The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault

Mark G. E. Kelly

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Contents

Abbreviations

I. TITLES OF WORKS BY AND COLLECTIONS OF MICHEL FOUCAULT

In English:

AB—*Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France. 1974–1975*. Translated by Graham Burchell. London: Verso, 2003.

AK—*The Archaeology of Knowledge* (incorporating 'The Discourse on Language'). Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon, 1972.

BC—*The Birth of the Clinic*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan. London: Routledge, 1989.

DP—*Discipline and Punish*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Allen Lane, 1977.

EW(vol.)—*Essential Works*. 3 vols. New York: The New Press, 1997, 1998, 2000.

EW1—*Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Edited by Paul Rabinow.

EW2—*Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*. Edited by James D. Faubion.

EW3—*Power*. Edited by James D. Faubion.

FL—*Foucault Live*. Edited by Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1996.

FS—*Fearless Speech*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001.

HS—*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

LCP—*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Edited by D. Bouchard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

OT—*The Order of Things*. London: Tavistock, 1970.

PE—'Politics and Ethics: An Interview' in *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. Translated by Catherine Porter. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 373–80.

PK—*Power/Knowledge*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester, 1980.

PP—*Psychiatric Power*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

PPC—*Politics, philosophy, culture*. Edited by Lawrence D. Kitzman. New York: Routledge, 1988.

PT—*Politics of Truth*. Edited by Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1997.

RC—*Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*. Edited by Jeremy R. Carrette. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1999.

RM—*Remarks on Marx*. Translated by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito. New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.

SD—*Society Must Be Defended*. Translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.

TS—'Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault' in *Technologies of the Self*. Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988. 9–15.

UP—*The Use of Pleasure*. Vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

WK—*An Introduction*. Vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Reprinted as *The Will to Knowledge*, London: Penguin, 1998.

In French:

AS—*L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.

DE(vol.)—*Dits et écrits*. Edited by Daniel Defert and François Ewald. 2 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 2001.[1]

DS—*Il faut défendre la société*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997.

LP—*L'usage des plaisirs*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

LS—*L'herméneutique du sujet*. Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2001.

MC—*Les mots et les choses*. Paris: Gallimard, 1966.

NB—*Naissance de la biopolitique*. Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2004.

OD—*L'ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

SP—*Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

STP—*Sécurité, territoire, population*. Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2004.

VS—*La volonté de savoir (Histoire de la sexualité 1)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

II. TITLES OF WORKS BY FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

This referencing is based on the guidelines of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society, in which citations are to sections, not page numbers, to facilitate use of different editions. The editions listed here are the English versions I have used for the purpose of quotation.

BGE—*Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1973.

GM—*On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967.

TI—*Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1968.

TL—'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense' in *Philosophy and Truth*. Translated by Daniel Breazeale. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990.

WP—*The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1968.

Z—*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1969.

A NOTE ON REFERENCES TO FOUCAULT

To correct the problem that no reference to a collection adequately picks out the actual piece in question, I simply try to make it explicit what piece

I am referring to and what its provenance is in the main body of text; the alternative of referencing every article as a separate source—1989a, 1989b, et cetera—is cumbersome, since there are literally hundreds of such texts to refer to, and in any case misleading, since they refer to publication dates, not the actual dates that Foucault said or wrote the passage in question. If readers want to follow up references into editions other than that cited, there is an excellent online resource, Richard A. Lynch's bibliography, "Michel Foucault's shorter works in English."

References to shorter works by Foucault are problematic, because many pieces are found in more than one collection in English. Since all Foucault anthologies have at least some articles not reproduced in other anthologies, it is in fact necessary to refer to them all to some extent, though the overlaps are enormous. The 1988 *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* collection, at the time of publication entirely composed of new translations, now consists of three unique pieces and seventeen pieces published in one or more later collections. 1977's *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* was largely republished in volume 2 of the *Essential Works*, leaving only one article and a version of 'What is an Author?' unique to the older collection. 1984's *The Foucault Reader* has now been entirely republished elsewhere except for one interview. Colin Gordon's *Power/Knowledge* is the only early collection not to have had most of its content repeated elsewhere. Semiotext(e)'s *Foucault Live* collection is in fact the most extensive collection of Foucault's work in English, of which a substantial proportion is unique—it is, however, sadly marred by translation problems. As things stand, where works appear in multiple selections, I always refer to the *Essential Works* version where there is one, since this is generally the superior translation, and probably now the most widely-available version.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGES

This work is intended to be accessible to monoglot English-speakers, indeed to make accessible to them what is otherwise not. Thus, when I quote from texts in other languages, I do so in my own translations. I refer to foreign editions either where there is no extant translation at time of writing, or where the existing translation is problematic for my uses; in the latter case I always also give a reference to an alternative translation as a "cf."

Acknowledgements

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I must also acknowledge all those who rendered financial assistance to me during the PhD: the University of Sussex for a tuition-free place during an initial phase; the University of Sydney for providing me with a three-and-a-half-year stipend and funding my travel during the course of my research; and the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training for funding my tuition for four years.

Introduction

> Philosophy today is entirely political.
>
> –Foucault (DE2 266; cf. PPC 121; FL 222)

"Political philosophy" has come, as Alain Badiou (2006, xi) has polemically put it, to be a "disguise" for moral philosophy. This tendency may be identified with the revitalisation (which according to Badiou is of course nothing of the sort) of political philosophy in Anglophone/analytical philosophy since John Rawls. A rather different and older tendency may be identified in continental philosophy, namely the politicisation of philosophy under the influence of Marxism. This began with the philosophical adoption of Marxism in Germany after World War One and in France after World War Two. The eleventh thesis of Karl Marx's *Theses On Feuerbach*, which famously condemns philosophers for having merely interpreted the world instead of changing it, has stood for most continental philosophers as a spectral condemnation of a certain type of philosophy, calling them instead to do work that was engaged, concretely relevant. Even as philosophers in France and Germany have in many cases moved away from Marxism, we are left with a post-Marxian philosophical moment in which all philosophers must address the political concerns raised in Marxism—it is this moment that Michel Foucault is referring to in the above epigraph. The "political philosophy" of our title is thus in this sense of a philosophy that is intrinsically political. Political philosophy in this sense is profoundly at odds with the *soi-disant* political philosophy that dominates academically today, but is, if anything, as Badiou indicates, more properly political than the philosophy that is normally designated as such. It is thus not a political philosophy that seeks to prescribe politically on the basis of abstract reasoning, but rather a philosophy that attempts to understand politics while at the same time consciously undertaking the role of an intervention in the political.

That philosophy today is always political of course makes "political philosophy" into a truism. By using it, we signal two things: an approach to Foucault that is philosophical, and an attention to the political dimension of Foucault's work. The sum of these two efforts, or rather the whole that is greater than the sum, is what we hold is actually *a* political philosophy of Foucault's, coherent and applicable.

This book is thus not an attempt to neuter Foucault by making him into a political philosopher in the now-conventional mould, but rather to assert

the coherence and philosophical import of a thought that is clearly political and already generally understood as such. Indeed, it is claiming Foucault's thought as philosophy that is the contentious part of the title, rather than saying that it is political.

While many have treated Foucault's political thought, few have attempted to define the area systematically. The literature that exists either uses Foucault's work as an aid to particular studies, which was Foucault's own express intention for his work, or brings Foucault's work into productive confrontation or conflation with that of other thinkers, or simply treats it as part of a study of his work with a different overall focus. Jon Simons' *Foucault and the Political* belongs, despite its title, to this last category.

The type of project that we are engaged in here is no doubt avoided partly because it was something of which Foucault himself did not approve. Foucault did not set out his own political philosophy. Nevertheless, we contend here that he effectively, subliminally does produce one which can be discerned through the study of his thought and be set out by us.

Foucault didn't like to be studied. While he did give tacit approval to a secondary monograph about him during his lifetime, Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus' 1982 *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, he more or less reprimanded Jana Sawicki in 1982 for doing a doctoral thesis on him (Sawicki 1991, 15).

This was not, however, because Foucault was absolutely opposed to the study of historically-important thinkers, but because he did not think he himself was one: "one would prefer that the books of someone like me, not a great author but only someone who produces books, are read only for themselves" (DE2 1554; cf. FL 454).

Now, this distinction between a "great author" and a mere producer of books may be read in two ways: it might be taken to be a distinction on the basis of historical importance, or it might be a distinction on the basis of the type of work being done.

On the first reading, we can say Foucault would surely be surprised by the attention his work has received in the decades since his death, that he has become a touchstone figure in multiple disciplines. He might in his modesty argue that he does not deserve such attention, but I and many others would disagree; either way, the amount of work done which uses Foucault itself now in my view makes detailed clarification of his work all the more necessary. Foucault's refusal to clearly formulate his own positions has become a problem as he has emerged as a central intellectual figure, leading to general misinterpretation on key points, with a tendency for the deleterious effects of this misunderstanding to be magnified as work which utilises him multiplies. Foucault didn't want his work to become a dogma, but now instead we have interpretations of Foucault proliferating under the cover of not being interpretations, a tyranny of formlessness. Moreover, those who do practice meticulous philosophy have been able to run riot in criticising Foucault, with Foucaultians

leaving open the philosophical ground on which Foucault's insights might be defended and extended. True, Foucault says that he "writes in order to have no face" (AK 17). I hope we are not violating his wishes here: though we do invoke Foucault's biography, we are mainly interested in something impersonal that he produced.

Regarding the second reading of Foucault's distinction, while it is true that Foucault is not a great author in the sense of one whose name stands for a great theoretical system (a Hegel or a Kant), we hope to show here that Foucault does produce at least the bare bones of a coherent political philosophy. Indeed, this implicit philosophy might be said to be something that has led Foucault to become such a prominent figure in spite of himself.

Now, Foucault did not develop theories, but rather wrote singular works, which were for him experimental pieces of thought, from which he then moves on:

> I am perfectly aware of having continuously made shifts both in the things that have interested me and in what I have already thought. In addition, the books I write constitute an experience for me that I'd like to be as rich as possible. An experience is something you come out of changed. . . . In this sense I consider myself more an experimenter than a theorist; I don't develop deductive systems to apply uniformly in different fields of research. (RM 26–27)

However, this does not imply that Foucault doesn't build something coherent across and underneath his experiments; against the common claims of radical discontinuity in Foucault's thought, I posit general coherence over some changes of direction and emphasis. In doing so, I am in the company of Gilles Deleuze (1988) and, more recently, Toni Negri (2004), who says, "It seems to me indeed that the three themes Foucault focussed on are perfectly continuous and coherent—coherent in so far as they form a unitary and continuous theoretical production."

The most important challenge yet to such views was mounted recently by Eric Paras in his *Foucault 2.0*. Paras's is really the polar opposite of my treatment of Foucault: while I read Foucault from the beginning in an attempt to establish as much coherence as possible, Paras tries to find as much incoherence as possible. I acknowledge and challenge Paras by turns in the text before you, but in fact I think that Paras's work constitutes a useful accompaniment to this present work: he thus attends things which I do not, which are nonetheless important, even though I do disagree with him both on many specific points and in my overall assessment.

Foucault always defends the substantial validity of his output from his doctoral thesis onwards, although his work before that is effectively juvenilia that he indeed does not defend. Despite his early defiance of oeuvre—"do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same" (AK 17), he famously inveighs—he retrospectively insists that he does remain the same

at a level more fundamental than the differences of style and theme which occur between or within his texts. This begins in 1977:

> If I wanted to pose or drape myself in a slightly fictive coherence, I would tell you that this has always been my problem: effects of power and the production of truth. (FL 220)

While Foucault here cautions that the coherence is "slightly fictive," he later makes unmitigated statements about the continuity of the thematic of his work across his oeuvre—we will deal with these when we assess the last period of Foucault's work, in Chapter 4 in particular.

The evanescence of Foucault's interests belies a deeper continuity of presuppositions and approach. Indeed, Foucault himself teaches that at some level we have an historically constituted *a priori* limit to our possibilities for thought, although I am claiming Foucault's work has a closer continuity than the necessary minimum that this implies. Our posited coherence is not located at so subterranean a level; we will examine rather precisely what Foucault said about what he was doing, and will not look for a secret, esoteric message, but rather reconstruct what he was doing, taking as our hypothesis that Foucault didn't change his mind.

Our project inverts that of Pierre Bourdieu's *Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*: where Bourdieu tries with Heidegger to reveal the hidden political import of Heidegger's ontology, in the case of Foucault it is the politics that is plain to see, while the ontology is what I am reconstructing. Where Bourdieu is trying to expose Heidegger, I am trying, in a sense, to defend Foucault. I do not criticise Foucault in any significant way precisely because I am interested in seeing what can be done with Foucault, to take the idea of a Foucaultian political philosophy as far as it will go. This is perhaps ironic, given that the conclusion from my exegesis of Foucault will ultimately be that rigorous criticism is the greatest political necessity. Still, this book is not a work of criticism, but a contribution to critical philosophy.

The major animus to this project is indeed to defend Foucault, to answer in particular certain perennial complaints against his work. The first chapter of the book is in large part an attempt to show that Foucault has a coherent account of truth, against those who claim that Foucault tries to have it both ways by being radically sceptical or socially constructivist about truth, while himself making bold assertions. The second and third chapters of the book are concerned with showing that Foucault's conception of power is consistent and coherent, and that he never abandons it. The fourth chapter of the book is an attempt to understand Foucault's apparently contradictory pronouncements on the nature of the subject, to show that his reintroduction of the subject in his late work does not constitute the repudiation of his early work. In the fifth chapter, I show that Foucault's views on power, truth and subjectivity do not prevent him having a robust

concept of resistance to power. In the sixth and seventh chapters, I show that Foucaultian political practice is possible, that Foucault's thought does not lead us down a dead-end of relativist quietism.

Foucault's critics for the most part make very similar criticisms to one another. Ultimately, almost all criticism of Foucault boils down to the question of norms, and the allegation of relativism (*see* Patton 1998, 64; Lemke 1997, 13–22). Nancy Fraser (1995), Charles Taylor (1984) and Jürgen Habermas (1987) are the most prominent critics of Foucault who decry his lack of an explicit normative basis, claiming that ultimately he does make normative assumptions and that his work thus contains immanent contradictions.

Critics hold the problem with Foucault's conception of power to be that, because he makes power ubiquitous, he makes all political choices alike. The problem with his conception of the subject is that it makes the subject something produced by power, and hence robs us of any possibility of resistance. Similarly, power gets into truth and corrupts it, allegedly robbing us of our ability to stand outside power in criticism, making our criticisms themselves new forms of power. Since power is everywhere, freedom, truth, justice, rights and resistance all become mere forms of power and nothing can stand against it, all is futile. Foucault's notion of power is the crux of these objections to him, and hence the defence and elaboration of it is the crux of this book.

This is a study of Foucault rather than an attempt to place Foucault comparatively in the field of contemporary theory. While there is some comparative work here for the purpose of elucidation, generally we are interested only in the actual influences that Foucault himself had; most of these influences are shown diagrammatically in Figure A.1. So, while Foucault's work closely resembles that of certain sociologists, for example, including those who came before him, worked during his lifetime, or came after him—Weber, Goffman, Luhmann, Giddens, symbolic interactionism, conflict theory—there is scant attempt here to compare him to these, only to understand the actual philosophical roots of his thought. Even this enterprise is somewhat mitigated, moreover: the primary task is simply to understand Foucault in his own terms, not his place in the history of philosophy. Consequently, certain influences are also not examined—Hegel is the most prominent influence we simply do not touch upon.

I do engage in several pointed differentiations of Foucault from other thinkers who are in certain respects very close to him, namely from Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler. These differentiations respectively help to clarify in turn Foucault's distance from Marxism, from Nietzsche, and from Jacques Lacan.

In the course of this book, we study, in this order, the broad ontological presuppositions with which Foucault operates and the political dimension Foucault gives to epistemology even before he begins to talk about power as such (Chapter 1), the coherent evolution of Foucault's conception of power

(Chapters 2 and 3), his conception of subjectivity and its relation to power (Chapter 4), his conception of resistance to power (Chapter 5), and his intellectual and personal, ethical conception of political, or perhaps rather *anti*-political, practice (Chapters 6 and 7).

The first chapter is, I think, of the least general interest in the book. I have tried to give the chapters titles that allow readers to readily find the area of their own interest, as typically those who are interested in Foucault want, precisely as Foucault himself explicitly intended, to use Foucault's work as a toolbox, although of course there is some degree of concatenation, such that earlier chapters are unavoidably to some extent presupposed in later ones.

1 Epistemology

> The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.
>
> –Spinoza (1997)

In this first chapter, we look at the background to Foucault's development of a radically new understanding of politico-social power. This background comprises Foucault's work up to the point where he turns his attention towards power. This work happens not only to provide the background in a chronological sense, however, but also grounds Foucault's later work by furnishing its epistemological and methodological foundations. Insofar as Foucault did epistemological/methodological work later in his life, this is also dealt with here, at the end of the chapter, despite being out of the generally chronological order of our study.

The purpose of detailing Foucault's epistemology in relation to the theme of the book may not be immediately clear, but it is twofold. Firstly, it serves as a defence against those who question Foucault's political thought by attacking its supposed lack of epistemological or philosophical basis. Secondly, it grounds Foucault's notion of critique, which we deal with in Chapter 6. While this is necessary to a philosophically complete account of Foucault's political thought, those readers who are interested primarily in particular themes of that thought might however do better to use their discretion and skip in the first instance to the chapter that corresponds to their primary interest.

THE BIRTH OF ARCHAEOLOGY

I shall begin by bracketing Foucault's earliest works, namely: the lengthy introduction to his 1954 translation into French of Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* (*Traum und Existenz*); his first monograph, *Mental Illness and Psychology,* which originally appeared the same year; and the two parts of his 1961 doctoral thesis, one a commentary on and translation of Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, the other, much better-known, his *History of Madness* (*Histoire de la folie*)—best known in the English-speaking world via an abridged version published as *Madness and Civilization*. This exclusion is necessary and, though doubtless not entirely justifiable, it is nonetheless not arbitrary. The exclusion of

the first two works is justified on three counts: they are juvenilia, which Foucault never himself emphasised—indeed he actively sought to suppress *Mental Illness and Psychology*; they are not particularly relevant to our purposes, not being explicitly political; and they do not yet represent a distinctly Foucaultian perspective, rather sharing with much contemporaneous French intellectual discourse the threefold influences of phenomenology, psychoanalysis and Marxism with which Foucault would later break to a considerable extent.

The *History of Madness* is a different matter, however. It is clearly both an original work and one with immediate political import, detailing the "great confinement" of the mad and indigent in Europe at a particular historical moment. It moreover thus clearly sets the pattern for many of Foucault's later books: *Birth of the Clinic* (*Naissance de la clinique*), *The Order of Things* (*Les mots et les choses*), *Discipline and Punish* (*Surveiller et punir*) and *The Will to Knowledge* (*La volonté du savoir*)[1] all follow the same pattern of diagnosing certain revolutionary changes at more or less the same juncture in the modern era. However, while there is a distinctively Foucaultian pattern to this work, it is theoretically undeveloped. Since this pattern is so repeated, and indeed refined, we do not need to study this element of the *History of Madness*. Rather, the later repetitions are more interesting for our purposes, displaying greater theoretical depth. Foucault's 1974 lectures at the Collège de France, *Psychiatric Power* (*Le Pouvoir psychiatrique*), indeed take up where the *History of Madness* left off historically, studying the same area but with a different methodology (PP 12); the earlier work, Foucault says (PP 13), was based in the perceptions of madness that he found in the contemporary literature, "which inevitably refers to a history of mentalities, of thought." That approach was heavily influenced by the phenomenological philosophy then dominant in France. This phenomenological influence diminishes as Foucault develops a methodology of his own he labels "archaeology" during the 1960s. This methodology itself is superseded in turn in the 1970s (although he would make clear that he never stopped using either this method or the one that followed it [Foucault 1983]):[2] by the time of *Psychiatric Power*, Foucault (PP 13) is contrasting archaeology with a new kind of analysis, based on power—this shift will be dealt later in this chapter.

Foucault's first use of the term "archaeology" is in the preface precisely of the first two editions of the *History of Madness*, in which Foucault (2002, 2) describes the study in hand as not so much "the history of that language" used to speak about madness, as "the archaeology of that silence" today imposed on the mad. There is no explicitly formulated project of archaeology in the *History of Madness* yet, however. Its formulation is found only in Foucault's next book, *The Birth of the Clinic*, the original French-edition subtitle of which was "An archaeology of medical gaze." The introduction to the first edition of *The Birth of the Clinic* (which is the version used for the English translation) outlines a clear methodology,

proposing a structural analysis of signifiers without reference to the signified, which is to say, of words without attention to the things to which they refer, clearly based in the method of the grand old man of French "structuralism," Ferdinand de Saussure, who was interested not in the way signifiers relate to signifieds, so much as in the way signifiers relate to one another to form language (BC xix). Foucault announces his intention to conduct a "structural analysis of discourses."

The Birth of the Clinic does indeed analyse changes in medical discourse at the level of signifiers, but Foucault does not constrain himself to commenting on discursive matters, despite the intentions stated in his introduction. Rather, he explicitly connects his analysis of discourse up to structures of a different kind, namely the institutional structures of modern medicine. In doing so, Foucault does not, strictly speaking, breach his undertaking to refrain from a commentary which compares signifier to signified, since the signified of medical signifiers is not the medical system in which the signifiers occur, but rather diseases and symptoms themselves, and Foucault indeed passes no judgement on these or their relations to their signifiers. However, the institutional armature of medicine is not part of medical discourse either, and so the book ultimately, like its predecessor, the *History of Madness*, ranges over multiple levels and issues, despite a lack of a methodology that would justify this range. This is perhaps one reason that Foucault saw fit to substantially alter the introduction in later editions, removing the structuralist language.

THE STRUCTURE OF THINGS

In Foucault's next few works, however, he does concentrate purely on discourse itself, dropping the study of institutions, thus following the direction he had formulated in the original introduction to *Birth of the Clinic*. Foucault's next book was a shorter work of literary criticism, 1963's *Raymond Roussel* (published in English under the title *Death and the Labyrinth*). Thereafter, he produced two substantial works of a more theoretical nature, 1966's *The Order of Things* and 1969's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'archéologie du savoir*). Foucault in these two abandons concrete considerations; he would remark in a 1972 interview by way of explanation that

> *The Order of Things* situates itself at a purely descriptive level which leaves all the analysis of relations of power which subtend and render possible the appearance of a type of discourse entirely to one side. . . . I wrote that book . . . after two others, one concerning the history of madness, the other the history of medicine, *The Birth of the Clinic*, precisely because, in the first two books in a somewhat confused and anarchic manner, I had tried to treat all the problems together. (DE1 1277)

The Order of Things describes shifts in the intellectual culture of the West, in which what Foucault calls the *episteme* is replaced by a new one. The *episteme* is for Foucault the historical order that governs the production of knowledge across disciplines in a particular historical epoch by governing what counts as proper knowledge within scientific discourse (which is to say that the *episteme* does not necessarily apply to everyday discourses).[3] Foucault tracks three domains of discourse, those which evolved into the modern disciplines of economics, linguistics and biology. Foucault's point is to show how changes in the episteme meant changes in all of these areas of knowledge simultaneously, and to tease out what the common governing principle for the production of discourse is across all these areas of scholarly discourse in each disjointed period. Foucault's analysis remains resolutely at this level, and does not ask *how* or *why* these changes occurred, rather exploring only *what* has happened at the level of discourse itself.

The Order of Things was a surprise bestseller, while also attracting considerable controversy. Foucault was accused of idealism by Marxists for looking at discourse without examining the class relations that, supposedly, underlie it. Foucault would later indignantly point out, "I wrote *The History of Madness* also in order that it be known that I don't ignore the problem" of "the constitution of a knowledge from a social practice" (RM 102–3).

One can see how a perspective that sees no need to refer the history of ideas to anything outside of the ideas themselves could be viewed as idealist, though it is nevertheless an unfair accusation, since this analysis does not claim that the discursive is self-sufficient, only that it can be *described* without reference to the material. Foucault does in the preface to *The Order of Things* clearly expound an ontology of the discursive, moreover, arguing that "there exists, below the level of [culture's] spontaneous orders, things that are in themselves capable of being ordered, that belong to a certain unspoken order" (OT xx–xxi). One might argue that this is not unambiguously non-idealist, that the "things" capable of being ordered are mere subjective experiences or perceptions, things in a phenomenological sense no less, rather than physical objects as they exist in themselves. More insight into Foucault's thinking about this extra-linguistic reality can, however, be gleaned from an extraordinary and as-yet untranslated interview with Foucault, given shortly after he wrote *The Order of Things*.[4] Here, Foucault clearly distinguishes himself from those who studied the structures of perception, the phenomenologists of the previous generation of French philosophy, proclaiming his contrasting interest in the underlying structures of reality. Foucault does not speak of "structures" per se here, but rather of "systems," yet this is the very word Saussure himself employed. Foucault takes as his model DNA, the hidden, *material* code which determines what unfolds at the explicit level (DE1 543). He explicitly sees a number of contemporary scholars—Jacques Lacan, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Georges Dumézil, and

himself—as engaged in the project of uncovering these hidden systems. These four were commonly grouped together contemporaneously under the label of "structuralism,"[5] though Foucault does not use that word itself here. Foucault never unambiguously accepts the label of "structuralist" to describe himself: he rejects it as a simple description (EW2 437; OT xiv; RC 89; DE1 1164; Foucault 2005, 130), and, although he accepts that it might apply to him in the sense that it is applied to others among his French contemporaries (AK 234), he ultimately denies that the term "structuralist" properly applies to any French thinker, including therefore also those who explicitly described themselves as such, preferring to reserve the term "structuralism" for the Eastern European movement that influenced French "structuralism" (DE2 884).

Whatever one calls it, the project that Foucault thought he and others were engaged in was "to show that our thought, our life, our manner of being, even our most everyday manner of being, is part of the same systematic organisation and therefore depends on the *same* categories as the scientific and technical world" (DE1 546), against the "abstract" "humanism" which is "cut off from the scientific and technical world which is the real world" (DE1 545; cf. EW2 433).

Clare O'Farrell (1989, 132) rightly points out that "Foucault is perhaps being a little extreme here," and it is indeed his most scientistic moment. Still, there is nothing Foucault says here that is actively contradicted by what he does later. As Hubert Dreyfus (1987, xi) points out, Foucault in his work criticises the truth claims of the human sciences only, and thus not those of the natural sciences, though he is interested in understanding the "ritual" implicit in natural science (PP 238). Foucault remains interested in the notion of an underlying order, which he in a 1968 talk links explicitly to Saussurean linguistics, as providing an alternative paradigm for relations of things to one another in the social sciences, namely the paradigm of logical relations, rather than the causal paradigm of the natural sciences (DE1 849–52).

TOWARDS A MATERIALISM OF THE INCORPOREAL

Foucault's follow-up to *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, is his least concrete work, being a meditation, with a rather Cartesian format, on language itself. It can thus be seen as the epitome of Foucault's archaeological project, as its definitively archaeological title might be taken to indicate. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault attempts to understand language in its specificity as language, and not merely as the token of the subjects behind it: "Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs" (AK 27). This effectively means bracketing language completely, whereas in the *Order of Things* preface, he explicitly defines that study as

the analysis of an "experience" (OT xxi), thus referring it implicitly back to the subjects of knowledge.

Despite the emphasis on language divorced from its non-linguistic material conditions, this bracketing of subjectivity is anti-idealist: ideas are themselves subjective, and so are also bracketed. Instead, Foucault wants to look at language in its own materiality. To do this means analysing language from the perspective of the *statement*. As Foucault's sometime friend Gilles Deleuze (1988, 3) puts it in his own study of Foucault, this perspective means taking language not as an array of possible things that might be said, but rather looking only at discourse qua what actually is said. This is thus a material perspective on language, since what is actually said is an irruption in the material world, not something merely ideal. "The statement is always given through some material medium" (AK 100): it is always instantiated in sound-waves, ink on paper.

However, this material medium is only one of the things that determine the specificity of a statement: Foucault is not reducing language to its material media, to books and sound waves. There is no simple mapping of one material artefact per statement: different copies of the same book are not separate statements (AK 102). Nor indeed is the statement simply the same words in the same medium: while a different medium automatically implies a different statement, a different enunciative context also makes for a different statement even if the material medium is exactly the same (AK 101). The statement's materiality is more like the materiality of an institution, than that of a mere artefact (AK 103). Still, the statement is material; its materiality is simply not identical with the materiality of the artefacts, or the sounds, that convey it:

> This repeatable materiality that characterizes the enunciative function reveals the statement as a specific and paradoxical object, but also one of those objects that men produce, manipulate, use, transform, exchange, combine, decompose and recompose, and possibly destroy. (AK 105)

The statement is a specific type of material object in its own right. The statement is thus what we get when we look at language as a material thing that is used as a tool. Tools are material things, no doubt, but their status as tools is not merely in virtue of their materiality, but rather in the practices with which they recombine. The statement is the basic unit of language as a practice. Here, Foucault is influenced strongly by speech act theory:[6] the statement is a speech-act,[7] but its character as act is mitigated by a materiality that divorces it from any actor. For Foucault (AK 97), the statement "is always endowed with a certain materiality," but is "neither entirely linguistic, nor exclusively material." Thus, the analysis of the statement is not pure linguistic analysis, but something else, the analysis of the interface between language and materiality. Foucault is

thus not claiming that the statement is the only correct way to view language: "The analysis of statements corresponds to a specific level of description"; it "does not claim to be a total, exhaustive description of 'language'" (AK 108).

What is the purpose of such an analysis, one which grounds language in its combination with materiality? Foucault performs a similar move in his 1970 inaugural address upon his election to the Collège de France, France's most prestigious academic institution, the "Order of Discourse" (*L'ordre du discours*),[8] where he inaugurates a "philosophy of the event":

> The event is neither a substance, nor an accident, nor quality nor process; the event is not of the corporeal order. And yet it is definitely not immaterial; it's always at the level of materiality that it takes effect, and that it is an effect; it has its place and consists in the relation, the coexistence, the dispersion, the cross-checking, the accumulation, and the selection of material elements; it is definitely neither the act nor the property of a body; it occurs as the effect of and within a material dispersion. Let's say that the philosophy of the event would have to advance in the at-first-sight paradoxical direction of a materialism of the incorporeal. (OD 59–60; cf. AK 231)[9]

"A materialism of the incorporeal" seems paradoxical because materialism is by definition an ontology in which matter, the material, is held to be at least primary, and the incorporeal is by definition lacking the material reality provided by having a body. However, as Foucault says, it is only a paradoxical term at first sight: the incorporeal, here typified by the event, is not necessarily immaterial since it can be something that occurs in the material world.

The statement is incorporeal in a sense very similar to that in which the event is, moreover: indeed, the statement *is* language taken as event, at the level of the individual linguistic event. The statement takes place at the level of materiality, although it is itself, as Foucault says, neither entirely material nor entirely linguistic. It represents rather, if anything, the interface between matter and language. Foucault thus in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* grounds language in the materiality of the event, in a materiality that is not material in the strict sense that an extended body is. Hence Foucault never subscribes to the linguistic idealism of which he was accused, in which language becomes self-sufficient, for while the statement is not the only legitimate way to view language, an account of language which overlooks its engagement with material reality can conversely never be complete in itself.

Foucault (OD 61; AK 231) speaks next in "The Order of Discourse" of "*chance*, *discontinuity* and *materiality*." Indeed, the three are connected in the philosophy of events: events happen essentially by chance (i.e. are not determined fully by what precedes them); are essentially discontinuous (i.e.

mark a rupture with what comes before); as well as occurring at the level of materiality. This connection is ontologically significant because it means that materiality is itself marked by chance and discontinuity because of the irruption of the event within it.

The elements of chance and discontinuity thus differentiate Foucault's putative materialism of the incorporeal from materialism *simpliciter*. This advance in the direction of a materialism of the incorporeal sums up Foucault's ontological orientation across his output. The search for the code behind knowledge that is analogous to DNA for organisms tended already in precisely this direction; unlike DNA, a material code perfectly acceptable to the most thoroughgoing materialism, the episteme is something incorporeal inasmuch as it exists only through its restriction of the field of discourse.

In his general approach to materialism, Foucault is close to (and presumably influenced by) that of soi-disant Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, Foucault's sometime mentor at the École normale supérieure (ENS). Althusser, as a Marxist, is committed to a materialist perspective, and like Foucault both invokes the notion of an epistemic break (which comes ultimately from the French philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard) and is committed to the notion that there is an "aleatory" element at work in the material, although Althusser's "aleatory materialism" in point of fact dates from well after Foucault's "Order of Discourse" (*see* Suchting 2004, 4), and as such is either a case of reaching similar conclusions independently from similar premises or of reciprocal influence between the two thinkers.

Foucault and Althusser have in common strong anti-humanist, anti-Hegelian and anti-phenomenological leanings (cf. EW2 422). Althusser's theoretical kinship to Foucault is illustrated in Figure A.1, where Althusser represents the densest point of linkages on the diagram, having five major influences in common with Foucault.

Althusser's (1994, 126) materialist ontological position is given in this passage from 1969:

> The material existence of ideology in an apparatus and practices does not have the same modality as the material existence of a paving stone or a rifle. . . . I shall say that "matter is discussed in many senses," or rather that it exists in different modalities, all rooted in the last instance in "physical" matter.

The notion of *ideology* is one that Foucault generally refuses to invoke because of a presumed Marxist connotation that discourse is subordinate to more basically material forces. However, although Althusser (1994, 125) of course uses the Marxist term, for him "ideology has a material existence." This materiality is here of course "rooted in the last instance" in matter in a narrow sense, but this is a claim that would seem to be necessary to be a materialist per se at all.

The phrase "rooted in the last instance" is an obvious reference to Friedrich Engels's (1934) notion of determination "in the last instance" of the superstructure by the economic infrastructure, which has become a shibboleth of Marxism, and as such rings alarm bells. Althusser (1969, 119) argues that Engels was mistaken in his own claims that what happened at the level of the superstructure averaged out to be insignificant, but does still assert that this determination in the last instance is operative in some sense (Althusser 1994, 105).

Foucault certainly doesn't repeat Althusser's statement about things being rooted in the last instance in physical matter, but nor does he deny it—that he is willing to call himself a materialist certainly seems to indicate that he believes something along these lines. The decisive difference between Althusser and Foucault is that Foucault repudiated Marxism, as he indicates in this 1967 statement:

> There does remain an obvious difference between Althusser and me: he employs the phrase "epistemological break" in connection with Marx, and I assert to the contrary that Marx does not represent an epistemological break. (EW2 281) [10]

Foucault's point here is that Marx is situated within the same episteme as thinkers before him, and hence does not represent a radically new way of thinking. However, this indicates no difference between Althusser and Foucault at the level of ontology, only a difference in how they relate their own ontological claims to Marx, with Althusser claiming that his philosophy is fundamentally rooted in Marx, whereas Foucault claims that Marx was working within an older framework of thought that we have now moved beyond.

Althusserian Marxists who are enthusiastic for Foucault, such as Mark Olssen and Étienne Balibar, nevertheless effectively claim Foucault as one of their own. Olssen, after Balibar, speaks of "Foucault's historical materialism" (Olssen 1999; 2004, 471) implying that Foucault has an at least broadly Marxian materialist conception of history. Olssen does not actually define what he means by "materialism" here, other than to say that Foucault is "more materialist" than his contemporary Jacques Derrida, because Foucault does not confine his attentions to language (Olssen 2004, 470). This is correct as far as it goes: as we will see in greater detail below, Derrida is guilty of the linguistic idealism of which Foucault was himself wrongly accused.

Olssen's attribution of historical materialism to Foucault seems to be based in Étienne Balibar's (1992) use of the term to describe Foucault, which Olssen (2004, 475) quotes. Balibar (1992, 54), another student of Althusser's, and contemporary and sometime colleague of Foucault's, says that Foucault "developed ideas which it would not be wrong to refer to by

the name of 'historical materialism.'" The basis of Balibar's attribution of "materialism" seems to be Foucault's emphasis on bodies and apparatuses of power. While Foucault does, as we shall see, emphasise these material things in his 1970s work, he does not root his analysis in them to the extent of abandoning his commitment to incorporeal materialism, and a materialism which consists in talking about *bodies* can hardly be a materialism of the *incorporeal*—hence the materialism that is being ascribed to Foucault by Balibar is not Foucault's.[11] Nevertheless, Foucault's materialism is nothing if not historical, so in a broad sense Balibar is right.

1968 AND ALL THAT

Foucault's use of the term "materialism" in "The Order of Discourse" may indeed be taken as a nod to Marxism, which was at that time dominant in the French intellectual milieu in which Foucault moved. Foucault had dabbled with Marxism in his youth, joining the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*—PCF) in 1950 under the influence of Althusser (Eribon 1991, 33; Macey 1993, 37). However, even while a member, he did no party work and did not attend meetings of the party cell at the ENS as a cadre should have (Macey 1993, 38),[12] and quickly became disillusioned with the slavishly Muscovite PCF, crucially over the anti-Semitism of the reaction to the so-called Doctors' Plot in the Soviet Union. Foucault was certainly intellectually influenced by Marxism beyond the party affiliation, an influence clearly evident in his first book, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (*see* Dreyfus 1987, viii), published in 1954. However, even that influence was soon repudiated: according to Foucault (2004), once he experienced a Marxist state, living in Poland (1958–59), he ceased to be a Marxist.

However, there is a sudden adoption of Marxist terminology by Foucault in 1969, which completely disappears again by 1975, which has been well charted by Eric Paras (2006, 60–61). The date of appearance of this vocabulary, 1969, is no doubt significant. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* appeared in 1969 and lacks these traces, but Foucault tells us he "had written *The Archaeology of Knowledge* before 1968" (RM 112).[13] Foucault's partner, Daniel Defert, tells us in his meticulous chronology in *Dits et Écrits* (Sayings and Writings—the collected shorter interviews and articles of Foucault) that Foucault finished the manuscript on the 25th August 1967, leaving him "two or three months of proofing this winter" (DE1 59).

This means that that book was written before the so-called "events" of May 1968 in Paris, which comprised a student uprising followed closely by a general strike, together considered to have constituted a near-revolution.[14] It has become generally accepted that the shift in Foucault's thought had something to do with these: the connection is such a commonplace that

Thomas Dumm (1996, 8), for example, can casually talk about "the Foucault who appeared before the events of May 1968" in his book on Foucault without saying another word about those events or the impact they are supposed to have had on Foucault.

Now, Foucault was in Tunis at the time of the events, where he had taken up a chair in philosophy at the University of Tunis in 1966, although he did return to Paris "briefly" "at the end of May" (Eribon 1991, 192; Miller 1993, 173; Macey 1993, xvii).[15] James Miller, in his biography of Foucault, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, nevertheless emphasises the direct influence of the Paris events on Foucault, referring to a phone call he received on the night of the 10th May, the "night of the barricades" which marked the beginning of the real crisis, from his partner Daniel Defert who was in Paris.[16]

Foucault was clearly aware of what was happening, yet himself deemphasises the role of the events of Paris on him: "It wasn't May of '68 in France that changed me; it was March of '68, in a third-world country," says Foucault (RM 136; *see also* Foucault 2004). What happened in March '68 in Tunis, which Foucault experienced much more directly than the manifestations in Paris the same year, were "student agitations of incredible violence" (RM 133), involving students of his, to whom he offered material aid, in the form of a place to meet and print propaganda.

The change on Foucault was twofold. The most obvious change was that Foucault threw himself into political activism for the first time in his life (having been inactive even during his youthful membership of the PCF). A less obvious and more gradual change occurred in his scholarly work. As we have already mentioned, Marxist terminology infiltrated his work, Foucault being exposed anew to Marxism first in Tunis where he read Marxist texts popular among his students (DE1 48, 50), and then back in France, where he taught in a philosophy department, which he had been responsible for assembling, in which the clear majority of teaching staff were Marxists and the majority of courses explicitly trafficked in Marxist theory (*see* Eribon 1991, 206).[17]

Foucault did not become a Marxist however—the change in his work was less radical than that, but nevertheless decisive, in that it moved clearly (back) towards political concerns at this time. In this respect, the influence of 1968 is much less clear, however: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, despite being Foucault's most abstract work, has clear traces which refer to the directions he will take (*see* AK 194), even though it dates from before 1968, containing numerous references to politics and institutions, themes which would come to the fore in "The Order of Discourse." Moreover, the political turn does not immediately follow 1968: in between the two books, Foucault gave the talk "What is An Author?" ("Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?"), which is as discursive in its concerns as *The Archaeology*.

In terms of the development of the specifics of his political thought, the most decisive event for Foucault was his leading involvement in the Groupe d'information sur les prisons (Prisons information group—GIP) from 1971, which led to his next monograph, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (*Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*) in 1975, as we will see in the next chapter. This involvement was linked to 1968 in several ways; as Foucault himself remarked, "without May 1968, I would never have done . . . such investigations as those on the prison" (RM 140). Nevertheless, Foucault's intellectual engagement with this issue grew out of his earlier interests, without break or renunciation. For Foucault (RM 139), this prison work "provided me with the opportunity to stitch together the loose ends that had troubled me in works like the *History of Madness* or *Birth of the Clinic*."

GENEALOGY

"The Order of Discourse" itself already took the project of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* into markedly more political territory. It was also the first major indicator of a new method; it is credited, for example by Béatrice Han (2002), with being the first of Foucault's *genealogical* works. Certainly, it is the first major text in which Foucault takes up genealogy as such as a project (AK 231).

This term "genealogy" implies a profound debt to Friedrich Nietzsche, to his "genealogy of morals." Nietzsche's *Genealogy* tells the story of the development of ethics as a means for the control of the strong by the weak—more generally, this exemplifies the use of supposedly non-political knowledge as a tool for taking power. Power and its ubiquity to life is a key theme of Nietzsche's philosophy, and it is this particular Nietzschean influence that is crucial to Foucault now.

The influence of Nietzsche on Foucault had already long been noticeable: Foucault had been heavily influenced by Nietzsche since reading him as a student (RM 51), and all his previous works had referred to Nietzsche. What's new is not reference to Nietzsche, but this interest in the specific Nietzschean theme of *power*, which is now linked to discourse: "speech may be of little account, but the prohibitions surrounding it soon reveal its links with desire and power" (AK 216). This is not the *only* thing new in relation to Nietzsche here; Paras (2006, 49) rightly points to the notion of a "will to truth" as radically novel at this point, although this precisely the addition of a political element to the construction of truth already studied by Foucault, the addition of the "will to power" to truth. The interest in punishment in the early 1970s also follows Nietzsche.

Foucault simultaneously adopts in the post-archaeological period both Nietzschean and Marxian vocabulary, combining the notion of class struggle with the "will to power" and mixing the concept of ideology

with a critique of notions of good and evil. Neither Nietzsche nor Marx is a new influence on Foucault by any means; politicisation is what lies behind the new direction.

A 1973 lecture series at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (published in English as "Truth and Juridical Forms") is particularly interesting in showing both Foucault's political turn and in particular its Nietzschean influence. The last couple of lectures in Rio were material which would become part of *Discipline and Punish*, but the first lecture in particular is still concerned with the discursive, the theme which had preoccupied Foucault in the 1960s, which he would never again explore in such detail after this. Here, Foucault expounds a Nietzschean, political account of knowledge. This lecture clearly develops from Foucault's as-yet unpublished inaugural Collège de France lecture series of 1970–71 (*see* EW1 14).

In both that course and "Truth and Juridical Forms," Foucault (EW3 6–8; EW1 14) calls knowledge an *invention*. In this, he explicitly takes his cue from Nietzsche, though he is ultimately unconcerned whether the views he presents here are really Nietzsche's own (EW3 13). Ostensibly following Nietzsche then, Foucault (EW3 6) replaces the general search for origins of things, their *Ursprung*, with the search for the point at which things were invented, their *Erfindung*. This shift is indeed one meaning of Foucault's abandonment of the term "archaeology," the study of the *arche*, the origin, to describe his own work, a connotation of "archaeology" with which Foucault had always been uneasy (cf. FL 57).

This notion that knowledge is invented has two implications. The first is that there are ulterior motives behind it, which are not the high ones often imputed to it, namely the urge to understand and explain the world. For Nietzsche, knowledge is rooted in non-human animal drives: for knowledge to be invented, it must have been invented by an animal which did not have knowledge, in order to further the struggle of animal existence, which for Nietzsche (TI "Skirmishes" §14) is a struggle for domination.[18]

The second implication is that, conversely, knowledge, while rooted in what came before, while an invention *made by and out of* things that were there before it, is in fact, "paradoxically" (EW3 7), something genuinely novel, an innovation: "Knowledge is the result of the instincts, but . . . it is not an instinct and is not directly derived from the instincts" (EW3 10). The novelty of knowledge means that it does not merely arise as the expression of experience of things in the world: "According to Nietzsche, there is no resemblance, no prior affinity between knowledge and the things that need to be known" (EW3 8). Knowledge is rather the attempt to impose order on an intrinsically chaotic world (EW3 9). It was never just an attempt to *describe* the way things are.

Yet there were and are things there, and we do enter into a relationship with them by *knowing* them. However, "knowledge can only be a

violation of the things to be known" (EW3 9). The relationship between knowledge and things is the imposition of an order which is new, not merely representational in relation to the things that are there. As Foucault says in "The Order of Discourse," "we must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things . . . or, at all events, as a practice we impose upon them" (AK 229).

Now, where Nietzsche spoke of knowledge, Foucault is here talking about *discourse*. This is not much of a leap, however: we can scarcely have knowledge without a discourse in which to embody it, nor can we have a discourse that does not embody some knowledge. It seems then that we can in these respective statements of Nietzsche's and Foucault's about discourse and knowledge simply substitute one term for the other, since both discourse and knowledge are part and parcel of the same irruption. Indeed, to reduce this problematic to its most general form, we can say that this invention of discourse and knowledge came about with the invention of *language* itself, at least insofar as language does not refer to something more basic even than these terms, that is to say, insofar as it does not refer for example to non-propositional, non-discursive communication of infants and non-human animals.

It is, nevertheless, much less radical to say that language was invented than it is to say the same thing about either discourse or knowledge. Knowledge is not the same thing as language, but rather a linguistic formation which we think to be *true*; discourse, for its part, at least in Foucault's usage, implies the existence of some kind of rules for distinguishing truth and falsehood.[19] Saying that these things can be invented thus implies that truth itself can be invented, that "truth itself has a history" (EW3 2). This is what disturbs about the Foucaultian/Nietzschean position on knowledge. Knowledge is conventionally thought not to be invented, not because language was not, but because language, having been invented, is taken to follow the logic of reality, guiding it towards truth to produce knowledge.

There is a double violence in language in fact: the violence of the statement, as covered by *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which is itself in contact with things as a material irruption, and the violence of ordering things through it, as outlined by Foucault in the preface to *The Order of Things*, the violence of a language. It is the more particular historical violence which is perpetrated by every new discourse or new knowledge which is at the crux of Foucault's account, the production of truth rather than simply the invention of language.

Foucault has frequently been interpreted as an epistemic relativist, as arguing in effect that no statement is superior to another and that truth is merely subjective. This conception of truth as produced seems to vindicate this. However, it does not, because that truth is produced does not imply that it is produced without any kind of external constraints. What Foucault

thought about truth was always straightforward, as he exasperatedly reiterates in a 1980 interview:

> I repeat once again that by production of truth I mean not the production of true utterances but the establishment of domains in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and pertinent. (EW3 230)

This is to say that there must be a regime invented by which truth and falsehood can be distinguished from one another for truth to exist, but this does not mean that true utterances within this framework are determined arbitrarily. Moreover, the framework itself is only arbitrary to a certain extent. As Stuart Elden (2001, 107) puts it, Foucault is "perspectivist rather than relativist." The account of truth as something developed within an episteme makes truth a matter of a certain perspective on objective reality, provided by the principles of that episteme, not a matter simply of cultural convention.

New discourses and knowledges, with their new assemblages of concepts (and by "assemblage" I mean a configuration of concepts, the way concepts interrelate with one another rather than the collection of concepts themselves per se), divide up the world each in a new way, which is to say, inflict a fresh violence on things, creating new distributions of truth which are fundamentally no more in accordance with reality than before (whatever other advantages they may boast):

> Knowledge simplifies, passes over differences, lumps things together, without any justification in regard to truth. It follows that knowledge is always an overlooking.[20]

What Foucault is saying here is that truth can provide no justification for the distribution of categories of knowledge. Rather, truth can only be determined once these categories have been established, so only ever within a discourse. Truth does not pre-exist the foundation of a specific knowledge which involves the distribution of concepts such that true statements may be formed.

There is a significant ontological question of what the "things" mentioned here consist in, however: are they supersensible reality, Kantian noumena, or the Kantian phenomena that we perceive and thus relate to our knowledge? At this point, this is unimportant: Foucault's demand is that we stop expecting discourse or knowledge to conform to either our perception or to reality. Appearances are in themselves ineffable: we cannot describe them completely accurately, for to represent them in their complexity in words would take an eternity and destroy the utility of speech, the reason that we were speaking in the first place (cf. Nietzsche TL I). Thus, violence towards

things is *necessary* to discourse; the error here is to have ever thought that the purpose of speech was to represent transparently how things truly are, non-violently, since that is impossible.

Nevertheless, while discourse is something new in excess of what was there before, it is still based in the extra-discursive. Discourse is not *just* violence, not just a matter of *Erfindung* (invention), but also of *Entstehung* and *Herkunft* (according to Foucault, these terms in Nietzsche's usage mean "emergence" and "descent" [*provenance*]), the two terms of Nietzsche's which Foucault (EW2 373–79; DE1 1008–11) contrasts with *Ursprung* (origin *simpliciter*) in his 1971 essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." The overall point about the Nietzschean meaning of "genealogy" then is that genealogy seeks an origin in what comes before, not the absolute *Wunderursprung* (miraculous origin) of metaphysics (EW2 370); discourse, qua invention, is itself then rooted in what came before, the pre-existing struggles between non-linguistic animals.

The "Order of Discourse" notion of discourse as violence done to things suggests that things limit what can be done with discourse: when one uses force to rearrange some physical object, one can only reconfigure what was already there, and even then only to a certain extent. If we use language to order things, we can only order what is there: we are not inventing discourse *ex nihilo* or with complete disregard to things.

Thus, things have a determining influence of discourse, but only to a certain extent. Discourse is underdetermined by the things of which it speaks, and indeed by the people who wield it, and even by a combination of these two. Discourse is largely determined by these two factors, but it does also have a strength of its own: nothing could be less Foucaultian than to posit man as a transcendent subject who stands above discourse. It might seem that the Nietzschean view of knowledge dissolves the gap between the will and knowledge, since it makes knowledge something created by the will, but this is not the case: while knowledge is invented, it appears to us not as our creation but as objective fact. Nietzsche's wish—and Foucault's in saying we must conceive of discourse as a violence—is to assert the capacity of the will to act in relation to knowledge, and to abolish the supposed suzerainty of knowledge over the will (via the suzerainty of truth over knowledge)—no easy task.

I think we can see the episteme as similarly underdetermining what is said: it governs what may be declared to be true, in the sense of excluding an infinity of possible propositions, but the relation of words to things also plays a determining role in whether propositions are assented to or not, although of course the role of individual volition in producing utterances is also important. As Foucault puts it in *Birth of the Clinic*, there is "an excess of the signified over the signifier" (BC xviii). To put it in a crude formula: truth = reality ÷ *episteme*. The regimes of truth are the "historical *a priori*" which is the precondition, the form for synthetic knowledge.[21]

Thus, Foucault's archaeological work provides a basis for the later elaboration of his Nietzschean epistemology, in which knowledge is from the beginning a political thing, insofar as its invention is a move in a struggle between animals. Regarding *The Order of Things*, we can now understand the *episteme* as tied to politics (although it is no easy thing to understand precisely how the two tie together in any given time and place), insofar as it too is a basic dimension of a fundamentally political game of truth- and knowledge-production. Regarding *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the project of understanding the materiality of language as an event and act and indeed as a tool clearly leads into understanding language now as an invention and political intervention.

CONSTRUCTION VERSUS DECONSTRUCTION

Thus, words cannot *correspond* to things, as in the classic philosophical theory of truth, but can only relate to them in an inevitably inadequate way through the rules of a given discourse or period. Now, the classic critique of the account of truth as correspondence is not Foucault's, but that of his contemporary, and sometime student, Jacques Derrida. In his 1967 masterwork, *Of Grammatology* (*De la grammatologie*), Derrida shows that words do not in fact relate to things the way they were assumed to in Saussure's structural linguistics, but rather that the relation between words and things is more like the relation words have with one another: things are, like words, part of systems of reference/signification, which ultimately form a single network of signification encompassing both all words and all things. Words derive meaning from the relations both to other words and to things, which in turn have relations of signification to other things, so that all things are signifiers of signifiers, as well as themselves signified, rather than it simply being the words that signify and the things that are signified. Since the written word is traditionally understood as a signifier that refers to another signifier (the spoken word), Derrida takes writing as his model for understanding all reality.

This position contrasts with Foucault's concept of discursive violence. We cannot hope to deal comprehensively with the differences between Foucault and Derrida, already covered quite thoroughly by Roy Boyne (1990), nor can we attempt to pass judgement on Derrida, which would require a full-scale treatment of his thought; rather, my use of Derrida here is rather to provide contrast to Foucault, to refine our understanding of Foucault's thought. The reason for using Derrida in this way is that it is precisely in lumping in Foucault with Derrida that Foucault is misinterpreted on the issue of his understanding of language.

Derrida (1976, 37) acknowledges that there is something inherently violent about language when he says, in *Of Grammatology*, "the violence of writing does not *befall* an innocent language. There is an originary violence

of writing because language is, in a sense I shall gradually reveal, writing." Derrida's point here is that the invention of written language, which violently distorts the language it writes down, failing to represent the nuances of spoken communication, happens to a language that itself already distorts reality. Hence, all language is like writing.

This sounds like Foucault. Derrida (1976, 112) goes on to talk about the originary violence of language itself, calling this "arche-violence." However, this violence is "the loss of what has never taken place," which is to say that the violence is only illusory. The thing that has never taken place that is lost is self-identity, the absolute identity of a thing with itself without depending on its relations to anything else, which Derrida rightly identifies as a myth, implicit in most Western thought. Thus, writing only appears to be violent from the "phonocentric" perspective, the traditional Western viewpoint that the function of writing is to represent speech, and hence the function of speech is to perfectly represent reality.

Derrida (1978, 91) sees such phonocentric discourses as themselves being violent in their denial of alterity, by distorting the complexities of the relationship of discourse to things. Hence it is not discourse per se that is violent, only the "logocentrism" that claims that language is supposed to correspond to reality. The point then is to work towards a non-violent discourse that can respect reality—something that Derrida acknowledges we do not yet have, but something that nevertheless functions as a normative counterpoint in his practice of deconstructing discourses by examining their metaphysical presuppositions.

Foucault, on the other hand, sees all language as inherently violent, because language can never adequately respect reality, hence the dream of non-logocentric discourse merely veils the specific violence of Derrida's own work, as the theory of coherence did the violence of earlier discourse. Derrida tries to eschew all violence, even that essential to discourse itself. As Foucault has it, the "logophilia" of our rationalist culture belies a "logophobia" which is in fact so scared of discourse it tries to neuter it (AK 228–29); Derrida is just such a logophobe. "Logos" of course literally means "word," but, as Derrida rightly points out, the Greek term has a far broader meaning than ours, as in the first line of John's gospel, most famously. In distancing himself from the logos in his critique of logocentrism, Derrida is not only attacking the notion of a univocal sovereign signifier, which Foucault too rejects, but also an essential function of language itself, on Foucault's account, namely doing violence to things. Derrida wants to move to a speech which escapes violence by acknowledging complex ambiguities. Foucault on the other hand simply embraces linguistic violence as a necessity: there must be a conceptual order, so we will make one, only *we* will not shy away from this fact.

Indicative here is Derrida's failure, for all his neologisms, to articulate a new vocabulary. Rather, he uses the traditional philosophy vocabulary, albeit "under erasure," which is to say crossed out to show that he no

longer agrees with the implicit logocentrism of the old way of speaking, but is rather using it is a placeholder in lieu of a new vocabulary (Derrida 1976, 13–14). For Foucault, on the other hand, since knowledge/discourse is violence, the thing to do in response to the objectionable aspects of existing discourse is to establish a new violence, a new way of ordering things, albeit one which understands itself as violent. While Derrida is right to say that we cannot simply reject the old vocabulary when we have nothing with which to replace it, he shirks the task of formulating a new conceptual framework: where Nietzsche replaced "origin" with "invention," Derrida merely crosses origin out, while leaving it in place.

Still, on this point Derrida is close to Nietzsche in a way Foucault is not. While conceptual construction rests on Nietzschean bases for Foucault, it ultimately owes more to Georges Canguilhem than to Nietzsche (*see* endnote 18): Nietzsche (TL II) explicitly opposes the construction of concepts, in favour of a return to primordial metaphoricity, which is precisely the project Derrida takes up in his "White Mythology" (1982).

Nevertheless, there is something in Foucault that is missing in Derrida, insofar as for Derrida (1976, 50) there is ultimately no outside of signification: "From the moment there is meaning there are nothing but signs." Of course, Derrida's Heideggerian point is correct: there is nothing I experience that I do not experience as a sign, as something that points to other things. But for Foucault there is nevertheless an outside. It is the antagonism inherent to nature that is the basis for the discontinuity of language with previously-existing reality. Missing from Derrida's picture is both the animal that existed before language who invented language, the instincts and drives of that animal that led to that invention and which continue to support it, and the senseless materiality of extralinguistic reality; Derrida (1976, 74–75) brackets such questions. Foucault is indeed more materialist than Derrida; his problem with Derrida was always that the latter thought it unnecessary to go outside the text (*see* EW2 416).

HAPPY POSITIVISM

Foucault's stance towards knowledge/language/discourse amounts to what he calls his "positivism." This is obviously not a positivism "in the normal sense of the word" (SD 9); Foucault rejects positivism in this sense, claiming in *The Order of Things* that positivism is indissociable from eschatology (OT 320). Yet, what Foucault understands to be the "normal sense" of "positivism" is not what we might normally understand by that word. In English-speaking academe, we are accustomed to seeing "positivism" as shorthand for "logical positivism," which is to say logical empiricism, but positivism has a longer history than that notorious moment in twentieth-century philosophy. The first philosophy to call itself positivist was the nineteenth-century French social thought

of Auguste Comte and Saint-Simon, which was naturally much better known in mid-twentieth-century France than was logical positivism. The use of the term "positivism" by the logical empiricists was based on a certain similarity to that earlier school—the common theme of all positivism is to base philosophy in a model of inquiry found in natural science. As we have seen, in this sense, Foucault clearly *is* positivistic. However, his positivism also differs greatly from any earlier variant.

Foucault was accused of positivism in a 1967 article in *Les Temps modernes* about him entitled "A Despairing Positivist" (Le Bon 1967; *see* Macey 1993, 176), just one of the articles in that journal attacking Foucault's new book, *The Order of Things*. "Positivism" is here counterposed to the dialectical historicism of Marxism, the favoured position of *Les Temps modernes* at that time. Against the allegations of despair, Foucault proclaimed his a "happy positivism." In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (AS 164–65) declares, "If, in substituting the analysis of rarity for the search for totalities, the description of relations of exteriority for the theme of the transcendental foundation, the analysis of accumulations for the quest for the origin, one is a positivist, well then, I can easily own that I am a happy positivist."[22] This declaration, which begins here as a riposte, is carried over into his genealogical project, with Foucault (OD 72) proclaiming in "The Order of Discourse," "the genealogical mood will be one of happy positivism."[23] This phrase has obvious redolence with Nietzsche's "gay science."

In a 1978 lecture, Foucault describes "positivist science" as that which "basically had confidence in itself, even when it remained carefully critical of each one of its results" (PT 37). It is exactly in this sense, seeing himself as heir to this critical tradition, that Foucault is himself a positivist. It is what I accuse Derrida of ultimately failing to do, since putting things under erasure is precisely not being confident in them at all.

This also makes Foucault's positivism the polar opposite of logical positivism (cf. Turetzky 1989, 154), in that logical positivism demands the verification of all statements, and refuses assent from propositions which cannot be scientifically proven, condemning them even as meaningless, whereas Foucault takes as his first premise that all propositions are violent towards things, and that therefore what is needed is the courage in the face of underdetermination of language by things to continue to put forward new concepts which we know will ultimately never be entirely "correct."

Foucault's positivism is not however the polar opposite of Auguste Comte's positivism. As Vincent Descombes (1980, 110) explains, "Foucault comes from the French positivist school, for whom philosophy is a function of the history of concepts at work in the various learned specialist fields." Comte's positivism was a philosophy of history, of the history of ideas, which sought the pattern of history; rather than conceiving philosophy, as logical positivism did, as a metascientific discourse which vouchsafes scientific truth, Comtean positivism tried to make philosophy itself

an empirical, scientific discipline. Foucault stands in the "long tradition of French philosophers from Comte to Duhem to Bachelard to Althusser" (Dreyfus 1987, xi) and Canguilhem, a "scientific realist" (Dreyfus 1987, x) tradition, which accords a value to natural scientific knowledge in excess of that accorded to other kinds of knowledge. This heritage in Foucault is generally overlooked.

This seems to contradict our epistemology, in that the notion of reality as chaotic seems impossible to square with a respect for scientific discoveries. As Descombes (1980, 116) puts it, "On the one hand, Foucault's approach is that of a positivist. . . . Yet, on the other hand, Foucault as a reader of Nietzsche does not believe in the positivist notion of *fact*." Descombes (1980, 117) thus claims that Foucault's work amounts to nothing more than "a seductive construct, whose play of erudite cross-reference lends it an air of verisimilitude." The accusation here is the classic one of relativist paradox: the relativist says truth is relative, but then this statement is itself relative—so he cannot be sure of it. Happy positivism avoids this criticism, however, because it asserts the necessity of putting forward underdetermined statements in view of the impossibility of full determination. There is no need for provisos that this is not *really* how things are, since there can be no description which does cleave to how things actually are. "Knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting," as Foucault says (EW2 380).

Charles Taylor's (1984, 162ff.) classic complaint that Foucault is held back by Nietzscheanism from making value judgements does not make sense: Nietzscheanism tells you to set forth your own values boldly. To the extent that Foucault's analyses are dry, and objectivist, not making evaluations, this is due precisely to the *non*-Nietzschean influence of French scientism, combining with the Nietzschean influence to make a gay positivism: Foucault combines the objectivism of French structuralism and positivism with a Nietzschean justification of this in the light of an understanding of the problems of objectivism raised by Nietzsche, which means that Foucault is neither entirely positivist, nor completely Nietzschean. In a 1967 interview, Foucault tells his interviewer that he was pulled in two directions earlier in his career, on the one hand "a passion for Blanchot and Bataille, and on the other hand the interest I nurtured for certain positive studies, like those of Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss" (RC 98). It is perfectly clear that the second interest corresponds to structuralism, and Canguilhem, the first to Nietzsche, Foucault having "read [Nietzsche] because of Bataille, and Bataille because of Blanchot" (EW2 239).

PROBLEMATISATION

After a lengthy hiatus, Foucault returns to epistemological reflection in his last years, when he introduces the notion of "problematisation."[24] To

problematise something for Foucault is to take it as a problem, thus inscribing it within a definite problematic, a notion for which Foucault is again indebted to Althusser (1969, 62; emphasis in original), for whom every ideology "internally unified by its own *problematic*." Foucault now retrospectively identifies problematisation as "the notion which serves as the common form for the studies I have undertaken since the *History of Madness*" (DE2 1488; cf. FL 456).

At Berkeley, California in late 1983, Foucault gave a series of lectures in English that was to be his last substantial public offering, transcribed and now published as *Fearless Speech*. The lectures deal with the ancient Greek notion of *parrhesia*, a practice of telling the truth—the "fearless speech" of the title. Foucault claims that truth has been problematised in two ways in post-Socratic Western thought down to the present day, firstly by asking how we know what is true, and secondly by asking about the practical significance of this knowledge. Foucault, for his part, is not doing either thing in this set of lectures, but rather, as he sees it, the genealogy (FS 170) of the second movement of problematisation, which is to say he is problematising a problematisation. Indeed, the very use of the notion of problematisation implies problematising problematisation.

Now, this problematisation of the problematisation of truth is, Foucault says, a matter of analysing a "specific relation between truth and reality" (FS 173). This relation could be called, in the vocabulary of "The Order of Discourse," the violence that discourse (now "truth"—as we have seen, discourse is speech within a regime of truth) does to things (now "reality"). There is no talk of "violence" anymore here, but the notion of violence was never meant literally. As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 3, there is a general shift away from floridity in Foucault's later writing, but it shouldn't deceive us into thinking his overall perspective has changed, since this "violence" was only ever metaphorical. It was meant to imply that discourse is an extension of an older violence, the violence of animals towards each other, towards natural objects, the violence by which we struggle for domination. All actions are violent in this sense: violence in the normal, narrow sense is a subset of this more general, ontological violence. Foucault (PP 14) dislikes the narrow notion, however, saying that "violence does not seem to me to be a very satisfactory notion, because it allows one to think that the physical exercise of an unbalanced force is not part of a rational, calculated, and controlled game of the exercise of power." Hence, Foucault's notion of discursive violence is meant to imply is that discourse and violence are related phenomena: "we must abandon the 'violence–ideology opposition'" (DP 28), which implies an opposition ultimately to both the concepts involved in it, both "violence" and "ideology."

One example of this opposition is Hannah Arendt's (1990, 18–19) claim that speech and violence are opposed to one another. Far from being mutually exclusive, discourse and physical violence in fact frequently accompany one another in a way that is complementary. Indeed, it is not even the case

that *truth* and violence are incompatible; the general lesson of Foucault's history of *parrhesia* in *Fearless Speech* is that telling the truth is as much an act as telling a lie is.

In *Fearless Speech*, Foucault offers an important clarification on the issue of truth, no doubt in part occasioned by the very serious misunderstandings of his earlier work, specifically about his belief in the existence of material reality:

> When I say I am studying the "problematization" of madness, crime, or sexuality, it is not a way of denying the reality of such phenomena. On the contrary, I have tried to show that it was precisely some real existent in the world which was the target of social regulation at a given moment. The question I raise is this one: How and why were very different things in the world gathered together, characterized, analyzed, and treated as, for example, "mental illness"? What are the elements which are relevant for a given "problematization"? And even if I won't say that what is characterized as "schizophrenia" corresponds to something real in the world, this has nothing to do with idealism. For I think there is a relation between the thing which is problematized and the process of problematization. The problematization is an "answer" to a concrete situation which is real. (FS 171–72)

Foucault (BC xx) talks as early as the *Birth of the Clinic* of clinical discourse as "a new 'carving up' of things." Reality itself is only ever amenable to being carved up in certain ways. The notion of an extra-discursive reality with which discourse is in contact is in fact a constant feature of Foucault's thought. In the Foucaultian conception of discourse as violence done to things, it is always possible to look to those things and explore new ways of violating them. This is what is at stake in problematisation, since it is what allows us to move away from received truths and develop new ones—it is the process described in the preface to *The Order of Things*. In an anonymous newspaper interview in 1980, Foucault says, "What is philosophy if not a way of reflecting, not so much what is true or false, as on our relationship to truth? . . . The movement by which one . . . detaches oneself from what is true and seeks other rules—that is philosophy" (EW1 327). This detachment can only be possible by virtue of what is outside of (regimes of) truth, reality.

Foucault (EW1 118), in an interview conducted in May 1984 (the month before his death), opposes problematisation precisely to Derrida's deconstruction. As Foucault himself says, the difference should be obvious. Deconstruction looks at and attacks the metaphysics presupposed by statements. Foucault, on the other hand, strays further from discourse and asks about the concrete historical situation of the statement's generation: "Given a certain problematization, you can only understand why this kind of answer appears as a reply to some concrete and specific aspect of the

world. There is the relation of thought and reality in the process of problematization" (FS 173). Here, Foucault is again close to Althusser (1969, 37), who speaks of "the dialectical circle of the question asked of an object as to its nature, on the basis of a theoretical problematic which in putting its object to the test puts itself to the test of its object."

2 Power I

> For me, power is that which must be explained.
>
> –Foucault (RM 148)

In this chapter and the next, I reconstruct Foucault's utterances about power, from across a ten-year period in which his thought changed considerably, into a single, coherent account of power. I continue to attend to his biography and read him chronologically, primarily because this is necessary to address those critics who see Foucault as eventually rescinding his conceptions of power and (therefore) resistance, to defend the contentious thesis that Foucault's work is coherent over this time. Our treatment of power is therefore split between two chapters: the first sets out Foucault's initial reconceptualisation of power in the 1970s, the second, how this shifts in the late 1970s with his use of the concept of "governmentality," and into the 1980s correlative with his move to problematising subjectivity. This then segues with the next chapter of the book, in which we explore how Foucault understands the influence of power on the subject. However, I leave two themes from Foucault's 1970s thought, namely the body and resistance, over till Chapter 5 in order to devote enough dedicated discussion to them, and because of their germaneness to the theme of subjectivity in Foucault's later work.

THE PROBLEMATISATION OF POWER

In a sense, all of Foucault's work has to do with power; Foucault (EW3 117) indeed asserts later that he was dealing with power in his early works, that he was talking about power even though he "scarcely ever used the word." However, we must distinguish being concerned with power from specifically problematising it, and there was indeed no such problematisation in Foucault's work before the 1970s. The concept of the medical "gaze" from *Birth of the Clinic* is often spoken of as if it were a precursor to power, for example by Nancy Fraser (1995, 138). While this "gaze" certainly does have something to do with power, it does not stand for medical power over the patient, but rather for medical perception more generally, although the same term would be taken up by Foucault later on in a more explicitly political connection in *Psychiatric Power*. The gaze

is in any case not such a signature concept as the prominence it is given in much English-language literature would suggest: really it has become renowned due to the translation of the rather ordinary French term *regard* with an English word connoting something altogether more insidious.[1]

The first mention of power in *Dits et écrits* in a distinctly Foucaultian way, stressing its autonomy as a formation, is in "La prison partout," a brief report from early 1971 on the work of the GIP. In the opening lines, Foucault (DE1 1061) speaks of prison as "one of the instruments of power." Here, power is not something that is contested, but something like a subject in itself, which has instruments at its disposal, a hallmark of what one may call Foucault's "mature" view of power. Foucault himself tells how the traditional view of power came to strike him as "inadequate" "during the course of a concrete experience that I had with prisons, starting in 1971–72. The case of the penal system convinced me that the question of power needed to be formulated not so much in terms of justice as in those of technology" (PK 184).

Thus, after "The Order of Discourse," Foucault starts to question power. Foucault (PK 183–84) later confirms that the problem with "The Order of Discourse" was that he was still stuck in the conventional contemporary way of understanding power, as he had been since *The History of Madness*. Madness is, says Foucault, actually essentially about exclusion, hence a negative moment of power, and for such a form of power a conventional, negative account was sufficient—though he is careful to add that there are problems with that work nonetheless. Now, however, looking at the prison, it becomes apparent to him that there is a problem with the conventional conception of power.

Foucault then rapidly becomes preoccupied with power. In 1971, in his famous televised conversation with Noam Chomsky in the Netherlands, Foucault (1974, 172) says that he thinks looking at the state or the class behind the state is insufficient to explaining what is going on at the level of power. On the 4th March 1972, Foucault makes the point that "we still perhaps do not know what power is. And Marx and Freud are perhaps not sufficient to help us understand this quite enigmatic thing called power" (DE1 1180; cf. FL 79).[2] The absence of an account of power is what is wrong with Derrida's critique of metaphysics, Foucault (DE1 1277) says in 1973. The word "power" appears in his literary reviews and in every interview as Foucault's new central preoccupation: the problem is for him now always that the centrality of the question of power has been overlooked.[3] In spite of the intentions he set out in "The Order of Discourse" at the beginning of the decade, Foucault's work ended up being something rather different: "I was working on a 'genealogical' history of knowledge. But . . . in the end, I had produced only a history of power" (RM 145).[4]

In terms of articulating his own alternative conception of power, judging from the course summary (EW1 17), Foucault's 1972 Collège course

contains the notion of the analysis of power relations in much the same form as in his later work, and certainly by 1973, immediately following the wrapping up of the GIP project, we have the broad strokes of *Discipline and Punish* and the conception of *pouvoir* (power) contained therein, in the form of the fifth lecture given by Foucault in Rio de Janeiro (EW3 70–87). Foucault has very quickly moved from a suspiciousness of the prevailing notion of power to reconceptualising it himself.

THE THEORY OF POWER

This reconceptualisation of power is generally recognised as one of Foucault's most important intellectual contributions, but the proportion of attention it has received in Foucault scholarship belies this. Jon Simons (1995, 129) claims that "commentary on and critique of Foucault's notion of power has become an intellectual industry in itself," but, while there are any number of articles and even books on Foucault with "power" in the title, few really deal with this theme in Foucault. Foucault's concept of power is the subject of sections of books, which are either about power more generally, such as Barry Hindess' *Discourses of Power*, where Foucault appears as part of a larger collage of thinkers (e.g. Haugaard 2002; Hayward 2000, 4–39), or about Foucault himself, such as Dreyfus and Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, in which power is treated briefly as one of many themes in Foucault's thought. This literature at best simplifies and renders comprehensible Foucault's own exposition of his concept of power without telling us anything new about it. Significant secondary work on Foucault's concept of power which attempts to move beyond his remarks synthetically has been undertaken only by David Weberman (1995) and, more extensively, by Thomas Lemke in his book on Foucault's political thought, *Kritik der politischen Vernunft* (Critique of political reason).

What signally has not been done is to forge Foucault's work on power into a coherent theory. Rather, it has been described, and explored or deployed, following Foucault himself (though generally without his characteristic aplomb or incisiveness), as an analytical tool. This lack of a theory is in keeping with Foucault's own disinclination to propound a theory of power, as exemplified by this 1976 remark:

> The question "What is power?" is obviously a theoretical question that would provide an answer to everything, which is just what I don't want to do. (SD 13)

and this one from the early 1980s:

> Do we need a theory of power? Since a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as a basis for analytical work. (EW3 327)

On the other hand, in 1978 Foucault seems to take a different view:

> In facing such elusive problems, it is better to advance step by step, in order to see how a theory of power might be elaborated. . . . As I told you, I'm only at the beginning. (RM 150)

Similarly, in 1976:

> For me, the whole point of the project lies in a re-elaboration of the theory of power. (PK 187)

While the last two extracts appear to contradict the first two, they do not necessarily. In the first two, Foucault eschews an *a priori* account of power, prior to the empirical investigation of how power works. Foucault is in both these passages explaining why he himself never articulated a theory of power: his concern was to do concrete analyses—hence elaborating a theory of power was not his task. Indeed, for Foucault, the attempts to elaborate a theory had been sterile and what was needed was *analysis* of power in practice (RC 127). Now *this* might lead to a theory, but a better one than pure political theory could achieve. Thus Foucault could still be *preparing the way for* a theory of power while deliberately refusing to elaborate one. Foucault summarises his position most clearly in 1978:

> The analysis of the mechanisms of power, which we began several years ago and which we are pursuing now, is in no way a general theory of what power is. It is not a partial one, nor even the beginning of one. It concerns itself simply with knowing where power happens, how it happens, between whom, between which point and which point, according to which procedures and with which effects. So at most it could be, and this is the most it should be, a beginning of a theory, not of what power is, but of power, on the condition that it is acknowledged that power is not exactly a substance, a fluid, something which flows from this here or from that there, but simply insofar as it is acknowledged that power is an ensemble of mechanisms and procedures which have as their role or function and theme, even if they do not reach it, precisely to secure power. It's an ensemble of procedures, and it's as such and only as such that it can be understood that the analysis of the mechanisms of power begins something like a theory of power. (STP 3–4)

So it is possible for a theory of power to grow up out of Foucault's analysis; indeed, Foucault thinks it could grow into "something like the global analysis of a society" (STP 4). This is because power is not an object which can be understood as such, but a relational modality which must be analysed in order to be understood. One can compare Foucault here to Freud, in that the unconscious cannot be understood prior to the

analysis; in the historical context in which Foucault is writing, his use of the word "analysis" has a clear Freudian connotation.

It is certainly clear, in any case, that Foucault himself never actually formulated a theory of power. Rather, what we have from Foucault is an "analytic" (VS 109),[5] and the "ongoing conceptualization" (EW3 327) he says is necessary for an investigation.

THE ANALYTIC OF POWER

The fullest exposition by Foucault in the mid-1970s of his views on power is to be found in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, *The Will to Knowledge*, which was published in December 1976. The core of this conception had already been articulated in *Discipline and Punish*, published in February of the previous year. The difference in *Discipline and Punish* is that power is not spoken of in general, but rather only in relation to the disciplinary power that affects bodies. Nevertheless, almost without exception, the features which Foucault discerns in that specific case, he later adopts as general "propositions" about power. We can say then that where *Discipline and Punish* was the outcome of Foucault's investigations tangential to his involvement in the GIP, *The Will to Knowledge* was the application of the new conception of power resulting from this study to an area he had long declared his wish to write about, sexuality.[6]

The *Will to Knowledge* account is foreshadowed by Foucault's comments in his contemporary Collège de France lecture series, 1975's *Abnormal* (*Les Anormaux*), which constitutes a hinge between *Discipline and Punish* and *The Will to Knowledge*, featuring the former's concern with disciplinary institutions alongside the latter's concern with normalisation, and the 1976 series, *Society Must Be Defended* (*Il faut défendre la société*), which was delivered in the period when Foucault was writing *The Will to Knowledge*, and constitutes something like a supplement to it. In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault produces a genealogy of the notion of power. The traditional conceptions of power—at any rate the "juridical" and "liberal" conceptions of power coming from the Enlightenment—tend, according to Foucault, to treat power as a "commodity" (SD 13) or "attribute" (Deleuze 1988, 27) that could be possessed, hence focusing attention on the powerful individual, the one who "has" power. Foucault's basic move is to say that this approach to power, relating it to the individual, fails to comprehend what happens at the level of power itself.

While Foucault is radical apropos of any previous account of power in several ways, the core novelty of his approach is shown here. That said, his approach is perhaps less novel than he himself thought, since Foucault was only aware of contemporary theoretical work done within France, where the question of power was not being raised, and in the history of philosophy. He was thus not aware of a variety of work in both German and English on

political power which to varying extents evades Foucault's criticisms. Foucault (EW2 440) himself later noted that his ignorance of the work of the Frankfurt School was unfortunate insofar as knowledge of their work would have saved him many missteps, and that his ignorance of their work and of Max Weber's was simply due to the fact that they were unknown in France. Weber's work on power itself has significant similarities to Foucault's, particularly its uncannily similar terminology: "power," "domination," "resistance," and "discipline." Still, Foucault (RM 115–29) himself notes, had he known of the work of the Frankfurt School, he probably would simply have followed their approach, hence would not have produced the unique and highly-influential approach that he did.

Foucault was still more ignorant of American theoretical work on power, power having been a major theme in American political theory in the mid-twentieth century, and Foucault not seeming to have become aware of this even in his later life. However, since the American political theory of power was still focussed around *having* power, it would not evade Foucault's criticisms. This is true both of its right-wing form, which focussed on individuals, and its more left-wing tendency, which focussed on the power of elite groups and communities, this latter tendency finding its most celebrated moment in the work of Foucault's contemporary, Steven Lukes (*see* Hindess 1996, 2).

Foucault's approach to power was little more initially than the application of his anti-subjectivism and anti-humanism, which is to say, to think of power as something autonomous from human subjects who are ordinarily held to wield power—subjectivism and humanism being, respectively, the positions that put subjective experience and human beings at the centre, whereas Foucault relegates them. Foucault here simply maintains the anti-subjectivist line against traditional thinking that he had pursued already for at least a decade, in short what might be called his "structuralism," as per this 1966 statement on the nature of the system, which provides an exact template for Foucault's reconception of power years later, even if Foucault does not use the concept of system with power:

> By system, we must understand an ensemble of relations which maintain themselves, transform themselves, independently of the things which they bind. (DE1 542)

From Foucault's basic anti-subjectivism, most of his characterisation of power follows quite logically, which would explain the rapidity of the progress Foucault makes from questioning power to reconceptualising it. It should be noted that in this anti-subjectivism, Foucault is similar to yet another tradition of which he was apparently entirely unaware, namely that Weberian-influenced strand in American and German sociology which reaches its anti-subjective apogee in the systems theory of Foucault's contemporary, German sociologist Niklas Luhmann.

In Foucault's intellectual milieu in the early 1970s, what did loom large was, as we have seen, Marxism. In *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault criticises "a certain contemporary conception [of power] that passes for the Marxist conception" for being as "economistic" as the liberal conception of power, but in a different direction: where liberal thinkers have viewed power as a commodity in itself, Marxist thinkers have viewed power as subsidiary to the economic domain (SD 13). Elsewhere, Foucault criticises Marxists for reducing power to the state and to class, which is to say, because it too has power as a commodity held by a subject, albeit an institutional or corporate, abstract one, namely by the state and/or by a dominant class. Marxism is condemned because Marxism, like liberalism, fails to take power seriously as a level on which things happen.

Foucault, for his part, takes power as a radically distinct domain of its own, just as he had earlier contradicted Marxism (or at least some variants thereof) by seeing discourse as a domain unto itself. On this front, there is no Marxist, even Althusser, who anticipates Foucault's position: Althusser's continual evocation of the state is indicative of his distance from Foucault, and indeed something that Foucault is precisely reacting to. It is the autonomy of power, both from other areas of social existence, and from the individuals who are traditionally supposed to wield it, that distinguishes Foucault's approach. Of course, this autonomy is only relative: the idea of power existing as a substance in its own right, regardless of individuals, economics, et cetera, is patently absurd. Indeed, Foucault (PK 188) reassures Marxists that power cannot be analysed apart from considerations of interests or economics. If not actually Marxist, Foucault's account of power is still moreover in a sense Marxian, and indeed presumably ceteris paribus compatible with some version of Marxism, Foucault seeing himself as doing with the analysis of power and sexuality what Marx did with the analysis of productive relations and the condition of the working class (FL 216).

I would extrapolate the following characteristics of power as composing Foucault's core anti-subjectivist conception of power; they are all found in both *The Will to Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*:

1. The impersonality, or subjectlessness, of power, meaning that it is not guided by the will of individual subjects (DP 26; SD 29; WK 94)
2. The relationality of power, meaning that power is always a case of power *relations* between people, as opposed to a quantum possessed by people (DP 27; WK 94)
3. The decentredness of power, meaning that it is not concentrated on a single individual or class (DP 27; PK 142; SD 27; WK 94)
4. The multidirectionality of power, meaning that it does not flow only from the more to the less powerful, but rather "comes from below," even if it is nevertheless "nonegalitarian" (DP 27; PK 142; WK 94 [quoted])

5. The *strategic* nature of power, meaning that it has a dynamic of its own, is "intentional" (DP 26; PK 142; WK 94 [quoted])

Foucault does not enumerate the features of power in the way I have above, which is why I call it extrapolation, but he does provide a similar list of "propositions" about power in *The Will to Knowledge* (WK 94–96); a list of "hypotheses" about power in a 1977 interview (PK 142), which is substantially a recapitulation of the *Will to Knowledge* list; a list of "methodological precautions" (SD 27) in *Society Must Be Defended*; and a "certain number of propositions . . . in the sense of selected suggestions [which] are neither principles, nor rules, nor theorems" (STP 3) in the first lecture of his 1978 Collège de France series, *Security, Territory, Population* (*Sécurité, territoire, population*).

From the first feature in my above list, the others flow: to say power is decentred is implied by its impersonality, since any centre, whether it be an individual or an elite, would be a subject; since power cannot be possessed, it can only be relational, residing in the interstices between individuals, since if it resided in individuals, they would possess it; if it is relational and decentred, then it must be multidirectional, because, since it does not have a centre, yet clearly must have form (if it is to be anything at all), it must be organised autonomously around its *own* tendencies and directionality, rather than those that individual subjects might have. This directionality is strategic and intentional—this specific form of directedness requires lengthy explanation, which we will give below.

There are several additional features which Foucault identifies power as having, which need to be justified independently of his basic anti-subjectivism. Interestingly, and I would suggest not coincidentally, these are all features which are *not* found in the early *Discipline and Punish* conception of power. Foucault's additional stipulations are that power is

- coextensive with resistance (WK 95; PK 142)—this aspect we will leave aside for the moment, to deal with in Chapter 5, which is devoted to the topic of resistance;
- productive, producing positive effects (WK 94)—this aspect will be dealt with in a subsequent section of this chapter;
- ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relationship, as a condition of the possibility of any kind of relationship (WK 94; PK 142)—although we will discuss this principle now, I shall argue in the next chapter that it can only be *fully* understood or justified in light of Foucault's later work, as indeed can Foucault's conception of power generally.

In the rest of the present chapter, we will consider first of all two questions which are possible to answer at this stage of the development of Foucault's views, namely the question of the historicity of power and the question of power's productivity. We will then give a preliminary account

of the relationship of power to other types of social relation, and of the strategic nature of power, which will lead us into a discussion of Foucault's later work on power via the accusation that Foucault there abandons his strategic conception of it.

DECAPITATION

Foucault's reconception of power is presented as a reaction and a solution to the problems of a long-dominant conception of power on the model of *sovereignty*, the model of the monarch reigning over his subjects, power of one person *over* another, and hence of one group over another, of the state over society. Famously, Foucault writes of there being a need to cut off the king's head in political theory (WK 88–89), to catch up with the actual political changes which were wrought by the literal cutting off of the King of France's head in 1793.

There has been some contention, however, as to whether power as Foucault describes it was brought into existence with that societal revolution, or whether Foucault's model also applied to power prior to this point. Should we take the metaphor of cutting off the king's head to mean that the revolution created a new type of power which we have simply failed to understand before now, or should we take it to mean that we need to follow in political theory what was shown by the revolutionary regicide, namely that the king could be dispensed with? This would make the cutting off of the king's head analogous to the "death of God": God, if dead, never existed; the king, if decapitated, was never the absolute he had appeared to be.

Béatrice Han (2002, 140), for one, questions whether Foucault's conception of power applies to any other era than the modern.[7] Jürgen Habermas (1987, 253–54) on the other hand claims that Foucault's power is transcendental.[8] What is at stake here is whether Foucault's conception of power is something in the order of a universal schema, or just an observation about modernity. Certainly, given Foucault's radical historicism, the latter seems plausible. It would be, moreover, an explanation for his refusal to provide a "general theory" of power.

Regarding the idea that power might be transcendental, we must remember Foucault's epistemology. Foucault says in 1978 that the terms *pouvoir* and *savoir* "only have a methodological role: it is not a matter of locating general principles of reality through them, but of somehow pinpointing the analytical front, the type of element that may be pertinent to the analysis" (Foucault 1990, 48; cf. PT 51). Thus, there are other possible conceptual schemata than this division into power and discourse. While the concept of power is thus a contingent element of a conceptual framework, the thing to which this concept relates (violently), like discourse itself, is anything but contingent to social life, and by this measure, Habermas is right about Foucault. There can be no genealogical account of the phenomenon of

power per se, only of particular configurations, or of the *concept* of power, because power itself per se is not something that occurs within history, but rather a condition of the possibility of history qua a phase in the struggle of existence. This is one reason Foucault eschews theoretising power:

> If one tries to erect a theory of power one will always be obliged to view it as emerging at a given place and time and hence to deduce it, to reconstruct its genesis. But if power is in reality an open, more-or-less coordinated (in the event, no doubt, ill-coordinated) cluster of relations, then the only problem is to provide oneself with a grid of analysis which makes possible an analytic of relations of power. (PK 199)

Here, "theory" is in a more narrow sense than that which is operative where Foucault encourages us to articulate a theory of power: here, Foucault is eschewing a theory of power in the sense of an a priori account of its emergence, of the type seen in early modern political philosophers, particularly Rousseau's view of power as something imposed on free-born man. Foucault opposes such thinking about power, which presupposes a priori that our natural state is or is not one of being invested by power relations. Rather, power is something that is always already there in human social relations to be examined, according to Foucault. Now, Foucault does have an account of why power is ubiquitous in this way to human sociality, but it does not emerge yet—we will discuss it in the next chapter.

Foucault consistently represents the broad features of power as being transhistorical, saying for example in 1983 that, "I can see no relevance whatever in saying that power is no longer what it used to be" (EW2 452). This is clearly not to say that things do not change at the level of power—Foucault is indeed concerned to understand how power changes—but these are shifts in *mode*, not new *forms* of power per se.

Foucault (PK 207) is clear enough that "the famous 'absolute' monarchy in reality had nothing absolute about it. In fact it consisted of a number of islands of dispersed power"—it was the bourgeois order that came later that was actually far more absolute. Even the mightiest king can be influenced, indeed *is* influenced in his decision-making. The French Revolution in a sense proved this, showing the capacity for action by those who were considered to be inherently, naturally at the bottom of a pyramid of power relations. Foucault explicitly acknowledges the multidirectionality of feudal power relations:

> In order for there to be a movement from above to below there has to be a capillarity from below to above at the same time. Take a simple example, the feudal form of power relation. Between the serfs tied to the land and the lord who levies rent from them, there exists a local, relatively autonomous relation. . . . For this relation to hold, it must

> indeed have the backing of a certain pyramidal ordering of the feudal system. But it's certain that the power of the French kings and the apparatuses of State which they gradually established from the eleventh century onward had as their condition of possibility a rooting in forms of behaviour, bodies and local relations of power which should not at all be seen as a simple projection of the central power. (PK 201)

Some people always knew that the monarch was not absolute: in feudal times, nothing was more obvious than that the king ruled by the agreement of his nobles; there was always a danger of civil war, and it was only avoided by the recognition of the force relations and clever manipulation of them. Peasant rebellion was also always possible, but was held in check by the threat and occasional use of extraordinary violence. In the epoch of absolute monarch, by contrast, centralisation of power involved a rise in the prominence of bureaucrats and bourgeois, who then obscured the fact that their power rested on a balance of force relations at all. But the force relations underlying the situation were nevertheless complex and multidirectional; nothing other than the multipolar and multidirectional power set out by Foucault was ever a reality.

This is not to imply that the power structure ultimately rests on consent: "Power is not a matter of consent" (EW3 340) for Foucault. Foucault's point is that the power of the sovereign, sovereignty itself, is produced by complex relations across society, regardless of the degree of consent—as we shall see, the overall logic of the strategic situation is divorced from the desires of individuals. While power indeed "comes from below," it still admits of radically *inegalitarian* relations (WK 94). While power was always decentred and multidirectional, it was not *acephalous*: in the monarch there used to be one point in the network which was enormously privileged, even though its predominance was far from total. It was not the case that the power of the monarch was simply an illusion that could be thrown off in an instant, but rather part of a real, entrenched network of power and of discourses which could only be changed through a great rupture:

> Between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between everyone who knows and everyone who does not, there exist relations of power which are not purely and simply a projection of the sovereign's great power over the individual; they are rather the concrete, changing soil in which the sovereign's power is grounded, the conditions which make it possible for it to function. (PK 187)

In the monarchical epoch, it was impossible for political discourse to say what Foucault does about power, to say that power is decentred and multidirectional. While we might look at the French Revolution then as a necessary step on the road to thinking power relations as a decentred

network, the beheading of the king was not in practice sufficient to make this happen. As Thomas Lemke (1997, 100) points out, it was not just the monarchists, but also their opponents who bought into the monarchical conception of power. Indeed, the principle of having a supreme leader with a quasi-monarchical function is still ubiquitous in modern political societies, republics having presidents whose roles, though they may be ceremonial, seem somehow still to be requisite. Thus, the regicide has yet to be fully completed even in political practice, let alone political theory, with some exceptions at the margins where organisations, particularly left and alternative ones, operate without a head. As such, the cephalic, inegalitarian form of power that marked the old monarchies remains ubiquitous today.

TECHNOLOGIES OF POWER

Understanding power in its "positive effects," rather than just in its "'repressive' effects" (DP 23; *see also* PK 142) is common to Foucault's analyses of power in both *Discipline and Punish* and *The Will to Knowledge*. To produce different behaviour in people is the explicit aim of the prison—although Foucault points out that the behaviour that the prison produces is not the behaviour that it is supposed to produce. In the case of sexuality, Foucault's thesis is that the "repressive hypothesis," the Reichian notion that our sexuality has simply been repressed in the past, particularly in the Victorian era, itself qua device of power actively *produces* sexuality as such. In both cases, Foucault is trying to debunk the monarchical conception of power *qua* negative conception of power.

As David Weberman (1995, 194) points out, all power is necessarily both productive and repressive: if we stop someone from doing one thing, they will do something else (unless we kill them), while to make someone do one thing is always to stop them from doing whatever else they might have done; as Weberman (195) puts it, "in getting us to do X, it is always at the same time (more or less) effective in getting us not to do Y."[9]

There is nevertheless a sense in which power has become more productive, however. In his 1975 Collège de France lecture course, *Abnormal*, Foucault (AB 51) argues the negativity of our usual conception of power is outdated and medieval, but in this case because the operation of power actually has changed, in that "the eighteenth century established a power that is not conservative but inventive" (AB 52). This is not to say that the nature of power itself has changed; rather, the *technological functioning* of power has.

As we have seen, Foucault's contention is that the traditional conception of power we have is tied to an older technological functioning, even though it was not accurate at describing that functioning either. In this, Foucault is clearly close to Marx's history of ideas. For Marx, the way in which people look at society is an inadequate and inaccurate one, produced by

the class relations in that society. Foucault says something slightly different here, however, namely that the conception of society that predominates is a hangover from an earlier social formation. Marxism in fact itself is guilty of retaining this conception of power—Foucault specifically accuses Marxist class analysis of being more germane to feudal power relations than present-day society (AB 51).

In a society in which power was about negative sanctions, naturally a negative conception of power grew up. In the modern era, new technologies of power emerge, which, while they have the same general characteristics of all power, are more productive, in the sense that they allow for the close production of behaviours in both individuals and entire populations beyond what was possible before.

Foucault's clearest exposition of technologies of power is to be found in the final lecture of *Society Must Be Defended*. Here, Foucault diagnoses the existence of a pre-modern technology of power called "sovereign power" (SD 240), which works by extraordinary violence. It is this technology that is described in the florid opening passage of *Discipline and Punish*, in which the utmost violence is used against the person accused of the greatest crime. In the modern period, according to Foucault, sovereign power has been supplemented (though by no means replaced, at the limits of our society) by two new technologies, namely *discipline* and *biopower*, the former micropolitical, and the latter macropolitical. Discipline, the older of the two, is the technology by which men's bodies are controlled and trained in prisons, factories, schools, et cetera, the appearance of which is charted in *Discipline and Punish*: it is the technology of individuals. Biopower, operating at the entirely opposite level, is responsible for constituting the *population* (SD 245), hence the modern nation. The technology of discipline encompasses techniques of individual surveillance and dressage. Biopower involves techniques of mass surveillance, such as the census, and of mass control, such as health campaigns.[10] Because of the different levels at which these two modern technologies operate, they complement one another without conflict. By contrast, discipline and biopower are both in some contradiction with sovereign power, since they do not operate simply through violence, but by training bodies and keeping people alive respectively (SD 254). Sovereignty only operates insofar as the newer technologies do not. They are used together in tandem, but require a device to separate those who are subject to the lethal technology of sovereignty, namely criminals, proscribed ethnic groups, and foreigners, and those who must be "made to live" by biopower—for Foucault, this device is *racism* (SD 256; *see also* Kelly 2004a).[11]

The key thing about technologies of power is that they are *technologies*, not merely structures or discourses of power, though there are certainly discourses and structures involved. That they are technologies means that they are, like other technologies, a body of technical knowledge and practices, a raft of techniques, which once developed and understood can

be applied to various situations. As an example of a mobile technique of power, Foucault (RM 170) points to concentration camps in the twentieth century, which once invented were applied in vastly different scenarios by many different states.

There is a relationship of profound reciprocity between technological innovation in the ordinary sense and the emergence of new techniques of power: mass production required both disciplinary power and new technology to emerge, disciplinary power itself being a technology much like the steam engine in this regard. Like all technologies, technologies of power are not socially or politically neutral but rather profoundly alter the way things operate in society. New technologies in fact do not always succeed in inserting themselves into the network of power relations, but are rather suppressed or ignored; one thinks of the steam-powered *aeolipile* in ancient Greece, which had no useful application from the point of view of a slave society (although, of course, that is no guarantee someone would have otherwise realised its application).

POWER-KNOWLEDGE

> Power relations are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationship (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in them; power relations are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibria which occur in the other types, and are the internal conditions of these differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with a simple role of prohibition or affirmation; they have, where they come into play, a directly productive role. (VS 123–24; cf. WK 94; *see also* PK 142)

The example of the interpenetration of different types of relation that Foucault most emphasises is the relationship between power and knowledge. Foucault (DP 28) indeed invents a concept of "power-knowledge" in which these two types of relation are understood correlatively. That Foucault should do this is natural given his turn from studying knowledge to studying relations of power. Foucault (AK 219) first, in "The Order of Discourse," begins to associate discursive order with the institutions that produce it; from there, it is a small step to seeing knowledge as underwritten by power, and indeed vice versa. There is no knowledge without an apparatus of knowledge-production in which relations of power are invested, but there is also no apparatus invested by power relations which does not itself produce knowledge, discourse by which it understands and explains its own operation, which it uses to further its operation. In the modern prison, knowledges such as criminology and psychology form a condition of the prison's existence, and have the prison as a condition of their existence. Such discourses on the one hand

are a necessary part of the prison's functioning, organising data necessary for the control of the prisoners (DP 126), and on the other perform specifically discursive functions, explaining the prison's function in terms of correcting criminal behaviour, thus justifying the prison to society at large, allowing the prison system to understand itself and even acting as a controlling discourse by which criminals come to understand their own behaviour, which then modifies said behaviour in regular ways (cf. DP 102–3).

The importance of the reciprocity between power and knowledge becomes even more acutely relevant for Foucault when he comes to deal with sexuality in his work, since there what is at stake is more directly discursive, in that the very object *sexuality* itself exists, according to Foucault, at a discursive-political level, rather than just at the physiological-psychological level assumed by medicine:

> If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was only because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it. (WK 98)

Power-knowledge is again an explicit corrective to Marxism, to the Marxist notion of ideology (Gordon 2004; O'Farrell 2004; cf. EW3 87), in which (non-Marxist) discourse is classically seen as a superstructural effect of, and cover for the machinations of, economically-based power. For Foucault, on the other hand,

> discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibition; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance. (WK 101)

Power and discourse are not automatically allied nor automatically opposed, nor is either more basic than the other. While Foucault (PPC 106) criticises the human sciences for being riddled with power, he also allows that there are "psychological and sociological theories that are independent of power," and leaves the natural sciences out of his criticisms entirely. While his general thesis does imply that there is power at work in the natural sciences—and it would be naïve to deny that there is a lot of politics at work in science—scientific discourses are not determined by power in their intrinsic content in the same way as certain other discourses, because the things whereof they speak generally do not have a great deal of specific political import, and are hence compatible with many different political strategies (*see* EW1 296; cf. Han 2002, 140).

Of course, there are exceptions—Lysenko, Aryan physics, intelligent design—but these are precisely cases where science has itself been subverted, corrupted by power.

Now, power and knowledge are very similar things for Foucault for all their variable relations to one another. We can replace the words "power" and "discourse" one for the other in many of Foucault's statements, and they would be as true. When Foucault speaks of "the tactical polyvalence of discourses" (WK 100) too, he might as well speak of the tactical polyvalence of power relations: just as apparently contradictory discourses can in fact cohere at the level of a grander strategy (WK 101), so too can apparently contradictory power relations; just as discourses can circulate unchanged between general strategies (WK 102), so too can power relations. Thus, the description from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* of a system which is coherent despite the presence of incompatible parts (AK 66), discursive unities composed of many competing sub-theories, can be applied to power too. Perhaps Foucault to some extent is directly applying formulae from the *Archaeology* now to power, such as that statements "are repeated, reproduced, and transformed; to which pre-established networks are adapted, and to which a status is given in the institution" (AK 120); the concept of strategy was similarly pioneered in that book.

The similarity of power and discourse is based in their shared type of materiality: "Relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality) for which they play at once a conditioning and a conditioned role" (PK 142); the materiality of power, just like the materiality of discourse, is mitigated by the fact that neither is truly self-sufficient. Neither can exist without people, nor without a social, institutional framework which supports them. This will become clearer in light of Foucault's later analyses of power.

Of course, what can be said of one cannot *always* be said of the other. Indeed, what can be said of one or other or both of these two cannot even always be said of power-knowledge.[12] There is a significant asymmetry between power and knowledge from the point of view of research, for example. While discourse can be studied in itself, without reference to power, as Foucault does in his archaeological work and also in his late work on sexuality, power cannot be studied without reference to discourse, since research is itself discursive. This might tempt us to think that language is ephemeral and that power is what is *really* happening. During his lifetime, Foucault was attacked for making power "endogenous," ontologically self-sufficient, without causes outside itself (FL 258–59). This criticism came from Marxists, who were perhaps so used to rooting things in an unseen base that when Foucault posits something unseen, they immediately saw it as an alternative base.

Foucault, for his part, points out that power is not a substance. Power is not the same as other things, cannot be reduced to them, but neither can anything else be reduced to it. Against the misinterpretation of Foucault's

view of what power is, Foucault describes power as "the form, differing from time to time, of a series of clashes which constitute the social body, clashes of the political, economic type, etc." (FL 260):

> Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (WK 93)

POWER AS SELF-ORGANISING

If power is not organised by subjects, it must in some sense be self-organising. Foucault describes power as having a logic, which is to say an *aim* or *intentionality*, one which is specific to power itself, not simply the intentionality of the agents, the subjects, caught up in relations of power, since that would restore the subject as the centre:

> The logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous, almost unspoken strategies which coordinate the loquacious tactics whose "inventors" or decisionmakers are often without hypocrisy. (WK 95)

The network of power relations and its strategies are *emergent*, regularly produced by the agents involved—although the now-familiar concept of emergence was not in Foucault's philosophical vocabulary. Emergent strategies of power loom large in Foucault's case studies of power, *Discipline and Punish* and *The Will to Knowledge*. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault claims that what he calls the "carceral system" functions regularly to produce a relatively stable effect, namely the existence of "delinquency"—in short, prisons function to demarcate and perpetuate a criminal class, who themselves play a certain social role. This is of course certainly not the intention of anyone who is involved in the carceral system, not the intention of government, of the guards, of the wardens, of the prisoners, but it is nonetheless the net effect. One of the most interesting and paradoxical parts of Foucault's thesis in *Discipline and Punish* is that one essential piece of this system is in fact the prison reform movement which condemns the prisons precisely for producing delinquency, since it buttresses the institution of the prison by calling for its improvement, whereas, as Foucault reveals, the prison is itself is as an institutional form inextricably bound-up with delinquency (DP 264–70). The intentions of those whose stated purpose is to eradicate delinquency are part of the logic of power which produces it, as are those of the policemen trying to eradicate crime. This is the aforementioned "tactical polyvalence," which is the condition of the

coherent strategy with its contradictory elements, elements which speak against one another while strategically cohering, like prison reformers and prison guards.

It is neither people nor groups nor an agency like the state that is in charge; rather, power itself governs itself:

> Power relations are at once intentional and not subjective. If, in fact, they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect, in terms of causation, of another instance that "explains" them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that exerts itself without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the whole network of power that functions in a society (and makes it function); the rationality of power is a rationality of tactics, tactics which are often quite explicit at the restricted level at which they inscribe themselves—a local cynicism of power—tactics which, connecting up with one another, attracting and propagating one another, finding their support and their condition elsewhere, end up describing whole systems. (VS 124–25; cf. WK 94–95)

Now, the idea that power is intentional is an exceptionally tricky one. Intentionality of course refers to purposiveness. Ordinarily, this notion is conjoined with that of subjectivity, in the notion of directed, human consciousness. The association of intentionality with consciousness is so strong that at first glance the claim that power is intentional seems to imply that power has full-blown agency for Foucault. However, Foucault says that power relations are not subjective. This implies on the one hand that power relations are not simply the result of choices by subjects, as well as that power relations do not themselves possess subjectivity. This is to say that power is not conscious, nor directed by a conscious sovereign, does not make decisions, nor is it the tool of one who does. Power is completely subjectless—we should not fall into the trap of reinstating the subject by making power *itself* a subject (cf. May 1994, 75). In using the term "intentional" here, then, Foucault is being quite provocative. What is intentionality shorn of an intending subject? The answer is that "the rationality of power is a rationality of tactics." Power's intentionality lies in its strategic nature, but its strategies have no strategist. It has rationality, but it is the rationality of a machine.[13]

Power therefore also lacks the type of directedness which is characteristic/constitutive of what is ordinarily called human intentionality, the type of relationship people have towards the world. Power has "aims and objectives," but these work ultimately towards a single purpose, namely

the stability of the network of power relations itself: "power is an ensemble of mechanisms and procedures which have as their role or function and theme, even if they do not reach it, precisely securing power" (STP 3).

Why does power aim to preserve itself? Foucault says that

> the condition of possibility of power . . . is the moving base of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, ceaselessly lead us into states of power, which are, however, always local and unstable. (VS 122; cf. WK 93)

This would seem to suggest that power's patterns emerge only by accident; as Norbert Wiener (1968, 36) observes, any dynamic system passes through both extremely unstable and relatively stable states, but by their very nature those relatively stable states will be longer-lived and so seem to be the innate "purpose" of the system. Foucault's claim for power is clearly stronger though: it tries to preserve itself, does not merely persist by accident;

> It seems to me that power must be understood firstly as the multiplicity of force relations that are immanent in the domain in which they exert themselves, and constitutive of their own organization; as the game that, by way of ceaseless struggles and clashes, transforms, reinforces, or reverses them, as the supports that these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or, on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions that isolate them from one another; and, lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, the general design or institutional crystallisation of which takes shape in the state apparatuses, in the formulation of the law, and in the social hegemonies. (VS 121–22; cf. WK 92–93)

Society is full of different forces, individual and corporate, struggling with one another. Sometimes there is cooperation towards shared goals. At other times there is open combat. The more powerful force may utterly destroy the weaker, or force it into subjugation, or it may itself be forced to compromise and reach a settlement with the weaker force in order to pursue other objectives, or out of exhaustion. Any settlement is inherently unstable: the forces will change, the same old forces will try again to gain the upper hand, but after such disturbances, new accommodations will be found. The net effect of all this gross struggle is the production of an ensemble of power relations whose strategies are those of enforcing the social settlement:

> No "local centre," no "pattern of transformation" could function if, through a series of sequences, it did not eventually enter into an overall strategy. And inversely, no strategy could achieve comprehensive

> effects if [it] did not gain support from precise and tenuous relations serving, not as its point of application or final outcome, but as its prop and anchor point. There is no discontinuity between them, as if one were dealing with two different levels (one microscopic and the other macroscopic); but neither is there homogeneity (as if the one were only the enlarged projection or the miniaturization of the other); rather, one must conceive of the double conditioning of a strategy by the specificity of possible tactics, and of tactics by the strategic envelope that makes them work. (WK 99–100)

Here, Foucault is describing precisely the emergence of power: without discontinuity different things are happening at two different levels (even though Foucault does not want to use this word, because of the implication of discontinuity it carries). Force relations together produce an ensemble which is not merely a stalemate, but is actively organised for its own self-promotion. Power organises itself by itself: it must adapt and take account of what it finds, an ever-changing environment. Foucault is clear, however, that power should not be understood on the model of an organism (PK 206). Power, unlike an organism, is not *autopoietic* (to use another term Foucault never did), or "self-producing": "these relations are not self-generating, are not self-subsisting, are not founded by themselves" (STP 4); (a strategy of) power is not a Luhmannian system. But neither does this mean that power's intentionality arises simply by accident: rather it is produced from elsewhere, by the contestation of forces, which is itself self-organising.

POWER AS WAR

The model Foucault chooses to employ instead of the organic model of autopoiesis used by Luhmann to understand social systems in understanding power is that of *war*: "power is war, the continuation of war by other means" (SD 15). Here Foucault reverses Clausewitz's famous dictum, that war is politics by other means, into the claim "that politics is war by other means" (SD 15). This is pure Nietzschean genealogy, reminiscent of Nietzsche's thesis that our present-day "civilised" society is the domination by slaves, rather than the absence of domination. It contradicts John Locke's (1689) formula that the state of nature is a state of peace which descends into a state of war, followed by the establishment of civil society, which ends it: for Foucault it is war from the outset, which never ceases, but rather *becomes* civil society. Foucault also pointedly distinguishes himself from Thomas Hobbes, who of course, unlike Locke, believes that the state of nature is already a state of war from the outset, because Foucault does not agree with the argument, common to Hobbes and Locke, that government ends the state of war. Foucault (SD 89–99) produces a sophisticated analysis of Hobbes. Foucault takes the view that Hobbes' (1651) argument

is directed not against the violence of the contemporary English Civil War, as is usually thought, but rather against the discourses, which are the central object of study in *Society Must be Defended*, that accompanied it, in particular the narrative that there was beneath English society a struggle that had been going on since the Norman conquest, a struggle between Saxons and Normans that contemporaneously took the form of a struggle between the common people and the nobility. Foucault argues persuasively that Hobbes' argument is specifically designed to counteract the claims arising from the extreme left, from the Diggers most notably, that any form of social order must have been imposed by force, with Hobbes arguing that it doesn't matter whether order is imposed by force (acquisition) or instituted by compact, that the establishment of the Leviathan has the same effect—namely, to the extent that it exists, peace. In this respect, Hobbes is no different from Locke (1689, §20), who says, "But when the actual force is over, the state of war ceases between those that are in society and are equally on both sides subject to the judge." While Hobbes readily concedes the continuation of a state of war in the present despite the existence of the Leviathan, this is in fact only to the extent that the Leviathan's dominance is not total. Foucault, on the other hand, self-consciously follows in the tradition of the left "political historicism" (SD 111) which sees war as "a permanent feature of social relations" (SD 110), something exemplified, not mitigated, by the state.[14] The prime example of this is of course "class war," which does not need any kind of open conflict to exist, but is rather an entrenched antagonism.

Now, there is obviously a difference between such permanent antagonism and war *simpliciter*. Actual, physical violence is the most obvious criterion for making such a distinction, yet it is in fact neither necessary nor sufficient to this distinction, since all states that have ever existed at some point or other employ violence in a regular way in their running, in "keeping the peace," and since wars themselves are not things which occur exclusively at the level of physical violence. We can thus see a continuum between war and politics: discourse and violence are always both present in either art; diplomacy and the knife are both tools of both war and politics. Foucault effectively considers war and politics to be different possible strategies of power:

> If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate rather that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded—in part but never totally—either in the form of "war," or in the form of "politics"; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense force relations. (WK 93)

When war starts, there is of course a kind of rupture in the international order, but power relations which cross the battle lines do not disappear

entirely. Thus, we can see a certain kind of cooperation and mutuality between sides in even "total" conflicts. A war has a certain kind of semi-stable existence, which allows its incorporation into strategies of power, in which the war is presupposed in the strategic configuration of power relations on both sides of the battle lines, and in which a certain dynamic operates between the foes as the contest with one another for domination, just as individuals or groups do within society in peacetime. War is no more unidirectional than any other modality of power relations (it could not be, since the two are bound together): within the victor's camp there has always been vying for position, strategy, alliance, and also within the defeated people. Hence alliances, implicit or explicit, across the lines of battle between mutually supportive tendencies in the other camp have always existed too: the Allies wanted the plotters against Hitler to succeed and, even if the two groups were not in direct communication, the Allies formed an essential component of the renegades' plot to kill Hitler and rescue Germany, the Allies hoping to incite just such treachery within the ranks of the enemy. Indeed, for Foucault, the peaceful state of society is an ossification of a previous state of war:

> Power relations, as they function in a society like ours, are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be historically specified. And while it is true that political power puts an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the disequilibrium revealed by the last battle of the war. (SD 15)

Foucault, like the seventeenth-century political philosophers, posits a state of war, followed by the birth of civil society. Thus Foucault is genealogical in a sense which he shares with Locke as well as Nietzsche. For Foucault, however, unlike for the classical genealogists, including even Nietzsche to some extent, the establishment of civil society is a matter not of a compact between men to end war, nor of the forcible ending of war by a conquering leader, nor even of the cunning ruse against the warlike victors by the vanquished. It is rather a matter of a war which is self-organising, which, through the dynamic of the war itself forms civil society as a state of stabilisation, not by ending war with victory and thus peace, but by ossifying the battle lines and allowing for a new form of much more sophisticated and productive contention. This, Foucault argues, moreover, is how it *really* happened, not a conceit to legitimate civil authority, but an historical hypothesis:

> The force relationships which for a long time had found expression in war, in every form of warfare, gradually became invested in the order of political power. (WK 102)

The development of the technology of biopower is part of this, the replacement of physical force, which is inherently disruptive, with closer and more effective regulation. Foucault sees civil society as embodying rather than replacing Hobbesian general conflict:

> This is just a hypothesis, but I would say it's all against all. There aren't immediately given subjects of the struggle, one the proletariat, the other the bourgeoisie. Who fights against whom? We all fight each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else. (PK 208)

All the lines of force, across, behind, between the battle lines, carry over into the peace, with everyone contending even in so-called civil peace against one another, and every individual riven by struggles between sub-individual forces. The difference between war and civil peace is only a relative lack of open violence in the latter, with the contention between forces possibly boiling over into new war or revolution, which may in turn result in a new settlement. Indeed, from the inversion of Clausewitz, Foucault concludes that "the final decision can only come from war, or in other words a trial by strength in which weapons are the final judges" (SD 16). Foucault calls this schema "Nietzsche's hypothesis," and it is indeed thoroughly Nietzschean, in that it sees society as a relentless struggle of contending wills to power. This relates back directly to Foucault's Nietzschean epistemology. Animal drives (precisely the kind of things within each of us that fight one another), Foucault says, produce knowledge "in a momentary stabilisation of this state of war" (EW3 12)—which is precisely how he now describes politics, as war by other means, a stalemate of opposing forces fossilised in relative peace. The two are not merely analogous, but part and parcel of the same process: it is the interplay of forces in our society that is represented in discourse. "Behind all knowledge [*savoir*], behind all attainment of knowledge [*connaissance*], what is involved is a struggle for power" (EW3 32; parenthetical French in original).

Foucault takes as his "model perpetual battle rather than the contract regulating a transaction or the conquest that seizes a territory" (SP 31; cf. DP 26). This is not quite legal positivism, since Foucault is not *reducing* the law to power, but rather believes that the law is itself an important weapon in the general social conflict (cf. DP 222, PK 141): he is a legal *materialist*, a legal realist. This reality is at the heart of the thesis of *Discipline and Punish*: there is power wherever there is law, but the law neither describes nor prescribes what is happening at the level of power; the law is something flexible, which is applied very differently at different points, different times and different places (cf. DP 21–22). The law is something which does not do what it says it is doing: the net effect of a law which applies such-and-such penalties for such-and-such crimes cannot be discerned from the law itself. Anti-drug laws often have, say, racist implications, the implications

moreover of robbing entire communities of much of their menfolk, with all the social impacts that that entails; Foucault (LCP 226) speaks of this himself in relation to the way drug laws are used to harass students.

Classical political theorists conceived of power as something static, on the model of conquest, where power over a territory passes to a new ruler, taking power as in itself discrete and stable, something one possesses; Foucault, following Nietzsche, takes the Heraclitean view that there is nothing stable, that the contract is merely a semblance of stability. Foucault in fact, in this move to a strategic conception of things, of language, and of society, sees himself as adopting a model that provides an alternative to that used in structuralism, an alternative to the privileging of stable, synchronic structures, all distinct from one another and precisely definable (PK 114). Foucault on the contrary wants to adopt an approach that enables the study of chaos without the presupposition of order, even if some kind of conceptual ordering must be adopted. Here again, Foucault's quasi-structuralist analysis of systems and his Nietzscheanism are combined.

3 Power II

> But who, after all, is doing this? They are all suffering as I am. Who then is it? Who?
>
> —Tolstoy (1942, 1064)

In this chapter, we examine the changes and new turns in Foucault's approach to power after 1977. In this period, the theme of power is largely absent from Foucault's work. Foucault turns his attention first to the related theme of *government*, and then, through a turn in his interest in government from statecraft to the "government of the self," in his last work becomes interested primarily in ancient ethics. Nevertheless, in this period Foucault does undertake significant, if occasional, reflections on the nature of power. In this chapter, we show how these later reflections interact with his earlier work on the topic to in fact complete his picture of how power works, and how the turns in Foucault's late work away from power represent developments of his thought that do not involve substantial repudiation of his earlier work on power, or indeed his earlier work more broadly.

WAR GAMES

Foucault drops his talk of war by around 1978. Nevertheless, I shall argue that, as with the "violence" of discourse, this amounts to little more than a shift in rhetoric: Foucault does not renounce his core point.

Now, Arnold I. Davidson, in his introduction to *Society Must Be Defended*, argues that Foucault had already "subtly but significantly modified his own attitude" (SD xviii) between the statement that "power is war" (SD 15) in *Society Must Be Defended* and his suggestion in *The Will to Knowledge* that, rather than say "politics is war pursued by other means," "perhaps if one wishes always to maintain a difference between war and politics: one should say that the two are 'different strategies' for integrating force relations."[1] Thomas Lemke (1997, 141) similarly sees this as evidence of a "tendential disqualification of the model of war," which later became complete.

However, there is no real disjuncture between the claims being made in these two texts. Indeed, it would be quite surprising if there were, since both date from the same year, 1976, with *The Will to Knowledge* being

completed in August, only five months after *Society Must Be Defended* was delivered (*see* DE1 67). The caution in *The Will to Knowledge* is not about using the model of war to understand power, but about saying the two are simply one and the same. Even though Foucault does say "power is war" in *Society Must Be Defended*, it is with the caveat that that is only a hypothesis, and moreover, he goes on in the same lecture to say, "The twin notions of 'repression' and 'war' have to be considerably modified and ultimately, perhaps, abandoned" (SD 17). In an interview published in 1977, Foucault (DE2 206; cf. PK 164) again demurs on the point, saying, "Is the connection of forces in the order of the political a relationship of war? Personally, I don't feel ready for the moment to answer with a yes or no in a definitive fashion."

Foucault goes on largely to abandon the analogy. Lemke sees this abandonment as a decisive break in Foucault's conception of power: "The moment of the break lies in the development of a conception of power which distinguishes itself from the model of war just as much as from the model of law" (Lemke 1997, 145). Lemke acknowledges that the break is not total, but rather sees it as "a complex play of break and continuity, whereby Foucault on the one hand drops earlier versions of his analysis of power and on the other continues to pursue central intuitions of his 'microphysics of power'" (Lemke 1997, 144–45).

Clearly there has been a shift in rhetoric; the question is how deep this shift runs, whether there is, alongside any continuity, in fact, a *break*, in which Foucault revokes (any of) his previous statements. For Lemke, there is, and it consists in the abandonment of the macro-level analysis of strategies of power in favour of the micro-level understanding of the relationality of power. This is what is really at stake then: is there an abandonment with the rhetoric of war of the strategic model of power?

Lemke (1997, 145) takes as support for his thesis that there is a distinct break in Foucault's conceptualisation of power the following sentence from Foucault's article "The Subject and Power," which appeared in 1982, and constitutes Foucault's only focused treatment of power after 1976, and indeed his most comprehensive treatment of it:

> The relationship proper to power would . . . be sought not on the side of violence or of struggle, nor on that of voluntary contracts (all of what can, at best, only be the instruments of power) but, rather, in the area of that singular mode of action, neither warlike nor juridical, which is government. (EW3 341)

Foucault in the last sentence specifically repudiates both the model of war and the model of the law in favour of the model of government, where he had previously explicitly advocated the model of war. This certainly appears to be a complete repudiation of the entire basis of Foucault's earlier

reconceptualisation of power, which we have shown to be based in an anti-subjectivist intuition. However, it is my contention that there is no break here, in that the state and even the subject are now themselves grasped from an anti-subjectivist perspective.

Bearing in mind that Foucault already consistently voiced doubts about the model of war even while he was using it, and that the model he used was hardly a straightforward use of the notion of war, but rather a metaphor, which, like any metaphor, was imperfect, the question is whether Foucault is here repudiating anything other than the metaphor itself, that is to say, whether he is repudiating any substantive thesis about power, for example the notion of power as strategic and self-organising. Foucault (EW3 346–48) in fact concludes "The Subject and Power" with a section discussing the strategic nature of power as such, so it would seem he is not repudiating that. While he does not talk about the strategic intentionality of the grand strategy here, he nevertheless does talk about domination as representing a strategic situation between adversaries which has stabilised (EW3 347–48).

What then is the meaning of this disavowal of the metaphor of war? One might argue that Foucault no longer sees power as necessitating violence: Foucault expressly distinguishes power from violence per se in "The Subject and Power" (EW3 340). However, Foucault still allows in "The Subject and Power" that violence is often a feature of power relations, and moreover, as we have said, violence is invariably a feature of civil peace as well as war. Nevertheless, the insistence on a continuum between war and peace does tend to diminish the seriousness or undesirability of open violence. We could then say that the change of model is a shift away from a trivialisation of the violence, which made war no worse than peace. Foucault's view of violence in 1980, however, while putting violence in a pejorative light more clearly than before, continues to oppose "the violence–ideology opposition":

> What is most dangerous in violence is its rationality. Of course violence itself is terrible. But the deepest root of violence and its permanence come out of the form of the rationality we use. The idea has been that if we live in the world of reason, we can get rid of violence. This is quite wrong. Between violence and rationality there is no incompatibility. My problem is not to put reason on trial, but to know what is this rationality so compatible with violence. (FL 299)

Here, Foucault is clearly against violence, but he never did valorise it. He previously rather wanted to depose the Hobbesian idea that by violence we can achieve a non-violent peace by showing that our peace is really a continuation of violence through sublimation. Now, Foucault wants to point out the commonalities between apparent peace and open conflict and to

oppose the Habermasian idea that reason can conquer violence. In either case, the point is not to be nonchalant about violence so much as to indict the violence inherent in peace.

Foucault is still no pacifist, moreover, despite the above condemnation of violence. In 1983, provoked by a particular local manifestation of the early '80s pacifist movement, Foucault (DE2 1357) identifies the problem of pacifism with the problem of the concept of peace, which he calls "a dubious notion," and sets out the need for investigation along these lines. Deleuze (1988, 70; emphasis in original) says that, for Foucault, violence is "*a concomitance or consequence of force, but not a constituent element*." This is to say that "force relations" will always produce violence, but violence is not part of what makes something a force relation—open violence is not required all the time, but it is sure to happen sometimes where power is concerned. Foucault stipulates in "The Subject and Power" that power and violence are quite different things, but that does not mean that you can have one without the other.

The metaphor that in Foucault's later work largely displaces that of war is that of the *game*. In the early '70s, Foucault tends to insist on violence and war: power is violence, politics is warfare by other means, discourse is violence. In the late Foucault, the paradigm is the game: truth is a game (TS 15; EW1 281), power is a game (DE2 545; EW1 29). This is only a relative shift of emphasis, however, since Foucault had long used the metaphor of the game: in *The Will to Knowledge*, he speaks of "the game that by way of incessant struggles" transforms force relations (VS 122; cf. WK 92), and he also used it in the first lecture of "Truth and Juridical Forms," where he speaks in terms of "strategic games" of discourse (EW3 2).

Foucault (2004) in 1975 simultaneously makes reference to games and war when he says, "What escapes power is counter-power, which is nevertheless caught up in the same game. That's why we have to go back to the problem of war"; Foucault similarly equivocates between war and games in "The Subject and Power":

> The word "strategy" is currently employed in three ways. . . . These three meanings come together in situations of confrontation—war or games—where the objective is to act on an adversary in such a way as to render the struggle impossible for him. (EW3 346)

The reason for the shift from the model of war to the model of the game was not, it seems, in fact the influence of some new discourse on Foucault, but a shift in the direction of his problematisation of power: "In previous years," says Foucault in 1976 (SD 26–27), "the general project was, basically, to invert the general direction of the analysis that has, I think, been the entire discourse of right, . . . or in other words to stress the fact of domination in all its brutality and its secrecy."

In "The Subject and Power," Foucault says (EW3 342), "Rather than speaking of an essential antagonism, it would be better to speak of an 'agonism.'" This notion of "agonism" comes from the Greek *agonisma*, which is a combative contest—a fight which is also a game—rather than antagonism, which etymologically relates to struggle (*see* Pottage 1998, 22).[2] Note also that Foucault only says this would be *better*, not perfect. These again are analogies; they are more or less apt, never entirely exact. Foucault, even after expressing his preference for the concept of agonism, continues to speak of "antagonistic reactions" in the "Subject and Power" (EW3 347). While the contrast between warfare, with its associations of horror and bloodshed, and the game, with its connotation of fun, might seem stark, there is little difference between the implications of these metaphors for the nature of power relations. They are metaphors after all, which means power is not *literally* a matter either games or of war (cf. EW1 297). Warfare and games are different in that games have much lower stakes, and are generally non-fatal, but both have rules, and both involve strategy and competitiveness, games implying opponents and a quest for victory just as much as war.

The essential difference is one of *level*: war occurs at a grand, societal level, whereas the game occurs at an interpersonal one. Note that the grand scale might be called a game, but should not be, since this plays into the hands of those politicians who do treat war like a game; and we can certainly describe friendships and other personal relations as strategic, but calling them "war" serves to diminish what is good in them, would sound paranoid. The shift in emphasis between the two models undoubtedly correlates to a shift in political-cum-intellectual climate in France over this time with the tail-off of post-1968 radicalism, and a concomitant shift in Foucault's own interests, from looking at the nefarious social power effects in the prison system and the constitution of modern sexuality, to less insidious interpersonal and governmental relations, first in the development of modern governmental techniques, and then in ancient ethical practices.

Still, the model of war never really captured what Foucault was trying to do. War and strategy are models which suggest sovereignty, in that they suggest leadership. It is rather the Hobbesian war of all against all that most closely corresponds to Foucaultian power. A Freudian model would in fact do just as well, however: if archaeology looks at the "unconscious of knowledge" (OT x), then genealogy can be said to look at the political unconscious. Like the psychic unconscious, discourses have their own unconscious, and so too does politics have its own unconscious, the strategies of power. The similarity to the unconscious mind is obvious: it has its own dynamic which is thoroughly concealed behind the explicit claims and interpretations associated with it, yet is nevertheless discoverable through an analysis of what is said at a level other than that

of its explicit meaning; still, the Freudian model would not be a perfect fit either, metaphors of course being necessarily imperfect, as Derrida (1982) has shown.

GOVERNMENT

Lemke does not dwell on the displacement of the metaphor of war in favour of that of the game, however. Rather, he casts the shift in terms of one from a *model* of war to a *model* of *government*. There's no question that this is the model that Foucault takes up in the last years of the 1970s. It is my contention, however, that this is not a replacement, since war was never taken up by Foucault as a formal model at all, but rather only a metaphor Foucault uses tentatively, whereas government actually is an available model for the operation of power which Foucault takes up decisively.

In Foucault's lecture courses of 1978 and 1979, which are the main indication of what he was thinking in this period, and the main focus of Lemke's work, his preoccupation is with *governmentality*.[3] In these two courses, *Security, Territory, Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (*Naissance de la biopolitique*), despite titles which clearly hark back to the conceptual armoury of *Society Must Be Defended*, biopower is now largely displaced by the notion of governmentality.[4] Foucault now speaks of "a triangle: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management" (STP 111), in which the last term has clearly replaced biopower.

Foucault never entirely ceases to speak of power itself, however, and even in the 1979 lectures he continues to define his project, the specific project of the lecture series, in relation to power:

> If I got a bit waylaid by the problem of German neoliberalism, this was firstly for reasons of method, because I wanted, continuing a bit what I had started to say to you last year, to see which concrete content one could give to the analysis of power relations—being understood, of course, and I repeat this yet again, that power cannot in any case be considered either as a principle in itself, or as an explicative value functioning straight away. Even the term power does nothing other than designate a domain of relations which are entirely analysable, and what I have proposed to call governmentality, which is to say the way in which one conducts men, it is nothing other than a proposition of a grid of analysis for relations of power. (NB 191–92)

The concepts of "government" or "governmentality" remained prominent in Foucault's work from his first use of them to his death. However, as Colin Gordon (1991, 2) puts it, "Foucault understood the word 'government' in both a wide and a narrow sense." The narrow sense is of an

historical type of "governmental rationality"; according to Gordon (1991, 1), "governmentality" is a portmanteau word of this phrase. This narrow sense is the sense that isomorphically replaces the notion of biopower in the last two Collège lecture series of the '70s. This notion of governmentality is particularly familiar to English-readers via the lecture of the 1st February 1978, which has long been available in English translation as "Governmentality" in the collection *The Foucault Effect*, and has been widely influential in a number of fields (*see* Dean 1999, 1).

Now, we must set the specifics of Foucault's work on government in the narrow sense to one side, just as the specifics of his earlier explorations of particular historico-political conjunctures have been bracketed, in order to concentrate on what is relevant to his general conception of power. To treat Foucault's notion of governmentality thoroughly is a vast task, which has already been ably undertaken by Gordon (1991), Lemke (1997), and others.

Foucault in fact moves in his use of the concepts from the narrow sense to increasingly broader usages. Initially, as we have seen, the focus on "government" was synonymous with the study of the modern form of "governmental rationality." Foucault was quite explicit at the time, however, that this was an experiment in understanding power differently more generally:

> What I have proposed to call governmentality, i.e. the way in which one conducts the conduct of men, is nothing other than a proposed grid of analysis for power relations.
>
> It is a question, therefore, of trying out this notion of governmentality and it is a question, secondly, of seeing how well this grid of governmentality—one can certainly suppose that it is valid when it is a matter of analysing the way in which one conducts the conduct of the mad, the sick, delinquents, children—can be applied to phenomena of a totally different scale, such as, for example, a political economy, like of the management of a whole social body, etc. (NB 192)

The concept of government appears in Foucault's thought as an attempt to deal with what his earlier analysis of power relations had deliberately bracketed, namely state power, as well as the other kinds of power which can be called governmental (Foucault 2007, 118). While these latter kinds were passed over because they were relatively mundane, the state was bracketed as a reaction to Marxist theories of the political. In his earlier work on power, Foucault's concern was, as we have seen, to correct the prevailing Marxism, which was obsessed with state power, both with fighting the state as presently constituted and with seizing state power, constituting a proletarian state. Having removed the state's status as the central concern of political thought in his earlier work, Foucault now moves towards

understanding the state in the specific role that it actually does have in networks of power.

In doing so, he also corrects an opposite tendency in Marxism to diminish the role of the leaders of the state, attributing history rather to anonymous forces, a tendency itself reacting to the general tendency for centuries by scholars to locate history as occurring at the level of aristocratic wrangling over the reins of power. While this might seem to contradict the Marxist emphasis on the state, it does not, since seeing the state as the expression of the all-important domination by a class in fact is precisely how the state is privileged in Marxism. Against the tendency to locate everything at the level of the masses and economics, Foucault claims that there is something highly specific going on at the level of government which is not reducible to what is going on below, that the state is not just the representation of struggles between subterranean forces.[5]

Very importantly, the concentration on government reintroduces the subject by implying some focus on the one who governs. The move to studying governmentality was, as we have seen Lemke argue, for Foucault part of a general move to a "micro-power" perspective, compared to which, Foucault's previous perspective on power, though certainly incorporating a "microphysical" analysis, was nonetheless in general a macroscopic *perspective* on the power relations involved. This is precisely, *pace* Lemke, a different perspective on the same thing, namely power. As Foucault (WK 100) had it in *The Will to Knowledge*, when he was still clearly concerned more with strategies/domination than with government and interpersonal relations, "no strategy could achieve comprehensive effects if [it] did not gain support from precise and tenuous relations serving, not as its point of application or final outcome, but as its prop and anchor point. There is no discontinuity between them, as if one were dealing with two different levels (one microscopic and the other macroscopic)."

The micro perspective deepened in the 1980s, as Foucault came, via his *History of Sexuality* researches, to study the ancient world. Foucault's 1980 lectures were entitled "On the Government of the Living" (Du gouvernement des vivants) and the course summary reveals a broader use of the concept of government even than that indicated in *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Foucault has now turned his attentions away from modernity towards the ancients and earlier Christianity, applying the notion of government to this era.

The concept of government is explicitly broadened even further in "The Subject and Power," with government extended not only to everyday life, but even to our own relations to ourselves. The import of ancient thought here is manifest, in that ancient thought explicitly linked one's mastery over oneself with one's mastery over the household and mastery over the *polis* via one's public life as a citizen. However, Foucault extends this general

principle to cover all power, at least since the Greeks, combining it with the insights gleaned from his study of the (relatively) modern problematisation of government per se.

Foucault now models power as "less a confrontation between two adversaries or their mutual engagement than a question of 'government' [in] the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century" (EW3 341)—note once again that Foucault is rejecting not the model of war so much as a binary logic. Foucault, as he already had in the above passage from *The Birth of Biopolitics*, sees government as a matter of the "conduct of conducts." Foucault sees that "the equivocal nature of the term 'conduct' is one of the best aids for coming to terms with the specificity of power relations." "Conduct of conduct" can refer to the way I control my own behaviour ('conduct myself') or to the way I show others how to behave. Foucault is not here exploding "government" and "conduct" to an extension of such generality that they are simply synonymous with power, but rather using the one form of power, government, as a new paradigm for power.

The notion of government(ality) in fact migrates from being an historically-specific form of power, to become itself the level of generality beyond that of the political in Foucault's 1982 Collège de France lectures, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject (L'Herméneutique du sujet)*:

> If we take the question of power, of political power, situating it in the more general question of governmentality understood as a strategic field of power relations in the broadest and not merely political sense of the term, if we understand by governmentality a strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability, and reversibility, then I do not think that reflection on this notion of governmentality can avoid passing through, theoretically and practically, the element of a subject defined by the relationship of self to self. (HS 252)

Here, governmentality, far from being a revocation of the strategic model of power, takes on the general meaning of "a strategic field of power relations," including people's own relations with themselves. Foucault, now turning his attention to the theme of subjectivity precisely qua self-relation, takes the theme of government with him into this new territory.

THE SUBJECT AND POWER

The key text in which Foucault passes via the theme of government to analysis of power at a subjective level is "The Subject and Power," a two-part essay on power, one part written in French and the other in English, which was first published in 1982, in English, as an appendix to the first book to be written solely about Foucault's work, *Michel Foucault: Beyond*

Structuralism and Hermeneutics, written by two Americans, philosopher Hubert Dreyfus and anthropologist Paul Rabinow, coming after several years of relative silence from Foucault on the question of power.

Here, Foucault uses the same very broad notion of government as in the *Hermeneutics of the Self*, which for Foucault essentially conforms to his notion of power:

> Basically, power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or their mutual engagement than it is a question of "government." This word must be allowed the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century. "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed—the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It covered not only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action for others. (EW3 341)[6]

What we see here is part and parcel of Foucault turning his attention to interpersonal forms of power, in which power is precisely a *game* played between relative equals. Foucault in the same movement introduces the subject as a theme: at the level of societal domination, Foucault (SD 46) must treat subjects as produced by power, but, in dealing with less pernicious forms of power, we encounter a subject who is relatively free, and thus must be taken into account in its own being. Foucault, in "The Subject and Power," uses the term *domination* to refer to any array of power relations which is stable and taken for granted (EW3 347–48). This is in line with the use of the term in *Society Must Be Defended*: what Foucault was stressing in the early '70s about power was precisely that kind of power that he will later categorise as domination. In 1976, Foucault had emphasised the anonymous influence of unseen networks of power relations in forming subjectivity itself and the very notion of free subjectivity (cf. SD 37), but this perspective is one which takes domination, as it is later understood, as the only—or at least the paradigmatic—form of power:

> Power relations . . . are . . . about domination, about an infinitely dense and multiple domination that never comes to an end. (SD 111)

With the shift of metaphor away from war, the model of power shifts from domination to government, which Foucault will ultimately define as the type of power relation intermediate between domination and a free

play of power relations, but which in "The Subject and Power," Foucault is content to define on historical grounds as structuring the possible field of action of others, which is how he also now defines power.

The shift in Foucault's later work towards the self, and particularly towards the concept of the *subject*, is extraordinary given that his previous work had always concentrated on critiquing the notion of the subject; indeed, as I have portrayed it, Foucault's scepticism about the importance of the subject was really the lynchpin of his reconceptualisation of power.

This might seem like a 180° turn on Foucault's part, but for the fact that Foucault claims in his late work that the subject has *always* been his major concern (EW3 326). Foucault's concern with the subject is in this period, as before, essentially critical; his newfound fascination with the subject is in understanding how subjectivity, qua historical phenomenon, comes about.

We will explore Foucault's analysis of subjectivity and its general implications for Foucault's work in the next chapter. For now, suffice it to say that there is a new problematisation and a new direction in analysis: Foucault is suddenly staring directly at the subject, while before he had always purposefully looked away from it, trying to see how things could be understood precisely without invoking the concept of the subject at all. Our problem at this point is whether this shift involves a revision of Foucault's conception of power.

As one might expect from the title, "The Subject and Power" situates power in relation to the subject. Lemke is right to say that in examining power in relation to subjectivity, Foucault moves away from the grand strategic perspective on power to look at it from the micropolitical, relational perspective; but to do this is merely, even prima facie, to add to, and not contradict, his previous work on power.

The first part of "The Subject and Power" is entitled "Why Study Power: The Question of the Subject," and the second "How is Power Exercised?" The first part is thus concerned with the historical constitution of subjectivity through associated forms of power. For the moment, however, we should concern ourselves with the second part, which pertains to the nature of power in general.

Now, this very question, how is power exercised?, is striking in that it clearly seems to imply that power is something that can be exercised by someone, rather than being autonomous and anonymous. Indeed, Foucault is perfectly clear that he does mean that there are people who exercise power:

> *"How?" not in the sense of "How does it manifest itself?" but "How is it exercised?" and "What happens when individuals exert (as we say), power over others?"* (EW3 337; emphasis in original)

Now, this is not the replacement of the older picture of power, but rather an addition to it: "if we speak of structures or mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power on others" (EW3 337). Note that this neither implies nor excludes the converse, that if we speak of the exercise of power by persons on others, it is only insofar as we can speak of structures of power. Only if Foucault excludes the converse is he contradicting his earlier views on power here, since there is in point of fact nothing novel about Foucault saying that the individual is necessary to power. It was always implicit in Foucault's analytic of power that power involved the relations of persons to one another. If subjectlessness is the motive force behind Foucault's 1976 conception of power, relationality was the crux about which it moves. "I scarcely use the word power," said Foucault in a 1984 interview, "and if I use it on occasion it is simply as shorthand for the expression I generally use: relations of power" (EW1 291). Relations can only exist where there are things between which they hold; hence, there must be some things which power relations are relations between, namely people. Foucault's conception of power was always then one in which people related to one another, though also one in which the individuals involved in the games of power were themselves partly constituted by it, and the forces involved therefore operated at a "sub-individual" level (PK 208).

Foucault now, in "The Subject and Power," for the first time succinctly defines power on this relational basis:

> The term "power" designates relationships between "partners" (and by that I am not thinking of a game with fixed rules but simply, and for the moment staying in the most general terms, of an ensemble of actions that induce others and follow from one another). (EW3 337)

The most crucial part of this definition comes in the parenthesis, slipped in, as it were, although Foucault reiterates it a number of times in the rest of "The Subject and Power," showing now how it derives from the paradigm of governmentality, the formulation that "the exercise of power is a 'conduct of conducts' and a management of possibilities" (EW3 341); Foucault defines power itself for the first time, as "as a mode of action upon the actions of others" (EW3 341). Power in general then is a matter of an ensemble of such actions, which are of course inter-human relations, hence in fact "power" for Foucault, as he says, always means "power relations."

Foucault distinguishes power here from two other types of relationality. Firstly, power is not for Foucault what we might ordinarily call power, the "power" to do something, what he calls the "capacity" to do it; for Foucault power is on the contrary about relations between doers, not the innate capacity of the doer. Secondly, he distinguishes

power from the relationships of communication, which "transmit information by means of a language, a system of signs, or any other symbolic medium" (EW3 337).

These three things are obviously mutually implicated, but also distinct: one can hardly have power without the brute capacity to affect things, but this is not in itself power in the political sense, nor is political power reducible to such innate capacities. Again, to communicate with others may often be a major component of acting upon their actions, conducting their conduct, which is to say of exercising power, but communication and power are certainly not the same thing: communication essentially means, say, the transmission of information, which is not the same thing by any means as trying to get someone to do something. We cannot act on the actions of others without communicating with them in some way, or without using our physical capacities. Indeed, we cannot communicate per se without having a capacity for communication, although I suppose in principle we might, living on a desert island, have brute capacities for communication and power without realising them. Moreover, we cannot communicate with others without at some point influencing their actions, without our communicative actions producing actions in others of a kind in excess of the simple receipt of information.[7]

ACTIONS THAT INDUCE OTHERS

When I do something, almost anything, certainly anything in a social situation, it affects the behaviour of other people around me, which is to say, it leads them to act, or perhaps not to act, but in either case to modify their behaviour in some way, at some point. It might be said then that this is power: the simple fact that I have influence over the actions of others by my own actions. Foucault does not say, however, that when*ever* an action induces another action, it is power. Indeed every action to some extent affects everyone else's subsequent action due to the basic fact of the physical unity of the universe, the so-called "butterfly effect." If Foucault does indeed mean that actions which affect the actions of others even incidentally are power, it seems that there is no longer anything specific to power beyond what is found in other types of relation, such as capacity and communication. There is indeed, however, a further criterion for what counts as a power relation: in a 1984 interview, Foucault identifies a power relationship as "a relationship in which one person *tries* to control the conduct of the other" (EW1 292; emphasis added).

In the case where an action affects someone else's actions entirely unintentionally, where this effect is entirely unknown to the actor, this is not strictly speaking an action on another action *at all*. It is an action which has an incidental effect on the actions of another. This is because it is in

the nature of an action to be directed: an involuntary spasm is no *action*. Rather, actions are volitional, and this means that they are designed to do something.[8] If the point of power were simply the interaction between bodies, the concept of action would not be invoked. Rather, the implication is that, on both sides of the relation, both body and will are involved, as Wittgenstein (1963, §621) classically indicates.[9]

Foucault makes this distinction in an American interview from 1980:

> What does it mean to exercise power? It does not mean picking up this tape recorder and throwing it on the ground. I have the capacity to do so—materially, physically, sportively. But I would not be exercising power if I did that. However, if I take this tape recorder and throw it on the ground in order to make you mad, or so that you can't repeat what I've said, or to put pressure on you so that you'll behave in such and such a way, or to intimidate you—well, what I've done, by shaping your behavior through certain means, *that* is power. (Foucault 1988, 2)

On the side of the wielder of power, then, there must be some intention vis-à-vis the one who is to be affected. Otherwise there is no action upon an action, merely an action which affects another action, which any action whatever ultimately is. In the cases of communication and physical actions, they can affect others in such a way that power is involved, but also in such a way that it is not. If, in a blind rage perhaps, I shove someone out of my way and continue to walk, they may act to steady themselves, but this is completely irrespective of my intentions, which were just to get by. If I *ask* them to move, then it is power, since I act to try to make them act in turn. If I tell someone news that I do not know will affect them, and it does, profoundly, for reasons I could not have known, this can hardly be power. But if, knowing this background, tell them the same news in the same nonchalant way, it can hardly not be power, hardly not be expected to provoke a response.

This is irrespective of the phenomenology of the one whose action is acted upon—she may think what she likes about the cause of her action; it is still power. If I can't find my car keys and paranoiacally, wrongly believe that someone is hiding them from me for nefarious purposes, there is no power relation, though I think there is. Conversely, if someone *has* hidden my keys from me but I do not realise, and believe instead that I have misplaced them, then there is still a power relation. Here, we maintain compatibility with Foucault's early '70s view: "Power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations" (PK 186).

It moreover does not seem to matter quite what effect is had on the one whose actions are acted upon, as long as there is some effect. This would make Foucault's conception of power contrast with Max Weber's

(1962, 117) definition of power as "that opportunity existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one's own will even against resistance and regardless of the basis on which this opportunity rests." For Foucault, it is not the mere opportunity, but the actual attempt that counts:

> Power exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action, even though, of course, it is inscribed in a field of sparse available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures. (EW3 340)

There has to be some effect, some action or lack thereof specifically occasioned. Foucault is not concerned with the mere possibilities for affecting the actions of others (it seems to me that this is one meaning of his distinction of power from capacity), but with the way it actually does come into play in society. Thus when Foucault talks of power, he is not talking about one person having power over another, the legal right, but of one person actually *exercising* power over another. This includes acting "on the field of possibilities" (EW3 341); if I remove someone's ability to do something, that too is power. The case of Locke's (1690) locked room, where someone is willingly in a room, which has then been locked unbeknownst to them, thus removing the possibility of their leaving, would be a case of power. What is *not* power, in Foucault's sense, is the mere *possibility of acting* on someone else's activity: my capacity to intimidate people into doing things is not power unless it is actualised in actual intimidation. If someone is scared of me because of that capacity that they know I possess on the basis of previous experiences, but without my attempt in any way to play off this capacity, then it is those actions which occasioned those experiences whose power is represented by the behaviour of their victim in my presence.[10] Most probably in such a case there would be actualised power too, because by my every action I would be affecting the actions of that frightened person, and I would probably realise this, consciously or unconsciously. Even if I were to be highly conciliatory and thereby succeed in putting that person at his or her ease, I would have modified his or her behaviour in a desired way and thus exercised power.

INTENTIONALITY

While the positivism of only acknowledging the actual effects of power is obvious, imputing importance to the intentions of individuals looks like a backtrack to phenomenology. It is for such reasons that Niklas Luhmann (1995, xliii–xliv) throws out the notion of action along with that of the subject. However, Foucault does not reinsert the subject as fundamental in

using the concept of action, because what he takes the subject to be is not something prior to the operation of power, prior to actions upon actions, because he does not understand subjectivity in the phenomenological sense of a synthesising consciousness which perceives and acts, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, Foucault seems to be removing the autonomy of power relations by asserting the necessity of intentions at the level of the subject. Since Foucault previously denied that such intentions map regularly onto the intentionality displayed by power relations, because the intentions of the actors involved may individually run contrary to the overall effects at the level of power, it seems that there can be no reconciliation between the old model and this microscopic attention to power relations.

However, power relations do not require the intentions of actors to be carried out, but rather simply that there be intentions. Yet this in itself is rather surprising: why is it that only actions which intend to affect the actions of others concatenate into a strategy of power, particularly when the specificity of these intentions are themselves inessential?

The difficulty is in connecting micro-intentionality to overall strategic intentionality of the larger strategy. We can certainly trace the intentionality up at least one level, to local "tactics" which remain transparent to actors (WK 95). The prison guard can be explicit about the intentionality of his actions in terms of what they are designed to achieve at a local level: the compliance of the prisoners, their manageability. What the actors do not know is what the global strategic significance of their actions is—the creation of a permanent class of delinquents, in this example. "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (Foucault, quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 187).

This epistemic opacity in fact applies not merely to the gap between the intentionalities of actors and the strategies of power, however. Rather, it applies to the gap between the intentionality behind actions upon actions and the actual actions which are occasioned. Not only do we not know the grand strategic import of our actions, but we don't even know for certain what actions they will proximally occasion in others.

Now, it is easier to grasp the point that what we mean our actions to do, our own intentionality, does not necessarily, or even particularly often, coincide with the actual effects of those actions than it is to grasp that all our actions, averaged over society, all our actions put together, between them have an intentionality of their own, which is neither our intentionality, nor even some corporate sense of purpose, nor Rousseauian general will.

It is easier in reverse, to grasp that the macro strategies require micro-power relations: the personnel who are integral to the machine are engaged in actions which are intended to affect the actions of others.

The prison warder clearly must be engaged in intentional action in order to discipline prisoners for the carceral system to exist. We could perhaps imagine cases in which discipline is handed down without intentionality, by machines, which would have the effect of allowing the technology to operate without any intentional actions affecting actions. In this case, we could argue there still must be a power relation simply by tracing power up the line to whomever deployed these machines, to their purpose in doing so, a meta-action affecting the actions of a whole population through the creation of an army of policing automata. And if there is no intentionality behind the technology, we must then say that, since purposiveness is lacking, we do not really have a case of true power relations, but something more akin to a complex natural state of affairs. A dumb robot's movements, shorn of any kind of intentionality, do not in fact bid me to do one thing or another—they simply are, and my reaction to them is simply my way of dealing with them, like my way of dealing with rainfall. This is the case even if the automaton gives the appearance of intentionality, even if it *appears* to care about what my actions are, unless it *does* care in some sense, in which case we must ascribe intentionality to it. Put simply, either there is a guiding intelligence and intentionality in what we encounter in our immediate experience, at the local level, which constitute it as a micro-power relation, or there is not, in which case there is no power.

This explains the necessity of intentional agency to the possibility of power; the question of the relation of individual intentionalities to the intentionality of the strategies of power remains. They are obviously not the same: the prison guard's motivation for disciplining miscreants, his bitterness, his cruelty (or his kindness), are something that a strategy simply cannot have; what it has is a bare directedness.

We need to distinguish power from both mere effects of nature, on the one hand, as we have above, and mere affect on the other. Affect, of course, is neither communication (on Foucault's definition), nor power, but rather something more basic than either of these, namely the ways in which people affect one another, other than by direct violence, actions upon actions or communication.[11] Sometimes, for example, people imitate others without prompting, or a mood might spread among people in a room without any of them saying anything or trying to affect one another. In Foucaultian power, only *deliberate* influence can concatenate into a network which exhibits strategic characteristics. Attempts of people to influence other people cohere together in a specific way. They take account of others' attempts to influence people, come together in alliances, are determined (in a sense) by other power relations. One power relation does not occur irrespective of other power relations. If one person is trying to get me to do one thing, and someone else is trying to get me to do something else, then there is conflict: either they will

have to reach a compromise to use me at different times, or together, or one must give up, or both, et cetera. Similarly, if someone wants me to do things, and I want other people to do things, these various potential power relations will play against each other, tending towards some kind of integration, either through the elimination of certain power relations, or compromises in which they attain compatibility. This compatibility is itself strategic: an overall strategy emerges for the purpose of integrating various power relations. The people who are fed up with crime exercise their power on their rulers to do something about it, the rulers exercise power directly by hiring underlings and having them build and staff prisons, by passing laws that direct police and the judiciary, these people follow their orders and exercise power on criminals. The net effect of this is nothing less than the regular and continuing production of a class of delinquents. This might seem bizarre in that it exceeds, and indeed apparently contradicts, the motives of the agents involved, but in fact it is simply the way in which all the power relations have been integrated productively. This can be seen in the way that the production of delinquency in fact serves a number of purposes, such as the purpose of capital in dividing the working class and demonising a certain element as the cause of problems, which in fact ensures the very stable situation which produces this very criminal layer. This network, (relatively) stable though it is, contains any number of power relations in which the intent behind the power relation is not realised: prisoners often do not respond as warders try to get them to, for example. And this is a regular part of prison functioning, providing the occasion for the regular occurrences of brutality and disorder which perform roles in the formation of the kind of individuals who are produced by prisons, in the confirmation of the beliefs of wardens, the public, in innumerable ways, despite that no-one *wants* this. The system is only, as I say, *relatively* stable, however, which means that often enough effects are produced which do not abide by the settlement that the system represents. But even within the stability of the system, apparent disorder occurs which is in fact a regular part and effect of the strategies of power, which appears to be resistance, and which is resistance from the perspective of local power relations, but is not from the perspective of the grand strategies of power. This question of resistance will be treated fully in Chapter 5.

THE REVERSIBILITY OF POWER RELATIONS

Power is ubiquitous to society, as Foucault said from the mid-'70s:

> Power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network. (PK 142)

Power's extensiveness only really becomes fully clear given the definition of power as actions upon actions. Wherever people interact with one another, there will be the attempt to get others to do things. This is utterly commonplace and can be totally innocuous: when I say, "Excuse me," to get someone to move out of my way so I can pass, I have acted so as to get them to act. In order to interact with other people at all, hence to have social relations, it is necessary to act on others' actions.

That is emphatically *not* to say that all social relations are power relations, but merely that the two are *co-extensive*, as Foucault says. The objection, as raised, for example, by Saul Newman (2004, 150), though he is not the first to raise it, that "if *power is everywhere*, as Foucault maintains, then it loses its identity as power," is incorrect for precisely this reason, that although power is every*where*, it is not every*thing*, since there are any number of things and levels and types of relation against which to differentiate it. What it is to say is rather that everyone is involved in networks of power relations, and, moreover, that they are all involved both as actors on the actions of others and as the ones acted upon.

All people are both wielders of power and subjected to power. This is similar to the ontological principle that people are simultaneously subject and object, although it is not the same principle, since in order to be subjected to power, one's own agency must already be taken into account, since power is about actions which induce actions in turn, not about effects on passive victims, hence one is a subject in a phenomenological-ontological sense both as a wielder of power, and the target of someone else's attempts to make one act. Throwing someone off a cliff is not in itself power (although threatening to throw someone off a cliff would be); this is a case of mere violence, in which one's subjectivity is not involved in the action (although it might well be involved as a motivating consideration). There is only a power relation where someone is *induced* to *jump*. That is to say, where a person is treated simply as an object, to be disposed of, to be manipulated without any input of his or her own, as a fixed quantity, be it known or unknown, there is no power in Foucault's sense. A machine is not something over which we have power—it is rather a tool, which is incorporated into us insofar as we act through it.[12] We use people in an ontologically different sense, acting through the medium of their own agency (though of course we may use that as a means to act on yet another person). In most cases, we make people do things precisely because they are people, we make them objects to a degree that, and only because, they are subjects.

This is reminiscent of what Foucault's ENS philosophy teacher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1967, 167), says of sexual desire: we want the other person as if he or she were an object, but only because he or she is in fact a subject, and only insofar as he or she remains a subject. This is possible because the subject is always already also an object, that anything

that is a subject has to already be an object, is in short *reversible*, which Husserlian idea is the heart of Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project (*see* Merleau-Ponty 1975).[13]

In Foucault, there is a reversibility in power relations because any power relation already presupposes the capacity of the one acted upon to act on his or her own account, and hence to act on others' actions him- or herself. This is why Foucault says that slavery is not a case of power—because a slave is someone who is used as if he or she were a machine, someone who is entirely replaceable by a machine, performing a function for which a machine will ultimately always be more suitable, since it will not pose the unique problems that humans do.

Foucault in fact stipulates that slavery is only not a power relation when slaves are "in chains" (EW3 342), since slaves who can walk around are in fact still caught up in a network of power relations, because they are not machines—there is still a possibility for resistance, which is to say a reversibility of the power relation; they are still subjects of power, not merely objects of control like farm machinery. Foucault is wrong about this specific example, though: enchainment is insufficient to remove power relations because it is insufficient to make it so that there are not several possibilities of action open to the enchained slave. A slave is by definition one who is required to perform certain tasks for a master, and the slave always has the physical possibility of refusing his or her master's orders. It is not the enchained slave who is not caught up in power, but the man chained up in a dungeon (as opposed to a modern penitentiary where one's every move is watched), forgotten, physically restricted but otherwise unmolested.[14] This is an incredibly unpleasant predicament, no doubt, but does not involve any ongoing application of power; it is rather the ossification of a discrete act meted out in the past (viz. the act of chaining the prisoner up in the dungeon), to which no resistance is possible.

Foucault recognises this in the 1984 interview, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom":[15]

> 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, of leaping out the window, or of killing the other person. (EW1 292)

Of course, the extent to which power relations are reversible varies extremely widely, and this variation is of the utmost importance. For this reason, Foucault goes on in this interview to outline a tripartite typology of power relations based on their reversibility.

At one extreme is the state he calls *domination*, in which power relations have become ossified and inflexible (EW1 285; *see also* EW3 347; Foucault 1988, 11). This situation is one in which reversal is a possibility,

but a bare possibility, requiring drastic action to break up the existing inflexible structure. This drastic action is called *liberation* (EW1 282). This liberation is the precondition for the creation of a more readily reversible form of power relation, the kind of everyday interpersonal power relation which we can be ambivalent about, like that between two lovers, which Foucault calls *freedom*. This kind of power relation is marked by a constant play of reversibility; neither partner is truly *dominant*.[16] "Between" these two situations is what Foucault terms *government*, wherein there is an obvious power imbalance, but not one which has become either ossified or inflexible.

This notion of liberation from domination, qua inflexible power relations, as producing a state of freedom, qua highly flexible power relations, takes the place of the more traditional notions of liberation and (negative) freedom from power itself per se; since power is for Foucault not something that can be eliminated from social life, no such liberation could be hoped for. Foucault's point is that power is neither good nor bad in itself, just so long as it is reversible:

> Power is not evil. Power is games of strategy. We all know power is not evil! For example, let us take sexual or amorous relationships: to wield power over the other in a sort of open-ended strategic game where the situation may be reversed is not evil; it's a part of love, of passion and sexual pleasure. (EW1 298)

Here we have the exact reason Foucault adopts the notion of the strategic *game*. However, it is not as if Foucault did not realise that power could be so ambivalent before, having already said in a 1976 interview,

> Between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between everyone who knows and everyone who does not, there exist relations of power. (PK 187)

If one couples this with Foucault's insistence that power could not be abolished, it seems that he always thought substantially the same thing, even if previously he had taken the more suspicious tone exhibited by Nietzsche (Z 2 "Of Self-Overcoming").

In fact, Foucault was to continue to advocate suspicion, while obviating any need for a total opposition towards, or paranoia about, power. In a 1980 interview, Foucault (1988, 1) starts off saying, "We need to rise up against all forms of power," but later clarifies himself:

> If I accepted the picture of power that is frequently adopted—namely that it's something horrible and repressive for the individual—it's clear that preventing a child from scribbling on the walls would be an

> unbearable tyranny. But that's not it: I say that power is a relation . . . in which one guides the behavior of others. And there's no reason why this manner of guiding the behavior of others should not ultimately have results which are positive. (Foucault 1988, 12)

Indeed, while Foucault (SD 26–27) himself confesses that he was largely focussed on domination in his earlier 1970s work, which is natural, especially when he was working on the prison, this notion of differentiating different kinds, different severities of power relation is not in itself new for Foucault. Firstly, he already understood that power's multidirectionality did not simply mean that everyone was in an equal position apropos of power, saying in 1977, "In so far as power relations are an unequal and relatively stable relation of forces, it's clear that this implies an above and a below, a difference in potentials," (PK 201) whilst on the other hand realising that power is such that it is never entirely fixed, and that no domination is total (as class domination is often supposed to be):

> Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix—no duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole. These then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together; to be sure, they also bring about redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of force relations. Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations. (WK 94)

The notion of domination is one that explains what it means conventionally to say someone is "powerful" or "has power," but in fact sees power not as a possession, but as a *structural difference*. The basic Foucaultian schema of power, including the principle of reversibility, was included in Foucault's thinking all along, as demonstrated by this passage from *Discipline and Punish*:

> [Power relations] are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, of hotbeds of instability, each of which carries its risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of the force relations. The reversal of these "micropowers" does not, then, obey the law of all or nothing. (SP 32; cf. DP 27)

Although "The Subject and Power" and "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" bear the hallmarks of Foucault's later work, such as concern with the subject, my contention is that they in a sense *complete* his thinking about power, even if, at least in the former text, Foucault (EW3 327) is clear that he is still engaged in an "ongoing conceptualization"—one which would, one might reasonably presume, have carried on had Foucault not died so soon after the latter text was published.

In the former text, Foucault manages with his late definition of power to tie together all the seemingly paradoxical directions of his previous analyses: power is both wielded and a matter of the ensemble. Foucault asks the question of who wielded power in his early investigations of power, in his 1972 conversation with Gilles Deleuze (LCP 213–14), for example, and he reaffirms this question when asked about that interview in 1978 (PPC 103), but in his late work he gives an answer. It was always there in the 1970s, implicitly, but Foucault has now brought it out. Power was always personal as well as autonomously strategic—these two levels were always reciprocal:

> I don't believe this question of "who exercises power?" can be resolved unless that other question of "how does it happen?" is resolved at the same time. (PPC 103)

While "The Subject and Power" is the beginning of a final analysis, however, there are still problems of modelling power that remain unresolved until "The Ethics of the Concern for Self." Previously, Foucault had moved from a model of domination to one of government. Now, Foucault clarifies that neither is the definitive model of power, but rather that they are both types of power on a spectrum of flexibility in power relations.

4 Subjectivity

> I have tried to get out from the philosophy of the subject through a genealogy of the subject, by studying the constitution of the subject across history which has led us up to the modern concept of the self.
>
> –Foucault (PT 176)

In this chapter, I begin by exploring Foucault's turn towards the subject, defending Foucault's own claims for the continuity of this approach with his earlier work, explaining Foucault's attitude towards the subject, before going on to look at the relation of the subject to power in Foucault. I argue for Gilles Deleuze's (1986) Nietzschean reading of Foucault on power and the subject, debunking other readings, primarily Judith Butler's, as based in misreading pronouncements by Foucault about *contemporary* subjectivity as being general claims pertaining to subjectivity *per se*, and as conflating Foucault's approach to subjectivity with Jacques Lacan's account of the formation of the subject, and with Althusser's concept of interpellation.

THE TURN TOWARDS THE SUBJECT

The status of the subject in Foucault's thought is a vexed issue. Despite this, there has been no really thorough attempt to analyse Foucault's usage of the term; this lack perhaps contributes to the vexation. Much in the same way as no-one has really focussed on the theme of power in Foucault, while dozens have written about it in a tangential way, so too with the question of the subject we find works whose titles promise a comprehensive treatment of the theme, but which in fact do not contain one.[1] As with power, the most systematic account we have is to be found in a journal article by David Weberman, in this case "Are Freedom and Anti-Humanism Compatible?"

For our part, we have a specific purpose in looking at subjectivity, namely to understand what role Foucault assigns for the subject (ontologically) in relation to power. This entails dealing with the issues of what exactly Foucault conceives the subject to be, and whether this conception changes across his intellectual career.

Foucault was, for a time, as we have seen, simply, infamously anti-subjectivist, excluding any notion of the subject from his work. To this extent, there is an undeniable shift when Foucault starts talking about the subject, and indeed becomes preoccupied by it. As we saw, Foucault's initial work

on power is an extension of the project of decentring theoretical analysis away from the subject, putting forward an account of power as essentially subjectless, as having dynamics of its own which are ill-understood or overlooked by those caught up in its strategies.

However, it is actually at the point where Foucault starts talking about power that he begins to reintroduce the subject and subjective phenomena in his writing. Foucault introduces *Discipline and Punish* as "a history of the modern soul" (DP 23), in marked contrast to his previous preoccupation with the abstract rules for the production of discourse. This trend becomes more noticeable in *The Will to Knowledge*; in dealing with sexuality, Foucault can hardly ignore the subjective, and the final two volumes of *The History of Sexuality* see the subject, or rather the self, take centre-stage.

This is not the picture which is usually drawn of Foucault's turn towards the subject. It is generally seen as a rather sudden turn, made around 1980, rather than the gradual shift throughout the '70s which I am positing. It is frequently alleged, moreover, that Foucault backtracks on his antisubjectivism, being forced latterly to concede the existence of a subjectivity he denied or pronounced dead. Slavoj Žižek (1999, 253), for example, characterises Foucault's manoeuvre as a reversal on the question of the subject, from saying that we can only understand power by bracketing the subject, to reinstating the subject as essential. This argument builds on the criticism of Foucault's work, levelled since the 1970s, that he ignores the normative and the ethical, the subject and freedom: since Foucault in his final work starts talking about ethics, the subject and freedom in as many words for the first time, critics have interpreted this as an admission of defeat on Foucault's part, in which he is forced at last to acknowledge the necessity of the humanist concepts he so long bracketed, thus proving that his earlier thought was baseless relativism.

Such allegations are immensely important for our purposes, since if they are correct it would indicate some kind of rupture in Foucault's thinking about power, and indeed his repudiation of his earlier views concerning power. Now, we have already addressed the issue of Foucault's alleged relativism about truth (in Chapter 1), and the alleged rupture in his political thought in his turn towards the micropolitical perspective (in Chapter 3). In this part of the book then, we will consider the introduction of a positive concept of the subject in Foucault's thought, and how this relates to his views on power.

Foucault himself, far from presenting his new focus on subjectivity as a novel turn in his thought, tends rather to see it retrospectively as fundamentally in continuity with his earlier work. In the 1984 interview, one of Foucault's last, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," for example, he understands his archaeological investigations precisely as analyses of the relation between the subject and truth, despite that these two notions were not problematised as such at the time:

> I have tried to find out how the human subject fits into certain games of truth, whether they were truth games that take the form of a science . . . or truth games such as those one may encounter in institutions or practices of control. This is the theme of my book *The Order of Things*, in which I attempted to see how, in scientific discourses, the human subject defines itself. (EW1 281)

Indeed, as early as 1978 Foucault identifies subjectivity as having always been central to his project:

> Everything that I have occupied myself with up till now essentially regards the way in which people in Western societies have had experiences that were used in the process of knowing a determinate, objective set of things while at the same time constituting themselves as subjects under fixed and determinate conditions. For example, knowing madness by being constituted as a rational subject; knowing economics by being constituted as the laboring subject. (RM 70–71)

Now, Foucault (EW1 282; UP 6), in "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" and in the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure* (*L'usage des plaisirs*), does nevertheless identify a "shift" in his thinking about the subject, but this shift is effectively a change of focus, the third that his work has undergone, the first being the move to concentrating on discourse, the second that towards power, and the third, now, towards the subjective. This does not imply that the subjective perspective is exclusive of the analysis of power, any more than the analysis of power excludes the analysis of discourse; rather, the three are complementary while remaining irreducible to one another.

It is my position (Kelly 2004b, 97) that Foucault's oeuvre is unified not by a single line of argument so much as by a single problematic, which is how Deleuze described his own work to Foucault (EW2 343). Foucault ultimately sees the problematisation of the relationship of truth to subjectivity as the animus for all his work—even though description of it in these terms is new—and the problematisation of power as one moment in this broader problematisation. It is not surprising or suspect that he retrospectively reassesses the meaning of his earlier work, nor should this reassessment be taken as diminishing or renouncing that earlier work. Foucault is famously opposed to the presumption of coherence of a thinker's oeuvre—that Foucault ultimately claims coherency for his own could thus be interpreted as hypocrisy, but I would suggest that in fact it indicates that Foucault actually does believe coherence to be there, in spite of his lack of an attempt to ensure his works cohered into a whole.

In his last interview,[2] which took place mere months after the above-quoted "Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," Foucault does nevertheless criticise his earlier thinking about subjectivity:

> In the *History of Madness*, in *The Order of Things*, and also in *Discipline and Punish*, many things that were implicit could not be rendered explicit because of the way in which I posed the problems. I tried to mark out three types of problem: that of truth, that of power, and that of individual conduct. These three domains of experience can be understood only in relation to each other and only with each other. What hampered me in the preceding books was to have considered the first two experiences without taking into account the third. By bringing this last experience to light, I had a guiding thread which didn't need to be justified by rhetorical methods by which one could avoid one of the three fundamental domains of experience. (DE2 1516; cf. FL 465–66)

This admission of the importance of the individual is then the same type of change in Foucault's thought as occurred with the introduction of power and the political, the addition of a new "domain of experience." First, Foucault dealt with truth, but then he realised that one could not understand truth without looking at power. Ultimately Foucault has decided that this approach too was insufficient because it excluded subjectivity, but only insofar as that exclusion prevented him from spelling out what should have been spelt out. Now, while we should recognise that omissions are important to the meaning of a text, the deficiencies of the earlier methodologies do not mean that we have to repudiate the works which used them in light of this late realisation of Foucault's. Foucault is claiming only that there was something in those works that is not said, not something true which is actively denied nor something false that is asserted. To correct this deficiency, one must simply read Foucault's earlier work with an eye to the subjective dimension which is missing. This might seem to repudiate outright the endeavour of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, a book of methodology that advocated the quasi-structuralist bracketing of as much as possible outside an immediate domain of study. However, Foucault doesn't explicitly rule out the usefulness of this method in his late work; rather, he merely takes the line that the method did hamper him in "the preceding books," which might be read to mean *The Will to Knowledge*, *Discipline and Punish* and "The Order of Discourse," and not the *Archaeology* which came before those; Foucault could consistently maintain that the hermetic analysis of discourse as such still has its uses, just as he was quite explicit when doing that hermetic analysis that that was not the only valid approach.

I am wary, however, of the concept of "domains of experience," used for the first and only time by Foucault in the above-quoted passage. It does not really seem to describe its referents accurately: it seems odd to define "truth" in terms of experience, and downright inaccurate to describe power in this way—while power necessarily entails experiences, whether something is or is not power is a matter of the experiences involved—and even personal conduct isn't ordinarily defined experientially. If anything, these look like domains of *practice*. While they of course all involve experiences,

it is their characteristics as particular types of practice, not their experiential qualities, that differentiate them. In the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault writes, I think more accurately, of "three axes that *constitute*" (UP 4; my emphasis) experience; see also the original version of that preface, in which Foucault (EW1 202) again calls them axes, and also very clearly makes the appropriate link to practices: "The study of forms of experience can thus proceed from an analysis of 'practices'" (EW1 201).

We can I think write the precise notion of a "domain of experience" off as an anomaly, while defending the substance of the claims Foucault is making, because the text of this final interview is peculiarly unreliable. Foucault was ill by the time of the interview, in a terminal decline indeed, and too ill thereafter to be able subsequently to proofread the edited version of the interview prior to publication as was his usual habit. Rather, it was edited by Daniel Defert, who could not of course edit it for theoretical content as Foucault would have done himself; the interview is therefore subject to a disclaimer in *Dits et écrits* (DE2 1515). As we shall see, there are several more anomalous statements made by Foucault in this interview.

Foucault's correct general point across all the quoted sources is that he had raised three types of questions, in three different stages in his career, and that there are reciprocal relations between these domains, which are necessary to understanding one another. It is also important that, along with the concept of the subject, Foucault is here reintroducing the concept of experience, and saying that it is necessary to look at the experiential dimension—which is of course precisely what is ordinarily called the "subjective" dimension—of truth, power and conduct to understand them.

THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE SUBJECT

Foucault has certainly not back-tracked on an ontological position about the subject in any case, since he never *denied* the subject's existence, but rather only bracketed it as a consideration. He never thought that the subject could be reduced to a position produced by discourse. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (AK 92–96) acknowledges the role of the subject in the enunciative function, in the form of the "enunciating subject" (AK 95) and as implied by the statement "in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it" (AK 96). Foucault is clear that this subject defined by the statement is not all there is to the subject, but rather simply the subject taken from the perspective of analysis of the statement: "I wanted not to exclude the problem of the subject, but to define the positions and functions that the subject could occupy in the diversity of discourse" (AK 200). In "What is an Author?," another classically anti-subjective, archaeological text, Foucault says that the subject "must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex

and variable function of discourse" (LCP 138), but this does not mean that all the subject is is a function of discourse; rather, it merely lays out a way of analysing its discursive role: "suspicions arise concerning the absolute nature and creative role of the subject. But the subject should not be entirely abandoned" (LCP 137).

In Foucault's last exploration of the nature of discourse as such, "Truth and Juridical Forms" (*see* Chapter 1), Foucault begins looking at the subject itself. Now, Foucault of course takes an anti-subjectivist position here to go with the Nietzschean epistemology he is espousing: "If it is true that between knowledge and the instincts . . . there is only discontinuity, relations of domination and servitude, power relations, then it's not God that disappears but the subject in its unity and its sovereignty" (EW3 10). We might then expect Foucault here to take the tack that Nietzsche, at his most extreme, takes of simply decrying the subject as a "mere fiction" (GM I:13). For all his Nietzscheanism, however, Foucault never explicitly takes such a stark position himself. The project Foucault sets himself in 1973 is rather the positive one of "*reworking* the theory of the subject" (EW3 2; emphasis added).

Chauncey Colwell (1994, 56) makes the point that "it is important to remember that Foucault does not announce the "death" of the subject. The subject has not gone the way of God, man or the author."[3] In fact, Foucault himself never actually announced the death of anything: "The Death of the Author" was an article by Foucault's sometime companion Roland Barthes (*see* Macey 1993, 81–82), not Foucault himself, although that essay was an influence on him, and one he appears to endorse (DE1 821); the death of God was announced by Nietzsche and Foucault never explicitly endorsed it (cf. RC 85); and Foucault never even pronounced man dead, but rather vaguely threatened him with extinction at the end of *The Order of Things*, and contemporaneously declares that we are "the last man in the Nietzschean sense," which implies that man is indeed *not* yet dead.[4] The important, Nietzschean gesture Foucault does make in all these cases is to identify the subject, man, and the author as each being an "invention of recent date" (OT 386).[5] This does not mean that they do not exist: on the contrary they are the real product of just the sort of battles of impulses that Nietzsche describes.

In "The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," Foucault outlines his basic position towards the subject clearly:

> Perhaps I did not explain myself adequately. What I rejected was the idea of starting out with a theory of the subject—as is done, for example, in phenomenology or existentialism. . . . What I wanted to show was how the subject constituted itself, in one specific form or another. . . . I had to reject a priori theories of the subject in order to analyze the relationships that may exist between the constitution of the subject and games of truth, practices of power, and so on. . . . [The

> subject] is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself. (EW1 290)

In common with a whole generation of French intellectuals, Foucault reacted against the orthodoxy of phenomenological philosophy, and particularly its popular French derivative, existentialism (*see* RC 88). Phenomenology classically, in the works of its originator, Edmund Husserl, taught that the only proper way to approach knowledge was to start with one's own immediate perceptual experience and move out from there. Thus the subject is a blind-spot, or, in the phrase of some phenomenologists, a "hole in being" (Sartre 1958, 624). Thus it is not open to question.

Now, Husserl's pure phenomenology was in itself in France less popular than the philosophy of Husserl's pupil, Martin Heidegger. Heidegger (1962) attacked Husserlian phenomenology for its Cartesianism, for failing to account for the fact that the subject was "always already" engaged in the world, and that as such our concrete activities and social engagements are already woven into the structure of our perception. In France, this critique was carried forward by Foucault's sometime teacher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1967), who had his own direct engagement with Husserl's work, which was very influenced by Heidegger.

Even Heidegger's early work that was so influential in France still begins with Dasein,[6] which, while it was supposed to be a radical alternative to the constituent subject by considering people in their primordial, historical engagement with the world, still meant starting with the human being, even if very differently from the traditional philosophy of the subject. This problem can be seen clearly in Merleau-Ponty's (1967) Heideggerian phenomenology, wherein the place of Dasein is taken by the "body-subject," an embodied version of the subject.[7] Foucault, for his part, takes things a step further:

> I don't believe the problem can be solved by historicising the subject as posited by the phenomenologists, 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's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. (PK 117)

That quote comes from a 1977 interview. At that point, Foucault is on the cusp of the "return to the subject" diagnosed by some commentators. I think that we can in this passage see the coherence in this "return": Foucault is still talking about "dispensing with" the subject, as anti-subjectivist as ever, but he identifies this precisely with accounting for subjectivity *qua* historical phenomenon—a project, indeed, that he had already staked out in 1973.

Once Foucault starts dealing with the subject, particularly as he starts to study ancient sexuality in his effort to fulfil his *History of Sexuality* project,

Foucault finds himself compelled to fall back on concepts, such as that of experience, that he has long eschewed, because the new subject matter makes it impossible to bracket them from his inquiry. Béatrice Han (2002, 187) argues that this constitutes a "regress to a prephenomenological perspective," in that Foucault is now deploying phenomenological methods without the whole methodological apparatus of phenomenology to back it. *Pace* Han, however, Foucault has in fact not become interested in the phenomenological perspective of the subject itself at all, but rather in experience qua what is historically constituted, as subsidiary to practices.[8] Foucault's problematisation of subjectivity in his late work embraces subjective experience because it is not really possible to examine the subject's relation to itself without making reference to experience, but he does it by taking subjective experience into consideration from the point of view of practices and technologies, and still does not accept the contents of consciousness as of primary importance.

Even Mark Olssen (1999, 34) errs in saying that "during the 1980s . . . Foucault . . . came to see the self, though constituted by power, as developing a new dimension of subjectivity which derived from power and knowledge but which was not dependent on them": Foucault does not "come to see" this so much as simply he does *come to be interested in* it—his previous work did not deny the *existence* of the subjective dimension, just the analytical need to include it.

NOMINALISM AND THE ONTOGENESIS OF THE SUBJECT

Foucault is not interested in looking for the origin of the subject: "my problem was not defining the moment from which something like the subject appeared, but rather the ensemble of processes by which the subject exists with its different problems and obstacles and across the forms, which it still hasn't finished traversing" (FL 472). Foucault calls what he does the "history of the present" (DP 31): it is contemporary subjectivity he is concerned to understand, thus *how* we have been made to constitute ourselves as subjects, rather than *when* this process first began.

However, in his final interview Foucault does make a rather strident comment pertaining to the history of the subject:

> Since no Greek thinker ever found a definition of the subject, never looked for one, I would simply say that there was no subject. Which doesn't mean that the Greeks didn't strive to define the conditions of an experience, but it wasn't an experience of the subject; rather it was of the individual, insofar as he sought to constitute himself through self mastery. (FL 473)

The great attraction of Foucault's approach here is its "strict nominalism," which is precisely the position Garry Gutting (2003) imputes to the

Late Foucault, which would then follow Nietzsche in saying that the subject is just a word applied to give an appearance of unity to something manifold. If we want to be strictly nominalist, we must say that the subject appeared when the concept of the subject did.

However, Foucault does not elsewhere use the word "subject" so cautiously: in his 1981 and 1982 Collège de France courses, "Subjectivity and Truth" and *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and in the final volume of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Care of the Self* (*Le souci de soi*), Foucault clearly and repeatedly uses the word "subject" in reference to the Greeks. In view of this, the position Foucault takes in his final interview might seem to represent a deathbed shift in what he considers as constituting a subject. The idea that, after writing books and giving lecture courses explicitly on ancient subjectivity, Foucault might suddenly in his last interview adopt a new view about subjectivity is far-fetched, however. One should again bear in mind the relative unreliability of this interview as a reliable reflection of the nuances of Foucault's position.

More likely then, Foucault is simply making the point that there is a more recent way of relating to ourselves called the subject, but that the Greeks thought differently. However, this did not stop Foucault from problematising the Greeks' discourses anachronistically according to our concept, much as he was doing at the same time with the notion of "government" (*see* Chapter 3).

Notwithstanding the final interview, Foucault is not a nominalist about the subject, but rather a realist. The best example of this realism is Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* position on the soul, something even more apparently unreal than the subject: for Foucault it "exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of power that is exercised on those punished" (DP 29). This insistence on the reality of something so paradigmatically immaterial is typical of Foucault's materialism of the incorporeal, a realism which asserts the reality of all things, whether conventionally "material" or conventionally "immaterial." It is not nominalism, however, because the soul is not simply a matter of the use of the word "soul," but rather something produced at a certain juncture by certain practices, which historically is linked to use of the word "soul," but is certainly not historically coextensive with it.

Compare the way Foucault speaks about ancient sexuality in a 1982 interview:

> Our distinction in sexual conduct between homo- and heterosexuality is absolutely irrelevant to the Greeks and Romans. This means two things: on the one hand that they would have lacked the notion, the *concept* of the distinction, and on the other that they wouldn't have had the experience of it. (DE2 1105; cf. FL 363)

Here, Foucault implicitly distinguishes between having a concept of something and having an experience of it. Certainly, our conceptual framework

must play a role in constituting and ordering our experience, but it does not follow that if we have an experience we *must* have a corresponding concept, even if our experiences are bound in some way to affect our conceptual life. Now, the ancients lacked homosexuality both as a conceptual category and as an experience. Foucault's extensive application of the notion of the subject anachronistically in talking about the ancients implies that they had an experience corresponding to subjectivity, without a corresponding concept. As Althusser (1994, 128–29) has it, "Even if it appears under this name (the subject) only with the rise of bourgeois ideology, above all with the rise of legal ideology, the category of the subject . . . is the constitutive category . . . whatever its historical date." [9] Thus, the moderns problematised and named the subjectivity already experienced by the ancients: "classical antiquity never problematized the constitution of the self as subject; inversely, beginning with Christianity, there is an appropriation of morality through the theory of the subject" (FL 473), although here I am persuaded by Balibar's (1994) argument that such a problematisation, while it might have begun with Christianity, certainly did not take the form of a theory of the subject till the modern epoch.

SUBJECT(IVA)TION

The question for us is thus one of the constitution of the real subject with respect to power. Foucault coins his own term for the constitution of subjectivity, namely "subjectivation" (the word is written identically in English and French, though it is sometimes translated into English as "subjectivization"),[10] defining subjectivation in his last interview as "the process by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity, which is obviously only one of the given possibilities for organising self-consciousness" (DE2 1525; cf. FL 472).

Foucault does not invent this term until 1981 or 1982, however. Prior to that, Foucault simply uses the existing French words *assujettissement* and, much less frequently, *sujétion*. These two French words are ordinarily synonyms: while *sujétion* derives from the noun *sujet*, "subject," and *assujettissement* from the verb *assujettir*, "to subject," *assujettir* itself derives from *sujet*; hence, both can be accurately rendered in English by the word "subjection." These two French words and this English word all have broadly the same connotations, in that they usually mean "subjugation," but literally mean to make something into a subject. That is to say that usually the subject into which we are made in "subjection" is taken to be the passive subject, the test-subject, the subject of the king, rather than the active philosophical or grammatical subject, hence the need for a new word to refer to the constitution of subjectivity.

In *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault explicitly uses the term *assujettissement* to mean "constitution as 'subjects' in both senses of the word" (VS

81; cf. WK 60). Thus, in Foucault's usage, "'subjection' signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject," as Butler (1997, 2) puts it,[11] although in point of fact it is only *assujettissement* which Foucault endows with this special definition—where he used *sujétion* contemporaneously, for example in a 1976 paper, it was in a more common-or-garden sense, simply to imply subjugation (DE2 1012). Confusingly, Foucault's *assujettissement* is in fact itself sometimes translated into English as "subjugation." I shall henceforth use "subjection" to translate *assujettissement*.

Subjectivation, in contrast to subjection, only refers to our constitution as subjects in one sense, namely the active one, even if this constitution is not possible in practice without also being constituted as a passive subject.

Subjection in the Foucaultian sense is a more recent phenomenon than subjectivity per se, hence than subjectivation. In the full *Will to Knowledge* passage about *assujettissement*, Foucault speaks of

> an immense labour to which the West has submitted generations in order to produce—while other forms of work ensured the accumulation of capital—the subjection of men, meaning their constitution as "subjects" in both senses of the word. (VS 81; cf. WK 60)

Before this labour, Foucault says in 1982,

> where we moderns understand "subjection [*assujettissement*] of the subject to the order of the law," the Greeks and Romans understood "constitution of the subject as final end for himself through and by the exercise of the truth." (LS 304 ; cf. HS 319)

Note here that Foucault not only uses the word "subject" when referring to the ancients, but actually describes their own way of understanding things using the term: the constitution of the subject in some sense was there prior to subjection.

Foucault invokes the polysemy of the word "subject" again in the part of "The Subject and Power" that he wrote in English, saying, "both meanings [of subject] suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to" (EW3 331). This however implies that this is only one possible form of power, the implication being that there are forms of power that do not perform this dual role. Although the modern form, or "technique," of power is unnamed, Foucault is referring of course precisely to the new productive power that we described in Chapter 2. Thus, we may link subjection precisely to modernity.

Judith Butler (1997, 83) has contributed to misinterpretation of Foucault here by running the concepts of subjection and subjectivation together, indeed using them interchangeably, believing "subjectivation" to be "a translation of the French *assujettissement*" (Butler 1997, 11),[12]

when in fact the word is Foucault's own neologism. Butler (therefore) sees a single account of subject(ivat)ion in Foucault extending back to *Discipline and Punish*, where Foucault also used the term *assujettissement*, even though at that stage he does not mention the word as having any dual meaning, or connotation of positive subject-formation.[13] As Béatrice Han (2002, 117) points out, in *Discipline and Punish*, in contrast to *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault is talking about subjection in the sense of simple investment by power.

Indeed, all Foucault's talk of subjection is in fact an attempt to bracket everything from subjectivity but the influence of power. In *Society Must Be Defended*, for example, Foucault is interested in subjects, but only from the point of view of a power which manufactures them:

> A theory of domination, of dominations, rather than a theory of sovereignty . . . means that rather than starting with the subject (or even subjects) and elements that exist prior to the relationship and that can be localized, we begin with the power relationship itself, with the actual or effective relationship of domination, and see how that relationship itself determines the elements to which it is applied. We should not, therefore, be asking subjects how, why, and by what right they can agree to being subjected [*assujettir*], but showing how actual relations of subjection [*assujettissement*] manufacture subjects.[14]

The problem here, as with *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, is that people take Foucault to be *reducing* subjectivity to a mere effect of structures—then of structures of discourse, now of structures of power-knowledge. In neither case is this true: rather, Foucault's interest is in showing *the extent to which* subjects are the effects of discourses or power by bracketing the relative autonomy of the subject. In the mid-'70s, Foucault is focussed on a binary choice between the theory of sovereignty and the theory of domination, between the notion of the subject as politically *constitutive* and the notion of the subject as politically *constituted*. Ultimately, he will acknowledge that something more reciprocal and complex is going on: subjects are creating themselves like pearls around the foreign particles of power.

BUTLER, FOUCAULT, AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Butler (2002, 18) does perceive the shift and, moreover, understands that this shift is towards reflexivity. The point of the shift in Foucault's thought is, however, missed by her, since she misses the subjection/subjectivation distinction. She moreover misunderstands what subjectivity is for Foucault. No doubt this is not without good reason, since Foucault is hardly clear about his meaning. Indeed, for this reason, I cannot claim finality for my own (mis)understanding, although I do hope to refute Butler's.

Butler reads Foucault alongside his contemporaries, Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser.[15] Now, Butler does this quite deliberately, for the purpose of producing constructive conflations, to historicise psychoanalysis on the one hand, and to bring Foucaultian insights into developmental psychology on the other. I agree with Slavoj Žižek (1999, 257) that Butler's work is much more than just an "eclectic monstrosity," but Butler's own thought is outside my remit here; I am interested merely in what she has to say about Foucault, which is quite inaccurate, at least insofar as it is an interpretation of Foucault. Butler's work is in any case frequently read as such, including by Žižek (1999), despite his awareness that Butler differs from Foucault, and by Saul Newman (2004). Addressing Butler's account also serves the useful purpose of distinguishing Foucault from psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and from his old mentor Althusser, on the other.

Butler uses Althusser and Lacan together with Foucault, alongside Freud (whom one can scarcely avoid when talking seriously about Lacan), Hegel and Nietzsche, in *The Psychic Life of Power*, in an analysis of the effects of power on the psyche. Foucault does not himself talk about the psyche—certainly not as such—but the attempt to understand the psychic effects of power using Foucault's work on power is surely not illegitimate.

However, Butler, in her conflation, diminishes certain differences between psychoanalytic accounts of the subject and Foucault's account. Now, Foucault (HS 189) says that he can "see only two" people who have posed the question of the relation between subjectivity and truth in the twentieth century (up to that point in 1982, of course, and excluding, presumably, himself): Lacan and Heidegger. Foucault sees himself as following Heidegger. This does not make his approach the correct one apropos of Lacan's; rather, Lacan's concept of the subject is inscribed within a different framework, and therefore means something different, although that does not imply that there is a *contradiction* between the two approaches.

Foucault analyses the subject in terms of technologies and practices of the self: for Foucault, subjectivity means the historical relation of the self to itself. Foucault follows Heidegger here in opposing an historical and practical approach to Husserlian pure phenomenology, but goes further than Heidegger in historicising the subject. Lacan also defines himself against the phenomenological, subject-centred view of subjectivity, but with reference to the anti-subjective perspective given by Freudian psychoanalysis, in which the subject itself does not understand its own, unconscious basis. Though there is no *incompatibility* between these two approaches to the subject, there is little common content, since a psychoanalytical analysis of subjectivity is not about understanding its historicity, but rather about revealing its universal structure. What Butler tries to take from Foucault as central to her own thesis is the notion that power produces the subject, combining this with the psychoanalytical account of childhood development to show the biographical production of subjects

by power. There is nothing wrong with this, except insofar as Butler's account of Foucault is wrong: what Butler calls "subjectivity" is not what Foucault means by the same name, and Foucault does not simply believe the subject is produced by power.

Mark Olssen (1999, 31) characterises the difference between Foucault and Jacques Lacan on the subject thus:

> For Foucault, the subject is constituted not by language, as Lacan would have it, but through many different types of practices. Some of these individualizing practices are discursive (author function); others are institutional.[16]

Butler (1997, 11) clearly takes up this Lacanian perspective in *The Psychic Life of Power* insofar as she contends that "the subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency." Butler links subjectivity with the grammatical subject, with the ability to self-ascribe, and hence to form a conception of oneself. For Foucault (EW1 277), on the other hand, "it is not just in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices."

INTERPELLATION

In contrast to Foucault's relation to Lacan and psychoanalysis, which he read and respected, but did not use, Foucault in his 1970s thinking about the subject, as in his thinking about materialism, does to an extent reprise Althusser's celebrated essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," published in 1970, as Warren Montag has capably demonstrated in his "The Soul is the Prison of the Body." Althusser paves the way for Foucault in treating subjectivity positively as something historically-constituted, but the rejection by Foucault of the Marxist framework in which Althusser works is at the root of a crucial difference.

Althusser (1994, 129) understands the subject in terms of "interpellation," a concept he introduces in the "central thesis" (Althusser 1994, 128) of "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Althusser (1994, 130) identifies interpellation with "hailing," which is to say direct communication from others to us which makes us recognise ourselves. Althusser is widely interpreted here as in some sense producing a Lacanian account of the subject, particularly given his reference to "mirrors" (Althusser 1994, 135), which is seen as appropriating Lacan's (1994) theory of the mirror-stage. However, if Althusser does mean to be Lacanian, he has missed the point of Lacan's thesis; as Terry Eagleton (1994, 216) points out, Althusser's "subject" corresponds not to Lacan's "subject" at all, but in fact to Lacan's "ego."

Moreover, Althusser (131) himself downplays the presentation of subjectivity in terms of hailing: "For the convenience and clarity of my little theoretical theatre I have had to present things in the form of a sequence, with a before and an after, and thus in the form of a temporal succession. . . . But in reality these things happen without any succession." Being hailed does not constitute so much as bring us to recognise our already-existing subjectivity. Althusser's (132) overall perspective is different to Lacan's: Althusser is concerned with society, not the psyche, and therefore primarily sees subjectivity qua social rather than psychic phenomenon; "That an individual is always-already a subject, even before he is born, is nevertheless the plain reality, accessible to everyone and not a paradox at all." The implication here is that subjectivity is a matter of one's relative position in society, not a psychic state. This clearly diverges from accounts of subjectivity such as Lacan's or Butler's, which try to understand subjectivity as something created in infants, which is then foundational to the personality of the individual thus-created. Althusser and Foucault do not deny the creation of individual personalities through childhood experiences; it is simply that this is not the kind of thing they refer to when they use the word "subject."

For Foucault, subjectivity is constituted specifically in connection with certain precise, historically-constituted "experiences": "at the very moment in which this object, 'madness,' took shape, there was also constructed the subject capable of understanding madness" (RM 65); there is a "reciprocal constitution of a subject" (RM 67), conjunct with "certain well-known historical processes" (RM 66), that goes along with the constitution of madness as an object of knowledge. Here, I have quoted from a 1978 account; in 1984's "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," Foucault maintains a similar position:

> You do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to vote or speaks at a meeting and when you are seeking to fulfill your desires in a sexual relationship. Undoubtedly there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject. 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 which interests me. (EW1 290–91)

Foucault here differs from Althusser in seeing the subject as something that is constituted from actual, already-existing people in the play of sociohistory. This might seem an unimportant difference, but it is based in the deeper difference that for Foucault "one establishes a relationship to oneself," even if in both accounts what this relationship is is determined not primarily by our own inclinations but rather by social conditions. Guillaume

Le Blanc (2004, 48) points out that where Althusser talks of "ideology interpellating concrete individuals into concrete subjects," Foucault talks about "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject."[17]

This is not to say that Althusser conceives of people as purely passive in the face of subjection. Althusser (1994, 136), like Foucault, makes the point that "subject" has both active and passive senses. For Althusser, the subject is necessarily an active participant in producing its own interpellation: "The individual is *interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall . . . (freely) accept his subjection. . . . There are no subjects except by and for their subjection*" (Althusser 1994, 136; emphasis in original). Subjectivity appears as something affirmative, as freedom, but which we are forced to choose, even before we are born.

As Warren Montag (1995, 70) points out, Foucault makes a similar point: "The more you . . . submit to those in power, then the more this increases your sovereignty" (LCP 221). However, Foucault is here clearly talking about a particular strategy, endemic to humanism, which produces certain *types* of "subjected sovereignties," not about subjectivity in general. When Foucault talks about self-constitution of the subject, on the other hand, he is not talking about "attachment to subjection," but rather a broader phenomenon. In short, our attachment to subjection is a feature specific to modern subjectivity, as Butler (1997, 102) realises in locating "attachment to subjection" as a corollary of disciplinary power. Foucault talks about an internalisation of power brought about by specific disciplinary mechanisms, paradigmatically the panopticon:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously on himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (DP 202–3)[18]

Foucault (EW3 331) maintains this view in "The Subject and Power," the best part of a decade later, where he invokes the polysemy of the word "subject"; the active sense is here cashed out as being "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge."

Althusser links subjectivity essentially to ideology. For Althusser, this, somewhat idiomatically, means an essential link to the *state*.[19] Foucault is of course strictly opposed to the concept of ideology, and moreover sets out pointedly to distinguish himself from Althusser's state-centric view of the political,[20] while still recognising in modern subjectivity the way in which institutions operate to produce modes of subjectivity.

Despite these differences between Althusser's position and Foucault's, Butler understands Foucaultian subjection on the model of Althusserian interpellation (while also understanding the latter on a quasi-Lacanian linguistic model). Her conflation here proceeds via the substitution of

Foucault's "power" for Althusser's "ideology," giving us a subjectivity constituted inevitably by power. In Butler's conception, there is, moreover, no ability to wield power without subjectivity (Butler 1997, 12–13). Subjectivity is essentially, then, for Butler coextensive with both power and language. So, Butler ultimately identifies power with language, as Catherine Mills (2003, 261) has pointed out.

Such an identification may be denied from two directions in Foucault's work.

Firstly, there is manifestly power, qua actions upon actions, that is non-linguistic; as we saw in Chapter 3, communication in some form is (for Foucault) necessarily implicated in power relations, but it is not necessarily linguistic. Conversely, much communication and language is not a matter of intentional action on the action of another, so not actually an instance of power. Butler does not make these distinctions, and hence conflates power with affect, and thence with language and subjectivity.

One suspects that Butler's interpretation of Foucault is based in a reading of *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault's major case study of power, in which power happens to appear as indissociable from discourse, due to the nature of the object of study, sexuality, being such that power and discourse are indissolubly intertwined in it. However, even sexuality qua "regime of power" does not operate at a purely discursive level. Rather, it is institutionally-based. One key institutional basis of sexuality is confession, which, albeit a discursive practice, is a practice first and foremost. The confessional is an exemplary case of Foucaultian power, since it is an action, and one which is induced by others; Foucault characterises confession as "all these voices which have spoken so long in our civilization—repeating the formidable injunction to tell what one is and what one does" (WK 60). It is this injunction, carried out by actual individual priests, and indeed more recently by psychoanalysts, on other people, that is the action upon actions.

Secondly, on a Nietzschean conception, power ought to be older than language, since language is itself invented as a move in a game of power. Similarly, it ought to be older than subjectivity, since the struggle of wills to power is the law of life in general for Nietzsche, not just of humanity.

Now, Butler does acknowledge that power comes prior to subjectivity, but only biographically, in that individuals are moulded by power and thus become capable of power of their own. However, when read in non-biographical chronological terms, Butler's thesis becomes circular: if agency is created by power, but power stems from agency, whence does either of them come? The Nietzschean notion of power, in contrast, by conceiving of power as force, points back, ultimately, palaeo-ontologically, in a Schopenhauerian way, to the origins of life in physical forces. Subjectivity in the biographical case can be formed by every infant's pre-existing competing drives under the influence of the network of power relations. Of

course, for Foucault, unlike for Nietzsche, these questions of the order of invention of power, subjectivity and language are not important. Yet, the ontological order of contingency of these things is implicitly there, power for Foucault being a prerequisite of subjectivity and language, something which does not require either of them to occur, but without neither of them could be possible.

INDIVIDUAL, BODY AND SOUL

"Foucault occasionally tries to argue that historically *juridical* power—power acting on, subordinating, pregiven subjects—*precedes* productive power, the capacity of power to form subjects," claims Butler (1997, 84). Foucault certainly does claim that juridical power precedes productive power, and that subjectivation precedes subjection, but this does not mean at any point that there is power acting on a "pregiven" subject in Foucault: the idea of a pregiven subject, which might be found in phenomenology, is completely foreign to Foucault. Butler, operating from her perspective in which subjectivity and subjection are mutually implied, seems to read Foucault's notion of a subject that precedes subjection as being a nonsense, and hence disregards it.

Where does the subject come from? We have been arguing that it effectively *creates itself*; we need to ask how this is possible. It is not a matter of a pre-existing *individual* creating subjectivity by acting on him- or herself, since for Foucault (PP 56) individuality is an even more recent phenomenon than subjectivity: "We cannot say that the individual pre-exists the subject-function." Foucault is clear that prior to the emergence of Christian "pastoral power," which was the first power in which authority took a direct interest in the everyday doings of the flock, indeed in the very thoughts behind their actions, there was "not yet an individualising society" (DE2 549).

The term "individual" of course carries an etymological implication of indivisibility. For Foucault, however, the "individual" is no such thing:

> It is . . . a mistake to think of the individual as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom or some multiple, inert matter to which power is applied, or which is struck by a power that subordinates or destroys individuals. In actual fact, one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual. The individual is not, in other words, 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 29–30)

As with the subject, however, Foucault asserts that the individual is therefore nonetheless *real*:

> The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called "discipline." (DP 194)

So, from what is the individual fabricated? The answer is simple and obvious, given Foucault's Nietzschean political ontology: it is made from the animal existence and drives that precede the existence of the individual; Foucault's

> hypothesis is that the individual is not the given thing upon which power pounces and exerts itself. The individual, with his characteristics and identity, in his attachment to himself, is the product of a power-relation which exerts itself on bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires and forces. (DE2 36–37; cf. PK 73–74)

Now, Nietzsche's view is unambiguous that the body is not only the basis upon which the subject is constructed, but the actual agent of its construction: "The creative body created spirit for itself, as a hand of its will" (Z 1 "Of the Despisers of the Body"). The body works on itself, then, via the will, to make itself a subject: "It was the body that despaired of the body—that touched the ultimate walls with the fingers of its deluded spirit" (Z 1 "Of the Afterworldsmen").

There has been a good deal of contention about what Foucault thinks about the body. This contention focuses around two passages in his work: one of these, the *Will to Knowledge* passage in which Foucault offers the body as a "fulcrum" for resistance, will be dealt with in Chapter 6; at this stage, we will consider the meaning of Foucault's claim in *Discipline and Punish* that "the body itself is invested by power relations" (DP 24).

I read these remarks naïvely: the body, as we would ordinarily understand it, as what Foucault (PP 56) calls a "somatic singularity," is grasped by power: "Power relations have an immediate hold on it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (DP 25).

Baroque views on this issue predominate in Foucault studies, however. Butler (1997, 89–90; 2002, 13), for example, ponders how it is possible for power to take hold of something that it also produces, how the body can be both a material substrate and the production of power relations. Well, as I see it, there is simply no paradox here; rather, the pre-existing, material body is straightforwardly marked by power: the body of course does not depend on power for its existence per se, but nevertheless power is responsible for making it what it is. Foucault details in *Discipline and Punish* particularly the way physical training is a part of disciplinary power, and

this, Foucault argues, determines the way the body behaves, through practised movements which become second nature, through practices which become habitual (DP 128). Now, this would actually entail an alteration to the physical structure of a pre-existing body: muscles grow, bones warp through repeated exercise, while the body is otherwise determined by other environmental factors and of course, primarily, by genetics. There is hence no great ontological puzzle here.

In the same movement, power creates the soul: the soul "exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of power that is exercised on those punished" (DP 29). The soul in *Discipline and Punish* is not subjectivity, nor even a precursor to Foucault's concept of the subject. Rather, it is for Foucault something highly specific produced by disciplinary power, which, unlike previous technologies of power, is not content to punish the body directly, but rather seeks to punish and tame the soul, which it paradoxically produces through its control over the body. Hence, Foucault is not strictly nominalistic here, since the soul (or at least *this* soul) is not supposed to have existed in previous centuries when the notion of a "soul" was in use, and indeed would seem to exist in a situation in which the word "soul" is often not used at all—the prison today is much more likely to be accompanied by a less metaphysical vocabulary.

Discipline is focussed on the body to the extent that Foucault (WK 139) calls it "anatamo-politics." However, while power is, on Foucault's definition, a matter of occasioning actions, the concept of action in Foucault is not purely corporeal: "thought, at the level of its existence, in its very dawning, is in itself an action" (OT 328). It is manifestly possible for power to primarily target not the body, but the mind, to try to produce ideas. Of course, we can say that there must be physiological corollaries to any shift in thought, but it is then just as true that there must be a psychic upshot of any corporeal effect.

THE FOLD OF POWER

The body is, however, no more a monadic basis for our selves than is the individual. For Nietzsche, the body is itself *already plural* (*see* Hoy 2004, 47–53).[21] Foucault argues that there are sub-individual animal drives and forces in this exchange with Jacques-Alain Miller in 1977:

Foucault: We all fight each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else.

J.-A. Miller: Which would mean that there are only ever transitory coalitions, some of which immediately break up, but others which persist, but that strictly speaking individuals would be the first and last components?

Foucault: Yes, individuals, or even sub-individuals.

J.-A. Miller: Sub-individuals?
Foucault: Why not? (PK 208)

While the subject, or the individual, can be a pole of a power relation, so too must sub-individual forces be. If individuals and subjects were originally born out of power, then it must have been the machinations of these forces that produced them. The one reader of Foucault who thinks of subjectivation in these terms, in terms of the power between sub-individual forces, is Gilles Deleuze.

In a passage (already quoted above) from "The Ethics of Care for Self as a Practice of Freedom," Foucault speaks of not being interested in locating "the moment from which something like the subject appeared." Unlike Foucault, Deleuze does locate this moment, in his chapter on subjectivation in his book on Foucault. He locates it as occurring in ancient Greece. We might say then that, although the Greeks did not have a concept of the subject, they were still the first people to have *something like* subjectivity.

Deleuze (1988, 100) expresses this origin by saying, "the Greeks are the first doubling." Deleuze's "doubling" is a doubling of power: while power relations already existed prior to the Greeks, the Greeks were the first to turn power relations back on themselves. The Greeks invented self-mastery, "power that one brought to bear on oneself," as Foucault (UP 80) himself deems it. This peculiar relation to the self, of power of self over the self, is, according to Deleuze, what Foucault means by "subjectivity."

Deleuze (1988, 101) gives this explanation as to why subjectivity emerged first in Greece: "As moral codes here and there execute the diagram (in the city, the family, tribunals, games, etc.), a 'subject' must be isolated which differentiates itself from the code and no longer has an internal dependence on it." Greek society required that individuals dominate themselves in order to dominate others—it is the Greek ruling class then, the free men addressed by the Greek philosophers, who were the first subjects. That is not to say that they were the first to conform to the model of the sovereign subject of modern philosophical imagination, but rather were subjects "only as a derivative or the product of 'subjectivation.'" Deleuze says, parenthetically, that "if we do not regard this derivation as being a new dimension, then we must say that there is no subjectivity among the Greeks" (Deleuze 1986, 108; cf. Deleuze 1988, 101). Note that this does not logically imply the converse claim that if we regard it as being a new dimension, we must say there is subjectivity among the Greeks: while Giorgio Agamben (1998, 119) claims that Foucault sees subjectivity beginning with Christianity, hence that there is no subjectivity among the Greeks, he nevertheless identifies subjectivity with the action of self on self.

This is an arguable point: as we have seen, Foucault does see the theory of the subject first emerging with early Christianity, and denied that the Greeks had subjectivity, but of course copiously uses the notion of subjectivity in talking about the practices of the ancient Greeks, which

is, I have argued, only explicable if he thought that the Greeks *did* have subjectivity.

Foucault does not himself explicitly identify the action of self on self with subjectivation. However, Deleuze's interpretation would seem to be singularly compatible with Foucault's late claims that subjectivation is a matter of self-relation, and also with his great preoccupation with the theme of the activity of self on self, particularly relating to the ancients. It moreover explains Foucault's application of the word "subject" across historical periods. It is certainly an invaluable interpretation for our purposes, moreover, since it specifically understands subjectivation as a mutation of power relations.

THE SELF AND POWER

Slavoj Žižek (1999, 251) charges Foucault with seeing in the ancients a "myth of a state 'before the fall' in which discipline was self-fashioned, not a procedure imposed" from outside. The implication is clearly that, in the terms we've developed here, while Foucault talks about modern subjection as a matter of power producing the subject, Foucault talks about Greeks as people who were, via their exemplary ethical procedures, beyond such baseness.

Now, Foucault does suggest, plausibly enough, that there is something about power today which makes it far more concerned with people's very subjectivity than power used to be. This comes with power's increased sophistication, its increasing intensity which penetrates ever deeper into our self-relation. But this does not mean, as Žižek (1999, 253; emphasis in original) argues it does for Foucault, that "disciplinary power mechanisms can constitute individuals *directly*, by penetrating individual bodies and *bypassing the level of 'subjectivization.*'" Rather, it works precisely by influencing people in their own self-reflexive subjectivation. While power does, for Foucault, work directly on the body, this is precisely work on the body itself, not the whole work of constituting the individual.

While subjection can hardly be thought to bypass subjectivation, subjectivation must always have been a relay for the influence of others, power qua actions upon actions, as demonstrated in the Greek pedagogical techniques, in which some men influence others to subjectivise themselves.

Foucault's mode of approach to the subject changes as he starts to study ancient texts relating to subjectivity. The ancient Greek texts were preoccupied, Foucault discovered, with something called *epimeleia heautou*, which he translated as *le souci de soi*. This phrase has normally been translated into English as "the care of the self," but alternative renderings are possible: *de* can be rendered as either "of" or "for," *soi* can be rendered as "self" or "oneself," and, most significantly, *souci* can be rendered as either "care" or "concern." This problem of translating *souci* from French is almost exactly

the same as that of translating Heidegger's key term *Sorge*: while these words would normally be translated into English as "care," this word has unduly positive connotations in English. "Caring for oneself" seems to connote "being nice to oneself," or "caring only for oneself," suggesting a self-indulgence absent from the Greek concept. On the other hand, "concern" is unduly negative, carrying connotations of being *anxious* about oneself. Of course, "care" can also have negative connotations, hence phrases like "carefree" and "without a care in the world" (translatable by the French phrase *sans souci*, and the German *ganz ohne Sorge*), in which care is cast as something one does *not* want to have. Neither translation being perfect, the important thing is to grasp that we are talking about a practice of reflexive power relations, which encompasses *both* care and concern, both about and for both oneself and the selves of others.

It is the auto-relation which is the focus for Foucault's later interest in the subject. We can now retrospectively understand subjection as people being induced by power to relate to themselves in certain ways, to subjectivise themselves in certain ways. In the earlier period, Foucault is, no doubt inadequately, preoccupied with the way in which subjectivity is politically constructed, not with the way the individual relates to him- or herself politically as a relay or (partial) consequence of this process. This approach was obviously apposite when studying the prison, and even when Foucault turns to studying sexuality, he studies it from this "domination" perspective. Foucault can later define "the *mode of subjection (mode d'assujettissement)*," however, as "the way in which the individual established his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice" (UP 27); although the individual is responsible for establishing his/her relation to the rule, this does not preclude this relation itself from being conditioned by power, and it's rather obvious that the rule itself has to do with power.

The subject is not created *by* power as Foucault has been interpreted as saying by both supporters, primarily Butler, and critics, such as Axel Honneth (*see* Lemke 1997, 112), alike. Rather, it is the self that creates the subject in its relation *to itself through power* (and of course with a fundamental relation to truth, as Foucault would no doubt remind us). That is not to say that there is not a considerable degree of determination by power in subjectivation—there is—but this is only possible because *the self-relation is itself a power relation*. It is a form of conduct of conduct, and thus is part of the general network of power relations which is power, but nevertheless is specifically a relation of self to self, not a relation *simply* of external power over internal subjectivity, but rather the relay by which we can be induced to act upon ourselves by external forces.

Butler (1997, 6) realises the Nietzschean dimension to subjectivation: "If, in a Nietzschean sense, the subject is formed by a will that turns back upon itself, assuming a reflexive form, then the subject is the modality of power that turns on itself; the subject is the effect of power in recoil." Here, Butler is entirely right, except that in her account, this is a subsidiary stage:

power acts on us, and only thereafter do we have the ability, the power to create ourselves. She is correct indeed also that power does act upon us from without to encourage our creation of subjectivity: this is, I would argue, a major function of early childhood pedagogy. Nevertheless, it is the power of our sub-individual forces which are not created by power which is at stake: their prior relations to one another are acted upon from without. We are not unresisting tabulae rasae prior to power affecting us, but systems in struggle, a struggle into which outside forces intervene. "Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them," as Deleuze (1988, 101) puts it. Peter Dews (1989, 40) rightly points out that "the obvious paradox of a reflexive account of self-construction is that the self must already exist in order to construct itself." Butler embraces this paradox as such, but really, at least for Foucault, there isn't one: the self is constructed by and from pre-existing sub-self forces.

Foucault's notion of government—in the broad sense in which he uses it in "The Subject and Power," at any rate—is signally important here. Government means both the conduct by others of our conduct, and our own conduct of both our own practices and the forces within us. The fold of power, reflexive power, is implied in Foucault's late conceptualisation of power as government, which includes self-government alongside the government of others, and not, moreover, as distinct from one another, but rather as parts of a single practice and a single network of power relations; our ability to govern ourselves is fundamentally linked to our ability to govern others.

Care of the self includes our control of ourselves through mediate mechanisms, such as the control of diet and the scrupulous use of drugs. We can speak here of "self-discipline" and "self-control": government of the self is a matter of discipline and control, not the free play of power with oneself, an asymmetrical relation with oneself, paradoxical though that idea might be. Indeed, one might say in a Freudo-Nietzschean vein that the will is required to take up the role of master in respect of the drives. This is not a role of domination, necessarily, nor does it simply allow the drives free reign—in short, it is a role of *government* over the self. Foucault does not, that I am aware of, specifically forbid self-domination, but Foucault's general attitude towards domination might be taken to imply that he thinks self-domination might call for some kind of self-liberation. An absolute psychic liberation is quite clearly ruled out, however, and such a thing would indeed be a psychopathology.[22] It's quite clear though that Foucault does want to move away from the modern subjection in which subjectivity is constituted primarily from without, and towards the broad form of ancient subjectivation, in which the individual subject is responsible for taking care of his or her own subjectivity, in coordination with and with help from others. If power is the conduct of conduct, and the relationship to the self is a conduct, this implies the possibility, for example, of trying

to conduct someone to be internally healthy, to have a good relation with him- or herself. With Butler, we must note that there is a role for power, if a less monolithic one than she imagines, in the formation of subjectivity in childhood: parents and others purposively act on children so as to elicit subjectivity, although much of this childhood inculcation of subjectivity also occurs *pace* Butler not by power relation but by simple enculturation, mimicry and the like (just as primal psychic traumas, paradigmatically the separation of the infant from the mother, will occur with or without the intentional involvement of the parent in a power relation).

There are techniques, indeed entire technologies of the self (*see* EW1 224–25 for Foucault's quadripartite typology of technologies), which are, like the technologies of power, invented at a certain point and thereafter may be available to people to learn to apply. Our subjectivation is a group of power relations caught up in the great network of power relations, and indeed in its strategies. What we see in the subject is essentially the same kind of stable integration of power relations as in society, and, moreover, is part and parcel of that stable social integration.

RESISTANCE TO SUBJECTIVATION

A clear consequence of his conception of subjectivation is that subjectivity is for Foucault not something to be resisted, as some commentators seem to think, such as Jon Simons (1995, 30), who says, "Within the scope of his oppositional politics Foucault portrays the conditions of possibility of what we are, of our subjectivities, as constraining limitations to be resisted." Foucault's methodological anti-subjectivism does not amount to an attempt, or even the advocacy of an attempt to actually rid ourselves of subjectivity. We must not fall into the trap of believing that subjectivity is something from which to liberate ourselves. This is not because power is inevitable: although power is inevitable, since power exists without subjectivation, resisting subjectivity is not a way to resist power per se. Rather, we do not need to liberate ourselves from subjectivity because subjectivation is not a form of domination.

Weberman (2000, 263) is more strident than Simons in positing "desubjectivation" as a "strategy" to "escape forms of subjectivity altogether" advocated by Foucault. However, Weberman's cited source, a quotation of Foucault from Halperin (1995, 94), does not itself make "desubjectivization" look like a strategy for escape at all. Foucault is there speaking of the desubjectivising experience of anonymous sexual encounters in the bathhouse. Such encounters have no potential to escape subjectivity *altogether*, since they are only a temporary suspension, and cannot be the whole of a life. They are rather a moment of temporary release to be sought and savoured. This is not to say that it is impossible, or even ultimately unlikely, that a kind of society will emerge in which subjectivity is more lastingly

abolished, but this would be several major ruptures removed from our own. Since subjectivity is, remember, a reality based in practices beyond the mere concept of the subject, it is not something that can easily be superseded, say by mental or lexical effort. Rather, for the moment, Foucault is himself clear that "we have to promote *new forms of subjectivity* through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries" (EW3 336; emphasis added).

It's true that Foucault does on one occasion call for the rescindment of the norm of the *individual* as a means to its concrete abolition:

> Do not demand of politics that it restore the "rights" of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization. (EW3 109)

While, as we have seen, the individual is something different and more recent than subjectivity per se for Foucault, and while it is thus something that is connected to the subjection that Foucault obviously in a sense condemns, Foucault does not in general follow this anti-individual line. The quoted passage comes from the introduction written by Foucault for the English translation of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. Here Foucault is doing an exegesis of their thought, outlining what he thinks is a central principle expounded in the work he is introducing. The fact that Foucault says this here then really does not imply that Foucault himself believes it. This Deleuzian demand for de-individualization follows the logic that individuality is something pernicious imposed on us; such harking after an authentic existence is quite alien to Foucault's thought.

By contrast, in "The Subject and Power," Foucault lauds recent struggles that "assert the right to be different and underline everything that makes individuals truly individual" while simultaneously attacking "everything that separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life": "These struggles are not exactly for or against the 'individual'; rather, they are struggles against the 'government of individualization'" (EW3 330).

That to which Foucault does advocate resistance is *identity*. Now, David Weberman (2000, 263), among others, claims that Foucault wants us to develop "new 'identities,'" but Weberman in fact here cites the passage we have already mentioned in which Foucault advocates "new *forms of subjectivity*" (EW3 336; emphasis added); he does not here mention "identity" as such. Butler (1997, 84) for her part sees individuals as "formulated" through "discursively constituted 'identity,'" which would mean that identity and individuality are coextensive, but Foucault (EW1 166) is himself ambivalent about the concept of identity, only using the word a couple of

times, and then in a pejorative sense, in contrast to "form of subjectivity," which for Foucault is a perfectly neutral expression.[23]

Weberman (2000, 264) does correctly make the core point, however, that "there are no paths to selfhood or subjectivity that lie outside of power. Subjectivity is an unavoidably *political* affair." As Foucault (SD 29) says, as early as 1976, individuals "are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power . . . they are its relays."

5 Resistance

> The most intense point of a life, the point where life's energy concentrates itself, is where it comes up against power, struggles with it, attempts to use its forces, or to evade its traps.
>
> –Foucault (DE2 241; cf. EW3 162)

In our earlier discussions of Foucault's conception of power, there was a crucial element that we bracketed, namely *resistance*. It was bracketed because it is so essential to Foucault's conception of power that it requires a dedicated explanation. It is essential to power, in a strict sense: on Foucault's conception, we cannot have power without resistance. Explaining this paradox is the main task of this chapter.

If Foucault's remarks on power are schematic, his remarks on resistance are merely suggestive. Foucault gives few concrete examples of what might count as resistance—the movements of homosexuals and women are two (EW3 329)—and does not develop the kinds of analysis of these cases that he did for instances of strategies of power. In this part of the book, we must do more original work then, extrapolating from and expanding upon Foucault's writings; we must also abandon our linear chronology.

"Resistance" entered Foucault's technical vocabulary somewhat after "power." Judith Revel (2002, 53) identifies the concepts of "transgression" and "the outside" as possible precursors in Foucault's thought, but concludes rightly that these are actually quite different things. Earlier in his work, Foucault uses the term "resistance" only in its established political and psychoanalytical senses, without any particular problematisation.

It is obvious that power encounters something that may be called "resistance." Foucault's reconception of power requires a reexamination of this resistance. Foucault uses "resistance" as a term of art for the first time in his first major exposition of his views on power in *The Will to Knowledge*. As Foucault develops his conception of power into the 1980s, he continues to develop his correlative conception of resistance, if always less decisively than he does his conception of power.

Kevin Thompson (2003) argues that there are two distinct phases in Foucault's thinking about resistance: the first, in the 1970s, exemplified by *The Will To Knowledge*, conceives resistance negatively, as a matter of seeking freedom from limitations; in the second, in Foucault's last years, exemplified by "The Subject and Power," resistance is conceived positively as consisting in practices of self-formation.

This distinction is of a piece with the alleged turn in Foucault's thinking about power and the subject. As in the case of the claim that Foucault has "turned to the subject," Thompson's basic characterisation is correct, but misses the compatibility between the two "phases": Foucault views resistance as liberation when he is focusing on power as domination, and later takes a more nuanced view.

Foucault's (WK 94–96) initial problematisation of resistance in *The Will to Knowledge* constitutes by far the most copious of his five "propositions" about power there. It is my contention Foucault never abandons this conception, just as he never abandons the rest of his conception of power. Indeed, in the case of resistance, he never produces a new, simplified definition, as he did with power in "The Subject and Power," which means that this is the definitive statement from Foucault about resistance. I will simply quote it now in almost its entirety, and the rest of the chapter will effectively be a long commentary on it:

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should we say that we are necessarily "inside" power, that we cannot "escape" it . . . or that . . . power is to be the ruse of history, which always emerges victorious? This is to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relations. They can only exist via a multiplicity of points of resistance, which play, in power relations, the role of adversary, target, support, or handhold. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is with power relations no single locus of great Refusal. . . . Rather there are *resistances*, which are all special cases: possible, necessary, improbable, spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, violent, irreconcilable, quick to settle, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist within the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only the backlash or hollow trace of that field, forming, in relation to the basic domination, an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat. Resistances do not depend upon a few heterogeneous principles; but neither are they a lure or promise that is of necessity betrayed. They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in these relations as an irreducible counterpart. Hence they too are distributed in an irregular fashion: the points, knots, or foci of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definite way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour. Are there great radical ruptures, or massive binary divisions? Sometimes there are. But more often it is a matter of mobile and transitory points of resistance, introducing into a society cleavages, which shift around, shattering unities and giving rise to regroupings, ploughing through individuals

> themselves, carving them and remodelling them, drawing irreducible areas in them, in their bodies and their souls. Just as a network of power relations ultimately forms a thick fabric which traverses apparatuses and institutions, without precisely localising itself in them, so too does the swarming of points of resistance traverse social stratifications and individual unities. And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships. (VS 125–27; cf. WK 95–96)

THE COEXTENSIVENESS OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

Foucault's first claim here is that "where there is power, there is resistance" (WK 95). Since power is everywhere in society, it means that resistance is everywhere too.

But why should this be the case? Well, we might say it is because "there is no power without potential refusal or revolt" (EW3 324). Power can only exist where there is a possibility of refusal, since otherwise we would be mere tools of whoever exercised power over us, rather than being what we are: agents in our own rights, with actions which may be acted upon by others, but not completely controlled.

Yet this merely tells us that we *might* act differently: it does not mean that resistance actually *is* to be found wherever there is power, but rather only implies that the potential for resistance is ever-present. Foucault does seem to be saying something stronger than this in *The Will to Knowledge*. One might argue the slightly stronger thesis that it is a matter of an average effect, that wherever there is power, sooner or later, *someone* will resist. Foucault's argument is, however, much more basic; in a 1982 interview, he makes resistance the very condition for power's ubiquity:

> If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would just be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation where you're not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. So I think that *resistance* is the main word, *the key word*, in this dynamic. (EW1 167)

Power is about making people do things *that they otherwise would not*. You cannot act on someone's actions so as to make them do exactly what they would do anyway; you must at least limit their possibilities for action. This might mean that resistance is not inevitably *actualised* where power exists, but cases of power which do not actually meet with resistance, the

Locke's locked room cases, are in fact unlikely scenarios, since power is only exercised to limit possibilities for action where there is some kind of expectation that the action limited might otherwise be carried out. Which is to say, we normally only lock doors that we believe someone might try to open, in anticipation of people doing what we don't want them to, in anticipation, namely, of resistance. There is always something there that power has to account for—resistance—and hence usually this resistance does occur, through contact with power. It does not matter whether we acquiesce to power, once we come into contact with it, once it hampers our intentions, resistance has occurred, whatever the outcome.

"And yet, or rather consequently," says Foucault (WK 95), "this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power." An apparently paradoxical fact, that is nonetheless a consequence: while resistance is in a sense presupposed by power, resistance is, as I have phrased it, actualised by power; its character *as* resistance derives from its opposition to some power relation. This is a semantic necessity of course, in that resistance clearly could not be defined as such if there were nothing to resist, but it is also a fact about the ontological constitution of resistance. Without power intervening upon me, I am simply doing, not resisting. Without something there potentially to resist power, it is similarly merely action, not action upon actions, not the exercise of control in the Foucaultian sense. If I am walking down the road, and someone tries to stop me, then I resist, inevitably: my pre-existing action itself becomes resistance to power in the moment in which the other acts upon my action. When we resist, it is never a matter of us doing exactly what we would have done had no one acted upon our actions: the specific character of resistance is itself influenced by the power it opposes. As Foucault says,

> I think that resistance is a part of this strategic relationship of which power consists. Resistance really always relies upon the situation against which it struggles. (EW1 168)

This is to say, more than simply being *occasioned* by power, resistance is in itself an adaptive response to power, which therefore varies according to the power it opposes, even if the response is acquiescence. In this sense, resistance "is not anterior to the power which it opposes" (FL 224): while resistance in general "comes first," specific resistance does not come into existence until power appears on the scene.

MICRO- AND MACRO-RESISTANCE

My walking down the street does not have to have a strategy, but in order to resist power upon its interference, my behaviour must become strategic, must qualitatively change. It is of course conceivable that the behaviour

that is called for in a given situation is superficially identical to what I was going to do anyway, but even in that infinitesimally unlikely case, the behaviour still has a different meaning, a different psychic component, a different relation to the behaviour that follows, which will itself be different. The capacity of people to deliver such an adaptive response is what makes us resistant entities.

"To say no is the minimum form of resistance. But, of course, at times that is very important," says Foucault (EW1 168). The importance of such a gesture is in the adaptedness of it as a response. To say "no" might seem like a simple diametrical refusal, as might doing the *exact opposite* of what was intended, but in fact these are already strategic responses in practice. Which is to say, they are *not determined* in their specificity by power. The no is an irruption from the human subject of power, which is not compliance, nor the regular reaction of a physical object to a quantum of force. Resistance is what opposes power, not simply diametrically but transversally, opposing by going off in a different direction to power's strategies.[1] If someone tells me to stand up, I could stand (obey), I could continue sitting (disobey), I could lie down on the floor (disobey by doing something else), or I could stand up and punch the one who ordered me to stand, obedience with a supplement of resistance, or indeed any number of other responses; there is no "simple refusal," but rather many ways of refusing. Acts of refusal indeed typically involve power themselves, even the most passive responses: the point is in general to get the other to stop, which is to say, to act upon their actions, even if this manipulation may pale in comparison to that of the perpetrator.

Of course, we must distinguish between the intention implied in the act of power and the actual intention behind it: the action of saying "Stand up!" clearly implies that the wielder of power wants me to stand, but it is perfectly possible that there is some other agenda, that he is calculating enough to anticipate a resistant reaction—he may even want to provoke me into hitting him. He may want me to disobey so that he has a pretext to take further actions. Direct resistance is therefore not assured of effectuality.

The inevitable resistance to power at the personal level is what we might call micro-resistance. Just as the intentionality behind micro-power, the action upon our actions, has no regular relation to how micro-power fits into an overall strategy of power, even if our resistance is successful at the local level, there is no guarantee that it will therefore constitute resistance at the macro-level. Even if one makes an effort to critically understand the overall political implications of actions upon the actions of others, the network of power relations will always contort towards the assimilation of this knowledge. My favourite example, although of course many will dispute it, is that of Marxist organisations in contemporary Western societies. Trotskyist organisations for example, while articulating an analysis of contemporary society and trying strategically to outwit the state in pursuit of socialist revolution, in fact merely achieve a stable niche in an overall

network of power relations: their membership experiences a high turnover, but the overall number of cadres remains almost static; they become a machine through which young people pass almost as a rite of passage, their youthful exuberance temporarily harnessed and controlled and then escaping, the organisation itself only engaging in activity which in fact does nothing to change society in the ways which such groups explicitly intend; rather, they are part of the existing configuration of forces, in which they simply represent the constant articulation of demands on the left. That is not to say that they are like the prison reform movement described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, which continually articulates demands for reform of the prison system, while ultimately validating the prison system per se by doing so: the cohesion achieved by stable pockets of revolutionary sentiment with the whole is at a higher level, more like the cohesion of criminality and the prison system, the way in which these apparent opposites complement and produce one another. This does not mean that criminals and socialists are *simply* produced by power, but rather that they have become co-opted (though we must use this word advisedly with Foucault, as I will explain below): punks, Bolsheviks and criminals were all originally disruptive, problems for power, but over time, in our society, for the most part they have become integrated into a functioning network of mutually-supportive strategies of power. Even though the notion of rebellion continues to be an intrinsic element of the punk ethos, and even though punk continues to be incompatible with many things in society—with parental wishes, and the demands of most employers, school administrations, et cetera—punk itself, like Trotskyism, occupies a relatively stable niche in which there is no overall conflict with the network of power relations.

Micro-resistance thus does not necessarily constitute macro-resistance. Unlike with power, then, with resistance the microscopic and macroscopic perspective are not two views on the same phenomenon. From the point of view of an overall strategy of power, whether an action is resistant or not at the micro-level is not decisive. Micro-resistance is regularly produced and therefore can be anticipated at the level of macro-power. The prison system qua strategic assemblage requires micro-resistance to function: resistance to the authorities is regularly produced, a justification for further disciplining, in which regular recidivism is produced in people caught in power relations in which others try explicitly at the micro-level to discourage reoffending. This is not that criminals would not commit crimes were they not punished, but rather that the existing system of punishment produces effects of criminality that it is not supposed to, which count as resistance at a micro-level, but at a macro-level are already accounted for in power's established strategies. Foucault does not himself make this distinction between micro- and macro-resistance explicitly, as in the case of power. He does, however, shift from talking about "effects of counter-power that spring from [the multiplicity] and which form a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate it" (DP 219) to talk, particularly in his 1978 Collège de

France lectures, *Security, Territory, Population*, of "counter-conduct," i.e. to talk about resistance at an individual level.

As we have said, resistance is, from the moment it occurs, adaptive to power. This adaptivity is part of what makes resistance in our political sense distinct from the resistance of a rock to a drill. Indeed, resistance, in order to resist power, must itself be strategic in the same way as power:

> Resistances . . . are all the more real and effective for forming right where power relations exert themselves; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, but it is not trapped because it is the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being where power is; it is, therefore, like power, multiple and integrable into global strategies. (DE2 425; cf. PK 142)

In order to meet power, resistance must produce a strategy incorporating many persons, must be complex, must meet power dynamically:

> To resist, it must be like power. As inventive, as mobile and as productive as power. Like power, it must organise itself, coagulate and cement itself. Like power, it must come from below and distribute itself strategically. (DE2 267; cf. FL 224)

If resistance is strategic, however, in what respect is it not power? Well, in fact, it *must be*. Strategic resistance cannot proceed without power in its own circuits: people cannot be organised without power relations obtaining between them; this is a clear lesson of Foucault's understanding of power as ubiquitous to social relations. Strategic resistance is *counter-power*, which affects the actions of others to marshal them against power. As Foucault (2004) put it in a 1975 interview, "That which escapes power is counter-power, which is nevertheless caught up in the same game. That's why we have to go back to the problem of war."

The model of war tells us that the network of power relations is a matter of contestation between forces. A resistance movement, say a disciplined national liberation movement, can still be a resistance movement, even though it must itself also encounter internal and external resistance qua power. Unlike power relations, resistance does not automatically bloc with all other resistance, which is why Foucault says resistance is always multiple, is always a matter of resistance*s*. While power and resistance both exist at a micro-level and while they both concatenate strategically, there is no total network of resistance, only a total network of power, which supervenes on resistance, which strategic resistance is, qua power, part of, which resistance can only aim to alter, not replace it as such. It is possible to oppose things within the network of power relations, but only by dovetailing with something elsewhere in the existing network. Setting up an entirely new network alongside the existing network would be possible only if no-one

in either network had contact with anyone in the other. Foucault (STP 202) talks about political parties which "cannot but function to a certain extent as a counter-society, an alternative society." However, they will always be amenable to pressure from without, hence will always be part of the broader network of power relations which in itself tends towards strategic coherence. To this extent, there is never a total cleavage of power relations: as I argued when discussing Foucault's use of the paradigm of war, even in war, there is still a network of power relations across both sides, since one side tries to get the other to do things.

Since there is always resistance, there is no intrinsic contradiction between resistance and the existence of the network of power relations. Resistance is, as Foucault says, always specific, targeting a specific power, never the network of power relations as such. Resistance has a specificity which meets the specificity of the power it opposes, and which is indeed part of the same, as resistance and power are part of the same, conditions of each other's possibility.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE ABOLITION OF POWER

Counter-power is power in two directions: it is power in that it implies the regulation of people towards its strategies, occasioning its own sub-resistance, and it is power in that it is acting upon the actions of agents outside its own strategy, in attempting to retard or change the behaviour of people perpetrating the strategies of power it opposes. Clearly, counter-power cannot hope to abolish power per se, or even to be implacably opposed to it, since it is itself power!

Might it not be possible however to constitute resistance in such a way as to utterly refuse and exclude power, and thus eventually abolish it? Hardly, since to utterly annihilate power would mean nothing less than the destruction of all actions upon actions. It cannot be done by appealing to a higher action upon actions that will keep power in check, since that would of course itself still be power, hence the abnegation of total freedom. The complete disappearance of Foucaultian power relations would seem to require nothing less than the total abolition of sociality:

> Power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above "society" whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. To live in society is, in any event, to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others. (EW3 343)

Hence Foucault's injunction that "we must stop imagining that we can escape power relations at a stroke, globally, massively, by a kind of radical rupture" (DE2 542), since "there is not then with power relations any one site of the great refusal, no soul of revolt, base of all rebellions, or pure law

of the revolutionary" (VS 126; cf. WK 95–96). Hence, anarchism, qua the project of abolishing government, is a kind of fantasy that belies the real reasons for its existence, which is always in fact the opposition to a real, proximal repression: in the discussion after a 1978 lecture in Paris, Foucault declares,

> I do not think that the will not to be governed at all is something that could be considered an originary aspiration. I think that, in fact, the will not to be governed is always the will not to be governed like this, in this way, by these people, at this price. As for resolving not to be governed at all, it would seem to me to be some kind of philosophical and theoretical paroxysm of something that would be this will not to be governed relatively speaking. (Foucault 1990, 59; cf. PT 72–73)

However, he in fact goes on to make clear that, while he does not endorse a "fundamental anarchism," that is opposed to government, he does not "absolutely exclude it" either. Such anarchism, though "fundamental," is merely opposition to "all governmentalisation" (Foucault 1990, 59), not opposition to *power* per se. Foucault clearly had certain anarchist tendencies; like Nietzsche (Z:1 "The New Idol"), Foucault (2005, 128) has a keen mistrust of "this monstrosity we call the state," and at times he does indeed seem to endorse a fight against power itself, as in this excerpt from a 1980 interview:

> We have to rise up against all forms of power—but not just power in the narrow sense of the word, referring to the power of a government or of one social group over another: these are only a few particular instances of power. (Foucault 1988, 1)[2]

Yet, here Foucault does not mean that we must rise up against power itself, but rather that every form which does occur must be fought against. Anarchists, on the other hand, as Todd May (1994, 65) has put it, assume as an a priori that power itself must be fought against.[3] The difference is that the Foucaultian aim of fighting against specific forms of power is not to get rid of power forever, but only to modify the network of power relations in such a way as to change the power with which we are at that moment concerned. As May puts it, the problem with the anarchist attitude, and the reason it is an a priori, is that their opposition to power is not based on an assessment of the tactical situation. Total opposition to power does not allow us to pick our battles, but rather condemns all power by way of a norm of the abolition of power relations which is thoroughly unachievable.

Foucault explains that "a program of power can take three forms," namely the program of strengthening power, the program "to overturn power" and the program of "limiting the relations of power as embodied

and developed in a particular society." Foucault (1988, 11) describes himself as uninterested in the first, interested in the second with the proviso that it "be considered essentially with an eye to its concrete objectives, the struggles one wishes to undertake. And that implies that one should not make of it an a priori theory" and rejects the third. This rejection is because no power is to be supported: while we should pick the power that we oppose, that does not mean for Foucault, as we shall see in the next chapter, that we have to support some alternative power instead. The difference between this and apriori anarchism is that, for Foucault, not all resistance is to be supported. An example of resistance which we might not want to support is the resistance to medicine Foucault (STP 203) cites, namely refusing medical treatment and vaccinations in the name of "alternative therapies." While there are elements of medical practice, as shown in Foucault's analyses of medicine, that we might want to condemn, refusing vaccinations is not automatically to be supported simply by dint of its being resistance. Transgression is not the goal in itself for Foucault—indeed, one of the early targets of *The Will to Knowledge* is the idea we should automatically seek to transgress sexual taboos (*see* WK 5–6).

There are no "acceptable conditions of power," however: while the "victims" of power may "tolerate" it "for a period of time . . . after a few days, years, centuries—people always end up resisting, and that old compromise no longer works." And of course, successful struggles immediately lead into new struggles, such as the struggle against asylums (to which Foucault's *History of Madness* constituted a contribution), which led to their closure, which led in turn immediately to new problems and struggles for the mentally ill (EW1 256).

As we have already seen (in Chapter 3), in the case of dominations, like the asylum, resistance has a rather simple purpose, liberation. Though of course this may itself take many modalities, it has a simplicity in that it aims at abolition of some specific power relation or strategy of power. In cases of power in general, however, the imperative to resist cannot be equated with an imperative to *abolish* the power relation resisted. In domination, one's room for negotiation with power is by definition restricted such that abolition is the only possible demand, but in less restrictive scenarios, resistance can be part of a negotiation or game (cf. EW3 342).

THE ONTOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE OF POWER ON RESISTANCE

The principles of the ubiquitousness of power and the coextensiveness of power and resistance mean power and resistance are not mutually opposed forces locked in battle, insofar as that would imply that one side or other could actually *win*. The abolition of either power or resistance would in itself be the abolition of the entire power/resistance dynamic.

Is this point not merely semantic, however? Might not power in fact completely crush resistance, or vice versa?

For resistance to break free utterly and destroy power per se would mean to kill us all or somehow otherwise sever all interpersonal contacts that might involve power relations. For power to win would mean for people to be made so pliant that they offer no resistance that could not be predicted at the level of and incorporated into strategies of power, or indeed for power simply to annihilate all those who oppose it. In either case, the abolition of one means the abolition of the other, and either the extinction of society or the reduction of society to a mechanism:

> Every intensification or extension of power relations intended to wholly suppress these points of insubordination can only bring the exercise of power up against its outer limits. It reaches its final term either in a type of action that reduces the other to total impotence (in which case the victory of the adversary replaces the exercise of power) or by a confrontation with those whom one governs and their transformation into adversaries. (EW3 347)

Contemporary technologies of power, particularly discipline with its creation of "docile bodies" (DP 135ff.), might be seen as tending in the very direction of "victory over the adversary." Power is only possible on the condition that those whose actions are acted upon are to some extent unknown; technology makes them increasingly knowable in two ways. On the one hand, increased technological sophistication allows us to create individuals who are known quantities. This can be done on a number of levels, from the physiological shaping of individuals to the shaping of their thoughts. On the other hand, our explanatory tools—psychology, computer-modelling of behaviour, et cetera—become ever better at predicting what people will do. It is necessary to the existence of the power-resistance dyad (without which neither of its components can exist), that there be some excess of unpredictability, that when you want someone to do something there is a chance that he or she won't do it. This is because someone who does whatever you want is no more than an object in your hands. Of course, in practice, we don't know whether it will ever be possible to achieve the computational power required to map behaviour accurately at a neurological level closely enough to completely predict and hence control all behaviour, compounded at a societal level. Certainly, it is not feasible with contemporary technology.

At the macro-level, power will, as we have seen, try to stabilise itself by incorporating or entirely excluding the elements available, which may mean crushing or trying to crush some elements which are not readily reconcilable with others, and may mean trying to ignore or isolate them. This is of course simply, at the microscopic perspective, a matter of the dynamic of interrelating power relations shifting according to resistance

and tending towards stability. However, different technologies have vastly different levels of adaptability, hence when "the eighteenth century established a power that is not conservative but inventive" (AB 52), this meant that power became far better able to integrate things. In the Middle Ages, power would simply kill those who did not bend to it when required, while ignoring them much of the time, whereas today, the intransigent can have their own political party and are generally integrated into a complex political system.

Since their incorporation will require change, we can expect there to be some kind of "resistance" to new methods, even where they are helpful to power, but innovation is not necessarily allied to resistance. Indeed, technological development is itself an engine of power insofar as it changes power's ability to integrate resistant forces, to deal with resistance, to better control or integrate forces. Even technological innovation as such can itself be harnessed as a technology, the technology namely of research and development, to this end.

The question remains whether technology might accede to a level at which it finally crushes all resistance forever. There are multiple science fiction scenarios in which something like this happens. In *The Terminator*, a human-constructed computerised defence system determines that the enemy of security is ultimately humanity itself, which it then tries to exterminate, an obvious short-cut to the extermination of political contingency and resistance. This will mean that power will cease to exist as such. In this case, a tool of power has slipped out of human hands and is no longer interested in power, therefore, but rather only in exterminating humanity, and with it political power and resistance as a dyad.

Still, even if resistance were to be extinguished utterly not by extermination, but by perfection of control mechanisms, through perfecting neuroscientific comprehension, to such an acute degree that behaviour comes to be accounted for almost perfectly by the mechanisms of power, it too would have the same ultimate meaning in political terms. A final victory by power is the political equivalent to the heat death of the universe, in which the political negentropy of human resistance is negated.

Of course, as long as this is not the actual heat death of the universe, biological and other forces may give rise to new power and resistance. As Deleuze (1982, 92) says in exegesis of Foucault, "Life becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object"[4]: all life contains a kernel of unpredictability and adaptability that can pose a problem for what tries to dominate it; as Foucault says in exegesis of Canguilhem, "error is the permanent contingency around which the history of life and the development of human beings are coiled" (EW2 477).[5] More basically, Deleuze (1988, 92) asks, "Is not life the capacity to resist force?" This is in a way the obvious conclusion to what we have been saying, a kind of vitalism.[6] As I have said, ultimately, since life emerges from non-living natural forces, it is in fact nature itself that is resistant, at least insofar as it features negentropy.

That is to say, that the power-resistance dyad is a mutation of organic life, which is itself a negentropic moment in the physical history of the universe: as such, the universe itself contains the germ of resistance.

THE RECALCITRANCE OF THE WILL

We must, however, distinguish between these levels, the "resistance" of natural phenomena and resistance in Foucault's sense. It's true that power has to account for changes in the natural environment. Major seismic events may ultimately be as impossible to accurately predict and control as people, but this does not elevate volcanic eruptions to the status of political resistance, even though power may account for such events. Sheer unpredictability is necessary, but not sufficient, to constituting political resistance.

In "The Subject and Power," Foucault says, "At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom" (EW3 342). Power and resistance to power are both a matter of actions, and hence both presuppose the *will*. Of course, "power is not built up out of wills (individual or collective)" (PK 188), in that its own intentionality is radically independent of the intentionalities of political actors. It is rather ontologically premised on the will. Resistance, on the other hand, especially at the personal level, is almost purely a question of will, of wilful intransigence, of a reactive adaptability which not only does not automatically do what it is told, but actively tries to think of ways around power.

The notion of the will is necessary here (*pace* Schopenhauer) in order to distinguish between the resistance of people and the dumb resistance of the natural world. Power and resistance are both essentially related to the will: there must be wills on both sides of the power relation for either power or resistance to exist. Resistance is not the dumb recalcitrance, the inability to comply of someone who has not been trained to do or cannot understand what we want them to do. On the other hand, it is not always *deliberate* recalcitrance, in the sense that we *decide* to resist. Even in the case of an opaque power, a power which conceals itself so that we don't know that there is anything to resist, we can and do resist nonetheless.

In the science-fiction film *The Truman Show*, unbeknownst to him, one man's life is continuously monitored and directed for the purposes of producing a twenty-four-hour reality television program. The protagonist, Truman, may not realise that when it starts raining this is the action of a hidden controller, or that this controller is making it rain to make Truman go inside, say, thus acting via the rain on Truman's actions. Truman still can and does resist, however. His adaptive, willed responses to such actions, regardless of whether he understands them as such, are still resistant relative to the intentions of the controller. In the

film, Truman ultimately does realise that there is power at work, and he realises this moreover *through* resistance; as Foucault has it, resistance acts "as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations" (EW3 329).[7] By unwittingly defying the manipulation of his romantic affections, he starts a train of events that result in the unravelling of the whole illusion of naturalness overlaying the vast edifice of control in which he is ensconced.

Conversely, where people wrongly, say paranoiacally, believe that accidental occurrences are instances of power and try to resist them, they will not actually be offering resistance. An essential feature of power/resistance is the existence of wills on both sides of the power relation. Of course, we must here interpret "will" broadly enough to allow that power relations can obtain between sub-individual forces, which is to say that there are manifold "wills" at a sub-individual level.

Now, Foucault avoided the word "will" for much of his career. It appears for the first time along with the other subjective vocabulary in this later work, and even then Foucault doesn't much focus on it—notwithstanding that it appears in the title of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, in an obvious nod to Nietzsche. The term "will" is peculiarly problematic in that it can be confused not only with subjectivist uses of it to mean transcendence of the subject, but also with its key use by Nietzsche in the phrase "will to power," which is not how Foucault used it, recognising its importance as a theme in its own right:

> One cannot confront this problem, sticking closely to the theme of power without, of course, at some point, getting to the question of human will. It was so obvious that I could have realized it earlier. However since this problem of will is a problem that Western philosophy has always treated with infinite precaution and difficulties, let us say that I tried to avoid it as much as possible. (PT 74–75)

Although it is unpredictable, the will exceeds mere unpredictability because it also strives actively to explore and break bonds, tends to resist power, not merely accidentally, but purposefully. This does not mean that we are taking the will to be a simple atom with its own force: what we have already said about the subject and sub-individual forces stands; in order to understand the will, a project which I shall not venture into, we must understand its historical constitution from precisely these forces. Nor does it mean we are adopting some radical metaphysical position about the freedom of the will. It's simply that the will, whatever freedom it has metaphysically, politically struggles to be free and to resist power:

> People react; the more one convinces them, the more they question things. The mind isn't made of soft wax. It's a reactive substance. (EW1 325)

CO-OPTION?

"Should we say that we are necessarily 'inside' power," asks Foucault (VS 126; cf. WK 95), "that we cannot 'escape' it, that there is, in relation to power, no absolute exterior?" Of course, it is strictly-speaking true, since power is everywhere, that it cannot be "escaped," and that there is no exterior, but, as I say, while power is everywhere, this does not mean that it is everything. Resistance itself is not power; though it is eternally bound up with it, and thus means that the eternal possibility of change exists within the circuits of power; "To claim that one can never be 'outside' does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what" (PK 141–42).

Many have argued, however, presumably in ignorance of Foucault's remark that "resistance comes first," both critics and even several upholders of Foucault alike, that he makes resistance ontologically subsidiary to power. Now, this does not imply that we are trapped by power, as is demonstrated by the views of Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek; though these philosophers both misinterpret Foucault, they nonetheless articulate models in which power produces a resistance that exceeds it.

We have already said enough to dispatch the crude notion that Foucault thinks that resistance is *directly* produced by power; Butler (1997) produces a more subtle variant of this interpretation, that *subjectivity* is produced by power, and that this is in turn necessary for resistance. While the extent to which Butler overplays the role of power in forming subjectivity is not in itself that dire, the mistake is magnified when added to her interpretation of resistance. Because Butler sees subjectivity as tied to resistance, she therefore sees our resistance as deriving from this same source, and thus ultimately claims that Foucault "understands resistance as an effect of power" (Butler 1997, 98–99).

Because Butler conceives of the subject not as the fold of someone exercising power over his or her resistant self, but rather as something formed by power which then has the capacity to resist, she sees resistance itself as a capacity created, paradoxically, by power. On our Nietzschean-Deleuzian-Foucaultian understanding of the relation between subjectivity and power, however, it is sub-individual forces that are both bound to resist and to seek to dominate one another. Resistance is not specifically a capacity of an agent: to resist action on our actions, we do not have to be subjects; any animal can resist by refusing to comply. This is not to say that *life* per se is politically resistant, any more than nature is. However, of *animals* at least, some kind of adaptive resistance can regularly be expected, since in some sense we animals always simply do not want to do quite what we are told to do (*see also* Kelly 2007, 789–90). At least the higher animals have sub-individual drives, moreover, and sub-individuals can and do resist. Resistance is not only what is marshalled by the subject, but indeed something older or deeper encountered internally by subjectivity itself.

Now, when I do resist as a subject, my resistance is thereby more focused. This is a distinction similar to that between resistance and strategic counter-power: subjectivity can marshal sub-individual forces into a dynamically resisting individual, although it may also marshal them into a compliant individual.

This is *not* to say, however, as Butler does, that "agency is the assumption of a purpose *unintended* by power, one that could not have been derived logically or historically, that operates in a relation of contingency and reversal to the power that makes it possible, to which it nevertheless belongs" (Butler 1997, 15). We must agree with Butler that "agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled"; we agree that power makes agency possible. However, agency is a relay of power which power does in fact intend, which is part of its intentional strategies, with the attendant risks of more sophisticated resistance; as Foucault says, "the individual has become an essential gamble for power. Power is much more individualising when, paradoxically, it is more bureaucratic and more statist" (DE2 551). This is a key result of Foucault's researches into disciplinary technologies: power increases its level of control by constituting more individualised subjects, who are more concerned with themselves than ever, leading to demands inimical to disciplinary power as traditionally constituted.

However, if we can exercise power over ourselves, then we can, indeed *always do*, resist ourselves too. This is why subjectivity is itself a matter of government. Of course, the notion of power relations with the self has been most developed in psychoanalysis:

> The psychoanalysts, Freud, and many of his successors, . . . have, at bottom, tried, like me . . . to see how power relations related to what happened in the psychic life of the individual, or in the individual's unconscious, or in the economy of desire. . . .
> . . . The unconscious constitutes itself . . . starting with a power relation. (DE2 568; cf. RC 128)

Slavoj Žižek (1999, 366) claims that "the fact which usually goes unnoticed is that Foucault's rejection of the psychoanalytic account of sexuality also involves a thorough rejection of the Freudian Unconscious." In fact, Foucault was consistent that "although my project, in doing the history of sexuality, is the reverse of that perspective, that is not at all to say that psychoanalysis is mistaken, not at all to say that there is not in our societies a misunderstanding by the subject of his own desire" (RC 118). Foucault (EW3 3) praises psychoanalysis for calling the subject into question. Foucault (EW1 44) was of course very critical of the operation of the psychoanalytic *technique* as incorporated into strategies of power, and indeed was critical of it in other respects (*see* Bernauer 1990, 167–69),[8] but this is not to imply a total rejection of it: "I fear very much that [psychoanalysts]

will take for an 'anti-psychoanalysis' what will merely be a genealogy" (PK 192). While Foucault did not see a decisive epistemological break in Freud, he nevertheless held the notion of the unconscious in high regard (PK 212–13), indeed making the rejection of the unconscious by Sartre his main complaint about that thinker (RC 94).

Žižek (1999, 256), for his part, is perhaps unique among Foucault's critics in accepting himself that resistance is produced by power. Žižek argues, under the influence of Butler, wrongly, that Foucault sees resistance as produced by power but underestimates the radical independence that resistance has from power once it has been produced, that, from the "absolute inherence of resistance to Power, [Foucault] seems to draw the conclusion that resistance is co-opted in advance, that it cannot seriously undermine the system."

The misunderstanding here is fundamental. Foucault never capitalises "power," as Žižek does when discussing Foucault, precisely to avoid such interpretations, if in vain in this case. Struggles do emerge out of the network of power relations much as Žižek himself argues they do: national liberation struggles, the example Žižek discusses, depend on European notions of nationhood, of liberation, on the European ideas imbibed by elites, and these movements do grow beyond these notions implanted by colonialism itself, but the outgrowth is only possible because there was always already resistance. Žižek is simply mistaken that Foucault sees resistance as totally produced by power, and his quasi-Hegelian view that power necessarily produces its opposite, resistance, does not, therefore, trump Foucault. Rather Foucault's position in a way resembles that of Foucault's humanist critics more closely than it does Žižek's, in that Foucault actually sees people as exceeding power and offering resistance, rather than power itself dialectically producing its own supersession. So it *is* indeed true that Foucault "precludes the possibility that the system itself, on account of its inherent inconsistency, may give birth to a force whose excess it is no longer able to master" (Žižek 1999, 256).

This then is Foucault's position: resistance is sometimes, but not always, power, and power is sometimes, but not always, resistance; though there can be no power without resistance nor resistance without power, neither one produces the other, although in a certain, ontological sense, resistance may be said to precede power.

If all resistance is local, "do we not run the risk of letting ourselves be determined by more general structures outside of our control?" (EW1 316). It's true that the *network* of power relations cannot be resisted as such. Power as a network must either find a way to ignore/exclude, or must find a way to integrate, everything: "We can always be sure . . . that everything that has been created or acquired, any ground that has been gained will, at a certain moment be used [as a means of social control]. . . . That's the way of human history" (EW1 166–67). If a counter-power remains outside of some structure of power relations in such a way that

it becomes its stable counterpart, it can only mean, as we have argued, that it has been incorporated at a meta-level. Resistance can never be total within a social network. Rather, as Foucault says, it is only ever resistance to some specific power relation, which means that this particular agonism can be incorporated into the general network insofar as it becomes regular and predictable. Only the utterly chaotic can escape incorporation, what changes continually without codification or comprehensibility. But, as I have suggested, something that cannot be incorporated, but which nonetheless resists, may be destroyed or ignored, including a geographically isolated social network; in either case, its resistance is ineffective as such. Isolating oneself might be effective as a form of avoiding repression, for example, but not of fighting that repression.

Incorporation into the network of power relations thus cannot for Foucault imply *co-option*. Foucault warns in a 1977 interview that the notion of futile co-option is caused by the definition of struggle as *contradiction*: "If one accepts that the form—both general and concrete—of struggle is contradiction, then clearly everything which allows the contradiction to be localised or narrowed down will be seen as a brake or a blockage" (PK 144). This "logic of contradiction" (PK 143), characteristic of course of Marxism with its specific theme of contradiction, involves thinking that everything is either with us or against us, part of the solution or part of the problem, that not to work for revolution is to work against it. The very notion of co-option stands condemned for Foucault as part of this logic.

The logic that says that all non-revolutionary change is co-option is in itself thoroughly mistaken, because from the perspective of the network of power relations as such cannot be defeated, even revolution itself would be cast as co-option, since it only represents a break with certain forms or configurations of power, never ultimately with the network or with power. As Richard Rorty (2000, 129) has pointed out, it is reading Foucault in conjunction with Marxist critical theory, with its aim of "the cataclysmic transcendence of the actual situation through *total revolution*" (Marcuse 1972, 29), as he often has been read in the American academy, that made the problem of co-option seem utterly intractable. Foucault's position is not however that all resistance is a reaction to power that is ultimately ineffective and from the outset a part of the same old structure of power itself. Rather, it is that resistance is effective precisely insofar as it brings about the rearrangement of power relations. Foucault's understanding of the total network of power relations as too ubiquitous to overthrow shows up the logic that claims that revolution is a total break to be false, while leading not to quietism, but an appreciation of the concrete potential for change through contestation.

Deciding we are going to act directly contrarily to power is, I have suggested, neither necessary nor sufficient to qualify as resisters: it is in this sense that activists find themselves "playing into the hands of" their enemies—rioters may be victims of police *agents provocateurs*, for

example. Rather, it would seem that a real awareness of the operation of power, of its true dynamics, should allow us, not to prevent *co-option*, but rather to allow ourselves to operate better *within* the network of power relations, and, in the rare cases where this might be applicable, understand how we can—and what it means to—breach the network. This awareness is not resistance in itself, however. While such an awareness does provide a tool for those who wish to change things, it does not automatically destroy what it analyses, though it is of course in itself an action which does affect things.

We can, I think, *pace* Foucault, distinguish between two levels of co-option: a trivial co-option that will befall anything we do, insofar as anything we do will be part of the socio-political fabric which it comes out of, in which sense the concept of co-option must be rejected, and a co-option which is the danger, which would constitute defeat for any resistance, that resistance fails to achieve what it wants but rather becomes a tool for the maintenance of the relations it was initially a resistance to. This seems to be a perennial problem in the class struggle certainly, since movements aiming at abolishing relations of exploitation have all apparently thus far been unsuccessful. On the other hand, this is not to say that they are total failures. The co-option of workers' movements has been at the price of the adaptation to many of their proximal demands. For revolutionaries, of course, success or failure is relative to the ability of resistance to capitalism to achieve its aims as such, namely abolishing capitalism. It is according to this standard that something may be condemned as reformist. The fundamental point here is that made by David Couzens Hoy (2004, 2), that "critique is what makes it possible to distinguish emancipatory resistance from resistance that has been co-opted by the repressive forces."

6 Critique

De omnibus dubitandum.
–Marx (1865)

In the concluding chapters of the book, we consider the practical implications of Foucault's political ontology as we have described it. Thus far, we have seen power and resistance from both micro- and macroscopic perspectives; we will now examine the practical implications of these insights at the same two levels. As in the areas we have already looked at, from a practical point of view Foucault appropriately advocates quite different things from each level, while the recommended micro- and macro-practices are nevertheless profoundly complementary. From the macroscopic perspective, Foucault advocates precisely the practice in which he himself engages, the critical analysis of power relations; on the micro-level, he advocates deliberate practice of one's power relations with oneself and others, practices which Foucault, after the Greeks, calls "ethics." This chapter deals primarily with the macro, the next with the micro.

NORMATIVE BASES

Foucault says that we always resist, and also clearly that we must. He clearly supported some resistance at least, was clearly self-consciously engaged in resistance himself, and indeed his work on resistance clearly grows out of a practical concern for resistance.

Now, Foucault (RM 136) argues that power becomes intolerable, not because of its own objective characteristics, but rather because people become so subjectively fed up with it that we are capable "of an absolute sacrifice without our being able to recognize or suspect the slightest ambition for power or profit." This indeed for Foucault is the essence of revolt:

> The man who rebels is finally inexplicable; it takes a wrenching-away that interrupts the flow of history, and its long chains of reasons, for a man to be able, "really," to prefer the risk of death to the certainty of having to obey. (EW3 449)

Foucault effectively posits the will to rebel as a kind of element of human nature, although one which is precisely always to defy expectations, undermining any fixed human characteristic. While human nature is typically cited in support of a thesis about what constitute the optimal conditions for human existence, this definition of human nature as intrinsically dynamic leads us to an open-ended teleology of struggle for freedom; here, then, lies the prescription, the morality, of resistance:

> I am a moralist, insofar as I believe one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence—the source of human freedom—is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. (Foucault 1988, 1)

Given the ubiquity of power relations to social existence, freedom for Foucault is never something unmitigated, hence never a state to be achieved. There can therefore be no aim of absolute freedom, but rather only a strategic imperative based in the existing configuration of power relations to fight for freedom from specific power relations. As Paul Patton (1998, 73) puts it, resistance "is an effect of human freedom" ("freedom" here is in the sense of freedom of action/the will), in that, "in the attempt to exercise their capacity for autonomous actions, those subject to relations of domination will inevitably be led to oppose them."

Patton argues that "it is not at all a question of advocating such resistance." Does this mean, then, that Foucault is going too far in positing a *moral imperative* never to accept anything? It would seem that no "ought" can be implied by the "is" of resistance, insofar as the actual tendency towards resistance cannot lead to a normative claim that resistance is good. Rather, this tendency makes a separate normative claim redundant, for if resistance is in our nature, then we are always already resisting, since we are ourselves running up against power in our attempt to act freely. Foucault's prescription of resistance is not an "ought" beyond the "is" of resistance: it is simply the "is" of Foucault's own resistance qua intellectual. This does not give us a morality in the conventional sense, because not all resistance is to be supported. Rather, Foucault's morality, grounded in the fact of human resistance, is not to support all resistance, but precisely to *question* everything, resistance itself included, and it is why this is a "task" inherent to "human existence," rather than a morality in the sense of a set of immutable rules, or even an immutable standard of deliberation or judgement: Foucault's "morality" is simply a specific, self-conscious, directed resistant practice, which is indeed how he saw it himself (cf. DE2 1566–67).

Foucault's analyses of power outrage the reader. The obvious interpretation of this reaction is either as indicative of a latent normativity in the reader, or that Foucault himself is speaking with normative intent, which is then transmitted to his readers. In line with my reduction of morality

in Foucault to resistant practice, I would suggest that what we are rather seeing is a kind of communication between the resistance of the reader and Foucault's resistance. This "communication" relies on the fact of the coherence of all power relations in a single network, and the inevitability of resistance to these power relations. Both Foucault and the reader are caught up in the same network of power relations, extending across all societies and across history, and they are both resisting that same network. Foucault's analyses serve to lay bare that network, and as such are connected both to his own resistance to power and that of his readers. Of course, the relevance that one finds in Foucault's analysis depends on the relevance, for example, of the specific technologies analysed to one's own experience.

But is there not a kind of altruistic, sympathetic outrage invoked even in those readers who have no experience of the mechanisms of power Foucault describes? Certainly, but resistance on the behalf of another is still our resistance: it is still against what we are told or led to do, against power, still our own resistance. This is not to say that we are all rational egoists. There is no rational calculus underlying resistance, whether in our own name or in that of others; the apriori of resistance is, as we have seen, not rational. So our outrage does not have to be in our own interest to nevertheless count as our own resistance—it is rather the relation of our outrage, or, more importantly, of our outraged actions, to power that determines whether or not they count as resistance. This is also then not to imply that power degrades us all equally, such that it is always in our self-interest to resist it, although interests certainly do have a bearing on resistance. Foucault (1988, 11) rightly repudiates such views: "It would be pushing it a bit too far to say that those who exercise power are victims. In a sense it's true that they can get caught in the trap . . . but they're not as much the victims as the others." Even if we do not have clear self-interests in common with the oppressed, we may still, on the basis of our own experience of the contemporary strategies and techniques of power, find common cause with them in opposing something for which we feel deep and visceral dislike. Of course, it is perfectly possible that we will not feel these things, and hence feel no solidarity! But this effect does occur, and is precisely what we typically respond to Foucault's analyses: most of us feel horror at the execution at the beginning of *Discipline and Punish*, and then feel deeply unsettled by the description of the carceral system in the rest of the book.

Such second-hand resistance may be supposed as the motive force behind these analyses themselves. Biographically, they come out of, or are at least contemporaneous with, Foucault's political activity resisting phenomena related to those he analyses. That political activity, certainly his activity in resisting the prison system, was not based on his own oppression by the prison system itself. However, of course, there is always the potential for any of us to go to prison, which therefore does give us a personal investment in resistance—but there is scarcely any form of power that might not at least potentially affect any given member of society.

There is a gap between Foucault's analysis of power and political activism, of course: most obviously, the former is different in that it is historical, and only related to the present as a genealogy of the present problem. Foucault (PK 212) in 1977 admits coyly that there is a "polemical or political objective" to some extent in his analyses. I say "coyly," because he simultaneously claims that he goes in for neither polemics nor politics (cf. RM 162; *see* STP 6 for Foucault's repudiation of "politics"), so the objective should not be understood as political or polemical per se, but rather simply as motivated, and perhaps also resistant. Foucault (FL 462–63) in 1984 distinguishes between two roles which an intellectual should play (not coincidentally, these are two compartments of his own life), namely the professional role, and also the "role as citizen." While, in a sense, the role of the critical intellectual is political, the intellectual critic is not doing politics in the same sense as the politician, or even the activist. Foucault of course did wear an activist hat on occasions, but this does not have to mitigate the relatively rarefied nature of his intellectual work.

Foucault's intellectual activity is a problematisation with an agenda, a "re-problematization." While Foucault (PK 212) does say that his intellectual work is "fabrication," he does not mean that he is making up facts; rather, he means that facts are themselves something fabricated in a violence done to things: "There are no 'facts-in-themselves,' for a sense must always be projected into them before there can be 'facts,'" as Nietzsche (WP 556) says. Of course, it has been argued that Foucault does commit historical inaccuracies—but if he does, he does not intend to do so. While Foucault's analyses are in a sense a form of political activity, it is an activity guided by the things it does violence to qua discourse, an exercise in tendentious, resistant truth-telling. Foucault does history to help the present struggle precisely by paying fresh attention to the realities, by inscribing them in a new analytical framework, which is itself tailored to the present objective, which does, as Charles Taylor (1984, 164–65) points out, amount to "one-sided" simplification. According to Foucault's epistemology, however, all knowledge involves a simplification. What this means is that the condemnatory force, which certainly exists in Foucault's analyses, works not through the immediate invocation of a normative standard, but by bringing the readers to make connections with their own resistance, by presenting them with facts in a certain way, that is neither inaccurate (since there is no perfectly accurate representation of the facts—all accounts are tendentious, and those that deny that they are are insidiously tendentious) nor imbued with an explicit bias.

Now, some commentators claim that Foucault is explicitly condemnatory. Nancy Fraser (1995, 143) claims that words like "biopower" carry "ominous overtones," but this seems to me to be confusing the reaction to Foucault's descriptions with their intrinsic content; there's nothing intrinsically sinister about the word biopower when, say, it is used to denote biologically-based fuel sources. Jon Simons similarly claims Foucault is clearly biased against discipline and biopower. This is of course true, because his analyses are as

I have said essentially biased, but Simons means something less trivial here, quoting Foucault saying that biopower makes genocide possible. This is in fact simply a case of Foucault bringing to light facts within a fresh analytical nexus; only when one assigns a normative evaluation to genocide—and I submit that Foucault does not in his analysis—is there a normative evaluation of biopower implied in the statement of the connection between them. Simons (1995, 42) cites Foucault's (DP 308) descriptions of discipline as involving "insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties": the "unavowable petty cruelties" are simply unavowable (no-one can be held responsible), petty and cruel, so this is merely descriptive; the use of the word insidious here simply means that the leniencies in fact have problems attached to them, are not simply leniencies, but ones which play a functional role in support of the carceral system. Moreover, even if Foucault were here, in the penultimate sentence of the book,[1] to show a breach of neutrality, this hardly alters the general tenor of the study. Simons and others read Foucault according to norms, according their usual pejorative connotations, without considering that in fact there is no non-pejorative way to describe things generally held to be bad; even a euphemism for genocide like "ethnic cleansing" is sinister to most who read it. That is not to say that Hitler would have relished Foucault's analyses, however; rather, it is to be hoped that even supporters of genocide would not like the connections that Foucault draws. Still, this cannot be assumed, and Foucault's analyses will not have the same effects on everyone who reads them.

Hence, Foucault is not playing the game of explicit moral condemnation. Certainly, he himself does condemn things, but this is not done explicitly in his work; rather, he hopes through descriptive analysis to produce effects in the reader. His critique combines with the reader's resistance: "I do it so that those who are inserted in certain relations of power, who are implicated in them, might escape them through their actions of resistance and rebellion, might transform them in order not to be subjugated any longer" (RM 174), allowing them to understand the strategic nature of what they are resisting—and this is part of Foucault's own resistance.

We see power indicted, not by a sleight of hand or subterfuge on Foucault's part so much as by the fact that he is laying bare technologies of power which we are, in our own way, already resisting, hence may then recognise as such after reading Foucault. Foucault does have a morality, as we have seen him say. This morality is not however normative in the usual sense, but rather *transnormative*—not prescribing any norms, but rather representing an ethic which itself does not embody any norms, but rather binds Foucault himself precisely to question norms.

PHILOSOPHY AS CRITIQUE

While Foucault had earlier eschewed the label of philosopher,[2] he later resumes the label by reconceiving the enterprise of philosophy starting in

1978. In a January 1978 Collège de France lecture, Foucault already defines what he does "having to do with" philosophy:

> What I do is, after all, neither history, nor sociology, nor economics. But it's certainly something which, in one way or another, and for some simple reasons of fact, has to do with philosophy, which is to say with the politics of truth, because I can't imagine many definitions of the word "philosophy" other than that one. (STP 4–5)

In a talk given later in 1978, Foucault goes on to reimagine philosophy in more detail in the light of his understanding of power:

> Perhaps one could conceive that there is still a certain possibility of playing a role in relation to power left for philosophy, which would not be a role of foundation or of renewal of power. Perhaps philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on condition that this role no longer consist in emphasising, in the face of power, the same old law of philosophy, on condition that philosophy stop thinking of itself as prophecy, on condition that philosophy stop thinking of itself either as pedagogy, or as legislation, and that it gives itself the task of analysing, of elucidating, of making visible, and thus of intensifying the struggles that unfold around power, the strategies of the adversaries inside power relations, the tactics utilised, the sites of resistance, on condition in short that philosophy stop posing the question of power in terms of good or bad, but rather it does so in terms of existence. Don't ask: is power good or is it evil, legitimate or illegitimate, a question of right of morality? Rather, simply, try to rid the question of power of all the moral and juridical overtones which we have previously given it, and naïvely ask the question, which hasn't been posed that often, even if effectively a number of people have been posing it for a long time: in what do power relations essentially consist?[3]
>
> Long ago we knew the role of the philosopher is not to discover what is hidden, but to make visible precisely what is visible, which is to say, to take what is so close, what is so immediate, what is so intimately connected to ourselves that we cannot perceive it, and make it apparent. Where the role of science is to make known that which we do not see, the role of philosophy is to make seen that which we already do see. After all, to this extent, the task of philosophy today could well be: what is it about these power relations in which we are caught and in which philosophy itself has been tangled up for at least the last hundred and fifty years? (DE2 540–41)

Clearly, the role Foucault prescribes here for the philosopher is essentially *critical*. It is the exercise not of proposing solutions, nor of discovering anything new, but of examining what is already known. Now, this *purely* critical

vision of philosophy is somewhat surprising in that I earlier portrayed Foucault as engaging in an exercise of conceptual *construction*, but these two go hand-in-hand for Foucault: "If we are not to settle for the . . . empty dream of freedom, . . . this historico-critical attitude must also be an experimental one" (EW1 316); the invention of concepts is helpful to criticism. Foucault's conceptual activity is about trying to invent new ways of thinking—precisely as opposed to *discovering* deep truths. This, for him, was a universal human activity, an essential resistance:

> It is not ideas that guide the world. But it is precisely because the world does have ideas (and because it continuously produces lots of them) that the world is not passively led by those who direct it or by those who would like to teach everyone what to think.[4]

Conceptual construction is however not the activity which Foucault assigns to *philosophy*, unlike for Deleuze and Guattari (1994). Rather, he charges philosophy with the historical investigation of the relationship between politics and truth.

Critique is for Foucault not the function only of the philosophers, however. Simultaneously with his redefinition of philosophy, Foucault (FL 461) "reclaims" the term "intellectual," charging intellectuals, who presumably constitute a broader category than philosophers, with the same critical task as philosophy. Indeed, as early as 1971, Foucault (Foucault 1974, 171) identifies the critique of the functioning of institutions as "the real political task in a society such as ours."[5]

This was thirty-seven years ago, but society is today in the relevant respects even more in need of criticism, critique becoming more vital the more sophisticated the integrative functions of the ensemble of power relations become (cf. EW1 317). Indeed, critique, in a general sense, is in fact essential in respect of *any* resistance movement, regardless of the configuration of forces. In "The Subject and Power," Foucault makes the even broader claim that "the analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations and the 'agonism' between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is . . . the political task that is *inherent in all social existence*" (EW3 343; emphasis added). This follows for him from the fact that power is inescapable, which "makes all the more politically necessary the analysis of power relations in a given society, their historical formation, the source of their strength or fragility, the conditions that are necessary to transform some or to abolish others" (EW3 343).

Foucault is influenced by Kant's interpretation of the Enlightenment as, in Kant's own words, "man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another" (PT 7). In this spirit, Foucault depicts *critique* as a specific counterpart to the modern art of government, a counter-art; in Foucault's words, "the art of not being governed quite so much" (PT 29):

> Critique is the movement by which the subject gives itself the right to question truth on its power effects and question power on its discourses of truth; well! critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of considered indocility.[6]

This self-conscious resistance Foucault identifies as a hallmark of modernity, qua the Enlightenment, as inaugural to "the attitude of modernity" (EW1 309). Indeed, critique is necessary to determine whether a given tactic is truly resistant or not. This is the defining point of David Couzens Hoy's *Critical Resistance*: that resistance can be either with or against "domination," but what he calls "critical resistance" is essentially against it, because "critique is what makes it possible to distinguish emancipatory resistance from resistance that has been co-opted by the repressive forces" (Hoy 2004, 2). This distinction can be understood, in Foucaultian terms, not as normative, but rather as tactical.

In Foucault's study of governmentality qua the problematic of modern political thought, he points to a pair of opposites inaugurated simultaneously at the level of macro-practice: while the technology of government essentially implies the question, how should one govern?, there is a simultaneous counter-art in which the governed ask how they can not be governed in the way that they are being governed (PT 27–28). While Foucault does not condemn the macro-practice of government per se, he does refuse to engage in it qua intellectual, Foucault seeing intellectuals as obligated to resist power.

AGAINST UTOPIANISM

The diagnostic function of critique replaces the traditional justification of the legitimacy of a struggle. Legitimacy is not determined for Foucault by any of the traditional methods, which is to say, by reference to formal criteria of legitimacy deriving from natural law (as in Locke) or some social telos (as in Hobbes), by comparison with a society to come (e.g. communism in Marxism) or with a freedom lost (Rousseau, Fourier, contemporary anarcho-primitivism), or even the "regulative ideal" of Habermas' "ideal speech community." Simons (1995, 51–52) casts Habermas in a Foucaultian light, pointing out that Habermas believes that legitimacy is itself historically constituted, by "rational agreement . . . by free and equal persons," but I would argue this makes the ideal speech community the criterion of legitimacy at a meta level, hence Foucault's (EW1 298) own position that Habermas "gives communicative relations . . . a function that I would call 'utopian.'"[7]

All ways of distinguishing struggles by reference to legitimacy ultimately involve positing a way things should be, a normative standard, either a fixed human nature with which society must accord, or a template for an optimum future society. The normative assumption is either (as in anarchism) that power must be deposed completely, or that there is some

optimum situation of power relations, at least in broad terms; even conservatives pursue their own specific conception of the optimum, even if, say for fascists, that may mean a maximum. As we saw before, Foucault has considerable sympathy for general opposition to power, but only when conducted critically-strategically, so only as long as it does not become a total opposition which spreads itself so widely as to be ineffective. Attempts to determine an optimum, however, Foucault has no sympathy for, because it means constraining people's political options. That is to say, he is not shy about identifying *excesses* of power—as in the cases of Stalinism and fascism (PT 43)—but refuses either to adopt the norm of the abolition of power, or, somewhat paradoxically, to acknowledge that there can be any point at which we can say we have *enough* power.

For Foucault, utopianism is a kind of natural corollary of critique, however:

> Critique only exists in relation to something other than itself: it is an instrument, a means for a future or a truth which it will not know and which it will not be; it watches over a domain which it really wants to police but where it is unable to lay down the law. (Foucault 1990, 36; cf. PT 25)

This urge to police what it cannot possibly police, the future in which what is criticised is superseded is in fact an invalid urge, for Foucault. Foucault is then advocating that intellectuals suppress this urge, and rather remain at the critical level. Foucault generally opposes the attempt to prescribe how things should be, the kind of society that is desirable, which we might loosely, and pejoratively, label utopianism.

In 1967, Foucault (EW2 178) defined utopias as "society perfected or the reverse of society, . . . spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal"; he makes similar but much scanter comments in *The Order of Things* (OT xviii–xix). In 1978, he distinguishes Jeremy Bentham's panopticon from utopias, claiming that

> The fact that this real life isn't the same thing as the theoreticians' schemes doesn't entail that these schemes are therefore utopian, imaginary and so on. One could only think this if one had a very impoverished notion of the real . . . these programs induce a whole series of effects in the real (which isn't of course the same as saying that they take the place of the real): they crystallize into institutions, they inform individual behavior, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things. (EW3 232)

There is no noticeable shift in Foucault's position in this decade-long gap: utopias are for Foucault something unreal, though with a real function. Foucault distinguishes between the utopia, an image which performs

a certain function in a society precisely by virtue of its unreality, and the sub-utopian real plan, which is a contributing element of the reality. A utopia has a kind of necessary unreality to it: it's not supposed to be where we are, or even within immediate grasp, but is defined both by its desirability and its unreality, while a scheme like the panopticon, though somewhat abstract, is nevertheless meant for immediate application, so not utopian. The distinction here is that between Stalin's five-year plans and communism: the former is a real plan, the implementation of which was attempted, despite that it contained exaggerated expectations and fantasy, whereas the latter was something that these plans were ultimately supposed to pave a path to, but via coordinates as yet unknown. This utopianism that Foucault refuses, rather than the technocratic five-year plan, is typically assigned as the function of the intellectual:

> For a rather long period, people have asked me to tell them what will happen and give them a program for the future. We know very well that, even with the best intentions, those programs become a tool, an instrument of oppression. Rousseau, a lover of freedom, was used in the French Revolution to build up a model of social oppression. Marx would be horrified by Stalinism and Leninism.[8] (TS 10; *see also* EW1 316)

Foucault sees this as a lesson of the twentieth century:

> One of the great experiences we've had [between 1945 and 1982] is that all those social and political programs have been a great failure. We have come to realize that things never happen as we expect from a political program, and that a political program has always, or nearly always, led to abuse or political domination from a bloc—be it from technicians or bureaucrats. (EW1 172)

Utopianism can serve to license a wantonness at the technocratic level. Of course, one can have one without the other, an anti-bureaucratic utopianism (e.g. anarchism), or a bureaucracy with only realistic aims. The former stands condemned because its opposition is so total that it is naïve with relation to Foucault's understanding of power, failing to pick its fights strategically in an awareness of the ultimate resilience of power. That said, Foucault is not totally opposed to anarchism, as we have seen, so long as it is an anarchism that is not utopian, but rather strategic, defined by its thoroughgoing criticality, rather than a utopian aim.

Foucault believes that refusing the utopian intellectual function in favour of pure critique can undercut the utopianism of others, and even the more modest programs of legislators and technocrats:

> I concern myself with determining problems, unleashing them, revealing them within the framework of such complexity as to shut the

> mouths of prophets and legislators: all those who speak *for* others and *above* others. It is at that moment that the complexity of the problem will be able to appear in its connection with people's lives; and consequently, the legitimacy of a common enterprise will be able to appear through concrete questions, difficult cases, revolutionary movements, reflections, and evidence. (RM 159)

Note that this desire to shut the mouths of those who *speak for* others does not mean that one should not *resist for* others, which I have already argued is something that Foucault does do. For Foucault, complex analysis of political problems can function to de-legitimise the political agents who trade in simplifications, and representation of others: this paradigmatically must mean the politician, but also encompasses the bureaucrat and even the revolutionary—in short, the entire panoply of twentieth-century political contestation. Foucault's (EW1 172) alternative is the "process of political creation" of the social movements, who do not offer a program, but rather a critique. While Foucault is not completely opposed to programmatic politics, in the sense that he was at least positively inclined towards the alliance of the PCF and the Parti Socialiste in the 1981 French elections in which they took power, this was not in the name of their program so much as in the name of the "logic of the Left" (EW3 454) they instantiated, an ethos then rather than a program. He did not, moreover, explicitly support them (Macey 1993, 436), and after their victory immediately declared, "Now the time has come to react to what is beginning to be done" (EW3 454). Foucault is for limitless critique:

> The necessity of reform mustn't be allowed to become a form of blackmail serving to limit, reduce, or halt the exercise of criticism. Under no circumstances should one pay attention to those who tell one: "Don't criticize, since you're not capable of carrying out a reform." That's ministerial cabinet talk. Critique doesn't have to be the premise of a deduction that concludes, "this, then, is what needs to be done." It should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, essays in refusal. It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage in a programming. It is a challenge directed at what is. (EW3 236; *see also* FL 453)

Richard Rorty has made the contrary claim that one does need to have an alternative vision to criticise the status quo. Rorty (1995, 211) like Foucault condemns the tendency of philosophers to claim to know what they cannot in the area of political teleology. Unlike Foucault, for Rorty antiutopianism implies that arguments are only worthwhile when they point to some real-existing alternative, which can be assessed as to its desirability. Such an alternative used to exist in the Soviet Union; since its collapse,

however, Rorty (1995, 212) argues that there is no real alternative to capitalism, which means that the term "capitalism" has become meaningless (Rorty 1995, 218).

It is irrelevant to our purposes whether Rorty is right that the Soviet experience proves the undesirability of the alternative it represented, or in his implicit assumption that the remaining "socialist" societies offer no such alternative, since the Foucaultian point against Rorty (2000, 129), who identifies his post-Cold War opponents precisely as the "Foucauldian left," is that we can criticise *regardless* of the lack of an alternative.

As Foucault says,

> radical criticism . . . is utterly indispensable for any transformation. For a transformation that would remain within the same mode of thought, a transformation that would only be a certain way of better adjusting the same thought to the reality of things, would only be a superficial transformation. (EW3 456–57)

Since we can't have a transformation without criticism, Rorty's argument has ultimately relatively conservative implications, arguing against the very prerequisite for producing an alternative society.

As we have seen, critique can, if not closely controlled, produce a dangerous utopianism. The specific dangers of utopianism in the twentieth century, in which the utopian vision has licensed its antithesis, derive from the more general fact that the pre-prepared schema of how things should be serves to distract from the unpredicted realities which inevitably emerge during social transitions, and thus to prevent the appropriate tactical taking into account of the present. Of people who were affected by his critiques of the carceral system, Foucault (EW3 236) said, "it's because of the need not to tie them down or immobilize them that there can be no question of trying to dictate 'what is to be done.'"[9] For the phenomenon to reach its "full amplitude, the most important thing is not to bury them under the weight of prescriptive, prophetic discourse":

> If I don't ever say what must be done, it isn't because I believe that there's nothing to be done; on the contrary, it is because I think that there are a thousand things to do, to invent, to forge, on the part of those who, recognizing the relations of power in which they're implicated, have decided to resist or escape them. (RM 174)

For Foucault then, criticism can to some extent rupture existing power relations, whereas expounding alternatives is not particularly helpful in doing this:

> If prisons and punitive mechanisms are transformed, it won't be because a plan of reform has found its way into the heads of the social

> workers; it will be when those who have a stake in that reality, all those people, have come into collision with each other and with themselves, run into dead ends, problems, and impossibilities, been through conflicts and confrontations—when critique has been played out in the real, not when reformers have realized their ideas. (RM 174)

This is not to completely condemn governmental rationality, however, any more than it is to condemn power itself. Rather, simply,

> the role of the intellectual today is not that of establishing laws or proposing solutions or prophesying, since by doing that one can only contribute to the functioning of a determinate situation of power that to my mind must be criticized. (RM 157)

Not only is political planning unhelpful to resistance, but it actively helps the formation of new structures and strategies of power.

REFORM AND REVOLUTION

There are traditionally, particularly in leftist discourse, held to be two modalities of political change, namely reform and revolution. One is piecemeal, the other, in some sense, total. Reformism and revolutionism, qua the programmatic pursuit of a change piecemeal or all-at-once respectively, are *both* rejected by Foucault. This is part and parcel of refusing to have a pre-prepared plan of action: "We need to escape the dilemma of being either for or against" (EW3 455)—again, we must reject the logic of contradiction. We must accept neither the reformist blackmail that says you have to say how to make things better or you can't criticise, nor the revolutionary blackmail that says that we must have an eschatological stance towards the totality of the present or we are co-opted. Reform and revolution are both allowable for Foucault, but he favours neither exclusively.

Foucault does take a dim view of "reform" in relation to the prison system, but then prison reformers are, according to Foucault's analysis at least, not able to bring about reform at all, but are rather a stable feature of the carceral system. Not all reform takes on this character, and, as I have argued, some ostensible revolutionaries are just as ineffective.

Foucault (FL 223) says that he neither does nor does not want a revolution. Paras (2006, 86) claims that this position backtracks on Foucault's earlier claim that "the role of the intellectual today must be to establish for the image of revolution the same level of desirability that existed in the 19th century" (DE2 86) in 1976. Clearly there is a difference between the two statements: in the former, the intellectual has a descriptive-analytic role; in the latter, a role as a political agent. Our overarching point in this chapter, however, is that for Foucault these roles are in practice combined in the intellectual. If

the purpose of analysis is as an aid to resistance, and if resistance must lead now and again to revolution—and clearly, for Foucault, philosopher of discontinuity, it must—then the intellectual's role is to bring us cooperatively to the point where the intellectual can say that it *is* time for revolution.

If, as Foucault teaches, we have a tendency always to demand change, and power relations are arranged in a mutually-supportive framework, then it is reasonable to assume that sooner or later a point will be reached where there is a number of power relations which need to be pushed aside simultaneously, through revolution. There is of course a long and involved debate on the possibility of achieving the same aims through peaceful, gradual change. While Foucault does not address this as such, and while he rejects the revolutionary claim that *only* revolutionary change is worthwhile, reformism, qua the perspective that revolution can *always* be avoided, is utterly inimical to Foucault's worldview. Foucault thinks in terms of breaks and rupture; his conception of history is of relatively stable orders punctuated by massive shifts:

> Reformers wish to change the institution without touching the ideological system. Revolutionary action, on the contrary, is defined as the simultaneous agitation of consciousness and institutions; this implies that we attack the relationships of power through the notions and institutions that function as their instruments, armature, and armor. Do you think that the teaching of philosophy—and its moral code—would remain unchanged if the penal system collapsed? (LCP 228)

A change at this level we may call a political "revolution" in a strict sense, even if it does not necessarily involve burning barricades or blood-letting. Now, Paras might argue that this is an example of the period of Foucault's intense engagement with Marxism, in which he was wont to fulminate about revolution. This is true, but there is no reason to believe that Foucault ever backtracks on these claims. Perhaps, rather, it is simply that the *possibility* of revolution seems more remote in Foucault's later years. For Foucault, such a change in the strategic situation is all-important. Paras does not include in his quotation from Foucault's 1976 interview the means by which Foucault advocates that intellectuals establish the desirability of revolution, namely the establishment of "new modes of knowledge, of new modes of pleasure and of sexual life" (DE2 86). Without these, revolution for Foucault is *not* yet clearly desirable in 1976. Revolution itself, says Foucault, must be *transformed* in order to make it desirable, at least in the West, where it is not currently desired by the masses. Logically then the question of its desirability is not yet settled, and its ripeness as a possibility must be discerned by the intellectuals exercising their strategic-analytic function:

> I dream of the intellectual . . . who locates and marks out within the inertias and constraints of the present the points of weakness, the openings,

> the lines of forces, who incessantly displaces themselves, who doesn't know for sure either where they will be or what they will think tomorrow, because they are too attentive to the present; who contributes to the posing of the question of knowing whether the revolution is worth it, and what kind of revolution it is and what it is worth, it being understood that only those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about can reply. (DE2 268–69; cf. FL 225)

This is to say that the role of the intellectual is not to play the role of an armchair general, nor to pontificate about the future, but to analyse the present on behalf of those who might actually opt to militate at the risk of their own existence. Thus, while intellectuals are not to lay down visions of the future to justify revolution, the concrete question of whether to launch one, based in the concrete situation and the analysis of the strategic array of power relations, is still an intellectual question, since it is an immediate question. Foucault talks less of revolution in the period after 1975 for the obvious reason that, certainly in his milieu, radicalism had declined, and as such the situation was quite different in respect of revolution.

This determination of the desirability of revolution by intellectuals is not for Foucault the final arbiter of the desirability of revolution. Rather, it is the masses, who must actually carry through a revolution at risk to themselves, who must decide. They must, with help from the intellectuals, transform themselves to make this decision possible for them. While the masses are the only ones who can say whether they want to risk a revolution per se, it is the intellectuals who are in the analytical position to say what the stakes are, to inform the masses' decisions.

Foucault describes the domination over the working class precisely as such, and lists a series of options that the workers might consider to resist that domination:

> States of domination do exist. . . . In a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom. . . . In such cases of domination, the problem is knowing where resistance will develop. For example, in a working class that will resist domination, will this be in unions or political parties; and what form will it take—a strike, a general strike, revolution, or parliamentary opposition? In such a situation of domination, all of these questions demand specific answers that take account of the kind and precise form of domination in question. (EW2 292–93)[10]

It is not a question of whether the working class should seek their liberation, but of when and where. However, Foucault leaves open the question of whether this must entail revolution per se, a point which has of course been historically disagreed upon. The important Foucaultian point apropos of

previous advocates of working class liberation, meaning primarily the Marxists, is that this particular liberation struggle is not somehow the key struggle which all others, those of homosexuals, or women, or ethnic groups, are dependent on, but rather something quite specific, if in this case very basic and pervasive. Hence, while revolutionary change may be necessary, it is not possible to prejudge this by saying that the liberation of the working class requires a revolution, since this leads precisely to the Marxist premise that the revolution and the liberation of the working class are one and the same, and an absolute threshold which must be breached, such that all our efforts must culminate in this single, final *Aufhebung*.

Limitless criticism and resistance must *ultimately* lead to revolution, but for Foucault that does not mean it is time for revolution yet. Indeed, Foucault assigns for the intellectual the role of determining when the situation is ripe for revolution, when revolution is desirable. This desirability rests on the desire of the masses for revolution, which in the course of the twentieth century has ebbed, at least in Europe (DE2 85). "The masses have come of age, politically and morally. They are the ones who've got to choose collectively and individually" (RM 172). This means not only that they are the agents of change; the masses have always in a sense been the agents of change. The difference now is that they no longer need the direction of intellectuals (FL 75). But this is not to say that man is yet released from his tutelage entirely:

> I do not know whether we will ever reach mature adulthood. Many things in our experience convince us that the historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults, and we have not reached that stage yet. (EW1 318)

Hence, the intellectual still has a function to play in respect of struggle. But this is one of critique as a practice alongside the masses' own practice, not as a vanguard leadership.

Foucault in fact claims that today there is a specific historical phenomenon occurring that is neither reformism nor revolutionism. Foucault doesn't declare revolution dead, à la Rorty or Francis Fukuyama (1992);

> This type of prophecy, this type of condemnation to death of revolution seems to me a bit ridiculous. We are perhaps living the end of an historical period which, since 1789–93, has been, at least in the West, dominated by the monopoly of revolution, with all the associated effects of despotism which that could imply, which is not to say that this disappearance of the monopoly of the revolution means a revalorisation of reformism. In the struggles which I'm talking to you about, indeed, are not at all a matter of reformism, since reformism's role is to stabilise a system of power to the extent of a certain number of changes, whereas in all these struggles it's a case of the destabilisation

> of mechanisms of power, of a destabilisation apparently without end. (DE2 547)

This claim which Foucault repeatedly makes (*see also* FL 223–25) that we have seen the sign of the revolution hovering over politics for nearly two centuries is ultimately somewhat Francocentric. Foucault's enthusiasm for the new social movements is also perhaps a matter of Foucault's place and time: in Foucault's day, these were emerging for the first time; since then they have been through a boom, during the altermondialism of the 1990s, followed by a bust post-September-11. While not as shiny-new, however, they do still exist, hence can provide a locus for political practice. These movements moreover carry into political practice the same ethos that Foucault has in his own work: they do not base their practice around a desired reform, though they may demand reforms, nor a revolution, but rather around resistance itself. A queer liberation movement might articulate demands for equal treatment under the law, and may want to see a fundamentally different kind of society, but its primary purpose is in resisting oppression of homosexuals as such. Social movements act as a conduit for forces for change, without becoming the government. Foucault (FL 453) calls upon all those who are governed, intellectuals or not, to hold government to account.

While Foucault is often (cf. PK 49) thought of as opposing any notion of progress, an historical relativist, as Foucault himself points out, "I don't say that humanity doesn't progress" (PK 50). Rather, he cautions us against valorising the present as better than the past. The notion of "progress" is usually seen as implying progress *towards* something, as teleological. However, this need not be the case—all that progress literally means is to move *forward*. This directionality, forward, does not imply foreknowledge of the destination, a knowledge of what is over the crest. Rather, it is based on us now, our current orientation and our appraisal of our next step. In a 1967 interview, Foucault defines progressive politics idiosyncratically in this vein. Rather than being about moving towards a goal, progressive politics for Foucault (FL 48–49) is precisely about not having any such ambition, but rather having a solid critical stance, incorporating an understanding of historical conditions, the specificity of transformations, which does not see itself in a position of "sovereign criticism," does not see itself as historically transcendent.

BODIES AND THOUGHT

Regarding the role of critique apropos of political practice, reflecting on the efficacy of his work in the light of the victory of the Left in the 1981 French national elections, Foucault said:

> I don't think that criticism can be set against transformation, "ideal" criticism against "real" transformation.

> A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking accepted practices are based.
>
> We need to free ourselves of the sacralization of the social and stop regarding that essential element in human life and social relations—I mean thought—as so much wind. (EW3 456)

Foucault's approach here answers two possible errors: one to think that practice occurs without significant influence from theory (call this spontaneism), the other to impose our theory without heeding the practical realities. Deleuze refers to both these meta-theoretical errors in passing in conversation with Foucault in 1972, when he says that previous models were either of theory having to be created by practice or that theory was what had to be put into practice (FL 74; DE1 1175). Foucault avoids the first error by insisting on the necessity of critique, that practice without strategic analysis is no good, and the second by refusing to prescribe what should be done.

Foucault radically traverses the theory/practice dichotomy moreover by conceiving of thought as itself a form of practice, albeit a highly specific one which relates to other practices in specific ways. Utopias, plans, critique, all involve thought, but in different modalities with different relations to other practices.

Here we see Foucault's materialism of the incorporeal at work, seeing thought itself as material qua practice (OT 328). Thought is not discourse, not a violence we do to things per se (*see* Chapter 1). It's rather in the order of a preparation for such a violence, a step further away from things than language. Like language, it still has a fundamental connection to non-linguistic reality, but its relation is in a sense the opposite of that of language, in that where language is an irruptive intervention into the world, thought is a kind of withdrawal from it:

> 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, and 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. (EW1 117)[11]

How is it possible to step back from things and reconsider them? On what basis can we proceed? We have already had Foucault's answer in our examination in Chapter 1 of Foucault's notion of a pure experience of things to be ordered as the basis for discursive mutation. As we saw there, albeit from a different angle, in the preface to *The Order of Things*, Foucault articulates an account of how epistemic change occurs, in which, between the codes

which establish how a given culture divides up the world and the highest level philosophies which sanctify the bases of the culture, is the domain in which culture deviates from the codes to the extent that its fundamental principles are called into question. At that point, as we have seen,

> this culture then finds itself faced with the stark fact that there exists, below the level of its spontaneous orders, things that are in themselves capable of being ordered, that belong to a certain unspoken order; the fact, in short, that order exists. As though emancipating itself to some extent from its linguistic, perceptual, and practical grids, the culture superimposed on them another kind of grid which neutralized them, which by this superimposition both revealed and excluded them at the same time, so that the culture, by this very process, came face to face with order in its primary state. It is on the basis of this newly perceived order that the codes of language, perception, and practice are criticized and rendered partially invalid. It is on the basis of this order, taken as a firm foundation, that general theories as to the ordering of things, and the interpretation that such an ordering involves, will be constructed. Thus, between the already "encoded" eye and reflexive knowledge there is a middle region which liberates order itself. . . . This middle region, then, in so far as it makes manifest the modes of being of order, can be posited as the most fundamental of all: anterior to words, perceptions, and gestures, which are then taken to be more or less exact, more or less happy, expressions of it (which is why this experience of order in its pure primary state always plays a critical role); more solid, more archaic, less dubious, always more 'true' than the theories that attempt to give those expressions explicit form, exhaustive application, or philosophical foundation. Thus, in every culture, between the use of what one might call the ordering codes and reflections upon order itself, there is the pure experience of order and of its modes of being. (OT xx–xxi)

What is described here is a space in which new ways of thinking can emerge. This fits with the ontology and epistemology we already drew out from Foucault in Chapter 1. It contrasts, however, with how Foucault is usually read, which is as a radical constructivist. Foucault does certainly, here too, take there to be what might be called "construction," but the very concept of "construction" implies the existence of a something, some raw material, to be constructed—this is the point made in the title of Ian Hacking's book, *The Social Construction of What?* Certainly, Foucault does not believe that we can attain a stable unmediated, unconstructed appreciation of reality. Nevertheless, reality does exist, our experiences do exist, and we are in contact with them all the time. We can utilise this fact to gain the leverage to think about things differently, to construct things differently; not to escape construction, but to change it.

One of the most contested passages in Foucault's oeuvre seems to me to be an example of Foucault advocating just this manoeuvre:

> Don't place sex on the side of the real, and sexuality on the side of confused ideas and illusions; sexuality is a very real historical figure, and it is what gave rise to the notion of sex, as a speculative element necessary to its functioning. Don't think that by saying yes to sex, you say no to power; on the contrary, you are following the thread of the general device [*dispositif*] of sexuality.[12] It is the insistence of sex that we must break away from, if we aim, through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality, to range bodies, pleasures, and knowledges in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance against the grips of power. Against the device of sexuality, the fulcrum for the counter-attack ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures. (VS 207–8; cf. WK 157)

This statement, a rare example of Foucault giving something like prescriptive political advice, has, as I say, caused immense difficulties for commentators. Indeed, it has affected many people's lives deeply. This is certainly the case of feminist philosopher Ladelle McWhorter, who has written an autobiographically-based book, *Bodies and Pleasures*, around this three-word phrase from *The Will to Knowledge*.

The contestation around this passage turns on the meaning of the words "bodies" and "pleasures." My contention, as I say, is that in invoking bodies, pleasures and knowledges, Foucault is pointing to the "pure experience of order and of its modes of being," upon the basis of which new reflection on order, and hence new order, may be constructed. While the role of "knowledges" in this statement is, I think, rather clear (which is presumably why this term in this passage has not come under scrutiny from commentators), in that it refers precisely to subjugated knowledges (ways of thinking about things which are not the currently-dominant ordering), the meaning of "bodies" and "pleasures" is more vexing.

The obvious interpretation would be that Foucault simply means bodies and pleasures themselves, the actual things that exist beneath the ordering of language, or rather to our own experiences of pleasure and corporeality. The problem is to understand by what rationale Foucault commends bodies and pleasures to us, while warning us against the rather superficially similar phenomena of sex—it is unclear what Foucault means by *sexe*, whether it refers to coitus, to the difference between the sexes, or to the sexual organ, but in any case, sex is something bodily—and desires.

Now, Foucault says of his history of sexuality,

> I had begun to write it as a history of the way in which sex was obscured and travestied by this strange . . . growth which was to become sexuality. Now, I believe, setting up this opposition between sex and sexuality

> leads back to the positing of power as law and prohibition, the idea that power created sexuality as a device to say no to sex. (PK 190)

Foucault's initial conception is easily comprehensible: people have always had sex, but then this thing called "sexuality" was invented and distorted it. This is in fact little more than a variation of the "repressive hypothesis" which Foucault ended up attacking in *The Will to Knowledge*, the view that our natural sexual behaviour and existence is repressed, except that on this thesis it would be artificial ideas about sexuality that repress natural sex, rather than Victorian morality repressing natural sexuality.

Foucault realises thereafter that there is no such thing as a set, natural "sex," but rather that the idea of "sex" as natural is a product of sexuality, and therefore part of what needs to be resisted in sexuality. On any definition of the word "sex," it refers to something which we cannot call a natural given, but rather to something which is identified as such precisely according to the logic of the regime of sexuality. There are those, such as Hinrich Fink-Eitel, who read the body and pleasures passage as just Foucault shifting things back another level, such that, although sex is no good as a transcendental bulwark against sexuality, bodies and pleasures are themselves natural and have been distorted by the invention of sex/sexuality:

> The prediscursive, anarchistic world of the "body and pleasure" is the silent prerequisite for the apparent monism of "discursive" power. For nowhere is it explained to us what the meaning of "the body and pleasure" is if not desire, sex or sexuality. . . . This means then that *The Will to Knowledge*, contrary to its conscious target, has basically remained the repressive theory. The discursive world of power suppresses the pre-discursive, anarchistic world of "the body and pleasure." (Fink-Eitel 1992, 64)

Fink-Eitel surely hits the nail on the head when he complains that "nowhere is it explained to us what the meaning of 'the body and pleasure' is"; Deleuze (1997, 188) makes the same point. Fink-Eitel takes it that Foucault is arguing that the reality of bodies and pleasures is suppressed and that Foucault is therefore committing exactly the same kind of move as that against which *The Will to Knowledge* is targeted.

In a sense, Fink-Eitel is right: discourse is imposed on a reality. But, as we have seen at length, this is only possible because discourse is of the same order as reality itself, namely materiality, violence. Therefore, there is no reality to be *liberated* from the violence of discourse. We cannot, in any event, forget how to speak, which is what would be required for such a "liberation." Hence, Fink-Eitel is wrong here to interpret "bodies and pleasures" as the rocks of dualism upon which Foucault founders, since this is to imply that Foucault naïvely believes we can retreat from language to pure experience as some kind of alternative to conceptualisation. He does

not. The notions of "body" or of "pleasure" are also themselves artificial categories imposed by language on reality.

Ladelle McWhorter and Judith Butler each gave papers on the question of bodies and pleasures at a 1988 symposium, which in both cases form the basis of their subsequent disquisitions on the point.

McWhorter (1989, 608) took the position in her 1988 paper that the body is something latched onto by (unnamed) readers who need to interpret Foucault's critique as a kind of liberation, which is to say, interpret him as producing a new repressive hypothesis, as Fink-Eitel does, albeit in his case as a criticism of Foucault. McWhorter (1989, 612) argues that, on the contrary, the body is itself discursively constituted: "as Foucault reminds us, the natural body is itself a discursive phenomenon." I take it that McWhorter is here alluding to Foucault's (DP 155) argument that the "natural body" was invented in the late eighteenth century. There, however, Foucault is talking about a more specific concept than that of the body *simpliciter*. McWhorter (1989, 613) argues that when Foucault refers to the body in *The Will to Knowledge*, he is again referring to this very "discursive phenomon," which for him stands as the point of resistance to any discourse which attempts to posit something eternal or transhistorical:

> We must hear "body" in Foucault's discourse, not as a metonym for nature as opposed to culture, but rather as a term referring to no thing but standing in opposition to our desire for a sure and singular source for the truth of man. (McWhorter 1989, 614)

This is to say that, since the body is something flexible and adaptable, and which also decays, referring to the body does not refer to a transhistorical natural object at all, but rather to the very non-existence of anything outside of history.

The difficulties with this interpretation are, firstly, the lack of textual evidence that this is what Foucault meant—indeed, as we shall see, there is overwhelming textual evidence that he does not use "body" this way generally in *The Will to Knowledge*—and, secondly, the fact that the body is by no means a unique exemplar of the way things really are, namely historically constituted, differing from themselves. Since it is in fact also historically constituted, we might as well focus on sex-desire itself qua evanescant phenomenon.

Ten years on, McWhorter (1999, 111) modifies her thesis somewhat after long reflection. She acknowledges the fundamental similarity between sex-desire and bodies/pleasures as things which each have their own genealogies, and understands what Foucault is doing as selecting *one* of these genealogies as being an appropriate rallying point against the other. McWhorter (1999, 176) thus sees Foucault as wanting us to look to what our bodies are now, namely "normalized," natural bodies, as a way of resisting sexuality. The central point of McWhorter's *Bodies and Pleasures* is that desire

would not be good as a point from which to launch a counterattack, since it is historically-genealogically bound up with sexuality. As Foucault says of desires,

> That notion has been used as a tool . . . a calibration in terms of normality: "Tell me what your desire is and who you are, whether you are normal or not, and then I can qualify or disqualify your desire . . ." The term "pleasure" on the other hand is virgin territory, almost devoid of meaning. There is no pathology of pleasure, no "abnormal" pleasure. It is an event "outside the subject" or on the edge of the subject, within something that is neither body nor soul, in short a notion which is neither ascribed nor ascribable.[13]

We may desire something because we are supposed to desire it, or indeed desire what is taboo precisely because it is taboo to do so; but whatever we desire, our desire is thoroughly overcoded with norms: "Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup" (Deleuze 1987, 215)—Foucault and Deleuze are agreed on this point. For Foucault, the point is that pleasures are not overcoded to the same extent. Pleasure is not, in the case in hand, always already divided at the level of the pleasure itself into sexual and non-sexual. This is one meaning of Foucault's use of the phrase "sex-desire": sex is already immanent in the desire itself, generative of it even. Pleasure is pleasure. It may make us feel uncomfortable, but one does not feel uncomfortable about having the pleasurable sensation per se, say in the case of a homosexual encounter—rather, what concerns people is whether there is a desire for the same-sex other.

The advantage of pleasure then, it seems, is that *the concept* it is not invested by power, or at least not in the way Foucault is concerned about. Feeling pleasure has not been problematised. Sex-desire is, on the other hand, no place to gain leverage against the regime of sex. Foucault in the bodies and pleasures passage presents bodies and pleasures precisely as a *point d'appui*, literally a point of support, a "fulcrum" on my translation. Robert Hurley's translation of the phrase as "rallying point" has led Anglophone commentators to miss Foucault's point that bodies et cetera serve as a point *about which* to move, rather suggesting that they are something to move *towards*.

We cannot emerge from behind the veil of language to experience pleasure per se: "There is no experience that is not a way of thinking" (EW1 201), as Foucault wrote in 1984. But the reality of bodies and pleasures can still serve as a fulcrum, reached through the concepts of pleasure and of body, for experimentation with pleasures and bodies, and the production of new realities and discourses. McWhorter is right, insofar as Foucault does use concepts; the mediation of concepts cannot be eradicated, but this does not mean those words do not refer to something extra-linguistic. What McWhorter seems to be missing is this connection to extra-linguistic reality.

Butler (1989; 1997; 2002), for her part, interprets the ambiguity between concept and reality in the "bodies and pleasures" passage as intended by Foucault. Thus, Butler (2002, 14) sees Foucault as trying to make a deep metaphysical point: "The vacillation he performs for us, through his practice of ambiguous reference, is an effort to compel us to think according to a nonconventional grammar." It is correct to say that Foucault is neither speaking purely about the signified nor the signifier, although Butler is, it seems to me, overegging the pudding in arguing that Foucault deliberately produces this ambiguity. Rather, I suspect it is more a case that he does not bother to cash out the ambiguities, leaving his ontology implicit, if indeed complex and unconventional. However, ultimately Foucault is doing something very simple, referring to bodies and pleasures themselves, the actual bodies we are/inhabit, and pleasures we experience/constitute. Of course, he is doing a necessary violence to these things merely in the act of referring to them using linguistic terms, but Foucault can hardly be expected to point out the inherent complexities of language-use every time he uses language to refer to something.

Foucault is speaking about things rather more simply than his interpreters have tended to allow. This is indicated in the passages of *The Will to Knowledge* leading up to his invocation of bodies and pleasures. Sex, says Foucault, was created within the "device of sexuality": "at the root of that device is not the rejection of sex, but a positive economy of the body and pleasures." Of course, here "sex" clearly refers to something historically constituted, whereas bodies and pleasures are clearly anything but, rather appearing as a kind of material substrate. Certainly, our concept of the "body" must have a genealogy, as must our concept of "power," but Foucault is not researching these genealogies, but rather those of sex and sexuality. The body and power are in this study on the side of concepts introduced by Foucault by way of providing a materialist grid of analysis for sexuality:

> The purpose of the present study is in fact to show how deployments of power are directly connected to the body—to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures. . . . Hence I do not envisage a "history of mentalities" that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a "history of bodies" and the manner in which what is most material and vital in them has been invested. (WK 151–52)

Similarly, the corrective Foucault advocates for sexuality is not simply genealogical analysis, but rather the actual production of new pleasures:

> "We have to liberate our desire," they say. *No!* We have to create a new pleasure. And then maybe desire will follow. (EW1 166)

On this matter, Foucault was famously at odds with Deleuze. Deleuze (1997, 189) recounts the story of Foucault telling him, the last time the two

met, that Foucault cannot stand the word "desire," because it implies a lack (of what is desired, presumably), or repression (of the underlying desire). Deleuze counters that for his part, he "can scarcely tolerate the word *pleasure*." For Deleuze, desire represents our capacity to become something else, whereas pleasure is a constant which constrains. For Foucault, desire is an effect of power, while pleasure is unencumbered by its limitations. The two positions are not mirror images: Foucault sees desire as the main danger, what must be criticised, while Deleuze (1997, 190) sees pleasure as simply something that gets in the way, "a reterritorialization." He is completely right about this, but Foucault is not concerned with Deleuze's project of "deterritorialisation," but rather with the unlimited possibilities of perpetrating violence against reality, for the purposes of which it is necessary to plant our feet on the ground.

Thus, the assertion that bodies and knowledges can serve as a fulcrum for counterpower is actually a restatement of Foucault's materialism. The assertion that Foucault was at first inclined to make, that sex is the counterpoint to sexuality, would be based in the same ontology, but would simply represent a different, and inaccurate, reading of the strategic relation of forces; it is difficult indeed to see how sex could possibly be useful in resistance to sexuality. As it is, Foucault's strategic assessment is that we must turn to experimentation in the practice of pleasure, beyond the category of sex, which is clearly caught up now with sexuality:

> The possibility of using our bodies as a possible source of very numerous pleasures is something that is very important. For instance, if you look at the traditional construction of pleasure, you see that bodily pleasure, or pleasures of the flesh, are always drinking, eating, and fucking. What frustrates me, for instance, is the fact that the problem of drugs is always envisaged only as a problem of freedom and prohibition. I think that drugs must become a part of our culture. (EW1 165)

Foucault is not here setting up hedonism as a counter-power, but rather asking for a reorientation about the extra-discursive pivot of experience. In the bodies and powers passage there is both a descriptive and a prescriptive moment. Foucault states what we must do "if" we want to range bodies and powers against the device of sexuality. He does not tell us that we must oppose it, but still we must, and in the way he suggests too, because these real fulcra of bodies, pleasures and knowledges are the ones upon which the inevitable resistance should turn. The fulcra are not there to be "liberated," and as such cannot in themselves give content to what is to come after. "The soul is the prison of the body" (DP 30) does not mean that once we get out from under the soul we will be completely free. Rather, this is a more acute metaphor: as in life, to get out of prison presents one with new, more complex problems—but it is still preferable!

7 Ethics

> Ethics and aesthetics are one.
>
> –Wittgenstein (2001, 86)

In this concluding chapter we discuss Foucault's conception of the ethical and the question of what personal practice is appropriate given Foucault's political philosophy as reconstructed thus far.

ETHICS AND THE CRITICAL ETHOS

The macro-practice Foucault proposes is critique; Foucault will not give any more guidance on how to oppose power at the strategic macro-level than that it must be informed by thoroughgoing, analytical criticism of the present, and that it must itself organise strategically.

Now, while in Foucault's own life, this critical macro-practice clearly dovetailed with the micro-practice of political activism, and while Foucault held that theory is a form of practice, Foucault does not claim that there is a necessary correlation between one's theory and one's personal practice. Reflecting in 1983 on the positions taken by various philosophers during the *Nazizeit* in Germany, Foucault concludes,

> there is a very tenuous "analytic" link between a philosophical conception and the concrete political attitude of someone who is appealing to it; the "best" theories do not constitute a very effective protection against disastrous political choices; certain great themes such as "humanism" can be used to any end whatever. (PE 374)

While Foucault does not then argue it is a matter of political indifference what philosophical theories we adopt, they are not much of a prophylactic against certain dangers. Foucault reaches the conclusion that we would expect: that rigorous criticism is the requisite prophylactic against supporting the wrong cause, that we should not just seek to "apply" theories in practice, but on the basis of practice modify our theories. However, he adds that

> the key to the personal political 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. (PE 374)

There is certainly a failure of critical reflection at a macro-level in, say, the support of Heidegger for Nazism. But in such a case, there is also a failure at the micro-level. This is not a failure of Heidegger's philosophy itself, but rather a failure of *ethos*. Heidegger's philosophy does not, *pace* Bourdieu, imply his politics; it's rather a case that his lack of an adequate philosophical *ethos*, along with a failure of critical political analysis, allows him to make a catastrophic political choice. Thus, the tenuous link between the philosopher's theory and the philosopher's politics goes back to a tenuous link between his theory and his ethos.

Now, Foucault (PE 377) in the same 1983 interview distinguishes ethos from ethics: "ethics is a practice; ethos is a manner of being." While our manner of being may avert catastrophe in the domain of personal political practice, it is not in itself a practice. Foucault effectively suggests combining the philosophical ethos with an ethics counterposed to another practice, politics. Apropos of then-recent events in Poland, the imposition of martial law and imprisonment of dissidents, ethics for Foucault means not accepting what was happening in Poland; despite there being nothing the government of France can do about it, hence no "political" solution, there is an ethical practice of non-acceptance of this state of affairs. This is not critique per se, but it is clearly related to Foucault's conception of critique as not limited by the need to propose an alternative—the difference is that this ethics can be a non-specialised, non-intellectual, mass practice.

Critique is thus allied to an anti-political ethical practice: "The ethico-political choice we have to take every day is to determine which is the main danger" (EW1 256). Note that here we are trying to see the greatest danger, not the least of our arrayed evils: we are choosing what to combat, not what to endorse; the intellectual's critique is an indispensable aid to this everyday ethico-political judgement. The ethos and ethics of the critical intellectual belong with the practices we detailed in the previous chapter: the ethos is a manner of being which complements the critical practice of the intellectual and prevents him being pulled into nefarious politics; this ethics is the generalised practice in response to pervasive government by which all those who are governed, citizen-intellectual and citizen simpliciter alike, hold government to account.

The notion of ethos here in particular, however, points in a different direction to that in which the intellectual critical practice points, towards the philosopher's self rather than her world. Although an ethos is not a practice, its inculcation points towards a practice oriented towards the self, towards "ethics" in a different sense of the word to the one we have just outlined. This is the ethics for which Foucault is generally known. In the introduction to the second volume of his *History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure*, composed in the last years of his life and published only shortly before his death, Foucault defines this ethics as "'ethics,' understood as the elaboration of a form of self-relation that enables the individual to constitute himself as the subject of a moral conduct" (LP 274; cf. UP 251). While

of course we can draw connections between this ethics of subjectivation and the ethics of permanent resistance—Bernauer and Mahon (1994, 144–45) indeed seem to cast the latter notion of ethics as a kind of formative stage of the former, and as we will see, Foucault thinks that effective resistance may ultimately depend on practices of ethical self-relation—they are not straightforwardly the same thing, i.e. Foucault uses the word "ethics" in at least two different senses in his later work.

Ethics is here defined as similarly being a matter of self-relation and subject-constitution. Now, we have argued that the formation of the subject through self-relation is, in Foucaultian terms, "subjectivation," and that this first occurred with the Greeks, which is precisely the context in which Foucault comes to this definition of ethics, on the basis of his examination of ancient Greek ethical thought. This is not to say that ethics is synonymous with subjectivation, but it does seem to be the case historically that subjectivation was invented in the same moment as ethics. As Deleuze (1988, 100–101) puts it in his reading of Foucault, the Greeks "bent the outside, through a series of practical exercises." These practices were, in Greek terms, the *tekhne tou biou*, the "art of life," one form of which was the *epimeleia heautou*, the *souci de soi*, care/concern of/for the self. They were a set of tools for exercising power over oneself, in a constructive manner. These practices are the armoury of both subjectivation and of ancient Greek ethics. The difference between ethics and self-formation simpliciter is that subjectivation does not logically of itself imply the existence of a *moral code*, although one might, via a Butlerian/Lacanian psychoanalytical reading of Foucault, or indeed on the basis of a Nietzschean genealogy of morals, argue that there is a necessary connection between an external code and the formation of subjectivity. Ethics is, on Foucault's above definition, a matter of the articulation of forms of self-relation which mediate the code in producing "the ethical subject" (UP 27).

MORALITY AND MODERNITY

In the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault defines *morale* ("morality"/"morals") precisely as an external code, "an ensemble of values and rules for action, which are recommended to individuals and groups via various prescriptive agencies" (LP 32; cf. UP 25). This is morality in a narrow sense; Foucault (UP 29) goes on to say that "Every morality in the broad sense, comprises . . . codes of behavior and forms of subjectivation."

In Christianity, says Foucault (UP 29–30), the code has been more important than the subjectivation, whereas with the Greeks, the inverse was the case. Presumably because of this, the notion of a moral code is central to modern Western thought, while the mediation of the code in the formation of ethical subjectivity is less well recognised in the modern West,

though this is not an area of knowledge which has ever disappeared, as Foucault (HS 251) points out.

While Foucault only really engages with this ethics late in his career, via and as a result of his study of ancient thought, he had already included a brief history of ethics/morals in *The Order of Things*:

> Apart from its religious moralities, it is clear that the West has known only two ethical forms. The old one (in the form of Stoicism or Epicureanism) was articulated upon the order of the world, and by discovering the law of that order it could deduce from it the principle of a code of wisdom or a conception of the city; even the political thought of the eighteenth century still belongs to this general form. The modern one, on the other hand, formulates no morality, since any imperative is lodged within thought and its movement towards the apprehension of the unthought; it is reflection, the act of consciousness, the elucidation of what is silent, speech restored to what is mute, the illumination of the area of shadow that cuts man off from himself, the reanimation of the inert—it is all this and this alone that constitutes the content and form of the ethical. Modern thought has never, in fact, been able to propose a morality. . . . Let those who seek, without any pledge and in the absence of virtue, to establish a morality do as they wish. For modern thought, no morality is possible. (MC 338–39; cf. OT 327–28)

It is not at all clear what Foucault means either by "ethics" or "morality" here, although he already distinguishes the two: today we have an "ethical form" in which "morality" is impossible. There is no indication that Foucault means by either term what he means by them in the work almost two decades later.

What Foucault in *The Order of Things* explicitly thinks is impossible in modernity is a code based on analogical reasoning from the perceived orders of nature. This logic of resemblance has gone by the board, to be replaced by the logic of the discoverable unspoken interiority—this epochal epistemic transformation is the crux of *The Order of Things*. This is not something which Foucault is decrying, moreover: remember that, contemporaneously with *The Order of Things*, Foucault was himself advocating precisely the discovery of secret codes. When Foucault says that no morality is possible for modernity and those who dream of restoring it are doomed to fail, he implies that modernity, or at least certain features of it, are not surpassable, even by himself. Foucault (OT 328) credits a list of modern thinkers who understand the nature of modernity and concomitant impossibility of morality: "Sade, Nietzsche, Artaud, and Bataille have understood this on behalf of all those who tried to ignore it; but it is also certain that Hegel, Marx, and Freud knew it." Now, Foucault's later enthusiasm for ethics in fact belongs to this same modernity, in that Foucault's Greek-influenced conception of ethics is of a practice of

self-creation, not one of subservience to the natural code. Foucault (HS 251), over fifteen years after *The Order of Things*, in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, includes Nietzsche on another list, this time of those—"Stirner, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, dandyism, Baudelaire, anarchy, anarchist thought, etc."—who have sought to "reconstitute an ethics and an aesthetics of the self." For Foucault, Nietzsche in a sense provides the join between two complementary projects in respect of ethics: the reconstitution of an ethics of the self, and the understanding of ethics as something which is neither universal nor discoverable, so much as something that must be artfully, indeed *aesthetically*, constructed, via a relation to self. Modernity repudiates the old form of moral code that is based on analogical reasoning, but in fact has consistently attempted to create a humanist ethics, based in the universality of human nature and on scientific knowledge. Foucault in *The Order of Things* repudiates the possibility of humanist ethics acceding to the status of a morality. That is itself a Nietzschean move, to accuse secular ethics of being the continuation of a Christian morality without the religiosity in which that had been based. Foucault's Nietzscheanism continues into his late work, a clear continuity underlying an apparent complete turn in his direction. What could be more Nietzschean than a scholarly return to the Greeks that does not valorise them or adopt them as a model? Of course, Nietzsche's biographical intellectual starting point here turns out to be Foucault's terminal moment.

As always, Foucault is careful not to say that we have lost something that we need to recover (EW1 294–95): he does not idealise the Greeks, in fact going so far as to call ancient ethics "disgusting" (EW1 258). It is only the general area of the ethics of self-conduct that attracts Foucault (EW1 259). Refusing to posit *any* "alternative," Foucault (EW1 256) thus refuses the specific ethics of the Greeks, or indeed any specific prescriptive ethics. Foucault rejects both modern universalist ethics and premodern ancient ethics. This makes him look rather "postmodern," but Foucault (EW1 309–10) eschews any such notion, on the basis that modernity is itself an ethos, which includes both the universalism he rejects and the critical Enlightenment ethos which he instantiates.

Before universalist modern ethics, the universality of which is based in the universality of the human nature uncovered by modern thought, there was universalist Christian ethics, which was universal in scope because of the universality of God, the author of the moral law. In pagan culture, however, with a plurality of gods and peoples, ethics was of a different nature, which is to say, it invoked notions of an indefinite practice without a definite answer, the notion of *kairos*, that the appropriate action must be at the right time, and also a notion that different practices were necessary for different people, based on cultural ethnicity, social status, or simply temperament (FS 111). Thus the Greeks had an individualist ethics; "individual freedom was very important for" them (EW1 285). Today we need an individualist ethics again.

I do not mean here to agree with Mark Bevir (2002), who suggests a demographic explanation for the timeliness of Foucault's advocacy of care of the self in America, coinciding with what is commonly called social atomization. That practices of self-constitution are necessarily centred on a relationship one has to oneself, by no means implies that they exclude the involvement of others. Indeed, they must include it, since as we have seen the self-relation is only ever part of a societal network of power relations. Foucault himself makes it clear that other people have the most profound roles to play in practices of the self:

> The care of the self also implies a relationship with the other insofar as proper care of the self requires listening to the lessons of a master. One needs a guide, a counselor, a friend, someone who will be truthful with you. (EW1 287)

For Foucault (EW1 293), other people are an intrinsic part of ethics: the philosopher who cares for the care of the self of others is himself indispensable to that care of the self. Reciprocally, caring for oneself makes one generally better able to care for others(' care of the self).

What I mean by saying that individualist ethics is necessary today is rather that, for the first time in nearly two thousand years, there is no universal moral law. Clearly, most people still do believe in the existence of some kind of moral universality, but there is no single moral code actually universally accepted in our society, and (hence) there is no moral law which is universally enforced. From the rise of Christianity, through the Reformation, through to the twentieth century with its media censorship and moral majorities, there has been a continuously-existing apparatus for the enforcement of a public morality, creating a palpable universalism, albeit one which is not truly universal at all, but in reality constrained to a single society in a single period, and even then in fact shifting and patchy. Of course no law was ever literally universally subscribed to or obeyed, since the existence of a law presupposes challenges and transgressions, but morality in the present era has actually become somewhat contestable; as Foucault said in 1967,

> from now on morality may be reduced entirely to politics and to sexuality, which itself may be reduced to politics: that is why the moral is the political. (RC 100)

ETHICS AS AESTHETICS

Foucault links ethics not only to politics, but to aesthetics—and thus politics and aesthetics to one another too. This too is rooted in the ancient

Greek practices of the self, which were, like all practices, a form of *tekhne*, art in a general sense, and crucially bound up with an "aesthetics of existence." For example, in sexual ethics,

> sexual austerity in Greek society was a trend or movement, a philosophical movement coming from very cultivated people in order to give to their life much more intensity, much more beauty. (EW1 261)

When we talk about ethics as aesthetics we are talking about a *style* of personal conduct (cf. FL 466). Timothy O'Leary (2002, 3) points out the apt etymology of this word: "To give style, to stylise, is to apply the *stylus* to some pliable material: it is to inscribe, make one's mark, to *own* one's character as one's own."

Aesthetics is moreover the most obvious available counterpoint to universalism within modern thought, since aesthetic taste is frequently held today to be something that is personally relative or subjective, despite Kant's attempt to reconcile the subjectivity of the aesthetic with universalism. Aesthetic judgement is not a matter of determining immutable basic principles, but neither is it a crass relativism in which anything goes; rather it is something which is deeply felt, which may be cultivated, where there can be meaningful discussion and broad agreement, but where there is no absolute prescription, merely agreement and disagreement, albeit a form of prescription:

> The prescriptive discourse . . . which consists in saying "love this, hate that, this is good, that is bad, be in favour of this, oppose that," all that seems to me nothing other, nowadays in any case, than an aesthetic discourse, which can only find its foundation in choices of an aesthetic order. (STP 5)

This is germane to an ethics of the self, because the ethics of the self is primarily concerned with the self, hence the private domain, whereas universalist ethics is primarily concerned with the public domain in which adherence to a commonly agreed code is necessary. Note that where such a public societal moral code for Foucault reduces to politics, here personal moral prescriptions reduce to aesthetic preferences. Here, Foucault is himself being both prescriptive and descriptive: ethics is really nothing more than an aesthetic today anyway, but this entails that we must understand it as such, and self-consciously build an aesthetic ethics.

Foucault (EW1 261) wants to democratise art: rather than art being a matter of objects produced by specialists, "couldn't everyone's life be a work of art?" He thus advocates a Wildean aestheticism, in which the attempt to live one's life according to one's access to truth, through a (pseudo-)spirituality, should be replaced by the art of life.[1]

We thus seek to cultivate an ethical sensibility, which identifies what is good with what is beautiful. Our personal ethic/aesthetic is a matter of

asceticism, "in the broad sense," as Foucault has it, which is to say not self-denial per se, but rather self-regulation. Without some level of self-denial at least, a definite aesthetic is impossible: without excluding anything, there is just chaos, dissolution.

AUTHENTICITY

Peter Dews (1989, 40) argues that Foucault's advocacy of an aesthetics of existence is in danger of collapsing into the domain of off-the-peg lifestyle choices sold as products in contemporary capitalism (cf. Bevir 2002). When questioned on this, Foucault (EW1 271) counters that in fact "the Californian cult of the self" is about trying to find one's authentic self, not making the free decisions he advocates. The point against Dews is that lifestyle products peddled as commodities are not in fact free practices of the self at all, but rather readymade solutions, which advertise themselves as universal (while of course in practice targeting distinct market segments)[2] and are in fact means of avoiding the hard task of taking responsibility for oneself.

Philosophically, the notion that we must return to our "true" selves, the notion of "authenticity," is for Foucault proximally represented by Jean-Paul Sartre, the most prominent intellectual in France for most of Foucault's lifetime. For Foucault (EW1 262), Sartre's notion of authenticity represents a contradiction, in which Sartre, taking our freedom of action to be absolute, produces an ethics orienting us towards "authentic" behaviour, thus constraining our actions to a single correct course. Foucault claims, plausibly, that the conclusion that should be drawn from Sartre's philosophy of freedom is an ethics of self-creation, not one of authenticity. As Foucault's interviewer then points out, that is Nietzsche's conclusion, not Sartre's.

Of course, neither Nietzsche nor Foucault in fact share Sartre's premise of an absolute freedom of conscious agency. While Béatrice Han (2002, 167) correctly identifies points of agreement between Sartre and Foucault, namely that humans have no essence, and the consequent need for self-reflection and self-determination, the freedom posited by the two thinkers is completely different.[3] Sartre claims that everything we do is always already an absolutely free choice. The result is an absolute individual responsibility for everything we do and are. For Sartre, the key is for us to grasp this total self-determination, in the process ending our usual self-deceit about this fact—what Sartre (1958) calls "bad faith."

Foucault's picture is the polar opposite. Things we do are *not* fundamentally free choices: Foucault spends much of his time studying the way our behaviour is determined right down to the historical construction of subjectivity itself. We do not choose to be the way we are, so are not always already responsible; Foucault refers to Sartrean philosophy as "the existentialism of self-flagellation" (PK 189). Foucault points out that

Sartre actually ends up advocating completely restricting freedom via the simple goal of authenticity, which is universal, and determined by truth, being for Sartre not historically constructed so much as concealed by bad faith. For Sartre, circularly, facing up to our total responsibility for our own actions means abnegating that freedom by choosing the one true path of authenticity.[4] Sartre is not so different from Kant here, who attempted to rescue ethical universality from pre-Enlightenment tutelage through the appeal to our rational faculty—Sartre of course explicitly identifies with the categorical imperative in his *Existentialism & Humanism* (*L'existentialisme est un humanisme*). Sartre's thought, like Kant's before it, is an example of the "state of tension" (EW1 314) which in "What is Englightenment?" Foucault argues exists between the Enlightenment, qua critical project, and humanism, since, where the former urges critique and self-creation, the latter is limiting us because it means defining and then trying to realise human nature.

Now, where for Sartre ethics is a matter of grasping our utter freedom, for Foucault it means understanding the necessary violence of our choices, against a background of historical determination, and in inculcating in ourselves an ethic appropriate to this situation. Unlike Sartrean good faith, this ethics doesn't tell us what to do, but rather consists in grasping our true ethical responsibility for self-determination within limits.

There is a connection here to Sartre and Foucault's very different attitudes towards revolution. Sartrean authenticity ultimately requires us to grasp the reality of our total freedom in revolution, since capitalist society in effect demands bad faith. Foucault on the other hand espouses an ethics which consists in practicing the limited freedom one has already under capitalism, "a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty" (EW1 319), towards the realization of greater freedom.

ETHICS AND POLITICS

Ethics is for Foucault a logical outcome of his political thought; indeed, he actually claims it serves as the *referent* of his analysis:

> Although the theory of political power as an institution usually refers to a juridical conception of the subject of right, it seems to me that the analysis of governmentality—that is to say, of power as a set of reversible relationships—must refer to an ethics of the subject defined by the relationship of self to self. Quite simply, this means that in the type of analysis I have been trying to advance for some time you can see that power relations, governmentality, the government of the self and of others, and the relationship of self to self constitute a chain, a thread, I think it is around these relations that we should be able to connect together the question of politics and the question of ethics. (HS 252)

Here, Foucault refers to precisely the "chain" of links that we have drawn between power and the subject earlier in the book, the linkage of micro and macro. Still, even though Foucault seems to think that ethics is the natural corollary of his political analyses, he nevertheless, in almost the same breath, asserts that it may not be possible to constitute the necessary ethics today:

> We may have to suspect that we find it impossible today to constitute an ethic of the self, even though it may be an urgent, fundamental, and politically indispensable task, if it is true after all that there is no first or final point of resistance to political power other than in the relationship one has to oneself. (HS 252)

Both elements of this paradox, the necessity and the impossibility of the formation of an ethics of the self today are clear. It is necessary, in a sense, precisely because it is impossible: we need ethics to escape our tutelage. For Foucault, freedom is both a necessary precondition for, and only possible given, the practice of ethics: "freedom is the ontological condition of ethics," ethics being "the reflexive form that freedom takes."[5] For Foucault there was a problem in contemporary liberation movements, that they did not understand this dimension to freedom:

> Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on. (EW1 255–56)

Foucault, it seems to me, is referring here to psychoanalysis and Marxism, which both famously make contentious claims to scientificity. Psychoanalysis and Marxism, Foucault suggested in 1982, are in fact in the order of what he calls "spiritualities" (HS 29), which is not to say religious movements (*see* HS 19), but rather movements that offer an answer to "the problem of what is at stake in the subject's being (of what the subject's being must be for the subject to have access to the truth) and, in return, the question of what aspects of the subject may be transformed by virtue of his access to the truth" (HS 29). However, says Foucault, neither of these two movements has been capable of understanding this aspect of itself; they both understand themselves not as pseudo-spiritualities, but as sciences. As such, they do not understand the necessities of constructing a new subjectivity. Instead, they unreflectively and unwittingly build a new subjectivity in the midst of a reality they criticise and desire to change.

There are, on the other hand, lifestylist movements, such as the hippie movement or lifestyle anarchism, which seem to be interested in building a new subjectivity, but while anarchism does appear in Foucault's above-quoted

list of attempts to reconstitute an aesthetics of the self, this is an aesthetics of total liberation in the personal sphere, and as such is still universalist and utopian. These movements lack the asceticism necessary to the constitution of an ethics.

"Free for what?" asks Nietzsche (Z I "Of the Way of the Creator"). This is a fundamental question which is not answered by any of these movements, by negative philosophies of liberation, by sciences that oppose capitalism or neurosis, but do not provide positive content. They are interested in negative freedom in Isaiah Berlin's (1969) sense, freedom from; by itself this is nihilistic. Rather, there is a need to have something to strive for, *positive freedom* in Berlin's sense.[6] This is not utopianism, but rather a striving for something different, but which is in itself no final end, nor a dangerously-fixed plan.

"He who cannot obey himself will be commanded," says Nietzsche (Z II "Of Self-Overcoming"). And, on the other hand, as Foucault (EW1 288) puts it, "It is the power over oneself that thus regulates one's power over others." The Greeks knew that to exercise power over others, as a free man was required to do, over women, children, slaves, he needed to exercise control over himself. This means that ethics and resistance are essentially related, too, however, since if we cannot control ourselves, our capacity for resistance is diminished.

One of the attractions of Greek ethics for Foucault is very clearly the kind of relation which is posited in Greek thought between the ethical and the political. Foucault unites the two under the rubrics of "government" and "conduct," which quasi-Hellenistic concepts cover both the way we conduct/govern ourselves and the way in which one may conduct/govern others. While a fundamental relation with the political of course also exists in modern Western "ethics," from Kant's Kingdom of Ends to utilitarianism, here the relation is one in which individual action is held to concatenate uncomplicatedly into collective action, such that what is appropriate for individuals to do is also what is appropriate for many to do—"What if everybody acted like that?" Greek ethics, on the other hand, was of course not universal. Not only did it not prescribe the same values to everyone, but rather general guidelines, it did not even address itself to everyone, but rather to the small, free, male elite, which is to say, in Athens at any rate, which is archetypically where we are talking about, the political class.

The deliberate practice of ethical self-formation, modernised and democratised so that it becomes an ethics of resistance to domination, rather than an ethics of patriarchal domination over hoi polloi, appears as the solution to the problem of subjection, in which subjectivation is identified with subjugation by power, offering an alternative mode of subjectivation:

> The subject constitutes itself through practices of subjection [*assujettissement*], or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of freedom, as, in Antiquity, starting, of course, from a certain

> number of rules, styles and conventions, which are found in the cultural milieu. (DE2 1552; cf. FL 452)

The alternatives are clear: subjection or freedom. This is not a choice we can simply make, however, so much as something to strive for blindly in the dark. It is the Nietzschean far shore, the *Übermensch*, what is beyond modernity and the era of man, but for Foucault this transition is not even outlined to the extent that Nietzsche outlines it. Rather we are left only with the patient labour of the local struggle and attentiveness to the present, since this ethics is not a ready-formed template which can be imposed on reality to produce the desired effect.

CONCLUSION

What does Nietzsche give us? His work offers recommendations for personal practice with no obvious coherent political implications, reacting to democratic modernity with disdain. What does Marxism give us? It shows how to analyse our situation, which gives indications as to how we might change it, but not any coherent conception of what personal praxis one should follow, no *ethics* in the classical sense (and arguably none in *any* sense).

While for Foucault Nietzsche is explicitly primary, the dominant theme in Marx, the liberation of the working class is indeed carried through into Foucault, as merely one token of the total expurgation of elitism from Foucault's Nietzscheanism. Foucault ultimately retains the *Übermensch*, if without using any such term, qua what lies beyond the "man" that Foucault criticises and threatens with extinction in *The Order of Things*. For Nietzsche, the *Übermensch* lies in the unseeable future: s/he is precisely what we aim at without determining it, what is beyond the human, undetermined in its specificity, but which nevertheless serves as the meaning of our present actions. While for Nietzsche in his elitism, the *Übermensch* seems to be a type of individual, Foucault effectively posits a generalised *Übermenschheit*. This is a kind of Nietzschean answer to the problems of communism's utopianism. Foucault wants us to invent new forms of subjectivity, as a precursor to the possibility of mass revolutionary change in the West.

What Foucault produces is materialist and modernist without being a form of Marxism. To properly assess the relation between Foucault and Marxism is an awesome enterprise, which I have not attempted, but one which is needed and which must include a full appreciation of Althusserian Marxism. Foucault offers a corrective to Marxism, producing via Nietzsche an alternative materialism, which provides an alternative grid for the historical analysis of the present. Foucault's materialism entwines discourse, thought, bodies, souls, subjects, epistemes in a network of force relations, the possibilities of which are unknowable, since knowledge is a subset of the whole.

Foucault's work is thus a challenge to Marxism's claim to be a privileged social "science." Nevertheless, Marxism remains as such a living discourse of resistance, both in Foucault's time and today. Today two of the most significant discourses in terms of actually animating resistance movements are Islam and Marxism, both of which Foucault was a pioneer in understanding as discourses of resistance, Islam in his coverage of the Islamic revolution, and Marxism in *Society Must Be Defended* as an exemplar of the leftwing discourse of race war. Such understandings are of immense importance today.

As Deleuze (1988, 30) famously said of Foucault, "it is as if, finally, something new were emerging in the wake of Marx." "As if" is, I think, the operative phrase here: Foucault is not really something new finally emerging in the wake of Marx. Foucault is doing something very important in the wake of Marx, and certainly something novel, but if Marx is not an epistemic break, as Foucault argues he is not, then Foucault is himself even less of one.

The danger with Foucault is that he be taken as an alternative for the movements, Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism primarily, that he worked "in the wake of." Foucault did not want to be an alternative. He did not even want to debunk, in say a Popperian fashion, these two schools of thought. He sought only to analyse their limitations. Nevertheless, Foucault has been used as a weapon against them, which results either in a falling back into other theories against which Foucault would urge equal criticism, at least insofar as they become intellectually dominant, or in a sacralisation of Foucault, alongside certain other thinkers, eclectically synthesised into an alternative "theory."

If we *must conceive* of discourse as a violence we do to things, then this speaks against the violence of discourse which masks itself in so many discourses, and in favour of a discourse which is aware of its own underdetermination, hence both courageous in speaking, but understanding its own dangerousness. It does not speak in favour of timorous discourse, since, as Nietzsche teaches, timorousness is itself a tactic to steal power. Phenomenology is perhaps the height of the modern tendency to occlude its own violence: where Marx admitted his abstractions and Freud his analogies, phenomenology disguises itself as the first knowledge ever to be nonviolent, a tendency which is carried through into Derrida. There is however almost no-one willing to acknowledge in as many words that one's own discourse is violent *as such*, and we thereby deny that we ourselves are violent and it is precisely this that exposes us to becoming the unwitting tools of dangerous political tendencies. That is not of course to condemn everybody and every theoretical framework equally; Marxism, for example, is excellent at pointing out the violence inherent in *other* discourses, at how seemingly inoffensive speech is in fact red in tooth and claw as a mask for the everyday violence of a class system. But there is a terrible tendency there to believe that materialism will set us free, that the truth can only serve to liberate. On the contrary, says Foucault,

> I think this serious and fundamental relation between struggle and truth, which is the same dimension upon which for centuries and centuries philosophy has unfurled, . . . does nothing other than make itself theatrical, strip the flesh from itself, lose its sense and its efficacy in polemics which are internal to theoretical discourse. I only propose therefore this single imperative, but this will be categorical and unconditional: never do politics. (STP 5–6)

To "do politics" is here construed in a narrow and pejorative sense, which of course does not include the ethico-political activity that Foucault undertook and advocates.

Politics is rife today, of course. We are involved in a war which has been waged based on universalist and utopian premises. The War on Terror is, according to its own propaganda, the project of creating a utopia of absolute security via the promotion of the universal values of democratic liberalism. Viewed through the prism of this goal and these values, Islamism indeed appears as the main danger. For Foucault the lesson of the twentieth century is that such ways of thinking lead to disaster. Foucault advocates rather a materialist analysis attentive to the present, which deduces the main danger based only on the actual configuration of power relations. Such an approach entails concentrating on the problems posed by imperialism in the present, rather than apologising for it on the basis of what it would do if its opposition did not exist, or what horrible imperialisms its enemies are considered liable to inflict were they given a free rein. Here, Foucault's reconception of power in particular provides a tool which may be used to understand what is happening geopolitically in its complexity, interpreting the world precisely in order to change. It also provides us with a patient critical labour to undertake to give shape to the frustration of our immediate ineffectuality in the face of events beyond our control, and a guide to developing personal practices which will be at least arrows to the far shore of the bloody morass of the modern world.

Appendix

A Diagram of Foucault's Major Influences

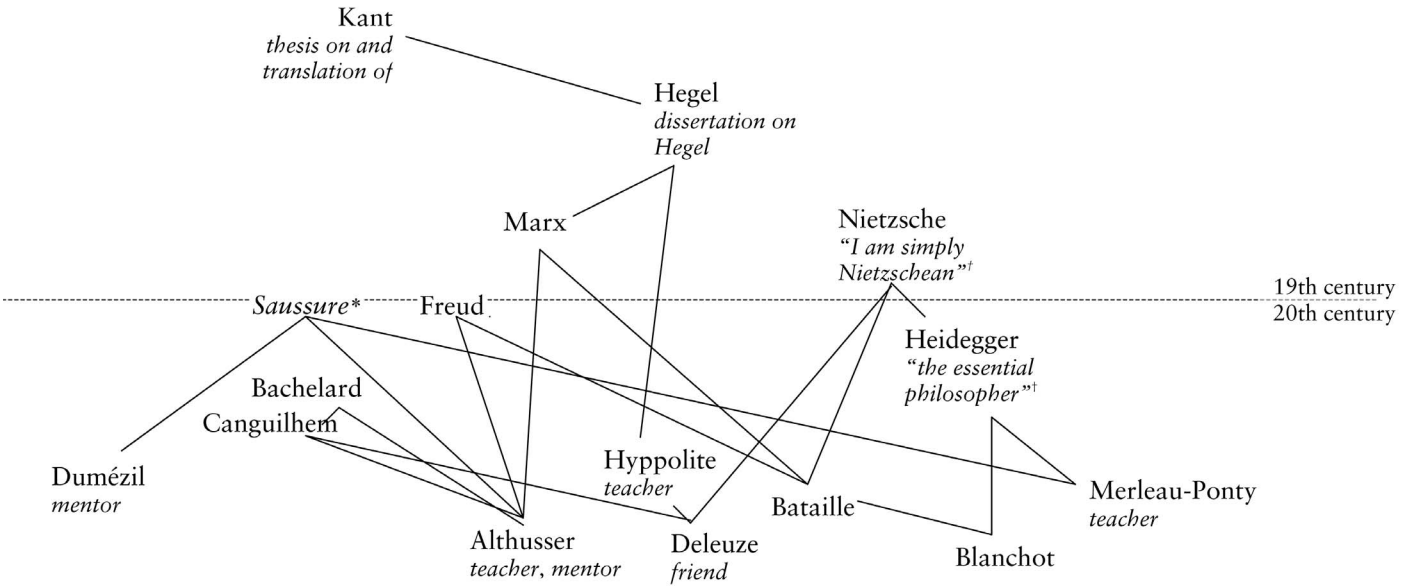

Figure A.1. This illustration shows Foucault's major influences and illustrates significant lines of influence between them. There are of course relations and influences not included here, notably Anglo-Saxon figures, who would not join up with this web. Chronological relationships are represented schematically on the y-axis.

* Not himself a major influence
† Both quotations from Foucault's final interview (DE2 1522–23)

Notes

NOTE TO THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. For those in possession of the older, four-volume edition of Dits et écrits, page references may be converted using the following formulae:

   References to DE1 can have 868 subtracted from the page number to give their position in the original second volume, or 28 from the page number to give that in the original first volume. References to DE2 correspond to the same page numbers in the original third volume, and those of later pieces which are contained in the original fourth volume must be converted by subtracting 819 from the DE2 reference.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. We shall call this work by this title, which its English edition has only latterly acquired, and then only in the edition published by Penguin in London, having long borne the title *An Introduction*, which title was based on Foucault's initial plan for the *History of Sexuality* (*Histoire de la sexualité*) series; this plan was not followed, hence the first volume is not an "introduction" to the subsequent volumes at all, having only the most tenuous connection indeed to the subsequent two extant volumes.
2. I am grateful to Michael Mahon for pointing this source out to me.
3. As Foucault later put it, "I would define the *episteme* retrospectively as the strategic apparatus which permits of separating out from among all the statements which are possible those that will be acceptable within, I won't say a scientific theory, but a field of scientificity, and which it is possible to say are true or false. The *episteme* is the 'apparatus' which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific" (PK 197).
4. Foucault's "Entretien avec Madeleine Chapsal" (DE1 541–46) . The interview was first published in May 1966, after *The Order of Things* had appeared, and seems to date from that same period: the first question mentions *The Order of Things* as Foucault's "last book" (DE1 541), although Chapsal also states that Foucault is thirty-eight years old, when he in fact turned thirty-nine in 1965. Still, one must assume that she is more likely to have made a mistake about Foucault's age than about *The Order of Things* having been published.
5. Cf. contemporary representations of a structuralist party comprising himself, his close associate Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan and Claude Lévi-Strauss (Eribon 1991, 177).

6. While Foucault was writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he took time out to read English analytical philosophy, including Austin and Searle (Defert 2004; DE1 58).
7. In the *Archaeology*, Foucault maintains that statements are not actually speech acts, but later conceded that statements are in fact speech acts in a 1979 letter to American speech-act theorist John Searle (quoted Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 46fn.). The statement differs from the speech act as classically conceived, however, in its ontological status: where a speech act is conceived as the act of a sovereign subject who speaks, the statement is considered only in its own being. Language is not determined, as we have said, by the things it names, but nor is it determined by its material, embodied speakers; rather, it has its own existence.
8. In French, this was published as a monograph, but in English it appeared first as an appendix to American editions of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, under the title "The Discourse on Language" and in a couple of collections as "The Order of Discourse." I shall refer to it by this latter title, the translation of the original.
9. Paras (2006, 66–67) makes a convincing case that this incorporeal materialism is decisively derived from Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*—I hope, however, that I show it to be rooted in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which appeared in the same year, 1969, as *The Logic of Sense* and was written before that.
10. Not coincidentally, Foucault (PK 212) also distinguishes himself from Lacan in exactly the same terms in a discussion with Jacques-Alain Miller, Jacques Lacan's son-in-law and heir presumptive: Foucault does not see an "epistemological break" in Freud either.
11. In a 1975 interview, Foucault does assert that (his) focusing on the body is more materialist than the materialism of the Marxists, casting "the emergence of the problem of the body" as an anti-Marxist trend around 1968 (PK 57). He goes on to say "while there are some very interesting things about the body in Marx's writings, Marxism considered as an historical reality has had a terrible tendency to occlude the question of the body, in favour of consciousness and ideology" (PK 58–59); "I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it" (PK 58). However, the point here is not that the study of thought is not materialist, but rather simply to criticise Marxism by its own standards.
12. Eribon (1991, 36) reports that Foucault actually applied to join the PCF as early as 1947, but was turned down, precisely because he refused to follow the usual pattern of membership.
13. In the same breath, Foucault identifies the particular motivation behind *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as wanting to deal with what was being said about Foucault's alleged structuralism (or lack thereof), which at first sight might confuse things, when Foucault specifically complains that Jean Piaget, a self-identifying structuralist psychologist, "published a book describing me as a theorist who lacked an analysis of structures" (RM 113). The book in question can only be Piaget's *Structuralism* (*Le structuralisme*), which contains an entire section on Foucault's *The Order of Things* entitled "Structuralism without Structures" (Piaget 1971, 128–35). But this book was not published until 1968, hence it might seem that Foucault, speaking in an interview in 1978, has mixed up the course of events. The evidence suggests, however, that he was merely citing Piaget in this interview as an example of his structuralist opposition without implying a correlation between this book of Piaget's and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and that it was written before then.

14. For example by Althusser (1993, 230).
15. All three biographers use exactly the same vague phrase. Maurice Blanchot (1987, 61) also has a somewhat uncertain memory of meeting Foucault in Paris in May 1968.
16. It is certainly worth noting, however, that Defert (2004) has forcefully disassociated himself from Miller's book, calling it "absolutely disgusting," and indeed that such derision for Miller's biography is not confined to Defert—see also David Halperin's (1995, 9–11, 143–152) criticism of Miller.
17. The philosophy department consisted at that time of Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, Judith Miller, Étienne Balibar and Henri Weber on the pure Marxist side, and Foucault, François Chatelet and Michel Serres on the less Marxist side.
18. In looking for an extrinsic motivation for the formation of discourse, Foucault is not uniquely influenced by Nietzsche. The French philosopher of science Georges Canguilhem, a major influence on Foucault, particularly through his work *The Normal and the Pathological*, which provided key concepts to Foucault's early work on madness and medicine, saw concept formation as the action of a living organism in a way that *promotes* life—cf. Foucault's own 1978 introduction to the English translation of *The Normal and the Pathological* (EW2 475) and the introduction of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (AK 4). Of course, as Foucault (EW2 438) himself says, Canguilhem was himself crucially influenced by Nietzsche.
19. It was thus rather inaccurate for Alan Sheridan to entitle the translation of *L'ordre du discours* he appended to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 'The Discourse on Language,' since it speaks about discourse, not language as such.
20. "De ce fait, la connaissance est toujours une méconnaissance" (DE2 1420). I have retranslated the word *méconnaissance*, which in the original translation is translated as "misconstruction" with the original word in brackets (EW3 14). "Misconstruction" ignores the play on the words *connaissance* and *méconnaissance*, and moreover hints that there is a form of construction that is authentic and not misconstruction. "Misknowledge" is the most literal possible translation, but of course unlike the French word lacks currency, hence my use of "overlooking," which has the advantages of being a conventional translation of *méconnaissance*, and capturing exactly Foucault's meaning here, if not his characteristic wordplay.
21. On the notion of the historical *a priori* in Foucault and Foucault's relation to Kant, see Han 2002.
22. My translation; Alan Sheridan's version, "If, by substituting the analysis of rarity for the search for totalities, the description of relations of exteriority for the theme of transcendental foundation, the analysis of accumulations for the quest of origin, one is a positivist, then I am quite happy to be one" (AK 125), is more elegant, but the fact that Foucault explicitly calls himself "un positiviste heureux" is lost, which is clearly significant when this passage is read together with the following passage from *L'ordre du discours*.
23. "L'humeur généalogique sera celle d'un positivisme heureux"; this is translated by Alan Sheridan Smith as "the genealogical mood is one of felicitous positivism" (AK 234). This translation has the word "heureux" having two completely different senses in the two passages, which is possible, but seems unlikely when they are taken together. Ian McLeod (Foucault 1984, 133) translates the second passage as "the genealogical mood will be that of happy positivism"; I split the difference between the two translations.
24. The first instance I am aware of in which Foucault uses the word "problematisation" is in the introductory text from 1976's *Les Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l'hôpital moderne; dossiers et documents*, called "The Politics of

Health in the Eighteenth Century" (PK 167). He thereafter does not seem to use it again until 1982 in an interview, published in English as "History and Homosexuality" (FL 368). He does not seem to have invented the word, since the 1976 fifth edition *Grand Larousse de la langue française* already had a definition of *problematisation*, which it dates to 1968.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. The usual translation of *regard* would be as the commonplace English word "look," but this is problematic because "look" in English has several meanings in addition to an instance of looking at something, which is what *regard* means. "Look" can for instance be the way something appears; talking about a "medical look" would primarily connote a style of dress for medics, not the way medics look at us. Hence, the translation decision was understandable, though it has had certain unforeseeable undesirable consequences.
2. He moreover here, uniquely, attributes his interest in power to reading Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (*Nietzsche et la philosophie*)—although this work does not palpably anticipate Foucault's reconceptualisation of power.
3. There is an apparent contradiction to this trajectory, a book by Foucault on Magritte, *This Is Not a Pipe* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), which came out in October 1973. However, this simply comprised an essay by Foucault already published in 1968, with the addition of two letters and four pictures by Magritte—see DE1 663.
4. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu (1988, xxiv), who sees genealogy as a "screen-concept" "for an ambitious enterprise in social history or genetic sociology."
5. The French is *analytique*—and Foucault places it in scare-quotes. The word is odd to use as a noun in French as in English, hence there is no obvious translation—Robert Hurley's "analytics" (WK 82) is perfectly acceptable. However, it occludes multiple possible allusions; the use of scare-quotes would seem to indicate one in any case. One possible connotation of an "analytic of power" (*analytique du pouvoir*) would be to Martin Heidegger's "analytic of Dasein" (*Analytik des Daseins*; *analytique du Dasein* in French). Another could be to analytic—i.e. Anglo-American—philosophy, Foucault having elsewhere expounded his desire to do an "analytic philosophy of power" (DE2 534–51).
6. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, for example, Foucault (AK 193) proposes an archaeology of sexuality.
7. Some early commentators, such as Nancy Fraser (1995, 137), took it for granted that Foucault's descriptions of power were only meant to apply to modernity.
8. Habermas indeed claims that for Foucault power is *the* transcendental, the only transhistorical constant.
9. Weberman (1995, 195) therefore contends that Foucault's attack on the "repressive hypothesis" in *The Will to Knowledge* is misleading, since power is always repressive; I would argue that the repressive hypothesis is the claim that power operates *purely* negatively in relation to sexuality, hence Foucault does not mislead us, though it is true that there has been much confusion on this point, which would indicate that Foucault could have been clearer.
10. The term "biopower," and its companion term "biopolitics," have been subject to more abuse/misunderstanding than any other in Foucault's entire vocabulary. Firstly, when it is used in reference to Foucault's work, its meaning is frequently misunderstood. Often the word "biopower" is misidentified as referring to other parts of Foucault's conceptual schema.

This is quite comprehensible, given the obvious etymology, relating to *bios*, life, and the less than obvious sense in which the "control of populations" equates to "life-power." As Foucault himself said, he named it biopower "un petit peu en l'air" (STP 3)—meaning that he named it without really thinking about it. Secondly, the term "biopolitics" has been taken in different directions by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, and by Marxist duo Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, with neither of these usages sufficiently marking their divergence from Foucault's original concept (*see* Rabinow and Rose 2006).

11. Specifically, this device is not racism *simpliciter*, but rather "state racism," which identifies enemies of the population *per se*, namely the "enemy within" of indigent and immoral elements and ethnic minorities, and the enemy without of enemy populations. All these elements must have borders drawn around them (ghettoes, prisons, national borders) to differentiate them from the population itself, which is to be protected.
12. Some have an unfortunate impression that "power-knowledge" means that Foucault simply thinks power and knowledge are one and the same, a problem exacerbated, it seems to me, by the use by some English writers of the translation of Foucault's *pouvoir-savoir* (or, rarely, and which is the same thing, *savoir-pouvoir*) as "power/knowledge," with a slash rather than a hyphen, for example by Todd May (1993, 8), which makes the two things seem interchangeable. This seems to have originated with title of Colin Gordon's 1980 Foucault anthology, *Power/Knowledge*. Gordon himself of course did not impute the slash to Foucault himself, and, moreover, Gordon (2004) has stated that his intention was precisely that no conflation between power and knowledge be made, and that his use of the slash was designed precisely to allay such misconceptions, which would imply that it is in fact Foucault's own hyphenation which was ambiguous.
13. Although this is not to imply that there is an "intelligent design" behind it as there is behind most machines—rather it is meant more in the sense in which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the word "machine," although in point of fact Foucault (DE1 1391) himself eschews adopting their concept here, and uses the model of the machine himself only rarely, for example talking about "machines of power" in 1976 (PK 160). Paras (2006, 64–65) nevertheless claims that Deleuze's influence is decisive on this point, though Deleuze (1997, 191) himself pours cold water on the idea that what he means by a "machine" is to be found in Foucault's work.
14. Regarding "political historicism," note that Foucault explicitly distinguishes this from Marxism: for him, "dialectical materialism" was the force that tried to crush political historicism in the nineteenth century, just as Hobbes had in the seventeenth (SD 111).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Davidson also interestingly points out that as early as 1975 (in fact in January, before even the publication of *Discipline and Punish*), Foucault had said (in an interview) that "war is the continuation of politics by other means" (DE1 1572).
2. Foucault at this stage was reading ancient Greek texts in earnest, so this etymology must have been apparent to him.
3. I call these lecture courses those of 1978 and 1979 because the first was given in 1978 and the second of 1979. However, the courses are, in their published editions, subtitled to include the dates of the academic year in which they

were given, namely 1977–1978 and 1978–1979 respectively, as is the case with all Foucault's Collège courses, though only a couple in fact ran across two calendar years.

4. "If I had wanted to give the lectures I am giving this year a more exact title, I certainly would not have chosen 'security, territory, population.' What I would really like to undertake is something that I would call a history of 'governmentality'" (Foucault 2007, 108).
5. For another account of Foucault, Marxism, the state and governmentality, *see* Gordon 1991, 4.
6. This quotation continues that at the end of the first section of this chapter.
7. Niklas Luhmann tends to view power precisely in these terms, as on the one hand communicative, and the other involving a necessary "negative sanction" (*see* Borch 2005).
8. Paul Patton (1998, 67) also makes this point in relation to Foucault's conception of power—though he does not expand on its implications.
9. Here we touch upon the analytical philosophy of action. There is, as always in this period, an outside possibility that Foucault has been influenced by this debate, at least I think to the extent that here, presumably writing for an American audience, since "The Subject and Power" is an appendix to an American book, Foucault is spurred to employ this analytical-sounding concept. J. L. Austin's (1962, 101) third kind of speech act, the "perlocutionary," in which "saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons, and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them," looks rather like Foucault's notion of action upon action. It is not, however—it is, to make a somewhat dubious distinction for the sake of illustrating my point, merely a case of an *act upon acts*. Perlocution does not actually imply a power relation in Foucault's sense, since it is irrelevant to the perlocutionary nature of the speech act whether or not its effect is intended. This is why Turetzky's (1989, 148) beautiful explication of Foucault in terms of a Husserlian bracketing of the illocutionary in favour of an anonymous perlocutionary falls flat.
10. Cf. Foucault's (DE2 1024) remarks about Jacques Lacan that he "exercised no institutional power. Those who listened to him wanted precisely to listen. He only terrorised those who were afraid."
11. For an exceptionally clear and thorough discussion of the meaning of affect, see Shouse 2005.
12. It is in fact incorporated, or at least susceptible to being incorporated into our own *body schema*—see Merleau-Ponty 1967, 143.
13. Foucault of course explicitly refuses any such notion of subject/object (RC 93)—I am merely using it metaphorically, illustratively. There is more than a nod here in Merleau-Ponty of course to Hegel's master-slave dialectic; there is certainly some potential here to compare Foucault also to Hegel, although I will not attempt it.
14. That is, so long as this is a situation from which he *cannot* escape (i.e. in which he might make any number of efforts to try to escape but which are all ultimately fruitless and therefore, most importantly, are efforts which do not resist power because his jailors never intended that he should not *try* to escape, since escape is impossible), in which there is no interaction with him and in which no particular behaviour is desired by the jailors.
15. The original French title is "L'éthique du souci de soi comme pratique de la liberté," the first part of which has been translated variously as "The ethic/s of (the) care/concern for/of (the) self." I have used the title supplied in the

Essential Works collection simply because that is the translation that we are using.

16. This again resembles Merleau-Ponty's ontology of sexual intercourse.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Examples: Deborah Cook's *The Subject Finds a Voice: Foucault's Turn Toward Subjectivity* is a collection of essays about Foucault, only the last of which focuses on the subject; Dirk Daiber's *Subjekt—Freiheit—Widerstand—die Stellung des Subjekts im Denken Foucaults* addresses the themes of madness and power in Foucault, and a large part is actually about Levinas; Malte Brinkmann's *Das Verblassen des Subjekts bei Foucault* is a chronological survey of Foucault's thought which finishes with *The Will to Knowledge*, and so does not deal with the material in which Foucault talks most about the subject.
2. I refer to this interview simply descriptively as Foucault's "last interview" because its publication title, "The Return of Morality" (*Retour de la morale*), was added by the journal and is a particularly misleading title, since Foucault does not posit any such return. Moreover, as we shall see, it is my argument that this interview is an exceptionally dubious source precisely because it was Foucault's last.
3. Amy Allen (2000) has very thoroughly argued that the widespread reading of Foucault as pronouncing the subject dead has been the animus for most of the severe criticisms that have been levelled at him, further claiming that most of Foucault's disciples have also incorrectly perpetuated this understanding of Foucault as radically anti-subjectivist (though this latter claim is rather less well-supported).
4. And even to the extent that he does menace man with an imminent demise in *The Order of Things*, Foucault (RM 122–23) later admits that this was precipitous, brought about by conflating the event of man's death in the human sciences with his demise in terms of "general cultural experience," which is indeed not yet in progress.
5. God of course is a rather more ancient invention.
6. Although in Heidegger's later work, which according to Foucault was the most influential on him, this subjectivism does disappear.
7. Deleuze (1988, 108) claims that Merleau-Ponty himself thought he had taken the phenomenological theory of the subject as far as it could go. This is all the more interesting considering Merleau-Ponty's interest in structuralism.
8. My portrayal of Foucault here accentuates his divergence from phenomenology, although there is a lot of good work which correctly points to continuities, including Johanna Oksala (2005), Stuart Elden (2001), Dirk Daiber (1999) and Andrea Roedig (1997), to mention just the monographs.
9. Foucault (PP 57) agrees that the individual emerges with the rise of the bourgeoisie.
10. John Johnstone in *Foucault Live*, for example, uses the "subjectivization" translation. This less-used translation is technically correct: because *subjectivation* is the noun from the French verb *subjectiver*, which in English is "subjectivize" (there is no verb "to subjective" in English), the English noun should be "subjectivization."
11. Balibar (1994, 8) points out that the word "subject" itself results from a "play on words" on the Latin terms *subjectum* and *subjectus*—although, as he points out, comparable experience emerges also in Germanic languages

where this particular verbal play is not operative, so it is not crucial to the emergence of (a concept of) modern subjectivity as such.
12. David Couzens Hoy (2004, 70) also makes the same error.
13. Warren Montag (1995, 72) uses *Discipline and Punish* references to subjection in exactly the same way as Butler in this respect.
14. SD 45, modified by the addition of French words in brackets and the rendering of *assujettissement* as "subjection" rather than "subjugation" as David Macey has it; *see* DS 39 for the original French.
15. This pair have some affinities themselves, and some personal contact (Althusser 1993, 186–89).
16. See also Saul Newman 2004, 154.
17. Le Blanc references the quoted passage from Foucault as being from *Discipline and Punish*, namely p. 298 in a French edition. There are two editions of *Discipline and Punish* in French, and this reference does not seem to point to either. The line is nevertheless present in "Le sujet et pouvoir" (DE2 1042—my thanks to Emmanuel Pehau for this reference), the French translation of "The Subject and Power," from whence (EW3 327) I draw the formulation given in my translation of Le Blanc. For Le Blanc, in fact, the problem of the transformation of people into subjects by power relations is the same in Althusser and Foucault, with the way in which the transformation is effected left mysterious: he simply overlooks the fact that for Foucault the agent of this transformation is the human being him- or herself, whereas for Althusser it is "ideology."
18. This is still "action upon actions," though, since there are initial actions which are undertaken specifically to inculcate the belief that one is currently under surveillance, even though the actual relation of surveillance which the victim/patient perceives is not really there: "a real subjection is born mechanically of a fictitious relation" (DP 202).
19. "*The category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology only in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects*. In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology" (Althusser 1994, 129; emphasis in original). These claims are specific to Althusser and not strongly implied by historical materialism; my point is rather simply that Foucault will differ in some way from any Marxist account of subjectivity.
20. Cf. Foucault's (PP 16) rejection of the notion of the "state apparatus."
21. On Deleuze's (1983, 40) Spinozist reading of Nietzsche, the body becomes something highly generalised in this regard: "What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship."
22. I would venture to suggest that self-domination and total self-liberation could perhaps be mapped to neurosis and psychosis respectively.
23. Butler (1997, 86) seems to be implying that Foucault uses the word "identity" in a passage in *Discipline and Punish* in which he does not.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. A note on my use of the word "transversal": I am saying that in Foucault's schema resistance is transversal to power; Foucault himself (EW3 329) talks about "transversal struggles," but here the transversality is with respect to other features of the societies in which these struggles emerge, which is to

say that it is a matter of transnationality. My usage rather follows Deleuze (1988, 95) who describes Foucaultian resistance as transversal, in contrast with power, which is *integral*.

2. In a rather similar vein, Claude Mauriac (1977, 27–28) remembers Foucault, after dinner in 1975, proclaiming that we are obliged to struggle forever against power in an effort to "reduce its domain."
3. For May, this is one half of a double a priori, the other being the belief in a human nature which is essentially incompatible with power. This of course is also incompatible with Foucault, as May points out, since Foucault rejects any notion of human nature.
4. Toni Negri (2004) effectively paraphrases this when he says, "*When capital invests the whole of life, life appears as resistance*."
5. Gary Gutting (2003) has explicitly claimed that this text shows that Foucault holds error to be the essence of individual autonomy. While this is also my interpretation, or rather, how my interpretation would cash out in Canguilhem's vocabulary, Béatrice Han (2003, 7) correctly points out that Foucault does not say as much by any means in his introduction to Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, which is the text Gutting cites.
6. We might follow Deleuze's (1983, 40–41) Nietzsche in resisting vitalism by making our main distinction one between active and reactive forces, understanding Foucault's resistance as the active force, and power as the reactive force. While of course matching up these two schemata would be elegant, and would make historical sense given the close connections between the trio of thinkers, it seems to me simply that there is no way to do this. Not least because reactivity is defined for Deleuze's Nietzsche as something which reacts to dominance, whereas, since for Foucault resistance comes first, it is not reactive, and we cannot see power as not merely reactive either, certainly not at the micro-level. This does not rule out that Foucault's binary division is here influenced by Deleuze, of course.
7. I think Foucault means "reagent" rather than "catalyst" here, but he's not a chemist, after all.
8. I am unconvinced by some of Bernauer's claims here for Foucault as anti-psychoanalytical, but it is not necessary for us to assess them, since they do not pertain directly to the unconscious.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Penultimate in the original French; the English has as its final sentence what is in the French a footnote to the final sentence.
2. In 1967, Foucault (RC 91) eschewed the label, for example, but later in the same interview insists that philosophy can be defined in ways other than how it now is (RC 96). The previous year, Foucault (RC 86) had said that he could "envisage" two forms of (post-Nietzschean) philosopher, one "who opens up new avenues of thought, such as Heidegger, and the kind who in a sense plays the role of an archaeologist." The second case clearly applies to Foucault, and arguably also the first, but Foucault did not explicitly say as much.
3. Foucault here says philosophy has no moral function; this does not contradict his assertion of a morality of his own, however, as long as that morality is not formulated as part of his philosophy.
4. DE2 707, 1978 newspaper article, my translation based on Macey's (1993, 406).
5. Foucault's understanding of power at this point, in 1971, is not his mature view, but is rather somewhat intermediate between Althusser's view and his

later view, in that he seems to be speaking about what Althusser (1994) calls "Ideological State Apparatuses," albeit without relating them to the state, but rather to power per se. To update this statement in accordance with Foucault's mature understanding of power, we must simply say that the political task is not about critiquing institutions per se, but rather about revealing strategies of power, et cetera.

6. Foucault 1990, 39, my translation; see PT 32 for Lysa Hochroth's version.
7. Richard Rorty (2000, 131) also uses the word "utopian" to describe Habermas, but approvingly, directly implying that Foucault's lack of utopianism is his failing.
8. As Foucault alludes to here, Marx himself in fact had very similar attitudes here to those of Foucault. Marx himself did not attempt to produce a prescribed vision of the future. Rather, as the young Marx put it in a September 1843 letter,

> We do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but rather first, through criticism of the old world, mean to find the new one. Hitherto philosophers have had the solution of all riddles lying in their writing-desks, and the stupid, exoteric world had only to open its mouth for the roast pigeons of absolute knowledge to fly into it. . . . If constructing the future and settling everything for all times are not our affair, it is all the more certain what we have to accomplish at present: I am referring to ruthless criticism of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be. (Marx 1956, 344; cf. Marx 1843)

   Marx also, of course, explicitly opposes himself to utopianism as such in the *Communist Manifesto*, although Marx's concept of utopianism there refers only to the *planned* utopian community.
9. Here Foucault is invoking, pejoratively, the title of Lenin's most famous work.
10. The "political domination" of "a working class" is also mentioned elsewhere by Foucault (1988, 12). Compare also Foucault's (1974, 170) more strident comments in the early '70s:

> It is only too clear that we are living under a regime of a dictatorship of class, of a power of class which imposes itself by violence, even when the instruments of this violence are institutional and constitutional; and to that degree, there isn't any question of democracy for us.

11. Cf. OT 326:

> What is essential is that thought, both for itself and in the density of its workings, should be both knowledge and a modification of what it knows, reflection and a transformation of the mode of being of that on which it reflects. Whatever it touches it immediately causes to move: it cannot discover the unthought, or at least move towards it, without immediately bringing the unthought nearer to itself—or even, perhaps, without pushing it further away, and in any case without causing man's own being to undergo a change by that very fact, since it is deployed in the distance between them.

12. Robert Hurley in *The Will to Knowledge* translates *dispositif* idiosyncratically as "deployment," which is misleading insofar as it seems to imply someone doing the deploying. The more common translation is "apparatus," as used by Brian Massumi in his translations of Deleuze (see Deleuze 1997, 183fn), which is a perfectly ordinary dictionary translation of the word.

However, I think this is best avoided in this case because it makes Foucault appear to be referencing Althusser, when in fact "apparatus" is used to translate Althusser's *appareil*, which is the cognate of the English "apparatus," not *dispositif*, a word without an English cognate, which Althusser's translators render as "device," as do I here.

13. Foucault, 1978 interview; quoted by Macey (1993, 365).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Oscar Wilde was not a direct influence on Foucault, but the similarities are obvious—see O'Leary 2002.
2. I am grateful to John Grumley for pointing this out to me.
3. Of course, Sartre's extreme interpretation of human freedom as total puts him at odds with almost everyone, including those nearest to him, most famously Merleau-Ponty.
4. Han (2002, 229–30) claims on the contrary that Sartre's authenticity is precisely about dynamic self-creation, and that Foucault is wrong about it. As I discussed in Chapter 1, however, the essential difference between Foucault and phenomenology (instantiated by both Sartre and Derrida in this regard) is that Foucault reacts to underdetermination by setting out his own truth, while for phenomenology there is something more in the order of an attempt to grasp the fact of underdetermination as the final truth.
5. The second quote is my own translation of DE2 1530; the first quote is from the same source, but I have used the translation from EW1 284.
6. Of course, this is a glib comparison compared to Duncan Ivison's (1997) work covering the relation between Berlin and Foucault here—to which I am therefore inclined to defer.

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