. “Hence pure violence and pure right,” he insists, “are one and the same” (*NE* 177). And even if most rights are not absolute, their tendency to trump the claims of other freedoms makes them potentially violent. “All violence presents itself as the recuperation of a right,” he notes, “and, reciprocally, every right inexorably contains within itself the embryo of violence” (*NE* 177).

If one were to contrast the Sartrean ethic as developed in this text with the Kantian one (which serves as his model of an ethic of rights and duties) one could summarize the difference as that between *demand* and *appeal*. On Sartre’s reading, an ethic of rights and duties is rule driven, impersonal, and exceptionless. Its drive toward unity and uniformity is implicitly violent in its neglect of the singular and idiosyncratic. “Since the end of demand is absolute and unconditioned,” Sartre writes, “it is not in a situation” (*NE* 254). He shares with Emmanuel Levinas a distrust of systems that fail to respect singularity and difference in their rage for the One and the Same. “The goal and final justification of violence,” he insists, “is always *unity*. If a situation requires violence, in springing up, this violence projects before itself the total unity of being through destruction” (*NE* 186). This anticipates the violence that permeates his concept of “fraternity terror” introduced by the “oath” which solidifies the group in the *Critique*.¹⁶ But if

“demand” is violent in its insensitivity to the unique situation of each agent, “appeal” is the bond among freedoms that respects the individual in his or her singularity. In fact, this gift-appeal relationship emerges from the *Notebooks* as the model for the nonalienating reciprocity that authentic morality requires.¹⁷

(3) *Bad Faith*. Although Sartre has insisted that this expression carries no ethical implication and that, in effect, it is purely descriptive in nature, I agree with most of his commentators that such is not the case. Sartre’s use reveals a distinct judgment of disvalue in his use of the term. Consequently, his characterization of the man of violence as being in bad faith reflects another dimension of violence as an evil. The bad faith of the ethic of duty stems from what Sartre calls the “internalized violence” of appealing to another in me, namely my obligation, as a strategy to escape the anguished responsibility for my ethical creativity. In a phenomenological analysis of the voice of conscience, Sartre continues: “Another continually repeats, ‘I do not want to know.’ There is bad faith because, to calm my anxiety and surmount my facticity, I perpetually maintain the position that *I* am an other and this other is not me. *I want*, all the while abdicating the responsibility for wanting it, a consciousness that *I do not want* what *I want*” (*NE* 258). In other words, in feeling the obligation to do *my* duty, I deliberately conceal from myself the fact that *I* am the origin of this obligation which I ascribe to a transcendent source.

These three concepts, namely, the spirit of seriousness, rights and duties, and bad faith, condense with other elements into what Sartre calls “an ethics of violence” which, it seems, is the only “ethics” that our society of oppression and exploitation will support.¹⁸ I consign to a note the fourteen principles of what Sartre designates “the ethics of force (which is simply an ethics of violence justifying itself).” They resemble the voluntarist principles of Fascist morality as Sartre would recently have experienced it under the Vichy regime, with a critical nod toward the willingness of Stalinism to sacrifice one generation for the good of another.¹⁹

It would seem that any constraint on my consciousness-freedom that is imposed by another freedom contrary to my willing it (including my own freedom as other, e.g., in the spirit of seriousness) through the mediation of what he will later call the “practico-inert” in the *Critique*²⁰ entails a form of violence. In fact, in the *Critique* he will make the blanket claim: “The only conceivable violence is that of freedom against free-

dom through the mediation of inorganic matter” (*CDR* 1:736). This confirms our earlier thesis that Sartrean (“existential”) violence obtains primarily among freedoms and is not a feature of nature as such.

So rather than a side issue, violence is an abiding concern for Sartre, especially in the second half of his career. But already in the immediate postwar years, when the *Notebooks* were composed, we discover him coming to terms with the challenge of trying to reconcile the inevitable violence of our interpersonal and social lives with the full freedom of the existentialist individual that he had championed in *Being and Nothingness*.

FOUCAULT: VIOLENCE CONTRA POWER

Hermeneutics [with its violence] is the fierce enemy of semiology [with its indexical terror].

Michel Foucault, *Essential Works*, “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx”

If one thinks of “violence” in the thought of Foucault, one probably has in mind his famous genealogy of the penal system, *Discipline and Punish*, especially its grisly overture. But even there, the emphasis is on surveillance and control, features he extrapolates to our entire “carceral society,” rather than on violence as such. So let us turn to the Foucauldian side of the equation in light of the foregoing to address his understanding of the relation between power and violence. In this regard Foucault’s following remarks are especially pertinent:

What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions *or on those which may arise in the present or the future*. [Recall Sartre’s claim that the lie steals one’s future.] A relationship of *violence* acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, *or it closes the door on all possibilities*. Its opposite pole can only be passivity, and if it comes up against any resistance it has no other option but to try to minimize it. On the other hand, a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end *as a person who acts* [think of Sartre’s “existential” violence or his description of the sadistic relationship in *Being and Nothingness*];²¹ and that, faced with a relation-

ship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up. (*EW* 3:340, SP; emphasis added)

He goes on to point out that appeal to power relationships “does not exclude the use of violence any more than it does the obtaining of consent.”²⁰ In fact, he concedes that “the exercise of power can never do without one or the other, often both at the same time.” But he insists that “even though consensus and violence are the instruments or the results, they do not constitute the principle of the basic nature of power. . . . *In itself the exercise of power is not violence*; nor is it a consent which, implicitly, is renewable. It is a *total structure of actions* brought to bear upon *possible actions*; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it make easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely [as does Sartre’s ethics of duty]; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting *or being capable of action*.” (*EW* 3:340–41, SP, emphasis added).

Like Sartre, Foucault extends “violence” beyond the physical to include “moral” violence, broadly speaking; for example, the violence of the interpretive act. Apropos of Nietzschean hermeneutics, he remarks:

If interpretation were the slow exposure of the meaning hidden in an origin, then only metaphysics could interpret the development of humanity. But *if interpretation is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules*, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then *the development of humanity is a series of interpretations*. The role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as *events* in the theater of historical process. (*EW* 2:378–79, NGH, emphasis added)

But this implies that history as interpretation, at least in part, is a series of violent events. In fact, Foucault explicitly subscribes to such a concept of historical violence when he admits to a Japanese interviewer: “I consider history to be a succession of fragments, a succession of chance events [*hasards*], *of violences*, of breaks.”²²

One recognizes the Nietzschean inspiration of such discourse. In

“Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” Foucault speaks of the “progressive enslavement [of knowledge (*savoir*)] to its instinctive violence.” Knowledge, far from being detached from its empirical roots and freed for pure speculation and universal truth, “ceaselessly multiplies the risks, creates dangers in every area; it breaks down illusory defenses; it dissolves the unity of the subject; it releases those elements of itself that are devoted to its subversion and destruction” (*EW* 2:388, 387). Though we have noted earlier the hermeneutical challenge of distinguishing that portion of this essay which Foucault simply expositis from those ideas which he positively endorses, the preceding quotations resonate with Foucault’s acknowledged view in an unproblematic manner. He echoes these remarks in a series of lectures delivered in Brazil two years later. Citing Nietzsche with approval, he observes:

Knowledge must struggle against a world without order, without connectedness, without form, without beauty, without wisdom, without harmony, without law. That is the world that knowledge deals with. [Pace Kant] there is nothing in knowledge that enables it, by any right whatever, to know this world. There can be no relation of natural continuity between knowledge and the things that knowledge must know. There can only be a relation of violence, domination, power and force, a relation of violation. Knowledge can only be a violation of the things to be known, and not a perception, a recognition, an identification of or with those things. (*EW* 3:9, T JF)

Nietzschean nominalism and its concomitant voluntarism meet to yield relations of power and violence where the subject is sacrificed or at least rendered superfluous.²³

It has been pointed out that one German word, *Gewalt*, means both “violence” and “power.”²⁴ This is not the case in French. Although Foucault occasionally uses the terms interchangeably, we have noted his concern to distinguish them while yet allowing that they usually accompany each other along with “consent.” It is not easy to separate them in practice. Whether it be the “quiet violence” of psychoanalysis, the “instinctive violence” of knowledge [*savoir*] or simply the violence that attends our apparently consensual agreements, violence, insofar as it entails “action on the action of others,” seems ingredient in the very exercise of power. And yet if all violence attaches to relations of power, not all relations of power necessarily entail violence. Rather, it is with that species

of power which Foucault calls “domination” and which we might label “negative” power that violence seems necessarily associated.²⁵ Whereas Sartre admitted being incapable of reconciling “fraternity and terror,”²⁶ Foucault embraces an agonism that refuses to try.

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VIOLENCE, FREEDOM, AND INDIVIDUAL
RESPONSIBILITY: THE EXISTENTIALIST CHALLENGE

“I firmly believe in human freedom,” Foucault insists in an interview published the very month he died. Expressing amusement at the accusations of determinism [*fixisme*] and even nihilism leveled against him, he counters:

On the contrary, I meant to show that the systematic use of imprisonment as the main form of punishment constituted only a historical episode, and therefore other systems of punishment could be envisaged. What I tried to analyze were the practices, the immanent logic of the practices, the strategies that supported the logic of these practices, and, consequently, the way in which individuals, in their struggles, in their confrontations, in their projects, freely constitute themselves as subjects of their practices or, on the contrary, reject the practices in which they are expected to participate. (*EW* 3:399, Interview with *Actes*)

Much as Sartre could claim of capitalism that “the meanness is in the system” and of colonialism that it advances by a certain “internal necessity”²⁷ while still upholding the responsibility of individuals whose praxes moved these systems along, so Foucault can uncover the “immanent logic,” or what he often terms the “rationality” of a violent or dominating practice, while calling for the names of those responsible for fostering such practices and urging us to resist. The Sartrean logic of existing “in situation” is evident in both cases. The point of separation occurs when one attempts to assess the role and the degree of conditioning attributable to either the agent or his circumstances.

Foucault’s understanding of “freedom” as reflective withdrawal (the second meaning we have detected in his vocabulary) edges him even closer to a Sartrean usage. Recall Sartre’s description of “subjectivity” (immanence) as the “the smallest recoil [*recul*] which can be made from self to itself” (*BN* lxv). This supplies a theoretical basis for those remarks about individual responsibility that we have noticed punctuate

Foucault's writings in an otherwise unexpected way. As Sartre did on so many occasions, Foucault addressed the general public, even to the extent of taking out a full-page announcement in *Le monde* along with Simone Signoret and others to publicize the mistreatment of prisoners in the penitentiary at Toul. Specifically, their purpose was to present the full statement of a prison psychiatrist recently dismissed for revealing instances of prisoner abuse by the guards. As Foucault explained, his aim in sponsoring this ad was to bring to light "the violence of power relationships."²⁸ Noting that the public would rather turn its view away from "the events that betray the true power relations"—events that have concrete sites, dates, and the names of responsible parties—in favor of generalizations, statistical curves, and the like, he wished to give a hearing to "the voice that says 'I,'" that is, to someone who could report these events in the first person (*DE* 2:238, Toul). Reading this passage, one almost forgets that Sartre had been dead for over a year, it so resembles the Sartrean *modus loquendi*.

Recall that for Foucault, power relations as distinct from what he calls "capacities" entail relations between individuals or groups. "Capacity" refers to the force we exert over things, our ability to modify, use, consume, or destroy them. As he warns: "Let us not deceive ourselves: if we speak of structures or mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others. The term 'power' designates relationships between 'partners'" (*EW* 3:337). While it would be too much to claim that this resembles closely the Sartrean principle of the primacy of praxis that we have traced throughout our first volume, it does uncover the basis of those seemingly inconsistent calls for responsibility that we observe Foucault making in his various public statements. Whether the "executors" of power are true agents or mere conduits, as he has sometimes claimed, remains debatable. On its resolution hangs the question of ascribing anything more than causal responsibility to these individuals. And yet Foucault seems to waffle. Consider such ambiguous evidence as the following set.

In an interview given in 1978, Foucault showed a restrained sensitivity to the question of agency and, by implication, of responsibility as well, while continuing to insist on the priority of structural or, in this genealogical context, "strategic" questions when he remarked:

Of course we have to show who those in charge are, we know that we have to turn, let us say, to deputies, ministers, principal private secre-

aries, etc., etc. But this is not the important issue, for we know perfectly well that even if we reach the point of designating exactly all those people, all those “decision-makers,” we will still not really know why and how the decision was made, how it came to be accepted by everybody, and how it is that it hurts a particular category of person, etc.². [These are] the strategies, the networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way it was.²⁹

In a lecture course conducted two years earlier, he reveals a certain agnosticism about divining the intentions and motives of agents. Seeming to confirm the popular conception that his concern is more with the “how” of power relations (techniques) that constitute individuals than with the “who” of those individuals themselves, he offers this “methodological precaution”:

My goal was not to analyze power at the level of intentions or decisions, nor to try to approach it from inside, and not to ask the question (which leads us, I think, into a labyrinth from which there is no way out): So who has power? What is going on in his head? And what is he trying to do, this man who has power? The goal was, on the contrary, to study power at the point where his intentions — if, that is, any intention is involved — are completely invested in real and effective practices; the places where it implants itself and produces its real effects. (SD 28)

In other words, the “happy positivist” has not lost his bite.

And yet, notwithstanding his emphasis on system and structure as well as on the power of certain techniques to constitute individuals of a specific type (e.g., the “docile bodies” and “dangerous individuals” of *Discipline and Punish*), he again resembles Sartre when acknowledging the need “to identify the agents responsible” for the social domination generically attributed to the bourgeois class in general:

We should be . . . looking in historical terms, and from below, at how control *mechanisms* could come into play in terms of the exclusion of madness, or the repression and suppression of sexuality; at how these phenomena of repression or exclusion found their instruments and their logic, and met a certain number of needs at the actual level of the family and its immediate entourage, or in the cells or the lowest levels of society. We should be showing what their agents were, and we should be looking for those agents not in the bourgeoisie in general,

but in the real agents that exist in the immediate entourage: the family, parents, doctors, the lowest level of the police, and so on. (*SD* 32, em phasis added)

One is immediately reminded of Sartre's well-known barb against Marxist determinists: "Valéry is a petit bourgeois intellectual. But not every petit bourgeois intellectual is Valéry" (*SM* 56). What Foucault designates the "immediate entourage" Sartre calls "mediating factors" between organic individuals and social structures.

Let me caution in the midst of these examples not to see Foucault subscribing to something like Sartre's primacy of individual praxis in social causation.³⁰ Again, despite occasional calls for the responsible agents, it is the "mechanisms of power" that he wishes to uncover, the techniques and procedures that at a certain moment in time serve the "interests" of the bourgeoisie. As Foucault reminds us, "the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted" (*SD* 30). Still, he clearly considers individuals more than merely passive conduits.

In another case of such a demand for responsible parties, this time an apparent judicial cover-up of the death of a black athlete in prison, Foucault commends the author of a denunciatory book: "You show in detail how the machinery functions with individuals who have a name, with little acts of cowardice that have their date and their authors, with desires for promotion, complacencies, fears." Which leads him to observe: "Justice, one must not forget, walks with the judges, and the judges by means of justice inscribe their little personal mediocrity on the body, the time, the freedom, the life and the death of others. They succeed in doing large anonymous injustices with minuscule individualized acts of cowardice. One must rationally undo the former while carefully pointing out the latter" (*DE* 3:8, "Une mort inacceptable"). Again, the problem concerns the relation between these "large anonymous injustices" to be undone and the "minuscule individualized acts of cowardice" that have done them.

This is a common theme in Foucault's prefaces and occasional pieces of the 1970s. He often speaks of the problem of releasing the violence that the state envelops by its quiet force "from the penumbra and familiarity that renders it almost invisible." He suggests two approaches: either direct defiance of this hidden violence via extreme action that provokes an equal reaction—the confrontational politics of the late 1960s—

or else sharpening one's intolerance of the facts of power and the habits that keep us from noticing them, "making them appear in their smallness, and fragility and, consequently, in their accessibility"; in other words, "to modify the equilibrium of fears, not by an intensification that terrifies but by a measure of reality that 'encourages' in the strict sense of the term."³¹ In many ways, this exemplifies the tactical contrast between Foucault and Sartre in the social realm. Both thinkers had their hyperbolic moments, but Sartre would seldom have been satisfied with such limited moves. Given these Foucauldian options, Sartre would almost always have counseled the former, confrontational choice where violence is really counterviolence. On the other hand, Foucault's numerous histories—each in its own way—may be seen as contestations of power-violence in the latter mode.

Equally in the Sartrean style are Foucault's remarks on the inculcation of bourgeois values in the working class: "When they teach you not to love violence, to prefer peace, not to desire revenge and to prefer justice to warfare, what are they teaching you? They are teaching you to prefer bourgeois justice to social struggle." This is what Foucault means when he says that the problem is to show the proletariat that "the system of justice that is being proposed, that is being imposed on them is in reality an instrument of power."³² He is, in effect, appealing to what Sartre has called counterviolence in support of class struggle. Again, it is difficult not to hear Sartre's voice echoed in such remarks.³³

Even though he does not think that one can ever escape the exercise of power relations, he urges people to recognize them where and for what they are:

When one makes love, one puts into play power relations; not to take these relations into account, to ignore them, to leave them in their wild state or to let them be confiscated by a state power or a class power that is what I believe one must try to avoid. In any case, it is against this that one should polemicize. Making power relations appear is, in any case in my understanding, to try to *put them back in the hands of those who exercise them.* (DE 2:799, *Radioscopie*, emphasis added)

This goal of returning power to the hands of those who exercise it could scarcely be more Sartrean in nature—except that the Sartrean individual is not primarily constituted by the society in which he or she lives. Though society plays an important role via the concept of "situation" in

the constitution of the Sartrean subject, that subject is never wholly its product, as Foucault sometimes seems to say. Of course, that can't entirely be the case for Foucault either. But until one charts his work along the axis of subjectivation and the understanding of "freedom" that it presumes, this aspect remains out of focus and obscure.

Thus, his reflections on the strategic relations that honeycomb the historical monolith both unlock the doors to social change and leave it for the agents of change to courageously push them open. In other remarks redolent of Sartrean social criticism, Foucault explains that "situations can always give rise to strategies. I don't believe we are locked into a history; on the contrary, all my work consists in showing that history is traversed by strategic relations that are necessarily unstable and subject to change. Provided, of course, that the agents of those processes have the political courage to change things" (*EW* 3:397, *Actes*). Again, this echoes what I've characterized as the motto of Sartrean humanism: You can always make something out of what you've been made into. In both cases this is the condition for their hortatory rhetoric.

So the connection between violence and power in Foucault's thought, if not as problematic as that between knowledge and power, is certainly ambiguous. The two, while remaining distinct, usually accompany each other. Does this leave us any hope for relations of power freed from violence? By distinguishing between power and violence, by more clearly associating violence with domination (what we have termed "negative power"), and by refusing to claim that power is necessarily linked to violence, Foucault leaves open a space for limited hope, though scarcely the utopian aspiration that Sartre associates with a "socialism of abundance" and the "city of ends." Absent any glimmer of such ideal expectation among these "actions on the action of others," Foucauldian freedom still renders reasonable his references to "responsible individuals" and exhortations to "political courage." Unlike Sartre, whose theory of history revolves on the contingent fact of material scarcity, Foucault's approach, as I have here suggested, is more Camusian in nature: the only (immediate) hope is to realize that there is no (ultimate) hope—the wisdom of Sisyphus.

VIOLENCE, POWER, AND THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF HISTORY

In the spring term of 1976 Foucault presented his lecture course at the Collège de France on the possibility of understanding power relations on

the model of war as distinct from the juridical model of sovereignty that “aims to account for the ideal genesis of the state and makes law the fundamental manifestation of power” (*EW* 1:59).³⁴ He describes the juridical model as a “massive historical fact” that first served to legitimize the feudal monarchy and its subsequent administrative bureaucracy. After the wars of religion the notion of sovereignty was used to strengthen or to limit monarchical powers. It became “the great instrument of political and theoretical struggles that took place around systems of power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (*SD* 34–35). Finally, Rousseau and others appeal to “sovereignty” to defend parliamentary democracies. In other words, the relation of sovereignty, whether broadly or narrowly conceived, covered the totality of the social field such that power relations were conceived essentially in terms of the sovereign/subject dyad.

But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Foucault insists, an entirely new mechanism of power relations came on the scene, one that was “absolutely incompatible with relations of sovereignty.” This type of power came to focus on bodies and their behavior rather than on lands and their produce. Reflecting his study of the prisons, he remarks: “It was a type of power that was exercised through constant surveillance and not in discontinuous fashion through chronologically defined systems of taxation and obligation.” Foucault considers this new type of power “one of bourgeois society’s great inventions” (*SD* 36). So one must look to this alternative mechanism of power in order to understand the meaning of bourgeois society. The theme of these lectures, he points out, is “the manufacture of subjects rather than the genesis of the sovereign” (*DS* 46). Indulging his nominalist preference for inversion and multiplication, he explains:

Instead of asking ideal subjects what part of themselves or what power of theirs they have surrendered, allowing themselves to be subjected, one would need to inquire how relations of subjectivation [*assujettissement*] can manufacture subjects. Similarly, rather than looking for the single form, the central point from which all the forms of power would be derived by way of consequence or development, one must first let them stand forth in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, their reversibility. (*EW* 1:59, *SD* Course Summary)

Extending the problem to the larger issue of historical intelligibility, he asks: “Who looked in the din and confusion of war, in the mud of battle, for the principle of intelligibility of order, institutions, and history?”

Who first thought that politics was war pursued by other means?" (*EW* 1:60, Course Summary). His response in this course is an object lesson in Foucauldian history as social critique.

In a series of comparative studies throughout these lectures, he traces the emergence of a *historico-political* discourse out of the political struggles following the end of the wars of religion and extending into seventeenth-century England and France. Quite different from the *philosophico-juridical* discourse, which appeals to universal rights and is organized around the problem of sovereignty, *historico-political* discourse is perspectival, committed, and strategic. It makes war "the permanent basis of all the institutions of power" (*EW* 1:61, Course Summary). Foucault finds such discourse at work in the writings of Edward Coke and John Lilburne in England in the seventeenth century and in Henri de Boulainvilliers and Louis Gabriel du Buat-Nançay in eighteenth-century France. They exemplify the Foucauldian preference for the concrete and historical inversion. Thus the subject who speaks in such discourse "cannot occupy the position of the universal subject." No doubt such a one tries to make right prevail, "but the right in question is his particular right, marked by a relation of conquest, domination, or antiquity: rights of triumphant invasion or millennial occupations." And if he also speaks of truth, Foucault insists, "it is that perspectival and strategic truth that enables him to win the victory." For the subject who speaks this sort of discourse, universal truth and general right are illusions and traps" (*EW* 1:61–62, Course Summary).

Accordingly, the *historico-political* is a discourse that "turns the traditional values of intelligibility upside down." Its field of reference is concrete contests and their sequelae, the "dried blood in the codes," not the "game of representations" that constitutes the dominant, Hobbesian view of the matter. This discourse will continue into the nineteenth century, viewing history under the aspect of class struggle or biological confrontation. Like Sartre, Foucault looks for the combat at work in any historical account. But whereas Sartre ascribes the source of this violence to the "transcendental fact" of material scarcity and urges the socialism that would abolish it, Foucault sees this peculiar form of power relations as the contingent fact that conditions the rise of bourgeois society and helps constitute the individuals it requires. His alternative, far from envisioning a socialism of material abundance, suggests fashioning "a new right that is both anti-disciplinary and emancipated from the principle of sovereignty" (*SD* 40).

Describing the historical thesis of Henri de Boulainvilliers about the rise and demise of the French nobility, Foucault credits the historian with the claim that “it’s war that makes society intelligible.” And he adds his own belief that “the same can be said of historical discourse” (*SD* 163). When he asserts that “war basically was the matrix of the truth of historical discourse,” he explains that he means: “truth, contrary to what philosophy and law would have us believe, does not begin, truth and *logos* do not begin, where violence ceases.” Alluding to Boulainvillier’s thesis, he continues: “On the contrary, it began when the nobility started to wage its political war against both the Third Estate and the monarchy, it was in this war and by thinking of history in terms of war that something resembling what we now know as historical discourse could establish itself.” In an obvious criticism of historical materialism with its doctrine of modern history as a characteristically bourgeois creation—riding on the back of the rising class—Foucault counters that the French nobility, precisely insofar as it was “a class in full decline, deprived of its political and economic power, was able to establish a certain historical rationality which was then taken up by the bourgeoisie and subsequently by the proletariat” (*SD* 165; *DS* 146).

But we must caution that it is not the war of nations that will finally capture Foucault’s attention as the key to understanding late modern history, but the struggle among *racés* and *classes* as it emerged with the rise of industrial society and what he came to term “biopower” in Europe in the nineteenth century. In fact, he now thinks that the notions of repression and war around which his earlier lectures revolved “have to be considerably modified and ultimately, perhaps, abandoned” (*SD* 17).³⁵ But he never questions the centrality of “struggle” to historical intelligibility.

VIOLENCE, DANGER, AND SCARCITY

Of the two models for relations of power that Foucault takes to be available today, namely, the model of power as law, interdiction, institution, and the military as opposed to the strategic model, the former, he believes, is inadequate whereas the latter has remained undeveloped. Thus, for example, when the Marxists speak of “class struggle,” he observes, “they pay little attention to one word in the phrase, namely ‘struggle.’”³⁶ We have observed that Foucault, on the contrary, without slipping into a Manichaeian attitude, argues that every relation of power (as “action on the action of others”) is accompanied by at least the possibility of resistance if not by actual resistance itself. Such is the nature of the power re-

lationship that it could not obtain in a situation of utter passivity without devolving into a relation of “force.” It is this agonistic nature of all human relationships that makes struggle a constant feature of the human condition. Again and again, he points out the potential for abuse in even our most praiseworthy practices and institutions: “What I am attentive to is the fact that every human relation is to some degree a power relation. We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations. Every power relation is not bad in itself, but it is a fact that always involves danger.” So when we are considering the distinction between the state and civil society, for example, and the issue is the institution of forms of informal justice that would delegate certain kinds of arbitration to the group itself—an option which Sartre favored on occasion—he warns: “whatever scenario one takes, a power relation would be established, and the question would still remain of how to limit its effects, this relation being in itself neither good nor bad, but dangerous, so that one would have to reflect, at every level, on the way it should channel its efficacy in the best possible way.”³⁷ On such a reading, neither Sartre’s “city of ends” nor Marx’s classless society would be free of internal danger.

But if power relations more often than not are accompanied by violence and yet are not identical with it, how does violence enter into Foucauldian history? We have seen him attribute to Ricardo an explanation similar to that of Sartre, namely, that the violence (“the threat of death”) and competition in modern society originate in the fact of material scarcity: “What makes economics possible, and necessary, then, is a perpetual and fundamental situation of scarcity: confronted by a nature that in itself is inert and, save for one very small part, barren, man risks his life” (OT 256–57). This is a basic form of human finitude that opens the “man” of the modern episteme to analysis. Though this “man” is starting to disappear, and with it the efficacy of the “analytic of finitude,” Foucault gives us no reason to believe that material scarcity will vanish as well or that the countersciences of ethnology, psychiatry, and structural linguistics can release its harsh grip on human life. Typically, Foucault resists the kind of utopian hope that occasionally slips into Sartrean discourse.

And yet we noted earlier another inspiration, if not source, for violence in Foucauldian history besides the fact of material scarcity, one that Foucault and Sartre share with Ricardo, namely, the Nietzschean. On more than one occasion Foucault refers to the “progressive enslave-

ment” of the Nietzschean will to knowledge “to its instinctive violence.”³⁸ Given the virulent anti-Platonism that he shared with Nietzsche, it is not surprising that Foucault would acknowledge a kind of “epistemic” violence by repeating the Nietzschean maxim that “knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting” (*EW* 2:380, NGH). And one might add, pace Plato, that this carving does not occur “at the joints.” The *historico-political* model of social relations analyzed in his lectures at the Collège in 1976 and the unequivocal linking of power and historical inquiry that it implied entailed a dimension of violence in its concentration on relations of struggle and conflict, of victor and vanquished. Foucault is contesting what he calls the “platonic” idea which maintains that “knowledge [*savoir*] and truth cannot fail to belong to the register of order and peace, that one can never discover truth and knowledge [*savoir*] on the side of violence, disorder and war” (*DF* 154; *SD* 173). Foucault believes that the modern state assiduously tried to revive that idea in our day by means of what he terms “the disciplinarization of knowledges [*Savoirs*]” in the eighteenth century.³⁹ This, he thinks, is what fed the opposition to historicism such that one tried to avoid it at all cost. Ironically, Foucault, in this instance at least, is offering a historicist account of the widespread antagonism to historicism in recent times. In a counsel that Fredric Jameson has famously echoed, Foucault advises: “We must try to be historicists.”⁴⁰

THE DIAGNOSTIC

Effective history studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance (an approach similar to that of a doctor who looks closely, who plunges to make a diagnosis and to state its difference). Historical sense has more in common with medicine than philosophy.

Michel Foucault, *Essential Works*,
“Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History”

We have observed Foucault refer to archaeology as a “diagnostic” and claim that “archaeology is in the plural” (*AK* 157). Though I do not intend to undertake an archaeological analysis of the discursive and nondiscursive practices of violence in existentialism and genealogy, our investigation has placed us in a position to reflect comparatively on the two foregoing approaches to the question. Comparisons and contrasts have been drawn throughout the chapter. Let us conclude by summariz-

ing these features to determine what insights Sartre's and Foucault's respective treatments of the problem of violence lend to our understanding of their concepts of historical rationality.

Although Sartre speaks from an articulated ontological background that Foucault has explicitly rejected, both insist that violence (and more generally, "power" in Foucault's case) can obtain only among free individuals or groups. This is a promising bridge between the two thinkers and doubtless helps account for their shared involvement in acts of political liberation and protest. Unlike the postmodern "differend" where it is precisely such bridge concepts that are missing, what Jean-Luc Nancy calls "the experience of freedom" offers a likely starting point for comparison and contrast.⁴¹ We have noted the respective roles of experience and "the lived" in the thought of Foucault and Sartre. Where they would appear to differ is in the theoretical meaning of this "freedom": for Sartre it is ontological and originary, for Foucault it seems to be empirical and nonfoundational. But for both it functions as a "value" (though neither would adopt the term) that saves them from the morass of nihilism where so many of their critics would entangle them.

Yet even here, both would accept a thick sense of "socioeconomic" freedom whereby an individual's choices are not constrained by the reduction of all possibilities to one, as Sartre would put it in the *Critique*, or where determining factors saturate the whole, as we have observed Foucault say. And what we have termed Foucault's "second" use of "freedom" as reflective withdrawal certainly resonates with the Sartrean notion of freedom as transcendence of one's facticity. In both cases, one can insist, we can always make something out of what we've been made into. Though curiously, whereas Sartre's development moved from stressing the former to respecting the latter, Foucault's trajectory reversed that movement, starting with an archaeological constitution of individuals and moving toward the self-constitution of the moral self. But the command "Choose, that is, invent!" could be and has been issued by each in his own way.

Despite these similarities, the two philosophers differ sharply concerning (1) the model of social intelligibility, (2) the means of analysis, and (3) the goal of emancipation from violence.

(1) *Model*. Where Sartre is thoroughly anthropocentric in his account, stressing the epistemic primacy of organic praxis, Foucault has

gloried in awakening us from our anthropological slumber and thereby freeing us once more “to think” and, specifically, to think against ourselves. His three analytical axes are meant to open new possibilities for sense-making that equally create new alternatives for practical choice. His model is “transgressive,” as is Sartre’s, but without being limited to a specific social ideal like Sartre’s “city of ends.”

(2) *Means.* Sartre’s progressive-regressive method, which is a (sometimes disfunctional) marriage of phenomenology, existential psychoanalysis, and historical materialism—in other words, a Marxian existentialist dialectic—such a method is expressly consigned by Foucault to the dustbins of the nineteenth century! Recall his unkind description of Sartre as a man of the nineteenth century trying to think the twentieth.⁴² Foucault’s method is “positivist” (with scare quotes) and “historical” (again with quotes). We have observed it undergo a certain expansion through three phases or, better, moments of emphasis, namely, the archaeological, the genealogical, and one of “problematization.” Of the three, the genealogical most closely approximates that of Sartre. Although their common Nietzschean inspiration leads both thinkers to suspect the “sincerity” of *les bien-pensants*, Foucault is more attuned to the structural conditioning that makes possible certain lines of power that constitute the objects of rational discourse. And whereas Sartre distinguishes dialectical from analytical reason and underscores the political commitments of each, Foucault is especially sensitive to the history of reason itself and to the fact, as we saw, that “there is no incompatibility between violence and rationality,”⁴³ a claim we have seen that Sartre could endorse as well.

(3) *Goal.* Nowhere does Sartre’s character as a philosopher of the imagination come more clearly into focus than in his ideal of a city of ends that guides his social ethic throughout most of his career. This translates into “History” (in an evaluative sense) and into the “socialism of abundance” as the *als ob* that directs and unifies our socioeconomic struggles. And even if he is chastened by the thought that human freedom could betray its finest sentiments, Sartre remains hopeful in his last years that exploitation and oppression can be lessened and perhaps even eradicated. Foucault, on the contrary, is coldly “realistic” (which, for Sartre, means “pessimistic”) about any long-range goals or talk of emancipation. Rather, like Camus but for different reasons, he favors limited projects and attainable goals. Talk of universal emancipation, he believes, is counterproductive, the work of the “universal intellectual” (*EW* 3:127, TP) of which it is commonly assumed

he took Sartre as a prime example. To this he contrasts the “specific intellectual” like J. Robert Oppenheimer, who from his field of expertise addresses issues of profound significance for the welfare of the human race. Such an intellectual, Foucault insists, is no longer “the rhapsodist of the eternal, but the strategist of life and death” (*EW* 3:129, TP). The attitude and stance that Foucault recommends and exhibits is one of “hyper and pessimistic activism” (*EW* 1:256, GE).

Recognizing that the question of violence is ultimately a matter of social, not just personal, ethics, what can we expect by way of a potential dialogue between these two approaches to social ethics? Briefly, I have suggested that one especially promising space for fruitful exchange lies in the field of freedom. Lest this be seen as conceding too much to the existentialist, recall the importance Foucault assigns to that term in his analysis of power relations as well as the practical confluence of his and Sartre’s positions in acts of social protest and reform (if not revolt).

IT COULD be said that Sartre’s account of violence is a function of the dualism of spontaneity and inertia that touches every facet of his thought even at its most dialectical. Sartre’s notion of violence is an immediate example of his ontology of the either/or. This emerges, for example, in his account of absolute right in terms of violence. There is no room for compromise or for prima facie and defeasible obligations in such a theory; which makes the implicit violence entailed by the concept of absolute right/duty as understandable as it is unavoidable.

Foucault is ready to distinguish violence from the power that it seems frequently to accompany but without shading into. And we have remarked the closer association of violence with that form of power that Foucault calls “domination.” But what burdens his approach is its insistence on sustaining a violence that holds among free individuals, themselves the products of power relations. In other words, Foucault’s account holds quite well for “structural” violence, the kind of relation that Sartre’s social ontology would ascribe to the practico-inert. Where it is less than satisfactory is in explaining those all too frequent cases where individuals deliberately undermine the freedom of other individuals; that is, where, in Foucault’s terms, they lack the “political courage to resist.” Here the answer to the question “Who is struggling with whom?” requires more than the Hobbesian response that Foucault occasionally

tenders (“all are struggling with one another”), notwithstanding his insistence that Hobbes remains in thrall to the sovereignty model of social relations that Foucault is combating (see *SD*, 110–11).

In sum, on the question of violence as with so many other areas of potentially common interest, Foucault’s unresolved problem is that of accounting for the human *agency* that responsible resistance requires, whereas Sartre’s is not only that of reconciling positive reciprocity and violence (fraternity and terror) but also the more basic issue of coming to acknowledge the full force of structural conditioning in human history.

If the diagnosis in each case is clear, the prognosis is not, especially since the two subjects are now deceased. Apropos of Sartre’s later thought, Raymond Aron once maintained the impossibility of reconciling Kierkegaard and Marx. In the present context, one might observe that the very impossibility of reconciling praxis and structure, consciousness and thing, conditions the violence that obtains, not only within the works of these two philosophers but between them as well. Yet the very possibility of this impossibility itself forges an *agonistic freedom*, the experience of which urges us to settle neither for quiet resignation nor for pacific possession. In the matter of relating violence and historical intelligibility, the recalcitrance of agonistic freedom may well be their common lesson for us all.

Foucault as Parrhesiast:
His Last Course at the
Collège de France
(An Object Lesson
in Axial History)

His first class that term met three weeks later than announced. The large hall in which Henri Bergson used to lecture was filled to overflowing, students sitting in the aisles and on the floor around the dais, a battery of microphones for tape recorders crowding the desk at which Foucault was to sit. He entered the room precisely on the hour, sat at the desk, and assumed the pose he would often maintain throughout the course—forehead leaning lightly on his upraised arm, eyes cast down on the manuscript before him: “I apologize for the delay in meeting the class, but I was sick.” Then, as if to confound the skeptics accustomed to professorial ploys, he paused, looked out at the auditors and insisted: “I really was!” I doubt that any of us present that first day has failed to reflect on those words in light of his tragic death scarcely four months later. Not once in the intervening lectures did he give any indication of failing strength or flagging spirit. Indeed, if it is true that he knew he was going to die in the near future, his *sang-froid* or, better, Stoic indifference (tranquillity of soul, *ataraxia*) is amazing. And yet, given his admiration for the classical Greek and Roman thinkers, especially the Stoics and the Cynics, to have acted otherwise would have been out of character.

Nietzsche’s philosophy, Foucault was fond of saying, is not a philosophy of truth, but of speaking truly.

Paul Veyne, *Foucault and His Interlocutors*

The topic for this term's lectures was the same as the previous year, namely, the practice of plain speaking or truth-telling [*parrhēsia*, *le franc parler*] in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, and there is considerable overlap between the sets. But whereas his earlier treatment had focused on parrhesia as a political virtue—you told the prince the truth even if it cost you your head—his subject this semester was truth-telling as a moral virtue—you admitted the truth even if it cost you your self-image. Political parrhesia was the right of a citizen, and its loss, through exile, for example, was considered a major deprivation. Euripides' Phedra, for instance, feared that her crime [*faute*] might deprive her children of their right to parrhesia. For the slave lacks the citizen's right to speak his mind openly, and "one thing can make the most bold-spirited man a slave: to know the secret of a parent's shameful act."¹ Foucault now speaks of a "transformation of parrhesia and its displacement from the institutional horizon of democracy [the political] to the horizon of individual practice of *ethos* formation" (*Par* 2/8/84).

All such truth-telling involves the presence of an other, even admitting the truth about oneself. In the latter case this other may be another philosopher, a teacher, friend, lover, or sage. The qualification to serve as that other for the Greeks was not institutional authority, as with the Christian Church, nor was it a professional ability or competence as would later be required of psychoanalysts. What was expected in the case of telling the truth about oneself was that the other likewise be a truth-teller, not a flatterer or a coward. (This was the condition of what Foucault calls the parrhesiastic "contract" established between the two parties.²) A relationship of power (subjectivation and control) is thereby constituted between the subject and the other by telling the truth. One becomes a confessing subject who is likewise subject to the judgment of the other. This raises questions about the mode of "veridiction" involved as well as the practice and the techniques of self-government at work in this relationship, issues Foucault began to treat in his *History of Sexuality*.

AN AXIAL ANALYSIS OF PARRHESIA

Talk of "power," "veridiction," and ethical parrhesia invites us to chart this topic along each of Foucault's three axes. And in fact, he does just that during the first of his lectures at the Collège that year. Referring to the topic of government of self and others that has been his concern for some years and which constituted the topic of his lectures at the Collège

the previous year, he observes: “It seems to me that in examining closely the notion of parrhesia, you can observe joining together types of truth-telling [*véridiction*], study of the techniques of governmentality and mapping [*repèrage*] of the forms, the practices of self” (*Par 2/1/84*). He goes on to explain these axes in some detail and to defend this triangular approach from the reductionist misunderstandings of his critics:

Basically, I’ve always tried to articulate among modes of veridiction, techniques of governmentality and practices of the self. You will notice insofar as it is a matter of the relations among modes of veridiction, techniques of governmentality and forms or practices of self, that the presentation of such research as an attempt to reduce knowledge [*savoir*] to power, in order to make knowledge the mask of power in structures where the subject has no place that the display of such research under this form cannot be anything but a caricature pure and simple. On the contrary, such an undertaking entails analysis of complex relations among three distinct elements that neither are reduced one to the others nor are absorbed one by the others, but whose relations are *constitutive* of one another. These three elements are: knowledges [*les savoirs*] studied in the specificity of their *véridiction*; relations of power, studied not as the emanation of a substantial, invasive power but as relations of power studied in procedures by which the conduct of men is governed; and finally modes of constitution of the subject across practices of the self. It is by carrying out this *triple theoretical displacement* of the theme of knowledge [*connaissance*] toward that of veridiction, of themes of domination toward that of governmentality, and of the theme of the individual toward that of practices of the self that it seems to me one can study the relations between truth, power and subject without ever reducing them one to another. (*Par 2/1/84*, emphasis added)

Notice Foucault moving from the angle or “pole” of the prism to the segment connecting it to its neighboring pole, the related space of the “between”; that is, from knowledge to truth (veridiction), from power to governmentality, and from subjectivation to practices of the self (among which we would include ethical parrhesia as the topic at hand). These lectures are an example of “history” charted along the three axes of his prism.

We are familiar with Foucault’s paradoxical search for consistency of topic across his career, but my reason for quoting this lengthy aside is to

situate what follows in the context of Foucault's three-dimensional approach. If his present concern is truth-telling, it is chiefly as an act of self-constitution and ethical self-control. Thus each of the lines that he is about to pursue could be paralleled with another on an alternative axis. And though we have seen him characterize philosophical activity in our day as "diagnostic," in these lectures he describes it as "parrhesiastic" in that it refers to all three poles or axes of investigation at once. Thus, he explains, what distinguishes philosophic discourse from merely political discourse or from simply moral discourse is its *attention to all three modes*, the veridical, the political, and the ethical. He admits that the other discourses, while stressing the political and the ethical respectively, cannot avoid reference to the two remaining axes (or "poles," as he calls them here). But it seems that what distinguishes the philosophical is not its focus on the veridical as such, which Foucault describes as "scientific" discourse, but its explicit attention to all three axes in the course of its investigations.

But note the "theoretical *displacement*" that occurs along each of these lines. The "knowledges" [*savoirs*] of archaeological investigation are specified in their exercise as truth-telling (veridiction). Similarly, the negative aspect of power relations (namely, domination) is transferred into the more neutral theme of governmentality (which we characterized as a "bridge concept" in chap. 7). And attention to the subject has been displaced from individual to self [*soi*] along the axis of subjectivation. In other words, an axial reading is not static; it allows for movement among the concepts on its line of sight. What it resists, in the Foucauldian spirit, is any attempt at synthesis, any totalizing move or even concession to a progressivist metaphor. Such images he has located amid the modern *épistème*, whose limits he has been charting, at least implicitly, from *History of Madness* (1961).

This concentration on the threefold, if you will, leads Foucault to propose an "axial" reading of occidental thought by identifying four distinct ways of relating this trio in the history of Western philosophy. The first way centers on the production of truth with regard to the future and thereby collapses all three in its vision of their promised reconciliation. In other words, prophesy seeks to conflate the dimensions of *alētheia* (forms of saying the truth), of *politeia* (structures and rules of governance), and of *ēthos* (principles and norms of moral activity; guide for a stylistic of life). The second historical track claims to think their funda-

mental unity while acknowledging their differences. The third approach seeks to define the irreducibility and the distinctiveness of each pole, arguing for their mutual heterogeneity. It employs correspondingly distinct methods of studying each domain, namely, logic for the formal conditions of truth-telling, political analysis for the best forms of exercising power, and study of the principles of moral conduct for examining the ethical realm. The fourth, properly philosophical mode of interrelating questions arising from each of these poles tries to establish the *conditions* of political practice, of ethical differences, and of true discourse. While acknowledging that it is impossible to think any of the three without thinking them all, the philosophical mode respects their individual distinctiveness and irreducibility. One encounters here for the first time Foucault's four forms of truth-saying (*parrēsia*) that will constitute the focus of his lecture, namely, the prophetic, the sapiential, the technical, and the parrhesiastic, properly speaking. It is this "mapping" that leads me to conclude that he sees philosophy in our day and certainly what he has been undertaking with his "histories" as parrhesiastic in this full sense. He confirms this judgment when he observes that it is the "necessity of this [inter]play" among the three poles that has characterized philosophical discourse from the Greeks to our day (*Par* 2/8/84).

In what follows I wish to delve more deeply into Foucault's "history" of parrhesia by attending to three prominent themes of these lectures, namely, the characteristics of the parrhesiast in contrast with other truth-tellers, the pivotal role of Plato's Socrates in the transformation of parrhesia from a political to a moral virtue, and the practice of the ancient Cynics as exemplars of this new, "ethical" parrhesia. I shall conclude with reflections on the relationship between such parrhesia and Sartrean authenticity as affording another perspective on comparative approaches to reason in history.

THE PARRHESIAST AND OTHER TRUTH-TELLERS

Foucault concludes his Berkeley lectures on parrhesia with the disclaimer that he is interested in presenting a sociological description of the different possible roles of truth-tellers in diverse societies. Rather, he wants to analyze "how the truth-teller's role was variously problematized in Greek philosophy" (*FS* 169). His interest, as we noted earlier, is in the *effects* of truth, not in its epistemology. He is asking about truth-telling as an activity: "who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what conse-

quences, and with what relation to power" (*FS* 170). He believes that these questions came to the fore with Socrates, especially through his confrontations with the Sophists about politics, rhetoric, and ethics toward the end of the fifth century BC. It is typical of Foucault to discover the seeds of two branches of subsequent Western thought in the works of Plato/Socrates or in the Hellenic and Hellenistic eras. In the present case, he extracts from Plato/Socrates a distinction between two approaches to truth, one epistemological (the logic of scientific knowledge) and the other broadly ethical: "What is the importance for the individual and for the society of telling the truth, of knowing the truth, of having people who tell the truth, as well as knowing how to recognize them?" (*FS* 170). The scientific interest is the source of what he calls the "analytics of truth" in Western philosophy; the ethical interest generates the "critical" tradition in the West. He describes his project in the parrhesiast lectures as constructing "a genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy" (*FS* 170–71).

The parrhesiast in fourth-century Greece had to meet certain prior conditions. Of course, he had to speak the truth, but this truth could not be merely a *de facto* verity, a mere coincidence of speech with fact. Unlike the rhetorician, he had really to believe what he was saying himself and to manifest that belief at personal risk before the other to whom he spoke. There was risk of violence at the hand of the interlocutor (the infamous practice of killing the messenger bearing bad news) or at least of a lessening of the other's estimation of the parrhesiast himself. Traditionally, the messenger always ran the risk of learning the truth as well. So parrhesia entailed the *courage* of the truth on both sides of the ledger, but especially on the part of the speaker.³

But if all parrhesiasts are truth-tellers, not all truth-tellers are parrhesiasts. To bring this point home, Foucault distinguishes four basic modalities of saying the truth, namely, those of the prophet, the sage, the teacher-technician, and the parrhesiast. Each respectively is concerned with truth as destiny, as being, as *technē* and as *ethos*. Predictably, he speaks of charting "a sort of rectangle of these four great modes of veridiction," placing the pairs, prophesy and destiny, wisdom and being, teaching and *technē*, and parrhesia and *ēthos* at right angles to one another (*Par* 2/1/84).

The prophet tells the truth not in his own name, as does the parrhesiast, but as mediator between the principal speaker and his auditors. Un-

like the parrhesiast, who speaks about the present and does so clearly and directly, the prophet mediates the present and the future and does so in words that require a certain interpretation because typically they conceal even as they unveil what is hidden.

Speaking in his own name, the sage is distinct from the prophet. Indeed, conserving his wisdom in himself, he feels no need to express it at all and, if questioned, may simply remain silent like Heraclitus. When he does so, he speaks of what is, of the being of the world and of things, and expresses his thought in the form of general principles. In this he differs from the parrhesiast, who is obliged to speak and who speaks of the individual and the present situation.

The teacher-technician, Socrates in a Platonic dialogue, for example, possesses *technē*, a skill learned by apprenticeship, tied to a tradition, and capable of being transmitted to others. Unlike the sage, he is traditionally obliged to transmit his truth-knowledge. But he runs little risk in doing so. He depends on a common tie with his students that unites and binds, whereas the word of the parrhesiast, like Nietzsche's "knowledge," divides, even if it may also bind and cure. In contrast with the prophet, the teacher seeks to be utterly clear and unambiguous.

Foucault notes that in antiquity these four modalities were sometimes well defined and even institutionalized. But they were essentially modes of "veridiction," not mutually exclusive social roles. The same person, again Socrates, for example, could fulfill each of them, though he was depicted by Plato primarily as a parrhesiast.⁴

SOCRATES AS PARRHESIAST

Foucault assigns an ambiguous role to Plato's Socrates in the evolution of *parrēsia*. In fact, it is similar to the one he plays in the transformation of sexual ethic in the same period. Specifically, in the history of "sexuality" it was Plato's work that supported both the metaphysically oriented concern for love "in its very being" and the more practically motivated aesthetic of "care of the soul."⁵ The former inspired the application of a moral code against which to measure the uses of pleasure as well as an asceticism linked with access to truth. The latter, with its ideal of self-mastery, served as the touchstone for an entire "culture of the self" which flourished among the educated class in the Hellenistic era.

Similarly, Plato's work signals both the older tradition of parrhesia within the polis and the transformation of truth-telling from politics to

ethics that is our present concern. It is a fruitful ambiguity in his use of *parrēsia*, Foucault believes, that contributes to this transformation. Politically, *parrēsia* was a right of the citizen. We have seen that one of the most painful aspects of exile, according to Euripides, was loss of this right to speak one's mind. It left the stranger little more than a slave as far as governance of the city was concerned.⁶ But "democratic" parrhesia was criticized by the aristocrats in fourth-century Athens because it gave freedom of speech to the masses, that is, to those who judged in view of the desires of the crowd, not in terms of what was best for the polis. Their opposition was not only an expression of class interest; it revealed a perceived structural incompatibility between parrhesia and democracy that challenged Greek political thought for generations. One can recognize the plight of Socrates before the *demos* as Plato's example of the dangers of such false parrhesia. He criticizes it directly in the *Republic* [8.557a–b] and by implication in the *Phaedo*.⁷ But the transitional nature of Plato's parrhesiast position lies in his continued respect for parrhesia as a personal attribute of character despite a basic distrust of democratic parrhesia. The focus of parrhesia is no longer the citizens nor even the *politeia* but the soul [*psychē*], especially that of the prince which, because it is educable, is capable of moral transformation to the benefit of all. The objective of parrhesia is the formation of a certain way of acting, of an ethos of the individual.⁸

It is this emergence of parrhesia as transformative of the soul, Foucault notes, that introduces into philosophical discourse his three irreducible but interrelated poles that, he insists, remain in place to this day, namely, the dimensions of *alētheia* (forms of saying the truth), of *politeia* (structures and rules of governance), and of *ēthos* (principles and norms of moral activity; guide for a stylistic of life). Of course, we have observed Foucault argue elsewhere that these constitute three possible domains of "historical" analysis, each focusing on a distinctive form of self-constitution (subjectivation), namely, constitution as subject of knowledge, as subject acting on others, and as moral agent (see *EW* 1:262, GE). This is the basis of his axial readings and of ours. It is significant, however, that the genealogy of *alētheia* in his earlier works, specifically, *The History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *The Order of Things*, considered the subject chiefly as the "object" of authoritative knowledge. In these last lectures, Foucault addresses the subject as the "agent" of truth-telling, as actively entering into the "game" of the

true and the false. Moreover, this analysis is primarily ethical, even as it explicitly refers to the domain of “veridiction” and implicitly to that of power. In fact, we have just seen Foucault insist that properly philosophical discourse distinguishes itself from the exclusively political or moral by its necessary reference to all three poles. In other words, *the Foucauldian philosopher is a parrhesiast* in this new, ethical sense.⁹ In previous chapters we noted various forms of this Foucauldian triangle operative throughout his works. We can now give a name to its integral use.

If Plato consigned to the Sophists the political dimension of the very concept of truth (thereby ignoring the power which was being exercised by his own contemplative view of truth), he contributed mightily to both the knowledge and the subjectifying aspects of any philosophical question. It is to this last facet, the relation of truth-telling to the constitution of the (moral) subject, that we must turn to appreciate Plato’s contribution to the shift from political to moral parrhesia in the Western tradition. Predictably, Foucault assures us that the relation of truth-telling to self-constitution has been his abiding concern (see *EW* 2:446, SPS). His analysis centers on three dialogues.

In the *Apology*, Socrates argues as a parrhesiast. He speaks at the risk of his life, but not like a political parrhesiast, not like Solon, for example, facing the threat of Pisistratus. Rather than address the people as the law-giver or the doctor of a sick state, he speaks like a father or an older brother. He has renounced politics in order to tell a truth of another kind, that of philosophy to which the divine voice calls him. This new veridiction has three characteristics. With regard to the god, it involves undertaking an *elenchus*, an argument: rather than interpreting the message and awaiting the effects of the god’s pronouncement as would commonly be expected, Socrates subjects the oracle to inquiry and proof in the field of truth: What can it mean to claim that there is none wiser than Socrates in Athens? Next, the form of his verification is a *probing of souls*, their confrontation in terms of knowledge and ignorance. Third, this enterprise, not surprisingly, incurs the *hostility* of those questioned, thus confirming the parrhesiastic nature of the undertaking. The mission of Socrates as ethical parrhesiast is not to do politics but to awaken others to concern with themselves [*phronēsis*], with their truth [*alētheia*], and with their soul [*psychē*]. Together these form the basis of an ethics, a way of comporting oneself with regard to the true. Thus, Foucault sees Socrates’ famous daimonic prohibition against risking his life in politics as drawing a line that separated two types of parrhesia: the political and the ethical.¹⁰

According to Foucault, each dialogue initiates a line of philosophical inquiry that will perdure in Western thought. The *Alcibiades*, although its context is still political parrhesia, discusses the education of a young man based on the principle of care of the soul by means of self-contemplation. This “metaphysics of the soul” [*psychē*] that places a primacy on *logos* in the project of self-mastery and builds on the distinction between the world of the changeable and the “other” world of the changeless, grounds the care of the soul which Socrates later enjoins on his fellow citizens in the *Apology*.

But it is the *Laches* which is of greater interest to Foucault. Here he sees another mode of veridiction emerge which is concerned more with life [*bios*] than with the soul and which views philosophy more as a “testing of life” [*l'épreuve de la vie*] than as a knowledge of the soul. Admittedly, the standard Platonic arguments for a metaphysics of the soul are enunciated in this dialogue as well. But Foucault hears another voice in counterpoint to the traditional *cantus firmus*. Its theme is “rendering an account of oneself” as the terminus of the parrhesiastic game that Socrates joins with his interlocutors. The account sought, however, is not an essence or form but a relation between one’s self and the *logos* one proclaims; in other words, the *manner* in which one lives and has lived one’s life.

‡An important transformation of Socratic parrhesia is taking place. Socrates’ authority early in the dialogue derives not from technical expertise (after the Platonic model of the craftsman or the navigator) but from the *harmony* that obtains between his *logos* and his *bios*, his doctrine and his life. What is at issue is not a “testing” of one’s life once and for all but an ongoing practice, a certain style of life. Socratic parrhesia now entails asking one to give an account of oneself so as to lead one to care for oneself. But this care of oneself is not just the “care of the soul” of the *Alcibiades* and the *Apology*, namely, contemplation of the soul as a distinct reality. Rather, this alternative care of oneself denotes a manner of living in addition to a self-knowledge of a quite different sort from the contemplative: it involves a practical proof, a testing of the manner of living and of truth-telling that lends a certain *form* to this rendering an account of oneself, a lifelong examination that issues in a certain *style of existence*. In sum, Foucault claims that the ambiguity of the Socratic principle of rendering an account of oneself (or, for that matter, of the interpretation of the Delphic injunction to know thyself) resulted in *two distinct*, if complementary, *approaches to parrhesia*, one which focused on a

metaphysics of the soul, its essence or being, and another that led to a stylistic of life, an aesthetic of existence. Though the relationship between these two modes of veridiction is subtle and nuanced, Foucault argues quite plausibly that the metaphysics of the soul dominated philosophical discourse in the West. Attention to a style of existence found expression elsewhere.

He concludes that, while one can speak of an aesthetic of life [*bios*] in Greek thought (indeed, it is the aim of vols. 2 and 3 of his *History of Sexuality* to do so), this side of the parrhesiastic distinction has been eclipsed by the metaphysical, at least among philosophers. And yet a person's way of living, one's "traces" in the eyes of one's survivors, can be an object of aesthetic concern. One's *bios* can be a beautiful work. As Foucault observed on an earlier occasion:

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become some thing which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life? (*EW* 1:361, GE)

Yielding to his obvious preference for this latter form of care of the self, Foucault interjects the warning not to forget the aesthetic of existence in favor of concern for the beauty of things or even for the metaphysics of the soul. He allows that this was not a dominant theme in the thought of Socrates, that, in fact, one had to wait for Pindar and others for it to gain full attention. But his point is that this concern for a beautiful existence [*souci de l'existence belle*] was linked to concern for truth-telling by means of the notion of care of the self in the work of Socrates at the dawn of Western philosophy. The art of existence simply *is* truth-telling [*le dire vrai*]. But developing this relation between the beautiful life and truth-telling, a relation which is the "true life" [*la vraie vie*], Foucault concludes, is a task he will leave for others.

THE "GOOD" CYNICS AS PARRHESIASTS

In fact, Foucault did not leave entirely to others the task of fleshing out the relationship between the aesthetic of existence, parrhesia, and the true life. He had already devoted much of his lecture course entitled "The Hermeneutic of the Subject" (spring 1982) to a close reading of the

Stoics, especially Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, and the Epicureans, particularly Epicurus himself, that concentrated on the relation between truth and subjectivity, between a specifically Hellenistic asceticism (*askēsis*) and the constitution of an autonomous “self.”¹¹ But it was the Cynics who afforded him the opportunity to consider this issue in a context characteristically free from theoretical encumbrances.

Citing several authors on the history of Cynicism and recognizing the distinction made in German between *Kynismus* (ancient Cynicism) and *Zynismus* (its contemporary successor),¹² Foucault insists that they all support the hypothesis of a rather sharp and well-marked discontinuity between ancient and modern cynicism. Foucault (the so-called philosopher of discontinuity), on the contrary, claims that “it is easy to show the permanent existence of something that can appear as cynicism across the entire European culture” (*Par* 2/29/84). He proceeds to sketch the lines of this continuity by referring to a kind of “Christian cynicism” or an “anti-ecclesiastical cynicism” whose marks continue through the periods of reform and counterreform, through secret societies, militant revolutionary groups, anarchist movements, bohemians, or works of satirical art and the like to the present day (see *Par* 2/29/84). The defining value of this “transhistorical cynicism,” so it seems, is a kind of “authenticity” (my term, not Foucault’s), a harmony between one’s personal life and one’s ideals (a style of life). In fact, he goes so far as to maintain that “modern art is Cynicism *in* the culture; it is the cynicism *of* culture turned back on itself” (*Par* 2/29/84).

The Cynic was characterized by friend and foe alike as a parrhesiast, indeed, as a kind of prophet of truth-telling. His deliberately unconventional lifestyle freed him for the task. In fact, the Cynics made of their lives a liturgy of truth-telling, carrying to the extreme the Socratic harmony between *bios* and *logos* described earlier. Foucault sees at the core of this movement the theme of *life as the scandal of truth*. It is in this moral guise, he contends, and not via academic instruction that it penetrated Western thought.¹³

The Cynics’ scheme of life is difficult to summarize theoretically. It is expressed and transmitted by stories, by appeal to paradigmatic figures like Hercules and by biographies. Because what is to be communicated is a way of life more than a doctrine, the philosophic hero becomes of prime importance and philosophic legend is common coin. (Foucault notes that this approach was considerably weakened once philosophy be-

came the *métier* of professors and that the last such philosophic hero was probably Goethe's Faust: "Exit Faust and enter the revolutionary."¹⁴)

The relation between truth-telling and the Cynics' way of life is forged by the concept of the "true life" [*alēthēs bios*]. It was the true life that the Cynics were transmitting by word and example.¹⁵ The primary role which Foucault accords the Cynics in the history of philosophy is that of offering a major *alternative to Platonism*. By inverting the "true life" of the Platonists, Stoics and others, linking it with parrhesia as a style of living and with "care of the self" understood as the mission of challenging the erroneous institutions, beliefs and practices of most people, the Cynics brought to the fore that other parrhesia introduced in Plato's *Laches* but neglected for the sake of a metaphysics of the soul and a theory of the other world, which characterized the subsequent Platonic philosophical tradition.

If it is true, as Heidegger claims, that Western philosophy has forgotten being in order to construct a kind of essentialist metaphysics, so, Foucault argues, has its neglect of "philosophical life" (the "true life," parrhesia as an aesthetic of existence) inclined it to see "truth" in primarily scientific terms.¹⁶ Correspondingly, it has come to regard historical "truth" from the perspective of the social sciences, when it was not immersed in humanistic narrative. It is this Foucauldian moral that I wish now to address, for it suggests that his final approach to history extends both "beyond structuralism and hermeneutics," as Dreyfus and Rabinow put it, and beyond, though not counter to, his earlier archaeology and genealogy as well.

THE PHILOSOPHER-HISTORIAN AS PARRHESIAST

In his biography of Foucault, Didier Eribon records what we have been calling a "parrhesiastic" turn in Foucault's life and work. Commenting on Foucault's involvement with Sartre and others in founding the left-wing newspaper *Libération*, Eribon observes that "it was during this period [the 1970s] that a particular theme emerged in Foucault's remarks about politics: if one wants to be credible and effective, one must first know, and above all *speak*, the truth. Speaking-the-truth, *véridiction*, has to be the founding principle of any journalism of intervention."¹⁷

In an interview published the year before he died and which we analyzed earlier along the axis of subjectivation, Foucault reviews his entire career in terms of what we now might call the "parrhesiastic mode," in

which the risks of the truth-teller are articulated and assessed in the different stages of his historical reflections:

While historians of science in France were interested essentially in the problem of how a scientific object is constituted, the question I asked myself was this: How is it that the human subject took itself as the object of possible knowledge? Through what forms of rationality and historical conditions? And, finally, *at what price?* This is my question: At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves? At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves as mad persons?

The Order of Things asked the price of problematizing and analyzing the speaking subject, the working subject, the living subject. . . I wanted to pose the same kind of question in the case of the criminal and systems of punishment: How to state the truth of oneself, insofar as one might be a criminal subject. I will be doing the same thing with sexuality, only going back much farther: How does the subject speak truthfully about itself, inasmuch as it is the subject of sexual pleasure? And at what price? (*EW* 2:441, SPS, emphasis added)

He observed that, whereas Deleuze exhibited a relation to Nietzsche in his theory of desire, “my own problem has always been the question of truth, of truth-telling, the *Wahr-sagen*—what it is to tell the truth—and the relation between telling the truth and forms of reflexivity, of self upon self” (*EW* 2:446, SPS).

So we can say that the philosophical historian will operate in the parrhesiastic mode. As archaeologist, one continues to perform a diagnostic that reveals contingencies and the possibility that matters could be otherwise than they are. This requires the courage of the parrhesiast. As genealogist, one runs the risk of uncovering the relations of domination and control that underlie our most laudatory practices, including, of course, one’s own. And as prober of problematization, one unsettles the established accounts and opens the closed books of moral generalization and self-identity: a task that both requires and fosters the aesthetic harmony of creative existence. In the words of Antonio Gramsci, the intellectual, in this case, the parrhesiastic historian, must first do an inventory of one’s self.¹⁸

Of the three axes along which the philosopher ideally should chart an issue, we have seen that the parrhesiastic historian concentrates on the third: subjectivation or becoming a subject. And he or she does so in relation to the truth, thereby connecting with the veridical pole of the trian-

gle. Foucault implies this relationship between parrhesia and his interest in subjectivation in his histories when he remarks apropos a prominent expert on Stoicism who was also a Nazi sympathizer:

At every moment, step by step, one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, with what one is. . . I have always been concerned with linking together as tightly as possible the historical and theoretical analysis of power relations, institutions, and knowledge, to the movements, critiques, and experiences that call them into question in reality. If I have insisted on all the “practice,” it has not been in order to “apply” ideas, but in order to put them to the test and modify them. The key to the personal poetic attitude of a philosopher is not to be sought in his ideas, as if it could be deduced from them, but rather in his philosophy as life, in his philosophical life, his ethos.

He could not help but have noticed that these remarks were redolent of Sartrean “authenticity.” Perhaps that is why he hastens to add, “Among the French philosophers who participated in the Resistance during the war, one was Cavailles [executed by the Nazis], a historian of mathematics who was interested in the development of its internal structures. None of the philosophers of *engagement*—Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty—none of them did a thing.”¹⁹

Given Foucault’s characterization of the “prophet” in his last lectures, not to mention his critique of Marx and Sartre as “prophets” on another occasion,²⁰ it seems inappropriate, or at least ironic, “to associate Foucault with some prophetic visionary capacity,” notwithstanding the claim that it is one possessed of “a severe utopian vision that projects into the future even when there is no alternative world imagined in that vision.” Such, according to Paul Bové, is Deleuze’s aim in reading Foucault.²¹ Yet to the extent that both prophet and parrhesiast share an obligation to tell the truth, the parrhesiastic historian might be likened to a prophet, especially to a biblical prophet, who is far more an ethical witness than the fortune-teller Foucault seems to have in mind; that is, the biblical prophet is someone who calls both the people and their ruler back to an authenticity that they as a people had abandoned.²²

Bové’s alternative seems to approximate what we have been calling the “parrhesiast” when he writes:

What we lose in Deleuze’s Foucault is the critically and politically fundamental commitment to enacting the gestures of an ironic negation

that would, in itself, exist outside the reach of the reflective apparatus of the State (and its institutions) and its double, the Party. What we lose is both the skeptical questioning of “liberatory” rhetorics and politics and, as important, the anxious pathos that results from having so much to doubt the effects of the great narratives of liberation. What we lose is a certain critical maturity in a time when classical political solutions are impossible; we lose a certain loving despair over the fact of people whose past offers little reason to forget the omnipresence of barbarism as the underside not only of our cultural monuments but of our everyday institutions and rhetorics. (*Foucault* xxxiv)

What we lose, in sum, is the parrhesiast.²³

In pursuing the strategy of writing a history of truth and of reason, Foucault is aware of the risks he runs, risks defined chiefly in terms of the Reason he at base is questioning. First of all, there is the danger of burying one’s own arguments in the sand of self-reference. This objection was leveled against him when he undertook to describe the epistemic grids that made “knowledge” possible within a series of discursive communities. His answer then, as it would be now, was that he is fully aware of the ground shifting under his own feet and that he merely wants to bring to our attention the contingency of our epistemic necessities, not to settle any issue (except perhaps that of absolute knowledge) once and for all (see *OT* 384). Moreover, such Archimedean objections, as we have termed them, amount to the denial that any critique of reason by reason is possible—an assumption that Foucault (along with Rorty) simply denies (see *EW* 2:441, SPS).

Of course, his opponents will counter that he loses critical bite on whatever rationality he describes if the one he employs is itself under suspicion. While I believe that this traditional argument carries a certain plausibility, I think it misses the “flavor” of Foucault’s claim. His is a skepticism more in line with Montaigne’s “*Que sais-je?*” (“What do I know?”) than with the patently self-defeating form, “I can’t be certain of anything.” His subtle, interrogative stance *casts suspicion*; it does not settle issues. But that is all Foucault intends. For in weakening our confidence in homogeneous reason and univocal truth, he has opened the door to new alternatives, other creativities, further “revolutions.” Ethical parrhesia is one such alternative.

His friend and colleague at the Collège de France, the Roman historian Paul Veyne, made a similar observation. After likening Foucault’s “histories” to those of Montaigne, he remarks, “Foucault’s work con-

sisted in revealing the weight of practices (“discourses”) in thought. He didn’t pretend to explain the history of thought—he left that task to the historians. He sought only to prove that our thought is full of irrational practices and is not the light of reason.”²⁴

THE MORAL AND THE ETHICAL PARRHESIAST

The question of the self-constitution of the moral subject, which emerged in Foucault’s history of sexuality, is clouded more than clarified by reference to the moral parrhesiast. Even when we disregard the “necessity” of referring to the other axes in pursuing the line of subjectivation, there remains the troublesome matter of the *activity* of the subject in this process of self-constitution. Is he or she the mere reflection of structural changes, the simple nodal point of a multiplicity of lines of force and impersonal relationships? A Sartrean critique would answer in the affirmative, adding that Foucault’s rejection of dialectical reasoning has come home to roost. But the situation is more complicated than that.

It is clear that Foucault continued to respect these structuralist concepts even as he insisted that we “rethink the question of the subject.”²⁵ He had done just that in his lecture courses at the Collège the two years prior to the present set on the government of self and others. The titles of those courses were “Subjectivity and Truth” (1980–81) and “The Hermeneutic of the Subject” (1981–82). There he argued that the relation between subjectivity and truth is mediated by care of the self (and in his last lectures, by parrhesia as both a moral quality and a technique for care of the self).²⁶ In classical antiquity, one had to become a certain kind of subject (with the help of one’s relation to the truth) to be able to attain that truth itself. Exhibiting a certain nonvicious circularity, truth and subjectivation were in a reciprocal relationship. In fact, we have just seen that this circularity is intensified as one moves from an ontological to a moral sense of truth in the classical authors. Foucault discerns the advent of early modernity in the transformation of this relationship such that “the subject as such is capable of truth but that truth such as it is in not capable of saving the subject” (*H* 20). Cartesian doubt, for example, requires an epistemic but not a moral asceticism. What Foucault calls “spirituality,” that is, “the transformations [in the very being of the subject] that are necessary for access to the truth” was always united to “philosophy” in classical antiquity (*H* 16). But this close relationship between philosophy and spirituality so prevalent in antiquity is noticeably absent among most modern philosophers. And to the counterexample of Aris-

total as a major Greek thinker for whom such “spirituality” was unimportant, Foucault responds somewhat enigmatically: “As everyone knows, Aristotle is not the summit of Antiquity; he is the exception” (H19).

We have recognized how Foucault’s famous questioning of the “author” did not entail the denial of the existence of a subject as some have claimed. What he consistently rejected was the substantial self, the *res cogitans*, of Cartesian metaphysics as well as the meaning-bestowing ego of phenomenology. In its stead he spoke of a “form” of the self that could change according to a change in context.²⁷ The distinction between the ancient Greek and the early modern self (in the standard uses of these terms) with regard to spirituality is clear evidence for such a transformation along the axis of subjectivation. We charted that difference with regard to reflective subjectivity in chapter 9.

But a lingering uneasiness remains if one believes such passivity suffices to account for the *self*-constitution of the moral subject. No doubt a form of “historical a priori” makes certain concepts and practices possible while excluding others.²⁸ We have suggested that one result of these limitations is the *individual* described explicitly as a social product in *Discipline and Punish*. The courage of the parrhesiast in face of possible violence, for example, may well be encouraged and even taken for granted in a specific society at a particular time. Messengers may be chosen for their moral character as much as for their speed. It is the question of individual responsibility (a concept Foucault would historicize as well) that assumes particular urgency in the context of moral constitution. The excuse, “That’s just the way I am!” carries little weight in moral exchanges, as Aristotle also reminds us.

Foucault was facing an issue that many have regarded as the Achilles’ heel of Marxism and structuralism alike: the moral implications of their theories of history and society. Do their claims to scientific status lead to a sterile amorality, rendering inconsistent any viable moral theory, let alone moral involvement in the world? Foucault’s Nietzschean sympathies make him hostile to moral norms as commonly conceived. But the increasing importance given the moral subject in his later work, as well as the interrelation of power and truth in its self-constitution, suggests that Foucault’s account might leave room for *moral creativity* in a way that eluded both Marx and the structuralists but which was propounded by Nietzsche and became the hallmark of Sartrean existentialism.

It is here that Foucault’s second notion of freedom as reflective with-

drawal could come to his aid. For the power of the self to act reflectively on itself, that is, to take perspective on its possibilities and, as Dewey says, to rehearse its possible actions not only constitutes a “moral self,” it warrants ascriptions of responsibility. Admittedly, it is Sartre, not Foucault, whose attention is directed toward historical agency and moral responsibility. And yet Foucault’s occasional demands to expose the responsible parties behind public offenses betrays a sense of accountability not charted along his first two axes. Rather than distinguish an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine in Foucault’s remarks or simply appeal to an easy developmentalism that he had locked in the cupboard of the modern episteme, I would urge that we chart this aspect of his thought along the axis of subjectivation, admitting that its emphasis and elaboration occur in the later reaches of this line of analysis but also insisting on its presence even in his first major works. In other words, an axial reading need not preclude the charting of varying degrees of emphasis or of gradual growth in explicit awareness of a theme along the way—say, the charting of the movement from individual to self [*soi*] that we have just remarked along the axis of subjectivation. Rather, it encourages us to seek evidence of each “pole” in effect throughout the corpus of Foucault’s writings. Its aim is to justify Foucault’s frequent appeals to what his abiding interest “had always been.”

PARRHESIA AND POSTSTRUCTURALIST HISTORY

Though we shall consider this issue at length in our final chapter, we should not end this discussion without a few remarks about the relation between parrhesia and Foucauldian history. It should now be clear that Foucault’s histories are as far from traditional historiography as are Sartre’s existentialist biographies—well, almost as distant. Our discussion of “fearless speech” in the classical world, I believe, sketches both the object and the form of Foucauldian investigations. The object or subject matter is a history of truth or of Reason that has engaged him from his first major publication. So the emergence of parrhesia as the explicit topic of his inquiries is not only appropriate, it is even consummatory in the sense that it brings into consideration the role of this practice/virtue in the constitution of the moral self (whether ancient or modern, though each in its own manner) while reflecting Foucault’s own politico-ethical project.

The parrhesiastic form of Foucault’s histories is omnipresent as a

moral leitmotif favoring creative freedom and ferreting out what he takes to be the forces of domination with historical societies. This is archaeology and genealogy as critique, no doubt, but without the transcendental *locis standi* that more systematic thought would demand. If one prefers the metaphor of battle, Foucault's investigations advance more on the order of guerrilla warfare than on that of general mobilization and decisive attack; the probing and undermining of specific fault lines (lines of supply) rather than the massive confrontation via appeal to alternative systems. But if the tactics are nominalist and ad hoc, the strategy is moral. And Foucault's adoption of a parrhesiastic modality is the appropriate way of avoiding the pitfalls of domination in his own discourse.

If so-called poststructuralist history is a history, not of agents but of structures and events, if it is what Fredric Jameson calls "the crisis of historicity itself,"²⁹ then Foucault's parrhesiastic "histories" fit rather nicely into that slot. But, of course, we know too well by now that the fit will be imperfect. Foucault is too elusive, his thought too unorthodox, even for the recent poststructuralist orthodoxy. That is doubtless why critics have chosen to detect "breaks" in his own thought—implicit repudiation, changes of direction. Perhaps we should be satisfied to qualify whatever labels we apply, confirming in the end what we urged at the beginning, that Foucault is a thinker *sui generis*.

STILL, A PARRHESIAST

Like his other histories, this one leaves us with a heightened sense of the contingency of our most prized necessities, the variability of our lodestar, the relativity of it all (if indeed once can speak of it "all"). But rather than counsel some kind of transcendental (re)turn, as do Habermas and others, or propose a neopragmatist collapse of truth into power, of knowing into doing, Foucault at this stage of his thought seems inclined to recommend a cautious skepticism with regard to utopian politics and a neo-Stoic, almost Camusian "pessimistic activism" in the face of ultimate meaninglessness (see *EW* 1:256, GE).³⁰

If, as he claims, the history of truth was his abiding interest, Foucault's last lectures were a kind of homecoming, not only because they brought into play his basic concepts and methods (an archaeology of knowledge, a genealogy of power, and a problematization of truth and subjectivity), but because they directed these to the discourse and practice of a historical period and culture that held a special fascination for him. If his hard-

fought battle against anthropologism kept him from idealizing Hellenic culture, he nonetheless admired and, indeed, practiced the kind of ethical parrhesia whose roots he uncovered in Plato but whose flower he savored among the “good” Cynics. For he too was taken with the crafted beauty of life, with the freedom of resistance, with the inverted, the fragmented, the aleatory. Indeed, there is something Greek about his tragic passing and about the philosophical torso he left behind. If Habermas failed to find in Foucault the unity of his theory and his practice,³¹ it is perhaps because he overlooked the parrhesiast.

ETHICAL PARRHESIA AND EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY

Throughout our study we have remarked a similarity between Foucault’s self-creating choices and Sartrean authenticity. In our search for parallel and contrasting features in the works of Sartre and Foucault, the foregoing discussion of parrhesia presses the matter even more, for the “truth-telling” or “fearless speech” that Foucault praises in these lectures, especially when the “truth” concerns oneself and one’s *style of life*, invites a comparison with Sartrean “good faith” and the well-known existentialist virtue of authenticity. In both cases we are dealing with an ethical *style*, not a specific content. Each case appeals to the kind of heroic honesty that Karl Jaspers took for a Nietzschean hallmark that would scarcely be unwelcome to either Sartre or Foucault.³²

By way of conclusion, let me summarize three striking similarities between Foucauldian parrhesia and Sartrean authenticity that I have noted in this chapter in order to underscore their differences. In terms of our general topic of historical intelligibility, the present chapter stands as an object lesson in the axial reading of a Foucauldian history as practiced by Foucault himself. The philosophical (parrhesiastic) historian will appeal to each axis to construct a “polyhedron” of intelligibility. So we can seek our similarities along each of the lines of historical analysis that Foucault himself suggests. But the parrhesiastic character of Foucault’s histories comes to resemble in important ways Sartre’s “committed history,” as reconstructed in volume 1.

The truth that the parrhesiast enunciates is as much lived as uttered. It assumes a “correspondence,” to be sure, but one that obtains between life and doctrine, *bios* and *logos*. Its counterconcept is not falsehood but hypocrisy and cowardice. And these are features of Sartrean good faith

and authenticity as well. Without entering the dispute among Sartre scholars over the relation between these two terms,³³ suffice it to note that there is considerable overlap between them. “Authenticity” is an ethically evaluative term that denotes getting clear on the nature and likely outcomes of a choice, consciously making that choice and embracing its consequences. It is an exercise in freedom both as the condition of its possibility and as the value that it ultimately fosters. Its correlate, “good faith,” whether merely descriptive or also evaluative, denotes living the “truth” of one’s ontological makeup, namely, embracing the fact that one is never self-identical and hence is always responsible for sustaining the “choice” that one is living. Its contradictory is “bad faith” or self-deception (paradoxically, a “lie” to oneself) about this ontological *nonself-identity*. The overlap occurs chiefly between bad faith and inauthenticity, which seem to signify the refusal to accept the nature and consequences of one’s ontological freedom. Such nonself-identity is reminiscent of Foucault’s allusion to “this dispersion that we are and make” (*AK* 131). The parrhesiast would enunciate and live it.

Just as existential “authenticity” denotes more a style than a content, so the parrhesiastic contract (and a fortiori the “aesthetics of existence” that Foucault proposes in *The Use of Pleasure*) points to a style of life, the “true life” [*alēthes bios*] of Socrates exaggerated by the Cynics (see *Par* 3/14/84). Again, the epistemic is subordinated to the ethical, knowledge to self-constitution, without losing its relevance in some irrationalist “leap.”

Finally, in a way that showcases the “aesthetics of existence” (making of one’s life a work of art) more than parrhesia as such, the creative or inventive character of Foucault’s general scheme of self-constitution resembles Sartrean authentic “choice” so closely that, as we saw, Dreyfus and Rabinow could ask him about it in their interview on the Berkeley campus. Indeed, Sartre’s well-known line from a public lecture: “You are free, therefore choose that is to say, invent,” (*EH* 297–99) counters in advance Foucault’s response that, whereas Sartrean authenticity stresses fidelity to “our true self,” his own favors creativity: “we have to create ourselves as a work of art” (*EW* 1:262, GE).

But as existentialist features have begun to emerge along Foucault’s axis of subjectivation, one should not rush to detect a “return of the repressed” in his later work. Reserving a fuller discussion of this matter for our final chapter, let me simply conclude this portion of our investigation

by pointing out that the Foucauldian prism resists the totalizing movement of “original choice” and the Sartrean hermeneutic that seeks to reveal it. Despite lines or aspects of subjectivation that pervade his thought, Foucault’s “self” remains prismatic, his historical intelligibility polyhedral, and his “experience” nonfoundational and derivative. If his histories exhibit passion, it is that of the cartographer, not the diarist.

Ethics and History: *Authentic*
vs. Effective History

Having traced the conceptual coordinates of Foucault's "theory" of history, namely, his nominalism and event orientation, in part 1, and reviewed his spatialized analyses of different historical practices and epochs, culminating in an axial reading of his entire oeuvre, in part 2, we began our explicit comparison of Foucault and Sartre on several issues that both condition and reciprocally are conditioned by their respective approaches to history in part 3. First we graphed Sartrean existentialism across the Foucauldian quadrilateral and triangle to determine how closely Sartre fits into the modern episteme; that is, to ascertain how deeply Sartre is lodged in the thought of the nineteenth century, as Foucault has charged. In succeeding chapters we undertook a comparison of the two authors on three specific issues: experience and the lived [*le vécu*], violence and power, and *parrhesia* and authenticity. We now conclude this comparative phase by considering how these coordinates, spatializations, axes and contrasting concepts issue in *two distinct approaches to the intelligibility of history* (what we have been calling "historical reason"). What renders Foucault's and Sartre's alternative theories comparable in the final analysis, as has be-

One always moves
backwards toward the
essential: the most general
things appear last.

Michel Foucault,
"Concern for Truth,"
Foucault Live)



come evident in the present volume, is their shared concern with the *ethical* dimension of this seemingly epistemic undertaking that is the philosophy of history. What was clear from our first volume regarding Sartre's theory was its *aesthetic* (i.e., poetic and poietic) character.¹ This aspect is not foreign to Foucault's approach, as we argued with reference to the fittingness or "fit" among the epistemes in *The Order of Things*, not to mention his Nietzschean recourse in his later writings to making one's life a work of art.² As we did in the previous chapter, let us undertake another diagnostic of these two strategies, but with greater stress on their evaluative concerns, a topic already broached in our discussion of freedom in the work of each.

AUTHENTIC HISTORY

Given that our first volume discussed "authentic history" in detail, I shall review this topic in summary fashion. The mark of an appropriately existentialist theory of history in the Sartrean mode, I have argued in volume 1, is its reliance on the threefold primacy of individual praxis: ontological, epistemic, and moral. If Sartre, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, fashions the social ontology that undergirds his approach to historical intelligibility, he introduces the progressive-regressive method in a prefatory essay to that same work to enlist existential psychoanalysis and historical materialism in this project of historical understanding. But his ontology and epistemology, I have insisted, are at the service of a moral vision that, as individualized, seeks to uncover the responsible parties in any social undertaking and, from the viewpoint of the collective, promotes the ideal of a society of free individuals in positive reciprocity mediated by abundant material goods—his famous "city of ends."

In the Marxian tradition that distinguishes "History" from "prehistory," Sartre conceives of "History" (with a Hegelian "H") as a value to be attained by conjoining a kind of individual "conversion" with the advent of a socialism of abundance; in other words, individual "choice" linked to socioeconomic change.³ Of course, the ambiguity of the given and the taken that pervades Sartre's thought surfaces the moment we attempt to ascertain the proportional contributions of choice and objective conditions (transcendence and facticity, in his terminology) to this ideal situation.

Because of the primacy he accords individual praxis, Sartre's historical accounts focus on the individuals who experience the risk of choice

and the pinch of the real; in other words, biography is essential to existentialist historiography. This was the lesson of the kaiser's withered arm.⁴ But the role of biography is not merely illustrative any more than are Foucault's tables, figures, and historical tableaux. Sartre was once asked why his plays with their socially revolutionary themes were presented in the bourgeois quarters of the central city rather than in the proletarian outskirts of Paris. He responded in defense that no bourgeois could leave one of these performances without thinking thoughts traitorous to his class. By its choice of topics and its attention to the experience of "living" history, existentialist historiography serves that undermining (what Foucault calls "transformative") purpose as well. In the sense that has become defining of existentialism, such history is *committed*. The object of that commitment is freedom: abstract freedom as the "definition" of the human individual, no doubt, but especially concrete freedom as the maximization of the possibilities of choice in a particular socioeconomic setting. Sartre's goal is to get people to acknowledge the former while striving to achieve the latter. This is what we called "History as value" in volume 1. It resembles what we have designated Foucault's "first" use of "freedom," namely, freedom as a plurality of genuine options for a potential agent. Concrete freedom is not significantly different for Sartre and for Foucault.

Recall the role of the artwork as the vehicle of communication between free individuals (Vol. 1:51–52). To the extent that existentialist biographies-histories are "novels that are true," they too are vehicles for disalienated communication. Indeed, insofar as they raise our consciousness and underscore our responsibilities, they are instruments of disalienating communication. And as an individual life is authentic when lived in the full realization that it is free to be other than it is, that its "to be" is "to choose" and that to choose is first to choose freedom, so it is with the authentic historian. He or she is fully aware that writing is not a ghostly enterprise that lightly skims the surface of the world, leaving it unchanged by its value-free observations. Like committed authors in general, committed historians "write for their times" in full cognizance of their responsibility to their contemporaries and for the values that their narratives embody. These values include recognition of the radical contingency of historical events as subject to both the free choice of historical agents and the counterfinality of the practico-inert domain. But they also embrace championing the cause of the least favored in our soci-

ety: the exploited and the oppressed — always in the name of freedom. The authentic historian extends these free and liberating values to his or her particular subject matter and criteria for assessing the success and failure of historical projects and events.

As Sartre wrote apropos of committed literature, “the ‘engaged’ writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change. He has given up the impossible dream of presenting an impartial picture of Society and the human condition” (*WL* 14). We have argued that this applies to the committed historian as well. Such history acknowledges that it has assumed the viewpoint of the least favored in society. It fully accepts responsibility for the choice. Admitting that, pace Marx and Hegel, History has no meaning/direction [*sens*] of its own, the committed historian is intent on fashioning a meaning in accord with the “facts,” but doing so with a view toward giving voice to the oppressed and exploited while helping dismantle exploitative structures and stinging the consciences of the oppressors.

AUTHENTICITY AND OBJECTIVITY

“What do we have to give up to tell a story in a certain way?”

Hans Kellner, *Encounters*

In his positive critique of Peter Novick’s influential study of objectivity in American historiography,⁵ Thomas Haskell warns that “in making detachment a vital criterion of objective thinking, we need not make the still greater error of confusing objectivity with neutrality,” which he thinks is Novick’s mistake. It was a mistake that Raymond Aron avoided when he remarked: “objectivity does not mean impartiality, but universality.”⁶ Haskell continues: “I see nothing to admire in neutrality. My conception of objectivity (which I believe is widely, if tacitly, shared by historians today) is compatible with strong political commitment.”⁷

Committed history, like committed literature, is scarcely “neutral.” It glories in its bias toward the socially and economically disadvantaged in our society. By denying that there is anything like uncommitted knowledge, Sartre’s epistemology has excluded the “noble ideal” of historical objectivity in the sense of “neutrality” from the outset. And yet Sartre continued to rely on historical facts/events that fastened his interpretative readings to the hard reality of being-in-itself or the practico-inert, as he terms it in the *Critique* (see *CDR* 1:18). As we observed in volume 1,

there are at least two “absolutes” in Sartrean ontology: the historical event and individual choice.⁸ When one adds the intuitive grasp of the phenomenological object “in person” to the recalcitrance of the historical fact or event, one has fashioned the first pole of Sartre’s bipolar epistemology.⁹ The other, more pragmatic pole is formed by totalizing praxis and its resultant dialectical reason. There is a tension between these two approaches to knowledge in Sartrean epistemology, roughly, the analytic and the dialectical, that must be either lived with or resolved in favor of the dialectic.¹⁰ For the latter, as the logic of practice, is capable of subsuming the former as a static stage in its dynamic process, whereas the former could not recognize the ultimacy of the latter but would have to reduce it to a form of analytical reason with strong rhetorical biases or heuristic functions such as one observes in the work of Kant. This last, in part, was Claude Lévi-Strauss’s criticism of Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* in the closing chapter of his *The Savage Mind*.¹¹ But with dialecticians like Hegel and Marx, the historical “givens” and objective possibilities show themselves only at certain moments in the dialectical advance. In fact, one could say that they are constituted only at such junctures. So the existential “choice” of dialectical over analytical reason, we have seen Sartre argue, is tantamount to the choice of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie; that is, the preference for holist (e.g., class-centered) over individualist reasoning (see *CDR* 1:802). But in the long run, Sartre’s dialectical “nominalism” will always focus on the organic individual, albeit, “in relation.”

MULTIPLE RATIONALITIES?

Having rejected the monolithic view of Western reason by his distinction of the analytic and the dialectical, one can ask whether Sartre would subscribe to Foucault’s further multiplication and fragmentation of rationalities throughout the West. The answer, I believe, would be an increasingly unequivocal “no” for the following reasons.

Sartre is an ontologist, though not a metaphysician. This leaves him uncomfortable with the light-footed positivism that marks Foucault’s empirical studies and distrust of phenomenology. The subtitle of Sartre’s masterwork *Being and Nothingness* is “An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.” As Hegel used his *Phänomenologie* as a propaedeutic to his larger *Logik*, so Sartre’s phenomenological ontology culminates in his existential psychoanalysis for which it offers the theoretical basis (see

BN 567 68). And while his subsequent writing invites us to exploit the two hints in *Being and Nothingness* that what seemed to be inevitably alienating ontological relations described there are, in fact, historically conditioned and hence historically superable,¹² Sartre gives no evidence of favoring a Foucauldian sequence of historical patterns (epistemes). However, the implicit pragmatism of Foucault's "games of truth" and "truth-effects" could fit quite nicely into what I have called Sartre's "praxis epistemology." So Sartre's epistemological resistance to Foucauldian archaeologies comes from just one pole of his bipolar approach, the phenomenological. And even that pole could be subsumed as the first, descriptive stage in the progressive-regressive method.¹³

But a stronger ground for Sartre's opposition to Foucault's multiplicity of reasons is his commitment to a dialectical reason that is fundamentally teleological. Dialectic, he explains, "as a movement of reality collapses if time is not dialectic; that is, if we refuse to recognize a certain action of the future as such" (*SM* 92 n). This "future" is a function of Sartrean consciousness, not of Hegelian *Geist*, insofar as individual consciousness is the locus of possibility, negativity, and lack. That these were originally defining characteristics of 'imaging consciousness (see *PI* 235 46) underscores its function as paradigm for Sartrean consciousness in general as well as the central role of imaging in his thought. Whatever vestiges of utopianism linger in his theory of history can be traced to this model of imaging consciousness. "One must understand," he continues, "that neither men nor their activities are *in time*, but that time, as a concrete quality of history, is made by men on the basis of their original temporalization" (*SM* 92 n). It is the primacy of this temporalizing praxis and of the dialectical reason which is its logic that separates him from Foucauldian spatialized reasoning. Sartrean dialectic is totalizing, even if the ontological freedom of the individual resists ultimate synthesis (totalization is not totality; one is always "other" or "more" than the totality one forms precisely insofar as consciousness transcends facticity, and praxis the practico-inert). As we concluded in chapter 7, Sartrean reasoning is pyramidal, Foucauldian prismatic.

Still, there is room for multiplicities in Sartrean discourse since his dialectic is open-ended in the sense of necessarily unfinished and its apex correspondingly ideal. In the first volume we witnessed him interpreting a labor strike as "a dialectic with holes in it," an implicit reference to his characterization of consciousness in *Being and Nothingness* as a "hole in

Being" (Vol. 1:147). He too claims to be a nominalist, though a "dialectical" one (*CDR* 37).

But Sartre's strongest objection to a Foucauldian fragmentation of rationality is doubtless ethical: such retreat to the multiple finesses questions of moral *responsibility* even as it draws the teeth of revolutionary discourse. In an interview, Foucault once told me that he had heard enough talk of "responsibility" under the Vichy regime!¹⁴ The problem is what we have called Foucault's "prismatic" notion of the self.¹⁵ The nominalist dispersion of forms of rationality threatens the unity and continuity demanded for ascriptions of moral responsibility. Recall that this was Sartre's early objection to the "pluralist anthropology" of Raymond Aron: its skepticism favored the political status quo and undermined individual responsibility.¹⁶

What Dilthey called "the unity of a life" is commonly admitted to be a necessary condition for ethical action and moral identity.¹⁷ As Aristotle remarked, just as one swallow does not make a spring neither does a single good deed make a virtuous person.¹⁸ Moral responsibility is not only a function of personal identity, insofar as responsibility is linked to original "choice" for Sartre, it is constitutive of the same.¹⁹ The authentic individual is denoted as such by virtue of his acceptance of responsibility for his choices. Sartre, whom we have observed seeking every chance to ascribe moral responsibility to historical agents, relied heavily on dialectical mediation and constitutive praxis to arrive at the individuals who sustained such impersonal social systems as colonialism and industrial capitalism.

To the extent that Foucauldian "responsibility" extends to the use of a particular form of "rationalizing," Sartre would heartily agree. But insofar as such responsibility is finessed by appeal to something like "responsibility under description *x*" (a plausible application of "responsibility" to Foucault's "prismatic" self on the axial reading I am proposing), I think Sartre would resist such a move as a form of bad faith. The primacy and nonnegotiability of ethical concerns for Sartre precludes an axial approach to individual responsibility. Despite occasional appeals to aesthetic models for interpersonal relations, for example, he explicitly rejected the aestheticism that some might find lurking there. But if one reads Foucault along the axis of subjectivation, it seems to leave the ethical a mere option among ways of describing a situation without granting it the kind of primacy that Sartre maintains or the overriding character

that many, perhaps most, ethicists would accord it. As Frédéric Gros points out, as early as his “existentialist” introduction to Ludwig Binswanger’s *Dream and Existence*, Foucault was recognizing an aesthetic dimension to the ethical.²⁰ Foucault’s explicit call for an “aesthetics of existence” toward the end of his life left him vulnerable to accusations of aestheticism and the kind of social indifference and moral callousness so often associated with that stand. His infamous suggestion that rape be decriminalized did not help counter this charge.²¹ No doubt, Sartre gradually came to respect the “meanness” in such social systems as well and the corresponding need to dismantle them by revolutionary action. And he could accept Foucault’s appeal to an important role of structural considerations in the formation of individuals. Indeed, this totalizing thought made organic metaphors and collective identities more plausible. But Sartre never retreated from his quest for moral agency or muted the existentialist battle cry: “We are condemned to be free [responsible].”

EFFECTIVE/ACTUAL (*WIRKLICHE*) HISTORY

Pierre Boncenne: Do you regard yourself as a “specific intellectual”
 Foucault: Yes, I do. I work in a specific field and do not produce a theory of the world. Even if, in practice, whenever one works in a particular field one can do so only by having or arriving at a particular point of view.

“On Power,” *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*

I haven’t written a single book that was not inspired, at least in part, by a direct personal experience.

Michel Foucault, “Interview”
 by Ducio Trombadori, *Essential Works*

In an essay that we said marks Foucault’s transition from explicitly archaeological to genealogical concerns, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History*,²² he addresses and in effect adopts Nietzsche’s term “effective history” [*wirkliche Historie*].²³ In contrast with traditional history that “seeks its support outside of time and pretends to base its judgments on an apocalyptic objectivity,” effective history is “without constants. Nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men.” This entails the recommendation that “the traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development *must be systematically dismantled*” (*EW* 2:380, NGH,

emphasis added). Though ostensibly an essay on the work of Nietzsche, this pivotal study is a compendium of archaeological and inchoate genealogical notions. In fact, it exemplifies the Nietzschean inspiration of much of Foucault's work. The "systematic dismantling" of "the traditional devices" for constructing a view of history that is comprehensive and developmental, while scarcely consonant with the supplemental role that Foucault sometimes assigned his work in relation to traditional history, follows logically from his earlier advice in *The Order of Things* to "destroy the anthropological quadrilateral in its very foundations" so as to open a space for thought (OT 341–42). And it suggests more than the mere guerrilla warfare with which I previously characterized Foucault's historical critique. In attending to Nietzsche's uses of history, it implicitly raises the issue of the ethics and the politics of history since such uses are inescapably ethical and political.²⁴

If history is a construct of the historian—if historians, in de Certeau's words, "make" history—the selection of one interpretive scheme over another is both an ethical and a political act. It is ethical in that it constitutes a way of existing for the historian, a manner of defining scope and direction in the exercise of his or her craft. In other words, it helps define the person as well as the historian. But the crafting of history is equally ethical and political in the sense that this selection helps establish the context in which others see themselves and articulate the values according to which they assess one another's work. This too is historiography as subjectivation. Historiography is political insofar as its constructivist practice is easily charted along the axis of power-government and not simply along that of knowledge-truth. History has traditionally been used to legitimize a house, a nation, a military action. This is captured in the well-known assertion that history is written by the victors. As in the case of "committed" history, effective history is ethical and political to the core. But in Foucault's version, these two dimensions do not radiate from the historical agent the way they do in Sartrean praxis; rather, they reflect prismatically alternative views of a *multiplicity*. Again, this is not promising for concepts of historical agency or moral responsibility as these are commonly understood, a fact not lost on Foucault's critics.

In his perceptive study of Foucault's methods and historical sociology, Mitchell Dean notes that his "effective history" sets itself against what might be called the 'colonization of historical knowledge' by philosophies of history such as the 'high modernism' of Hegel and Marx

(or Sartre, one might add) and the ‘critical modernism’ of Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno” (*CEH* 2). A central thesis of Dean’s book is that “historical study can become effective because it is able to exercise a perpetual vigilance and scepticism toward the claims of various philosophies to prescribe the meaning of history” (*CEH* 4). But in remarks indicative of Foucault’s distance from Sartre’s committed history, Dean adds that Foucault’s approach “is not a question of advocating the adoption of a perspectival history against a positivist one but of reflecting upon the possible uses of historical studies. Any critical, transdisciplinary historical study must not only avoid empiricist *naïveté* but also actively thematize the problem of the uses to which history is put and the necessity to which it answers” (*CEH* 15).²⁵ Foucault’s Nietzsche-inspired, genealogical “history of the present,” Dean believes, does this more successfully than his earlier archaeologies.

Clearly, the expression “*wirkliche Historie*” surfaces with Foucault’s explicitly genealogical investigations and with it, the openly political dimension of his writings. But if one adopts the axial reading of his oeuvre that I am recommending, one discovers this practico-political concern at work early on. And the ethical interest, implicit in the subjectivation that such a hermeneutic brings to light, is likewise operative in these early “histories.” Which is not to deny that the *ex professo* writing of “history of the present” may have had a more immediately practical use in these later works than in the histories of madness or of clinical medicine. But even in these instances, I would cite the role assigned to, if not assumed by, Foucault in the antipsychiatric movement of the 1960s as a counterexample to Dean’s claim. Foucault’s early questioning of received views and legitimizing narratives was a form of critique directed at the very “rationality” of these practices.

Just as Foucault is concerned more with the “effects” of truth than with truth as such, so is his historical interest directed toward the “uses” of history rather than toward history itself. Like Nietzsche, Foucault was a constructionist in both epistemology and historiography. This gives his work the neopragmatic hue that we have remarked throughout our investigation and avoids such traditional metaphysical issues as the nature of truth, the “subject” of history, and the like. What distinguishes him from constructionists like the Marxists, a number of *Annalistes*, and many pragmatists, for that matter, is his refusal to link the distinctive historical epistemes to any causal succession or to place Deweyan

confidence in scientific “method.”²⁶ Though he can scarcely avoid claims that ring metaphysical such as “history has no ‘meaning’” (*EW* 3:116, TP) and “power as such does not exist” (*EW* 3:336, SP), his approach to history is *sui generis* and demands that we lower the barriers among the social sciences as well as between them and philosophical critique. Like John Locke, though without concentrating on “human understanding,” Foucault is a kind of “under-laborer” who clears the terrain of utopian hopes and transcendental clutter, not out of a preference for a desert landscape, much less to construct an interesting piece of intellectual architecture, but in order to increase the options for “thinking otherwise,” which we have seen him specify as the “ethics of an intellectual” in our time. It is his understanding of the relation between the ethical and the historical that concerns us now.

Mitchell Dean argues that it is to Foucault’s genealogical “history of the present” that we should turn for the critical bite of his arguments:

The historical-theoretical project Foucault’s writings on Kant imply and which the rest of his work can be shown to exemplify, is not directed towards an objectivistic, comparativist, science of history, nor to metaphysical philosophy of history as humankind’s journey to a higher goal or search for the recovery of lost origins, but to the political and ethical issues raised by *our* insertion in a particular present, and by the problem of action under the limits establishing the present. (*CEH* 51, emphasis his)

Like Sartre’s committed historian, Foucault as critical and effective historian is trying to make a difference that is more than informational. He is addressing the urgent social issues of the day, but doing so, not from some transhistorical perspective, but by pressing his situatedness and ours to the full—what Sartre called “historialization” and which he too advocated (see Vol. 1:84–87). Such history is not antiquarian in interest nor does it mine the past in search of models for current behavior (a traditional use that some mistakenly perceive in Foucault’s study of sexual mores in ancient Greece and Rome). Rather, it reads the reflection of our own political and ethical concerns off the behavior and customs of the ancient world the way a perceptive traveler in a foreign land will see his homeland anew in light of the experience.

But the “we” whose “present” Foucault is studying may not be “the modern West” but a more closely circumscribed unit, as Dean suggests

(see *CEH* 52). That would be quite in line with the historical nominalism to which Foucault subscribes and would underscore the fluidity of such unities under a nominalist reading. Moreover, his “history of the present,” while acknowledging our inescapable situatedness and the impossibility of reaching the past “as it actually occurred,” is far from the sterile “presentism” of which Habermas and others accuse it.²⁷ We have seen that Foucault is outspokenly opposed to prophetic history and/or utopian hope. To “feel the ground shaking under our feet” or “hear the distant roar of battle” are rhetorical expressions of fissures in our present practices that mark their vulnerability, not predictions of oncoming events. Again, the reinsertion of chance into historical accounts.

In contrasting Foucault with Sartre on the role of the committed intellectual, Gilles Deleuze was asked: “So one of the possible functions of the intellectual according to Foucault was to open a space where others could talk?” Deleuze responded:

Well, for France this was something totally new. This was the big difference between Foucault and Sartre, a conception of the political position of the intellectual that was not at all theoretical, but rather *as way of life*.²⁸ Sartre, despite his strength and genius and here I am not being in the least critical shared the classical conception of the intellectual. That is, he intervened in the name of superior values: truth, justice, the good. I see a long line from Voltaire and Zola to Sartre.

Foucault had a wholly new conception. The intellectual was no longer the guarantor of certain values. His conception was, in a way, much more functional. Foucault was always a functionalist; he simply invented his own functionalism.²⁹

After discussing how Foucault, on finding the current condition of inmates in French prisons intolerable, gave voice to this insufferable situation, Deleuze concludes: “Therefore the point is not to seek truth in Sartre’s fashion, but to produce new conditions” (*CA* 3:270, “Politics, Ethics”).

Though he has touched on an important contrast, Deleuze has overstated the difference between Sartre and Foucault on this point. As we saw in *What Is Literature?* Sartre was keenly aware of the productive force of the written word, and his subsequent political action simply confirmed this theoretical view, occasioning the most vitriolic abuse from both Right and Left. But, admittedly, Sartre had a vision of a poten-

tial society of free beings, and his practice was guided by that vision which, if it called for revolution (and to that extent was uncompromising), was willing to decry exploitation and oppression in concrete circumstances.

HISTORY AS CRITIQUE

Structures don't take to the streets.

Student graffito, Paris, May 1968

In his Tanner Lectures, Foucault notes: "Experience has taught me that the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than is abstract criticism."³⁰ Although enunciated during his genealogical phase, this observation captures the critical force of his archaeological writings as well. Above all, it articulates the effect of "reintroducing chance" into history, of making us aware of the contingency of our necessities and perhaps above all of underscoring the *specific rationalization* at work in any particular relationship of power. In a previous chapter I noted his reference to the linkage between power and violence. On the one hand, he insists that "the government of men by men involves a certain type of rationality. It doesn't involve instrumental violence" (EW 3:324, *Omnes*). In other words, the control of our actions, the delimitation of our possible choices, need not entail violence, which, if it accompanies such exercises of power (recall his reference to violence and consent as almost always accompanying power) is not identical with its exercise. So Foucault can conclude:

Consequently, those who resist or rebel against a form of power cannot merely be content to denounce violence or criticize an institution. Nor is it enough to cast the blame on reason in general. What has to be questioned is *the form of rationality at stake*. The criticism of power wielded over the mentally sick or mad cannot be restricted to psychiatric institutions; nor can those questioning the power to punish be content with denouncing prisons as total institutions. The question is: *how are such relations of power rationalized?* Asking it is the only way to avoid other institutions, with the same objectives and the same effects, from taking their stead. (EW 3:324–25, *Omnes*, emphasis added)

Thus what he calls "political rationalization," for example, the kind that warrants what he called "pastoral power" at one stage of Western

history or “Reason of State” at another, carries as its “inevitable effects” both individualization and totalization. Liberation, he warns us, “can only come from attacking, not just one of these two effects, but political rationality’s very roots” (*EW* 3:325, *Ommes*). And this, it seems, will primarily be a matter of unmasking its presence at work in our midst and naming it for what it is. “I’m interested in the rationalization of the management of the individual,” he explains. “The objective of my work is not a history of institutions or a history of ideas but the history of that rationalization as it is at work in institutions and in the behavior of people.” Regarding violence, he adds: “What is most dangerous about violence is its rationality. To be sure, violence is terrible in itself. But violence finds its deepest anchorage in the form of rationality that we employ. My problem is to to prosecute reason but to determine the nature of that rationality which is compatible with violence. I’m not fighting reason.”³¹

So his long-standing project of writing the history of reason, far from favoring the “irrationalism” of which he knew it would be accused (“the blackmail of the Enlightenment”), is motivated by the desire to uncover those lines of legitimization and hypothetical necessity that control human behavior in ways that we find intolerable. In other words, his history of reason is an effective history of the present.

In a manner reminiscent of Sartre’s committed history, Foucault describes his writing of the book on the prison system:

For *Discipline and Punish* my idea was to try to write a book that was directly connected with a concrete activity that was taking place on the matter of the prisons. At the time a whole movement had grown up that challenged the prison system and questioned the practices involved in confining offenders. I found myself caught up in this movement, working, for example, with former prisoners, and that is why I wanted to write a history book about prisons. What I wanted to do was not to tell a story, or even to analyze the contemporary situation, because that would have needed much greater experience than I had and a connection with penal institutions much deeper than I had. No, what I wanted to write was a history book that would make the present situation comprehensible and, possibly, lead to action. If you like, I tried to write a “treatise of intelligibility” about the penitentiary situation, I wanted to make it intelligible and, therefore, criticizable. (*PPC* 100–101, “On Power”)

Here as elsewhere, what Foucault’s histories of reason intend is to uncover the various rationalizations that accompany and serve to legitimize

practices that we find intolerable. This is history as critical investigation. By “critical,” he explains, “I don’t mean a demolition job, one of rejection or refusal, but a work of examination that consists of suspending as far as possible the system of values to which one refers when testing and assessing it” (*PPC* 107, “On Power”).³² Of course, the challenge to suspend “as far as possible” the system one is criticizing becomes problematic when that “system” is reason or rationality itself. Again, we encounter the Archimedean issue or what epistemologist Roderick Chisholm calls “the problem of the criterion.”³³ Obviously, Foucault was not a foundationalist. He did not appeal to any apodictic, self-evident, or intuitively grasped first principles on which to ground his judgments. He is pragmatic in the sense of always beginning in the middle. This was one of the corollaries to his preference for “descent” [*Herkunft*] over “origin” [*Ursprung*] in his study of Nietzsche (*EW* 2:370ff., NGH).

But, as we have remarked in our study of *The Order of Things*, Foucault seems to have “resolved” the inevitable question-begging nature of the criterion problem by accepting the de facto authority of “Western *ratio*” in the “countersciences” emerging at the end of the modern era. He does so, recall, with the caveat that we be aware of and seek to minimize the harm that such *ratio* necessarily entails.³⁴ As for the question of his *locus standi* when he analyzes his own episteme, we have watched him adopt a distancing tactic by nominalist reversal, by questioning received opinions about such concepts as authorship and sexual repression, and by adopting a fundamentally neopragmatist approach in order to undertake an ethnology of his own society.³⁵ Put in spatial imagery, we can say that his relation to his own present is “sagittal.”³⁶ But here as earlier we seem required either to reject Foucault’s protestations and label his history of reason inconsistent (the Habermasian maneuver) or to suspend or ignore whatever foundationalist tendencies we might harbor for the sake of the “truth effects” of Foucault’s studies (the Rortean approach). Given the hypothetical tenor of Foucault’s reflections on his own works (“all my books are little toolboxes”),³⁷ it seems “reasonable” to cut him the slack required to pursue his studies as promised.

BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND MARXISM

Foucault links his critique of rationality with his critique of phenomenology when he asks: “Is the phenomenological, transhistorical subject able to provide an account of the historicity of reason?” and responds: “Here, reading Nietzsche was the point of rupture for me. There is a his-

tory of the subject just as there is a history of reason; but we can never demand that the history of reason unfold as a first and founding act of the rationalist subject.” Describing the rise of interest in Nietzsche in the sixties, he explains: “The first people who had recourse to Nietzsche were not looking for a way out of Marxism. They wanted a way out of phenomenology” (*EW* 2:438–39, SPS). But whereas the Frankfurt School’s bifurcation of reason into the instrumental and the noninstrumental is Kantian in nature, Foucault insists instead on “an endless, multiple bifurcation—a kind of abundant ramification.” As he explains:

I do not believe in a kind of founding act whereby reason, in its essence, was discovered or established and from which it was subsequently diverted, which is why I have tried to analyze *forms of rationality*: different foundations, different creations, different modifications in which rationalities engender one another, oppose and pursue one another. I want to depart as such from the phenomenological account (with its foundational and essential project of reason, from which we have shifted away on account of some forgetfulness and to which we must return) as from the Marxist account, or the account of Georg Lukács. [In the latter version] a rationality existed, and it was the form par excellence of Reason itself, but a certain number of social conditions (capitalism, or rather, the shift from one form of capitalism to another) precipitated this rationality into a crisis, that is, a forgetting of reason, a fall into irrationalism. I tried to take my bearings in relation to these two major models, presented very schematically and un- fairly. (*EW* 2:442–43, SPS, emphasis added)

Foucault’s resistance to the two major currents of French thought in his day might seem to have pushed him into a kind of scientific empiricism as the third alternative. Yet, he has been equally critical of the honorific “science” and especially of its insensitivity to the exercise of power associated with that term.

Foucault maps his critique of rationality along the axis of subjectivation when he adds that what interested him in this regard “were precisely the forms of rationality applied by the human subject to itself.” While historians of science in France inquired how a scientific object was constituted, recall that the question he asked himself was: “How is it that the human subject took itself as the object of possible knowledge? Through what forms of rationality and historical foundations? And, finally, *at what price?*” This was his question: “At what price can subjects speak the

truth about themselves as mad persons, as sick, as criminals, as speaking, working or living subjects, as the subject of sexual pleasure?" (*EW* 2:443–44, SPS, emphasis added). We have already remarked the relation between truth-telling and subjectivation that is emerging in this general project of critically mapping the history of rationality. The dawning issue of the *cost* of truth-telling, even to oneself, serves to underscore the conjuncture of parrhesia, Foucauldian spirituality, and care of the self that opens a space in which an autonomous self can emerge not as origin but as achievement, not as substantial and determined but as prismatic and free, not as self-identical but as self-reflective; in effect, as that "dispersion which we are and make" (*AK* 131).

Not surprisingly, Foucault insists that his interest has always been in the question of truth, of telling the truth, the *Wahr-sagen*. Indeed, his study of the parrhesiast exemplifies this concern. But he now appeals to the axis of subjectivation when he adds that his problem has included "the relation between telling the truth and forms of reflexivity, of self upon self" (*EW* 2:446, SPS) what we have called Foucauldian "freedom" in its second sense. He reads this move from phenomenology to truth as the inverse of Sartre's progression. Referring to Sartre's youthful Nietzschean essay "The Legend of Truth," Foucault remarks that they both began with the same problem but moved in opposite directions.³⁸

Foucault's direction, as we said, led away from any essential definition of "truth" toward the various "effects" of truth as a social phenomenon. As with truth, so with reason: it ramifies in nominalist fashion. Refusing to take part in the Habermas-Adorno debate over the breakup of reason, Foucault insists:

That is not my problem, insofar as I am not prepared to identify reason entirely with the totality of rational forms which have come to dominate at any given moment, in our own era and even very recently in types of knowledge, forms of technique, and modalities of government or domination; realms where we can see all the major applications of rationality. . . . 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 [science, technology, and politics] 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 trans-

formation 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 that is now finished, and that another narrative is under way. (*EW* 2:448–49, SPS, emphases added)

Just as he proposed a “polyhedron of intelligibility” rather than a single cause or a master narrative for understanding historical events, so, again in pragmatic fashion, he appeals to a rhizome of rationalities that lead in multiple directions without requiring an absolute origin or a final goal.

THOUGHT AND THE FORMS OF EXPERIENCE

If we sift archaeologically through older texts that at first seemed alien to our own experience, we can gradually re-create a conception of experience that will not conflate the previous conception and our own, but will allow the distinctiveness of ours to emerge in contrast to the distinctively different ones out of which ours was formed.

David Couzens Hoy, “Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?”

In the opening chapter I cited a reflection by Foucault on his general project of formulating a history of the forms of experience. I promised to repeat these comments at the conclusion of the study since the present volume serves as a kind of gloss on these initiatory remarks. So let me add the other bookend to our study in this final chapter by repeating Foucault’s observations, which we can now consider in light of the foregoing discussion of its basic terms.

Reflecting toward the end of his life on his first published book, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, Foucault remarks:

To study the forms of experience in their history [as he was about to do in the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*] is an idea that occurred with an earlier project, in which I made use of methods of existential analysis in the field of psychiatry and in the domain of “mental illness.” For two reasons, not unrelated to each other, this project left me unsatisfied: its theoretical weakness in elaborating the notion of experience, and its ambiguous link with a psychiatric practice which it simultaneously ignored and took for granted. One could deal with the first problem by referring to a general theory of the human being, and treat the second altogether differently by turning, as is so often done, to the “economic and social context”; one could choose, by doing so, to accept the resulting dilemma of a philosophical anthropology and a social history. But I wondered whether, rather

than playing on this alternative, it would not be possible *to consider the very historicity of forms of experience*. This entailed two negative tasks: first, a “nominalist” reduction of philosophical anthropology and the notions which it serves to promote, and second, a shift of domain to the concepts and methods of the history of societies. On the positive side, the task was *to bring to light the domain* where the formation, development, and transformation of forms of experience can situate themselves: that is, a history of thought.⁴⁰

As we noted at the outset, Foucault was facing a dilemma similar to that which confronted Sartre, namely, choosing between phenomenology and historical materialism (roughly, between anthropology and social history). But where Sartre undertook a synthesis of these two in his progressive-regressive method, which basically elaborated his concept of situation, Foucault opted for a *tertium*, the domain of “thought” where the formation, transformation, and displacement of “forms of experience” could be charted and diagnosed. We analyzed the negative aspects of this project, namely, his nominalist cleansing of the humanist subject in chapter 2 and, in chapters 3 and 6, we addressed his “situating” of the human sciences in the space vacated by the displacement of early modern ontology in the archaeological event of the late modern episteme. This methodological move involves a “shift of domain” from the traditional history of ideas to the realm of discursive and nondiscursive practices whose transformations and displacements are noted and analyzed as well as to the realm of power relations that accompany these shifts and the problematizations that serve as their symptoms in the lives of individuals within the confines of societies.

Though the term “thought” is a recurring one among post-Heideggerian philosophers such as Derrida and Foucault, we have found that Foucault’s use of the expression is difficult to pin down.⁴¹ An initial attempt might review the array of practices, power relations, and problematizations that he has charted across his career and conclude: “These comprise his ‘history of thought.’” This is unexceptionable as a beginning. It has the advantage of removing the term from an exclusively cognitivist perspective as well as opening the door to its potentially transformative character. For the very exercise of a history of thought would itself be a form of thinking. That, in turn, would place the expression in proximity to Sartrean praxis and render its history not merely descriptive but “effective”: “Modes of thought, that is to say, modes of action,” as

Foucault remarks on one occasion.⁴² The history of thought, on this account, would be, in the final analysis, simply the history of the forms of experience, as he states in the above quotation. Like experience, thought requires the conjunction of the threefold, not in a pyramidal synthesis but as what Deleuze calls an “inclusive disjunct.” This disjunctive relationship would account for those passages in which Foucault links thought with problematization and self-constitution. But it would equally support remarks that join thought with truth-saying and the relations of power. Thus “thought” becomes extensionally equivalent to “experience.” So when he observes that “thought exists independently of systems and structures of discourse” (*PPC* 155, PC), he is underscoring the potentially critical function of experience that is always “more” than each or all of its axes. Given the ambiguity of his use of the term, I suggest this as a plausible and preferable interpretation.⁴³

But this interpretation encounters a formidable objection from Foucault himself, one that seems to undermine my entire prismatic reading of his works, bending these axes in a pyramidal direction. In what is described as his last interview before his death, he is faced with a version of my claim that there is an movement from the implicit to the explicit along each axis of his work when read independently.⁴⁴ He responds:

I must say that I would not put it that way. It seems to me that in *Madness and Civilization*, *The Order of Things* and also *Discipline and Punish* a lot of things which were implicit could not be rendered explicit due to the manner in which I posed the problems. I tried to locate three major types of problems: the problem of truth, the problem of power, and the problem of individual conduct. These three domains of experience can only be understood in relation to each other, not independently. What bothered me about the previous books is that I considered the first two experiences without taking the third into account. By bringing to light this third experience, it seemed to provide a kind of guiding thread which, in order to justify itself, did not need to resort to somewhat rhetorical methods of avoiding one of the three fundamental domains of experience. (*PPC* 243, “The Return of Morality”)

He appears to be denying the legitimacy of an axial reading; that is, the adequacy of focusing on the lines of knowledge or power to the exclusion of subjectivation (individual conduct). In effect, he seems to be denying the intelligibility (“can only be understood”) of his earlier works as they were presented. How is one to respond to this self-critique?

The easiest answer is to read it as a kind of *volte-face* and apply to him the developmental model that he so staunchly resisted employing for others in his earlier writings, especially the archaeological ones. This has been a widespread rendition of his oeuvre. Its theme is the return of the subject or, more cautiously, the emergence of the self, in Foucault's thought. And it totalizes the earlier writings in a narrative of exclusion or resistance (perhaps repression) in combat with discovery or liberation. In a move that I find personally attractive, given the general scope of my inquiry, several critics describe this as a return to Foucault's existentialist roots, as if he had been combating the ghost of Sartre all these years. More of this in a moment.

I shall not rehearse my reasons for proposing an axial reading, at least as a complement, if not an alternative, to the evolutionary model. I argued this at some length in chapter 7. Let me summarize those remarks by pointing out that the axial reading is productive of new insights and attention to overlooked issues in his earlier works (such as the role of experience or the ethico-aesthetic relationship or the presence of the subject) and that it is clearly more in accord with his resistance to dialectical thinking, organic models, and totalizing thought. But apropos the lengthy quotation set forth as a counterexample, let me emphasize, first, that it does admit the "implicit" presence of (presumably subsequently articulated) matters that his method at the time could not render explicit. That scarcely refutes my observation of a movement from implicit to explicit or the reverse along each of these lines of argumentation. In fact, it suggests a reason for the shift from implicit to explicit: his regnant "method" excluded or at least deflected attention from consideration of such issues at that stage. Nor does his, I would argue, overstated claim that the three domains of experience cannot be understood independently contradict his affirmation in his last lectures that, whereas the "scientific," the "political," and the "ethical" considerations of an issue might characteristically attend to the axes of truth, power, and subjectivation respectively, the properly "philosophical" treatment of a topic had to consider all three. He christens this unifying view "philosophical parrhesia."⁴⁵ Again, the inclusively disjunctive relationship among these axes would respect the mutuality of their features while preserving their multiplicity and irreducibility, not unlike the "presence-to-self" of the Sartrean subject.⁴⁶ In both cases the result is a unity without identity. As David Hoy concludes in respect to Foucault, "if the postmodern geneal-

ogy counts at all as self-knowledge, then the self that is thereby known turns out to be not single, unified, complete, and whole, but complex, disseminated, fractious, and fragile.”⁴⁷

SARTRE WAITING AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS?

In his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in which he assumed the position formerly held by the famous Hegel scholar Jean Hyppolite, Foucault muses: “We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us” (*DL* 235). Could something similar be said of Foucault’s relation to Sartre? “An existentialist Foucault?” asks Rudi Visser, who then answers, “Why not?”⁴⁸ The sometimes viciously ad hominem remarks directed toward Sartre by Foucault in print, not to mention those excluded from print,⁴⁹ suggest that he was trying to free himself from the senior’s power (read “undermine Sartre’s popular authority while establishing his own”). Was this a case of “killing the father” and offering a “map of misreading” to anyone still trying to follow in his path? Was Foucault wrestling with a Sartrean demon in his own thinking?

Refusing the temptation to psychoanalyze Foucault or to indulge in facile attributions of motive, let us briefly recount and analyze the evidence from his work that might support an existentialist approach to history such as we have observed Sartre champion. Despite his linguistic turn away from phenomenologists and the philosophy of experience toward that of concept and system, Foucault insisted at the height of his archaeological publications that “discourse is not life: its time is not your time; in it, you will not be reconciled to death” (*AK* 211). But that very attempt to distance himself from espousing existential humanist values in his archaeologies betrays an awareness of the sterility of discursive analysis by itself. It does not treat of lived time; it ignores our personal mortality even as it analyzes our finitude.⁵⁰ That “experience” remained a key concept in his thought is not belied by its partial eclipse in a number of texts. And the movement from individual to self charted on the axis of subjectivation enriches experience without personalizing it. In fact, the word “person” is rare in Foucault’s vocabulary and never assumes the technical meaning it received from Sartre in *The Family Idiot*. The closest Foucault approaches Sartrean “personalization” is the constitution of the moral self by appeal to “spirituality” and parrhesiastic prac-

tices—an aesthetic of existence. And yet it is an aesthetic of *existence* that he proposes to his contemporaries returning from the journey he had guided through the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Inventing meaning, not discovering it; resisting domination, not acquiescing in it; continuing the indefinite work of freedom—is this not the stuff of existentialism? And if the motto of Sartrean humanism is the claim that “you can always make something out of what you’ve been made into,” consider once more the following:

Situations can always give rise to strategies. I don’t believe we are locked into a history; on the contrary, all my work consists in showing that history is traversed by strategic relations that are necessarily unstable and subject to change. Provided, of course, that the agents of these processes have the political courage to change things. (*EW* 3:397, *Actes*)

Nor is this a mere slip of the tongue. In the remarkable interview with Ducio Trombadori, cited earlier, he explains:

I’m very careful to get a grip on the actual mechanisms of the exercise of power; I do this because those who are enmeshed, involved, in these power relations can, in their actions, their resistance, their rebellion, escape them, transform them, in a word, cease being submissive. (*EW* 3:294, IDT)

He even shares the optimism of the final Sartre when he continues: “From that viewpoint, all my research rests on a postulate of absolute optimism” (*EW* 3:294).⁵¹ In other words, Foucault and Sartre as committed thinkers and French moralists have more in common than is usually recognized. The overlap that we have observed is considerable.

But in the final analysis, Foucault remains at oblique, if not right, angles to Sartrean existentialism and to the existentialist theory of history that we formulated in volume 1. The linguistic turn, even if modified in later works, the resistance to dialectical totalization, the penchant for spatialized reasoning and general emphasis on space over time, the downplay of ideal ends and utopian “as ifs,” and, above all, the implicit rejection of the threefold primacy of individual praxis (ontological, epistemic, and moral) — these are the features that keep Foucault from sharing more than a certain overlay of concepts and interests with Sartrean existentialism.

As for historical reason, the difference finds concrete expression in the comparative role of *biography* in their historical accounts. As we saw in volume 1, an existentialist theory of history seeks to articulate the experience of the historical agent: “the risk of choice and pinch of the real.” Such “existential psychoanalyses” render history “living” and give its narrative a moral force. Foucault ignores biography almost entirely in constructing his major works. His brief remarks on the memoirs of the hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin and the parricide Pierre Rivière⁵² are at most case studies that scarcely enter into his concept of history as do Sartre’s biographies of Genet or Flaubert. Though equally “committed,” the centrality of biographical concerns to Sartrean history contrasted with their almost total neglect in the Foucauldian reaffirms that the latter constitutes not the peak of a totalizing pyramid but the transverse slice of a prism.

Conclusion: *The Map and the Diary*

Neither Foucault nor Sartre could be called “historians” in the usual sense of the word. We have recorded each of them admitting as much. My project in this and the previous volume has been to describe how each assumes a second-level perspective on standard history. In that sense, each is a “philosopher” of history or better, since that expression had come to denote advocates of History in the grand style, a philosophical historian. I proposed the respective models of the diary and the map to characterize the interpretive schemes adopted by Sartre and Foucault respectively to “make” sense of history. Foucault once referred to himself as a kind of cartographer, and Sartre devoted thousands of pages to “existential biographies” throughout his career. For both, their writing of history is a kind of *poiesis*, an artful enterprise that Sartre calls “creative disclosure” and Foucault “fictions.”²

But the contrast plays out on a larger field than that of the theory of history. It extends to the respective camps of what have come to be called the modern and the postmodern domains, for which Sartre and Foucault are often taken to be the poster figures. In my introduction to our first volume, I warned that it was not my intention to produce a “post-

The whole first volume of *Dits et écrits* echoes with the thunder of [Foucault’s] rivalry with Sartre. At stake is the Foucauldian response to the Sartrean question, *What is an Intellectual?*

Robert Redeker,
“La dernière peau
philosophique de
Michel Foucault”¹

modern” Sartre or a “modern” Foucault, though I cautioned that the distinction between them might turn out to be more subaltern than contradictory; that is, that these opposing categorizations might end up being true of each “to some extent.” I believe we have found that to be the case.

The Sartrean subject, because it is not a self but a presence-to-self, is ontologically nonself-identical. In other words, it harbors difference (Foucault’s “that difference which we are and make”) within its very being and a corollary which Foucault did not draw but could have—temporalizes its world. Owing to the threefold primacy of praxis as well as the sedimented practices and unintended consequences of the practico-inert, the Sartrean subject responds to a historical reason that is analytical in its parts but dialectical in its whole. The resultant historical accounts bear an ethical message (“we can always act otherwise and hence are responsible historical agents individually and collectively”), are guided by a politico-moral vision (“the city of ends”), and carry an invitation via their aesthetic and ethical attractiveness to “re-present” the experiences of the individuals whose lives are being depicted. This is history modeled on the diary. Dialectical reason subsumes the merely anecdotal into the significantly historical (e.g., “the kaiser’s withered arm”).³

But if historical reason, on Sartre’s reading, is dialectical, if it imposes certain necessities of its own—the “logic” of the boxing match, for example—these necessities and this rationality remain *hypothetical*. It is free organic praxis that puts them into play. In the final analysis, this is what guards our freedom and responsibility in the process; this advances the narrative; this keeps history “human.”

Foucault, like Sartre in his more cautious moments, acknowledges that he is proposing hypotheses: heuristic devices, experiments, ways of “thinking otherwise” than before. Both authors write not for the sheer pleasure of the text but to make a difference: Foucault to transform himself and to open spaces for the possible transformation of others; Sartre to give the bourgeois a guilty conscience by underscoring his responsibility for exploitative systems and oppressive practices. For each, the goal is to achieve a certain “autonomy,” not in the Kantian sense of “giving the law to oneself,” but in the aesthetico-moral sense of the unhindered exercise of one’s creative activity, though not simply for its own sake. Creative freedom offers a space for fruitful exchange between both

thinkers—for Sartre, the truth of freedom; for Foucault, the freedom of truth.

But Foucault's cartographical method addressed the issue of what Althusser called "structural causality" with a detail and sophistication that Sartre's "practico-inert" failed to match. Not only did it take seriously the linguistic turn in twentieth-century thought to the point of insisting on the mutual incompatibility of the being of language and the being of man (an obvious shot across the Existentialist's bow), but it underscored the extent to which the individual and even the "self" are functions of its power relations and truth effects. That existentialist, much less traditional, history fails to chart fully on this map should come as no surprise. Not that the axes of power and knowledge could not support Sartrean claims—we saw them do so—or that the line of subjectivation did not issue in a quasi-existentialist reflective freedom and creative ethics—arguably it does—but that the pervasive "disjunct" of the Foucauldian approach, the tension between his drive for continuity ("what has always been my concern") and his penchant for self-distancing ("the ethic of the intellectual in our day") leaves us with a set of open-ended possibilities but no guidance except to resist domination wherever possible.⁴ Foucault's ultimate service to theory of history might well be forcing us to unlock and think otherwise our received concepts of truth, power, and the subject. As Pasquale Pasquino observes: "We should be concerned with gauging how great a displacement [Foucault] has forced [our] reflection on truth, on the subject and on power to undergo, and with assessing the space for philosophic, historical and political thought which opens up, as a result of this displacement."⁵ The practical upshot of this history of rationality and these histories of the three forms of revolving relationship (to truth, power, and the self) that constitute "experience" is the uncovering of certain situations as changeable because contingent and the concomitant recognition that they may thereby become intolerable. To borrow the Sisyphian metaphor one last time, Foucault's goal is not Sartrean liberation from the rock pile but getting the bolder off one's toe!

Yet this comes as no surprise. Foucault had always insisted that he was not offering definitive solutions: "What I've written is never prescriptive either for me or for others—at most it's instrumental and tentative" (*EW* 3:240, IDT). But his analytic of power, truth, and subjectivation

yields a set of histories that, I have argued, encloses an “experience” that is as fluid and malleable as the respective slice of the prism that encloses it. In other words, if there is any “carving at the joints” at work here (other than the standard periodizations, which he accepts without question), it will be done with an archaeological instrument, and the resultant “experience” will be as different from others as are the positions on the axes that designate the relevant truth effects, power relations, and subject formations (individual or self) that enclose and constitute this experience. This is nominalism at work; this is parrhesiastic history; this is the work of a historian *sui generis*. It challenges us to think historically as never before. The kaleidoscope, once turned, can never regain its original configuration. Each turn both opens and closes certain possibilities. Perhaps if Foucault had tempered his distrust of dialectic and accorded the temporal a greater role in his thought, he might have found more than “the thin line of narrative” at work in human history and appreciated better the complementary role of his mapping of a territory that is not just the space of transformation but the abode of historical agents. If existentialism is indeed an ideology, as Sartre once allowed in a reckless moment, its host is no longer Marxism but neither is it poststructuralism. Yet in either case, its task would be the same: “To reconquer man within Marxism [poststructuralism]” (*SM* 83); to preserve through committed history the image of the face in peril of being washed from the sand by the waves of epistemic change.⁶

Perhaps the final word is best expressed by Robert Maggiori. Writing in *Liberation*, the leftist paper which both Sartre and Foucault had helped found, on the occasion of the latter’s death, he notes that one spontaneously associates Sartre and Foucault as the leading “committed intellectuals” of their day. After charting the ups and downs of their respective and mutual careers as philosophers and as militants, Maggiori concludes: “It now remains for us to read them in relation to each other, not in order to attempt an impossible synthesis or to achieve artificial reconciliations, but to be enriched by both the one and the other.”⁷ That, in sum, has been the aim of our lengthy investigation.



THE FOLLOWING short collection of definitions is intended to ease the entry of the reader unfamiliar with Foucauldian vocabulary into the first chapters of this volume. Accordingly, they are initiatory and make no claim to completeness. Where possible, I shall respect Foucault's own definition of technical terms. But several other expressions pivotal to my subsequent argument will also be listed and explained.

A priori, Historical. Unlike the Kantian concept of the a priori as that which is universal and necessary, the Foucauldian is regional and contingent. The term denotes the prior conditions established by discursive formations for the existence of certain discursive practices and the exclusion of others. How did it happen, for example, that thinkers in the Renaissance readily drew analogies between the micro- and the macro-cosm? At the archaeological level, Foucault sees the acceptance of a relationship of resemblance as the historical a priori for the widespread search for such analogies. Unlike transcendental conditions that limit in advance our experience and meaningful action, the historical a priori is postdictive and existential. It must be encountered, not deduced.

Archaeology. "By 'archaeology' I would like to designate not exactly a discipline but a domain of research, which would be the following: in a society, different bodies of learning, philosophical ideas, everyday opinions, but also institutions, commercial practices and police activities, mores—all refer to a certain implicit knowledge [*savoir*] specific to this society. This knowledge is profoundly different from the bodies of learning [*des connaissances*] that one can find in scientific books, philosophical theories, and religious justifications, but it is what makes possible at a given moment the appearance of a theory, an opinion, a practice. Thus, in order for the big centers of internment to be opened at the end of the seventeenth century, it was necessary that a certain knowledge of madness be opposed to nonmadness, of order to disorder, and it's this knowledge [*savoir*] that I wanted to investigate, as the condition of possibility of knowledge [*connaissance*] of institutions, of practices" (*EW* 2:261–62, "The Order of Things").

Archive. "I shall call an *archive*, not the totality of texts that have been preserved by a civilization or the set of traces that could be salvaged from its downfall, but the series of rules which determine in a culture the appearance and the disappearance of statements,

their retention and their destruction, their paradoxical existence as *events* and *things*. To analyze the facts of discourse in the general element of the archive is to consider them, not as documents [with deep meanings to be interpreted] . . . but as *monuments* [whose surface is readily visible and identifiable]" (*EW* 2:309–10, Circle). Archaeology studies this archive of a society.

Axial Reading. The description and analysis of Foucault's major works along three distinct and irreducible but interrelated conceptual lines or axes, namely, knowledge, power, and subjectivation, each with its proper mode of analysis (archaeology, genealogy, and problematization respectively). Proposed as a complement rather than an alternative to the standard developmental approach to Foucault's works, such a reading discovers concepts at work in texts that an evolutionary interpretation has discounted or overlooked. In particular, on this reading, the field of experience as the space enclosed by these three axes emerges as central to Foucault's entire project.

Biopower. "The endeavor, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race . . ." (*EW* 1:75, "The Birth of Biopolitics"). With the help of statistical methods, the art of government shifts its focus from the family to populations and the economy. "The new science called 'political economy' arises out of the perception of new networks of continuous and multiple relations between population, territory, and wealth" (*EW* 3:217, "Governmentality"). But this biopolitics extends to public safety and eugenics, appealing to concepts like "criminal type," "monster," and "degeneracy."

Diagnostic. The comparative study of two or more objects as opposed to the immediate grasp of an essence. Extending to archaeology and to philosophy in general the diacritical principle of medical observation that "the only pathological fact is a comparative fact" (*BC* 314), Foucault describes archaeological study as "always in the plural" (*AK* 157) and as a "diagnosis" that "does not establish the fact of our identity by the play of distinctions. It establishes that we are difference. . . . That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin [as in traditional philosophy since Plato], is this dispersion that we are and make" (*AK* 131). As for philosophy: "I would say that perhaps if there is now an autonomous philosophical activity, if there can be a philosophy that is not simply a sort of theoretical activity within mathematics or linguistics or ethnology or political economy, if there is a philosophy free or independent of all these domains, then one could define it as a diagnostic activity" (*FL* 53, "Foucault Responds to Sartre").

Discourse. Admitting that it is a term with an "equivocal meaning" that he uses and abuses in many different senses, Foucault defines discourse as "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation." Thus one can speak of "clinical discourse,

economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse" (AK 107 8). Constituting the space between words and things, discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs," he insists, "but what they do is more than use those signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to language [*langue*] and to speech. It is this *more* that [archaeology] must reveal and describe" (AK 49). Stating a basic claim of *The Order of Things*, he observes: "What existed in the place where we now discover man was the power special to discourse, to the verbal order, to represent the order of things" (EW 2:264, "The Order of Things"). A principle of the antihumanism of archaeology is the assertion of the mutual incompatibility of the being of language and the being of man (see OT 339).

Episteme. This is the historical a priori of what counts for knowledge in a society. (Presumably there are other historical a priori for other domains of archaeological inquiry such as ethics, art, or history itself [see AK 193–94].) Foucault sometimes speaks as if there was just one per society in a particular period but at other times he allows that these existential conditions differ from science to science. Thus the condition for accepting mathematical statements as scientific changes according to a different "temporal viscosity" from the conditions for granting or denying the honorific of "science" to statements in biology or the study of language.

Formation, Discursive. The regularity that obtains among statements at the discursive level. That regularity can be a function of shared objects (e.g., "madness" as the same object of individual and social experience), shared modes of expression (e.g., perception of the body in nineteenth-century medicine and the corresponding discourse as contrasted with its eighteenth-century counterpart), shared concepts (e.g., that set which characterizes the classical analysis of language), and shared themes (e.g., the evolutionist theme or that of the Physiocrats). The notion of discursive formations enabled Foucault to "slice" the historical narrative at unusual angles, revealing unaccustomed affinities (see AK 31–39).

Genealogy. Inspired by Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, this approach to history focuses on power and the nondiscursive just as archaeology attends to the discursive. Its goal is to uncover the relations of power that undergird our most disinterested practices. As a vehicle of historical intelligibility, its model is struggle and strategy, not meaning and consensus.

Knowledge [Savoir/Connaissance]. *Savoir* denotes the "deep" knowledge that archaeological investigation yields. It includes the epistemes, discursive practices, and historical a priori that Foucault has analyzed in his explicitly archaeological investigations. It conditions historically the standard "sciences" [*connaissances*] and their proper objects such as political economy, linguistics, alchemy, and phrenology.

Nominalism. The ancient philosophical theory that general terms such as “animal” or “body” are only words (*flatūs vocis*) and do not denote any extramental reality. Metaphysically, it entails the further claim that only individuals exist outside the mind. Epistemologically, it implies that general terms exist only in the mind without any external basis in nature. Thus Foucault’s statement that “power” does not exist, that there are only individual relationships of action on the action of others, is a nominalist claim.

Positivity, System of. “The laws of the formation of a whole set of objects, types of formation, concepts, and theoretical options which are invested in institutions, techniques, collective and individual behavior, political operations, scientific activities, literary fictions and theoretical speculations. The set thus formulated from the system of positivity, and manifested in the unity of a discursive formation, is what might be called a knowledge [*savoir*]” (*EW* 2:324, “On the Archaeology of the Sciences”). The operative portion of this cumbersome collection is “laws of formation.” While they set the conditions for what will count as true or false, accurate or not [*connaissance*], as their Comtian name suggests, positivities as such are not subject to these assessments. And unlike formal criteria, positivities account for the factual existence, the historical appearance of some sciences and the disappearance of others (see *EW* 2:321–26, “On the Archaeology of the Sciences”).

Power. “Action on the action of others,” including their possible actions. Power as such does not exist; it is not a commodity that one can possess. There are only concrete relations of dominance and control over others’ actions. As distinct from sheer force or domination (negative power), power properly speaking assumes the freedom of possible resistance as a condition for its exercise: “Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, only when he has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape” (*EW* 3:342, “The Subject and Power”). Power is both constructive (as in reasoning together toward consensus) and destructive (as in the abuse of authority or economic exploitation).

Practice (Discursive/Nondiscursive). A discursive practice is “a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined at a given period and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area the conditions of operation of the enunciative function” (*AK* 117). Nondiscursive practices, accordingly, would be those that delimit the nonverbal. The discursive would be related to the nondiscursive as the “sayable” [*le disible*] to the “seeable” [*le visible*]. Contrasting these two further, Foucault explains: “To analyze ‘regimes of practices’ means to analyze programs of conduct that have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done (effects of ‘jurisdiction’) and codifying effects regarding what is to be known (effects of ‘veridiction’)” (*EW* 225, “Questions of Method”).

Problematization. “The totality of discursive or non-discursive practices that intro-

duces something into the play of true and false and constitutes it as an object for thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)” (*PPC* 257, “The Concern for Truth”). Foucault distinguishes a history of periods from one of problems and subscribes to the latter. Whereas the former demands exhaustive erudition, the latter focuses on a specific issue to be resolved within a limited scope. In his later work, especially the last two published volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, he addressed the question of how sexual practices became problematic for the modern era (to the point of holding the key to an individual’s identity) whereas the “matters of Aphrodite” in fourth century Greece ranked on a par with questions of diet and general health with the exception of relations between men and boys. “The work of the history of thought,” he explained, “would be to rediscover at the root of these diverse solutions the general form of problematization that has made them possible” (*EW* 1:118, “Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations”).

Quadrilateral, Anthropological. The spatial image of the episteme of the modern era. With the concept of “Man” at its center, it accounts archaeologically for the emergence of the human sciences. Foucault sometimes speaks as if he sensed the approaching collapse of this quadrilateral and our awakening from the “anthropological slumber” that it induced.

*Statement (L’*énoncé*).* A very elusive term in Foucault’s archaeological vocabulary. He notes its paradoxical character as both event and thing (see *Archive*). As event, it is a singular historical eruption and as thing it is the object of an “economy” of scarcity, exclusivity, and the like. “A statement is always an event that neither language nor meaning can completely exhaust. A strange event, certainly: first, because, on the one hand, it is linked to an act of writing or to the articulation of a speech but, on the other hand, opens for itself as residual existence in the field of a memory or in the materiality of manuscripts, books and any other form of record; then because it is unique like every other event, but is open to repetition, transformation, and reactivation; finally, because it is linked both to the situations that give rise to it and to the consequences it gives rise to, but also at the same time and in quite another modality, to the statements that precede it and follow it” (*EW* 2:308, “On the Archaeology of the Sciences”).

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

See Paul Veyne, "Foucault Revolutionizes History," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 146 ff.; hereafter cited as *FI*.

2 Michel Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 334; hereafter cited as *FR*. This is a portion deleted by the author from a draft version of his introduction to the second volume of *The History of Sexuality* (see Hubert Dreyfus, foreword to Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987], viii).

Actually, Foucault's first published book was a distinctively different first edition of this work, entitled *Maladie mentale et personnalité*. Apropos the second edition, retitled *Mental Illness and Psychology*, Hubert Dreyfus observes that Foucault was unhappy with the book and tried to prevent its translation into English. For a careful and detailed analytic comparison of *Maladie mentale et personnalité* (1954) and *Maladie mentale et psychologie* (1962), see James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics of Thought* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990), appendix 1, 185–87. Bernauer underscores the centrality of history to Foucault's argument in the second version, a point he develops in the second chapter of his *Force of Flight*, "From Man and Psychology to the Experience of Thought."

Pierre Macherey made the first comparison of these two works in his "Aux sources de 'L'Histoire de la folie,'" *Critique* 42 (August–September 1986), 753–74. He reminds us that any archaeology of Foucault's own thought should begin with the 1954 edition and its rather Marxist reading of mental illness as the expression of social alienation. The myth of a disalienated human essence, implicit in the earlier edition, Macherey argues, is replaced in the second by that of "an essential madness" that persists throughout the institutional and discursive systems that alter or take possession [confisquent] of it (the theme of *History of Madness*): "as if reference to Nietzsche and to Heidegger, implicit throughout *Mental Illness and Psychology*, had replaced reference to the young Marx that haunted the text of *Maladie mentale et personnalité*" (770). But the "veritable reversal of perspective" that Macherey observes between the two editions consists in Foucault's having freed himself from the "teleological presupposition of a meaning [sens] to history." Henceforth, he will avoid "like the plague whatever

smacks of ‘dialectical materialism’” (773). We shall discuss Foucault’s animus against the dialectic in chap. 5.

3. See Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald with the cooperation of Jacques Legrange, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), hereafter cited as *DE* with volume and page number; here “Chronologie,” *DE* 1:16, and “Structuralisme et poststructuralisme,” *DE* 4:434, hereafter cited as SPS.

4. Gary Gutting characterizes the work of Georges Dumézil on the comparative study of Indo-European religions as “proto structuralist.” See his excellent *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 261 n. 9.

5. Macherey, “Aux sources,” 764.

6. In his introduction to *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984 / Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1988), entitled “Foucault and the Politics of Experience,” Lawrence Kritzman agrees that “Foucault was concerned, above all else, with the idea of experience,” (xviii, hereafter cited as *PPC*). But Kritzman focuses on the genealogical writings and does not pursue Foucault’s concept and use of experience at any length. A more promising treatment of the topic appears in Béatrice Han’s *L’ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault: Entre l’historique et le transcendantal* (Grenoble: Jérôme Million, 1998), recently translated by Edward Pile as *Foucault’s Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), which we shall consider in chap. 9.

7. See Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow, 3 vols. (New York: New Press, 1997–2000), 1:xxxv; hereafter cited as *EW* with volume, page, and title of entry.

8. Toward the end of his life, Foucault offers the following ponderous definition of “thought”: “what establishes, in a variety of possible forms, the play of true and false, and which as a consequence constitutes the human being as a subject of learning [*connaissance*]; in other words, [thought] is the basis for accepting or refusing rules, and constitutes human beings as social and juridical subjects; it is what establishes the relation with oneself and with others, and constitutes the human being as ethical subject” (*FR* 334). Though this description illustrates his later work with its emphasis on “games of truth” and the constitution of the ethical subject, it addresses a field of investigation proper to his earlier research as well, though in a manner that overlooks thought’s nondiscursive and, we might say, “nonscognitive” aspect.

Paraphrasing, one is reminded of Heidegger’s *Denken*, likewise beyond the metaphysical and the average everyday, whenever one encounters Foucault’s strategic use of the terms “thinking” and “thought.” In both cases we are dealing with a domain for the exercise of freedom, cleared by an alternative to the established realm of reflection. But we shall see that Foucault’s concern is not with the Being-event as was Heidegger’s but with the “events” of epistemic break, shifts in power relations, and alterations in forms of subjectivation. Still, the ghost of Heidegger haunts Foucault’s work, though not as markedly as that of Nietzsche. Resisting the temptation to undertake a “hauntology,” much less an exorcism, of these spirits, we shall simply and occasionally note their presence along the way.

9. *EW* 3:278, “Interview with Michel Foucault,” conducted by Ducio Trombadori, hereafter IDT.

10. Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism, and History: Mode of Production versus Mode of Information* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 73.

11. François Furet, *In the Workshop of History*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 56.

12. “Dialectic as a movement of reality collapses if time is not dialectic; that is, if we refuse to recognize a certain action of the future as such” (Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes [New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1963], 92 n. 3); hereafter *SM*. See also vol. 1, chap. 3 of the present study, hereafter cited as Vol. 1 with page number.

13. See *EW* 2:366, “Theatrum Philosophicum”; hereafter Theatrum. In “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” he remarks similarly that the forces operating in history “do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and their attraction is not that of a conclusion, for they always appear through the singular randomness of events” (*EW* 2:381, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” hereafter NGH).

14. *EW* 2:301, “On the Archaeology of the Sciences: Response to the Epistemological Circle,” hereafter Circle.

15. *DE* 1:430n, “Le Mallarmé de J.-P. Richard,” emphasis added.

16. Michel Foucault, *Les Anormaux*, ed. Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 1999); *Abnormal*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003).

17. Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett with an introduction by Michel Foucault (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978), xiii; hereafter cited as *Normal*.

18. *DE* 1:548, “Une histoire restée muette.”

19. Readers familiar with the first volume will recognize features of Sartre’s concept of the “practico-inert” in Foucault’s description of these “anonymous constraints.” But, of course, there remains a certain primacy of human praxis in Sartre’s *practico-inert* (see Vol. 1:120–25). This answers Sartre’s “humanist” urge, which nonetheless is decidedly not a “bourgeois” humanism.

20. Jean-Marie Benoist observes: “Existentialist anthropos, even freed from its reference to a human nature, remains an arrogant anthropos that takes itself for the sole source of signification” (*La Révolution structurale* [Paris: Grasset, 1975], 11). With greater irony, Denis Hollier remarks that “there is, however, a Sartrean semiology; it is resolutely antilinguistic. Linguistics will not be the pilot-science sought by structuralism. I myself am the signifier [*‘le signifiant c’est moi’*], says Sartre in all simplicity” (*The Politics of Prose* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986] 59, a translation by Jeffrey Mehlman of *Politique de la prose: Jean-Paul Sartre et l’an quarante* [Paris: Gallimard, 1982], 99).

21. *DE* 1:582–83, “La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu’est aujourd’hui.” When interviewed by Raymond Bellour on the remarkable if not uncritical reception accorded his *The Order of Things*, Foucault responded that many negative critics saw the work as undermining the “history of ideas.” In addition to cit-

ing his doubts about the explanatory value of those quasi-magical concepts like “influence,” “crisis,” and “sudden realization [*la prise de conscience*]” mentioned above, he cites another problem with that enterprise. In the face of a difficulty, Foucault insists, the history of ideas, rather than remaining at the level of analysis which is the locus of the statement [*l’énoncé*] where the problem occurred, quickly passes to another level, external to the former: “Thus, faced with a change, a contradiction or an incoherence [using this model, for example], one resorts to an explanation by social conditions, mentality, world view and so on” (*EW* 2:282–83, “On the Ways of Writing History”; hereafter *WWH*). This exemplifies the historian’s appeal to “economic and social context” to resolve the ambiguous links with psychiatric practice that we noted at the outset. We shall see that Foucault, while respecting the nondiscursive realm in his archaeologies, focuses on the transformation and displacement of statements [*énoncés*] and groups of statements as well as on the rules for their relations of implication, opposition, and exclusion. It is essential to what he calls his “archaeology” to respect the specificity and irreducibility of the discursive domain.

22. Michel Foucault, *L’Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith as *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976), 8, hereafter cited as *AK*.

23. *DE* 1:684, *Réponse à une question*, hereafter cited as *Réponse*. An English translation of the essay appears as “History, Discourse, and Discontinuity” in *Salmagundi* 20 (Summer–Fall, 1972): 224–47. For Foucault’s view of this essay as a response *en diagonale* to François Furet’s claim that the current decline of ideology among French intellectuals was due to the victory of structuralism over Marxism, see *DE* 1:32, *Chronologie*.

24. Summarizing the complex thesis of his *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which we shall later analyze at length, Foucault insists:

At the heart of this denial that came to rest upon discourse “in favor of the opposition: thought-language, history-truth, speech-writing [*parole-écriture*], words-things) there was the refusal to recognize that something is formed in discourse (and according to well definable rules); that something exists, subsists, is transformed and disappears (according to equally definable rules); in short, that alongside everything that a society can produce (“alongside” meaning in an assignable relation to all of that) there is a formation and transformation of “things said” [*choses dites*]. It is the history of those “things said” that I have undertaken to present. (*DE* 1:686, *Réponse*)

In many ways it is its ignorance of the nature and significance of those “things said” and their level of functioning that disturbs Foucault most about the tradition of the history of ideas. Conversely, his archaeologies are concerned precisely with that level of discourse.

25. *EW* 1:12, “The Will to Knowledge,” course summary.

26. *DE* 4:597, “Polémique, politique et problématisations,” and *DE* 4:668, “Le souci de la vérité.”

27. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 636; hereafter cited as *OT*. This is a translation of *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), hereafter cited as *MC*. Frédéric Gros re-

marks that this inability to escape an outmoded reliance on representation leaves the social sciences, hobbled in the modern era (*Michel Foucault*, 2nd ed. corrected [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998], 46). For Roger Chartier's post-Foucauldian preference for the term "representation" over "mentalité" in discussing 'cultural history,'" see his *Cultural History*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 9 10.

28. Jacques Revel, "Foucault, Michel, 1926 1984," *Dictionnaire des Sciences Historiques*, ed. André Burguière (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986), 290.

29. On the other hand, one Anglo-American philosopher explicitly asserts: "From this early engagement with linguistics and analytic reason to his later engagement with Wittgenstein and the strategic analysis of discourse, we find that Foucault's interlocutors comprise a background that makes it pointless, *merely* ideological, to describe him as a continental philosopher, as if the category of continental philosophy could give any genuine content to the specificity of his concerns. Developments outside of philosophy and outside of France were as crucial to his intellectual formation as were his constant exchanges inside French philosophy" (*FI* 13).

30. For an account of its rise, see François Dosse, *New History in France: The Triumph of the Annales*, trans. Peter V. Conroy, Jr. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994). For a description of its recent fragmentation, see Lynn Hunt, "French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the *Annales* Paradigm," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21 (1986): 215, as well as Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *Le Phénomène nouvelle histoire: Grandeur et décadence de l'école des Annales*, 2nd ed. rev. (Paris: Economica, 1989).

31. François Furet insists that "it would be vain to search for the traces of a doctrine or a favorite mode of explanation in the prewar *Annales*" (*Workshop*, 3).

32. Cited by Stuart Clark in "The *Annales* Historians," chap. 10 of *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, ed. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 179.

33. Furet, *Workshop*, 54; see 18.

34. It is worth considering Furet's characterization of this sea change in French historiography in the second half of the twentieth century, for it helps contextualize Foucault's peculiar "histories" as well. After referring to "the possibly definitive decline of narrative history" in our time, Furet hazards the opinion that "there has been a sometimes unconscious shift from narrative history to problem-oriented history, at the cost of the following changes" [summarized briefly]:

1) A shift from "the immense indeterminacy of the object of [the historian's] knowledge: time" and the complex of events that forms a historical period to the frank admission that the historian parcels out portions for investigation according to the *problems* raised by that period. "A good question or a well-formulated problem is becoming more important . . . than the skill and patience needed to bring to light an unknown but marginal fact."

2) A change of interest from the historian's traditional source material, *the unique event*, to the conceptualization of the object of inquiry according to series of events, comparable within a given period of time. "*Quantitative history*," Furet

claims, “provides the easiest—though not the only—means for this kind of intellectual task.”

3) An organization of the pertinent sources into “comparable and interchangeable units in order to be able to describe and interpret the phenomenon he is studying on the basis of a certain number of conceptual hypotheses.”

4) From the foregoing it follows that “quantitative analysis and statistical procedures, provided they are suited to the problem and sensibly applied, are among the most rigorous methods for ‘testing’ data” (*Workshop* 56–57, emphasis mine).

While conceding that “the unique and noncomparable phenomenon cannot be handled by such a methodology” and that neither the specialist of intellectual biography nor the historian of antiquity will find it satisfactory (*Workshop* 72), Furet insists that such “serial history” is closer to ethnology and, in any case, is the wave of future French historiography. It was on this wave that Foucault’s first definitive works rode to prominence.

35. Michel Foucault, “The Discourse of History,” *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1966–84)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, 2nd ed. enl. [New York: Semiotext(e), 1996], 20, my emendations; hereafter cited as *FL*.

36. Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961). A version of this work abridged by the author along with additions from the original selected by Foucault himself was published in English translation as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1965); hereafter cited as *Madness*. Once Foucault’s reputation was established, Gallimard published a second edition of the work as *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), augmented by two additional essays, “La folie, l’absence d’oeuvre” and “Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu.” Except for the preface to *Folie et déraison*, it is customary to cite the second, augmented edition, hereafter abbreviated as *HF*.

37. Cited by David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 108.

38. Cited by Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 118–19.

39. Although the details of that oblique confrontation were spelled out in volume 1 (chap. 10), let me summarize briefly the Sartrean side of the argument. Whether in his own interviews or via essays published by others in *Les temps modernes*, the journal he founded and edited with Simone de Beauvoir and others, Sartre accused Foucault of “murdering History” by his “structuralist” focus on the “forms” of social intelligibility. Sartre likened the result of such synchronic analysis to presenting a slide show when historical reality required the motion picture. The “death of history” Sartre and others read as symptomatic of the “death of man,” which Foucault predicted in a famous passage at the close of *The Order of Things*, and of the moral and political indifference that Sartrean existentialism had combated since the end of the Second World War. (In this last respect, Sartre and his friends could not have been unaware of the common criticism of *Annales* history as being apolitical, a criticism that Jürgen Habermas and others would direct toward Foucault in later years.) There was something of the traditional-

ist's criticism of the political indifference of the *Annales* approach in general in Sartre's remarks. And it is remarkable to discover how "traditional" a thinker the later Sartre appears in contrast with the structuralist and poststructuralist thought that was emerging in the late 1960s and 1970s. As Umberto Eco once observed with an Italian proverb, "We are born arsonists and die firefighters." Yet admittedly Sartre remained inflammatory to the end.

40. Patricia O'Brien explains these alternatives nicely in her "Michel Foucault's History of Culture," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 25–46.

41. It is not my intent to draw a tortured parallel between Foucault's intellectual progress and that of the Kierkegaardian hero, even though they both issue in the project of "becoming a self." Admittedly, one is tempted to pursue this analogy by the allure of an anti-Hegelian triad, the breaks rather than mediations among the stages, and the general result of a kind of individuation. But the differences are too great, beginning with their respective points of termination—an aesthetics of existence for Foucault and its explicit repudiation in the leap of religious faith for Kierkegaard. Moreover, the persistently temporal character of Kierkegaard's thought (including his category of the "instant") stands in sharp contrast to Foucault's spatialized reasoning, a major thesis of our study, leaving Kierkegaard the far more dialectical thinker and, in that sense, much closer to Sartre. Still, one is intrigued by the assertion of Frédéric Gros that "Foucault was a great reader of Kierkegaard even though he almost never refers to this author whose importance for him was as decisive as it was secret" (Michel Foucault, *L'hérméneutique du sujet: Cours au Collège de France, 1981–1982*, ed. Frédéric Gros [Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2001], 25 n. 46, hereafter cited as *H*).

42. "When it is possible, in a group of statements, to register and describe one referential, one type of enunciative divergence, one theoretical network, one field of strategic possibilities, then one can be sure that they belong to what can be called a discursive formation" (*EW*2:321, Circle).

43. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 134, a translation by A. M. Sheridan Smith of *La naissance de la clinique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), hereafter cited as *BC* and *NC*.

44. *FL* 53. I undertake such a diagnostic of Sartre and Foucault on violence and power in chap. 10.

45. As Alan Sheridan explains: "The *positivity* of a discourse or discipline is that which characterizes its unity through a specific period of time, that which enables us to say that Buffon and Linnaeus, for example, were talking about 'the same thing' or were engaged upon 'the same field of battle' and, by the same token, prevents us from saying that Darwin is talking about the same thing as Diderot. It is 'a limited space of communication,' not as extensive as a 'science,' with its long historical development, but more so than the mere play of 'influences.' What forms such a positivity, what makes it possible, Foucault calls the 'historical *a priori*'" (Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* [London: Tavistock Publications, 1980], 102).

46. Speaking of quantitative and serial history, François Furet points out that "they

both give a new answer [to the classical question: What is a historical fact?] that transforms the historian's raw material "time" (*Workshop* 42). He illustrates this claim with Braudel's work, observing: "By choosing identical indicators over a long period of time, historians can isolate phenomena according to their duration—short-term crises, longer recessions, cycles, and trends—and integrate them into a general interpretation. By adopting this approach, historians have rediscovered the long periods of economic stability and the social and cultural inertia that for a long time characterized societies studied by ethnologists. Historians, too, as Lévi Strauss would say, have their 'cold societies'" (*Workshop* 73).

47. Foucault's *Réponse* along with the original and the subsequent questions from members of the *Cercle d'épistémologie* appear in *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 9 (Summer 1968): 5–44. The original question and Foucault's response but not the subsequent questions are translated in "On the Archaeology of the Sciences: Response to the Epistemology Circle" (*EW* 2:287–333, Circle).

48. Actually, the matter is not that clear. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault explicitly distinguishes the statement from the speech act (see *AK* 83), insisting that "language and statement are not at the same level of existence" (*AK* 85). But John Searle reports that once his concept of speech act was explained to Foucault, the latter admitted that it resembled his own notion of the statement. In a letter to Searle, Foucault admits: "As to the analysis of speech acts, I am in complete agreement with your remarks. I was wrong in saying that statements were not speech acts, but in doing so I wanted to underline the fact that I saw them under a different angle than yours" (quoted in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. enl. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 46, n. 1; hereafter *BSH*). In any case, Foucault did liken his analysis of discourse as strategy to that of Wittgenstein, Austin, Strawson, and Searle, remarking that he would prefer to study such strategies in a more realistic historical context than "the analysis of a tea cup in an Oxford drawing room" (*DE* 2:631, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," *table ronde* not included in the English translation, "Truth and Juridical Forms," *EW* 3:1–89, hereafter TJF).

49. See *OT* 342. I discuss Foucault's relation to hermeneutics in my "Squaring the Hermeneutic Circle: Foucault and Caputo as Hermeneuticists," in *A Passion for the Impossible: John D. Caputo in Focus*, ed. Mark Dooley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 175–94.

50. For Foucault's subsequent treatment of this topic in lecture format, which he called a kind of "second volume" in this study, see his *Le pouvoir psychiatrique: Cours au Collège de France. 1973–1974*, ed. Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2003), 14ff., hereafter *Pouvoir psychiatrique*.

51. Many of the following observations are based on the essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," which first appeared in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 145–72, and is reprinted in *DE* 2:136–56 and translated in *EW* 2:369–91. Although it could be objected that his remarks should be seen as a paraphrase and commentary on Nietzschean texts, it would be naive to limit their significance to that alone. The work is also a clear statement of the principles of Foucauldian

genealogy, a fact that is confirmed by relevant interviews, several of his other essays, and his own practice in the major texts which we just described as genealogical.

52. Henri Iréné Marrou, *De la connaissance historique* (Paris: Seuil, 1954), see 63ff. and 222ff. At least that is how Paul Veyne interprets these passages when he concludes that “nothing is more reasonable than a nominalist conception of history” (Paul Veyne, *Writing History*, trans. Mina Moore-Rinvulcri [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984], 43).

53. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 11–12, hereafter cited as *UP*.

54. See chap. 6. Actually, though the expression is Foucauldian as well, the term seems to have been employed in this context by Deleuze to describe Foucault’s understanding of the relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive domains (see Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988], 10; hereafter cited as *F*).

55. Michel Foucault, “The Subject of Power,” afterword to *BSH*, 220.

56. Scott Lash, “Genealogy and the Body: Foucault/Deleuze/Nietzsche,” in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, ed. Barry Smart, 7 vols. (London: Routledge, 1994–95), 1:7, hereafter cited as *CA* with volume and page.

57. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 114, hereafter cited as *P/K*. In what one critic called “an infamous squib,” the theoretical sociologist Jean Baudrillard attacked Foucault’s concept of power for its failure to consider the semiotic dimension of power relationships. Given the complexity of Foucault’s notion of power relations and his sensitivity to the discursive dimension of such nondiscursive practices, as we shall see, Baudrillard’s remark seems to miss the mark (see Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, trans. Nicole Dufresne [New York: Semiotext(e), 1987], 57).

58. See Vol. 1:150ff.

59. Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 420; hereafter cited as *BN*.

60. Later in our study we shall consider Foucault’s answer to the obvious objection raised by Nancy Frazer and others regarding the futility of ultimate victory, “Then why bother?”

61. The first reference to the term in his *Dits et écrits* occurs in 1976 apropos the problematization of health [*la santé*] in eighteenth century France (see *DE* 3:14, “La politique et la santé au XVIIIe siècle”).

62. Though there are a few occurrences of “power” in vol. 2, they are minimal, especially when compared with its centrality to vol. 1; the term is totally absent from the index to vol. 3.

63. *DE* 4:612, “À propos de la généologie de l’éthique: un aperçu du travail en cours.” This is a translation with some modifications by Foucault of his interview given in English and published as “On the Genealogy of Ethics” (1983), the afterword to *BSH*.

64. *DE* 4:688, “Interview de Michel Foucault” with C. Baker, April 1984. For the *Groupe d’information sur les prisons* (GIP), see chap. 11, n. 23.

65. *EW* 1:318, “What Is Enlightenment?”; emphasis added.

66. In Jean-Luc Godard’s film about a group of disillusioned young Maoists in 1960s Paris, *La Chinoise*, one of the characters is depicted shooting toy arrows at “reactionary” images pinned to the bedroom door. One of these targets is the cover of *Les mots et les choses*. The visual implication is that Foucault, being antihistory, is opposed to the revolution as well. Perhaps a more reasonable conclusion might have been that Foucault’s sympathy for the “new history” seemed to leave political considerations to the margin and to ally him with the neoconservatives—a view shared by Habermas and others who failed to recognize the critical and politically committed nature of Foucauldian “histories.” The following chapters should serve to correct that misconception.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (Cleveland, OH: Meridian Books, 1956), 310, hereafter cited as EH.

2. See François Ewald, “La fin d’un monde,” *Magazine littéraire* 207 (May 1984): 32, and *EW* 3:238, “Questions of Method,” hereafter QM.

3. The argument of this chapter was substantially completed before I encountered John Rajchman’s *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) where the question of Foucault’s historical nominalism is carefully addressed (see esp. 50–60).

4. For reference to nominalism in his archaeological writings, see, e.g., Rajchman, *Freedom of Philosophy*, 52ff.

5. What has come to be called “analytic” or “critical” philosophy of history, depending on which side of the Channel one inhabits, has long distinguished both metaphysical and methodological holism and individualism in the social sciences. The former admits while the latter denies the existence or epistemic usefulness of social wholes such as economic “movements,” a “balance of power,” or the Spanish–American War in social scientific explanations (for further discussions of this controversy, see John O’Neill, ed., *Modes of Individualism and Collectivism* [London: Heinemann, 1973]). While *metaphysical* holism is commonly dismissed along with so-called speculative philosophers of history such as Spengler and Toynbee, *methodological* holism as exemplified by Durkheim’s first rule of sociological method, “Consider social facts as things,” (Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller [New York: Free Press, 1966], 14) has retained respectability even among analytic/critical philosophers of history (see, e.g., Arthur Danto, *Narration and Knowledge* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1985], 257–84).

One might add that Foucault seems simply to dismiss the metaphysical issue as he does metaphysics in general. On the other hand, claims such as “Power does not exist. There are only individual relations of power (dominance, control, etc.)” are typically metaphysical statements. Perhaps we are left to conclude that metaphysics cannot be eradicated but must merely be kept from doing intellectual harm (Kant and Derrida) and/or that metaphysics always buries its undertakers (Gilson).

6. Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), v, 107, 83.

7. Etienne Balibar, "Foucault and Marx: The Question of Nominalism," in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, trans. and ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 55–56.

8. Gilles Deleuze, "What Is a *Dispositif*?" in Armstrong, *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, 166. This quotation is a recorder's summary of Deleuze's response to Manfred Frank's reference to abiding universals in Foucault's work. But it accurately represents the body of his talk where Deleuze describes apparatuses [*dispositifs*] as "lines of force" and the triad of "Knowledge, Power, and Subjectivity . . . [as] series of variables which supplant one another." They are like "vectors and tensors" (159).

9. And in Sartre's case, the neglect of the ontological status of relations is even less appropriate, for, toward the end of his life, he admitted: "Philosophy is an inquiry concerning being and beings. That is really where I differ from a Marxist. . . I raise the class question, the social question, starting from being, which is wider than class" (*The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp [La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1981], 14).

10. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), hereafter cited as *CF*. White describes "discourse" as "the term under which [Foucault] gathers all the forms and categories of cultural life, including, apparently, his own efforts to submit this life to criticism" (*CF* 105).

11. Foucault's concept of practice seems close to that of his colleague at the Collège de France, Pierre Bourdieu, standing midway between "habit" and "field." See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). In fact, both thinkers seem indebted to Wittgenstein in their reliance on a set of rules as constitutive of a practice. Recall Foucault's definition of "discursive practice" as "a body of anonymous historical rules, always determined in time and space, that have defined for a given period and for a given social, economic, geographical or linguistic area the conditions of operation of the enunciative function" (*AK* 117). As Bourdieu developed the concept, "habitus" or "disposition" came to approximate what Foucault meant by "practice" (see n. 12 below).

Speaking of the Wittgenstein-Foucault relation in general, one Wittgensteinian concluded: "To the question: Is Wittgenstein's mode of clarification of ordinary language continued in the archaeological effort of Foucault—a resounding yes can be offered" (Harry Aron, "Wittgenstein's Impact on Foucault," *CA* 2:154).

12. "The word *disposition* seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as a system of dispositions)" (Bourdieu, *Outline*, 214 n.1). In fact, he subsequently elaborated and nuanced that characterization in a way that approaches more closely the Foucauldian concept of practice: "The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgments and the system of classification [*princípio divisionis*] of these practices. . . The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: The principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the di-

vision into social classes” (Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984], 170).

13. On the “production of truth,” see *EW* 3:230, QM.

14. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 277ff., hereafter cited as *DP*; and *UP* 7.

15. Veyne, *Writing History*, 15.

16. *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1, *Volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 121–22, trans. Robert Hurley as *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Random House Vintage, 1980), 92; hereafter cited as *HS*. When a non-English title is cited, the translation is my own.

17. See *BSH* 220–21.

18. *HS* 93; also see *BSH* 216–26.

19. See R. F. Atkinson, *Knowledge and Explanation in History* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 19.

20. See chap. 1, n. 36.

21. See *EW* 1:89–82, “Subjectivity and Truth,” course resume, 1980–81.

22. *DE* 4:13, “La poussière et le nuage.”

23. Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological method introduced the “eidetic reduction” that employs the “free imaginative variation of examples” to distinguish the essential features (the *eidōs*) from the nonessential features of an object being described.

24. See below, chap. 4.

25. See *DP* 185–87.

26. *BC* 118. On the displacement of a medicine of species by a medicine of “and individual cases, see *BC* 122, 170.

27. Those critics who persist in reading Foucauldian power relations in purely negative terms should recall the following: “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘abstracts,’ it ‘masks,’ it ‘conceals.’ In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (*DP* 194).

28. As Hacking points out, *les sciences humaines* denote more than our “social sciences,” “for the French classification will include some admixture of psychoanalysis and ethnography, certain kinds of literary analysis, and various reflections of a Marxist origin” (*Historical Ontology* 78).

29. Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 28, hereafter cited as *SD*; from the original *Il faut défendre la société* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1997), 26, hereafter cited as *DS*; translation altered and emphasis added.

30. See “Politics and Ethics: An Interview” in *FR*, 373–80, as well as *BSH* 218; Richard J. Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 166–73, 196; and especially Michael Kelly, ed., *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), and Samantha Ashenden and David Owen, eds., *Foucault Contra Habermas* (London: Sage Publications, 1999).

31. He insists that there is more than just domination operative in power relations but that the factor of domination can never be overlooked (or eliminated?) (see his interview with Paul Rabinow et al., in *FR* 378ff.). We must underscore this distinction between power and domination as we advance in our investigation, for Foucault's positive account assumes that we can minimize and perhaps even eliminate relations of domination in society whereas those of power are intrinsic to social life and hence ineliminable.

32. Such an account articulates the link between power relations and governmentality that we shall develop in chap. 7 even as it introduces the concepts of individual and subject, which, we shall see in that same chapter, are capable of being tracked along the axis of subjectivation.

33. Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire suivi de Foucault révolutionnaire l'histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), 225–26. This appendix is missing in the English translation, *Writing History*, but is translated in *FI* 146ff., "Foucault Revolutionizes History."

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Communists and Peace*, with *A Reply to Claude Lefort*, trans. Martha H. Fletcher and Philip R. Berk (New York: George Brazillier, 1968), 138. See also my *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism: The Test Case of Collective Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 57–64, hereafter *SME*; and Vol. 1:300 n. 16.

35. Michel Foucault, "Discourse on Language," published as the appendix to *AK*, 229, hereafter cited as *DL*; originally published as *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), cited as *OD*.

36. Rajchman, *Freedom of Philosophy*, 56–58.

37. Balibar in *Foucault, Philosopher*, 42.

38. See *SD* 80–83, 254–263; *DS* 70–72, 227–234. Foucault goes so far as to claim that Soviet socialism is fundamentally racist in its understanding of class warfare and class enemy (*SD* 83; *DS* 72) and that the socialist state is as marked by what he calls "social racism" in its operation as is the modern capitalist state: "Socialism was a racism from the outset, even in the nineteenth century" (*SD* 261; *DS* 232). "Socialism," he asserts, "has made no critique of the theme of biopower, which developed at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth; it has in fact taken it up, developed, reimplanted and modified it in certain respects, but it has certainly not reexamined its basis or its modes of working" (*SD* 261; *DS* 233). The decisive concept in this move from biopower to racism is that of *degeneracy*, which he charts in detail throughout both these lectures and especially those of the previous year, *Les Anormaux (Cours au Collège de France 1974–1975)*, see 110–25, 271–301.

39. On "police power" as it gradually developed into the detailed concern for public welfare, see *DP* 213ff., *HS* 24, *DS* 223, and esp. Michel Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther Martin et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 153–62.

40. Charted along the axis of power relations, this argument by reversal carries more than rhetorical force. At least in the matters at hand, sexual repression and penal reform, it suggests that Foucault may join Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud as one of Paul Ricoeur's "Masters of Suspicion."

41. *DP* 149. As we shall elaborate in chap. 9, "multiplicity," in Foucault's dictionary, when used in a technical sense, is a nominalist term. It denotes a gathering of individu-

als without entailing commitment to universal natures or organic “wholes.” Foucault is reviewing in a different context a similar distinction he had made in *The Birth of the Clinic* between the medicine of species (analogous to the characters and categories of natural taxonomy) and the medicine of sites (where each patient becomes a case and his/her body is the focus of singular attention). The surveillance model of social relations that Foucault calls “panopticism” and of which Bentham’s Panopticon is the emblem, he insists, “is the general principle of a new “political anatomy” whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline” (*DP* 208). In other words, one has displaced law with strategy and the theoretical whole with the practical multiplicity.

42. See below, chap. 12. As just seen, this seems to be Hacking’s view as well.

43. Only three volumes have appeared thus far. The fourth, *Confessions of the Flesh*, is said to have been near completion at the time of the author’s death. Its fate rests with his heirs’ interpretation of his curt injunction, “No posthumous publication,” expressed in a private letter that dates from before his illness (see Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 323).

44. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3, *Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1988), 236–37, hereafter cited as *CS*; translation of *Le souci de soi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 270–71, hereafter cited as *SS*.

45. See chap. 7, “Reading Foucault in 3-D,” as well as my “Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault,” *Journal of Philosophy* 82, no. 10 (October 1985): 531–40.

46. See *DE* 1:581, “La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer.”

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. See Veyne, *Writing History*, 216, 282; and Furet, *Workshop*, 3.

2. *OT* 342. For examples of the outcry attending Foucault’s proclamation, see Vol. 1:240–44, as well as Mikel Dufrenne, *Pour l’homme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968), 37–47; and “Jean-Paul Sartre Répond,” *L’Arc*, no. 30 (1966): 87–96.

3. See *AK* 200–201. On the “structuralism” of *The Order of Things*, see Dominique Lecourt, *Marxism and Epistemology: Bachelard, Canguilhem, Foucault*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1975), 189.

4. Michel Foucault, *EW* 2:426, “Return to History,” hereafter cited as *RH*.

5. Huguette and Pierre Chaunu, *Séville et l’Atlantique*, 12 vols. (Paris: Sevpen, 1955–60).

6. See Fernand Braudel, *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3–4, 27ff. This summary is taken from Hunt, “French History in the Last Twenty Years,” 211.

7. As Deleuze comments, “The task of archaeology is firstly to discover a true form of expression which cannot be confused with any linguistic study, be it signifier, word, phrase, proposition, or linguistic act. In particular, Foucault lays into the signifier, where “discourse is annihilated in its reality by entering into the order of the signifier” [*OD* 51; *DL* 228]. We have seen how Foucault discovered the form of expression in a most original conception of the “statement” which is viewed as a function that crosses

different unities, tracing a diagonal line more akin to music than to a signifying system.” Foucault elaborates that “the conception of the statement seemed to be inspired by music and owe more to Webern than to linguistics” (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 52).

8. In fact, Foucault prefers to treat the statement as a *function* rather than as a unit (see *AK* 86–87). Nowhere is the problematic nature of his *énoncé* more evident than in those pages of the *Archaeology*. As Deleuze observed in an interview, “Foucault was always a functionalist; he simply invented his own functionalism. He asked: what is there to see there? Not just see, but *really see*. And what is there to say? Or to think? What there was to see in the prison was something intolerable. But what was that intolerable something?” (Gilles Deleuze, “Foucault and the Prison,” *CA* 3:269).

9. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique général* (Paris: Payot, 1978), 166.

10. See Max Weber, *General Economic History*, trans. Frank H. Knight (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), esp. chap. 17.

11. In this it differs markedly from Sartre’s use of the term. For Sartre, as we have seen, the historical event is unique, unrepeatable, and date-progressive. Until it has been subsumed into a conscious project (subject to narrative) the event, in Sartre’s terms, is “temporal but not dated.” (see Vol. 1:69–70). It grounds a certain linear succession that cannot be reversed, once it is activated. No doubt, there is ample room for contingency in Sartre’s schema and in this he resembles Foucault in opposition to Hegel; but the structuralist concept of the synchronic is relegated by Sartre to the domain of analytical Reason, to be made concrete by incorporation in the “singular universal” of dialectical rationality.

12. On objective possibility in Marx, Weber, Lukács, and Sartre, see my *SME* 72–84. It is the concept, not the term, that I am considering in Sartre and Foucault. For a thorough comparison of the thought of Weber and Foucault, see Arpád Szokolczai, *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life-works* (London: Routledge, 1998).

13. *EW* 2:289–90, WWH, emphasis his.

14. Georges Canguilhem, “Mort de l’homme ou épuisement du Cogito?” *Critique* 24, 242 (July 1967): 603, reprinted in *CA* 1:357. The title of Sylvie le Bon’s essay on *The Order of Things* was “Foucault, Desperate Positivist” (*Les temps modernes*, no. 248 [January 1967]: 1304).

15. “To be sure, [Foucault’s] perspective remains historical. He distinguishes [historical] epochs, a before and an after. But he replaces cinema with the magic lantern, movement by a succession of immobilities” (“Jean-Paul Sartre Répond,” *L’Arc* 30 [October 1966]: 87).

16. *AK* 172.

17. “As you know, no one is more of a continuist than I am: to recognize a discontinuity is never anything more than to register a problem that needs to be solved” (*EW* 3:226, QM).

18. François Ewald, “Anatomic et corps politique,” *Critique* 343 (1975): 1229.

19. *DP* 8 and *UP* 109 ff.

20. *DP* 139 and *HS* 122.

21. See Vol. 1:322 n. 51.

22. I distinguish “subjection” in the sense of domination (power in its negative as-

pect) from “subjectification” in the sense of the constitution of a certain kind of subject (power in its positive dimension) at this stage in my account in preparation for charting these genealogies along the axis of “subjectivation” that we shall undertake in chap. 8.

23. “The carceral system combines in a single figure discourses and architectures, coercive regulations and scientific propositions, real social effects and invincible utopias, programs for correcting delinquents and mechanisms that reinforce delinquency” (*DP* 172).

24. The terminus ad quem is the French penal code of 1810. Foucault notes that penal reformers before that period had opposed incarceration as being a practice “directly bound up with arbitrary royal decision and the excesses of the sovereign power” (*DP* 119).

25. See Vol. 1:47–48, “A Dialectic with Holes in It: The Strike.”

26. Veyne, *Writing History*, 223.

27. See *OT*, chap. 10; and *DP* 182–94, 210–28, 295–96.

28. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marc Augé, and Maurice Godelier, “Anthropologie, Histoire, Idéologie,” *L’homme* 15, nos. 3–4 (July–December 1975), 177–88. The conversation took place February 6, 1974. The following unattributed page references are to this publication.

29. As Axel Honneth explains the term: “The concept of “structural causality” maintains the methodological aim not to conceive the influence of the economic laws on the superstructure in the manner of historicism, where the latter is directly dependent on the former, but in structuralist fashion, so that the economic base merely delimits the functions of the superstructure” (Axel Honneth, “History and Interaction,” in *Althusser: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gregory Elliott [Oxford: Blackwell, 1994], 87).

30. On the “absolute event,” see Vol. 1:31–32. “Practico-inert” is a Sartrean category denoting the passivity and counterfinality of sedimented past praxes, especially in the form of “worked matter” like artifacts or social institutions. Sartre describes it as “simply the activity of others in so far as it is sustained and diverted by inorganic iner- (Jean Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, *Theory of Practical Ensembles*, trans. Alan Sheridan Smith [London: NLB, 1976], and vol. 2, *The Intelligibility of History*, trans. Quintin Hoare [London: Verso, 1991], hereafter cited as *CDR* with volume and page number; here 1:556). For an extended discussion of this fundamental social category, see my *SME* 93–98.

31. *EW* 1:62–63, course summary, emphasis added; see *SD* 93ff.

32. *EW* 1:12, emphasis added; see *AK* 45.

33. See below, chap. 6, 136–37.

34. J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 121.

35. See Louis Althusser, “On the Evolution of the Young Marx,” *Essays in Self-Criticism*, trans. Grahame Lock (London: New Left Books, 1976), 151–61.

36. See Georges Dumézil, *Horace and the Curiaces* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1978).

37. These early chapters have been gathering evidence in support of my larger thesis that one can chart this corpus along each of the three axes of knowledge-truth,

power-governmentality, and subjectification-ethics (see below, chap. 7). I call this an “axial reading” of the Foucauldian “triangle.”

Some years ago, I had proposed the “rereading of Foucault’s ‘histories’ from the vantage point of his triad (knowledge, power, and subjectivation) and with the examples of sexual ethics and parrhesia in mind” (“Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault,” *Journal of Philosophy* 82, 10 [October 1985]: 538). Such a reading was first carried out by Michael Mahon (see his *Foucault’s Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], 26ff.), who informs me that his project was suggested to him by James Bernauer.

38. See *EW* 2:301, Circle.

39. *DE* 1:826–27, “Linguistique et sciences sociales.”

40. The expression “transformational grammar” is Chomskyan (see Roy Harris, *Reading Saussure: A Critical Commentary on the Cours de linguistique générale* [London: Duckworth, 1987], xiv–xv).

One would like to have seen this dispute clarified when Foucault and Chomsky appeared together on Dutch television, but the discussants tended to speak at cross purposes (see Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault, “Human Nature: Justice versus Power,” in *Reflexive Water: The Basic Concerns of Mankind*, ed. Fons Elders [London: Souvenir Press, 1974], 135–97). Still, there were moments of illumination. For example, in contrast with Chomsky’s “Cartesian” account of our linguistic capacities, Foucault asked: “What if understanding the relation of the subject to the truth were just an effect of knowledge? What if understanding were a complex, multiple, non-individual formation, not ‘subject to the subject,’ which produced *effects of truth*?” Affirming his own hypothesis, he concluded: “One should then put forward positively this entire dimension which the history of science has negativised; analyze the productive capacity of knowledge as a collective practice; and consequently replace individuals and their ‘knowledge’ which at a given moment functions according to certain rules which one can register and describe. What I am anxious about is substituting *transformations of the understanding* for the history of the discoveries of knowledge.” Citing the remarkable change in outlook regarding medical perception that occurred between 1780 and 1830, he concludes, “It’s a matter of a collective and complex *transformation* of medical understanding in its practice and its rules. . . . It represents the application of an entirely new *grill*, with its choices and exclusions; a new play with its own rules, decisions and limitations, with its own inner logic, its parameters and its blind alleys, all of which lead to the modification of the point of origin” (149–50).

Addressing the issue of the growth of science in the Western world over the centuries, Foucault observes: “Can one say that there has been growth? I, myself, would say that it has been much more a matter of *transformation*.” When Chomsky agrees with the “jagged pattern” that Foucault describes, “forgetting certain problems and leaping to new theories . . .,” Foucault interjects, “And *transforming* the same knowledge,” so crucial is that concept to his theory of historical “change” (157–58).

41. *DE* 4:23, “Table ronde du 20 mai, 1978,” hereafter Table. Before continuing with the details of his argument, let me describe the occasion on which it was offered. The historian, Jacques Léonard, had published a review of *Discipline and Punish* in a

historical journal whose editor used the occasion to invite a response from Foucault and to convene a round table discussion among several philosophers and historians, including Carlo Ginzburg, the *Annaliste*, Jacques Revel, and Foucault himself. In his review, Léonard admits that “since [Foucault] has intervened in our affairs, we [historians] can no longer treat certain subjects in the same way. To greet *Discipline and Punish*,” he continues, “does not simply mean allowing one more book into our venerable libraries, but agreeing to revise them in view of Michel Foucault’s problematic” “Jacques Léonard, “L’historien et le philosophe,” in *L’impossible prison*, ed. Michelle Perrot [Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980], 9, hereafter cited as *IP*). Turning to critique, the nub of Léonard’s objection is, first, that Foucault has rushed through the centuries at full gallop, neglecting the dust of specific facts and authoritative studies for broad general theses that cannot bear close scrutiny. But more important, Léonard is perplexed (as was Sartre) by the absence of historical agents in this analysis: “One doesn’t know whether Foucault is describing a machinery or denouncing a machination” in this study (*IP* 14). He speaks of “power,” “strategy,” “tactics,” and “technique,” but leaves unanswered the question “Whose power? Whose strategy?” (*IP* 14), the unabashedly “humanist” questions that Foucault is intent on short-circuiting.

Recall that, in his brief response, appropriately entitled “Dust and Fog,” Foucault distinguishes the study of a period from that of a *problem* in history and insists that he is engaged in the latter, which does not require the exhaustive treatment of all the material that the study of a period demands.

As for what we might call the “Sartrean question,” that of the “Who?” of agency and moral responsibility, Foucault makes another distinction of major importance for our comparative study, namely, between *mechanisms* proposed to achieve certain results and the *authors* of these projects. Whereas the former are quite systematic and impersonal, the latter can bring to their projects a variety of motivations, whether visible or not, individual or collective. He goes on to press the distinction in a manner that seems to contradict what he had written in *The Order of Things* about Hobbes, Berkeley, et al. (*OT* 63) and what he had claimed about the “author function” in an address to the Society of French Philosophers several years earlier (see *EW* 2:205ff.). In his best rhetorical manner, he asks:

What is it that is automatic? What works all by itself, without anyone to make it function or rather without machinists whose name and face are of little importance?—Precisely. [It is] machines foreseen, conceived, imagined, perhaps dreamed of by people who themselves have a quite precise identity and who are effectively named. (*DE* 4:17, *La poussière et le nuage*)

Of course, the whole point of what we called the “primacy of praxis” in Sartre’s theory was to underscore the ontological, epistemic, and moral priority of individual praxis in Sartre’s historical accounts. Foucault so rarely speaks in the manner just quoted that one wonders how deep runs his conviction of the role of the individual in historical accounts that Léonard is defending.

In response, one might appeal again to the nominalist to dissolve impersonal structures in individual events and add that Léonard’s concerns are not those of Foucault, that

the hypothetical and “effective” (read “critical”) nature of Foucault’s “histories” does not preclude other approaches, in fact, that he welcomes them, as we have just seen.

On the other hand, the simplest reading might be merely to admit that this is a rhetorical move on Foucault’s part, directed to parry the thrust of an objection that misconceived the nature of his claims in the first place. In fact, that seems to be Foucault’s view on this occasion. For he explains:

“The automaticity [*automaticité*] of power, the mechanical character of the deployments [*dispositifs*] in which it is embodied is absolutely not the *thesis* of the book [*Discipline and Punish*]. But the idea in the eighteenth century that such a power would be possible and desirable, the theoretical and practical research of such mechanisms, and the constant manifestation of the will to organize such deployments—that is what constitutes the *object* of the analysis. (DE 4:18, *La poussière*)

In other words, it is the manner of *rationalizing* power, the new “economy” of relations of power that concerns him, not the construction of a general theory of power, a task he has repudiated on several occasions. He even insists that such remarks as “the disciplinary apparatus produces power” or “it matters little who exercises power” or that power “has its principle in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, and looks”—“none of these statements constitutes my personal conception of power” (DE 4:17, *La poussière*). As he occasionally remarks, it is the “rationale” of the process that is his concern. He is writing a “history” of such reasons.

42. Gathering elements that he would elaborate the following year in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault explains: “When it is possible, in a group of statements, to register and describe *one* referential, *one* type of enunciative divergence, *one* theoretical network, *one* field of strategic possibilities, then one can be sure that they belong to what can be called a *discursive formation*.” (EW 2:321, “Archaeology of the Sciences”; DE 1:696–731). This and another essay, “Réponse à une question” (DE 1:673–95), offer helpful explanations of the leading concepts of *The Archaeology*.

43. In fact, it is doubtful that Foucault’s “histories” claim to be “explanations” in the historical, much less in any “scientific” sense. Regarding the regimes of *The Order of Things*, e.g., he has observed: “I wasn’t for the moment trying to explain them” (PK, 113). His “archaeologies” as well as the first phase of “eventualization” are descriptive analyses. The “genealogies” may be construed as explanations by virtue of their appeal to “power” as an axis of intelligibility, but the elusive character of that term as well as Foucault’s avowed “nominalism” in its regard leaves its explanatory force in doubt. Of course, there is the issue of those “axes” themselves, each of which offers a line of intelligibility that orders an otherwise disparate collection of practices and events. To what extent this mimics “historical” explanation, whether narrativist or genetic, I leave to our discussion of these axes in chap. 7.

44. See Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1994) and our concluding chapter.

45. See Aristotle *Physics* 2.5 6.196b—97b.

46. In his essay on Nietzsche and history just mentioned, Foucault discusses sympha-

thetically Nietzsche's concept of "effective History" [*wirkliche Historie*] in the context of his own understanding of genealogy. Though we should be cautious about mining this text for Foucault's ideas rather than for expositions of Nietzsche's thought, much of the essay resonates with concepts and criticisms that appear elsewhere in Foucault's writing. So when he writes of "the particular traits of historical meaning as Nietzsche understood it—the sense which opposes "*wirkliche Historie*" to traditional history," we can expect a reflection of Foucault's critique of traditional history as well. For instance, *wirkliche Historie* "transposes the relationship ordinarily established between the eruption of an event and necessary continuity." Whereas traditional history "aims at dissolving the singular event into an ideal continuity—as a teleological movement or a natural process, . . . effective history . . . deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations." The nominalistic aim of such history is to dissolve accustomed unities and introduce discontinuities:

The forces operating in history are not controlled by destiny or regulative mechanisms, but respond to haphazard conflicts. They do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and their attraction is not that of a conclusion, for they always appear through the singular randomness of events. The world of effective history knows only one kingdom, without providence or final cause, where there is only "the iron hand of necessity shaking the dice-box of chance." (*EW* 2:381, NGH)

It is the task of Foucault's "felicitous positivism" (DL 234) to register these events and trace the lines of force whose intersection constitutes them. Later we shall argue for a kind of post-factum necessity among the four epistemic periods analyzed in *The Order of Things* (a necessity we shall describe as "aesthetic" rather than logical because its basis is a quality of "fittingness") but shall insist that the replacement of one epistemic configuration by another is entirely a chance event which can merely be noted but not deduced from its immediate predecessor (see chap. 6).

47. *Moi, Pierre Rivière, ayant égorgé ma mère, ma soeur et mon frère*. . . , ed. and foreword by Michel Foucault (Paris: Gallimard, 1973); *I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother*, trans. Frank Jelinek, ed. and foreword by Michel Foucault (New York: Pantheon, 1975).

48. *DE* 3:116–17, "Le retour de Pierre Rivière," hereafter PR. Apropos his chance discovery of the Rivière journal as well as its lucky conservation over the years, what fascinates Foucault is the multiplicity of random occurrences, "the skein of reasons so complicated that, in sum, it is certainly an aleatory phenomenon that leads from this deed to the production of a film on this man's life." But when he calls chance a kind of "aleatory ploy [*truc*]," his interlocutor objects that there is nonetheless a certain intelligibility to history and not merely chance selection (*DE* 1:118, PR). In response, Foucault enumerates some of the improbable events that led to the assassination, the composition and preservation of Rivière's journal, and his own selection of it among hundreds of medical-legal documents from which he was to choose. He remarks that "this aspect of chance, all the same, gives a certain *aesthetic intensity* to these events" (*DE* 1:118, emphasis added). I stress this reference to the aesthetic dimension of the events or, rather, to one's enumeration of them in the story [*l'histoire*] that Foucault is

providing because it suggests his sensitivity to that aspect of the historical account that we saw Sartre's existentialist theory prize so highly. He even cites *Annaliste* historian Le Roy Ladurie's highly successful study of a medieval French village, *Montaillou*, as an example of writing about the everyday where "the personages are now present in French historiography with almost as much intensity as Mirabeau or La Fayette" (*DE* 1:119, PR).

The context for the present remarks, of course, is cinematic. After warning that it would be futile to pose questions of knowledge [*savoir*] to a film, Foucault insists that "one can ask it other questions." And he goes on to explain that "cinema allows us to have a relationship to history, to set up a mode of *presence* of history, to bring about a quite different history from that which can be obtained from writing" (*DE* 1:120 21, PR, emphasis added). Admitting that the great divide between knowledge [*savoir*] and art is beginning to disappear, he credits the power of cinema for increasing the interest of the public in the enigma of Pierre Rivière, e.g., so that a scholarly book such as the one Foucault published now finds an appreciative audience. But more than educating the public, such films can re-create that "presence" which in a sense is "everybody's memory." Taking as another example the film *Le pain noir* (Moatti, 1974), Foucault mentions the atmosphere reproduced by historical films: "Our grandmothers lived that history, and it was part not of our knowledge [*savoir*] but of our bodies, our way of acting, of doing, of thinking, of dreaming, and, suddenly, these little enigmatic pebbles that had been in us were released [désensablés]" (*DE* 1:121, PR). This sense of *presence* that film adds to our experience of history is what Sartre seeks to achieve by his existentialist accounts.

49. When challenged by Lacanian analyst Jacques-Alain Miller to admit that our actions were attributable to individuals, Foucault wryly added "and sub-individuals" (*DE* 3:311). Though this response left Miller perplexed, it could well have been an implicit reference to Gilles Deleuze (see below, chap. 9 n. 10 and Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990], 102ff.).

50. *DE* 2:295, *Réponse à Derrida*, hereafter *RD*.

51. *EW* 3:225, QM.

52. The "initiator event" (my term, not Foucault's) constitutes a special challenge to Foucault, in view of his suspicion of origins and his decentering of the subject and author from the historian's repertoire. He sees Homer, Aristotle, and the Church Fathers, for example, as authors of a special magnitude, occupying a "transdiscursive" position vis-à-vis the discursive realm that succeeds them. Yet among these, a distinct position is occupied by what he terms "initiators of discursive practices" such as Marx and Freud. These produced not only their own work "but the possibility and the rules of formation of other texts." Foucault claims that the initiation of a discursive practice is "heterogeneous to its ulterior transformations" (see *LCP*, 131, 133). Though it would take us too far afield to consider the nature of these "authors" and the consistency of the concept with the rest of Foucault's thought, the point is that the transformation which their work entails is what we may term an "initiator event." They are like the macro-events we shall now discuss, except that they are attributable in some noteworthy fashion

ion to specific “authors” whose names they bear. The nature of this attribution remains obscure.

53. See, e.g., Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), trans. by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly as *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

54. It is Paul Veyne who first suggested the image of the kaleidoscope in his “Foucault Revolutionizes History,” *FI* 167.

55. See, e.g., Pierre Nora’s “Le retour de l’événement,” in *Faire de l’histoire*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 1:210–27; and Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:207ff., 249 n. 36, 217–18, 170.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 192, 196.

2. Martin Jay, “In the Empire of the Gaze,” in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 194–95. Commenting on this essay, John Rajchman takes issue with Jay’s claim that Foucault was “against vision”:

Jay seems to start with the hypothesis that a host of diverse French thinkers were united in a sort of conspiracy to “denigrate” the visual, and that, across the Rhine, in German sociology, more “optimistic” views are to be found. If one replaces “the visual” with “the rational” in this formulation, one finds a familiar pattern of disqualification of contemporary French thought, expounded in a more shrill manner by Apel than by Habermas. For Jay really to join this polemic, he would have to show that the French thinkers in question identified the visual with the rational, or were opposed to the one because opposed to the other. I think this would considerably compound the difficulties or incoherences in the original charge of irrationalism. Failing this, Jay owes some account of what he means by “the visual” and what it would be to “denigrate” or be against it. (“Foucault’s Art of Seeing,” reprinted in *CA* 1:246 n. 4; the essay is reprinted and the note abridged in John Rajchman, *Philosophical Events* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 97 n. 4)

3. For the visualizing aspect of his “problematizing” works, see the following chapter on spatialized reasoning, where such visualization is assumed.

4. See *DE* 2:30–36, “La situation de Cuvier dans l’histoire de la biologie,” hereafter *Cuvier*, and chap. 5.

5. See Deleuze, “A New Cartographer,” in *Foucault*, 23–44.

6. Michel Foucault, “An Historian of Culture,” *FL* 95.

7. These last lines are taken from my essay “Foucault and the Spaces of History,” *The Monist* 74, 2 (April 1991): 170, where this thesis is developed at length. See also chap. 5 of the present work.

8. *P/K* 153–54, “The Eye of Power,” hereafter *Eye*.

9. In an interview, “Self-Portrait at Seventy,” Sartre confesses: “I think transparency should always be substituted for secrecy. I can imagine the day when two men will no longer have secrets from each other, because no one will have any more secrets from

anyone, because subjective life, as well as objective life, will be completely offered up, given” (*Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken*, trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davis [New York: Pantheon Books, 1977], 11; hereafter cited as *L/S*). Of course, he believes that this “will begin with the eradication of material scarcity—which, as [he] showed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, is for [him] the root of the antagonisms, past and present, among men” (*Self-Portrait*, 13). One has a foretaste of such transparency among the members of the group-in-fusion in the *Critique*.

Foucault helps to situate historically this Sartrean ideal when he asks:

What in fact was the Rousseauist dream that motivated many of the revolutionaries? It was the dream of a transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of there no more existing any zones of darkness, zones established by the privileges of royal power of the prerogatives of some corporation, zones of disorder. It was the dream that each individual, whatever position he occupied, might be able to see the whole of society, that men’s hearts should communicate, their vision be unobstructed by obstacles, and that [the] opinion of all reign over each. (*P/R* 152, Eye)

10. See David Couzens Hoy, “Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?” in Jonathan Arac, ed., *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 20.

11. The way had been carefully prepared in the eighteenth century. As Foucault observes: “A meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men, emerge through the classical age bearing with them a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data. And from such trifles, no doubt, *the man of modern humanism was born*” (*DP* 141, emphasis added). On the “disciplinary individual,” see *DP* 308.

12. It is typical of Foucault merely to allude to these other “powers,” leaving it for us to draw the implications of the new perspective that he has just offered on each of them. Though on several occasions he will address the “juridico-anthropological” power of Law (especially in *SD* 37–40 and *EW* 3:1–89, T]F), the implications of a “normalizing judgment” on “Word and Text” and on “Tradition” are traced neither here nor explicitly elsewhere. One can imagine extending such a genealogical reading to legal and religious texts and to social, political, and cultural traditions of various kinds. Of course, this raises the question of Foucault’s difficulties with hermeneutics. As Deleuze remarks apropos of Foucault: “Surface isn’t opposed to depth (from which one resurfaces) but to interpretation. Foucault’s method was always opposed to any interpretative method. Never interpret; experience, experiment. The theme of folds and enfolding, so important in Foucault, takes us back to the skin [and Valéry’s maxim that “there’s nothing deeper than skin”]” (Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin [New York: Columbia University Press, 1995], 87).

For a discussion of Foucault’s difficulties with hermeneutics, see my “Squaring the Hermeneutic Circle: Foucault and Caputo as Hermeneuticists,” *A Passion for the Impossible*, 175–95. A likely locus for undertaking such a deduction and application would be the last two chapters of *The Order of Things* and especially his discussion of “some

themes concerning *the techniques of interpretation* of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud," where the "violence" of interpretation suggests the power of a normalizing judgment (*EW* 2:270 78, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," hereafter NFM).

13. See below, chap. 8, "Pyramids and Prisms: Reading Foucault in 3-D."

14. See his interview, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," the afterword (1983) to *BSSH*, 216.

15. DL 235. This sympathy with Dumézil's methodology, we noted, led to his being identified as a structuralist, a label he strenuously rejected.

16. Veyne, *Writing History*, 284.

17. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*, 90, and chap. 2 above, nn. 11, 12. For each author these two terms offer a way of skirting the classical distinction between the objective and the subjective in philosophy and the social sciences respectively.

18. See *DE* 3:581. Even the Existentialists had tamed the temporal into a principle of individuation by such ploys as "anticipatory resoluteness" (Heidegger) and "fundamental project" (Sartre).

19. See Deleuze, "Foucault and the Prison," in *CA* 3:267, and chap. 3 above, n. 8.

20. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 255.

21. See above, n. 10.

22. Foucault has been critical of philosophical and social "prophets." In response to an observation by Japanese professor Moriaki Watanabe, he remarks:

Briefly, I would say that it doesn't seem to me that the intellectual today has so much the role of telling truths, of telling prophetic truths about the future. Perhaps the diagnostician of the present, as I was saying a moment ago, could try to get people to grasp what is going on in the specific domains where he or she may be competent. By the small movement that consists in displacing the gaze [*le regard*], he makes visible what is visible, causes to appear what is so close, so immediately tied to us that consequently we don't see it. His role is much closer to that which was called a "*philosophe*" in the eighteenth century. (*DE* 3:594)

The *philosophe* as master of the kaleidoscope, we might say. In *The Order of Things*, he associates eschatology and positivism Comte and Marx by "archaeological necessity" in the modern episteme (see *OT* 320). But, again, that necessity holds within the same episteme, not among epistemes. In the latter case, the connection is aleatory, something to be encountered not deduced. At best, it supports the kind of postdictive appropriateness that we are about to examine in chap. 5.

Nonetheless, his own works often slip into a vaticinal mode, especially toward their conclusion. Consider his allusion to "the ground that is once more stirring under our feet" (*OT* xxiv), the belief that "something new is about to begin, something we glimpse only as a thin line of light low on the horizon" (*OT* 384), "the distant roar of battle" (*DP* 308), and "a different economy of bodies and pleasures" (*HS* 159). This tendency has been noted by his critics. But what they fail to respect is the kaleidoscopic nature of these observations and their resonance with the concept of the philosopher as diagnostician.

23. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 160.

24. *EW* 2:178, "Different Spaces," hereafter cited as Spaces.

25. The ambiguity lies in the homophonic pronunciation of the Greek “u-topia,” meaning “no place,” and “eu-topia,” meaning “good place.” Thomas More, who coined the term, was playing on this dual meaning.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. *P/K* 70, “Question on Geography,” hereafter QG.
2. Michel Foucault, “An Historian of Culture,” *FL* 95; see *FL* 53 and *AK* 131, 157.
3. *DE* 1:581–82, “La philosophie structuraliste permet de diagnostiquer ce qu’est ‘aujourd’hui,’” hereafter cited as Diagnostiquer.
4. *DE* 1:606, “Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?” hereafter Qui êtes-vous?
5. *DE* 1:665, “Foucault répond à Sartre,” hereafter Répond à Sartre.
6. Admittedly, this quotation comes from a sympathetic review of Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition* published in 1970. As we warned regarding his essay, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” and other such works, one must be careful to distinguish those remarks that explain or merely paraphrase the other’s opinions from assertions that are Foucault’s own. But in the present case these are claims consonant with Foucault’s avowed position.
7. For an informative use of “discursive formation” as an instrument for analyzing British colonization of India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 20ff.
8. *EW* 3:361, “Space, Knowledge, and Power,” hereafter SKP.
9. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 238–53. Alternatively, Jameson’s aesthetic spatial utopias might find their place alongside the “mirror,” which Foucault describes as “a kind of mixed, intermediate experience” between the placeless place of the utopia and the real but “other” place of the heterotopia (see *EW* 2:179, Spaces. This was a lecture delivered on March 14, 1967).
10. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 306 7, 374 75.
11. *EW* 2:450, SPS.
12. “End of the Monarchy of Sex,” *FL* 224, hereafter Monarchy; see also *EW* 2:178, Spaces. Recall the motto of Sartrean humanism: “You can always make something out of what you’ve been made into” (Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Itinerary of a Thought,” in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism* [New York: William Morrow, 1974], 35, hereafter *BEM*; *Situations*, 10 vols. [Paris: Gallimard, 1947 76], 9:101, translation emended).
13. “Just as Order in Classical thought was not the visible harmony of things, or their observed arrangements, regularity, or symmetry, but the particular space of their being, that which, prior to all effective knowledge, established them in the field of knowledge, so History, from the nineteenth century, defines the birthplace of the empirical, that from which, prior to all established chronology, it derives its own being. . . . Since it is the mode of being of all that is given us in experience, History has become the unavoidable element in our thought: in this respect, it is probably not so very different from Classical Order. . . . It is enough to recognize here a philosophy deprived of a certain metaphysics

because it has been separated off from the space of order, yet doomed to Time, to its flux and its returns, because it is trapped in the mode of being of History" (*OT* 219 20).

14. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 168.

15. Michel Foucault, "La pensée du dehors," *Critique* 229 (June 1966): 529, translated by Brian Massumi as "The Thought of the Outside" (*EW* 2:153, hereafter TO). Anyone pursuing this "spatialization" of language in the literary realm must consider the writings of Maurice Blanchot.

16. See chap. 8, 196 97, 204 207 on the possibility of an ethnology of one's own society.

17. One should recall this remark when we discuss Foucault's critical thesis regarding the mutual incompatibility of the being of language and the being of man (see *OT* 339 and *EW* 2:264-65, "The Order of Things," as well as below, chap. 7). His Blanchot essay is a lively defense of that thesis.

18. Foucault, *Madness*, 45. This is the translation of *Histoire de la folie* (Paris: Plon, 1961) greatly abridged by the author to which some material from the original edition has been added, including the chapter "Passion and Delirium." See below, n. 22.

19. See our discussion of the "fittingness" among epistemes in chap. 6.

20. See Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 109 10.

21. *FL* 215, Monarchy.

22. The larger of the two theses required for Foucault's state doctorate at the Sorbonne, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* was published by Librairie Plon in 1961. A second complete edition, retitled simply *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, was published by Gallimard in 1972, with a very brief preface replacing the much longer one of the first edition and with the addition of two essays as appendixes: "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre" and "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu." When the English edition (cited as *Madness*) is supplemented or emended, reference will be made to the second French edition (cited as *HF*). Reference to the preface of the first edition will be from *DE* 1:159 67, and to that edition itself as *Folie*.

23. Michel Serres, "The Geometry of the Incommunicable: Madness," hereafter Geometry, *FI* 36.

24. "Madness [*la folie*] whose voices the Renaissance has just freed but whose violence it had already mastered, the classical age is going to reduce to silence by a strange manoeuvre [*coup de force*]. . . If man can always be mad, thought [*la pensée*], as the exercise of the sovereignty of a subject who is obliged to perceive the true, can never be insane. A dividing line is drawn that will soon render impossible the experience of an unreasonable Reason and a reasonable Unreason [*déraison*] so familiar to the Renaissance. Between Montaigne and Descartes an event occurred: something that concerns the advent of a *ratio*. But the history of a *ratio* like that of the Western world is scarcely exhausted by the progress of a "rationalism"; it consists in large, if more secret, part in that movement by which Unreason [*la Déraison*] is buried in our soil, doubtless in order to disappear there but also to take root" (*HF* 56, 58, missing from the chapter with the same title, "The Great Confinement," in the English abridgment).

25. See chap. 6, fig. 1.

26. A famous case of psychologism in mathematics (where the rules of mathematical reasoning are treated as simply expressions of the mind/brain's de facto constitu-

tion and hence as fundamentally empirical in nature) is the review that Gottlob Frege wrote of Husserl's initial work on the philosophy of arithmetic. The future father of phenomenology was castigated for explaining the concept of number on the basis of its psychological genesis in acts of selective perception and collection; in effect, he was accused of reducing the a priori to the empirical. So shaken was Husserl by the force of Frege's critique that he became the archenemy of psychologism in his subsequent writings. And yet psychologism has remained an occupational hazard for descriptive and genetic phenomenology to this day. As Husserl devoted a major portion of his research to combating psychological reductionism, so Foucault is employing spatialized arguments to free himself from phenomenology and the "anthropological postulate" (the concept of man as empirico-transcendental doublet) on which it is grounded (OT322).

27. For an analogous reading of the three planes that enclose "experience," see the model and argument mounted in chap. 7.

28. *EW* 2:381, NGH, translation modified.

29. Though we are employing the evolutionary vocabulary of spiral, phase, progress, and the like, common to the history of ideas, in our reconstruction and exposition of Foucault's approach to historical intelligibility, our proposal of an "axial" reading of his works in chap. 7 will enable us retrospectively to read these processive expressions as matters of emphasis and transition from the implicit to the explicit. Such, we claim, would be a properly Foucauldian reading of his own writings.

30. François Ewald, "Anatomie et corps politique," *Critique* 31 (1975): 1229, reprinted in *CA* 5:3.

31. Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 238.

32. *P/K* 69, QG, translation modified and emphasis added; *DE* 3:33.

33. "In 1980, Foucault gave a course entitled 'Government of the Living' devoted to the Christian practices of confession, introduced by a long analysis of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. This course constitutes a first inflection in the general drift [*tracé*] of his work because one finds formulated there for the first time in a manner clearly articulated and conceptualized the project of writing a history of 'acts of truth' understood as those rule-governed procedures that fasten [*noient*] a subject to a truth, those ritualized acts in the course of which a certain subject fixes his relationship to a certain truth" (Frédéric Gros, "Situation du Cours," in Michel Foucault, *L'herméneutique du sujet*, ed. Frédéric Gros [Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2001], 491; hereafter *H*). This may be the project and text to which David Macey was referring when he spoke of a collection entitled *Les Travaux* and edited by Veyne et al., to which Foucault's "Government of Self and Others" was promised but never appeared (see Macey, *Lives of Michel Foucault*, 425–26).

34. See below, chap. 11, "Foucault as Parrhesiast."

35. Interview with François Ewald, "Le souci de la vérité," *Magazine littéraire* 207 (May 1984): 22, reprinted in *DE* 4:670.

36. See my "Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault," *Journal of Philosophy* 82, 10 (October 1985): 532.

37. Interview with Ewald, "Le souci de la vérité," 22 (*DE* 4:670).

38. Veyne, *Writing History*, chap. 10, 213ff.

39. *EW* 2:359, *Theatrum*. Foucault shares with Deleuze the belief that "difference

can only be liberated through the invention of an acategorical thought” and that such thinking alone will free us from “the neurosis of dialectics” (*EW* 2:359, 358, Theatrum). “I have chosen to translate “*a-categorique*” (*DE* 2:91) as “acategorical” rather than as “acategorical” as in *EW* 2:359 and *LCP* 186. The reason is to avoid confusing this reference to the philosophical categories (of logic, metaphysics, and epistemology) with the categorical/hypothetical distinction (of logic and ethics). Foucault and Deleuze clearly have the former in mind as does Husserl when he speaks of “categorical” intuitions (see Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, bk. 1, par.3, 9 n. 13).

40. Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 209.

41. Mark Krupnick, ed., *Displacement: Derrida and After* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2.

42. Foucault’s address and the lively exchange with his audience can be found in *DE* 2:30–66, *Cuvier*. This meeting was held at the Institut d’histoire des sciences, May 30–31, 1969.

43. In response to one objection, Foucault insists: “The break between genera can be due only to our knowledge [*connaissance*] and not a break due to nature itself.” And yet he agrees that for the biological “methodists” these genera were “founded” [*fondé*] and in this sense “natural.” But he doubts that “one has the right to use the word ‘real’ where the methodists use the words *founded or natural*” (*DE* 2:39–40, *Cuvier*).

44. Despite the fact that Cuvier’s use of comparative anatomy in the classification and taxonomic organization of the species removed the ontological and the epistemological blocks to Darwinism, his commitment to fixism, vitalism, and finality made him its natural enemy. Notwithstanding the necessary, enabling role of what Foucault calls the “Cuvier transformation” in the passage from the Linnaean to the Darwinian stage of biological knowledge, Cuvier himself came to this transformation via certain errors that necessitated “with what Foucault terms “epistemological necessity”) that he and his followers systematize its implications in a direction opposed to Darwinism. What he calls their “archaeological resistances” to Darwinism are situated at the level of “discursive formations” and not in the field of natural history (*DE* 1:54, *Cuvier*). “If Cuvier is the founder of biology,” Foucault remarks elsewhere, “it is because [he] made possible, to a certain extent, a theory of evolution diametrically opposed to his own fixism” (*EW* 2:218, “What Is an Author?” hereafter cited as Author). In an assessment that reminds us of his claim in *The Order of Things* that the mercantilists and the physiocrats were dependent on the same *epistémé* for the possibility of their very existence, he concludes in the present case: “The integration of anatomo-physiology into taxonomy is realized by Cuvier. The integration of ecology into biology is realized by Darwin, but starting with the same epistemological conditions” (*DE* 1:56).

45. See my “Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault,” 535.

46. See Veyne, *Writing History*, 286.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

As Bruno Bosteels remarks: “Developments in contemporary marxism and post-structuralism . . . suggest that with the “map” the study of semiotics and politics of cultural forms encounters a model at once thicker and more dynamic than “sign” or “text,”

the most intimately related notion being Foucault's "discourse," of which the "map" is then a metaphorical equivalent" "Bruno Bosteels, "A Misreading of Maps: The Politics of Cartography in Marxism and Poststructuralism," in *Signs of Change: Premodern → Modern → Postmodern*, ed. Stephen Barker [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996], 116–17; hereafter *Signs*). He explains: "My argument is . . . that by definition the "map" is informed by a semantic and pragmatic complexity which can be shown to apply to the "sign" or "text" only through a series of stipulations. . . To some extent this is also true of "discourse," although Foucault's notion engages a problematic similar to the one addressed by the spatial metaphors of "map" and "diagram" (*Signs* 370, n. 33).

2. See Vol. 1, chap. 9, "Sartre and the Poetics of History: The Historian as Dramaturge," 213ff.

3. The validity and exclusivity of this distinction grounds Bosteels's larger point, namely, that "the confusion between object [*quadrillage*] and method [*repérage*] is not just a translator's mistake but marks a deeper ambiguity of Foucault's own discourse [such that] the possibility and even the obligation arises to offer a more explicit and rigorous description of the qualitative differences between "mapping" as *quadrillage* and "mapping" as *repérage*" (*Signs* 129). But if Foucault is the pragmatic nominalist that we have been describing, then the distinction between method and object is *necessarily* ambiguous, since the method serves to determine its object in as decisive a manner as does any discursive formation. Which is not to say that we should simply conflate the denotations. This seems to be Bosteels's position as well when he offers "a semiotic rethinking of cartography no longer as mimesis but as poiesis" (*Signs* 132), a proposal that I heartily endorse. So with Bosteels's warning in mind, we shall include the French term whenever we think a misunderstanding is likely.

4. Compare *OT* 168 with *AK* 158–59.

5. As did his interlocutor in an interview mentioned earlier that occasioned Foucault's sharp denial (see *FL* 96–97, "A Historian of Culture").

6. For a careful parsing of the "spatialized argument" in Velasquez's painting as Foucault presents it, see above chap. 5, as well as Gary Shapiro, *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 225–63.

7. Veyne, *Writing History*, 65.

8. Jean Piaget, *Structuralism*, trans. and ed. Chaninah Maschler (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 134.

9. This reading of the texts resonates with the eschatological character of the closing observations in several of Foucault's works. Consider, e.g., his mention of "a different economy of bodies and pleasures" at the end of *The History of Sexuality* (*HS* 159) or "the distant roar of battle" that concludes *Discipline and Punish* (*DP* 308) or especially his voicing in *The Order of Things* the belief that "something new is about to begin," that the "ground [is] shifting under our feet," and that some "event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility could effect a change in the fundamental arrangement of our knowledge," causing it to crumble "as the ground of Classical thought did" (see *OT* 384, 387).

10. White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 253, emphasis added.

11. Maurice Blanchot, “Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him,” in conjunction with Foucault’s “Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside,” in *Foucault/Blanchot* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), 71, hereafter cited respectively as Thought and *F/B*.

12. I initiated my consideration of the three axes in Foucault’s thought in my “Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault,” *Journal of Philosophy* 82, 10 (October 1985): 538.

13. Consider his discussion of the “political consciousness” at work in the entrenchment of pre- and postclinical forms of medical perception in *The Birth of the Clinic*, chap. 2; for example, “The first task of the doctor is therefore political: the struggle against disease must begin with a war against bad government” (*BC* 33).

14. *EW* 1:12, “The Will to Knowledge,” course resume.

15. Gilles Deleuze, “Un Nouvel Archiviste,” *Critique* 274 (March 1970): 198. This expression is missing in what is otherwise substantially the same essay printed in his *Foucault*, 1–22. Foucault introduces roughly the same three-part division in the summary of his initial course at the Collège de France, “The Will to Knowledge”:

[Discursive practices] have specific modes of *transformation*. One cannot reduce these transformations to a precise individual discovery; and yet one cannot merely characterize them as an overall change of outlook [*mentalité*], of collective attitude or state of mind. The transformation of a discursive practice is tied to a whole, often quite complex set of modifications which may occur either *outside* it (in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions), or *within* it (in the techniques of determining objects, in the refinement and adjustment of objects, in the accumulation of data), or *alongside* it (in other discursive practices). And it is linked to them in the form not simply of an outcome but of an effect that maintains its own autonomy and set of precise functions relative to what determines the transformation. (*EW* 1:12, emphasis added)

16. See his address to the French Philosophical Society, “What Is an Author?” reprinted in *EW* 205–22.

17. *Webster’s Third International Dictionary* (unabridged). The French word “*articulation*” carries similar denotations.

18. But archaeological description and analysis are applied at a level *anterior* to that where the hiatus between words and things occurs. It is for this reason that the relation between the two domains is not its prime concern.

19. On the distinction between general and total history, see chap. 4 and *AK* 9–10.

20. See, e.g., *CS* 81–95.

21. *FL* 53, “Foucault Responds to Sartre.”

22. See *EW* 1:304–5, “What Is Enlightenment?” hereafter cited as Enlightenment.

23. *EW* 3:131, “Truth and Power,” hereafter TP. We have discussed another epistemological consequence of the appeal to spatialized reasoning, namely, that it undermines dialectical thinking. Though Henri Lefebvre points to a dialectic of space, arguing that the phenomenon of urban centrality calls forth spatial contradiction (the “periphery”) and mediation (“information”) that he finds irreducible to temporal dialectics, it is difficult to recognize in this spatial interplay anything more than the give and take of inclusion and exclusion with varying degrees of “overlap” replacing

qualitative synthesis, rather than a genuine dialectic (see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991], 331–34). However, the question of a dialectic of space remains open. A fruitful line of reflection might start with Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration as discussed in his *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) and with Edward W. Soja's critique of the same in his *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso Books, 1989), 139–45.

24. Bošteels, *Signs*, 109.

25. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (London: Collins, 1972), 2:1237.

26. Phillip II died September 13, 1598, of septicemia, the same disease that would fell Foucault.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Veyne, *Writing History*, 284–86.

2. *EW* 1:289, "Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," hereafter ECS.

3. *HS* 58. When I first encountered this assertion, I immediately thought of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* as an obvious counterexample, though Foucault seemed to have in mind an *ars erotica*. He subsequently corrected that claim, referring to the classical Greek's "art of life" [*technē tou biou*] as a corrective to his earlier claim, but continued to press the contrast as well as the Nietzschean "will to knowledge" that fueled the discourse of sexuality in the West (see *EW* 1:259, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," hereafter GE).

4. Apropos of Jürgen Habermas's translation of "power" by "domination," Foucault demurs: "In our society there are production-relations, communications-relations and power-relations. By themselves neither production-relations, nor communication-relations, nor power-relations are bad or good. They exist, and you cannot live in any kind of society without these three different kinds of relations. They are not independent of one another, since we cannot have any kind of production-relations without communications-relations and without power-relations. But it is important to note that if they are not independent of one another, neither are they isomorphic. They have their own form, their own shape, and their own rules" (*FL* 416, Problematics).

5. See above p. 36 and *IP* 30–32, "La poussière et le nuage."

6. "Du pouvoir," interview, *L'express* 1729 (July 6, 1984): 62.

7. Actually, there exist in print two versions of this text or, better, drafts of a longer essay, of which yet a third unpublished portion is extant. The former, published as the introduction to *The Uses of Pleasure* cited here, differs somewhat from the preface to the same that appears in the *Foucault Reader* (*FR* 333–39 and *EW* 1:199–205). Hubert Dreyfus describes the latter as an "earlier draft" of the former (foreword to Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987], xi), hereafter cited as *MIP*.

The unpublished manuscript of forty-eight typed pages discusses "the play of contingencies and of transformations" between the ancient doctrine of sexual austerity and its Christian teaching (ms. 28). It also addresses our present-day uncertainty about the

origin of our ethics [*morale*], the extent, for example, to which it is the outgrowth of moral philosophy in classical antiquity and the degree to which it is specifically Christian in form. He calls such an investigation “historico-critical” because it seeks both the conditions of its singular emergence and the foundation of its universal significations. But Foucault raises his own kind of question in this regard that differs from the traditional historical one, namely, that of determining “how this uncertainty about the origin of an ethic [*morale*] could develop and perdure in the history of thought; specifically, how the uncertain origin of a sexual ethic [*morale*], that shows both Christian and pagan features on many important points, [could grow and survive]” (ms. 33).

It may be of use at this point to note that in this manuscript he takes “*morale*” to mean both the “real behavior of individuals with regard to the rules and values proposed to them” and “the abstract ensemble of precepts, rules, and values that are proposed to individuals and groups by means of various prescriptive apparatuses” such as education, religion, family, and the like (ms. 39–40). He links this with a certain “work” of the self on itself “[*tout un “travail” de soi sur soi*]” and concludes that “there is no moral action without a self-practice that could be called the ethical core of moral conduct” [*pas d’action morale sans une pratique de soi qu’on pourrait appeler le noyau éthique des conduites morales*] (ms. 44–45). Relating this to his famous aesthetic of existence proposed in these volumes, he observes that this ethical core gives form to the moral experience of individuals, enabling each to make of his own activity “a moral experience personal to himself.” Still, it arises from a common practice “that has its own forms and conditions of transformation in a society and a culture. One can study it along with types of “morality” and systems of codes, as forms of an “art of oneself” [*art de soi-même*]” (ms. 46). In a manner that anticipates our remarks about the relation of the individual axes among themselves, Foucault adds that “one must expect relatively complex play [*jeux*] between what arises from codes and their system and what originates from ethics and practices of self: a relative autonomy but dependencies, with gaps [*décalages*], inductions, reciprocal support and antagonism” (ms. 47).

8. I am using this title to denote the still untranslated original, *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*. The different editions of this work as well as its extremely abridged English translation are discussed in chap. 5, n. 20.

9. For an insightful discussion of the theme of the tragic in Foucault’s work, see the title essay in John Caputo, *On Not Knowing Who We Are* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) or an earlier version with the same title in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, ed. John Caputo and Mark Yount (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 233–62.

10. An earlier definition of “archive” is more structuralist in tone and even seems to contradict the definition just given: “I shall call *archive*, not the totality of texts that have been preserved by a civilization or the set of traces that could be salvaged from its downfall, but the *rules* which determine in a culture the appearance and disappearance of statements, their retention and their destruction, their paradoxical existence as *events* and *things*” (*EW* 2:309, Circle, emphasis added). Reference to “rules” approaches his definition of “discursive practice.” One can relate the two statements by insisting that discursive practices are the more formal aspects of the raw material of an archive,

which is the entire set of cultural phenomena under the aspect of its discursive character. In an interview given a year earlier than this last definition, he distances himself from the structuralists in this respect:

Unlike those who are labeled “structuralists,” I’m not really interested in the formal possibilities afforded by a system such as language. Personally, I am more intrigued by the existence of discourses, by the fact that words were spoken. Those events functioned in relation to their original situation, they left traces behind them, they continue to exist, and they exercise, in that very subsistence in history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions. (*EW* 2:289–90, WWH)

When his interlocutor suggests that “in that way you surrender to the characteristic passion of the historian, who wants to respond to the endless murmur of the archives,” he responds:

Yes, because my object is not language but the archive, which is to say, the accumulated existence of discourses. Archaeology, as I understand it, is not akin either to geology (as the analysis of substrata) or to genealogy (as the description of beginnings and successions); it is the analysis of discourse in its *archival* form. (*EW* 2:289–90, WWH)

11. See Husserl, *Ideas I*, pt. 1, chap. 1, “Matter of Fact and Essence,” par. 4.

12. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 32, 48ff.

13. *FL* 66, “The Birth of a World.”

14. Paul Veyne suggests that Foucault’s reference to the “Great Confinement” is more symptomatic than “factual”:

Foucault never speaks of historical explanation by causes or speaks of them rarely, very little, and superficially, because that, in effect, is not his problem. He does not do an event-oriented history of madness [in the received sense] but draws the portrait of madness as it was conceived at the time of Shakespeare and then in Descartes’s century. The Great Confinement that has amazed so many readers is not an episode in social and medical history; it’s a kind of *symptom*, it’s a detail in this portrait of unreason [*dérailson*]. (Paul Veyne, *Le quotidien et l’intéressant: Entretiens avec Catharine Darbo-Peschanski* [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995], 210–11)

Among those “amazed” by Foucault’s reference to the Great Confinement was Princeton historian Lawrence Stone, who shared a sharp exchange with Foucault in *The New York Review of Books* (December 16, 1982, 28–36; March 31, 1983, 42–44). The French version of Foucault’s response appears in *DE* 4:458–62.

15. For a discussion of Foucault’s quotation marks, see Rudi Visker, *Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso Books, 1995), 74ff.; hereafter *GC*.

16. See Foucault, *Les Anormaux; Abnormal*.

17. Reflecting toward the end of his life on “the power relations embedded in mental institutions or even in the personal relations between the psychiatrist and the patient,” Foucault asks whether they are in conformity with their stated goal of curing mental illness. “There are far too many power-relations, far too many dominations, in these in-

stitutions regarding their goals and values,” he concludes (*FL* 417, Problematics). But, of course, not all power relations are relations of domination (see *FL* 416, Problematics). Critics of Foucault’s use of “power” often fail to honor that distinction.

18. “The breakdown of philosophical subjectivity and its dispersion in a language that dispossesses it while multiplying it within the space created by its absence is probably one of the fundamental structures of contemporary thought” (*EW* 2:79, “A Preface to Transgression”). Of course, it is “philosophical” subjectivity (e.g., Cartesian and transcendental) that he has in mind. But similar, less guarded remarks lay behind Blanchot’s observation: “It is accepted as a certainty that Foucault, adhering in this to a certain conception of literary production, got rid of the notion of the subject, purely and simply: no more oeuvre, no more author, no more creative unity. But,” he warns, “things are not that simple” (*F/B* 76, trans. emended).

19. For a discussion of Sartre’s claim that “man is free because he is not a self but a presence-to-self” (*BN* 440) as constituting the ontological basis of Sartrean freedom, see my *SME* 9 13. His early *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Forest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Noonday Press, 1957), disposes of the transcendental ego even as it defends the empirical ego as an entity which “transcends” (is heterogeneous to) consciousness itself. Thus the genitive in his title is both subjective and objective in form: the transcendental ego has been transcended; the empirical ego is a transcendent object for (other than) consciousness.

20. Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 98.

21. *EW* 3:331, “The Subject and Power,” hereafter SP. Though “conscience” in this quotation is translated by another as “*conscience*” in French (*DE* 4:227), which can mean either “conscience” or simply “consciousness,” Foucault delivered the original text in English and chose to link “conscience” with the second meaning of “subject.”

22. It is worth considering Deleuze’s alternative view of the matter, which, like his important book on Foucault, is an original attempt to think his own thought through that of Foucault rather than simply to explain Foucault’s position. So he can argue perceptively:

Foucault doesn’t use the word *subject* as though he’s talking about a person or a form of identity but talks about “subjectivation” as a process, and “Self” as a relation (a relation to oneself). And what’s he talking about? About a relation of force to itself (whereas power was a relation of force to other forces), about a “fold” of force. . . . Indeed, I think subjectivation has little to do with any subject. It’s to do, rather, with an electric or magnetic field, an individuation taking place through intensities “weak as well as strong ones), it’s to do with individuated fields, not persons or identities. (*Negotiations*, 92–93)

23. I am setting aside the biological individual as contrasted with the species, which Foucault also discusses on several occasions (e.g., in his lecture on Cuvier [see *DE* 2:30–37]). For an argument that “the most basic qualities of an individual in the human-historical sense of the term are encountered throughout the living world,” see Francisco Varela, “L’Individualité: l’autonomie du vivant,” his contribution to the Colloque de Royaumont, in *Sur L’Individu* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987), 94. For an op-

posing view, see Gérard Percheron's contribution to the same collection, "Neuromythologies: cerveau, individu, espèce et société," 95–122.

24. See *Madness* 166–72. Of course, given the coercive nature of this particular case, one might refuse to take this as an act of "self"-constitution. To the extent that we are dealing with "force" rather than "power," that is probably correct, since the necessary condition of "freedom to resist" is either lacking or seriously attenuated in this case. This raises the question of relating freedom to self-constitution, which we shall treat shortly.

25. A helpful guide to this topic is Robert M. Strozier, *Foucault, Subjectivity, and Identity: Historical Constructions of Subject and Self* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

26. Arnold Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 118; chapter and volume hereafter cited respectively as *Ascetics* and *Companion*.

27. Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 93; emphasis added.

28. Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 98–99; Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers: 1972–1990* (Paris: Minuit 1990), 135, translation emended.

29. See Jean-Pierre Vernant, "The Individual within the City-State," in his *Mortals and Immortals*, trans. James Lawler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 320–21, hereafter cited as *Individual*. This is a translation of Vernant's contribution to the Colloque de Royaumont, "L'individu dans la cité," in *Sur L'Individu*, 20–37.

30. See chap. 9, pp. 215, 219.

31. In fact, the issue of subjectivation and access to "truth" resurfaces when Foucault addresses the issue of "care of the self." Starting with Plato once more, but concentrating on the Hellenistic ethicists, he underscores the phenomenon of intellectual and moral *askesis* requisite for approaching the "truth" (a practice he calls "spirituality"). Tracing the vagaries of such a practice throughout Western philosophy in his lectures of 1981–82 at the Collège, he concludes the course with the avowal that the challenge to philosophy in the West has been to reconcile a subject of knowledge [*connaissance*] that presents the world as an object by means of a *technè* and a subject of self-experience that presents this same world under the radically different aspect of the locus of self-testing [*lieu d'épreuve*]. His final remark is the "if that is the real challenge of Western philosophy, you know perfectly well why Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the summit of that philosophy" (H 467).

32. See above, chap. 5, p. 104.

33. "That which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation is the object of choice," Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.3.1113a, trans. W. D. Ross. Foucault was not unaware of the disputed authorship of the *Alcibiades*, as he calls it simply. In a lecture at the Collège, he asserts: "I believe that nowadays there is no longer a scholar who seriously questions its authenticity. Nonetheless, questions still remain concerning its date" (H 71). The editor of Foucault's lectures adds a note surveying the current state of this dispute, which may not be as settled as Foucault thought (see H 77 n. 12). But this made little difference to his arguments, which depend on the trajectory of Platonic readings

of “care of the self” [*epimeleia heautou*] during that period rather than on distinguished “authors.”

34. On at least one occasion, with a remark that could have been a quotation from Sartre, Foucault reflects: “Even when the power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has “total power” over the other, a power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of killing himself” (*EW* 1:292, ECS). Such a claim, on Sartre’s lips, presumes a certain “ontological” freedom that, as Sartre says, is the “definition of “man.” What we have called “reflective freedom” could serve a similar defining function in Foucault, but at the price of seriously compromising his nominalism.

35. John Rajchman alludes to another usage when he points out that Foucault’s “freedom” is rooted “in the unwillingness to comply, the refusal to acquiesce.” One thinks immediately of Sartre’s well-know existentialist “freedom to say ‘No’” (Rajchman, *Philosophy of Freedom*, 92). And Beatrice Hanssen notes yet another, related use of the term that is closer to a hybrid of resistance and refusal of power relations, namely, what she terms an “agonistic” use. She writes: “In one of his late texts, ‘The Subject and Power,’ Foucault seems to gesture to an ‘agonism’ at the heart of his conception of freedom, one that does not amount to antagonism; the latter implies mere opposition and dualism, whereas agonism refers to the ‘permanent provocation’ that takes place between reciprocal partners, that is, the ‘reciprocal incitation and struggle’ inhabiting the multiple force fields of power” (*Critique of Violence: Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory* [London: Routledge, 2000], 13).

36. See my *SME* 12 as well as Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), lxx, hereafter *BN*; originally *L’Être et le néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 24, hereafter *EN*.

37. On the ambiguity of “conscience” in French, see above, n. 21.

38. Explaining the Husserlian use of “intentionality,” Sartre exalts: “Nous violâmes délivrés de Proust. Délivrés en même temps de la ‘vie intérieure’” (*Situations* 1:32).

39. See Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 177 n. 72. Deleuze, e.g., is critical of the “idealism in psychoanalysis” that has been so influential on the French intellectual scene (see *Negotiations*, 16–18).

40. “I do not believe that the only possible point of resistance to political power understood, of course, as a state of domination—lies in the relationship of the self to the self. I am saying that “governmentality” implies the relationship of the self to itself, and I intend this concept of “governmentality” to cover the whole range of practices which constitute, define, organize and instrumentalize the strategies individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. Those who try to control, determine and limit the freedom of others are themselves free individuals who have at their disposal certain instruments that they can use to govern others. Thus the basis for all this is freedom, the relationship of the self to itself and the relationship to the other. Whereas if you try to analyze power not on the basis of freedom, strategies and governmentality, but on the basis of the political institution, you can only conceive of the subject as a subject of law. . . . On the other hand, I believe that the concept of governmentality makes

it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others which constitutes the very stuff of ethics" (*EW* 1:299–300, ECS).

41. See above, chap. 1, pp. 21–22.

42. This is a major thesis of his lecture course at the Collège in 1976, "Society Must Be Defended."

43. See *HS* 117–19. In his lecture course of 1975, "one of the essential points on which [he] wants to insist" is that "these three figures [the moral monster, the incorrigible (*correctionnaire*), and the onanist] remain perfectly distinct and separate until the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The entry point of what we may call a "technology of the human abnormality," or a "technology of abnormal individuals" appears precisely when a regular network of knowledge and of power [*de savoir et de pouvoir*] has been established that will reunite these three figures or at least invest them with the same system of regularities" (Foucault, *Anormaux* 56; *Abnormal* 61).

44. As he explains: "the mapping [*repérage*] of a discontinuity is never anything but the registering of a problem to be solved" (*EW* 3:226, QM; *IP* 43).

45. "How is it that sexuality has been considered the privileged place where our deepest "truth" is read and expressed?" (*FL* 214, Monarchy).

46. 'Michel Foucault,' pseudonymous entry in the *Dictionnaire des philosophes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), most of which seems to have been written by Foucault himself, trans. Catherine Porter, in Gutting, *Companion*, 317.

47. *FR* 334, preface to *HS*; hereafter Preface.

48. See chap. 2, n. 41, where the topic is broached, and chap. 12, where constructivism is ascribed. For a careful analysis of Foucault's "constructivism," see Martin Kusch, *Foucault's Strata and Fields: An Investigation into Archaeological and Genealogical Science Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 196–99.

49. Maurice Florence, "Foucault, Michel, 1926–," *Companion*, 318.

50. Ewa Domańska, ed. *Encounters: Philosophy of History after Postmodernism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 263; hereafter cited as *Encounters*.

51. "A kind of existentialization of Foucault, then. And why not?" (Rudi Visker, *Truth and Singularity* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999], 376).

NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. See my "Sartre and the Paradox of Committed History," in *The Ethics of History*, ed. David Carr, Thomas Flynn, and Rudolf Makkreel (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004).

2. See "History and Commitment," conclusion to part 1 of Vol. 1:92–96, as well as my "Sartre and the Paradox of Committed History," in *The Ethics of History*.

3. His exact expression in *What Is Literature?* is "disclosing in creating and creating by disclosing" (see Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* trans. Bernard Frechtman [New York: Washington Square Press, 1966], 26; hereafter *WL*).

4. One of the aims of this "archaeology of the human sciences," as the book is subtitled, is to trace the epistemic break "what we called the archaeological 'event'" that separates the eighteenth-century manner of ordering our "scientific" experience from

that of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The former assumed a relationship between word and thing that could be expressed adequately either in a mathematical formula (Leibnitz's ideal of a *mathesis universalis*) or in a classificatory table [*taxinomia*]. Foucault summarizes this ideal of the classical episteme: "What algebra is to mathesis, signs, and words in particular, are to *taxinomia*: a constitution and evident manifestation of the order of things" (OT 203). At the center of the classical episteme stands the naming relationship between words and things predicated on "a general representability of being" (OT 206).

On the hither side of this break stands an entirely different relationship between words and things, between knowledge and being. Kant had signaled this change with his "Copernican" revolution that severed the bond between words and things-in-themselves but saved the appearances by a transcendental turn that, among other things, redefined the "objective" as the "intersubjectively valid." Ironically, the chief effect of Kant's transcendental revolution was to reinstate the human whose geocentric regime had been overthrown by the astronomer. In Foucault's view, the figure of Man stands at the center of the modern episteme and the "human" sciences emerge as the empirical measures of this subject who is both their creature (as empirical) and their creator (as transcendental). It is in this context that Foucault articulates the anthropological quadrilateral and the human sciences whose possibility it charts. Our present issue is to fit Sartrean existentialism, particularly its theory of history, onto this epistemic block.

5. "Replacing the analysis of the verb's privileged position, of its power to make discourse emerge from itself and become rooted in the being of representation, we find the analysis of an internal grammatical structure which is immanent in each language and constitutes it as an autonomous being, in other words upon itself; similarly, the analysis of the articulation common to words and things has been replaced by the theory of inflections and the attempt to establish laws of mutation proper to words alone; the theory of the radical has been substituted for the analysis of the representative root; finally, where before there was the search for the boundless continuity of derivation, the lateral kinship of languages has been revealed. In other words, everything that had functioned within the dimension of the relation between things (as they are represented) and words "with their representative value) has now been drawn back into language and given the task of providing it with an internal legality" (OT 337 38).

6. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 142 n. 25, emphasis his.

7. See Vol. 1:246 and below, chap. 9.

8. For a discussion of Sartre's progressive-regressive method for social intelligibility, see Vol. 1:113 16.

9. OT 299; MC 312, reading "*signifiant*" as "signifier" rather than "significant," as in the English translation.

10. That primacy is epistemological, ontological, and moral (see Vol. 1:109, 126, and *passim*).

11. So it seems that, in Foucault's view, it is Nietzsche contra Sartre on the dialectical reading of history.

12. OT 314. One immediately thinks of Camus's Sisyphus in this respect: "One

must imagine Sisyphus happy” (title essay in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* [New York: Random House, Vintage, 1959], 91).

13. The first three were: What can I know? What ought I to do? and What can I hope for? The questions come from *Logik*, in Immanuel Kant, *Werke*, ed. Ernst Cassirer, 11 vols. (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1912 22), 8:343.

14. *CDR* 1:802.

15. Foucault’s term is “*le vécu*” (the French equivalent of Dilthey’s *Erlebnis*, “lived experience”), rather than “actual experience” as in the English translation (*OT* 321, *MC* 332). Dreyfus and Rabinow point to the existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty in this regard (see *BSH* 35 n), but they could equally have cited the later Sartre (see n.16 below). We discuss the nature and respective roles of “experience” and “the lived” [*le vécu*] in the works of Sartre and Foucault in our next chapter.

16. *OT* 322. One thinks of Sartre’s later work, e.g., but it is likely that Foucault had in mind Tran Duc Thao’s influential 1951 *Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*, trans. Daniel J. Herman and Donald V. Morano (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1986).

17. “The conception of ‘lived experience’ [*le vécu*] marks my change since *L’Être et le Néant*. My early work was a rationalist philosophy of consciousness. . . . What I call *le vécu*—lived experience—is precisely the ensemble of the dialectical process of psychical life, in so far as this process is obscure to itself because it is a constant totalization, thus necessarily a totalization which cannot be conscious of what it is. One can be conscious of an external totalization, but one cannot be conscious of a totalization which also totalizes consciousness. ‘Lived experience,’ in this sense, is perpetually susceptible of comprehension, but never of knowledge” (*BEM* 40–41).

18. Gary Gutting captures this dilemma neatly when he explains: “There is no unambiguous sense in which I can say, for example, that I (as a reflective consciousness) am ‘this language I speak, . . . this labor I perform, . . . this life I sense deep in me. . . . I can say equally well, that I am and that I am not all this’ (*OT* 324, 325). Accordingly, ‘the [modern] *cogito* does not lead to an affirmation of being, but it does lead to a whole series of questions concerned with being. . . . [e.g.,] What must I be, I who think and who am my thought, in order to be what I do not think, in order for my thought to be what I am not?’ (*OT* 325). Note the strongly Sartrean tone of these formulations. They echo Sartre’s paradoxical ‘human reality [is] a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is’ (*BN* 58)” (Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault’s Archaeology of Scientific Reason* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 203–4).

19. “When I deliberate,” Sartre explains, “the chips are down.” When the will intervenes, it is merely for the purpose of “making the announcement” (*BN* 451).

20. “We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us” (“Discourse on Language,” *AK* 235).

21. “I suppose [lived experience (*le vécu*)] represents for me the equivalent of conscious-unconscious, which is to say that I no longer believe in certain forms of the unconscious even though Lacan’s conception of the unconscious is more interesting” (*L/S* 127).

In the introduction to her edition of Sartre's *La transcendance de l'ego* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1972), Sylvie Le Bon writes: "Sartre would never renounce this youthful essay except on a single point, which is little developed there in any case, namely, the matter concerning psychoanalysis. He has totally revised his earlier conception his refusal of the unconscious and of psychoanalytic comprehension, and would no longer defend his previous biases [*préventions*] in this domain" (*Transcendance*, 8). She has in mind such remarks as those given in the interviews listed in n. 28 below.

22. John N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 253.

23. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and James M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 376; *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972), 328.

24. *DE* 1:666; *FL* 54, "Foucault Responds to Sartre."

25. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Idiot de la famille*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971–72; vol. 3 rev. 1988), 1:7; translated by Carol Cosman as *The Family Idiot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981–95), 1:ix; hereafter cited as *IF* and *FI* respectively, with volume and page numbers.

26. Again, I have developed this claim in my "Praxis and Vision: Elements of a Sartrean Epistemology," *Philosophical Forum* 8 (Fall 1976): 21–43.

27. For a careful discussion of Sartre's two ethics, though he does not relate it to what I have distinguished as two distinct epistemological approaches, see Thomas Anderson, *Sartre's Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Inintegral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993).

28. Fredric Jameson, *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).

29. See Jean-Paul Sartre, "L'Écrivain et sa langue" and "Entretien avec Jean-Paul Sartre: L'Anthropologie," in *Situations* 9:75ff., 97–98. In an interview toward the end of his life, Sartre admitted: "Language must be studied within a philosophy, but it cannot be the basis for a philosophy. I think that a philosophy of language could be drawn out of my philosophy, but there is no philosophy of language that could be imposed upon it" ("Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre," in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp [La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1981], 17; hereafter cited as Schilpp).

30. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 234, hereafter cited as *PI*.

31. It is common to divide Heidegger's work into early and late periods according to the famous "turn" [*Kehre*] his thought took in the late 1930s but which he seems first to have mentioned in his *Letter on Humanism* written in 1947 as an indirect response to Sartre. But others would add a "middle" period comprising the works of the early 1930s as distinct from the writings after 1936, which are then considered to belong to the "third" and more "poetic" phase of Heidegger's career. And, of course, still others question the notion of such a "turn" entirely.

32. While Husserlian phenomenology is post-Kantian, Sartre's epistemic realism (at least in intent) is arguably pre-Kantian—Cartesian, if you will. Though Sartre's reference to the Cogito as our necessary point of departure in this context referred to

our study of “the immediate structures of the For-itself,” the nature of his argument throughout the book (see, e.g., *BN* 244, 471) indicates that this counsel extends to his entire project of constructing a “phenomenological ontology,” his subtitle for *Being and Nothingness*.

33. *WL* 26, emphasis his.

34. I have developed the concept of the historian’s history as “creative disclosure” in my “Sartre and the Paradox of Committed History,” in *The Ethics of History*.

35. On the concept of “authentic” history, see below, chap. 12, and Vol. 1:146, 264.

36. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 213, emphasis added; *Cahiers pour une morale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983); hereafter cited as *NE* and *CM* respectively.

37. On his political anarchism, see my “*L’imagination au pouvoir*”: The Evolution of Sartre’s Political and Social Thought,” *Political Theory* 7, no. 2 (May 1979): 175–80.

38. EH 239; *L’existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Nagel, 1970), 31, cited as EH:F.

39. The nature of Sartre’s “argument” (actually a string of *aperçus*) in that famous lecture has been the object of much controversy. I offer a rational reconstruction of his reasoning along with an analysis of several necessary supporting arguments from other Sartre texts of the same period in my *SME* 31–48.

40. See Vol.1:133–35, 251. Sartre’s ambiguity with regard to the Archimedean question is a function of his commitment to two distinct and mutually incompatible epistemologies: one of vision and the other of praxis.

41. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 371. See Vol. 1:238.

42. For a similar remark, see *FL* 415, Problematics, cited above (chap. 7 n. 5).

43. For several nondefinitions of “truth,” see “Truth and Power,” *EW* 3: esp. 131–33.

44. On Foucault’s use of “multiplicity” to denote a unity without identity, see chap. 9.

45. See Axel Honneth in *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, trans. Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 146.

NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

1. A notable exception is Béatrice Han, whose important *L’ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault* (Grenoble: Millon, 1998), recently translated by Edward Plie as *Foucault’s Critical Project* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), we shall be discussing in this chapter.

2. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. J. Weisenheimer and D. G. Marshall (New York: Seabury Press, 1989), 346.

3. See *DE* 4:764, “La vie: l’expérience et la science,” hereafter *L’expérience*; translated by Robert Hurley as “Life: Experience and Science” (*EW* 2:466, hereafter *Life: Experience*).

4. In an earlier chapter we raised the problem of whether anyone can successfully pursue a coherently “nominalist” enterprise at any length (see chap. 2, p. 33). In his *His-*

tory of *Madness*, e.g., it seems that Foucault employs a kind of “eidetic reduction” via an analysis of modes of questioning to arrive at “what is essential . . . in the experience that the Classical age can have of madness [*folie*]” (HF 194). And yet from that work forward, he uses “experience” in a number of ways that are difficult to categorize. For example, he speaks of a multiplicity of antinomies that arise from the nineteenth-century reflection on madness and concludes: “The equivocation of a *basic, constitutive experience* of madness gets quickly lost in a network of *theoretical conflicts* about the *interpretation* to give the phenomena of madness” (HF 540, emphasis his). At first, this might seem to compromise what we are claiming is his later, more considered opinion, namely, that such experience is neither basic nor constitutive except in the accommodated sense that its “matrices” are the triad of knowledge, power, and subjectivation. But when one realizes that the context of this remark is “the ambiguity of the relation between man and madman” in the nineteenth century, such a description of the “modern” experience of madness is quite appropriate. In fact, he reads this ambiguity as the demand for a “dialectic of same and other” that moves “from man to true man via madman” (HF 546–47, 544). Indeed, Didier Eribon remarks how *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is critical of *The History of Madness*, especially the concepts of “original experience” and of a “fundamental truth of madness” (see Didier Eribon, *Foucault et ses contemporains* [Paris: Fayard, 1994], 250).

5. Michel Foucault, “Madness, The Absence of Work,” trans. Peter Stastny and Deniz Şengel, *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Winter 1995): 293, emphasis added; and *DE* 1:415.

6. Martin Jay, “The Limits of Limit Experience: Bataille and Foucault,” *Constellations* 2, no.2 (October 1995): 156, hereafter cited as Limits.

7. Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (Summer 1991): 793.

8. *EW* 1:116, “Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations,” hereafter Polemics.

9. See, e.g., Gilles Deleuze, *Différence and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 182–93 and passim. In fact, Deleuze finds the source of thought of the multiple in Lucretius and the Epicureans (see Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990], 279).

10. Deleuze’s and, presumably, Foucault’s model of a multiplicity is the large animal composed of smaller organisms—subindividuals—rather than the mathematico-logical paradigm of the set relationship. See Alain Badiou’s *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, where he contrasts the “vital” (or “animal”) paradigm of open multiplicities favored by Deleuze (and Foucault?) with the mathematical paradigm of sets, which Badiou prefers (3–4, 131–32 nn. 11, 12).

11. See *F/B* 70, 75. What I am calling Foucault’s “prismatic” self would exemplify such a multiplicity.

12. Parenthetically, one should warn both authors that an expression like “there are only . . .” in their respective contexts, despite their disclaimers, is typically metaphysical in character. The implicit metaphysics surfaces with the modal: “there can be only . . .” For example, can there be more than three axes matricial to experience?

13. Acknowledging that “experience” has recently emerged “as a critical term in debates among historians about the limits of interpretation and especially about the uses and limits of post-structuralist theory of history,” Joan Scott points out that “in these debates those most open to interpretive innovation . . . are among the most ardent defenders of the need to attend to ‘experience.’” And she observes that “all seem to have converged on the argument that experience is an “irreducible” ground for history.” Defending a more Foucauldian position, Scott concludes her essay by insisting that “this kind of approach [viz., historicizing “experience”] does not undercut politics by denying the existence of subjects [a common feminist criticism of Foucault]; it instead interrogates the processes of their creation and, in so doing refigures history and the role of the historian and opens new ways for thinking about change” (Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” 780–81, 797).

14. John L. Austin, “A Plea for Excuses,” *Philosophical Papers*, ed. John O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 180.

15. See James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 29 and passim.

16. Recall once more that in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault admitted: “We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us” (*DL* 235).

Of course, the Hegelian inspiration of “experience” [*Erfahrung*] in French thought cannot be discounted, especially after the Hegelian renaissance of the 1930s and 1940s. For an analysis of this phenomenon among existentialist philosophers, see George L. Kline, “The Existentialist Rediscovery of Hegel and Marx,” in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Edward N. Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 113–38, though he does not discuss “experience” as such. This dimension of Foucault’s usage has been noted by commentators; see, e.g., Maite Larrauri, who observes that “discourse, *dispositif*, and problematization are the loci of experience, a term employed by Foucault in *The Use of Pleasure* in a perfectly Hegelian tone to designate the being that “gives itself as able and having to be thought” (“Vérité et mensonge des jeux de vérité,” *Rue Descartes* 11 [November 1994]: 48 n. 14).

As Béatrice Han reminds us, the preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (trans. A. V. Mille. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977]) carries the subtitle “On Scientific Cognition.” Hegel gives a first analysis of the idea of experience in the introduction, notably in the well-known passage: “This *dialectical* movement which consciousness exercises on itself, and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called *experience* [*Erfahrung*]” (Han, *Foucault’s Critical Project*, 228 n. 4). And John N. Findlay describes the “curiously phenomenological sense” in which Hegel refers to “experience” in this text: “earlier, more naive views of absolute reality are incorporated into later, more developed ones: the objects of later views are said to be the “experience” of the earlier ones. It is by *having had* the earlier views that we are able to have the later” (Findlay, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, 87, emphasis his). Finally, Martin Jay notes Heidegger’s celebrated critique of the term in *Hegel’s Concept of Experience* (San Fran-

cisco: Harper & Row, 1970) and finds that “many of the post-structuralist objections against experience e.g., its reliance on a strong sense of subjectivity, a subject present to itself after a process of apparent alienation, and its pivotal role in mediating between consciousness and science are anticipated in Heidegger’s gloss on Hegel” (Jay, *Limits*, 170, n. 10).

Both the dialectical character of the Hegelian notion of experience and its retrospective necessities are foreign to Foucault. Still, they are not so alien that Foucault could not seek retrospectively to unify his life work, as we have seen him do on several occasions, or to support the kind of retrospective aesthetic necessity among his several epistemes in *The Order of Things* that we have termed “fittingness.”

17. Frédéric Gros, *Foucault et la folie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 126.

18. Béatrice Han, *L’ontologie manquée*. She asks “whether perhaps Heideggerian ontology might not be read as the *unthought* of Foucault’s oeuvre.” Specifically, she hypothesizes that it might be possible “to seek in hermeneutical phenomenology a more coherent basis for the analyses of problematization and subjectivation and for “the historical ontology of ourselves” that Foucault projects in general” (27, and see 301–3); *Foucault’s Critical Project*, 13, and see 185–87.

19. *FL* 99, “An Historian of Culture.”

20. See *DE* 4:631. Though this entry is often attributed to both Foucault and François Ewald, his assistant at the Collège de France, Paul Rabinow, the editor of the volume of the *Essential Works* in which it appears, claims that “the text . . . was written almost entirely by Foucault himself” (*EW* 2:459 n).

21. He grants that this opposition extends farther back in French history than the delivery and publication of Husserl’s lectures in 1929. It includes the traditional divisions between Bergson and Poincaré, Lachelier and Couturat, and Maine de Brian and Comte. But among the readers of Husserl, the first approach issued in Sartre’s *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936) while the second found expression in Cavaillès’s two theses on *Axiomatic Method* and *The Formation of Set Theory* (1938). Though the second group seems more abstract and theoretical, Foucault insists that their thought continued to play a crucial role in the crises that rocked the French universities and questioned the very status and role of knowledge [*savoir*] in the 1960s (see *DE* 4:764–66, *L’expérience*).

22. See Vol. 1:75, 125ff., and *SME* 104.

23. The notion of presence-absence has, in fact, been a feature of Sartrean consciousness since his psychological studies in the 1930s. As I have insisted throughout Vol. 1, imaging consciousness is paradigmatic of consciousness in general for Sartre. Such awareness “derealizes” its object, rendering it “present-absent” to the imaging subject. The dividedness that makes it possible to comprehend without “knowing” was already present in *Being and Nothingness*. It occurred in the distinction between reflective and prereflective consciousness. What was lacking in Sartre’s previously epistemic notion of “experience” was what we might call the “existential richness” of the later usage. In this earlier work, for example, he dismisses our awareness of the “we” as a “purely subjective experience [*Erlebnis*],” having no ontological significance (*BN*

429). It is that wealth which Sartre mines in his multivolume existential psychoanalysis of Flaubert and his age. Indeed, he once described *The Family Idiot* as a sequel to *The Psychology of Imagination* (BEM 46).

24. Iris Murdoch, *Sartre, Romantic Rationalist* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 114. Another such “equation” is his remark: “intelligence, imagination, sensibility are one and the same thing for me and can be described by the word “experience” [vécu]” (L/S 112).

25. See my *SME* 9–13.

26. See Han, *L’ontologie*, 248–57.

27. Or perhaps Blanchot’s concept of “contestation” would be a more appropriate expression of this nondialectical “reciprocity” that characterizes the subject as “prismatic.” As Foucault remarks:

Blanchot’s language does not negate dialectically. To negate dialectically brings what one negates into the troubled interiority of the mind [think of Sartre’s “interiorization of the external”]. To negate one’s own discourse, as Blanchot does, is to cast it ceaselessly outside of itself, to deprive it at every moment not only of what it has just said, but of the very ability to speak. It is to leave it where it lies, far behind one, in order to be free for a new beginning—a beginning that is a pure origin because its only principles are itself and the void, but that is also a rebeginning because what freed that void was the language of the past in the act of hollowing itself out. Not reflection but forgetting; not contradiction, but a *contestation* that effaces; not reconciliation but a droning on and on; not mind in the laborious conquest of its unity, but the endless erosion of the outside; not truth finally shedding light on itself, but the streaming and distress of a language that has always already begun. (EW2:152, TO, emphasis mine)

Admittedly, these remarks refer to Blanchot’s fiction. But they could easily carry over to the spatialized reasoning of Foucault’s own “histories” as we have been describing them. For Foucault concludes: “Thus [Blanchot’s language] bears a profound relation to space; understood in this way, space is to fiction what the negative is to reflection (whereas dialectical negation is tied to the fable of time)” (EW2:153, TO).

28. *PPC* 50–51, “An Aesthetics of Existence.”

29. “Mes livres sont pour moi des expériences, dans un sens que je voudrais le plus plein possible. Une expérience est quelque chose dont on sort soi-même transformé” (DE 4:41).

30. Martin Jay comments: “What Foucault seems to mean by limit-experience . . . is a curiously contradictory mixture of self-expansion and self-annihilation, immediate, proactive spontaneity and fictional retrospection, personal inwardness and communal interaction” (Limits, 159). We would add that “limit-experience” in this late interview is different from that which we noted earlier in *History of Madness* in that the more-recent use focuses explicitly on the subject whereas the earlier is more culturally concerned: “To interrogate a culture about its limit-experiences,” he writes in the introduction to the first edition, “is to question it at the confines of history, about a tearing [déchirement] that is like the very birth of its history. Thus the temporal continuity of a dialectical analysis and the revelation [mis au jour] of a tragic structure at the gates of

time find themselves in confrontation, in a tension that is always in the process of coming unraveled" (*DE* 1:161, *HF*). What the early and later uses of "limit-experience" share is their appeal to tearing [*déchirement*] and to wrenching [*arracher*] the subject from itself (desubjectivation) both clearly violent acts.

31. *EW* 1:239, "Technologies of the Self," hereafter Technologies.

32. "Firstly, to give the strictly circumstantial cause of this selection: Flaubert is one of the very rare historical or literary personages who have left behind so much information about themselves. There are no less than 13 volumes of correspondence, each of 600 pages or so" (*BEM* 44). See also *L/S* 123.

33. Raymond Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: An Essay on the Limits of Historical Objectivity*, 2nd ed., rev. and trans. George J. Irwin (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 509. The position of the adjective "*vrai*" is critical. Some of Sartre's critics have urged that, while *The Family Idiot* is a true (genuine) novel [*un vrai roman*], it is not a novel that is true [*un roman vrai*].

34. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 367, 368, 369.

35. For Foucault's various uses of "freedom," see chap. 8.

36. Agnes Heller, *A Philosophy of History in Fragments* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993).

NOTES TO CHAPTER TEN

1. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert [New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1948], 229. The issue is capital punishment. Camus's character reaches this conclusion after a lengthy description of how he had joined a revolutionary group that employed violence to bring about the day when such violence was unnecessary.

2. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. Constant Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 25; hereafter Fanon Preface.

3. Jean Paul Sartre and Benny Lévy, *Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews*, trans. Adrian van den Hoven (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 415, hereafter *Hope Now*.

4. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Purposes of Writing," *BEM* 23.

5. See Schilpp 14.

6. See Jean Paul Sartre, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 68–70.

7. Although Sartre is phenomenologically astute in observing the implicit collapse of the temporal spread of lived time into the atemporal instant, he overlooks one of the most prevalent forms of violence, namely that which infects the future by means of a *threat*. Waiting in the dentist's office, especially in full sound of the machinery, is often as bad or worse than the physical experience itself. Indeed, that is precisely why the ritual of torture in some societies required a display of the instruments to the potential victim as an initial step in the process, one that often sufficed to elicit a confession, as we can imagine.

8. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, Mentor Books, 1963), 389.

9. Thus Ronald E. Santoni in *Sartre on Violence: Curiously Ambivalent* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), esp. chap. 10, "Justificational Ambivalence:

Problematic Interpretation.” See also Linda Bell, *Rethinking Ethics in the Midst of Violence: A Feminist Approach to Freedom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993).

10. Another promising field of comparison between Sartre and Foucault is that of what we might call “psychoanalytic violence.” Foucault speaks of the “calm violence of psychoanalysis” (*OT* 377) and Sartre claims that “the psychoanalytical relationship is, by its very nature, a violent one” (*BEM* 202, “The Man with a Tape-recorder”; *Situations* 9:334, translation emended). Jean-Baptiste Pontalis, a distinguished psychoanalyst and friend of Sartre, has observed that “one day the history of Sartre’s thirty-year-long relationship with psychoanalysis, an ambiguous mixture of *equally* deep attraction and repulsion, will have to be written and perhaps his work reinterpreted in the light of it” (*BEM* 220, emphasis his). Similarly, Jacques Derrida notes that “for more than twenty years Foucault never stopped seeing in Freud and quite literally so sometimes a good and sometimes a bad or evil [*mauvais*] genius” (*FT* 78, “‘To Do Justice to Freud’: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis”).

11. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Albert Camus,” in *Situations* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 4:127.

12. Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 79.

13. See Thomas C. Anderson, *Sartre’s Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993).

14. Indeed, in an essay that offers a fine analysis of violence in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, William McBride insists that the possibility of “a violence-free world haunts all the pages of the *Critique*” (“Sartre and the Phenomenology of Social Violence,” in *New Essays in Phenomenology*, ed. James Edie [Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969], 298).

15. Foucault’s most concentrated discussion of the modern theory of rights occurs in his lecture course of 1976, “*Il faut défendre la société*” (“Society Must Be Defended”), especially the second lecture (Jan. 14). He repeats his methodological suggestion that we analyze power relations, not in terms of cession, contract, or alienation (the view of power as an entity that one could possess) but “primarily in terms of struggle, conflict and war.” This suggests another Foucauldian inversion, this time of Clausewitz’s famous dictum that “war is politics continued by other means” into “power is war continued by other means” (*SD* 15). It leads him to conclude that a political theory based on sovereignty and its modern version conceived in terms of rights succeeds in concealing the relations of domination (with its attendant violence) that pervade political life.

16. “We fraternized because we have taken the same oath, because everyone has limited his freedom by the other; and the limit of this fraternity (which also determines its intensity) is everyone’s right of violence over the other, that is to say, precisely the common, reciprocal limit of our freedoms.” Sartre calls this relationship within the group “violence friendship.” It denotes “a violent force within relations of friendship” that comes into full view when the oath is betrayed: “This violence, born in opposition to the dissolution of the group, creates a new reality, that act of treason; and this act defines itself precisely as that which transforms fraternity (as positive violence) into Terror (negative violence)” (*CRD* 1:456; *CDR* 1:440). It is the “positive” violence of fraternity that seems to constitute the unresolved problem for Sartre.

17. See Vol. 1, “Art and the Other: Beyond the Look,” 49–52.

18. "Any Ethic which does not explicitly profess that it is *impossible today* contributes to the bamboozling and alienation of men. The ethical "problem" arises from the fact that Ethics is *for us* inevitable and at the same time impossible. Action must give itself ethical norms in this climate of nontranscendable impossibility. It is from this outlook that, for example, we must view the problem of violence or that of the relationship between ends and means" (Sartre, *Saint Genet*, 186 n).

19. In what resembles more free association than logical progression, Sartre lists the "principles" of this *ethics of violence* in summary form as follows: "1st, the victor is always right; 2d, the principle of harshness: it is better to be unpitiful than to give way to acts of goodness which are signs of weakness; 3d, love of the struggle: the shortest route from one heart to another is the sword; 4th, the value of evil that cleanses and purifies like a fire; 5th, one has no right to resist force unless one is strong enough to hold it back; 6th, aristocracy; 7th, the vital values: nobility, ferocity, the refusal to subordinate the body to the spirit; 8th, the ethics of the weak. The refusal of slave morality; 9th, risking one's life. Acceptance of death (the master and the slave). The idea of hierarchy; 10th, the principle of ethics: the identification of force, value, and being; 11th, if every means is good, it is because none of them is *essential* to the end. Incommensurability of end and means. For an absolute end, inessential means. Violence itself, violent acts, and the violent man are all inessential to the end. Whence, at the same time, abnegation and contempt for men. Abnegation because as a diversity man is bad. He is good only through participation in the whole (being/value) that justifies violence. The violence has *always already begun*. Therefore human nature is bad. The anti-individualism of the violent man (hiding a shameful individualism); 12th, the value of purity (that of the cleansing fire); 13th, the beauty of *pessimism*. Violence and aesthetics; 14th, realism, in the name of efficacy. Idealism is the end posited without force. However, realism is itself a form of idealism: it is the idea of the *value* of Being" (NE 186). One suspects that this constitutes Sartre's compendium of a kind of Fascist reading of Nietzsche prevalent earlier in the century.

20. "Practico-inert" is Sartre's technical term for matter insofar as it has absorbed the sediment of prior human actions (praxes). Thus language, socioeconomic class, and social institutions, e.g., are practico inert phenomena. I develop this notion in the context of Sartre's social philosophy in *SME* 93 104.

21. See *BN* 399ff.

22. *DE* 3:82, "Le savoir comme crime," emphasis added.

23. See *EW* 3: 10, TJF, and 2:387 88, NGH.

24. See Hanssen, *Critique of Violence*, 3.

25. As one might expect from a nominalist involved in a vast array of lectures, interviews, and "occasional pieces," Foucault's terminology is fluid. Though he explicitly associates domination with violence in his lecture course "Society Must Be Defended," we have just witnessed his distinguishing domination from exploitation and forms of "subjectivation" which Sartre, at least, and Foucault himself in more careful moments, would link with violence as well. In sum, violence appears always to be connected with domination and often with other forms of power.

26. Sartre and Lévy, *Hope Now*, 93.

27. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Communists and Peace with A Reply to Claude Le fort*, trans. Martha H. Fletcher and Philip R. Berk (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 138. In a similar vein, speaking of colonialism, Sartre remarks: "Here is what I should like to show you apropos of Algeria which is, alas! the clearest and most legible example of the colonial system. I should like to make you see the rigor of colonialism, its internal necessity, how it had to lead us exactly where we are, and how the purest intention, if it is born in this infernal circle, dies immediately" (*Situations* 5:27).

28. *DE* 2:237, "Le discours de Toul" (December 1971), hereafter Toul.

29. *PPC* 103 4, "On Power." This interview is not included in the *Dits et écrits*.

30. This is a thesis I develop in *SME* 104 12. See also Vol. 1:109 and passim.

31. *DE* 3:139 40, preface to Madeline Debard and Jean-Luc Hennig, *Les juges khaki* (Paris: A. Moreau, 1977).

32. *DE* 2:336, "Table ronde," translated in a somewhat reduced form as QM.

33. In a debate with Noam Chomsky broadcast on Dutch television, Foucault defended the traditional view of the Left when he observed: "It is only too clear that we are living under a regime of a dictatorship of class, of a *power of class that imposes itself by violence, even when the instruments of this violence are institutional and constitutional.*" He considers it particularly urgent that one "indicate and reveal, even where they are hidden, all the relationships of political power which actually control the social body and oppress or repress it." As his general remarks about power would lead one to expect, he insists that, aside from the state and its institutions such as the army, the police, and the bureaucracy, "political power also exercises itself through the mediation of a certain number of institutions which look as if they have nothing in common with the political power, and as if they are independent of it, while they are not." Among these he cites the family and the entire educational system of a particular nation as well as the medical and the psychiatric professions in particular. Subscribing to a politics of unmasking, he remarks, "It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the *political violence* which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them" (*FI* 130, "Human Nature: Justice versus Power," emphasis added).

34. These citations are taken from the annual précis of his course delivered at the Collège. For the full text, see *Society Must Be Defended*, cited as *SD*.

35. Recall his remarks in an interview published the year after the course "Society Must Be Defended" was given. Asked to address what his interlocutor calls "nodal problems in history" such as the "great confinement" described in *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault responds that one must distinguish among levels or types of events, a point we have elaborated in chap. 3. But in a comment that bears repeating in the present context he goes on to explain that

from this follows a refusal of analyses couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures, and a recourse to analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic developments, and tactics. Here [he] believes one's point of reference should not be to the great model of language [*langue*] and signs, but to that of *war and battle*. The history which bears and de-

termines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning. History has no “meaning,” though this is not to say that it is absurd or incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be susceptible of analysis down to the smallest detail—but this in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics. Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradiction, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of *conflicts*. “Dialectic” is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and “semiology” is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue. (*EW*3:116, TP, emphasis added)

In other words, like Sartre, Foucault agrees that the intelligibility of history is a function of the intelligibility of conflict. But this conflict is to be understood on the model of domination and resistance.

36. *PPC* 123, “Power and Sex”; also translated as “The End to the Monarchy of Sex” (*FL* 224).

37. *PPC* 168, “Social Security.”

38. *EW* 2:388, NGH. “One can understand what knowledge consists of only by examining these relations of struggle and power, the manner in which things and men hate one another, fight one another, and try to dominate one another, to exercise power relations over one another” (*EW* 3:12, TJF).

39. *DS* 154; *SD* 173. For another version of the same criticism, see White, *The Content of the Form*, 72ff.

40. *SD* 173, and Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 9. A word of caution. In the context of the Foucault lecture, “historicism” is another name for the union of historical writing and the waging of war that Foucault had been discussing: “From the eighteenth century, historical knowledge has become an element of struggle: at once description of battles and weapon in the battle.” As he explains his directive: “In other words, try to analyze this perpetual and unavoidable relationship between the war that is recounted by history and the history that is traversed by the war it is recounting.” His injunction to “try to be historicists” follows an ironical observation that there is no philosophy worth the name “that ought not combat radically the platitude of historicism. No one should admit that he is a historicist” (*DS* 153; *SD* 172). It is this “value-free” and “objective” stance toward history that Foucault is rejecting.

And yet the general argument of our study has concluded that he is not a “historicist”; in the Popperian sense of that word (someone who reads “History” in a totalizing and teleological sense). For his trenchant critique of such “historicism,” see *OT* 372–73.

41. See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). In this regard, Jean-Luc Nancy’s *The Experience of Freedom* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), both the idea and the text, might serve as a convenient *tertium comparationis*, but one that I merely suggest without pursuing at this time.

42. *DE* 1:541–42, “L’homme est-il mort?”

43. *DE* 3:803, “Foucault étudie la raison d’État.”

NOTES TO CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Euripides, *Hippolytus*, in *Three Plays*, trans. Philip Vellacott (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), lines 420–25.

References to the six lectures of Foucault's Berkeley seminar delivered in the fall of 1983 rely on a typescript of students' notes based on recordings of the same. Edited by Joseph Pearson and published as *Fearless Speech* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2001) and hereafter cited as *FS*, they were never reviewed by Foucault and remain unofficial. Likewise, my own notes on Foucault's last course at the Collège de France, which I attended February–March 1984, are supplemented by recordings of those same lectures now available to the public at the Centre Michel Foucault, Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC), 9, rue Bleue, 75009 Paris. Though transcripts of the latter will be published eventually as part of the series "Cours au Collège de France," in their present form they too are unofficial. Hereafter they will be cited as *Par*, with the date of the lecture. The nine lectures of 1984, the year of Foucault's death, were delivered on February 1, February 8, February 15, February 22, February 29, March 7, March 14, March 21, and March 28, 1984.

2. The nature of the parrhesiastic "contract" was discussed in Foucault's lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, the previous term. It is only implicitly the subject of these lectures at the Collège.

3. In his course two years earlier, Foucault described an entire "culture of the self" that emerged during the Hellenistic and Roman eras and with it, a new ethic: "There develops, I believe, something very new and very important that is a *new ethic*, not so much of language or discourse in general but of *the verbal relationship with the Other*. This new ethic of the verbal relation with the other is what is designated by this basic notion of *parrhesia*" (*H* 158, emphasis added; see 172–73).

4. Anticipating his larger project of the history of the production of truth, Foucault observes, in a tantalizing aside hinting at areas for future research, that these four modes of speaking the truth have received different emphases in diverse "regimes of truth," i.e., in different disciplines and historical societies. In other words, this rectangle of veridiction can be mapped in different directions. The history of philosophy, e.g., has focused more on the sage and the parrhesiast than on the prophet or the teacher-technician. Consequently, a "philosophic truth-telling" has emerged in the Western philosophical tradition that deals primarily with being and ethos. In a remark inappropriate for a historical nominalist, Foucault speaks of a "transhistoric cynicism" by which he means a "historical category that extends over all of subsequent Western history." There is a cynicism, he explains, "that forms one body with the history of Western thought concerning existence and subjectivity" (*Par* 2/29/84).

Pursuing this map of regimes of truth (veridiction), we learn that the medieval Christian world stressed the prophetic and the parrhesiastic modalities, especially with the rise of preaching orders that commonly addressed eschatological themes. The university tradition focused on the sage and the teacher. Political, revolutionary discourse emphasized the prophetic and the parrhesiastic. In fact, later in the course, Foucault will again mention this revival of the parrhesiastic modality among romantic revolutionaries and bohemians in nineteenth-century Europe. This example of his "politics of

truth” is one he obviously favored. Finally, the discourse of science, he claims, was likewise in the tradition of the parrhesiast. Although Foucault did not develop this thesis here, it implies that the scientific mode of truth-telling belongs with politics and ethics rather than with metaphysics as has traditionally been assumed; in other words, it is more at home with doing and the particular rather than with being and the general. How this applies to clinical medicine and to the social sciences, which violate the Aristotelian ban on “science of the singular” by its emphasis on case studies, is a theme we have noted in his archaeologies of medical perception in *The Birth of the Clinic* and of the human sciences in *The Order of Things*. We have seen how it figures in his genealogies of the penal system in *Discipline and Punish* and of sexuality in the *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, as well.

5. For a discussion of the Socrato Platonic discourse on love, see *UP* 229–46 and *CS* 43–68.

6. See Euripides, “The Phoenician Women,” in *Orestes and Other Plays*, trans. Philip Vellacott (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), lines 386–94.

7. That, at least, is Foucault’s controversial interpretation of Socrates’ famous parting line as he is about to die: “O Crito, we owe Asclepius a rooster. Do sacrifice it to him; do not forget” (*Phd.* 118a7–8). During this portion of his lecture Foucault cited a recently published essay by his friend Georges Dumézil, “Divertissement sur les dernières paroles de Socrate,” which was attached to the latter’s *Le Moine noir en gris dedans Varennes*: *Sotie nostradomique suivie d’un divertissement sur les dernières paroles de Socrate* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984; trans. Betsy Wing, *The Riddle of Nostradamus* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999]). There Dumézil defends the thesis (contrary to the popular reading that Socrates orders a sacrifice to the god of healing because he is being “cured” of the sickness of bodily existence) that the “sickness” of which Socrates and Crito are being cured is that of succumbing to popular, false opinion rather than choosing a true opinion founded on philosophical examination. In Crito’s case it is a matter of healing; in Socrates’ case, of final immunization.

For Dumézil’s remarks on Foucault’s interpretation, see Eliane Allo, “Les dernières paroles du philosophe: Dialogue entre Georges Dumézil et Michel Foucault à propos du soucie de l’âme,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 61 (March 1986): 83–88.

A valuable survey of the controversy is provided by Glenn W. Most, “A Cock for Asclepius,” *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993): 96–111. Alexander Nehamas offers a careful, Nietzschean interpretation of the text as well as a critique of the Foucauldian position in his *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 157ff.

8. We have just observed Foucault ascribing a similar transformative function to his “experience” books in chap. 9. We might now call such histories “parrhesiastic” in the sense that their aim is our transformation as subjects through the revelation of the truth effects of the attitudes and practices analyzed therein.

9. This view is shared by Alexander Nehamas in his *The Art of Living*; see 169.

10. “[My daimon] is a voice, which, when it comes, always deters me from what I am about to do, but never urges me to act. It is this that fights against my entering political affairs; and the opposition strikes me as being altogether good; for, fellow citizens, you

may rest assured that if I, long ago, had tried to take up politics, I should long ago have perished, and been of no service whatever either to you or to myself" (Plato, *Apology* [31], in *Plato on the Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. Lane Cooper [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1941], 67).

Still, in the *Apology* Socrates exercises the three other forms of veridiction, albeit in a manner distinctly his own. He is dealing with a divine prophecy, though one which he transforms from the field of the real to that of the true. As a sage, he suffers the reputation of impiously seeking to know about the heaven above and the earth beneath, but in fact his concern is not the being of things nor the order of the world but the soul. Finally, he is a teacher, although, unlike the Sophists, he accepts no money and runs great personal risk for his effort. So he distinguishes himself not only from the prophet, the sage, and the teacher, but from the political parrhesiast as well. This new, Socratic parrhesia is properly philosophical in that it is concerned with practical reason [*phronēsis*], with truth, and with the soul — sides of the Foucaultian triangle we noted above. It is the aspect of "care of the soul" [*epimeleia*] which serves as a vehicle for the emergence of Socratic parrhesia in two early dialogues, the *Alcibiades Major* and the *Laches*.

(Foucault mentions his commentary on the first *Alcibiades* in an interview in 1983 [see *EW* 1:255, 260, GE]. It is perhaps worth repeating that scholars dispute the Platonic authority of this dialogue but that this does not undermine the nature of Foucault's argument, which turns on the role of Socrates as parrhesiast in the philosophical tradition. For a discussion of this controversy and a bibliography of relevant works, see *H* 77 n. 12.)

11. Foucault describes "asceticism" [*ascēse, askēsis*] as "the more or less coordinated ensemble of exercises that are available, recommended or even obligatory, at least for individuals in a moral, philosophical or religious system, in order to reach a definite spiritual objective." By "spiritual objective," he means "a certain mutation, a certain transformation of themselves insofar as they are subjects, subjects of action and subjects of true knowledges [*connaissances*]" (*H* 398). In the initial lecture of that course, he defines "spirituality" as "the search, the practice, and the experience by which the subject brings about in himself the transformations necessary to gain access to the truth" (*H* 16). In sum, *askēsis* "transforms true discourse, truth, into *ēthos*"; "it is a way of linking the subject with the truth" (*H* 398, 303).

He is careful to distinguish a properly Hellenistic *askēsis* from its Greek and Christian versions. The Hellenistic has as its aim the constitution of a "self" for its own sake, the classical Greek, for the sake of governing others, and the Christian (at least in its early monastic expression), the denial of the self and its renunciation. He makes the interesting conjecture that the early Christian preference for Hellenistic asceticism of external practices of the self over earlier, neo-Platonic practices of self-discovery through spiritual insight was motivated in large part by the association of the latter with the Gnosticism that the Church had opposed from early on and which, he notes, continued to plague Christian spirituality across the centuries (see *H* 246, 401–3).

12. Foucault cites Paul Tillich in *The Courage to Be* as well as two other German authors on the distinction between *Kynismus*, or ancient cynicism, and *Zynismus*, its contemporary derivative (see *Par* 2/29/84 5:41–43). For Tillich, the latter entails the

courage to be oneself “*non createur*.” For Klaus Heinrich (*Parmenides und Iona: Vier Studien über das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Mythologie* [1966]), ancient Cynicism was a response to the destruction of the political community in classical antiquity and a form of individual reaffirmation grounded on one’s animality. The third text Foucault cites is Arnold Gehlen’s *Moral und Hypermoral* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1969), in which Cynicism is described as a kind of individualism, an affirmation of the *moi*. I want to thank R. Bracht Branham for this citation. Though Foucault mentions Peter Sloterdijk’s *Critique of Cynical Reason* (trans. M. Eldred [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987]), he admits to not having read it. In the following lecture, Foucault recommends what some take to be “probably the best account of the whole [Cynical] tradition, ancient and modern, in one volume,” Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting’s *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1979), which came to his attention while he was preparing these lectures (see R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996], 442).

13. Foucault lists three such points of penetration, namely, the Christian ascetical tradition, to the extent that it suggested a form of life that publicly contradicted community norms and standards (e.g., mendicants and heretics in the Middle Ages); certain practices of the political militant, especially in the nineteenth century, such as unconventional communal lifestyles exhibited as prophetic of a new age or as critical of the present one; and in the fine arts, the adoption of cynical themes and stances by satirists and comedians in the ancient world and later. Foucault singles out two ways in which modern art has been a vehicle for the cynical mode of being: the appearance of the “artist’s life” [*la vie d’artiste*] at the end of the eighteenth century as a testimony that art itself can give form to life and that life belongs to the domain of art and, second, the “anticultural” stance of modern literary and plastic art both insofar as it often violently reduces the real to an elementary existence and to the extent that it contests even its own rules.

14. Foucault suggests that we reinterpret the “Faust myth,” not as a conflict between spirituality and science but as one between spirituality and natural theology à la Aristotle and Aquinas, that is, between a *savoir* that transforms the life of its subject and one that leaves the subject as such untouched (see *H* 28). By “spiritual knowledge [*savoir*]” he means a knowledge that fulfills four conditions: “displacement of the subject [either by a totalizing overview or by a detailed examination of the particulars of one’s life and world]; valorization of things in terms of their reality within the *kosmos*; the possibility for the subject to view itself in the truth of its being [which he terms a kind of “*héautoscopie*”]; and the transfiguration of the mode of being of the subject by the effect of the knowledge” (*H* 295). So he can later contrast the interpretations of this hero figure by Marlowe, Lessing, and Goethe in terms of spiritual and philosophical knowledge. On Foucault’s reading, Marlowe’s Faust is damned because of his commitment to a forbidden (philosophico-scientific) knowledge. Lessing saves Faust by transforming him into a believer in the continuous progress of humanity. In effect, “philosophical/scientific” knowledge becomes salvific in a secular sense. Finally, with Goethe, we detect what Foucault describes as “the last nostalgic formulation of a spiritual knowledge that dis-

appears with the Enlightenment and the sorrowful greeting to the birth of a philosophical-scientific knowledge [*connaissance*]" (H 297).

15. Foucault explains that *alētheia* in Greek philosophy assumed four guises: the true as the nonhidden; the true as that which has no foreign admixture which would make it impure; the true as the correct, as conforming to a rule; and the true as what exists in identity and immutability, beyond all change. Accordingly, the "true life" for Plato meant: one not dissembled with regard to its intentions or ends; a life without mixture of virtue and vice; a life of rectitude, lived in accord with norms and rules; and one that escaped corruption or fall and hence one not divided in itself.

Foucault sees the Cynics' extreme, indeed scandalous, pursuit of the true life as an *inversion* of and a kind of carnivalesque grimace directed toward the Platonic tradition. For the Socratic "other world" they substituted an "other life," the truly philosophical life, the "true life."

Specifically, the Cynics' understanding of the true life entailed a point-by-point inversion of the Platonic view just enunciated, namely: (1) absence of dissemblance to the point of dramatization their notorious "naturalism"; (2) lack of admixture of virtue and vice as exemplified in their poverty (an inversion of Stoic indifference), which led paradoxically to dependency, mendicancy, and dishonor [*adoxia*]; (3) rectitude understood as life according to the natural demands of animality, including the rejection of social conventions and taboos; and (4) self-possession and sovereignty pushed to the extreme of claiming a militant kingship which fights against customs, institutions, personal passions and vices to restore us to our natural state. The true life, the philosophic life, is one of mission, of service to others, as guides and "guard dogs" of all humankind, not just for members of an elite group. The universality of this mission, Foucault insists, is something new in classical philosophy. It will find a parallel in the early Christian extension of classical Greek asceticism to every human being (see UP 21).

16. Elsewhere he speaks of the "Cartesian moment" as the model of this displacement of care of the self by an antiseptic, epistemological understanding of "know thyself" (see H 15), cautioning that this attention to evidence rather than to personal transformation [*askesis*] was already present in Aristotle and in the natural theology of the medieval Scholastics (H 28).

17. Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 254. On "veridical" as a term borrowed from Canguilhem, see Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories*, 32.

18. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols. (Turino: Giulio Einaudi, 1975), 2:1376. I wish to acknowledge Walter Adamson's assistance with this reference.

19. FR 374, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," hereafter cited as PEI.

20. See DE 3:594, *La scène*, and 600, "Méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde: comment se débarrasser du marxisme."

21. Paul A. Bové. "The Foucault Phenomenon: The Problematics of Style," foreword to Deleuze, *Foucault*, xxxii.

22. See Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), xix, 202.

23. Still, it is not out of character to see Foucault as "in some fashion a seer." Recall

Deleuze's observation that, for Foucault, "to think always meant to think about the limits of a situation. But it also meant to see." For him, "thinking was an experiment, but it was also a vision, a grasping of something intolerable" (CA 3:267). In the case of the prison system, e.g., it was not only the loss of freedom obvious to anyone who thought about it but the entire system of humiliation that he sought to bring to our attention. He wanted us to see in concrete detail that prison within the prison which the French call the *mitard*. And so he founded with his friend Daniel Defert and others the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons* (GIP). But, as we discussed in the chap. 4, Foucault's vision is bifocal and diagnostic; it is diacritical. No doubt Deleuze is correct to point out that Foucault's goal "is to see the invisible [the statement, *énoncé*] within the visible [the nondiscursive]" (CA 3:271). And in that respect he is not far from Heidegger, who strove to bring Being to language. But Foucault's goal is also to open the space of possibility, specifically, the possibility of thinking and acting otherwise here and now. And in this he is closer than he would want to admit to Sartre's notion of authenticity as positively embracing one's radical contingency; in other words, as the affirmation of being what one is, as Sartre says, in the manner of not-being it.

24. Veyne, *Le quotidien et l'intéressant*, 212.

25. Foucault, introduction to Canguilhem, *On the Normal*, xx.

26. We have seen that the link between truth-telling [*le dire vrai*] and the constitution of the subject is very close in the earlier lectures as well (see *H* 220, 232, 348ff.). And we have just observed Foucault enlisting the Cynics' use of "care of the self" to mediate the aesthetics of existing and parrhesia.

27. See *EW* 2:462, "Foucault, Michel, 1926" and *EW* 3:254, IDT.

28. This is the thesis of Arnold Davidson's historical epistemology, elaborated in his Foucault-inspired *The Emergence of Love: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

29. Fredric Jameson, "Reflections in Conclusion," in Ernst Bloch et al., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 198.

30. One is reminded of two passages in Camus's *The Plague* that anticipate Foucauldian theses in this respect. In one, the Sisyphean doctor is challenged with why he continues to fight a hopeless battle against the plague: "Common decency," he replies. And when pressed to explain what this struggle means for him, responds: "A never ending defeat." Toward the end of the novel, as the pestilence has apparently ended, the same doctor reflects on the stark contrast between the loving couples whom he views in the street that "had got what they wanted . . . because they had asked for the one thing that depended on them solely," in contrast to the idealist, Tarrou, "who aspired beyond and above the human individual toward something they could not even imagine" and had found an answer, if at all, only in death (Camus, *The Plague*, 150, 118, 271).

Of course, Foucault had nothing but contempt for the "soft humanism" [*l'humanisme mou*] of Camus, Sartre, et al., especially in the days of his polemical self-distancing from the existentialist camp in the mid-sixties (see, e.g., *DE* 1:615 16, "Qui êtes-vous, professeur Foucault?"). Doubtless much of the similarity between his thought and theirs stems from their common Nietzschean inspiration, as Foucault suggested later in life (see *EW* 1:262, GE).

31. See Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," *University Publishing* 13 (Summer 1984), 5–6. See also his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 284ff.

32. Karl Jaspers, "Origin of the Contemporary Philosophic Situation (The Historical Meaning of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche)," *Reason and Existenz: Five Lectures*, trans. William Earle (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, Noonday Press, 1955), 28.

33. A considerable literature has arisen on this topic. Two excellent sources are Joseph Catalano, *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 1996) and Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWELVE

1. See Vol. 1, chap. 9, "Sartre and the Poetics of History."

2. See chap. 11, [14 and 28 in ms]. In his popular lecture translated as "Existentialism Is a Humanism," Sartre remarks in a somewhat similar vein: "Let us say that the moral choice is comparable to the construction of a work of art." Immediately distancing himself from any kind of aestheticism, he adds: "But here I must at once digress to make it quite clear that we are not propounding an aesthetic morality" (EH 305).

3. On Sartre's notion of "conversion," see Vol. 1:283 n. 19 and NE 471–531.

4. See Vol. 1:19–22.

5. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

6. Raymond Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: An Essay on the Limits of Historical Objectivity*, 2nd ed., rev. and trans. George J. Irwin (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), introduction.

7. Thomas Haskell, "Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Rhetoric versus Practice in Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*," in *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Brian Fay, Philip Pomper, and Richard T. Vann (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 303.

8. See Vol. 1:58, 68.

9. See my "Praxis and Vision: Elements of a Sartrean Epistemology," *Philosophical Forum* 8 (Fall 1976): 21–43, and also SME 90.

10. This seems to be what Sartre is undertaking with his talk of "temporalizing" the categories in his address to the French Philosophical Society (see Vol. 1:297 n. 20).

11. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 245ff. But Lévi-Strauss shares Sartre's view of the inevitable perspectivalism (Sartre's "commitment") of the historian when he remarks that "history . . . is never history, but history for" and explains that, once one considers the mutually exclusive Jacobin, aristocratic, and other possible accounts of the French Revolution, e.g., one would either give up trying to totalize such totalizations or else recognize them all as equally valid, "only to discover that the French Revolution as commonly conceived never took place" (257–58).

12. See BN 70 n. 9 and 412 n. 14.

13. See Vol. 1:113–16.

14. This seems curious when one realizes that he would have been a subteen at the time (personal interview, Paris, rue Vaugirard, June 1981). Perhaps the remark is less perplexing when one recalls Foucault's admission to Stephen Riggins about his boyhood interest in politics (see "An Ethics of Pleasure," *FL* 374).

15. See chap. 7, 159–60, 164; chap. 9, 215, 219.

16. See Vol. 1:4–6.

17. On life nexus (*Lebenszusammenhang*) in Dilthey, see Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, ed. with introduction by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 218–25.

Foucault notes that, for the Stoic emperor, Marcus Aurelius, there is only one element on which we can base our identity, namely *virtue*. "Virtue is undecomposable. It is undecomposable for the good reason that virtue is nothing but the unity, the coherence, the cohesive force of the soul itself" (*H* 291).

18. "Or one day or a short time make a man blessed or happy," Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, 1098a19.

19. Of course, one should speak of "personalization" rather than "identity" in Sartrean existentialism. Sartre considers consciousness an exception to the metaphysical principle of identity. Though the term "person" as distinct from "self" is introduced late in *Being and Nothingness* (*BN* 574), "personalization" emerges for the first time in *The Family Idiot*, where it plays a major role.

20. "Dès 1954, le problème éthique chez Foucault s'affirme dans le prolongement d'une problème esthétique. On ne trouve certes pas ici la préformation du concept d'une morale comme 'esthétique de l'existence,' mais l'idée au moins que l'éthique renvoie à une *expression* d'existence." Frédéric Gros, *Foucault et la folie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 24 n.

21. See Monique Plaza, "Our Damages and Their Compensation Rape: The 'Will Not to Know of Michel Foucault,'" *Feminist Issues* 1 (Summer 1981): 25–35. Plaza quotes Foucault from a roundtable discussion published in *La folie encerclée* (Paris: Seghers/Lafont, 1977), 99. Actually, the issue is complex and the remark should be contextualized. For example, his words were "when rape is punished, it is exclusively the physical violence that should be punished" (cited by Monique Deveaux in "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault," in *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault*, ed. Susan J. Hekman [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996], 225). In particular, one should recognize Foucault's insistence that "there are sexual acts like rape which should not be permitted whether they involve a man and a woman or two men" (*PPC* 289). What rightly disturbs feminist critics is Foucault's apparent insensitivity to the specifically gendered character of such violence and its sequelae.

22. Scott Lash agrees with Bouchard, Dreyfus, and Rabinow that this is "perhaps Foucault's key methodological essay after his break with Archaeology" (Scott Lash, "Genealogy and the Body: Foucault/Deleuze/Nietzsche," *CA* 3:17). I have recommended that this distinction be shared with *The Discourse on Language*, Foucault's inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, though our axial reading favors talk of "shifts in emphasis" rather than "breaks" in Foucault's thought.

23. Beatrice Hanssen remarks that “Nietzsche uses the phrase *wirkliche Historie der Moral* in the preface to his *Genealogy of Morals*. The English translation renders the designation as ‘actual history of morality’” (Hanssen, *Critique of Violence*, 266 n. 47). This seems a more accurate translation of “*wirkliche Historie*” than “effective History” (Foucault’s “*l’histoire effective*”) which would better render another German expression, “*Wirkungsgeschichte*” (see Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 12). In any case, Foucault uses the expression in the sense of “effective History,” as both his translation of “*wirkliche Historie*” and his explanation make clear.

24. See Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 29; hereafter cited as *CEH*.

25. “An effective history historicizes that which is thought to be transhistorical, grasps rather than effaces the singularity of events and processes, and defines levels of analysis that are proper to its objects. An effective history both refuses to use history to assure us of our own identity and the necessity of the present, and also problematizes the imposition of suprahistorical or global theory” (*CEH* 18).

26. See Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997), 79, 35–56, 129–37.

27. For a defense of Foucault in this regard, see Michael Kelly, “Foucault, Habermas and the Self-Referentiality of Critique,” in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 384–87.

28. Recall our thesis in chap. 11: Foucault as parrhesiast and philosophy as a way of life.

29. Gilles Deleuze, *CA* 3:269, “Politics, Ethics and Truth,” emphasis added.

30. *EW* 3:323, “‘*Omnes et Singulatim*’: Toward a Critique of Political Reason,” hereafter *Omnes*.

31. *DE* 4:38–39, “Foucault étudie la raison d’état.”

32. This use of “critique” looks suspiciously transcendental. Beatrice Hanssen has noted a certain ambiguity in Foucault’s use of “critique” that floats between the Kantian “transcendental” and the Nietzschean “genealogical” [my terms], ending in what she calls its “final definition as “self-critique” in the late work” (Hanssen, *Critique of Violence*, 40). An axial reading of his writings would associate each respective use with its appropriate pole or axis.

33. His well-known essay is published under several forms. See, e.g., Roderick Chisholm, *The Problem of the Criterion*, Aquinas Lecture 1973 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1973).

34. See *OT* 377 and supra chap. 8, 196–97.

35. See chap. 8, 195–97.

36. *PPC* 89, “The Art of Telling the Truth.” This image captures well his project of an ethnology of his own society.

37. *DE* 2:720, “Des supplices aux cellules.”

38. See “The Legend of Truth,” in *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, vol. 2, *Selected Prose*, ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 37–52. The properly Nietzschean dimension of Sartre’s vintage existentialism has yet to be studied at length.

39. David Couzens Hoy, "Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 37.

40. Draft version of introduction to the second volume of *The History of Sexuality (UP)*, FR334. For the background of this passage, see chap. 1 n. 2.

41. See above, chap. 7, 161.

42. PPC 156, "Practicing Criticism," hereafter PC.

43. For a plausible alternative interpretation, but one that leaves Foucault suspended between the transcendental and the empirical in a failed attempt to free himself from his Kantian background, see Béatrice Han's excellent *Foucault's Critical Project*, 189–96.

44. "It seems that you make certain things more explicit which could only be read between the lines in your previous books" (PPC 243, "The Return of Morality").

45. See *Par* 2/1/84 and above, chap. 11, p. 263.

46. "Man is free because it is not a self but a presence-to self" (BN 440). This "inner distance" of Sartrean subjectivity seems mirrored both in the self-reflective nature of the Foucauldian "ethical" relationship and in the nonsubstantial, "prismatic" self that is ingredient along with truth effects and power relationships in the full notion of "experience."

47. Hoy, "Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" 37.

48. Visker, *Truth and Singularity*, 376.

49. Recall Eribon's remarks about the deletion of anti-Sartre statements from the manuscript of *Les mots et les choses* and his interview with Foucault on the occasion of Lacan's death. These are reinforced by Foucault's early controversy with *La quinzaine littéraire* over similar comments not intended for publication (see *La quinzaine littéraire*, no. 46 [March 1, 1968]: 20–22, and no. 47 [March 15, 1968]: 21).

50. Nor should the prominent role of death in *The Birth of the Clinic* be considered a counterexample. The "death" at issue in that study is precisely the clinical death that "one" dies, as both Heidegger and Tolstoy's Ivan Il'yich would recognize.

Foucault's *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), sometimes considered a companion piece to *The Birth of the Clinic*, is another matter. In an interview published as the postscript to the English translation, Foucault confesses: "I would go so far as to say that [this work] doesn't have a place in the sequence of my works" (185). Doubtless Roussel's death, which Foucault mistakenly believed was a suicide, figures centrally in the text. But if we accept Foucault's own assessment of his own work at face value, we need not consider this example an exception to our point. Foucault seems to have considered it *hors concours*.

On the other hand, those places where he does treat of death in a seemingly personal manner (in *The Order of Things*, e.g.) do succeed in "existentializing" it.

51. For an expression of the optimism of the final Sartre, see his discussion with Benny Lévy, *Hope Now*, esp. 53–55.

52. *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, introduction by Michel Foucault, trans. Richard McDougall (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), and *I, Pierre Rivière*.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Robert Redeker, "La dernière peau philosophique de Michel Foucault," *Critique* 660 (May 2002): 392.

2. To be exact, Sartre used this expression to describe committed literature. We extended it to committed history in volume 1 (see above, chap. 12). As for Foucault's describing his works as "fictions" (*EW* 3:242, IDT), one thinks immediately of Borges's *Ficciones*; and Foucault in fact greatly admired Borges.

3. "[Early in his career, Sartre's] reading of Emil Ludwig's biography of Wilhelm II suggests the first statement of a theme to be repeated with variations throughout his career: can we find an 'internal relation of comprehension' . . . between Germany's English policy and the kaiser's withered arm?" (Vol. 1:19).

4. As he explains to Trombadori: "I am an experimenter and not a theorist. I call a theorist someone who constructs a general system, either deductive or analytical, and applies it to different fields in a uniform way. That isn't my case. I'm an experimenter in the sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before" (*EW* 3:240, IDT).

5. Pasquale Pasquino, "Michel Foucault (1926–84): The Will to Knowledge," in *Foucault's New Domains*, ed. Mike Gane and Terry Johnson (London: Routledge, 1993), 47; trans. emended.

6. The allusion, of course, is to Foucault's much-cited suggestion of an archaeological event that might displace the modern episteme such that "man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (OT 387). Two years earlier he had warned: "What must not delay in dying, what is already dying in us (and whose death our present language carries) is *homo dialecticus*—the being of departure, of return and of time, the animal who loses his truth and recovers it illuminated, the stranger to himself who becomes familiar once more. That man was the sovereign subject and the servant [*serf*] object of all the discourses about man that have taken place for a long time, especially those about alienated man. And, fortunately, he is dying beneath their chatter" (DE 1:414, "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre").

7. Robert Maggiori, "Sartre et Foucault," *Liberation*, new series, no. 967 (June 30 and July 1, 1984): 24.

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